

# *Colombian Teachers Continue to Strike, Demand Education Reforms*

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Bogota, May 6 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Teachers in Colombia say they will continue to strike across the country and demand better working conditions, after negotiations between the government and members of local teachers' union failed over the weekend.

According to Ombudsman Jorge Armando Otalora, mediator in the talks, both parties failed to reach an agreement after 20 hours of negotiations from Sunday to early Monday.

Finance Minister Mauricio Cardenas said the government is willing to increase teachers' salaries by 12 percent to meet a proposal by the ombudsman. However, the teachers union Fecode rejected the proposal, saying it does not meet enough of their demands including reforms in the public education system.

Thousands of teachers from the Colombian teachers' union Fecode have been on strike since April 22. They say they will not return to work until they receive a salary increase, access to adequate health care, and that the examinations used to evaluate teachers are eliminated. They also demand that the Colombian government invest more in public education across the country.

Thousands of teachers and supporters took to the street last week in major demonstrations across the country on both Monday and Friday, May 1st for International Workers' Day.

According to media reports, the demonstrations were peaceful, however some scuffles broke out between protesters and police, but no serious consequences were reported.

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