

Construction workers union to go on strike in Panama

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Protests in Panama City, July 2022. | Photo: Twitter/ @LuisanaBvarR

Panama City, July 12 (RHC)-- The National Union of Construction Workers (SUNTRACS) announced that it will join the massive protests against Panama's President Laurentino Cortizo by performing a 24-hour "warning strike" on Wednesday.

Over the weekend, thousands of citizens once again took to the streets in various Panamanian cities to demand that the right-wing president take measures to lower the price of fuel and food. Similar to what happened over the past week, Panamanians also closed the roads while public teachers continue to strike.

These protests were called by the United People for Life Alliance and the National Alliance for the Rights of the Organized People (ANADEPO). Both coalitions demand "concrete answers" from Cortizo, whom

they accuse of "telling stories" to avoid freezing fuel prices or approving a general wage increase, which is something that has not happened since the 1980s.

"There is a way out of the problem, but the government does not want to undertake it so as to continue benefiting the economic elites," said Saul Mendez, the SUNTRACS Secretary and former leftist presidential candidate. Forced by the intense protests registered over the last week, Cortizo called for a dialogue on Monday in the province of Veraguas, where ANADEPO is expected to participate.

Previously, the SUNTRACS leader warned that if the Panamanian government initiates a campaign of repression against the citizens, protests will become more radical because "the people are in the streets and tired of the lies of traditional politicians."

During the demonstrations that have been carried out mostly peacefully, citizens denounced that some high-level officials increased their salaries and lawmakers make public displays of opulence. Meanwhile, a good part of the economically active population has been unemployed since the pandemic began.

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