

Bank Workers in Brazil Launch National Strike for Better Wages



Brasilia, September 7 (RHC)-- Bank workers in Brazil launched a nationwide strike Tuesday morning to demand higher wages and better working conditions. The National Confederation of Credit Company Workers, known as Contec, said in a statement that the indefinite general strike is the “final weapon” available to workers to pressure authorities and will continue “strong and firm” until their demands are met.

“Bank workers are the main ones responsible for immense bank profits every year in Brazil,” said Contec. “And all this commitment and dedication should be reciprocated.”

The main demand of the strike is a 15 percent salary adjustment for bank workers, which, the workers say, is tantamount to only a 5 percent hike in real pay as a result of Brazil's 10 percent annual inflation rate.

Striking bank workers reject the proposal made by the National Bank Federation Fenaban on the other side of the negotiating table for a 6.5 percent wage adjustment plus a bonus of just over \$900, arguing that it fails to keep step with inflation, which hit 9.57 percent in August.

The strike also calls for better working conditions, including security measures, an end to discrimination against women, Black people, LGBTI individuals, and people with disabilities in the workplace, particularly

with respect to pay and opportunities for professional advancement.

The latest strike comes amid a wave of protests organized by various groups across the country in the wake of the installation of unelected President Michel Temer last week in a move widely labeled a parliamentary coup against ousted President Dilma Rousseff.

In a statement following the 61 to 20 Senate vote to remove Rousseff from office last Wednesday, the Union of Bank Workers of Brasilia dubbed the impeachment a “coup against democracy and workers,” arguing that it marked a “real blow to Brazilian democracy.”

“The coup will now charge the bill to be paid by the workers in the countryside and in the city, its main victims, with immeasurable effects,” continued the bank union’s statement, criticizing the neoliberal policies of the imposed Temer government, including “a brutal attack on labor laws.”

The strike will have an impact on access to banking services offered by tellers. Brazilian newspaper O Globo advised customers to conduct transactions using ATMs, online or mobile banking, and other “alternative” services during the strike.

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