

12-6-1991

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Deborah Tyroler

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Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Honduras: Strike By State-run Electricity Company Employees Declared Illegal By Government." (1991).
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Honduras: Strike By State-run Electricity Company Employees Declared Illegal By Government

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, December 6, 1991

Nov. 28: A Labor Ministry spokesperson reported that a strike by employees of the state-run electricity company (ENEE) had been declared illegal. On the same day, the government ordered militarization of ENEE installations. According to the spokesperson, the employee union (STENEE) had commenced the strike on No. 6, failed to comply with an agreement containing steps regarding negotiations, and used ENEE vehicles to block traffic during protest demonstrations in Tegucigalpa. STENEE president Gladys Lanza called the government's actions "fascist." The United Honduran Workers Federation (FUTH) called for a general strike, and described the government actions as "illegal, authoritarian, and anti-union." FUTH's 50,000 members include 4,000 ENEE employees. The Federation said the strike had been organized to protest privatization of selected ENEE services announced by Central Bank president Ricardo Maduro. Nov. 29: Members of 20 labor organizations participated in a demonstration in downtown Tegucigalpa. Protesters demanded respect for collective work contracts, and expressed support for ENEE employees on strike. Nov. 30: National Union Federation (FESITRANH) leaders told reporters that ENEE managers had fired over 50 employees, including strike leaders and STENEE president Gladys Lanza. Catholic Church spokespersons said the Church was prepared to mediate in order to contribute to resolution of the conflict. Dec. 5: Strikers rejected the government's ultimatum to return to work on Thursday. STENEE members said that any solution to the conflict must include reinstatement of union members fired since the strike began. (Basic data from Notimex, 11/29/91; Agence France-Presse, 11/28/91, 11/30/91; ACAN-EFE, 11/28/91, 11/29/91, 12/05/91)

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