Paraguay: revolt against inefficiency in the management of the pandemic

Via Esquerda.net

Friday night was one of rioting in the Paraguayan capital. Thousands of people protested, broke through the security barriers around the Congress, built barricades and threw stones at the police. On the police side water cannons, rubber bullets and tear gas were fired. There was at least one killed and 29 injured, 18 protesters and the remaining police.

The clashes led police delegate Silvino Leguizamón to call for a ceasefire. Earlier, a group of police officers had raised a blank in the face of the crowd. The rubber bullets they were using ran out. After that, the demonstration became peaceful again.

The cause of the protest is the management of the pandemic. The country's health system is collapsing, intensive care beds have been exhausted, there is a shortage of medicines, vaccination is slow, it has so far reached less than 0.1%, and the numbers of those infected keep increasing with 115 infections per hundred thousand inhabitants throughout the past week.

Health Minister Julio Mazzoleni had already resigned after a vote in the Senate demanded his departure for being "negligent, improvising and inoperative". But the protests did not stop because of this. After the demonstration, a vigil was maintained, demanding the departure of the president himself.

"Out Marito" was one of the slogans heard throughout the day. It was the head of state Mario Abdo Benítez they were referring to. The leader of what was once the only party

during the dictatorship and son of the former right-hand man of the dictator Alfredo Stroessner, who has been in office since 2018 with a political platform that combines economic liberalism and conservatism, is trying to resist. This Saturday, his spokesman declared that he "listened to the citizens" and therefore asked all his ministers to resign. But that is not what the protesters demanded.