

Argentina's unions begin campaign against IMF budget in front of Congress



Buenos Aires, October 3 (RHC)-- The Argentinean Workers' Central Union, known as the CTA, has set up a tent in front of the Congress all this week, until Friday, where discussions and debates are being held regarding the 2019 budget project of the Macri government.

On Tuesday, the agenda included a discussion of budget, public employment, and gender; security and defense Wednesday; health, labor and production Thursday; and education, science and technology Friday.

Opposition deputies and senators will present their criticisms against the official budget. The tent also includes tables where workers affected by the austerity measures will educate the public about their personal situations.

A collective of social political and professional organizations also called for a rally Thursday in defense of public health starting at the Ministry of Health to Buenos Aires' main square Plaza de Mayo. The march will be against the elimination of the health budget, the gutting and shutting down of social programs, the reduction in medicine and basic supplies such as; contraceptive methods that guarantee sexual,

reproductive and non-reproductive health, and resources that guarantee the Protocol of Legal Interruption of Pregnancy.

The camp will have the slogan "Against the budget of the IMF — for work, production and sovereignty."

President Mauricio Macri signed a \$50 billion emergency loan with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that is supposed to reduce Argentina's debt. But since the announcement of the deal in June, the Argentinean peso has lost 30 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar.

The 2019 Budget Project doubled the fund for debt repayment while cutting back on education, health, subsidies for public services, and transportation. Macri claimed that austerity policies will help the fiscal condition of the country but workers have experienced 34 percent inflation since last year without any wage increase. This measure also resulted in slashing 35,100 public sector jobs.

The country has been witnessing surges of protest and strikes by unions against the austerity measures, while the Argentinean president was in New York for the 73rd United Nations General Assembly, and met with IMF chief Christine Lagarde, and bankers from Citi Bank, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, JP Morgan, and UBS. He expressed his plans to run for re-election during the meeting last week with the bankers.

Last week, the president of Argentinean Central Bank, Luis Caputo, resigned from his post in the midst of efforts to negotiate a deal with the IMF to stem a currency crisis and large-scale national strikes, which have crippled public services.

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