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## Venezuelan Teachers Strike

*by John Neagle*

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On April 6, Venezuelan teachers staged a national strike for four hours to pressure the government into responding to demands for higher salaries and changes in university administrative decision-making. The strike was called by the Federation of Venezuelan University Professors Associations (FAPUV), but was also supported by pre-school, primary and secondary school instructors. As a result of government austerity policies, university budgets have been slashed by 50%. Meanwhile, says FAPUV, the rising cost of living is causing severe hardship among the nation's teachers. Deputy Education Minister Francisco Castillo told reporters that the teachers' strike was illegal. Since April 3, students in Maracaibo, Caracas and other major cities have staged several rallies and strikes protesting official economic policy. Interior Minister Alejandro Izaguirre asserted that the government will not tolerate disturbances and law-breaking, and is preparing to take action against the strikers. On April 4 in Caracas, one person was shot to death and a policeman wounded during street marches by high school students. The dead man was identified by police as 22-year-old Gonzalo Juarena Avazalo. The shooting occurred at the Andres Eloy Blanco secondary school located in the El Cuartel district, western Caracas. (Basic data from Xinhua, 04/06/89)

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