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El Salvador: Public Employees Strike

by Deborah Tyroler

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Nov. 11: About 3,000 Treasury Ministry employees initiated a strike demanding a 500 colones (US $60) per month wage hike, an increase in year-end bonuses equivalent to 125% of one month's pay, and other benefits. President Alfredo Cristiani said wage hikes would not be approved due to inadequate government funds. Nov. 12: Treasury Minister Rafael Alvarado Cano announced that 18 ministry employees had been dismissed, including strike organizers and leaders of the Treasury Ministry Workers Union (AGEMHA). Nov. 14: Union spokespersons told reporters that over 8,000 public employees at the public works, education, culture, agriculture, and treasury ministries were on strike. In a protest action, about 1,000 public employees interrupted a Legislative Assembly session during which a vote to increase their wages by US$12.30 per month was scheduled to take place. In comments to reporters, President Cristiani insisted that the 18 Treasury Ministry employees fired for "instigating" the strike would not be reinstated. He added, "This is not a labor issue, but a political one. We hope that the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) will stop exerting its influence in these actions." (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, ACAN-EFE, 11/14/91; Salpress, 11/15/91)

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