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Colombia: 180,000 Public School Teachers Join 48-hour Walk-out

by Barbara Khol

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On Aug. 13, at least 180,000 public school teachers throughout the country joined a 48-hour strike, organized by the Colombian Educators Federation (FECODE). The objective of the walk-out was to protest delayed salary payments, a freeze on creating new teacher posts in effect since 1975, and the absence of government action to protect teachers' "right to life." Since Jan. 1, 30 teachers have been assassinated. FECODE spokespersons said that an estimated 2,000 FECODE affiliated teachers have received death threats. For several months, the Federation has insisted on the creation of 3,000 new teacher positions. According to FECODE, nearly 1.5 million Colombian children are not in school because of government delays and inefficiency, and failure to hire more teachers. (Basic data from EFE, AFP, 08/13/91)

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