

Argentinian Banks Shut Down as Workers Begin National Strike



Buenos Aires, May 13 (EFE-RHC)-- Workers from the banking sector in Argentina initiated a 24 hour national strike on Tuesday to press for a 30 percent salary increase. The national strike comes after bankers have failed to make significant concessions to their workers in ongoing negotiations, unions reported to EFE.

Workers have already been on a national strike for eight days but protests were limited to closing the banks for two hours daily. On Tuesday, workers took to the streets across the country to force their demand onto the negotiation table. Banking sector workers are also protesting the lack of personnel, the effects of outsourcing, failure of salary payments, and compensation for paid taxes. Santiago Echemendi, secretary general of the international commission of "*Banco Provincia*" (Province Bank), said negotiations are "very tough". Despite the "lavish profits" the banking sector has made in the last decade, it "doesn't want to cede anything", Echemendi said. The banking sector made an average profit rate of 50 to 70 percent in 2014.

For the secretary general, salary isn't "profit," but rather a means "so that the worker can live with dignity." In light of failing negotiations, Echemendi believes workers are on strike because "the fight is the only message that the boss understands."

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