

9-7-1990

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Salvadoran Teachers Launch Five-day Strike

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, September 7, 1990

On Sept. 3, Salvadoran teachers launched a five-day strike to protest controversial legislation regulating education approved by the National Assembly on July 11. Saul Sanchez, leader of the Salvadoran Teachers' Front (FMS), an alliance of teacher and student organizations, asserted that unless the government responds in an adequate fashion, teachers' protests may continue until the end of the school year in October. According to the FMS, the new legislation seeks privatization of secondary and higher education, centralizes education facilities in municipality officials' hands, and increases social security taxes paid by teachers. Education Minister Rene Hernandez said salaries of teachers who participate in the strike may be docked. The mobilization beginning Sept. 3 is the seventh strike by teachers since the legislation was approved. Sanchez asserted that it is better to lose a month's salary than to spend a lifetime in subjection. FMS spokespersons said 18,000 of the 24,000 teachers at all levels of the Salvadoran education system had opted to participate in the strike. FMS leader Rafael Coto told reporters that striking teachers in Usulután department had been targeted with threats by soldiers. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 09/03/90)

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