

Colombian student protests continue, police repression increases



Bogota, November 17 (RHC)-- Students, workers and Indigenous people are mobilizing in several cities of Colombia to protest against the tax reform promoted by far-right Colombian President Ivan Duque. One of the main protests took place in the capital city of Bogota. The multiple groups organized under the hashtag #ManifestacionPacifica (Peaceful Protest) and #MarchaPorLaEducacion (March for Education), to voice their rejection of the financing law and the budget announced by the new Colombian administration for the year 2019.

According to reports, students were seen being taken away in ambulances with serious injuries after security forces were deployed to repress the demonstration. The protesters are demanding that the national government immediately withdraw their tax reform law because of the negative impact on Colombian workers.

Journalists have also reported being attacked by repressive police forces in their attempts to document the protests.

The protests will continue in many part of Colombia. President of the United Worker's Central (CUP)

Diógenes Orjuela, said in an interview with teleSUR that the main demands are: the "withdrawal of the tax reform bill that raises Value Added Tax (VAT) on basic goods, and that a roundtable of students, professors and university workers be reopened so that the government, through a dialogue with them, can define a strategy to get Colombian universities out of the crisis in which they find themselves."

Orjuela added that by next Wednesday, November 28th, they will carry out "the seizure of all the provincial Colombian capitals" to make the same demands in the event that the government does not respond in the coming days.

Likewise, student movements of the Universidad del Valle (Valley University) and the Sena, as well as the professors of several municipalities and representatives of different unions marched in Cali to demand that the measures of the Colombian administration be rolled back.

Teachers from the Union of Educators of Santander, students of the Industrial University of Santander, and informal vendors of the Bucaramanga Center marched peacefully through the streets of the department of Santander.

The students are marching to demand that the state provide them with the resources they need to attend places of learning, while the informal vendors are marching to get better guarantees on the implementation of the Public Space Master Plan.

The students of the Universidad del Atlántico (Atlantic University) in Barranquilla announced that they will continue the strike begun more than a month ago and indicate that they will continue supporting the daily protests of the 22 universities that are demand resources to finance public education.

Since last Sunday, November 11, at least 450 Embera Indigenous people have been in constant protest in Bogotá to demand that the Duque government carry out efforts to aid the crises in their communities so that they may return home. Representatives of the Indigenous protesters joined the student protest saying: "We reiterate our commitment to unity, of uniting with the struggle of the student movement."

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