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Peru: Over 1,000 Public School Teachers Commence Hunger Strike

by Barbara Khol

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On Aug. 18, Olmedo Auris, leader of the public school teachers' union federation (Sindicato Union de los Trabajadores de la Educacion Peruana-SUTEP), told reporters that over 1,000 teachers planned to commence a hunger strike on Monday, Aug. 19. The nation's 260,000 teachers have been on strike since May 8. The hunger strike is focused on pressuring President Alberto Fujimori into resolving the teachers' demands "as soon as possible." Auris said the unions have offered compromises in order to suspend the strike, and now it is up to the government to act in similar fashion. The strikers' demands have been reduced to requiring payment for July, and written documentation of wage hike and other agreements. Meanwhile, the Confederation of American Educators announced solidarity with SUTEP, and called on the Peruvian government to quickly resolve the strike. Confederation members number over 12 million. In a communique to President Fujimori, the Confederation said "teachers must be perceived as an essential part of the Nation, and the survival and development of its values and customs." The communique called for resumption of negotiations between the government and SUTEP, face-to-face dialogue, and respect for International Labor Organization (ILO) agreement commitments. The Peruvian government is a signatory to ILO agreements on the treatment of workers and unions. (Basic data from AFP, 08/18/91)

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