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Panama

General Strike in Panama – against extractivism, pension reform and the return of U.S. troops

- News from around the world -
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Thousands rallied in Panama City on May Day, in the midst of a general strike against privatisation, copper mining and Donald Trump’s threats to Panamanian sovereignty.

The strike began on 23 April, when teachers and other education unions came out. It became an indefinite, national stoppage on 28 April, when construction workers and banana plantation unions joined in. A couple of days later, secondary school students started their own mobilisation, and now doctors and other workers in the public health system say they will be joining the strike from Monday, 5 May.

This is more or less the same coalition of workers and people’s organisations that won a big victory in 2023 – after months of massive protests, the People United’s Alliance for Life, led by the teachers and construction workers, managed to push the Supreme Court into closing down, at least temporarily, one of the biggest open-cast copper mines in the world, owned by First Quantum of Canada (although there were reports of other owners lurking in the background).

The unions say participation in the current general strike is running at about 85 percent. There are three main demands: firstly, the revoking of a recent pension reform that cuts benefits and favours private pension funds; secondly to reverse the security agreements imposed by the Trump administration, which have already seen about 1000 U.S. soldiers return to three bases near the Panama canal, along with a sharp increase in the number of U.S. military planes, helicopters and warships seen in the vicinity; and, thirdly, to block attempts by the government to re-open First Quantum’s ‘Cobre’ mine – there are reports that the Trump administration has also been pushing for this, and may have some interests of its own.

In the present world situation, the people of Panama are again leading an emblematic struggle and deserve the broadest solidarity possible.

NB. The People United’s Alliance for Life in Panama is one of the initial signatories to the appeal for ‘Peoples Against Extractivism’, alongside Climate Camp Scotland.

Some further background on the general strike in Panama is available here:

People’s Dispatch, 28 April 2025: [“Panamanians gear up for indefinite strike on April 28”](#).

People’s Dispatch, 29 April 2025: [“Indefinite national strike continues in Panama, defying arrests and repression”](#).

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