

Miners Launch National Strike in Peru



Lima, May 20 (teleSUR-RHC) Miners in Peru began a national strike on Tuesday organized by the Federation of Mining, Steel, and Metal Workers who are protesting against a series of labor legislations and executive decrees cutting their rights at work.

Workers marched to Congress building on the first day of the strike, stopping at the Ministry of Work in an attempt to deliver their list of demands.

The striking workers cite three main issues in their fight as they hit the streets. The first is Executive Order 013, which allows for 10 percent of workers to be fired when a company reports losses, even if these losses are not or cannot be verified. The second law the unionized laborers are protesting is Legislation 29245, which facilitates the subcontracting of workers instead of hiring them as full time payroll workers with full benefits. The third law is Legislation 40008, which allows companies to claim up to 20 percent of salaries as bonuses and thus enables them to avoid paying employment benefits on this percentage.

On these consequences, miner Ivan Granados stated that "at work, they are starting to fire the workers, saying that the company is losing money. They are...harassing people with threats of firing them. That is why we are here fighting." Miner Daniel Quispe, claims "the salaries are kept the same year after year."

While not all workers from the mining, steel and metal industries have joined the strike, the overall impact of this action could be significant given that 65 percent of the Peruvian economy is dependent on primary

exports such as copper, zinc, silver, and gold.

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