

Montevideo, October 8, 2025

This coming October 20th, International Air Traffic Controller Day is celebrated worldwide, commemorating the creation of the International Federation of Air Traffic Control Associations (IFATCA), of which we have been proud, uninterrupted members since 1963.

Air traffic control operates 24 hours a day. Yes, in Uruguay, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, providing service to all aircraft overflowing our country and those arriving and departing from our airports.

This is an undisputed essential service that can not be interrupted, as it guarantees the safety of hundreds of flights and thousands of people every day.

We have frequently denounced the shortcomings of this service. At the end of 2022 and beginning of 2023, after a conflict lasting more than five years, we signed agreements with the Ministry of Defense to regularize salaries and compensate for the training of new controllers, among other issues. These matters are still pending, with files generated in 2023 and holding an average of four months in each office they pass through.

The previous government declared the status of essential services as a way to intimidate us and end the conflict. At that time, we decided to end the conflict and continue the path of dialogue, aware that the measures we proposed do not affect security and, therefore, comply with any declaration of essential services.

More than two years late, and with more than six months of a new government, the situation remains unchanged. The resources were voted in the 2023 budget report. The current budget proposal provides for the creation of more positions to make up for the staffing shortage. But this income will

take several years, involving the selection and training of future colleagues. Meanwhile, the service is hanging on by supported only with overtime, insufficient funds to cover needs until the end of the year and with resource reinforcements that arrive late. All of this, praying that no colleague falls ill or that a service closure is imminent.

In May, we alerted the current authorities that the urgent and worrying situation of the service can be resolved with effective and prompt management of available resources and with clear and decisive planning.

The failure to comply with the collective bargaining agreement has resulted in debts owed to instructors for almost two years and limits the redeployment of personnel to locations with greater demand. The first possible recruitment of personnel has also been in process since 2023.

The workers have consistently warned of the difficulties and limitations this entails. Flight restrictions, delays, partial closures, and general resentment toward the system with its consequent impact on operational safety.

The service is always essential, not only when workers intend to exercise the right to strike.

It requires real and concrete political decisions to address the needs for its recovery, as it is strategic for the economic and social development of our country.

If inaction and neglect continue, we will be forced to walk different paths, once again, in defense of the essential public service we proudly provide every day.