

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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The *World Socialist Web Site* invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature

Italian steelworkers strike against 4,000 redundancies

Steelworkers struck Monday to protest 4,000 redundancies--out of a total workforce of 14,000. They are being proposed by the Indian steel multinational ArcelorMittal as part of its recent takeover of Ilva, once Italy's third biggest steel producer.

Workers staged a sit-in in Taranto, Puglia where 3,300 jobs are due to be shed, and a protest in Genoa where 600 jobs are to go.

ArcelorMittal, part of the consortium Am Investio, completed the takeover deal against competition from Indian rival Jindal South West Steel, after promising the Italian government a €1.8 billion clean-up operation and revamp.

The Ilva plant, which went bankrupt and was nationalised in 2015, is implicated in causing 11,500 cancer deaths over seven years due to its failure to prevent toxic emissions. The plant was owned by the Riva family.

French public-sector workers strike against labour reforms

Thousands of French workers went on strike Tuesday and joined demonstrations nationwide, including in Paris, to protest President Emmanuel Macron's attacks on the Labour Code.

Workers from nine public sector trade unions were involved and are opposing a freeze on wages, the ending of payment of day one of sick leave, and 120,000 threatened redundancies in the public sector.

Workers also fear the privatisation of services and the abolition of national pay scales.

With 20 percent of the French workforce employed in the public sector, including civil servants, the strikes saw the closure of schools and hospitals, while air traffic controllers grounded 30 percent of flights.

UK: Sellafield firefighters to join strike over pay

70 firefighters employed by the Sellafield nuclear processing and decommissioning plant are to strike for the first time on October 17 and 19 in a dispute over pay and allowances.

The firefighters also double as paramedics.

While senior management are paid £20 million in bonuses a year, the firefighters' dispute over allowances has been dragging on since 2012.

The firefighters are members of the GMB union and will join 1,100 Unite union members who have voted to strike against a below inflation 1.5 percent pay rise.

Another 3,000 GMB members have also been taking action at the site over pay.

Bus drivers Merseyside, UK strike

Bus drivers and engineers working for Arriva and Stagecoach are to strike on October 19 for four days to protest a below inflation pay offer of 2.3 percent, rising to 2.6 percent after nine months.

They are members of Unite and the GMB unions.

London tube cleaners demonstrate against outsourcing

Cleaners who work for the London Underground staged a demonstration Thursday outside City Hall to protest Victorian era working conditions.

Their employers have sold the cleaning contract to the lowest bidder, the American firm ABM. ABM in turn will outsource cleaning contracts to sweatshop firms.

The cleaners are members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) union and are demanding £10 an hour in pay, free travel passes, holiday and sick pay.

London Picturehouse staff demonstrate for living wage

Ahead of strike action, 50 staff from five cinemas--Crouch End, Hackney, East Dulwich and Central Picturehouses, and the Ritzy--staged a demonstration last Wednesday in Leicester Square to demand the London Living Wage (£9.75 an hour).

The strike by the Bectu union members will run from October 11-15, to coincide with the start of the BFI London film festival.

Transport strike against cuts hits Belgian capital, Brussels

Public sector transport workers struck Tuesday in Belgium's capital, Brussels, to protest budget cuts. Trains stopped running for 24 hours from 10pm Monday.

Greek journalists in 24-hour strike against austerity

Greek journalists walked off the job to protest social security underfunding due to austerity measures imposed by the Syriza government.

There was no radio or TV news, newspapers published or news website updates from Tuesday 6am to Wednesday 6am.

Slovenian firefighters rally in Ljubljana

Firefighters protested Thursday in Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, in a pay dispute that threatens to escalate into strike action.

Dutch teachers close down elementary schools in fight for pay parity

Elementary (primary) teachers throughout the Netherlands struck Tuesday to protest low pay. They earn 20 percent less than their colleagues in secondary schools, or an average monthly wage that is lower by €1000.

90,000 teachers took part, with a million children having to take the day off.

Two more strike days are planned for November.

Miners in Ukraine protest unpaid wages

Miners working at two state enterprises--Volynvuhillia in the Volyn region and Myrnohradvuhillya in the Donetsk region--have not been paid for several months.

They are members of the Coal Mining Workers' Union of Ukraine and the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine.

Miners from Volynvuhillia blocked the road near an international checkpoint to highlight their grievance.

Previously 1,600 miners from Buzhanska and Novovolinskaya staged a week's strike, which resulted in payment for July, but only for underground workers.

On October 8-9, 40 miners from the Kapitalnaya mine, belonging to the Myrnohradvugillya state enterprise, staged a sit-in demanding payment.

In July, 91 miners at the state enterprise Lysychanskvugillya in the Lugansk region of Ukraine protested underground due salary arrears dating to 2015.

Journalists in Cairo, Egypt in pay dispute

Journalists at the Cairo office of AFP struck for six hours on October 3, held a 12 hours strike October 4 and a 24 hours stoppage October 5.

Since the devaluation of the Egyptian pound last November the purchasing power of their salaries has been reduced by half.

The journalists are members of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and demand a pay rise to restore the value of their wages.

Journalists in France, in the SNJ, SNJ-CGT and CFDT unions, have expressed support for their counterparts in Cairo.

Yemini Teachers' pay strike

Only a fraction of teachers in war torn Yemen turned up for work at the beginning of the new academic year in September. Teachers are striking in areas controlled by Houthi rebels as well as areas under the control of the Hadi government.

Since October 2016, 73 percent of Yemen's 166,443 teachers have not been paid.

Though teachers are receiving a salary in the port city of Aden, it is very low, so they have joined the action to demand a pay rise.

Kenya: Kisumu county government attempts to break nurses' strike

The Kisumu county government is set to hire 210 nurses on a three-month contract in an attempt to break a four-month long national strike by nurses over pay.

44,500 nurses have fought for four months for the implementation of a collective bargaining agreement.

Four other counties, Lamu, Kirinyaga, Murang'a and Lamu, have also advertised for temporary staff to break the strike.

The Health Ministry has refused to talk with the nurses, and Health Minister Dr Mailu is calling for them to be sacked.

Somalian University teachers strike

Teachers employed by the Somali National University in Mogadishu took strike action last Saturday because the government has failed to pay their salaries for the last six months.

Workers in Somalia work long hours for little pay, as there is no labour legislation protecting workers' employment rights.

South African bank foreclosures threaten miners' wages and jobs

Miners working at the Gupta family owned mines, Pretoria, fear they will not be paid if the Bank of Baroda closes twenty Gupta linked companies' accounts.

At the Gupta Shiva mine, 208 workers--employed through an agency Quatrotel--are without a job after Shiva terminated Quatrotel's contract on September 29.

Shiva CEO George van der Merwe justified the decision on the grounds that Quatrotel workers had defied a Labour Court interdict against

striking.



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