



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Cape Verde Telecom employees strike for higher wages, 2010

Late August

2010

to: November 3,

2010

Country: Cape Verde

Goals:

At first it was a 4% wage increase, but then went down to a 3.9% wage increase in mid-September

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions › of intention to strike
- 013. Deputations
- 051. Walk-outs
- 097. Protest strike

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 013. Deputations

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 013. Deputations

Methods in 4th segment:

Methods in 5th segment:

Methods in 6th segment:

- 097. Protest strike

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Group characterization:

- Workers in the telecommunications industry

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

The Union of Transport, Telecommunications, Hospitality and Tourism (SITTHUR)

Partners:

Not Known

External allies:

Not Known

Involvement of social elites:

Not Known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Hospitality and Tourism (SITTHUR)
- Telecommunications
- The Union of Transport

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: 12 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Cabo Verde Telecom administration

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not Known

Campaigner violence:

Not Known

Repressive Violence:

Not Known

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

In this particular campaign, the workers did not achieve their goal of a 3.9% pay raise, but they continued with another action in protest of the administration's response to their strikes, which indicates both survival, and a degree of growth.

The Union of Transport, Telecommunications, Hospitality and Tourism (SITTHUR) is a union in Cape Verde that is comprised of a range of employees involved in transportation, telecommunications, service work, and tourism. In 2010, the administration of Cabo Verde Telecom (CV Telecom) proposed a wage increase of 1.75%, while the employees wanted a wage increase of 4% (one source says Cabo Verde Telecom was only offering a 1% wage increase).

Starting in May 2010, SITTHUR representatives and the CV Telecom administration began engaging in talks over wage increases. In late August, however, SITTHUR announced that CV Telecom employees would go on strike in demand of a 4% wage raise. The administration of Cabo Verde Telecom said they were surprised by the "radical stance" that SITTHUR took. The company said they were, however, open to dialogue in "an environment of tranquility."

On August 31, 2010, union representatives and Cabo Verde Telecom representatives sat down in a meeting mediated by the Department of Labor to attempt to work out a wage increase that would be satisfactory for both sides. However, the union representatives refused to cancel the strike unless the company agreed to the wage increase. The company refused, so SITTHUR decided to go ahead with the strike. Both employees and company administration assured Cabo Verde Telecom customers that the strike would not affect communications in Cape Verde, both because the equipment functioned autonomously, and because emergency technicians would be there to repair any problems that could arise.

SITTHUR went through with the strike on the morning of September 2, 2010. Employees of Cabo Verde Telecom staged a walk out and remained on strike through September 3, demanding a 4% wage increase. SITTHUR reported that over 90% of Cabo Verde Telecom employees adhered to the strike. The only island where employees did not strike was Brava. SITTHUR also made sure that technicians remained at the switchboard to be sure that equipment was maintained, and other employees remained to be sure that mobile maritime communications were still functional. One union representative was reported to have said, "This is a great day of struggle."

It seems that negotiations then continued after the strike (though this is unclear), and SITTHUR lowered its demand to a 3.9% wage increase, but refused to go lower than that. On September 10, CV Telecom offered employees a 2.5% wage increase retroactive for the year of 2010, but at the same time suspended wage negotiations with the employees. CV Telecom administration said that the "intransigence" of the union representatives made further negotiation impossible.

Still, SITTHUR planned to reinstate negotiations on October 13. Beforehand, they sent out a press release saying that whatever happened with negotiations, they would have a meeting with the General Assembly of Workers (unclear what this body is) on October 15 to "analyze the overall performance of the whole process and take decisions where indicated."

CV Telecom employees organized another strike from November 2-3. It appears that the goal of the strike was the same as the previous one, though one source says that the goal was a "fair wage readjustment" that would satisfy the employees. Union representative Tomás Aquino reported that there was 100% strike participation in the northern islands, aside from term-contract workers.

Still, the company would not grant the workers their demand of a 3.9% wage increase.

On February 15, 2011, SITTHUR and the company employees had a meeting to review the progress of CV Telecom's labor policies since the November strike. SITTHUR claimed that CV Telecom disciplined four employees for no justified reason, and said it was retaliation for the strikes. So, employees decided to hold a protest of administration retaliation on February 18 in front

of the company's headquarters in the city of Praia.

The result of this protest is unclear, but the earlier strikes for a wage increase did not result in the increase that the workers demanded.

Research Notes

Sources:

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"CV Telecom: Administration and SITTHUR in Negotiating New Session." 14 October 2010. AfricanFinancialMarkets.com. 27 April 2011. <<http://www.africanfinancialmarkets.com/front-news-detail.php?NewsID=101579>>.

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"CV Telecom Workers Hold Protests in Praia." 17 February 2011. A Semana. 27 April 2011. <<http://asemana.ak-project.com/spip.php?article61540&ak=1>>.

"Nearly All CV Telecom Employees Adhere to Strike." 2 November 2010. A Semana. 27 April 2011. <<http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article57799>>.

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Additional Notes:

The actions of the employees after November 3, 2010 is unclear, as is information on the nature of the work these employees did for CV Telecom. The nature of SITTHUR's relationship with the employees of CV Telecom (how many of CV Telecom employees are members of SITTHUR, etc.) is also unclear.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Hannah Jones, 29/04/2011

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