

Request for Mutual Assistance

APLA – Aerolineas Argentinas pilots

Dear Colleagues,

IFALPA has been informed by APLA Argentina about the salary dispute that the Aerolineas Argentinas pilots are facing with the airline management and the country government.

Inflation in Argentina between October 2023 and September 2024 has been 190%. APLA signed agreements during this period, but those agreements could not keep up to the inflation rates, meaning that Aerolineas Argentinas pilots are now 80% behind in their salaries. Their demands are clearly not for a salary increase but to simply recover their purchasing power (*see background information below*).

On behalf of the Aerolineas Argentinas pilots, APLA Argentina requests the Mutual Assistance outlined below, as per the IFALPA Industrial Manual, **starting immediately and until further notice**.

- **Ban on Wet leasing** (Para. 2.5.1)
- **Freeze in Capacity** (Para. 2.5.2.2)
- **Denial of Training Facilities** (2.5.4)
- **Assistance to Pilots Stranded Away from their Home Base** (Para. 2.5.5)
- **Requests for IFALPA Submissions and Representation** (Para. 2.5.7)

APLA requests that the Letters of support for the Aerolineas Argentinas pilots be sent to the attention of Captain Pablo Biro, Secretary General, secretariageneral@apla.org.ar and cc sebastiancurras@ifalpa.org

APLA Argentina will keep IFALPA and its Member Associations informed of any further developments.

In Unity,



Captain Kevin Judkins
Executive Vice President
Professional & Government Affairs

Background Information

A new government took office in December 2023 in Argentina. Within months, they submitted a package of reforms to the Congress that included a list of state-owned companies to be privatized. This Bill passed, except for Aerolíneas Argentinas, which was taken out of the list. In the following days Government officials made it clear that they will find another way and they are not finished with the airline.

The Government has completely deregulated air transport to benefit the interest of TNAs. This includes, Open Skies Agreements with Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay, Panama and Uruguay, allowing them to fly full 9th freedom CABOTAGE with foreign crews and aircraft unrestricted, point to point within Argentina.

Inflation in Argentina between October 2023 and September 2024 has been 190%. APLA signed agreements during this period, but the agreements could not possibly keep up with the astronomical rise of inflation. At this point Aerolíneas Argentinas pilots have effectively lost 80% of their salaries.

Their demands are not for a salary increase but simply to recover purchasing power. The airline management offered partial and short-term agreements, and made proposals for a clearly insufficient increase, which does not exceed 10.8%.

APLA started labour actions before the southern winter holidays, however, mandatory conciliation was enforced by the Government. The association complied with it and then, the expiration date was extended for one more week. During this period, when there are usually intensive negotiations to find a solution to the conflict, with the presence of Government mediation, APLA was never invited to the table. A clear sign of the lack of interest from the airline management and the national Government to resolve this situation. Once the mandatory conciliation was over, APLA resumed their campaign of labour actions.

Such actions started with 3-hour assemblies at the airports that were made public well in advance. The Government's response was to issue a Presidential Decree to declare aviation as "essential service" and limit the constitutional right to strike. APLA has taken this issue to the local courts because it is against ILO Conventions signed and ratified by Argentina as well as national laws that regulate air transport.

Workers and union leaders receive constant criticism from Government controlled media outlets and that criticism has intensified in the last weeks with fake information that exaggerated salary values, and CLA benefits, to discredit pilots with the public. Today, Aerolíneas Argentinas pilot salaries are almost 40% below what other pilot salaries are within Argentina and the difference with respect to pilots abroad, is abysmal (for example, a *B737 FO USD 1.200 net monthly salary*).

As part of the conflict, 3 pilots have been fired, for complying with a legitimate union mandate. As a result of this, pilots that were in management positions, such as A330, B737 and E190 Chief Pilots, Chief Operations and Safety Manager, all submitted their 30-day resignation notice. This implies that unless the company finds their replacements, it will be grounded on 17 October 2024.

Unfortunately, every decision that management takes, only serves to escalates the situation. The airline management continues to lie, threaten, provoke and misrepresent data from the CLA, with the sole purpose of discrediting pilot demands.

There are no negotiations happening currently, and the Government uses this conflict as an excuse to create the social conditions that favor their interest for selling the company.

The Government is negotiating with GOL, LATAM, AVIANCA, Jetsmart, Flybondi and others, contingency plans to fly Aerolíneas Argentinas routes in case the company is grounded because of a strike.

Appendix 1, IFALPA Industrial Manual

- **Request for Ban on Wet Leasing**

A Member Association may request a ban on wet leasing. If requested, Member Associations should attempt to persuade their Companies by any appropriate and lawful means to ban Wet Leasing.

- **Request for Increased Capacity and/or Freeze**

When requested, Member Associations should encourage their Companies to provide increased capacity but not to undertake flights on behalf of, or in the name of the struck Company.

If requested, Member Associations should encourage their Companies to freeze capacity, by any appropriate and lawful means.

Associations should also consider requests for an increase and/or freeze in capacity carefully, particularly if they are members of an Alliance, as it may be that they are best served by an increase from carriers outside their Alliance but a freeze from carriers that are members of the same Alliance.

- **Request for Denial of Training Facilities**

MAs should take any reasonably practicable measure to dissuade their airline(s) from providing training or facilities to other airlines, which may be seeking to train pilots for strike-breaking purposes or for other purposes which may have the effect of undermining the effectiveness of industrial action.

- **Request for Assistance to Pilots Stranded Away from their Home Base**

All Member Associations should, so far as is practicable, assist members of other Associations stranded away from their home base. The requesting Member Association will be responsible for the reimbursement of any costs arising from such assistance.

- **Request for Submissions and Representation**

The Executive Board may be requested to make submissions and representations on behalf of a Member Association involved in an industrial dispute, to the media, the airline, the aviation authorities, and at ministerial, government, and political levels.

Member Associations may be requested to supplement the above action by making similar representations on behalf of the affected Member Association.