

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

Zimbabwean teachers demand end to poverty wages

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Zimbabwean teachers have threatened strike action next month, the beginning of the term, to demand a 100 percent wage increase and 50 percent increase in housing and travel allowances. This would bring them above the poverty datum line.

The teachers are members of breakaway Zimbabwe Educators' Union (FZEU) and demonstrated in Harare on Tuesday, but the government ignored their 14-day strike notice.

Education staff have not had a pay increase for eight years, while inflation has spiralled by 100 percent. They currently earn about US\$400 per month.

The FZEU strike notice does not include the reinstatement of holiday entitlements, lost in 2016 under then-President Mugabe.

Zimbabwe civil servants, members of the Apex Council, are also demanding a wage increase. The Council comprised 12 unions before the 5 unions in FZEU split.

See video coverage.

Kenyan university staff threatened with back-to-work court order

Kenyan university staff are continuing their month-long strike in defiance of a back-to-work labour court order.

Nairobi University's vice chancellor is imposing a no-work, no-pay edict on its 500 staff at the campus, with other vice chancellors to follow.

The 36,000 strikers, including 9,000 lecturers, are demanding university managements sign a collective bargaining agreement.

South African county nurses protest over late and unpaid wages

Around 600 nurses have gone on strike in Homa Bay County in South Africa over late payment of wages and in support of 80 colleagues, who have not been paid their December wages.

Across the county, nurses' February wages did not get paid until March.

The Kenyan National Union of Nurses members also complain about the shortage of 250 nurses in the county and lack of promotion.

Threats to withhold Zimbabwe doctors' wages as their month-long strike continues

Zimbabwe doctors are threatened with salary withdrawal as they continue their month-long strike. They have been warned that their action is in violation of labour laws, which say "the employer can withdraw salaries if there is no good cause for industrial action by workers."

The members of the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors' Association are demanding better pay and conditions, an increase in on-call allowances, a cancelation on vehicle duty and a modification of their rural allowances.

The Ministry of Health and Child Care and the Health Services Board have refused to negotiate since January 23.

Gambian doctors fight destruction of health provision

Gambian doctors began strike action on March 21 demanding drugs, equipment and an input into the health service to make it possible to carry out their work effectively.

Negotiations between the government and the Gambian Resident Doctors (GRD) have been to no avail.

The Health Minister accused the doctors of corruption, but she has since been forced to apologise, although the medics demanded her resignation.

Copperbelt University staff strike in Gambia

Staff at Gambia's Copperbelt University are continuing strike action to demand the sacking of Vice Chancellor Prof. Naison Ngoma. They say that Ngoma is incompetent and is a guilty of maladministration in relation to air tickets purchased with university finances.

Other demands include that all irregular suspensions imposed on staff be lifted and that unionised workers, who were shifted onto half-pay salaries, be paid in full.

Nigerian hospital unions threaten strike over wages

Nigeria's hospital unions under the Joint Health Sector Unions umbrella

have threatened a nationwide strike mid-April over an outstanding wages structure, signed in 2009.

A previous 21-day strike warning on February 28 met no response from the government, but when it expired, the unions did not act.

A new 30-day warning was given on March 5.

Nigerian aviation workers in dispute over unpaid redundancies

Nigeria Aviation workers have threatened industrial action in the next 14 days, after their strike warning expired on Monday. The liquidated Nigerian Airways Limited has refused to pay N45 billion (US\$125 million) redundancy pay, overdue by 10 months.

The National Association of Aircraft Pilots and Engineers, the National Union of Air Transport Employees, and the Air Transport Senior Staff Services Association of Nigeria have petitioned the Minister of State for Aviation and Labour and the Employment and Finance Ministry. They condemned the Finance Ministry for holding the money back until their members die.

Portuguese Ryanair cabin crew strike

Cabin crew employed by Ryanair in Portugal went on strike Thursday to protest poor industrial relations, including disciplinary measures and threats over failure to meet in-flight sales targets.

The first of three days of strikes impacted at least 20 flights arriving and departing Portugal, mainly from Porto airport.

Talks between airline and the cabin crew union SNPVAC broke down, with further strikes planned for Sunday and Easter Monday.

Portuguese doctors to walk out

Doctors in Portugal, members of the National Doctors' Union and the Independent Doctors' Union, have announced a three-day walkout beginning May 8. Their demands include a reduction in the number of patients on family doctors' lists and in the number of compulsory weekly hours they must serve in hospital emergency rooms—from 18 to 12.

UK Northern Rail and London Docklands Light Rail continue action

Rail guards at Northern Rail held further 24-hour strikes on Monday and Thursday this week over company plans to introduce Driver Only Operated trains (DOO). The Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) members face 6,000 redundancies, and DOO also threatens passenger safety.

RMT members working for the Docklands Light Rail system in London struck Wednesday as well as today, with further action planned in April. The strikes are against outsourcing of jobs and roster changes. The strikes went ahead after talks at the Acas government conciliation service broke down.

The RMT has limited workers' protests to uncoordinated, short-term

actions to dissipate their militancy while not fundamentally impacting rail operations.

Library staff in London borough protest pay offer

Thirty-six library staff working in the London borough of Bromley's 14 libraries began an all-out strike on Wednesday. The libraries are run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd on behalf of Bromley Council.

The members of the Unite union voted by a 100 percent majority to strike against a less than 2 percent pay offer.

The union offered a "compromise" formula of 2 percent for most staff and unspecified higher increases for the lower paid. However, talks to end the dispute broke down on Monday after union members described management's refusal to honour their demand as "insulting".

West London teachers oppose academy moves

Teachers at Acton High School in west London, run by Ealing Council Local Education Authority, struck Tuesday and Wednesday to oppose their school being made an Academy—a form of backdoor privatisation. Around 55 members of the National Education Union mounted a picket line.

Year 7 through to 10 classes were cancelled, while classes for year 11 through to 13 went ahead.

The school recently failed an Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspection, with the head and deputy head suspended following reported pupil behavioural problems.

The council and Ofsted want the school to be handed over to Ark Network, which runs 35 schools across the country and is owned by hedge fund speculators.

Bus drivers strike in Aberdeen, Scotland

Around 250 bus drivers working for First Bus in Aberdeen have been on strike all week. The Unite members are opposing contract changes by First Bus, which would mean some drivers working 12-hour shifts with 10 hours at the wheel. Other changes include split shifts, cuts to holiday pay and pension provision.

Demonstrations in support of Finnish day care teachers

Several hundred protestors gathered in Narinkka Square in the Finnish capital of Helsinki Saturday. They demanded that day care teachers be paid €3,000 a month, in line with primary and secondary teachers. They currently get paid around €2,300.

Taxi drivers protest in Belgian capital

Taxi drivers in Brussels, Belgium, held a protest Tuesday by driving slowly about the capital in convoys and setting up blockades on several major roads.

The members of the Federation of Belgian Taxi Drivers are protesting the government's refusal to ban the use of the taxi-hailing app Uber in the city. Uber drivers do not have to abide by legislation covering safety and training.

Strike by Cypriot taxi drivers serving Larnaca airport

Taxi drivers serving Larnaca airport in Cyprus took strike action between 8 a.m. and noon on Thursday to protest the issuing of licences by the Transport Ministry for extra shuttle buses to serve the airport, which will threaten their livelihood.

Tempers flared on picket lines, and police in riot gear were brought in. After taxi drivers in Limassol announced they would strike in solidarity with their Larnaca colleagues, Transport Minister Vasiliki Anastasiadou agreed to talks and the action was suspended.

Irish pension provider workers to strike over pensions

Around 70 percent of the 700 workers in the Unite union employed at pension provider Irish Life have voted to strike. The company plans to close their defined contribution scheme pension June 30, despite being in surplus.

The action is likely to begin with one-day strikes but may be ramped up.

Strikes hit Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) area of Iraq

Last week, doctors and health workers in Sulaimani walked out over issues with the salary saving scheme introduced by the regional government in 2016.

Before 2014, the salary of these employees was paid by the central government in Baghdad. However, the Kurdish government stopped receiving these payments following a dispute with the central government and the outbreak of the war with ISIS. As a consequence, civil servants are getting just 25 percent of their salaries, with the rest being withheld for later payment.

On Tuesday, around 250 workers employed on the Dukan and Darbandikhan dams in the KRG-controlled area also walked out over non-payment of wages.



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