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A truckers' strike in Brazil left a patchwork of empty gas stations and barren supermarket shelves Saturday as drivers appeared unmoved by the government's threats to use force or fine people who didn't comply.

Police forces conducted operations to clear blocked roads, and military vehicles provided escorts for trucks carrying emergency fuel to police stations and army facilities in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

About half of the roadblocks throughout the country had been cleared by the afternoon, as truckers who encountered police complied and moved, said Rio police spokesman Jose Helio.

However, many truckers still refused to return to work. Some remained in their 18-wheelers along the highways, while others moved their vehicles to rest areas.

The impact was being felt all over.

"There's no food, no fuel," said Joao Roberto, an Uber driver in Rio de Janeiro who was parked at an empty gas station.

Roberto said he filled up four days ago, but his tank was almost empty.

On Friday, President Michel Temer authorized the military to use force if need be. Moving against the truckers, however, could lead to violence and wouldn't solve the larger problems of getting vehicles off the roads and getting drivers back to work.

The Brazilian Assn. of Truckers, one of the largest transportation unions, called on its members Friday to remove their trucks from roads but "continue to protest peacefully." The union and several others did not return calls seeking comment on Saturday.

Perishable fruits and vegetables all but disappeared from local supermarket shelves. At several Hortifruti chain stores in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday, staff filled vegetable crispers and shelves with soda cans and bags of rice.

A popular Saturday farmers market, normally teeming with fruits and vegetables along several blocks, only had a fraction of its goods. Many vendors at the market were charging double, saying they had to pay more to buy what they could.

"This strike is killing us," said Manuel Reis, a watermelon vendor who sold about 880 pounds of the fruit on Saturday, about half of his usual.

Many gas stations nationwide have run out of diesel and gasoline, and local managers say they don't know when to expect more deliveries.

Bus and metro services in several Brazilian cities were reduced and several flights, mostly domestic, were canceled for a third straight day on Saturday.

The strike followed complaints from truck drivers about the rising cost of diesel oil, which has gone up sharply in recent months as world oil prices rise and the Brazilian real weakens against the U.S. dollar.

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On Thursday, the government and several transportation unions said an agreement had been reached to suspend the stoppage for 15 days to negotiate a solution. But many truckers balked, saying they did not feel represented and did not trust the government to follow through on promises.

The work stoppage comes as Latin America's largest economy struggles to move beyond a deep recession, and as many Brazilians are furious with politicians in the wake of a mega scandal involving a kickback scheme between construction companies and elected officials.

My personal opinion is: When a ship is in a storm and sinking, the most important thing is 'all hands to the pumps'. It does not matter at this point who is steering the ship.

The crew members who refuse to pump and instead believe in miracles, will be sadly disappointed, as they, together with their fellow crew members, slowly sink below the waves without any hope of rescue.

The economy of Brazil, together with most other countries of the world, is in a recession. According to official world petrol price statistics is Brazil's petrol price of R\$ 4.17 or US\$ 1.12 BELOW world average. Norway, for example have R\$ 7.- per lit.

Many other countries are in a worse situation than Brazil, but still manage to PULL TOGETHER !!

**Remember, REVENGE IS NO DEMOCRACY !!**