
Argentines March Across Country to Protest Macri's Policies

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The national march is modeled on a similar 1994 march against President Carlos Menem, whose economic policies punished workers nationwide.

Scores of protesters representing labor unions, political parties, and social movements took to the street across Argentina Wednesday morning to launch a three-day national mobilization against mass layoffs, [utility price hikes](#), and other neoliberal policies under the conservative [government of President Mauricio Macri](#).

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The protests are scheduled to converge on the capital of Buenos Aires Friday for a mass rally in the [central Plaza de Mayo](#) in front of the Presidential Palace. The nationwide demonstration is modeled on a 1994 action in which tens of thousands of demonstrators poured into Buenos Aires to protest the abrupt shift to neoliberal macroeconomic policies engineered by then-President Carlos Menem.

Macri has reintroduced similar policies which favor financiers over workers, triggering rising unemployment, asset inflation and privatization of state resources.

Hugo Yasky, head of the more than 1.4 million-strong Central Workers' Union, said that the march is the result of a strengthening coalition of labor unions and other grassroots social movements.

"This march expresses the will for convergence and unity in action of diverse and legitimate demonstrations of popular resistance and democracy against neoliberal restoration under Macri," Yasky said in a statement.

"We expect a massive response that serves as a prelude for the development of a national strike," the union leader added in an interview with Argentina's Pagina 12, noting that the central demand is that the government declare a "social emergency" and take steps to remedy the situation with concrete measures.

OPINION: [Tides of Returning Neoliberal 'Change' in Argentina](#)

The march will cover thousands of miles across the country through five main routes from various cities headed toward Buenos Aires. Major labor unions, social movements, and political organizations, including the Front for Victory coalition of former left-wing Presidents Nestor Kirchner and [Cristina Fernandez](#), have come together for the national action.

Aside from the main banner of the march against the neoliberal “adjustment, utility hikes, and layoffs,” some delegations have also raised other distinct issues, particularly an end to the criminalization of social protest and freedom for [jailed Indigenous leader Milagro Sala](#) — arrested earlier this year after staging anti-government protests in the province of Jujuy — and other political prisoners.

The national action comes as human rights organizations and social movements have raised alarm over rising poverty and inequality amid an ongoing wave of [mass layoffs that has caused over 179,000 people](#) to lose their jobs in both the public and private sectors since Macri took office in December. According to the local Observatory for Social Debt, some 1.4 million people have newly become poor since the beginning of the conservative government's term.

The national march comes after a slew of protests have rocked Argentina in recent months, including national strikes by federal labor unions to protests the layoffs, a [24-hour teacher strike in defense of public education](#), and a 24-hour March of Resistance led by the iconic Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo demanding justice for victims of state terror under the last military dictatorship, among other actions.
