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Workers Struggles: Middle East, Europe & Africa

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Workers defied a ban by Iranian authorities and gathered in front of the Workers House in Tehran to celebrate May Day. Security forces tried to intervene, but following a discussion with a workers' spokesman a march set off towards Republic Avenue.

According to Iran Human Rights Monitor, Iran's State Security Force reportedly arrested a number of activists in Tehran and Iranian Kurdistan Province.

State police attacked a May Day rally held in Saghez, Kurdistan Province, injuring Mahmoud Salehi, a prominent labour activist and arrested a number of protesters.

Other reports from Tehran indicate that at least nine people were also arrested for rallying outside the parliament in Tehran.

Tunisian workers hold May Day rally

Over 7,000 members of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) held a May Day rally in Tunis in the Menzah Sports Palace, addressed by the UGTT general secretary.

May Day protests in France

May Day marches took place in France on the 50th anniversary of the May Day events of 1968, which brought the country to the brink of revolution. The organisers declared 55,000 marched in Paris while police said 20,000—testament to the demobilisation of the working class by the trade unions since a quarter of a million demonstrated last September against Macron's labour reforms.

Police attacked demonstrators using teargas and water cannon, making around 100 arrests.

Rail workers were to strike for two days from Thursday as part of their ongoing three-month protest at Macron's plans to privatize the state railways SNCF, cut jobs and attack conditions including pensions. The CGT trade union called the action off until the legislation goes to the Senate.

Thousands of Air France pilots, cabin crew and ground staff were also to begin a 48-hour strike on Thursday, for a 6 percent pay rise. They are being balloted over a 7 percent offer over four years. The result of the

ballot is due Friday. The CFDT, one of 10 unions, is recommending acceptance.

May Day protest and strikes in Greece

Workers joined a May Day rally in the Greek capital Athens on Tuesday, called by unions ADEDY and GSEE. An hour earlier the Stalinist-dominated PAME held a rally. They were protesting the ongoing austerity measures imposed by the Syriza-led government carrying out European Union-dictated bailout measures. Rail and trolley bus services in the city stopped.

A 24-hour strike by seamen in the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation protested government attacks on pensions and reductions in minimum crew numbers.

Strike by McDonald's fast food staff at five UK stores

Workers at McDonald's fast food restaurants in Manchester, Watford, Crayford and Cambridge went on strike Tuesday. Members of the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union are demanding a minimum £10 an hour, an end to zero hours contracts and wage discrimination for younger workers, and for union recognition. The company, which employs 120,000, said 11 workers were on strike.

McDonalds workers struck last September for the first time.

UK cinema staff in May Day protests

Cinema workers at the London Picturehouse chain took part in a series of protests across London Tuesday. They have been involved in a long-running campaign for the London living wage of £10.20 an hour, sick pay, maternity pay and union recognition.

The members of the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre union held protests at various sites, including Picturehouse Central.

Dial a Ride drivers in London strike

The 120 Dial-a-Ride workers in London, members of the Unite union who provide special transport for elderly, vulnerable and disabled people, held a 24-hour strike Tuesday and Thursday. They are opposing plans by Transport for London to abolish 10 rest days per year and impose new tighter work rosters.

UK rail union calls off strike over driver-only operated trains

Guards in the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) at South Western Railways (SWR) were due to strike on five days in May in a two-year dispute over Driver Operated Only (DOO) trains. DOO threatens passenger safety and 6,000 job losses nationally.

The RMT called off the action as SWR has agreed to talks mediated by the government conciliation service Acas, which must begin by May 18.

The union has limited workers' protests to uncoordinated, short-term strikes to dissipate militancy while not fundamentally impacting rail operations.

A 24-hour strike by rail guards at Greater Anglia Railways over the extension of DOO is due to begin Saturday, with a further 24-hour strike planned for May 9. Rail Guards at Northern are due to hold a one-day strike on May 9.

Protest by Amazon workers at award ceremony in Berlin, Germany

Last week around 450 Amazon workers from Germany, Spain and France protested in Berlin as Amazon founder Jeff Bezos was given an award by the Axel Springer German publishing group. Bezos was lauded as an "extraordinary person, who is uniquely innovative, creates and changes markets, and influences culture and simultaneously assumes social responsibility."

Strikes have taken place at Amazon facilities across Europe due to low pay and repressive working conditions, the latest in March in Spain.

Cleaners at Irish college vote to strike

Ten cleaners working at De La Salle College, Waterford, members of the Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union, have voted to hold three one-day strikes during May. They are protesting attempts by college management to outsource cleaning.

Irish TV staff hold protest

Around 20 operational staff working for the Irish commercial broadcaster TV3, owned by Virgin Media, held a two-hour protest outside TV3's studios in Ballymount. They were calling for union recognition and collective bargaining.

Strike of regional transport workers in Netherlands

Around 10,000 regional bus and train drivers held a 48-hour strike Monday and Tuesday this week. The members of the FNV and CNV unions work for transport companies such as Connexxion, Qbuzz, Keolis and Arriva. They are seeking a 3 percent pay increase, less onerous working hours and the right to regular toilet breaks.

An attempt to have the strike ruled illegal by the public transit employers' association VWOV failed.

Kenyan construction workers strike over workmate's death

Kenyan construction workers went out on strike at Kakamega Teaching and Referral Hospital last Saturday when a worker died after falling from the fourth floor of the construction site.

The workers, on a five-year Sh6 billion (US\$56.76 million) contract to build the hospital, are demanding improved safety conditions.

Contractor CRJE East Africa does not provide harnesses for working at heights or safety helmets, high visibility jackets or safety boots. Workers also complain supervisors pressure and insult them.

The strike was suspended following the intervention of the Kenya Building Construction Timber Furniture and Allied Employees Union.

Kenyan university staff strikers face suspension and sack

Kenyan universities are suspending striking staff who refuse to follow the Labour Courts' demands to return to work.

The strike is the fourth over the last 15 months to demand previous and current collective bargaining agreements be implemented.

The University of Nairobi has suspended 35 lecturers and the Technical University of Kenya (TUK) is threatening to sack those still on strike.

TUK staff returning to work are required to sign forms committing them to ensure teaching goes ahead.

Strikers had their pay docked last month, and the vice chancellor at Moi University says they will not get paid this month.

Uganda's medical interns strike amid presidential threats

Ugandan medical interns, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists at 10 hospitals, struck last Friday over unpaid allowances, going back to December in some cases.

Some medics are being kicked out of their residences as the allowances cover their rents.

In his May Day speech this week, President Yoweri Museveni denounced doctors who struck for three weeks last November as "enemies of Uganda and should be treated as such." The Uganda Medical Association called that action off after Museveni made false promises to improve pay and conditions.

The president is planning to bring 200 Cuban doctors into the country in the event of another strike.

Nigerian health workers in national strike action

The national strike of Nigerian health workers under the umbrella of JOHESU is continuing into its third week.

The strike is over an unimplemented deal with the previous Goodluck Jonathan administration, which the present government refuses to recognise. The government insists all but one of the demands have been fulfilled, which JOHESU denies.

The strike will be extended if the government does not concede in two weeks.

thousands of commuters.



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Armed police mobilised against pensioners' protest

Armed police in Kano state Nigeria were mobilised on military-style vehicles to prevent pensioners holding a protest meeting against unpaid pensions, death benefits and gratuities. Over 7,000 pensioners are owed over Naira 12 billion, around \$33.5million.

Angola: Union supports privatisation as workers strike

An unofficial work stoppage in Angola's Luanda-Bengo Special Economic Zone (ZEELB) has brought 66 of 76 plants to a halt.

Chairman of the Democratic Trade Union of Industry, Trade and Services Workers, Carlos Samuel Neto, regretted the effect on the Angolan economy. He justified government plans to privatise the plants as necessary to revive the economy, generate more jobs and improve taxes, saying it increases efficiency and maximises profits.

His remarks were made at a meeting of the Union Committees of ZEELB's industrial units, "associated" with May Day celebrations.

Union betrays Zimbabwe nurses' dispute

Zimbabwe nurses sacked by the state for taking a week's strike action against poor working conditions and pay have been betrayed by the Zimbabwe Nurses Union (ZNU).

The union responded to the sacking of 16,000 nurses by calling the strike off in favour of legal action, while the government agreed to pay half the court costs with ZNU.

Nurses will now have to reapply for their old jobs with none of their grievances satisfied.

Bus workers strike in South Africa deadlocked

South Africa's national bus workers strike is continuing into its third week with employers threatening to reduce their pay offer.

While five unions in the South African Federation of Trade Unions reduced their pay claim, the employers still rejected outright improvements to working hours, allowances and conditions.

Over 50 bus companies are involved in the strike, affecting hundreds of