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Deborah Tyroler

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Costa Rica: Labor Federation Announces General Strike To Protest Government-imposed Price Hikes

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 2, spokespersons for the Permanent Workers Council (CPT), representing most Costa Rican labor unions, announced a general strike and street demonstrations scheduled for Oct. 5 to protest government decrees raising prices on basic goods and services. Since taking power in May, President Rafael Calderon's administration has raised prices on subsistence goods, fuels and utilities to reduce a fiscal deficit estimated at between \$300 and \$400 million per year. The CPT argues that the government had pledged to halt the price hikes, and to withdraw a civil service statute reform bill submitted to the Legislative Assembly. Employees of several government agencies are on strike, or threatening walkouts. As of Oct. 2, municipal workers in Limon, Costa Rica's principal Atlantic port, continued an indefinite strike. On Oct. 1, the Health Ministry and the National Production Council (responsible for commercialization of foodstuffs) were paralyzed. Employees of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social-CCSS) announced plans to commence a strike unless the government implements a pay hike retroactive to July 1 for an amount equivalent to \$13 per month. The CCSS administers the nation's hospitals and clinics. (Basic data from AFP, 10/02/90)

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