

Dockers strike in Spain, as South African municipal workers strike enters third week

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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Europe

The closure is part of plans to close 78 out of the 714 jobcentres nationwide along with other back office facilities.

Spanish dockers strike to oppose deregulation

Spanish dockers held a series of strikes this week in their fight against deregulation. They struck every alternate hour throughout the day on Monday, Wednesday, continuing the action today. The strike hit the ports of Algeciras, Valencia, Bilbao, Seville and Santander.

Further strikes are to be held throughout June.

The CETM union called the strikes after talks with the port employers' body, Anesco, broke down. The Popular Party government, at the behest of the European Union, is forcing through the abolition of the SAGEPS dock labour scheme. The scheme afforded dockers a degree of job security and relatively better wages.

The CETM called off previous planned strikes and the latest ones have only been called due to union disagreements over the exact number of jobs and wage cuts to be implemented.

Union ends French petrol delivery strike

A strike by lorry drivers of hazardous loads, including petrol, has been ended by the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) union federation on the promise of talks. The strike had led to severe fuel shortages across the country. The drivers are seeking a 10-hour limit to the working day, a pay increase and more routine health checks.

Jobcentre workers strike in Sheffield, England

Staff at a Jobcentre in Sheffield, England held a one-day strike on June 2 and are to begin a five-day stoppage June 12.

The members of the Public and Commercial Services union are campaigning against plans to close the Jobcentre located at Eastern Avenue in the Manor Castle area of the city. The strikers mounted a 45 strong picket line, as managers from other jobcentre offices were drafted in as strikebreakers.

London Picturehouse cinema staff strike

Staff at four cinemas in London held a 48-hour strike at the weekend as part of a 10-month dispute. They are demanding an increase in pay to the London living wage rate of £9.75 an hour, for improved conditions and for union recognition.

The members of the media union Bectu work at Picturehouse cinemas in Hackney, Brixton, Crouch End and Piccadilly Centre. Picturehouse is owned by Cineworld which owns over 220 cinemas across Europe.

British Airways cabin crew strike announced

Cabin crew employed by British Airways (BA) are to strike for four days from June 16 through to June 19 against poverty pay rates. The Unite union members work for BA's "mixed fleet." They are employed on a contract previously agreed by Unite with inferior pay and conditions compared to other BA staff.

To date they have held 26 days of strikes during the dispute. Unite said the cause of the planned strike is the refusal by BA to restore concessionary flights to staff who took part in previous stoppages.

Refuse workers in Birmingham hold strike vote

Unite is balloting refuse workers employed by Birmingham City Council for industrial action to protest planned job losses. The job losses are planned as part of the Labour-run council's imposition of Conservative government budget cuts. The ballot closes on June 14.

Turkish glass workers' protest

Glass workers employed by multinational manufacturer Sisecam are protesting by refusing to leave the company's nine factories at the end of their shift. In May, the Turkish government banned a proposed strike on grounds of national security.

Members of the Kristal-Is union are seeking an improved pay offer after the company announced a more than 150 percent increase in profits.

They are carrying out a work to rule action and instead of leaving the factory at the end of their shift, remain on site to hold meetings and protests. They then sleep on the factory premises.

Cypriot desalination workers end strike

Workers at the Episkopi desalination plant in Limassol ended their strike on June 1. The 20 members of the PEO and SEK unions began their strike on May 30, after the company failed to honour a collective bargaining agreement reached after a stoppage last year.

They returned to work following the intervention of the Cypriot government Labour Minister.

Middle East

Egyptian cement workers jailed

A court in the Maadi suburb of Cairo sentenced 32 cement workers to three years hard labour. The workers were employed at the Tora cement factory, which is part of the Italian owned Italcementi group.

The jailed workers had been fighting for permanent employment status, after being employed on a temporary basis for between 10 and 15 years.

Africa

South African municipal workers strike enters third week

The strike by 4,000 workers for Mangaung municipality has entered its third week. The members of the South African Municipal Workers Union are demanding that salary increases, in line with a "Metro Status" pay scale established in 2011, be paid to them. Managerial staff have received the increases.

They also demand back pay for the six years they have been on a lower pay scale. Another demand is that all 120 workers, who were casualised earlier in the year by the council, be brought back into direct employment, and that moves to further privatization be halted.

With sewage spilling into streets because of the strike, the main concern of the council is providing facilities for individuals and businesses to pay their bills. Payment centres, like the Bram Fischer building and other municipal buildings around the Metro area are inaccessible.

Union blocks industrial action by South African airline workers

Cabin crew staff at South African Airways (SAA) remain in dispute over their allowances. Staff have received no increase in allowances and many have to choose between staying in hotels or meals while on overseas

flights.

South African Cabin Crew Association (SACCA) entered further talks with the airline last Friday and threatened to strike Monday if a resolution could not be found. SACCA then cancelled the strike notice with the dispute still not resolved.

A half-day strike took place in April, grounding 50 flights, after negotiations failed under the auspices of the state arbitration facilities.

South African mortuary staff strike over pay and protective clothing issues

Mortuary staff at Pinetown Mortuary Durban in South Africa, struck last week demanding their manager be removed.

Around 20 workers have been sacked after employee's jobs were designated as essential services and an interdict issued demanding they return to work. The workers are demanding the removal of the manager, claiming she is preventing them raising grievances with higher management.

Their grievances include overtime not being signed off, having to buy their own safety equipment such as boots, staff having to put in request in for gloves, and face masks having to be reused because no replacements are available.

Labour bureaucracy in conflict over public sector in Nigeria's Nasarawa State

A strike by municipal workers in Nasarawa State, Nigeria—in which a central issue is a demand for the payment of unpaid wages—is continuing in the midst of a conflict within the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) bureaucracy.

The chairman of the Nasarawa state NLC chapter, Abdullahi Adeka, was seen by many workers as the government's man at the head of the union and was initially removed for opposing the strike. Adeka was reinstated after he promised to back the strike, but once again he called it off and was again removed.

Members of other unions are involved in the strike, including the Nigeria Union of Teachers, Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees, and the Judicial Staff Union of Nigeria.

Nigerian oil workers union threatens strike over privatisation

The PENGASSAN oil workers union is threatening to strike if the government goes ahead with the privatisation of the Port Harcourt Petrochemical and Refinery Company.

The government proposes to sell the company to Oando Plc., the largest Nigerian oil company with a production output of 54,000 barrels per day and a market value of \$894 Million.

The Nigerian Senate was ignored when it voted for the suspension of the sale.

Nigerian national college strike threatened over unpaid wages

Members of the Association of Senior Civil Servants of Nigeria (ASCSN) are striking at many colleges throughout the country.

College workers already out and those threatening to strike are protesting unpaid wages for the last month and a backlog of several months of outstanding wages, allowances and promotion arrears.

Namibian Shoprite workers face victimisation

100 Shoprite workers in Namibia are facing disciplinary measures for striking in 2015. Several lawyers are presently representing them on a pro-bono basis.

The lawyers claim Shoprite acted illegally in violating labour regulations. This involved the improper treatment by management and employment of permanent part-timers.

Workers have joined and left several unions during the course of the dispute in their attempt to achieve a living wage. The Namibian Food and Allied Workers Union (NAFWU) are proposing once again to represent them. NFAWU “represented” Shoprite workers until 2014, when a drop-off of membership culminated in the union pulling out.

The Shoprite Group of Companies is Africa’s largest food retailer with 143,000 employees and turned over N\$130 billion last year from its 80 stores across Namibia.

Nurses continue strike in Kenya

Kenya nurses continue to strike in a long-running dispute. They are demanding the implementation of the 2016 collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The action follows industrial action over its 2013 predecessor.

As with the 2013 agreement, the government has reneged on the 2016 contract. The government-authorised Salaries and Remunerations Committee threw out the 2016 CBA saying the cost involved is unreasonable.



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