

Danish nurses continue one-hour wildcat stoppages over pay and staff shortages; French transport workers continue strike wave over pay and conditions while unions hasten to shut it down; UK bus strikes planned in Wales and England over pay; workers in Cross Rivers State, Nigeria defy court order and continue strike for minimum wage

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.

Europe

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

On Wednesday, nurses across Denmark held a one-hour simultaneous wildcat strike, part of a long-running campaign organised through Facebook groups in defiance of the orders of the Danish Nurses' Council (DSR) union. Nurses have held short wildcat stoppages since the shutting down of a national strike of 6,000 nurses in August, when the government imposed a pay deal rejected twice by DSR members.

Hundreds of nurses joined the strikes, receiving support from workers in Denmark and internationally. Picket lines in Esbjerg were visited by dock workers and scaffolders, and social workers in Silkeborg walked out on a sympathy strike in September. Donations have come from supporters internationally to help pay the 86-kroner per hour fines imposed by the Labour Court.

Many nurses complained of irregular shift patterns, something ignored by the DSR in its demands during the 10-week strike. Conditions in hospitals led many nurses to quit or refuse to take extra hours. A survey of DSR members revealed that in October one in ten nurses applied for a job outside the sector.

To recover its reputation, the DSR called on members to refuse overtime, and said it will not renew an overtime agreement when it expires in January. The mass refusal of nurses to take overtime, which had been widespread before the DSR's announcement, has had a large financial impact. *Berlingske* reported last week that at Aarhus University Hospital doctors were offered over twice their base pay to take extra shifts due to the lack of nurses.

French transport workers continue strike wave while unions hasten to shut it down

Public transport workers in France continue to walk out over pay and conditions, while the unions are shutting down as many strikes as possible in order to prevent the development of a national movement.

On Tuesday, bus drivers in Brest held a one-day strike over unreasonable schedules and lack of rest to recover from the physical demands of the job. Bus and tram drivers in Bibus, Brest's transport network run by RATP-Dev, held multiple strikes through October, and protested in September about the back injuries they were suffering from driving over speed bumps repeatedly.

Bus drivers in Le Mans joined a second 24-hour strike on October 30, to oppose the sacking of two colleagues. A joint press release from the Workers' Power union, French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) and National Union of Autonomous Trade Unions condemned the sackings, for alleged fights, as "abusive," and called for fair disciplinary measures.

An eight-week strike by drivers at Transdev in Seine-et-Marne, near Paris, was ended by the unions last week after a "memorandum of understanding" was signed with the company. According to *Le Figaro*, the strike was begun to denounce the opening of the local bus operations to private competition, and the new deal mainly concerns rosters and working conditions.

The CGT, CFDT and Solidaires unions cancelled a strike on the TGV Atlantique rail lines which was scheduled to run every weekend from last Saturday, after receiving promises from the management to improve working conditions. On the weekend of October 23, drivers at TGV Atlantique, owned by the national rail company SNCF, held a two-day strike to demand increased staffing levels and resolve issues such as long unpaid waiting times between journeys, according to *Ouest France*.

Strike continues at Piraeus dock in Greece following death of worker

What began as a 24-hour stoppage last week at the port of Piraeus in Greece became a seven-day strike of dock workers, supported by a rally of local workers, including teachers, on October 28.

Dockers in Piraeus stopped work on October 25, after 46-year-old Dimitris Daglis was fatally crushed by a crane. The workers repeatedly voted to continue their strike until their demands were agreed, despite a local court ruling two 24-hour strikes “illegal,” according to *ef.syn*.

Members of the ENEDEP dockers’ union passed a resolution saying the government and the company COSCO, which operates the dock, should be held responsible for the death. They demanded a range of safety measures, 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. A banner was hung with the slogan “No more deaths for the profits of COSCO.”

ENEDEP suspended the strikes after October 31, but scheduled a new 48-hour strike from Friday, and the sailors’ union PNO called a 48-hour strike from November 10 in support.

Thousands of workers join strike over pay and conditions at Portuguese social care institutions

On October 29, a two-day strike began in the Private Social Solidarity Institutions and Misericórdias social care organisations in the Portuguese Azores islands. About 2,600 workers walked out to defend working conditions and pay, according to the *Observador*.

The Union of Public Administration and Public Service Entities (SINTAP) called on workers at day care centres, crèches, and care homes to join the strike, after a pay offer of one percent from the employers’ associations. The union called on the employers to “present a concrete counter-offer,” after they provocatively described even SINTAP’s demand of three percent as “disconnected from reality.” SINTAP said it will call a new two-day strike in the Azores on December 2 if a new offer is not made.

Workers from Misericórdias facilities around the country also protested in Lisbon on October 29, explaining most of them earn the national minimum wage.

Portuguese unions call off multiple strikes in favour of appeals to politicians

In the past week, trade unions in Portugal called off multiple strikes in favour of corporatist appeals to current and incoming capitalist politicians. Many unions announced strikes in October, calling on the government to meet their demands in the budget on October 27. Following the rejection of the budget and frantic meetings with government officials, these strikes were largely called off.

On October 27, the National Union of Pharmacists (SNF) announced it had met with the Secretary of State for Health and decided to “postpone” the strike of National Health Service pharmacists planned for the next day. According to *Lusa*, the SNF says the meeting addressed only two of their demands, but it was postponing the strike due to the failure of the budget.

The following week, two teachers’ unions and the Federation of Public Administration Unions announced they were also cancelling strikes

planned for November 5 and 12, and the Nurses’ Union said it was calling off the two-day strike due to begin Wednesday.

New strike begins at private psychiatric clinics in Brandenburg, Germany

On Thursday, around 1,300 workers at three private mental health clinics in the German state of Brandenburg began a new six-day strike during collective bargaining negotiations between operator Asklepios and the United Services Union (Verdi). The non-medical staff at the clinics held a previous six-day walkout, which ended on October 27, to demand the end in pay differences between employees in the east and west of Germany.

Verdi reported some employees in Asklepios clinics in Brandenburg earn 10,600 euros less per year than their colleagues in Hamburg. Another demand raised by workers was to be included in the same collective agreement (TVöD) as staff employed by the public sector. Verdi ended a strike of around 2,000 workers in Berlin hospitals, who raised the same demand after receiving a commitment that salaries would gradually approach the level of the TVöD. They would not reach 100 percent of that level by 2025.

German Verdi union calls for strike at Amazon warehouses

This week, Verdi called workers at seven of the nine Amazon warehouses in Germany to hold separate strikes as part of a pay dispute. According to Reuters, workers at three warehouses were called to begin a strike on November 1, and at four more warehouses the next day, for between one and three days.

Verdi called for Amazon to abide by the recently concluded collective agreement for the retail and mail-order sector. This agreement provides for pay rises below the current rate of inflation, with a pay rise of only three percent this year, and 1.7 percent the year after.

Prison guards in Antwerp, Belgium hold stoppage over understaffing and overcrowding

On October 29, guards at the Begijnenstraat prison in Antwerp, Belgium walked out in a spontaneous strike, leaving in the middle of a shift. They denounced the conditions for both staff and prisoners, following the suicide of a prisoner the previous day.

Begijnenstraat, with a capacity of 365, currently holds 738 prisoners. A spokesman for the General Union of Public Services (ACOD) said there were shifts where they were short over 20 guards. After the unions began negotiations with the local mayor, the workers returned to the job, with a promise from the mayor’s spokesperson that he would “listen to the grievances and take them to Brussels.”

Spontaneous strike at Aldi stores in Belgium over staff shortages

On Saturday, workers at 35 Aldi supermarket stores throughout the French-speaking region of Wallonia in Belgium walked out in opposition to understaffing and the unreasonable pressures placed on them, according to RTBF.

On October 18, the unions at Aldi ended a wave of strikes by signing a deal promising the hiring of several new staff and proposing that next year the company would carry out measurements of how long certain tasks take. A spokesperson for the National Centre of Employees told the *Belga* news agency “The discontent of staff was underestimated. The workers spontaneously went on strike.”

Bus drivers in Constanța, Romania walk out on spontaneous strike over pay

On Monday, drivers at CT Bus, which operates the buses in the Romanian port city of Constanța, walked out on spontaneous stoppage in support of pay demands, following broken promises from the city’s mayor. According to Radio România, the drivers received only a 200 lei increase to their monthly salary, after receiving promises from the local government to improve wages. They are demanding a 1,000 lei increase, and a 15 percent bonus for the difficult job performed by drivers and mechanics.

Engineers at cereal manufacturer Weetabix plants in Corby and Kettering, UK to double number of strikes each week

Around 80 engineers at the Weetabix plants in Kettering and Corby, England, who are currently holding 48-hour walkouts each week against the threat of fire and rehire, will move to a four-day stoppage each week from November 8. The Unite union members began their stoppages on September 21.

A Unite union press release stated that from November 8 the engineers will strike from Mondays to Thursdays. Weetabix management are using agency staff to 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 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 workers refusing to accept.

The engineers were to strike at the end of June, followed by weekly 24-hour strikes throughout the summer, but Unite union 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.

Strikes by rail staff on the London to Scotland rail sleeper service over pay and conditions

Rail staff on the overnight London to Scotland Caledonian sleeper service, operated by outsourcing company Serco, were on strike Sunday

and Monday over pay and conditions. The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members’ action led to the cancellation of services. Further walkouts are scheduled for November 11 and 12.

Originally the strikes were to be joined by RMT members at ScotRail. The ScotRail workers planned strikes to coincide with the COP26 climate summit talks taking place in Glasgow. ScotRail workers rejected a ScotRail “final offer” pay rise of 4.7 percent over two years. The RMT accepted a 2.5 percent pay offer over one year and called off the strike. Three other rail unions had already accepted ScotRail’s pay proposals.

Walkout by UK rail union administrative staff closes union conference

On October 30, administrative staff working for the RMT union walked out of the union’s annual conference being held in Leeds, England. The GMB union members alleged they were verbally abused by delegates. GMB union members also walked out of the RMT’s head office in London. The walkout forced the early closure of the conference.

Walkouts to continue at recycle centre in Sandwell, UK over safety concerns

Following five one-day stoppages, more than 100 workers at the Sandwell domestic recycling centre, run by outsourcing company Serco, plan further walkouts.

The GMB members are concerned over safety issues, including pools of dirty water, trip hazards and poor protective measures on equipment. They also raised concerns over the poor state of toilets, lack of handwashing facilities and bullying by managers. Another major issue is pay. According to the GMB, refuse drivers in Sandwell are on £8,000 a year less than drivers in nearby Birmingham.

The GMB entered talks brokered by government mediation service Acas over the dispute. The dates for planned strikes are November 15-16, 24-25, December 20-23 and January 4-7.

London College of Art staff begin third week of strikes over workload and casualisation

London College of Art staff in the UK capital began their third week of strikes over casualisation and excessive workloads.

The University and College Union (UCU) members voted by an 83 percent majority to hold the stoppages. They also began a programme of industrial action October 4, including a boycott of student assessments and marking, and refused to reschedule work not completed because of the stoppage. Around 90 percent of the staff are employed on casual contracts.

According to the UCU, over the last two years the college employed over 1,000 temporary lecturers on zero-hour contracts with restricted employment rights.

School teachers at Salford Academy, England to strike three days a week throughout November over dictatorial management practices

Following previous walkouts, UK teachers at the Co-op Academy Swinton in Salford will strike Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week in November, including this week.

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers members oppose excessive working hours, shorter lunch breaks, the elimination of pastoral care time and management's imposition of practices relating to performance management.

Cable manufacturer workers in Wrexham, Wales strike over pay

Around 200 workers at Prysmian cables in Wrexham, Wales planned a 24-hour strike on Thursday for a pay rise. Seven further 24-hour strikes are also planned. Workers are also carrying out an overtime ban. They have had no pay rise since 2019.

Prysmian is an Italian company, with its headquarters in Milan, that produces cables used in energy and telecoms sectors as well as optical fibres. The company made a €840 million profit last year.

Stagecoach bus drivers in South Wales to escalate pay strike

Around 200 bus drivers at Stagecoach in South Wales are to escalate their stoppage over pay. The Unite union members held 10 strike days over low pay.

Stagecoach, which made nearly £60 million in profits last year, refused a pay increase to bring wages up to £10.50 an hour. Unite agreed to defer a wage increase for 2020. Following intervention by government mediation service Acas, Stagecoach made two improved offers of £10.20 and then £10.30 an hour. Both offers, which came with strings, were rejected by the drivers.

The drivers, based at depots in Blackwood, Brynmawr and Cwmbran, will begin a continuous strike from November 17 until January 10 next year.

Arriva Cymru bus drivers in North Wales to strike over pay offer

Around 400 bus drivers working for Arriva Cymru in North Wales are to strike for five weeks beginning November 14 for an improved pay offer. The Unite union members voted by a 95 percent majority to walkout.

The drivers are based at depots across North Wales, including Hawarden (Chester), Bangor, Llandudno and Wrexham. Unite is offering the company the opportunity to come with an offer they can sell to their members. Unite regional officer Jo Goodchild stated in a press release, "There is a window of opportunity for the management to sit down with Unite for a constructive dialogue over pay before strike action starts on 14 November—and we urge Arriva Cymru to rise to this challenge."

Stagecoach bus workers in northeast England to walk out over pay

Around 800 bus workers employed by Stagecoach in northeast England

voted by a 92 percent majority to strike over pay.

The Unite union members will also refuse to work overtime. Strikes are planned for Monday, Wednesday and Friday next week. This will be followed by six further stoppages in November, and two in December. Depots affected include Hartlepool, Newcastle and Sunderland.

Stagecoach bus drivers in southeast England plan walk out over pay

UK bus drivers at Stagecoach in Kent and Sussex voted to strike over low pay.

The Unite union members are based at depots in Folkestone, Hastings and Herne Bay. They voted overwhelmingly to stop work after the company made an inadequate pay offer. Unite was involved in extensive negotiations with the company but failed to reach a resolution. Stoppages are scheduled for November 12, 15, 19, 22 and 26 and December 3 and 6.

Rates of pay vary according to depot, ranging from £11.10 to £11.67 an hour. Each depot was offered a different pay increase, ranging from 2.1 percent to 4.3 percent.

Ballot of bus drivers in Leeds, UK over pay

Around 900 UK drivers employed by First Bus in Leeds are balloting to strike over pay. The Unite union members rejected a one percent pay offer from the company, a pay cut in real terms. The ballot closes on November 18. Walkouts would take place early December.

Ballot of health staff in England over pay offer

A ballot of Unison union members employed by the National Health Service in England has begun to determine whether they are prepared to take industrial action over pay.

A ballot of members returned an 80 percent majority rejecting the government's three percent pay offer. Unison called for a £2,000 across-the-board rise. The ballot closes on December 5. A ballot of GMB members working in the NHS in England over pay will take place between November 10 and December 15.

UK Tesco supermarket logistic staff ballot over pay offer

Around 3,500 UK drivers and warehouse staff at supermarket giant Tesco are balloting, after rejecting an inadequate pay offer from the company.

The Unite union members work at Tesco's depots in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Didcot near Oxford, Doncaster in South Yorkshire and Thurrock near London. The ballots close on November 23, except in Belfast, which closes November 26. The workers rejected a below-inflation offer of four percent. Tesco's latest profit figure of more than £3 billion was boosted during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

Staff at four Berkshire, UK hospitals vote to strike over contract changes

Cleaners, porters and caterers at four hospitals in Berkshire, including the King Edward VII hospital in Windsor, voted by 100 percent to walk out. The GMB members oppose changes to their contracts when they were transferred from direct NHS employment to NHS Property Services. No date for any walkouts were set.

Tugboat crew at Teesport port in England ballot over pay

Tugboat crew at Switzer Marine at Teesport in northeast England are balloting over pay. The Unite union members oppose a pay freeze imposed by the employer. Teesport, the UK's fifth largest port, is part of the Johnson government's freeport strategy of increasing productivity at the expense of workers' conditions.

Switzer's parent company is the shipping container giant Maersk, which made nearly £12 billion profit last year. The ballot closes November 12. Any action would have an enormous impact on the movement of containers, car components and gas and oil imports through the port.

GMB ends strike by refuse workers in Derbyshire Dales, UK as company makes pay offer

The GMB ended a series of strikes and working to rule by UK refuse workers employed by outsourcing company Serco, contracted to provide refuse collection for Derbyshire Dales Council.

They were protesting a below-inflation pay offer and management attitude. A GMB statement said the strike was ended after Serco offered "a pay deal in line with inflation."

Strike at plastic bottle manufacturer in Wigan, England ended as union accepts below-inflation pay deal

Planned strikes of around 150 workers at the Alpha UK plastic bottle plant in Wigan were cancelled after a new pay offer from the company. The workers voted to strike after rejecting a two percent pay offer. A new offer has been accepted.

Workers on less than £25,000 a year will get a four percent rise, those on more than £25,000 will get a three percent rise, both backdated to January this year. From 2022 workers will get a 3.25 percent pay rise. Current inflation levels mean pay will leave workers little better off in real terms. The employer agreed a one percent increase in its pension contributions, and overtime rates are to rise.

The company makes plastic bottles and containers for firms such as Britvic, Coca Cola and Johnson & Johnson.

Protest by cycling instructors in London over pay and cuts

On Saturday, cycling instructors carried out a cycle ride from Trafalgar square to City Hall in the UK capital to protest budget cuts for cycle instruction in schools and poor pay and conditions.

The Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) members were protesting cuts in school budgets that provide cycle training. They also protested a pay freeze over the last 12 years, which represents a 30 percent reduction in real terms. The IWGB called on London Mayor Sadiq Khan and Deputy Mayor for Transport Heidi Alexander to restore the funding for cycle training.

Protest by UK HGV drivers over pay and conditions

On Monday, some UK HGV (heavy goods vehicle) drivers took part in a coordinated one-hour break beginning at 11am. Organised by the Trucked Off campaign and backed by the Unite union, the protest highlighted the poor pay, working conditions and long hours of HGV drivers.

Strike ballot of restaurant staff at London luxury store

Dozens of UK restaurant workers at Harrods luxury store in London are balloting for possible strike action over low pay.

Chefs and waiters represented by the United Voices of the World union want pay to be raised to £12 an hour from its current £9 an hour. They are also protesting a heavy workload after staff cuts. Any agreed strike action will take place in Christmas week.

Unite union calls off strike of lorry drivers delivering components to Oxford, UK car factory

A planned November 9 strike of lorry drivers working for Imperial Logistics, delivering components to the BMW Mini car production factory in Oxford, was called off after workers accepted a pay offer.

The lorry delivery drivers voted overwhelmingly to strike after agency drivers taken on to cover a shortage of drivers were being paid £3 more an hour. The permanent drivers accepted a 27 percent pay rise over two years. They were also awarded a lump sum of £3,500 in lieu of back pay.

Ancillary staff at London hospital in pay ballot

Staff working for outsourcing company Serco at St Bartholomew's Hospital, in the UK capital are to ballot for action over pay.

The Unite union members who work as cleaners and porters earn around 15 percent less than directly NHS employed workers. They rejected a below-inflation pay offer of one percent. The workers are seeking a significant pay rise. They also accuse Serco of bullying tactics. Serco's contract is due to expire in April 2023 and Unite is calling for the contract to be brought back in house.

Unite union suspends pay strike of Scaffolders at Billingham, UK chemical plant

The Unite union suspended a planned strike of around 25 scaffolders working on the Mitsubishi chemicals plant on Teesside, England, due to begin Thursday.

The Unite union members, who voted unanimously to strike, are employed by Altrad on a basic rate of £12.06 an hour, compared to the National Agreement for Engineering Construction Industry agreed rate of £17.45 an hour. Unite announced the suspension to allow for talks this week. A Unite press release stated the strike action due to take place until December 4 will resume next week if talks make no progress.

Middle East

Ongoing strikes by Iranian oil workers at three companies

Strikes by oil contract workers in Iran continue as they fight for pay and improved conditions.

On October 30, workers employed by Abadan Petrochemical in Khuzestan held a protest on their second day of a strike. They are demanding higher pay, job security and the reinstatement of four sacked colleagues.

On October 29, workers employed by the Kayson Contracting Company at the Kuh-e-Mubarak Jask Petrochemical company walked out over not being paid for six months.

The same day, workers at the Bistoon Petrochemical repair plant in the city of Kermanshah held a stoppage over the company's failure to implement previous promises to improve working conditions.

Lebanese public administration workers plan stoppage

On Monday, the public administration employees' association announced it would come out on continuous strike on Thursday.

In its strike announcement, the administrative workers' association said it had put off calling the strike for the last five months. The workers have not had pay rises since 2019. In addition, the Lebanese currency saw its value erode by 90 percent, meaning the workers are unable to afford necessities.

Separately on Monday, health workers at the Saida government hospital ended their month-long strike, after the hospital and Health Ministry agreed to improve their working conditions.

Africa

Workers in Cross Rivers State, Nigeria continue strike for minimum wage

Workers in Cross Rivers State, Nigeria are continuing their stoppage for payment of the agreed minimum wage, in defiance of a court order obtained by the state government to end the strike. The

strike began on October 12.

The Nigeria Labour Congress, the Trade Union Congress and the Joint Public Service Negotiating Council also accuse the state government of owing retirees who worked in the civil service and local government around N48 billion. Other demands concern lack of promotions, and the failure to reinstate 33 workers wrongly deleted from the payroll.

Doctors in Kwara State, Nigeria walk out over pay

Doctors and other health workers in Kwara State, Nigeria began a seven-day stoppage over pay on November 1. The National Association of Government General Medical and Dental Practitioners members are concerned about broken promises on supplementary payments, paid to doctors in other states.

The state government offered 70 percent of the promised supplements, so the union opted for a face-saving "warning strike."

Unemployed workers protest for benefits and social support in Johannesburg, South Africa

Over 50 former employees of the City of Ekurhuleni municipality, Johannesburg, South Africa marched to the Department of Employment and Labour October 27, demanding their names be removed from the employee database so that they can access benefits and social grants.

The unemployed workers, organised by the Simunye Workers Forum, cannot claim benefits from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and are ineligible for social grants from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) as they are still registered as working with the municipality. They demand the Department of Labour amend the database to reflect their unemployed status and investigate corruption in the municipality, which they allege caused the anomaly in the first place.

Many of the former workers were employed under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the discredited African National Congress government scheme introduced in 2003, in which unemployed people do temporary work in the public sector, without the salary or benefits afforded to direct employees.

Casual EPWP workers in North West province recently protested when their child support grants were cut after the government's Department of Public Works misinformed SASSA of their true earnings.

South African student accommodation workers' strike for better pay and conditions ends after union agrees sellout deal

The eight-week strike by over 190 student housing workers employed by South Point, a major private student accommodation provider in Johannesburg, Durban, Pretoria, Cape Town and Gqeberha, South Africa ended October 29.

The General Industries Workers Union of South Africa members currently earn R4,300 a month, but due to outsourcing and a new

rota system many earn just R2,000. They demanded a R12,500 a salary and other benefits including backdated UIF COVID-19 temporary relief payments, but the union agreed to a five percent wage increase and other minor concessions.

South Point houses 13,000 students, and receives up to R35,000 per year for each from the government's National Student Financial Aid Scheme. The company has R4 billion in assets.

Libyan doctors to hold nationwide strike over pay and conditions

Doctors in Libya plan a nationwide strike, although a date has not yet been announced by the unions involved. The unions complained about the “disregard” shown by Prime Minister Abdel-Hamid Dbaiba, who has ignored calls for a meeting to discuss pay and conditions.

There were also announcements of sit-ins at Benina International Airport in Libya, as employees of the airport administration and the Libyan Airlines Company responded to delayed salary payments over the last 17 months.

Ugandan road workers strike over pay arrears

Road workers on a 10 kilometre-long Kitale-Gerenge road in Garuga, Uganda walked out on October 11, over non-payment of wages.

The strikers are mainly unskilled labourers. Joachim Kiiza, a drainage builder working on the Kitale-Gerenge road project since June 2018, said he received no salary for five months, causing his daughter to miss her final exams at university.

The temporary workers on the project had 30 per cent deducted from their wages under false pretences for two years. Managers claimed the money was paid into a pay-as-you-earn fund. When the fraud was uncovered, the deductions stopped but the outstanding amounts were not repaid. Workers were also promised meals that were never provided.

For 18 months, workers were not provided with safety boots, gloves or helmets, even when handling molten tarmac. Some of the managers claimed that all workers were paid in full.

Ugandan doctors are also preparing to strike from November 6, over the government's refusal to give them a pay rise. The Uganda Medical Association said that intern doctors were promised a rise.



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