

## Mexican teachers hold vigil over pay issues

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

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

### Mexican teachers hold vigil over pay issues

Teachers in the Mexican state of Michoacán began a vigil in front of the Finance Secretariat in the capital Morelia on June 3. The vigil, called a plantón, included tents placed on the grounds and a blockade of several blocks of streets bordering the building.

The teachers are members of the National Education Workers Syndicate (SNTE). They demand the payment of over 120 million pesos (US\$6.12 million) in overdue pay dating back to 2014 for nearly 600 temporary teachers. The action follows by a few weeks a similar mobilization taken by the National Education Workers Coordinator (CNTE), a rival education union federation. That vigil's participants demanded the payment of 70 million pesos (US\$3.57 million) to 1,200 teachers, which was paid through freeing both state and federal resources.

SNTE claims that it wants a deal no different from the agreement between the government and CNTE. Union negotiators began talks with state authorities on June 7.

### Haitian public sector workers strike for wage increases, overdue pay, working conditions

On June 4, employees of Haiti's Directorate General of Taxes began a weeklong strike. The DGI office in Port-au-Prince was closed. The tax collection workers demanded a 300 percent increase in their salaries to offset the rise in the cost of living. Some striking workers complained that

they barely earn 750 gourdes (US\$8.11) per day.

In recent months, public service workers, among them workers in the judicial system, Ministries of Planning, Commerce and Industry have carried out industrial actions. In May, health care and medical personnel struck public hospitals to protest the lack of equipment, state of disrepair and unsanitary conditions, as well as low pay. Last week, workers at the Blood Transfusion Center struck to demand seven months of overdue wages.

### Paraguayan soccer players strike for unpaid wages

After showing up for the first day of preseason training on June 3, members of Paraguay's General Díaz soccer team resolved to strike and hold a demonstration in front of the stadium where they practice in Luque, Central Department on June 4. As of June 7, the players were still on strike.

The players claim that they have not received their pay as well as prize money for five months. Management claims that the debt is "only" for three months, and has promised to pay them, though without specifying when.

### Arbitration decree squelches planned strike by Argentine airline union

The night of June 6, Argentina's Labor Secretariat decreed "obligatory conciliation" talks between the Aeronavigators Association of Argentina (AAA) and Avian Airlines, forcing the union to suspend a strike planned for June 7. The AAA had called the action to press for a response from Avian to their demand for

several months' unpaid salaries. The union also called the strike to protest the steady shrinkage of the airline.

## **Staff win first contract against Vox Media**

Negotiators arrived at an agreement between the Writers Guild of America and Vox Media one day after hundreds of workers walked off the job. Details were not immediately available on contract terms, but Vox workers were fighting for wage increases, severance pay and compensation for employees whose works are adapted to film or television.

This is the first contract for Vox workers, who first unionized back in 2017. Negotiations dragged on over a 14-month period before the walkout, which was also accompanied by public denunciations by TV and film writers of Vox's foot dragging in negotiations.

## **Veterans Affairs workers in Michigan protest against concessions in contract negotiations**

Workers at the Department of Veteran Affairs (V.A.) in Battle Creek, Michigan picketed June 6 outside the city's facility to protest attempts to gut their union contract. In the current contract negotiations with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the V.A. is negotiating to take away 42 of the 66 articles in the existing contract, including grievances, time-off and whistleblower protections.

Contract talks began on May 27 and have come to a standstill. Besides contract issues, workers fear that the V.A. is moving towards privatizing the facility, which will impact the services that doctors and therapists provide to veterans for issues like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

## **Alberta plastics workers prepare strike**

Workers employed by AT Films Inc. in Edmonton, Alberta could be on strike this week after their union,

Unifor, served a 72-hour strike notice last Friday following the collapse of contract negotiations.

AT Films, which produces plastic bags and other film products for the agriculture and construction industry, walked away from negotiations after more than six months of bargaining. Unifor negotiators say that the company recently laid off 25 workers and cut wages by up to 44 percent in what they are calling an attempt to break the union.

This contract dispute comes as the parent company for AT Films, RPC Group is in the middle of a corporate acquisition deal valued at \$3.3 billion.

## **Sudbury home care workers locked out**

Workers employed by for-profit homecare company CarePartners in Sudbury, Ontario were locked out last week, three days after voting by more than 90 percent against the company's latest contract offer.

The United Steelworkers (USW) represents 30 workers at the Sudbury facility and has reported that the wage offer in the recent offer was extremely low and that the company was looking to force more weekend work while demanding concessions on pensions and vacation pay. The top wage currently paid to personal service workers at CarePartners, who provide homecare visits throughout the region, is just over \$16 an hour.

The union had indicated a willingness to continue talks despite the strong vote against the company offer, but the company chose to close their doors and lock workers out.



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