

Tens of Thousands Protest Brazilian Coup President on Independence Day



Brasilia, September 8 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets on Wednesday in over a dozen Brazilian cities for a national day of action dubbed the "Cry of the Excluded" to protest the country's unelected government, as President Michel Temer made his first public appearance one week after being installed in office.

Coinciding with Brazil's Independence Day and marked by shouts of slogans like "Out Temer," the marchers protested the rollback of social programs and protection of human rights under the newly-inaugurated right-wing government, which already began to implement an aggressive neo-liberal agenda during its "interim" three months in office.

Silvana Conti, a candidate with the Communist Party of Brazil in Porto Alegre, said: "This September 7th, Independence Day, is quite different because the people have just experienced a coup." She added that it is important that the Brazilian people show that they are not accepting an illegitimate government and will not leave the streets until there's a return to democracy."

When Temer made an appearance accompanied by his wife Marcela in Brasilia for the Independence Day parade, he was met with cries calling for his removal. It was his first public appearance in Brazil since his speedy inauguration on August 31 following the 61 to 20 vote in the Senate to impeach Dilma Rousseff. At an earlier event, Temer was greeted with boos as he attended the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in Rio last month.

Meanwhile, protesters also flooded in the streets in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Recife, Campo Grande, and several other cities. Solidarity protests were also held internationally, including in London and other major cities in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

“They did not calculate well the opposition there would be against the withdrawal of workers’ rights,” said Lindbergh Farias, senator with Rousseff’s Workers Party, during the demonstrations in Rio, Folha de Sao Paulo reported.

In recent days, labor unions and social movements have come together to reject Temer’s plans for the country, which include lifting restrictions on foreign land ownership, cutting social programs, and privatizing the country’s natural resources, including rich offshore oil reserves. Temer has also moved toward cozier relations with the United States after years of independent foreign policy favoring South American regional integration under Rousseff and her predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

On Monday, Brazil’s largest social movement, the Landless Worker Movement, or MST, occupied government offices in Brasilia to demand attention to agricultural issues while an estimated 12,000 protesters took to the streets in various actions across the country to echo demands for agrarian reform and guaranteed access to farmland for landless rural people.

Social movements have vowed to continue to protest the so-called coup against Brazilian democracy while fighting to protect the social gains won over more than a decade of Worker Party administrations.

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