FLIGHTS IN CHILE GROUNDED AS WORKERS GO ON 24-HOUR STRIKE

News / Airlines

Flights in and out of Chile were canceled Tuesday, grounding thousands of passengers, as workers tied to the country's civil aviation authority went on a 24-hour strike ahead of the travel-intensive Sept. 18 national independence day holiday.

Chile's civil aviation authority, called the DGAC, said all of the country's airports and aerodromes were affected as a majority of workers affiliated with it went on strike to demand improved benefits and working conditions.

"There will be no planes taking off today," said DGAC chief General Maximiliano Larraechea.

Despite the strike, international flights have been landing in Santiago, but have been unable to take off.

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Television images showed a long row of commercial jets parked at Santiago's international airport.

Regional carrier LATAM Airlines said it was canceling all of its flights in and out of capital city Santiago until midnight Tuesday. In total over 90 of LATAM's flights were canceled, affecting over 16,000 of its passengers, the company told Reuters.

LATAM, which was formed in 2012 in the merger of **Chile**'s LAN and Brazil's TAM, said it was reprogramming those flights and would make an additional 22 flights available on Wednesday, allowing an extra 4,000 passengers to travel.

Nearly 10,000 passengers have already reprogrammed their flights with LATAM or asked for a refund.

Other airlines, such as American Airlines, Air France, Delta and Copa, made adjustments to their flight schedules ahead of the strike.

16 SEPTEMBER 2015

SOURCE: REUTERS
ARTICLE LINK:
https://ids.50skyshades.com/news/airlines/flights-in-chile-grounded-as-workers-go-on-24-hour-strike

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