Honduran Police Clash with Students at Anti-Privatization Protest

Tegucigalpa, September 10 (RHC)-- Police forces clashed with a group of students who took the administrative building of the main campus of the National Autonomous University of Honduras in the capital of Tegucigalpa, as part of protests against privatization of education.

According to teleSUR, the students demanded academic authorities drop all charges against six student leaders who took part in the two-month occupation that paralyzed the country's main university during June and July. The students are charged with private property damage and sedition.

"We have waited too long," said one of the masked protesters inside the university. "This is a measure to pressure authorities and lawyers so they can solve this situation now." The students are set to face trial on Tuesday.

Protests started in June, when the directors of the UNAH decided to privatize academic services like tests reruns and the issuing of academic records, services that had been free. Students were also protesting against the current leadership of Director Julieta Castellano, who they feel does not represent them.

Students conducted a 62-day occupation of the main campus in Tegucigalpa and in the last days of the protest seven regional campuses joined in. They took over one of the floors of the university and demanded to be heard by authorities, protesting against outsourcing of academic activities. Riot police, during a violent eviction, cleared the protests and arrested 12 students.

Overall, 85 students were charged with disobedience and disorderly conduct, but had charges dropped after the occupation ended, authorities had also reached an agreement with the students to remove the charges against six of the protesters, which they have still not done.

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