

Danish nurses continue wildcat stoppages in defiance of unions over pay and lack of staff; teachers across France walk out for 24 hours to demand more staff, better pay and conditions; Sunday pay strikes at ScotRail continue; Nigerian resident doctors on strike for nearly two months over pay arrears

## 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.*

### **Danish nurses continue one-hour wildcat stoppages over pay and understaffing while Silkeborg social workers hold sympathy strike**

Nurses in Denmark continue to hold one-hour wildcat strikes, defying the orders of the Danish Nurses' Council (DSR) union and threats of fines from the national Labour Court.

The 6,000 nurses walked out for ten weeks over pay, understaffing and workload until the government intervened on August 28 to impose a pay deal, which was rejected twice by DSR members. They then began wildcat action, with support from workers in Denmark and internationally.

On Wednesday, a group of health and social care assistants (SOSUs) in the Danish town of Silkeborg held a sympathy strike in support of the nurses, defying their own union Forbundet af Offentligt Ansatte (FOA), according to *Politiken*. The FOA announced it "cannot support" the SOSUs' actions, which violate the corporatist "Danish model." A labour market researcher from Roskilde University told the newspaper sympathy strikes were "completely unprecedented" in Denmark.

In addition to hundreds of nurses walking out at the Rigshospitalet, Herlev Hospital and Aalborg University Hospital over the past few weeks, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nurses at Hvidovre Hospital near Copenhagen held one-hour stoppages, according to the *Arbejdere i Bevægelse* Facebook group.

Last week, the Labour Court ordered nurses could be retrospectively fined 56 kroner for each hour of the unofficial stoppages, and 86 kroner for each hour of future walkouts, in addition to withheld wages, reported *Jydske Vestkysten*.

Nurses at Rigshospitalet set up a fundraiser to help nurses pay the fines imposed by the Labour Court. According to *Politiken*, a nurse leading the protests, Luca Pristed, said nurses had received donations from supporters internationally, and the collection "exceeds all expectations." While condemning the wildcat stoppages as "illegal," the DSR announced it will

impose higher dues on its members to refill its strike fund. Until 2024, members will pay an extra 125 kroner per month (around 200 euros annually).

### **National teachers' 24-hour walkout in France for improved staffing, salaries and conditions**

On Thursday, teachers in France joined a national strike called by four unions against continuing low staffing levels and poor pay and conditions. The one-day stoppage coincided with the government's review of its education budget. The unions demanded the hiring of more teachers and other staff, and an end to measures worsening working and educational conditions, such as continual testing. According to *Ouest France*, one of the unions cited budget figures which show the loss of 7,490 jobs since 2018.

Staff at the Childhood Education Department in Angers also joined a walkout and protest on Tuesday over the same problems.

### **Wave of strikes by French public transport workers against risk of violence and poor working conditions**

Over the past two weeks, workers in public transport throughout France held strikes against poor working conditions, particularly escalating violence towards drivers.

On Monday, public transport workers in Lyon held a second stoppage following an incident in which somebody fired a gun at a bus on September 1. The bus drivers in the municipal transport service, run by the multinational Keolis, held a one-day stoppage last week, and this week were joined by tram drivers, according to *20 Minutes*.

The news site also reported that coach drivers on the line between Paris and Le Havre held a one-day strike on Tuesday last week, after multiple drivers were assaulted by passengers while attempting to check the health

pass. Public transport workers faced a wave of violence during the pandemic, as they are required to enforce hygiene measures alone. The murder in July 2020 of a driver in Bayonne, Philippe Monguillot, as he attempted to enforce mask wearing, met with widespread outrage in France and internationally.

Public transport workers also walked out in Dijon on Saturday, over working conditions and hours, according to *France Bleu*. *France Bleu* also reported a protest of 100 people and a strike of drivers at Transdev in Île-de-France on September 14, and Transdev drivers in Reims held a one-day strike on September 17.

The unions denounced working conditions following the opening of bus services to competition, demanding local authorities take over public transport.

### **Massive rally of thousands of people in support of GKN workers in Florence, Italy**

On Saturday, 25,000 people rallied in Florence, Italy to oppose the closure of the GKN auto parts factory and the firing of all 422 workers, according to *la Repubblica*.

The GKN workers were informed by email in July that they would all be made redundant. They occupied the factory in protest. On Monday, the Florence Labour Court announced the collective redundancies were unlawful as the unions were not involved in the decision-making process. The redundancy notices were withdrawn, and the unions are now negotiating with the company, joining forces with local politicians to call for government intervention.

GKN is owned by the British venture capital fund Melrose, which also announced it will close its site in Birmingham, England with the loss of 519 jobs. The workers in Birmingham are set to begin an indefinite strike from September 27.

### **Air transport strike in Italy against sell-off of national airline**

On Friday, Italian air transport workers joined a one-day strike to denounce the terms under which the national airline Alitalia was dismantled and privatised.

According to *Het Laatste Nieuws*, the successor company Ita will only hire 2,800 of 10,000 Alitalia employees, who will have to reapply for their jobs. On Monday, it was announced that the collective agreement covering Alitalia workers would not cover Ita. The unions say the average salary at Ita will be a third lower.

As a condition of state aid received by the company, the EU demanded part of Alitalia was sold off. The unions denounced the sale in nationalist terms, as selling a “symbol of the sovereignty and independence of this nation,” but did little to oppose the privatisation. They called isolated one-day or even four-hour strikes, without linking the struggle of Alitalia workers with mass layoffs in the airline industry across Europe and internationally.

Airbus is currently making thousands of job cuts with factory closures in Spain, and last week workers in Germany protested against the company’s restructuring plans which could cut over 2,000 jobs.

### **Public transport strike in Belgium against pay restraint law**

On Friday, public transport workers in Belgium will join a strike to demand changes to the law governing pay increases, according to *RTBF*.

In March, the unions called a one-day general strike against the law, introduced in 1996, which prevented average salary increases above 0.4 percent per year in the private sector. The stated intention of this law is to maintain the “competitiveness” of Belgian companies by preventing pay for Belgian workers from rising more than in Germany, France and the Netherlands.

The public transport company in Brussels said it expected the bus, tram and underground systems to run “very little, if at all.” The General Labour Federation of Belgium has also called for a national demonstration in Brussels.

### **Strike suspended at electronics factory in Istanbul, Turkey after fired union members are reinstated**

Workers at the Xiaomi-Salcomp electronics factory in Istanbul, Turkey returned to work on Tuesday. An agreement was reached between the company and the Türk Metal union to rehire workers fired after joining the union.

According to *Evrensel*, the company, owned by two China-based multinationals, also agreed to begin collective bargaining negotiations with Türk Metal on October 1.

Around half of the 800 workers at the factory walked out on an indefinite strike on August 27, after 25 of their colleagues were fired. Last week, *Evrensel* reported that 170 workers who had protested in support of their sacked colleagues were also fired. Workers reported they were forced to work 10-11 hours for the minimum wage, despite having an 8-hour day in their contract.

### **Warning strikes continue at private psychiatric clinics in Brandenburg, Germany**

On Tuesday, workers at three private psychiatric clinics in Brandenburg, Germany began a four-day warning strike as part of collective bargaining negotiations. The United Services Union (Verdi) called the strike in its negotiations with Asklepios to demand, among other things, that differences in pay between employees in the east and west of Germany be closed. The *Berliner Morgenpost* reported Asklepios pays some workers in Brandenburg 10,600 euros less annually than colleagues in Hamburg.

Verdi is also asking that Asklepios include its employees in the same collective agreement as public sector healthcare workers. This would amount to a substantial pay increase of 10 to 13 percent for nurses and 20 to 22 percent for therapists, according to the *Berliner Morgenpost*. Verdi made this same demand in the Charité and Vivantes clinics in Berlin, where workers held a total of 13 days of stoppages. Asklepios made meagre offers in collective bargaining, well below the German inflation rate of almost 4 percent.

### **Scotland’s ScotRail workers’ Sunday strikes over pay continue**

Several hundred train conductors and ticket examiners at ScotRail,

Scotland, walked out again on Sunday. The conductors' strikes began in March, while ticket examiners walked out at the end of April.

The strike was the first of six consecutive 24-hour Sunday strikes after a re-ballot—stipulated under Tory anti-trade union laws as their previous dispute ran six months without resolution.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers union (RMT) members demand equal overtime pay with train drivers. The dispute is one of the UK's longest running. The conductors voted by an 80 percent majority to continue the stoppages. Ticket examiners are currently re-balloting.

The RMT said ScotRail is compromising safety by using managers to replace the strikers, as they lack safety training. The union called on the Scottish government to intervene.

The team managers (Transport and Salaried Staff Association members) have voted to strike against being used as strike-breakers. Train cleaners at ScotRail began an overtime and rest day working ban on July 13.

The RMT revealed ScotRail's parent company Abellio is proposing to gut jobs and services. The plans include closing 140 ticket offices and cutting 85,000 rail services with a loss of 1,000 jobs.

From August 11, ScotRail gateline workers, also RMT members, began an overtime ban, refusing to act up or work on rest days to protest overtime rates. They will only work already booked Sundays.

The RMT was to meet with ScotRail for talks over the pay disputes. The RMT said it would not rule out holding strikes during the COP26 International climate change summit, due in Glasgow from November 1 to 12.

The RMT betrayed the five-year struggle of rail workers against the introduction of Driver Operated Trains, reaching agreements with train operators that undermined the safety-critical role of conductors.

### **Planned industrial action by ScotRail engineers over pay**

Around 250 engineers responsible for maintaining and repairing trains on the ScotRail system in Scotland plan industrial action short of a strike on September 24.

The Unite union members voted by 78 percent on a near 69 percent turnout to strike. They are seeking a pay rise, no compulsory redundancies and restoration of the rest day working agreement.

### **Protest by Scottish rail unions in Edinburgh against cuts**

The RMT, Aslef, TSSA and Unite unions protested outside the official residence of the Scottish First Minister on Wednesday.

Timed to coincide with a Scottish government debate on Scotland becoming a "Net Zero Nation," the protest is in opposition to plans by ScotRail to push through cuts in services. The cuts would lead to the loss of around 300 train services a day, closure of ticket offices and job losses. The RMT is demanding the SNP-Green coalition government, which manages the ScotRail franchise under its Emergency Measures Agreement, cancel the cuts.

### **Train managers and senior conductors at the UK's East Midlands Railways company hold further 24-hour Sunday stoppage**

Senior conductors and train managers at UK's East Midlands Railways, involved in separate disputes over safety concerns about operating the four-carriage Class 360 trains, held a further strike Sunday.

The four-carriage units can be coupled together to make eight- or 12-carriage trains. With no connecting passage between each carriage unit, it represents a hazard with only one manager or senior conductor on board.

The senior conductors began their dispute in mid-May and are holding 24-hour strikes each Sunday up to and including September 26. Train managers are also holding 24-hour strikes each Sunday up to and including September 26.

The RMT said the use of scab-operated trains resulted in safety breaches, citing doors being opened on the wrong side of the train. The union says strike-breakers are given one day's training and a £270 bonus for the shift.

The RMT refuses to unite the growing disputes in the rail industry.

### **New round of walkouts by rail catering workers in Scottish capital over management bullying and harassment**

Staff at Rail Gourmet, at Edinburgh Waverley train station, Scotland, began a new round of walkouts with a two-day strike September 17.

This follows 11 days of stoppages in July and August by RMT members who mounted a picket line at Waverley station. Rail Gourmet provides food and drink on the LNER rail service between Edinburgh and London.

The workers, who voted 100 percent to strike, are protesting bullying and harassment by management.

### **Staff at Dundee university, Scotland to strike over attack on pensions**

Around 300 Unison union members at Scotland's Dundee university will walk out for five days beginning September 29, to oppose attacks on their pensions.

Dundee university is seeking to end its defined benefit CARE pension scheme, replacing it next year with an inferior defined contribution scheme. This will affect around 900 staff at the university on grades 1 to 6. Some would lose up to 40 percent of their pensions. The action will coincide with the beginning of the new academic year.

### **Offshore workers in Scottish oilfield to ballot over contract changes**

Around 70 workers on the Ninian Central, Ninian South and Tiffany offshore oil platforms in the Scottish North Sea are to ballot over contract changes.

The Unite union members are employed by offshore contractor Petrofac for company Canadian Natural Resources. They are balloting for industrial action following a consultative ballot which gave a 93 percent majority in favour. The ballot closes on October 18.

Petrofac unilaterally cut pay by 10 percent and added an extra work week without an increase in pay.

## **Fire safety crews at Scottish nuclear bases begin overtime ban over job cuts**

Scottish fire and rescue staff at nuclear submarine bases on the Clyde began an overtime ban over planned job cuts.

The 45 Unite union members began the ban last week in response to outsourcing company Capita's plans to cut eight posts at the Faslane and Coulport nuclear submarine bases. Capita took over the role from the Ministry of Defence last year. The workers voted by 100 percent for the overtime ban and 78 percent for a strike.

## **Electricians walk off site in Reading, UK over blacklisting**

On Monday, 200 workers employed by building engineer NG Bailey walked off the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield site near Reading, England over suspected blacklisting.

The previous Friday, a number of electricians and fitters, including a Unite health and safety representative, were told to transfer with no prior notice at AWE's request. Anger among the workers grew over the weekend. The workers established it was the main contractor on the site, construction engineering company Costain, that had requested the transfer, not AWE. Costain and NG Bailey previously subscribed to a blacklisting service run by the Consulting Association.

## **Lecturers at UK colleges to strike over pay**

Lecturing staff at 15 Further Education (FE) colleges throughout England are to strike next week.

The University and College Union (UCU) members are demanding a minimum pay rise of five percent. They voted by a near 90 percent majority to strike in July. Colleges taking part in the action include City College of Plymouth, City of Bristol College, City of Liverpool College and Sheffield College. They plan walkouts Tuesday and Wednesday next week, and then from October 5 to 15.

Pay for lecturers has fallen behind that of school teachers, so there is a £9,000 gap between them. Over the last decade, the pay of FE lecturers fell by 30 percent in real terms.

## **Strike ballot of UK university staff to be held over pay and attacks on pensions**

Academic and related staff at over 150 UK universities are to ballot for strike action over pay and pensions.

The UCU members will begin balloting on October 18 until November 8. Staff are facing an attack that will see them lose around 35 percent of the value of their pensions.

The University and Colleges Employers Association made a pay increase offer of 1.5 percent. This would represent a cut in real terms and comes on top of an estimated cut in pay of around 20 percent between 2009 and 2019.

The UCU played a treacherous role in the ongoing fight in defence of pensions. Following the sell-out of nationwide industrial action in 2018

over attacks on pensions, the union was accused at a protest of UCU members outside its HQ of being "objectively on the side of the employers." The UCU demobilised mass resistance on the part of workers and students to establish a corporatist Joint Expert Panel on pensions with the employers.

## **Health workers vote by big margins to reject the UK government's three percent pay offer**

UK National Health Service (NHS) workers across different unions overwhelmingly rejected a below-inflation three percent pay offer.

GMB union members overwhelmingly rejected the offer, and the union says it has "no alternative...but to trigger industrial action ballots." The GMB is calling for a 15 percent or £2 an hour increase, whichever is the highest.

Unison union members rejected the same offer by an 80 percent majority. As part of prolonged process, following consultation Unison will hold a consultative ballot to see if its membership is prepared to take industrial action.

A consultative ballot of Royal College of Nursing (RCN) members voted by a near 92 percent majority to reject the offer. In a September 15 press release the RCN declared: "Your elected representatives on the RCN's Trade Union Committee will now carefully consider the results and decide on next steps... A range of options could be progressed, with the results and level of turnout being considered."

With inflation reportedly currently at 4.8 percent, the three percent offer is a cut in real terms. Additionally, the recent hike in National Insurance payments will eat into health workers' pay.

NHS workers are in the frontline of the resurging pandemic, suffering terrible stress, overwork, and illness from Covid including fatalities.

## **Strike votes by UK bus drivers at Stagecoach over pay**

UK bus drivers at three Stagecoach depots voted to take industrial action for improved pay.

RMT members at Derbyshire's Stagecoach depot and two of its South West depots voted by a 90 percent majority to walk out in support of higher pay. Currently Stagecoach drivers working out of the Stagecoach's East Midlands depots of Worksop and Mansfield are involved in an overtime and rest day working ban due to run until October 1. A further two-week ban is scheduled to take place October 8-22.

The disputes are part of the RMT's "Professional Drivers Deserve Professional Wages" nationwide campaign among Stagecoach bus drivers.

## **Stagecoach bus drivers in Manchester, UK to ballot over pay**

UK bus drivers at Greater Manchester Bus Company South, part of the Stagecoach group, are to ballot over pay.

Around a thousand Unite union members at the company's four depots in Ashton, Hyde Road, Sharston and Stockport will take part in the ballot running from September 28 until October 12. The company refused to make a pay offer. The drivers are seeking a substantial pay rise and

improved sick pay. Currently drivers are paid £12.54 an hour.

The company is the largest bus operator in the Greater Manchester area and its routes service Wigan, Oldham and Rochdale. Unite say any industrial action could begin later this autumn.

### **Stagecoach bus workers in Scotland balloting over pay**

Around 1,500 staff at bus company Stagecoach in Scotland are balloting for industrial action.

The Unite members working as drivers, engineers, administrative workers and cleaners began balloting Monday. They are opposed to a below-inflation pay increase from the company. Unite is calling for the current inflation rate plus one percent rise. The workers involved work from depots across Scotland including Ayr, Dumfries, Fife and Perth. Unite states any industrial action is likely to begin early in October.

### **Bus drivers in Chesterfield, UK to ballot over pay**

UK drivers and cleaners at Chesterfield-based Yorkshire Traction Company, part of Stagecoach, are balloting over pay.

The ballot of Unite union members opened Monday and runs until October 1. The workers received no pay rise in 2020 and were offered a small rise this year. Unite accuses Stagecoach of using the pandemic as the reason, despite making a £58.4 million profit last year. According to a Unite press release of September 20, if workers vote for a stoppage, it will take place in the autumn.

### **Royal Parks cleaning staff in London to hold month-long strike over job security and conditions**

Cleaners employed by the outsourcing cleaning company in the UK capital's Royal Parks are to strike throughout October over threats to jobs and conditions.

The Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) members have already held 16 days of stoppages since July. They are opposed to proposed job cuts and are seeking parity in pay and conditions with staff directly employed by Royal Parks.

### **Refuse and cleaning staff at UK council, Brighton to strike over conditions**

Refuse and cleaning staff working for Green Party-controlled City of Brighton council in southeast England voted to strike over management's unilaterally imposed changes to rounds.

The GMB members voted by a 100 percent majority on a near 80 percent turnout to walk out. A number of stoppages will take place over a two-week period beginning October 5. There is an ongoing dispute over management unilaterally intervening to remove drivers from long established routes. The workers interpret the changes as management imposing unofficial punishment or control of staff. The workers are angry

at the Green Party's refusal to intervene.

### **UK Tesco logistics workers reject pay offer**

Around 3,500 workers employed at four Tesco supermarket distribution centres rejected a 2.5 percent pay offer.

The Unite union members are employed at distribution centres in Belfast, Didcot, Doncaster and Thurrock. In a consultative ballot they overwhelmingly rejected Tesco's "final" 2.5 percent offer. This would be a pay cut in real terms. A Unite press release reported the RPI (retail price index) inflation figure is currently 4.8 percent. Tesco reported a £3.7 billion profit last year.

The press release stated that further talks will take place between Tesco management and the union and, "if an acceptable offer is not made, a full industrial action ballot will quickly follow."

### **Unite union suspends upcoming pay strike of Metrolink tram workers in Greater Manchester, England**

Following talks on Monday, the Unite union suspended a stoppage of around 300 UK drivers and supervisors at the Greater Manchester Metrolink light railway/tram system, due to take place Saturday and Sunday.

The Unite union members rejected a one percent pay increase offered by Metrolink by a 97 percent majority. In a press release of September 21, Unite stated the weekend strikes were suspended following "a greatly improved pay offer" from the company. The union did not disclose what the offer was. Unite will now ballot its members and is recommending acceptance.

Other scheduled strike dates included October 10 and 24, to coincide with major football matches or sporting events.

### **After strike vote, UK air traffic control union pushes for further negotiations**

Staff at Nats Holdings, the UK's main air navigation service provider, voted by 83 percent to strike in a recent ballot.

The PCS members demand an increase in pay, improved industrial relations and that Nats reverse its decision to tear up a longstanding redundancy agreement.

Following the ballot result, Nats agreed to hold further negotiations with the PCS. No announcement of industrial action was made by the union.

### **Lock makers at Wolverhampton, England company to strike over pay**

UK workers at lock maker Henry Squire in Wolverhampton are set to walk out over pay.

The Unite union members rejected a 1.25 percent pay increase. Pay is around £9.50 an hour. They will begin a week-long stoppage on October 4, followed by similar week-long stoppages on October 25, November 15

and December 6.

### **Cleaner who led protest at Facebook's UK headquarters is dismissed**

The Cleaners & Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIWU), announced on its website on September 16 that one of its union reps, Guillermo Camacho was dismissed from his job.

An *Observer* article September 12 stated the company acting as asset manager at Facebook's London office requested the sacking. The article said the paper had seen an email from JLL, the Chicago-based asset management company for Facebook's London office, asking for Camacho's removal. The email was to the Churchill Group, the company providing cleaning services at Facebook's offices.

On July 21, Camacho led a protest outside the offices. The cleaning workers were protesting against bullying, cuts in hours and unsafe working conditions at the site. The *Observer* quoted Camacho saying, "The number of floors we have to clean has gone up from five to 12 [at Facebook's offices on Brock Street]. But they haven't brought in more staff. It's impossible—I was having to come before my shift and leave late to get it done. It's making us all really stressed and sick. That's why we had to protest."

The CAIWU organised a protest outside the Facebook HQ on September 17 against Camacho's dismissal.

### **Protests by Iranian teachers**

Teachers protested in 14 Iranian cities on Saturday, including Bandar Abbas, Isfahan and Tehran.

They were protesting about poor working conditions and non-payment of retired teachers' pensions and called for the release of imprisoned teachers.

The same day "green report card teachers" held their fifteenth consecutive day of protest outside the Ministry of Education in Tehran. The green report card teachers are those who have qualified to teach but have not been offered posts.

### **Nigerian resident doctors' strike continues while other health unions prevaricate over calling members out**

The strike by resident doctors in Nigeria, begun August 2 over unpaid salaries and allowances, is in danger of being isolated by the other health unions.

The strike continues after a memorandum of understanding signed by the Nigeria Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) with the federal government at the Labour court to suspend the stoppage fell through.

The over 300,000 NARD members are owed from four to 19 months' wage arrears by state employers after the introduction of a new payment system. They also want payment of the COVID-19 inducement allowance and increased hazard allowance.

The Joint Health Sector Unions and Assembly of Healthcare Professional Associations allowed a "strike notice" to expire on September 17 without calling out their members. The health workers have the same demands as the doctors. While declaring a new "strike notice"

from September 18, they held talks with the government and spread illusions in its "patriotic humanitarian[ism]," despite the government running down the health service.

President Muhammadu Buhari appealed to the unions to give the government time and understanding.

### **South African metalworkers to strike nationwide in pay dispute**

A strike by workers in South Africa's engineering and steel industry is set to begin October 5, after negotiations with employer associations at the Metal and Engineering Industries Bargaining Council reached an impasse. A certificate of non-resolution was issued by the South African Labour Court.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa members demand an eight percent salary increase for 2021, plus the rate of inflation and two percent for the next two years.

The Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa and other employer bodies offered 4.4 percent for 2021, inflation plus 0.5 percent in 2022 and inflation plus one percent in 2023. They also want an exception for "struggling" companies to pay workers less than the national minimum rate.

### **South African health workers at Eastern Cape hospital strike in protest over unpaid wages**

Thousands of health workers in Eastern Cape, South Africa went on unprotected strike September 17, to demand their cash allowances and outstanding overtime and night duty payments.

At Frere Hospital in East London, nurses, admin staff and cleaners protested by blocking the hospital gates and were shot at by police armed with rubber bullets.

The provincial department of health blamed the non-payment of salaries on a technical problem at the bank, but workers say the department is in debt.

### **South African ICT workers at Mustek, Midrand strike in pay dispute**

Workers at the Midrand office of Mustek, one of South Africa's largest ICT assemblers and distributors, began a strike September 16, following a yearlong dispute over pay.

The Communications Worker Union (CWU) members say the company posted large profits but cite financial difficulties as the reason for not meeting workers' salary demands.

### **Lecturers in Durban, South Africa stage protest over unfair redundancies**

Thirty-one South African lecturers at the Durban University of Technology demonstrated September 17, in protest at the termination of their contracts.

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union members demand to be reinstated, saying the university failed to follow the Labour Relations Act correctly when they unilaterally retrenched them for being underqualified. Management says in 2008 it became mandatory that lecturers should have a master's degree and all staff were made aware of this.

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**

### **African National Congress staff suspend pay strike until after local elections**

African National Congress (ANC) staff, on strike since August 26, agreed September 16 to an immediate return to work in order to provide administrative support for the upcoming municipal elections campaign.

Workers have been on strike over late wages, unemployment insurance and hospital fund arrears and four years without salary increments. The ANC insist their poor finances are caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and promise to address the problem.

### **Malawian postal workers strike ends on union advice without getting pay arrears**

Employees of the Malawi Post Corporation (MPC) walked out for seven days from September 8, because they had not been paid. The management turned to the courts to force the workers to end their strike. The union advised their members to comply.

MPC Workers Union President William Chipoka admitted management had not addressed the workers' demands, or followed proper procedures before going to the courts. "At the moment, employees on M5, M4 and M3 ranks have not yet received their salaries yet management has obtained an injunction," he said.

The MPC was formed in 2000 by privatising the Malawi postal service. It runs over 180 post offices.

### **Gambian university staff's sit-down strike declared illegal**

Staff members at the University of The Gambia were told by the High Court that their sit-down strike planned for September 15 was illegal and would break the terms of an interim injunction.

The ruling outlawed "any form of picketing or industrial strike action" at the university "pending" the court hearing of the university's "main application." Staff members are "advised to report to work as normal in line with the Court order" or face charges for contempt of court.

Staff are demanding reforms to management structure, including the removal of the Vice-Chancellor and a new governing Council.

The governing party of President Adama Barrow recently formed an alliance with the country's former coup leader and president, Yahya Jammeh, in a move denounced by local human rights groups.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit: