

Danish nurses continue one-hour wildcat strikes over pay and understaffing; ScotRail Sunday stoppages widen as workers to strike over pay during COP26 climate summit; protests across Lebanon over fuel price hikes; workers in Cross River State, Nigeria, continue strike over pay and conditions, defying court order

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

28 October 2021

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

Greek healthcare workers hold national strike against understaffing

On October 21, healthcare workers throughout Greece joined a national strike against understaffing and neglect of the service. A demonstration of 500 people in Athens demanded that staff shortages be resolved and hospital workers receive hazard pay, according to *AP*. In Crete, healthcare workers denounced the run-down state of their hospital, saying to *ef.syn* that they did not believe the building was safe.

The unions involved in the strike advanced reactionary demands against restrictions on the spread of COVID, asking that workers who refused to be vaccinated be allowed to return to hospitals while daily case numbers are rapidly increasing.

Greek dock workers hold 24-hour strike after port death

On Monday, workers at the port in Piraeus, Greece held a 24-hour strike after one of their colleagues was killed on the job. According to *The Press Project*, a 46-year-old worker at the dock was fatally crushed by a crane on Monday, after which his colleagues walked out and denounced the dangerous conditions.

Members of the ENEDEP dockers' union voted to demand those responsible for the working conditions at the dock—the government and the operating company COSCO—be held responsible for the death. The union published a list of demands, including an end to 12-hour shifts, an increase in working groups from four to six, an increase in staffing levels, and the establishment of a Health and Safety Committee.

Danish nurses continue one-hour wildcat strikes over pay and understaffing

Danish nurses are continuing their one-hour wildcat strikes organised through Facebook groups across Denmark. The 6,000 nurses twice rejected a government imposed pay deal. *Ekstra Bladet* reported nurses at Køge Hospital near Copenhagen will be joining the stoppages this week. The nurses received support from workers in other sectors. Dock workers and scaffolders visited their picket line in Esbjerg, international donations have been received to help pay fines, and social workers in Silkeborg walked out on a sympathy strike in September.

Throughout the 11-week national strike, which continues despite an attempted shutdown at the end of August by the government, the Danish Nurses Council (DSR) has refused to call for broader support in the working class. Instead, it has appealed to female politicians of all parties, on the basis that nurses were underpaid because of gender discrimination. The pseudo-left Socialist Peoples' Party (SF) and Unity List proposed measures to provide more money for “women's professions,” despite the SF voting to fast-track the government intervention against the nurses. The ruling Social Democratic government obliged, announcing a “pay commission” to demobilise nurses' anger.

French midwives hold four-day national strike to demand improved staffing levels, conditions and pay

On October 22, midwives in France began a four-day national strike over pay and conditions. This followed a series of shorter local stoppages after the “Ségur” healthcare review last year, which excluded midwives and many other health professionals from its pay rise recommendations. Most of the major unions called on midwives to join the strike.

Many midwives denounced low pay, which has caused many to leave the sector, and demanded that the ratio of mothers to midwives be improved to one-to-one. One midwife told *France Bleu* that working conditions worsened during the pandemic, with many midwives quitting,

and that salaries had not changed for 20 years.

Other healthcare workers throughout France also held stoppages this week, with many demanding pay rises following the Ségur review, and denouncing worsening working conditions. Healthcare workers in the A&E department of Laval hospital continue their indefinite strike, begun on October 8, over low staffing levels. A one-day strike occurred at Chinon Hospital on Monday against plans to change the shift patterns so workers would have to take both day and night shifts.

One-day strike at Dutch university hospitals over pay and staff shortages

Healthcare workers at the eight university medical centres in the Netherlands joined a national strike on Tuesday, described by the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV) as the “biggest ever action in university hospitals,” as part of a pay dispute. This follows a strike at the end of September.

According to *De Telegraaf*, all non-emergency operations were cancelled in 279 wards, and thousands of workers took part.

The FNV and Christian National Trade Union Federation demand a collective agreement better than that signed by the NU’91 nurses’ union, which involved a 3.5 percent pay increase for higher pay grades but only 1 percent for lower-paid workers. Inflation is currently around 2.7 percent. Other demands include decreasing the workload and increasing staffing levels. One nurse speaking with the *Algemeen Dagblad* said staff shortages were so severe that “a fifteen-hour working day is no longer an exception.”

Portuguese paramedics strike to denounce poor conditions and pay

Paramedics in Portugal held a 24-hour strike on October 22, to denounce their “abandonment” by the healthcare system. According to *Impala*, dozens of striking paramedics held a demonstration in Lisbon to denounce their conditions.

One paramedic interviewed by *Lusa* said the ambulances are in such poor condition that they are not certain they will reach patients without a breakdown, and in real terms they earn less than they did 20 years ago.

The government imposed the requirement that the strike could only go ahead if 80 percent of services were available, which the Paramedics Union president said was higher than the ambulance service managed on an average day.

Workers in Germany’s Hamburg schools and local services hold warning strike over pay

On Wednesday, workers employed by local government in Hamburg, Germany held a one-day warning strike to demand higher wages. According to the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, the Verdi union called the stoppage and a protest of around 2,000 workers as part of collective negotiations covering 70,000 local authority employees. Verdi’s main demand is a wage increase of 5 percent.

Verdi union signs off on below-inflation pay deal for German retail workers

After a long campaign of warning strikes in Germany, the Verdi union agreed a below-inflation pay rise for hundreds of thousands of retail workers over the next two years.

Negotiations and several one-day warning strikes began in May, and a new deal was signed which provides a 3 percent pay rise this year, and 1.7 next year, according to *rbb*. Throughout negotiations, Verdi demanded a 4.5 percent pay rise in the retail sector, and 5.5 percent for workers in the wholesale sector.

With inflation in Germany at around 4.5 percent, the deal represents a pay cut. The employers’ association shed crocodile tears that the agreement does not allow “struggling” retailers to make even larger real-terms cuts. One commenter on *rbb* said, “It’s unbelievable that Verdi see this as a success, and that employers are still crying (probably tears of joy).”

Belgian unions call off strike in the chemicals sector

The major Belgian trade unions called off a national strike planned in the chemicals sector, which employs 130,000 workers in the country. Workers were scheduled to walk out on Friday over collective pay negotiations.

The deal provides for a 0.4 percent pay rise this year, the maximum allowed by a law restricting wage rises in Belgium. Inflation is currently over 4 percent. In March, the unions called a one-day national strike against the law, and public transport workers held a further one-day stoppage in September.

Belgian unions accept pay deal rejected by workers at ArcelorMittal in Ghent

This week, the major Belgian trade unions shut down a campaign of strikes by metalworkers in a wage dispute with ArcelorMittal and signed a new pay deal, despite workers rejecting it.

Het Laatste Nieuws reported that workers voted by 54 percent against the offer, but union statutes require two-thirds of workers to vote against a deal in order to reject it. The company, which according to *Nieuwsblad* is returning record profits, employs 4,500 workers in Ghent.

In September, hundreds of workers at the Ghent site walked off in a spontaneous strike to demand compensation for putting their lives at risk during the pandemic. Highlighting the dangers on the site, a worker was killed by an equipment malfunction the week after the spontaneous strike.

Norwegian cultural workers’ pension strike ends with new deal

This week, the strike of almost 1,000 workers in Norwegian operas, theatres and concert venues over pensions was ended by the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). The LO and employers’ association Spekter announced on Monday they had signed a deal which, according to Spekter, “is good for both the companies and all employees.”

According to *FriFagbevegelse*, LO accepted a “temporary scheme” in 2016, which was claimed to be necessary for the financial sustainability of the cultural institutions. The main issue in the pension strike was that the “temporary” pension was “defined contribution,” so the pension workers receive would depend on the value of the fund and decrease over time, unlike “defined benefit” pensions, where they receive a certain percentage of their salary as a pension. LO called for a “hybrid” model.

The deal was proposed by the country’s official mediator. The agreed document posted on its website avoids the issue of the actual structure of the pension scheme, agreeing to LO’s vague demand that it be “lifelong and gender-neutral.” The agreement also postpones the question of where additional money for pensions will come from, making clear it will be dealt with by LO and Spekter behind the backs of workers, as “The parties shall clarify the distribution of any additional expenses related to the new scheme.”

Spanish workers protest use of temporary and insecure contracts

This week workers throughout Spain joined protests to denounce the overuse of temporary contracts and to demand workers’ right to move to permanent contracts. A group of six unions called protests in cities throughout Catalonia on Monday and Tuesday, *Europa Press* reported. The protest organisers pointed out that the requirement that temporary contracts become permanent after three years is widely flouted, and that temporary contracts are overused in education and healthcare.

On Thursday, workers in the Balearic Islands also protested against the use of temporary contracts, which cover over 29,500 public sector workers on the islands and 800,000 throughout Spain, according to *Europa Press*.

Italian workers at Whirlpool and Elica demonstrate against plant closures

On Friday, there will be an eight-hour strike and demonstration in Varese, Italy to denounce a plant closure of wind turbine manufacturer Whirlpool cutting 340 jobs. This follows an eight-hour strike last week in Fabriano, against another closure plan by the multinational Elica.

The Whirlpool workers held multiple strikes and marches since July to oppose the closure plans. On October 19, according to *ANSA*, around 500 workers from Whirlpool and Elica marched to the Ministry of Economic Development to demand an industrialisation plan to save their jobs.

Unite union ends industrial action by engineers at ScotRail ramming through below-inflation pay deal

Industrial action short of a strike taken by engineers at ScotRail over pay was called off by Unite. In addition, a series of 24-hour strikes scheduled for October and November was cancelled.

Around 250 engineers who maintain and repair trains on the ScotRail system voted by 78 percent on a near 69 percent turnout to strike. The Unite members were seeking a pay rise, no compulsory redundancies and restoration of the rest day working agreement.

The engineers voted by a 75 percent majority to accept a new pay offer from ScotRail—a 2.5 percent pay increase backdated to April 2021, and 2.2 percent from April 2022 plus a £300 one-off payment.

Scottish local authority workers to strike over pay

Scottish local authority workers in half of the Scottish local authority areas will begin a five-day strike on November 8, over pay. The strike coincides with the COP26 climate talks.

A joint trade union body comprising Unison, Unite and the GMB organised the week of strikes. Those taking part will include school cleaners, school caretakers, refuse workers and transport maintenance staff. Cities involved include Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The workers’ pay claim is for six percent or £2,000, whichever is the greater. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities offered workers earning below £25,000 an £850 increase, while those earning between £25,000 and £40,000 would be offered a two percent rise and those earning more than £40,000 a one percent rise. More than 55 percent of Scottish local government workers earn less than £25,000 a year.

Engineers at cereal manufacturer Weetabix plants in Corby and Kettering, UK continue 48-hour walkouts over pay and conditions

Around 80 engineers at the Weetabix plants in Kettering and Corby, England held their sixth 48-hour walkout Tuesday, against the threat of fire and rehire.

The Unite union members began their stoppages on September 21. Further 48-hour strikes are due each Tuesday until November 30. Weetabix management are using agency staff to try and resolve production problems arising during strike days. Beginning this week, the Unite union organised protests outside supermarkets across the UK in support of the engineers. More protests are planned next week.

The engineers oppose pay cuts and restructuring of their contracts that would roster them to work more days, with the loss of shift allowance. The changes mean the engineers losing up to £5,000 a year. The threat of dismissal hangs over those workers refusing to accept.

The engineers were to strike at the end of June, followed by weekly 24-hour strikes throughout the summer. Unite suspended the strike to allow “meaningful talks.” This resulted in new proposals from Weetabix. Unite was unable to sell these proposals to the workers, who rejected them by an 82 percent majority, forcing the union to launch the current round of stoppages.

Pay strike of scaffolders at Scunthorpe, UK steel works enters fourth week

The strike of around 60 scaffolders employed by contractor Actavo at the British Steel plant in Scunthorpe, England is now in its fourth week.

The Unite union members have been in dispute over pay since 2019. They struck previously and are demanding payment in line with the National Agreement for the Engineering and Construction Industry (NAECI) rates of £17.45 an hour. They are paid 10-15 percent less than NAECI agreed rates.

Workers at London care home strike for improved pay and conditions

Care workers and cleaners at the Sage care home in Golders Green, London were on strike on October 21 over pay and conditions.

Scaffolders at Billingham, UK chemical plant to strike over pay

Around 25 scaffolders working on Mitsubishi chemicals' plant on Teesside, England, voted unanimously to strike over pay rates.

The Unite union members, employed by Altrad, are on a basic rate of £12.06 an hour, compared to the NAECI agreed rate of £17.45 an hour. Unite announced 19 days of stoppages between November 4 and December 4.

Month-long strike of London Royal Parks cleaners to end Friday with rally

The strike by London park cleaners seeking parity with directly employed staff will end today, with a rally planned at Marlborough Gate, St James Park. The strike began on October 1.

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union members work for contractor Just Ask Services, which provides facility management services in the Royal Parks. They are demanding an occupational sick pay scheme in line with staff directly employed by the London Royal Parks.

Lecturers at Scottish Rural University College hold fourth strike over pay and regrading

Lecturers at the Scottish Rural University College in Aberdeen were on strike Monday. It was the fourth strike over four weeks.

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) members are fighting for a pay rise and regrading. Their pay fell behind that of lecturers at other colleges. They are carrying out other forms of industrial action, and other strikes are planned.

Strike by staff at Scottish university over attack on pensions

Dundee University staff in Scotland walked out Monday and Tuesday, against plans by the university to replace their current defined benefits scheme with an inferior defined contribution scheme. The replacement could mean some workers losing up to 50 percent of the value of their pensions.

University and College Union (UCU), Unite and Unison members took part. Unite and the UCU held previous strikes over the issue. Following the strikes, selective action by library, security and mail distribution staff will continue for the next two weeks.

Office finance workers will take selective strike action next week. The United Voices of the World union members demand £12 an hour pay, improved conditions and sick pay in line with NHS workers and for recognition of their union. Currently the workers are paid the minimum wage or just above. The workers held strikes at the beginning of the year over the same demands.

Bus drivers across northwest England to begin strike Saturday over pay

Bus drivers at Arriva across north western England are to walk out on Saturday.

Around 2,000 Unite union members voted by an 87 percent majority to strike. They are seeking a pay rise above that made by the company. The company depots include those in Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Runcorn, Southport and Bootle.

The workers were voting Wednesday and Thursday on a two percent pay offer from the Arriva, but Unite expects it will be rejected.

Refuse collectors in Sheffield, UK vote to strike over pay

UK refuse collectors working for contractor, Veolia in Sheffield voted by an 80 percent majority to strike.

The GMB union members are protesting the below-inflation pay offer made by Veolia, which is under contract to Labour-controlled Sheffield council for waste removal services from around 200,000 homes. They are seeking an improved pay offer and improved terms and conditions. Their first strike is scheduled for November 1, with other strikes to follow.

Mental health workers in Greater Manchester, England vote to strike against plans for seven-day working

Mental health workers employed by the Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust, England voted to strike against plans by the trust to introduce seven-day working.

The 25 Unison members, who work with vulnerable and distressed people are being asked to "volunteer" to increase their working week from five days a week to seven. Unison set no dates for any industrial action, as it plans further talks with the trust management.

UK logistics drivers at two companies in strike ballot over pay

Around 2,000 UK logistics workers employed by DHL are balloting, after the company made a derisory pay offer.

The Unite union members are responsible for sorting and delivering car components for car manufacturer Jaguar Land Rover across the UK. The ballot closes on November 15. The company, which made global profits of £1.2 billion last year, offered a 1.75 percent pay rise over 30 months from 2020.

Unite held talks with DHL under the auspices of the government

mediation service Acas.

In a separate dispute, LGV (large goods vehicle) drivers employed by Imperial Logistics International UK voted by a 94 percent majority to hold a series of 24-hour stoppages. The Unite union members are responsible for delivering car components to the Mini production plant in Cowley, Oxford.

The drivers are seeking an improved pay offer. Faced with a driver shortage the company raised wage rates, but drivers are still paid £2 an hour less than agency staff employed to overcome the driver shortage. According to Unite, the firm would need to employ 70 drivers on a permanent basis to keep up with deliveries. Imperial Logistics only employs 25 drivers permanently, relying on agency staff to make up the shortfall.

Twenty-four-hour strikes are planned for November 9 and 17, followed by 48-hour strikes beginning November 23 and 30.

Bus drivers in Loughborough, UK vote to strike over pay

Around 50 UK bus drivers working for Kinchbus in Loughborough voted by a near 90 percent majority to walk out over a pay offer that would leave them earning less than £11 an hour.

The Unite union members plan eleven days of stoppages between November 13 and December 11. A proposed all-out strike will begin December 13, if there is no resolution.

Walkouts planned at recycle centre in Sandwell, UK over safety concerns

Over 100 workers at the Sandwell domestic recycling centre run by outsourcing company Serco, plan to stop work for 12 days during the period November 15 and January 7.

The GMB members are concerned over safety issues. Among these are pools of dirty water, trip hazards and poor protective measures on equipment. They also raised concerns over the poor state of toilets and lack of handwashing facilities.

Ballot of UK driving examiners on deal after PCS union suspends stoppage

A ballot of around 1,000 UK Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency staff (DVSA) over a company offer began on Monday.

A planned two-day strike, due to start October 18, was suspended by the PCS union. The driving examiners voted to strike after management planned to increase the number of daily driving tests examiners are expected to do from seven to eight. The DVSA proposed to postpone the introduction of the eighth test for at least a year. The ballot on the proposal will close November 5.

GMB union NHS staff in England to ballot for action over pay offer

NHS staff in England in the GMB union will ballot after they rejected a three percent pay offer by a more than 90 percent majority.

The ballot opens November 10 until December 15. The GMB is calling at this stage for a 15 percent rise or an extra £2 an hour, whichever is the greatest.

Nurses in Wales to ballot for industrial action over pay

Nurses in Wales will ballot over whether they are prepared to take industrial action over pay.

In a previous ballot, the Royal College of Nurses members rejected the Welsh Labour Party government's pay offer of three percent by a 94 percent majority. The ballot will open on November 4, and close November 30.

Bus drivers in Glasgow, Scotland in strike ballot over pay

Scottish bus drivers at First Bus Glasgow rejected a pay offer from the company.

Around 1,300 Unite union members overwhelmingly rejected the offer by a 99 percent majority. The ballot to take industrial action closes November 15.

Drivers and assistants transporting disabled children in London borough to ballot over pay and conditions

Drivers and assistants responsible for transporting disabled children to school in the London borough of Hackney will ballot for strike action.

The 37 Unite union members are seeking improved pay and conditions. The workers want recognition of their dedication to duty throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The ballot will take place between November 1 and 30.

Outsourced cleaners hold protest outside employer's London HQ

Cleaners employed by Churchill, who clean trains for train franchise companies in the UK capital and across the southeast protested outside the company's HQ building in Fleet Street on Monday.

The RMT members are calling for a pay rise and improved conditions. Throughout the pandemic the workload increased as cleaners carried out more intensive cleaning but without extra staff. They are paid the minimum wage and are not entitled to company sick pay.

Also taking part in the protest were Churchill cleaners responsible for cleaning the offices of Facebook HQ in London. The Cleaners & Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIWU) members protested outside the Facebook HQ in July, after which CAIWU representative Guillermo Camacho was dismissed from his job. The cleaners were protesting against bullying, cuts in hours and unsafe working conditions at the site.

Rally outside Scottish parliament calls for £15 an hour for care workers

A rally was held outside the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh on Saturday calling for a £15 an hour wage for care workers. The rally was organised by the GMB union.

The Scottish National Party government Health Secretary, Humza Yousaf recently announced the minimum wage for carers will be set at £10.02 an hour.

Middle East

Protests across Lebanon over fuel price hikes

On October 21, protests took place in Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon and other cities against a rise in fuel prices announced by the Ministry of Energy.

Protestors blocked main roads after the announcement that petrol prices would rise by 25 percent and diesel by 15 percent. Lebanon is undergoing an economic collapse, with its currency slumping by 90 percent, and over 75 percent of the population living in poverty.

Planned strike by Israeli bus drivers over wages and conditions

Israeli bus drivers working for the Egged Ta'avura, Superbus and Dan South bus companies were to walk out for four hours Thursday afternoon.

The strike was announced Monday by the Democratic Workers' Organisation. Services affected would include areas around Jerusalem and in other parts of Israel. The drivers are protesting low wages. They currently earn NIS 43 an hour (\$13.5). There is a shortage of 4,000 bus drivers in Israel.

The drivers are also protesting attacks on them during the COVID-19 pandemic, and are demanding to be classed as public workers, which would afford them more protection. Bus routes in Israel are regularly transferred to different bus companies. When this happens, the drivers lose their seniority ranking. Being classed as public workers would protect their seniority rights.

Israeli bus drivers have held several protests over the last few weeks over working conditions.

Iranian contract oil workers' stoppage over broken promises

Last week, contract oil workers at several petrochemical companies in the Iranian city of Bushehr walked out.

Among their demands are for the imposition of 20 days working followed by 10 days rest schedules. They are also seeking improved pay, as well as better dormitory conditions and food. The contractors were on strike in June, as part of a national dispute. Employers promised improvements to entice them back to work, but failed to carry them through.

Protests by other oil contract workers in Iran have taken place over the last few weeks. These included a strike on October 11, by contractors in Sapak in Assaluyeh county, who had not been paid for two months.

Africa

Workers in Cross Rivers State, Nigeria, continue strike over pay and conditions, disregarding court order

Workers in Cross Rivers State, Nigeria are continuing their indefinite strike in defiance of a court order to return to work.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) members began an indefinite stoppage on October 12, to demand payment of the agreed minimum wage. Their 12 other demands include lack of promotions, non-payment of gratuities, and failure to reinstate 33 workers wrongly deleted from the payroll.

Justice Sanusi Kardo of Calabar Industrial Court issued the court order after the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Tanko Ashang sued the NLC for starting the strike and preventing entry to local government offices.

There were no reports of any workers returning to work.

Over 160 automotive workers in Gqeberha, South Africa strike for a 100 percent wage increase

Assembly workers at the multinational First Automobile Works (FAW) truck company in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, South Africa have been on strike for pay rises and improved conditions since October 15.

Over 160 National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) members, including 70 outsourced workers comprising 85 percent of the workforce, demand a R40 per hour pay increase backdated to September 2020. Most FAW workers earn R39 an hour. The industry standard is R99 an hour with some workers receiving R136.

They also demand full employment for outsourced workers, a minimum wage, and medical insurance and provident fund contributions. NUMSA warn the strike could spread to other operations in neighbouring Gauteng province.

Hundreds of municipal workers defy court order and strike for pay rises in Pretoria, South Africa

Hundreds of angry South African municipal workers, including bus drivers and waste operatives employed by the City of Tshwane, Pretoria, stopped work October 21, and protested daily in the Central Business District of the city over unpaid wage rises and other demands.

The municipality obtained a court order October 22, prohibiting the strike. This has not stopped the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) members taking to the streets and disrupting services in protest over non-payment of a recently agreed 3.5 percent pay increase, an annual bonus agreed in 2019 but not paid this year, and funeral scheme contributions.

The mayor of the Democratic Alliance-run municipality said the strike was motivated politically, coming just before the country's local elections. SAMWU denied this, saying they will comply with the court interdict while negotiations with the city administration continue.

Unpaid Namibian security guards in Keetmanshoop protest over unpaid wages

Unpaid security guards at Nkasa Security Services in Keetmanshoop, Namibia held a protest on October 20, to demand the company pay them within two days or face a summons to the Labour Court. The protesters have not been paid for three to six months.

The guards work at the University of Namibia's southern campus in Keetmanshoop and at the Keetmanshoop State Hospital. One guard said she and her family were evicted from their home twice due to being unable to pay rent.

Congo port workers confront police in Kinshasa to protest over unpaid wages

Hundreds of port workers stormed the offices of the Commercial Society of Ports and Transports (SCPT), the state-owned port company in the Democratic Republic of Congo capital Kinshasa. Police shot cans of tear gas into the building to drive the workers out. It was not clear if the clashes resulted in injuries.

The workers have been striking since October 15, to protest unpaid wages, now worth a total of \$207 million.

Schoolteachers are also on strike, angry about unpaid salaries and bonus pay, plus increases in the retirement age.

Eswatini nurses refuse to treat police after colleagues protesting for better conditions were shot

Nurses in Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) refused to treat police officers after the police shot protesting colleagues, the BBC reported on October 23.

Referring to the police as a “brood of vipers,” the Swaziland Democratic Nurses Union (SDNU) called on nurses not to treat them “in solidarity” with nurses shot during protests.

Last week, health workers and other public sector workers delivered a petition to parliament demanding better living conditions. They were met with “an “unprecedented show of force,” according to the SDNU. Nurses at three hospitals demonstrated against police repression.

There have been widespread protests since June, with over 80 killed. The small landlocked country is rated by Oxfam as the most unequal in the world. On October 22, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (a millionaire hundreds of times over) sent special envoys to discuss the crisis with King Mswati III—estimated by Forbes to own a fortune of USD 50 million, while 80 percent live on less than 2 US dollars per day.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact