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Costa Rica: Labor Unions Protest Government-imposed Price Hikes

by Barbara Khol

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Government officials recently announced price hikes for gasoline, cement and other construction materials, and for several basic foodstuffs, including milk, sugar, corn, eggs, rice, beans, lard, and flour. Since President Rafael Calderon took power in May, prices on gasoline have increased by over 33%; electricity rates by 20%; water, by 100%; and, telephone services, between 10% and 15%. The General Workers Confederation (CGT) has threatened to launch a general strike unless the government establishes price ceilings on basic goods and services. The Permanent Workers Council (CPT) currently negotiating with government officials on privatizations, retirement pensions, and regulation of arbitration and collective bargaining, scheduled a demonstration for Sept. 27 to protest price hikes. As of Sept. 18, nurses' aides had entered into the ninth day of a general strike aimed at obtaining higher wages. (Basic data from AFP, 09/18/90)

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