



Breaking News on Government Strike in Brazil Affecting Immigration Applications

The Labor Union in Brazil representing employees of the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE), the *Sindicato Nacional Dos Servidores do Ministerio das Relacoes Exteriores* (Sinditamaraty), has announced earlier today that MRE employees are on strike effective today. Employees of the Ministry of Labor and of the Department of Justice have joined other ministries in striking with the MRE employees' union. The strike will have an immediate impact on most immigration applications, as all three of these ministries issue government approvals required to bring foreign nationals into Brazil to work.

Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) activity in Brazil

According to the union, MRE assistants and technicians will not be reporting to work during this time, and will not work until they have an official agreement with the Brazilian government. An official meeting is currently scheduled to occur this Friday, June 22, 2012; however, the MRE indicates that it is open to earlier communications with the government.

Diplomats and minimal MRE personnel are currently working to provide essential services. Priority will be given to the United Nations Conference Rio+20, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro between June 20 and June 22, 2012.

The MRE is responsible for reviewing work permit approvals and transmitting permissions to the Brazilian Consulates to issue work visas of all types. For the period that the MRE technical workers are on strike, work permit applications approved by the Ministry of Labor and waiting for MRE approval may be delayed.

Services at Consular Posts

The Brazilian Consular posts fall under the authority of the MRE, and as a result some of Brazilian Consulates are being affected. Currently, the Consulates in the United States reporting participation in the strike are the posts in Atlanta, New York, and San Francisco. However, visa applications filed at Brazilian consulates around the world may be significantly delayed.

To the extent that a consular post is still operating, the post may be able to continue issuing visas for tourism, business, and work visas for which they have received MRE approval from Brasilia.

However, work visa applications waiting for approval from the MRE may be delayed.

Services at Additional Ministries

It has also been reported this afternoon that the Ministry of Labor has joined the strike. There are no details at this time as to the extent of the Ministry of Labor employees' involvement. However, all work permit applications may be affected to some degree, and most or all applications may be delayed for further consideration until after the strike is over. It is possible that new applications may not be accepted for filing during this time.

Similarly, the Department of Justice has joined the strike. The DOJ strike may include the Federal Police, which falls under the authority of the DOJ. These authorities issues extensions and local residence registrations to foreign nationals. These applications may likewise be delayed or otherwise affected until an agreement is reached.

FosterQuan will continue to monitor the impact of these strikes, and will make further updates available via Immigration Updates© and on our firm's website at www.fosterquan.com. Contact your FosterQuan attorney should you require assistance in determining the best course of action in response to the government strike.