

7-11-1991

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### Recommended Citation

Khol, Barbara. "Dominican Republic: United Workers Confederation Calls General Strike." (1991).  
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## **Dominican Republic: United Workers Confederation Calls General Strike**

*by Barbara Khol*

*Category/Department: General*

*Published: Thursday, July 11, 1991*

On July 10, a strike organized by the United Workers Confederation (CTI) closed factories, shops and offices in Santo Domingo. The union federation called the strike to demand wage hikes, and to protest an expected agreement with the International Monetary Fund. During a two-day strike the previous week, one person was killed, 12 wounded, and more than 200 arrested. (See Chronicle, 07/04/91 for previous coverage.) Describing the action as "subversive," and a "declaration of war," President Joaquin Balaguer ordered police and army patrols to "keep order." The president said the government cannot raise wages by more than 20%, an increase he ordered July 1 for most government workers. Trade union leaders say the 20% hike does not begin to compensate for recent inflation. The minimum wage for public employees is equivalent to \$55 per month. Over 7,000 physicians employed in public hospitals and 32,000 school teachers have been on strike for three months, seeking a 100% salary increase. They earn about \$350 a month. CTI officials said that although the strike was originally planned as a two-day operation, it would continue indefinitely. Defense Ministry Gen. Hector Tejada Garcia said military personnel would act "energetically" to quash disorder. National police chief Gen. Ramon Rodriguez Arias said 7,000 officers were deployed in the streets. (Basic data from AP, 07/10/91)

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