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Bolivian Teachers' Strike: Summary Of Developments

by Barbara Khol

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Approximately 70,000 public school teachers launched a nationwide indefinite strike on March 20 to pressure the government into authorizing a pay hike. On March 16, President Jaime Paz Zamora decreed a 12% general wage hike, and a 17% increase for teachers and health care workers. Teachers rejected the government-decreed pay hike, insisting on a minimum 23% hike. March 31: In La Paz, during a peaceful demonstration attended by teachers, parents and students, police dispersed the crowds by wielding rubber truncheons. Several Bolivian and foreign reporters were also beaten. April 1: Government negotiators offered a 20% increase and an annual bonus of 400 bolivianos (US$104) to teacher union leaders. April 2: Jose Pimentel, leader of the urban teachers' union confederation, told reporters that at least 20,000 teachers, parents and students plan to participate in a candlelight vigil through the streets of La Paz on Thursday night. April 6: Rural teachers' unions decided to accept the government's April 1 offer. April 8: Following a meeting with labor and education ministers, teacher union leaders agreed to return to work on Thursday. Under the new agreement, teachers are to receive a 20% salary increase, retroactive to January, and an annual bonus of 400 bolivianos (US$104). In addition, teachers who work in border areas are to receive an additional subsidy. [Basic data from Notimex, 03/27/92; Prensa Latina (Cuba) 04/01/92; Agence France-Presse, 03/31/92, 04/02/92, 04/04/92, 04/06/92]

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