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Deborah Tyroler

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## **Costa Rica: Thousands On Strike In Limon**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Aug. 20, dock workers in the Atlantic coast city of Limon went on strike, demanding salary hikes, increased access to credit for farmers and agricultural workers, suspension of the national government's privatization plans, expanded union rights, and improved health care and education services, among others. According to a report by Xinhua, 10,000 workers walked off the job at midnight. On Tuesday, workers in hospitals, schools, and an oil refinery joined the strikers. The work stoppage was called by an umbrella organization of over 20 unions and civic groups. The organization rejected the government's demand for an end to the strike as a precondition for negotiations. Union officials said they would call off the strike 12 hours after the start of talks. The Roman Catholic Church has offered to mediate the conflict. Government officials said union leaders were politicizing the strike by presenting demands it cannot meet. The state-owned oil company RECOPE announced that it had reserves to supply the entire country for a month. A labor tribunal in Limon has declared the dock strike illegal. However, this verdict must be upheld by a higher court before employers can begin dismissing workers. (Basic data from Xinhua, AFP, 08/22/89)

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