

British Airways pilots ground planes in 48-hour strike over better pay



London, September 9 (RHC)-- British Airways pilots began an unprecedented 48-hour strike Monday grounding of most of the airline's flights disrupting thousands of travelers' plans in order to demand better salaries from the company.

"This strike will have cost the company considerably more than the investment needed to settle this dispute," British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA) General Secretary Brian Strutton said in a statement on the eve of the September 9th and 10th strike.

The two-day walkout will cost International Airlines Group, the airline's parent company, around \$98 million. While the pilots union put the cost of settling the strike at about \$6 million, "one-eighth of the cost of just one day's strike action," the statement added.

As almost 4,000 pilots will strike, grounding 1,600 flights that were scheduled, it will be the company's first involving pilots since the 1970s. The disruptions will affect mainly London at Heathrow airport and also Gatwick.

Pilots previously rejected a pay increase worth 11.5 percent over three years, which was proposed by the airline in July. The company has said the strike action is “unjustifiable” as its pay offer was fair. “It is time to get back to the negotiating table and put together a serious offer that will end this dispute,” the union stated.

BALPA has said that British Airways should share more of its profits with its pilots. The parent company reported an 18 percent jump in profit in 2019’s first quarter led by earnings at the carrier, the best performance by an airline in the June quarter.

The pilots union have announced another day of industrial action for Sept. 27 and is now campaigning at Ryanair as well, where U.K. pilots plan to walk out for an additional seven days.

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