

# *Colombian Teachers to Intensify Protests*

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Bogota, April 30 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Teachers in Colombia rejected a proposal on Wednesday to end their current strike and warned that protests will intensify in coming days.

Thousands of teachers from the Colombian teachers union FECODE abandoned classes last week and said they would not return until they received a salary increase, access to adequate health care, and the examinations used to evaluate teachers are eliminated. They also demand that the Colombian government invest more in public education across the country.

After over a week of demonstration, the teachers stepped up their actions on Monday, when over 20,000 educators from across the country participated in a major march in Bogota.

The vice president of FECODE, Luis Eduardo Varela, explained that one of the main motives behind the industrial action was an unfulfilled promise to increase salaries made by Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos a year ago.

Gina Parody, Colombia's minister of education, had asked teachers to pause the strike for five days in order for the two sides to restart a dialogue. However, the teachers rejected the minister's plea, while union members ratified their decision Wednesday to remain on strike until the government meets their demands.

According to FECODE's executive committee, major marches are planned for Thursday in the capital cities of each state across the Latin American nation. The union has also organized a mobilization for May 1st, otherwise known as International Workers' Day.

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