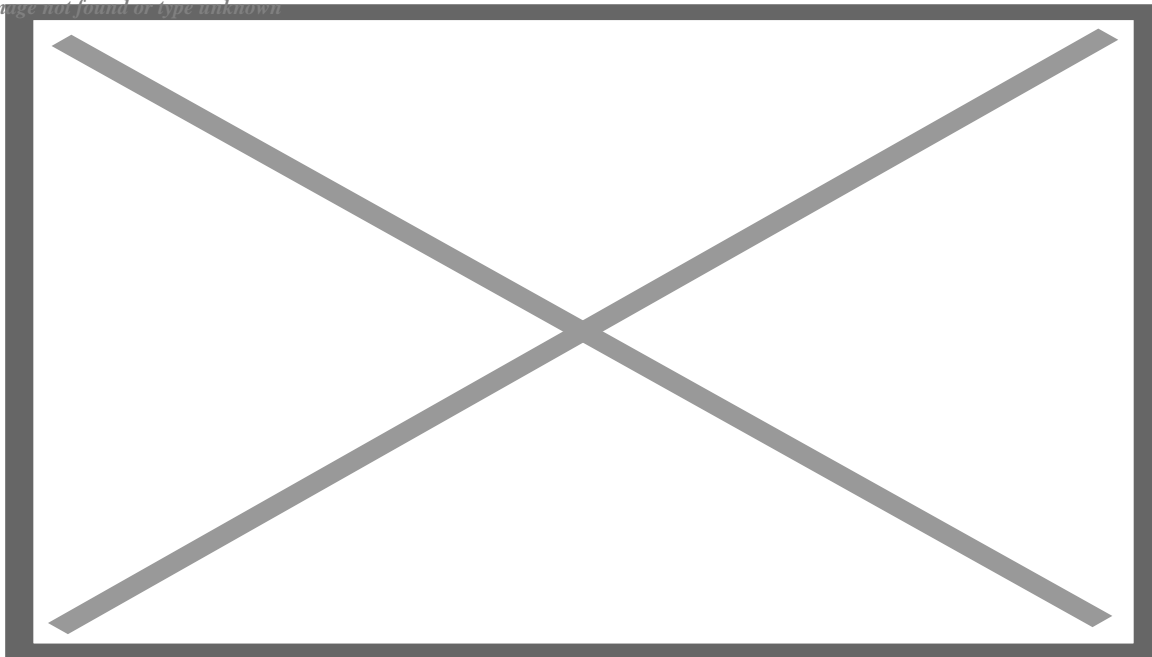


Manipulations against the tax law in Honduras rejected

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President Xiomara Castro made it clear that behind the protest there are interests of groups and individuals who want to manipulate and use the citizens to keep their privileges. | Photo: Prensa Latina

Tegucigalpa, May 11 (RHC)-- The president of Honduras, Xiomara Castro, gave indications on Wednesday night to investigate the protest carried out by hundreds of workers in Choluteca, in the south of the country, against the Tax Justice Law, and accused private businessmen and political organizations in the south of the country of financing it.

During a meeting with members of the National Defense and Security Council (CNDS), Honduran leader asked to hold accountable promoters or organizers of the mobilization, which occurred on May 9 and which seeks to "prevent this law from being discussed and approved" in Congress, she said via Twitter.

She also condemned the acts of violence that occurred during the debates on the law and called on the population to remain vigilant against the manipulations of groups and individuals who really want to preserve their privileges.

According to press reports, thousands of workers from melon and shrimp companies, among others, participated in the protest in Choluteca, arguing that the Tax Justice Law will supposedly scare away investors, force the closure of companies and create unemployment.

The president of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (Cohep), Mateo Yibrin, considered through Twitter that the tax bill "will have repercussions on jobs and investments". On the other hand, he requested the Honduran president to convene a national dialogue to reach consensus on the issue.

After Tuesday's protest, the director of the Revenue Administration Service (SAR), Marlon Ochoa, called for not biasing citizens against the Tax Justice Law and denounced that it is illegal for company directors to coerce their employees with dismissal or salary cuts if they do not join the mobilizations.

He announced that the Ministry of Labor will defend any worker who is a victim of such blackmail, particularly if it comes from employers of companies that enjoy broad tax exemptions or evade taxation.

The director of SAR made it clear that most workers pay taxes indirectly and thus sustain development plans. Ochoa also rejected that employees are lied to in order to mobilize them. In this sense, he affirmed that the information used by the private sector to call for the protest in Choluteca was false.

He denied that these companies are going to lose their tax benefits within two years, as they conveyed to their workers, and made it clear that there will be an end to tax evasion, a violation committed even by companies exempted from paying taxes, he said.

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