

# Chefs Go on Hunger Strike in Portugal

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GLOBAL, December 9, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chefs Go on Hunger Strike in Portugal

In front of the Parliament of Portugal, almost a dozen chefs, restaurant owners, and entertainment professionals were on a hunger strike for a week, for what they call a "ridiculous and surreal" decision by the Portuguese government to restrict opening hours for restaurants, hotels, and other businesses during weekends. According to the country's latest state-of-emergency measures, shops, restaurants, and bars can only operate until 1pm on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, with a compulsory curfew in the afternoons.

The hunger strike that started on the last week of November is the most radical measure taken by the 'A Pão e Água' group to push their demands to the government and came to an end on December 4th when Portuguese politician Dr. Fernando Medina listened to their proposals and assured the group that they will be discussed.

"Why can we work in the mornings but not at night? It is stupid, is it only on weekends that the virus is active, not on weekdays?" says Ljubomir Stanisic in an exclusive interview with [Rafael Tonon of Fine Dining Lovers](#). Stanisic is a famous chef in Portugal, and the face of the 'A Pão e Água' (Bread and Water) movement called highlighting the hand-to-mouth existence of those in the hospitality sector.

"It was a way we came up with to show that we are human beings and not puppets in the hands of politicians. What we want is to be heard, and the government needs to give people who work in this area a chance to expose their difficulties, to tell what they are experiencing," said the Bosnian chef to journalist Tonon.



Portuguese Celebrity Chef Ljubomir Stanisic photo by Jorge Luís

Stanisic is known as a controversial figure: he is the host of the Portuguese version of the Kitchen Nightmares TV show, says what he thinks, is always straight to the point, and is frequently involved with causes he truly believes in. This is such a cause, which he claims is in favour of the entire sector. "It is not just restaurants that are suffering deeply from this situation. We have people from bars, clubs, all the hospitality industry is here," he explained [to Fine Dining Lovers](#).

Initial demonstrations began a few weeks ago all over the country - first in Porto, then in Lisbon and Faro (in the Algarve region) - when it coordinated through social networks to protest in front of Government buildings. The group alleges that the government has not provided sufficient aid for the struggling sector. Placards held by protestors spelled out their plight: 'We need support.' 'We want to work, we need answers.' 'Until they listen to us, we will fight.'

Other chefs and restaurant owners stood with Stanisic in front of Parliament to show solidarity. Pedro Cardoso, the owner of Solar dos Presuntos, one of the most traditional restaurants in Lisbon, wept before the chef: "You know that not everyone likes you, but what you are doing for everyone is commendable," he said. chef João Rodrigues, from Michelin-starred restaurant, Feitoria, in Lisbon said "I went there to hug a friend, who chose to protest in a very specific way to the situation we are all going through, which can cause him health problems. I respect Ljubomir's demonstration, as I believe that our industry is divided."

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