

Danish nurses conclude wildcat strikes against imposed pay deal; disputes continue across French medical sector over pay and conditions; Greek seafarers' 48-hour nationwide strike over pay and conditions; Armenian ambulance drivers strike over pandemic workload; Libyan doctors continue indefinite pay stoppage

## 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.*

### Organising group winds up Danish nurses' 10-week one-hour wildcat strikes for now

Last Wednesday's one-hour wildcat strike by Danish nurses was the last for the time being, the national organising group announced. It concludes a 65-day series of strikes against a government-enforced collective bargaining agreement, held in defiance of the orders of the Danish Nurses Council (DSR) union.

The wildcat stoppages continued since the shutting down of a union-approved national strike of 6,000 nurses in August, when the government imposed a pay deal twice rejected by DSR members. Nurses organised the strikes through Facebook.

The labour court ruled that nurses can be docked 86 kroner per hour for the unsanctioned strikes. The nurses received widespread support across Denmark and internationally, with workers joining their picket lines and sending donations to help pay the fines.

To recover its reputation, the DSR called on members to refuse overtime. Members already began this before the union's call. The DSR also said it will not renew an overtime agreement which expires in January.

The union ignored nurses' complaints of irregular shift patterns in its demands. Conditions led many nurses to quit, with a DSR survey last month revealing one in ten nurses have applied for jobs outside the sector.

On Monday and Tuesday, nurses at Odense walked out for an hour ahead of Wednesday's national strike. Lucas Pristed, an Odense nurse on the strike organising group, posted that this was to draw attention to conditions across the whole healthcare system. Recruitment and retention are critical, and salaries and conditions must be improved across the board.

Announcing that Wednesday's national strike would be the last "in its current form," Pristed said nurses were "at the forefront of the fight for

better working conditions, sustainable wages and recruitment, better quality of treatment and better patient safety."

### Indefinite strike at Laval A&E highlights lack of resources in French hospitals

Staff at Laval hospital, near Lyon, are continuing their indefinite protest strike at lack of resources. The crisis was revealed in the first week of November, when the hospital's A&E department was forced to close for four nights due to a shortage of doctors.

Caroline Brémaud, head of A&E, said there were not enough doctors to treat all the patients coming to the emergency room. "It is not only the emergency room in Laval, but the entire public hospital service in France that is collapsing," she told *Le Figaro*, "With increasingly difficult emergencies in many municipalities." Without recruitment, she warned, A&E was at risk of closing five nights a week.

This situation is occurring across the country. Bailleul Hospital closed its A&E at night until November 8, while Ambert hospital's A&E was closed from October 27 because there was no interim doctor.

### French GPs continue to shut down home visits demanding modernisation of pay rates

French general practitioners in the SOS Médecins association are continuing to shut down home visits. They demand the payment for home visits, the same for 15 years, be raised.

They are calling for the current rate of 35 euros be raised to 57.60 euros, and an increase in their travel allowance, which remains capped at 10 euros. Home visits account for 60-70 percent of the daily activity of the association's 1,300 members—around three million home visits each year.

The protests began with an action on September 29, but there has been no response to their demands. Fabrice Massoulard, president of the

Limoges regional association of SOS Médecins told press, “We feel despised by authorities.”

Massoulard said, “Until further notice we will continue the total shutdown of visits.”

### **French national road haulage strike over pay and conditions extended**

A one-day protest strike action by French road hauliers announced for today has been extended into November 13.

The Sud-Solidaires union originally called the action to pressure the annual national agreement negotiations, begun November 10, to reassess pay scales and raise drivers’ wages.

The negotiations discuss pay scales for all grades under the national collective agreement. The companies argue their margins are tight and the price of road transport is low. Critics say for several years some drivers earned less than the minimum wage, depending on seniority.

The original call noted pay was not the only issue, pointing to pensions and conditions, especially the right to early retirement remunerated by the company (CFA). Facing labour shortages, employers are trying to end the right to CFA and further extend working life, disregarding the physical demands of the job.

Although Sud-Solidaires originally specified only a one-day strike, drivers’ enthusiasm for the action forced the union to extend it for a second day.

### **Union suspends bus and tram wages and conditions strike in Montpellier, France**

The Workers’ Force (FO) union suspended a month-long transport strike in Montpellier, France. The strike of workers on TaM 3M buses and trams was to begin with a protest today, then run from November 15 to December 31. Today’s protest will take still place.

The strike was called to demand a wage increase under compulsory annual negotiations, an improvement in working conditions, and the compulsory allocation of Saturdays to drivers on their fourth and fifth week of annual leave.

When the strike was announced, FO said they would lift the action if agreements were reached. Announcing the suspension of the strike, FO said they had reached a wage agreement below their demands. Today’s protest will continue because the union admitted it had not received enough concrete answers on working conditions.

### **Nantes, France baggage-handlers strike against “blackmail in employment”**

French baggage-handlers employed by Aviapartners at Nantes airport called a one-day strike Monday, protesting at “excessive flexibility, the decline in social gains and “blackmail in employment.”

CGT members held a one-day strike at the company in July over the same issues. The union noted the company benefited from public money during the pandemic, and shareholders were “doing very well,” and only workers were expected to pay.

### **Greek seafarers’ 48-hour nationwide strike over pay and conditions**

Sailors on Greek passenger ships began a 48-hour nationwide strike on November 10 and may escalate it. No boats are travelling between the mainland and the Greek islands.

The Panhellenic Maritime Union (PNO) members are calling for salary increases and collective wage agreements. A union statement explained the reluctance and negative behaviour of employers in drawing a new collective bargaining agreement for 2020-21. The problems faced by seafarers continue to accumulate, with permanent violation of collective agreements on working hours and payment of accrued salaries.

The strike is also raising demands over poor working conditions, sailors’ health and the granting of pensions.

These attacks are part of a series of anti-labour laws introduced under the pretext of the pandemic. Workers at the port of Piraeus, near Athens hung a banner reading “All out to fight, abolish laws against workers’ [rights].”

### **Armenian ambulance drivers strike in capital over pay to compensate increased workload**

Ambulance drivers in the Armenian capital Yerevan walked out on November 2. They are demanding more pay to compensate for their increased workload as a result of the pandemic.

Drivers complain their pay has not risen, but they are being called out to 30-40 calls every day. One driver told press he regularly conducts twice as many emergency calls in a 24-hour shift as the number specified in his contract. Drivers say they do not even have time for meal breaks.

Drivers told *News.am* they are struggling to live on their wages. Each driver works every three days and receives 11,700 AMD per working day. One driver, Serzhik Gasparyan, said “I have 111,300 ADM per month. On the days that we go to work, we are busy all 24 hours and there is not a minute of time for rest.”

Another protester explained drivers must find other work to support their families. “The first day we are ambulance drivers, the other two days we are taxi drivers. But how long can you maintain such a schedule?”

Ambulance director Taguhi Stepanyan defended the wages, saying “these are the prices in general in this area.” She acknowledged conditions are the issue because of the pandemic, but said the workload was even greater in 2020, “so ultimatums in this case are inappropriate.” She said any salary increases would require negotiations and planning.

On October 16, Minister of Health Anahit Avetisyan said Armenia’s health system was overloaded due to an increase of coronavirus cases and a low vaccination rate. Mandatory mask-wearing was introduced on November 1. The country, with a population just over 3 million, recorded 325,521 cases and 6,867 deaths to date

### **Transport workers in Faro, Portugal strike over pay**

Workers in Portugal at transport company PXM (Próximo) Transportes Urbanos de Faro, part of the Barraqueiro Group, came walked out for four days last week.

The Union of Road and Urban Transport Workers of Portugal (STRUP) members are demanding an increase in basic salary to 750 euros, the revision of maximum unpaid rest time from three to two hours and full

integration of the sole agent allowance into their salary.

Since ticket collectors were abolished, drivers received a subsidy as compensation for the collection of tickets. They want to see this subsidy integrated into their salary, and “not just 5 percent of the 25 percent of the normal working hour,” according to STRUP regional coordinator Paolo Afonso.

### **Metro and bus workers in Portuguese capital continue partial strikes**

Transport workers in Lisbon, Portugal continue partial strikes over wages and conditions.

On November 4, Lisbon Metro workers closed the network in a 24-hour strike over a wage freeze, and to demand the immediate hiring of operational staff. Earlier in the week, a partial strike by metro workers coincided with the latest 24-hour strike by bus workers at Rodoviária de Lisboa (RL), who are demanding a salary increase to 730 euros this year and 750 euros in 2022.

The average RL salary is around 700 euros (gross), while the national minimum salary is 665 euros.

The metro strike by members of the Federation of Transport and Communications Unions followed a series of earlier strikes on the same issues in May and June, and again in October.

The union restricted these to partial strikes as far as possible. On November 2, most workers were on strike between 5 and 9.30am, with administrative workers striking between 9.30 and 12.30.

On Monday the union began a 10-day overtime ban that is renewable. RL workers are also on an overtime ban.

The November 2 strike coincided with the latest RL 24-hour strike. João Casimiro, of the Independent Union of Lisbon Bus Workers (SITRL), told *Lusa* the strike was observed by 70 percent of bus workers. Management claim it was only 55 percent.

SITRL has announced a 48-hour stoppage for December 2-3, along the same lines, “until the administration listens to us.”

### **Dutch metalworkers to begin stoppages over pay**

On November 15, Dutch metalworkers will hold the first 24-hour strike in a series of work stoppages planned to last until November 22. Workers rejected the company pay offers made under the national collective agreement, and the companies failed to meet an October 28 ultimatum issued by the CNV, FNV and De Unie unions.

The collective labour agreement covers some 320,000 workers in companies in the small metal industry, the installation and insulation sector, bodywork construction and gold and silversmiths.

Employers’ body the Federation of Employers’ Organisations for Technology (FWT) says it offered an average wage increase of 2.8 percent for 2019-22 and a gross monthly increase of 42.50 euros. The FNV is demanding a five percent increase and a minimum gross hourly wage of 14 euros, while the CNV is demanding a 110-euro gross monthly increase.

The CNV says that after adjustment the pay offer only amounts to 1.4 percent. Inflation is rising, and prices have recently risen by 3.4 percent.

### **Belgian oil sector unions to strike over pay rise**

Workers across the Belgian oil sector will strike on November 15. The sector employs around 6,700 workers. The unions already issued an indefinite strike notice, which still stands. Andrea Della Vecchia of the ABVV union told press that “perhaps more actions will follow” after Monday’s strike.

Employers called together union negotiators last week, claiming to have a “broader mandate” for discussion. Their offer was a refusal of any gross pay increase for 2021, with the 2022 rise restricted to 0.4 percent.

Retroactive settlement of any pay rise was essential to any agreement, while workers are also concerned about job security, end of career arrangements and conditions.

No further negotiations are scheduled for now. The employers are keen to resume discussion with the unions, saying, “We have always favoured social dialogue.”

### **Unions limit protest at Belgian insurance sector’s “unacceptable” wage agreement**

On Monday, Belgian unions held a small protest demonstration outside the offices of Assuralia, the insurance companies’ association. The demonstration accused Assuralia of an “unacceptable” position in national wage negotiations. It was a token gesture on the day the unions’ previous strike notice expired without a strike or major action.

Assuralia proposed a one-off 250-euro coronavirus bonus. The unions were seeking a 500-euro bonus and a wage increase of 0.4 percent. Other demands included an increase in training, and the establishment of a minimum framework for remote working.

The insurance sector saw a 25 percent growth in profit in 2020, reaping 2.8 billion euros.

Having let one strike notice elapse, the unions will meet Assuralia again next week. Philippe Samek, national secretary of the CNE, said that without improvement in Assuralia’s offer, “there will be action.”

### **Further strike at Belgian Aldi stores over staff shortages**

Workers at 37 Aldi stores in the French-speaking region of Wallonia in Belgium held a second strike last Wednesday. This followed action the previous Saturday, over “unreasonable” productivity demands and lack of staff, after negotiations with the CNE union failed to reach an agreement.

In October, unions ended a previous wave of strikes by signing a deal promising the hiring of new staff and proposing that the company next year measure how long certain tasks take. The company continues to hide behind implementation time for new procedures, while making clear they are only looking at change beneficial to their profits. A company spokesman said, “The dialogue on the number of hours worked... is also being conducted in collaboration with shop managers to see if adjustments are necessary.”

### **Airport shuttle bus workers in Barcelona, Spain call week-long strike over conditions**

Spanish workers at the Aerobús shuttle bus service between El Prat airport and Barcelona are to strike for one week, December 2-8.

Galician company Monbus took over the service in July, one of several franchises it operates in the Barcelona area.

The UGT union members raised several issues, including disregard for effective working time, the payment of overtime and allowances, calculation of the working day according to previous agreements, cuts in travel times, delayed payroll payments and a lack of information for workers' legal representatives.

Workers are also challenging management moves to make them responsible for refilling the buses' fuel, oil and brake fluid. This handling of "highly flammable" material is not covered by the existing arbitration agreements awarded in 2001 and marks an increasing casualisation of duties.

### **Serbian cutting tool workers protest at closed factory**

Around 150 workers from the Factory of Cutting Tools (FRA) in ?ak, Serbia protested last week outside the plant, which closed a month earlier.

Production was halted and pre-bankruptcy proceedings opened because of vast debts and a long-term suspension of its account. The factory is some 29.7 million euros in debt and owes around two million dinars (£14,500 for gas alone).

The workers were laid off and put on a social programme, but the Commercial Court refused to declare the factory bankrupt, as the Ministry of Economy requested. The Ministry of Defence blocked this on the grounds it would jeopardise supplies to the Serbian defence industry.

Negotiations began with a private company to lease the factory and continue FRA's production, but these were delayed over the high lease charges being demanded. The factory's industrial union is championing this option for the future employment of the workers and denounced the refusal to implement bankruptcy as "unrealistic."

Workers are unhappy that the director remains in the factory as the sole paid employee. The union said that if there is no response from the authorities the workers will protest again on Friday.

### **Dagestan minibus drivers strike over fines imposed on drivers**

Minibus drivers in Kizlyar, Dagestan went on strike late last month. The drivers were protesting fine arrangements under the new coronavirus restrictions. Passengers are required to wear masks, but if they do not the fines are imposed on drivers.

The day after a new QR-code system was introduced across the country, drivers boycotted passengers without masks and refused to go on their routes. Only when the mayor intervened and allowed them to refuse maskless passengers did they return to work.

The problem is affecting the whole country. Minibus drivers in Makhachkala produced a video message asking passengers to wear masks because it is the drivers who are fined for violations. Passengers protested on social media that the measures are ineffective because the minibuses are constantly overcrowded.

Makhachkala drivers were also on strike to demand a reduction in the transport companies' daily revenue plan and returning the passenger fare to its earlier rate. Local residents, who supported the strike, called the increase unreasonable, pointing to widespread price hikes across the region.

In 2019, local carriers raised the fare from 17 to 23 rubles. On October 18, the company raised the fare again from 23 to 27 rubles. In July, two

companies restored the fare following an intervention by the country's antimonopoly body, and four other companies were also instructed to cancel their decision to raise fares.

Astoria LLC drivers went on strike against raising their daily revenue targets, and demanded the dismissal of the company's general director, Alexander Kubalov. Following a meeting with city deputy head Khakim Ashikov last week, transport company bosses decided to suspend drivers from work and recruit a scab workforce to break the strike.

The city authority is backing the transport companies. A transport department spokesman said drivers "do not have the right to demand the resignation of the general director and the cancellation of the daily plan, this is a private company" and they are bound by its conditions.

A post about the strike on a Dagestan public page on Instagram revealed widespread support for the strikers. One user commented "You did the right thing!"

### **Stoppage of UK shoe distributor workers against fire and rehire threat now in sixth week**

Around 100 UK workers at the Clarks shoe manufacturer's Westway distribution centre in Street, Somerset are continuing their strike over a fire and rehire threat.

The Community union members voted by an 88 percent majority to walk out, begun October 4. The firm was taken over in February by Lion Rock, a Hong Kong-based private equity firm.

Lion Rock wants to cut overtime rates, sick pay, redundancy and call out pay, and reduce pay and parental leave. The company wants the hourly rate reduced to £9.50 an hour, the minimum wage for adults. It is also seeking the abolition of 30-minute paid lunch breaks and 10-minute paid coffee breaks.

The BBC reported November 10 states the union accused Clarks of using agency staff to cover the work of strikers, which is illegal. Clarks admits using agency staff but denies they are used as strike breakers. Community raised the case of one agency worker operating a forklift truck, which is normally driven by a striker. Clarks said this was an isolated incident and a senior manager intervened to stop it.

Staff at Clarks headquarters, also in Street, accepted the changes

### **Engineers at cereal manufacturer Weetabix plants in Corby and Kettering, UK escalate strike action against pay cuts**

From Monday around 80 engineers at the Weetabix plants in Kettering and Corby, England, stepped up their strike, moving to a four-day stoppage each week.

The Unite union members walked out two days a week since September 21. Weetabix management are using agency staff to resolve production problems 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 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.

### **Further 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, plan stoppages on Thursday and Friday.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members are taking the action over pay and conditions following stoppages on October 31 and November 1. The Caledonian sleeper service runs overnight between London and major destinations in Scotland.

The RMT called off strikes planned at ScotRail to coincide with the COP26 climate summit, accepting a 2.5 percent pay offer over one year, despite workers rejecting the company's "final offer" of 4.7 percent over two years.

### **Fire safety crews at Scottish nuclear bases continue action over job cuts**

Scottish fire and rescue staff at nuclear submarine bases on the Clyde, Scotland began an overtime ban on September 19 and took several six-hour stoppages over planned job cuts.

The 45 Unite union members oppose 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.

They plan further stoppages on November 10, 16, 18 and 22. The fire and rescue workers raised concerns over resilience crews drafted in to cover for strike periods. They fear they do not have the skills needed to deal with marine incidents and nuclear radiation. The workers are also protesting the non-delivery of promised new fire engines and equipment.

### **Tram drivers in Nottingham, UK hold 24-hour strike over pay**

UK tram drivers working for the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) held a 24-hour stoppage beginning on Saturday.

The GMB members rejected two pay offers from NET, the latest one being a three percent rise. A GMB press release stated further strikes could take place in November if NET did not make an improved offer.

### **Massive vote in favour of strike by London Underground drivers over attacks on pensions and conditions**

Drivers on the UK's London Underground (tube) system voted by a near 99 percent majority to strike against management plans change contracts and attack pensions.

The ASLEF members oppose plans by Transport for London (TfL) and the Conservative government to unilaterally implement changes to their contracts. They fear it will lead to cuts in pension provision and worse working conditions.

TfL says it faces a financial crisis as demand for travel dropped off during the pandemic, despite getting a near £4 billion government bailout. No date has been announced for the network-wide stoppage. The RMT is to organise a ballot over the same issue.

### **UK academics vote to strike over pay, conditions and pensions**

The result of a ballot of academics working in UK universities over pay and pensions were announced last week.

The University and College Union (UCU) members took part in separate ballots. Overall 70 percent at 21 institutions voted to strike over pay, over 76 percent at 33 institutions voted to strike over the attacks on pay and pensions, and four voted for stoppages over pensions. In total, 58 universities voted to strike.

The UCU's higher education committee will meet November 12 to decide how to proceed. Staff face around 35 percent drop in the value of their pensions.

The University and Colleges Employers Association made a pay increase offer of 1.5 percent. This represents 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 sellout of nationwide industrial action in 2018 over 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 by workers and students to establishing a corporatist Joint Expert Panel on pensions with employers.

### **College lecturers in London win reversal of contract changes after they threaten stoppages**

Teaching staff at the United Colleges Group (UCG) in London won a reversal of contract changes after a strike threat.

The UCU members at the College of Northwest London and the City of Westminster which make up the UCG voted 99 percent in favour of striking after UCG management failed to implement an agreement arrived at when the colleges fused to form UCG in 2107. From September 2020, UCG removed timetabled non-teaching hours from the lecturers' contracts.

Following the strike threat, the UCG restored the non-teaching hours and offered other improvements.

### **Staff at electrical appliance depot in Cardiff, Wales to strike over pay**

Staff at Panasonic's depot in Cardiff, Wales are set to walk out over pay.

The GMB union members had their pay frozen last year. This year, the depot's management offered one percent, a cut in real terms. When the workforce turned it down, Panasonic withdrew the deal and put forward a

pay freeze for a second year. Strikes will take place November 15 and 22.

### **Ballot of ancillary staff at London hospital over pay**

Staff working for outsourcing company Serco at St Bartholomew's Hospital, in the UK capital are balloting 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 want a significant pay rise. They also accuse Serco of bullying tactics. Serco's contract will expire in April 2023 and Unite is calling for the contract to be brought back in house. The ballot closes on December 8.

### **Scottish school exam staff to ballot over redundancy terms as exam body is to be scrapped**

Staff working for the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) are to take part in a consultative ballot as the SQA is being wound up.

The Unite union members are concerned about redundancy terms as the current exam body will be replaced by a new body. The last two years saw the SQA in crisis as exams were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Exam results were determined using an algorithm, leading to claims of discrimination against pupils in more deprived areas.

### **Supermarket delivery workers at DHL, England to ballot over pay offer**

Around 140 UK food delivery drivers working for logistics firm DHL are balloting for a walk out over pay.

The Unite union members are contracted by Sainsbury's to deliver supplies to their supermarkets across the southwest of England. They rejected a three percent pay offer over 18 months, a pay cut in real terms. The ballot began on Thursday and closes November 25.

### **Housing association workers ballot over pay in Manchester, England**

Around 230 UK housing association workers employed by Onward Housing and Hyndburn Home Repairs Ltd in Greater Manchester are balloting over pay.

The Unite union members rejected a one percent pay offer. The association's director got a 12 percent rise taking their pay to £262,000 while executives got a 25 percent pay rise. The ballot closes on November 22.

### **Unite union calls off strike of bus drivers in Loughborough, England as company offers new pay deal**

Unite called off 11 days of stoppages by UK bus drivers working for Kinchbus in Loughborough. It was due to have taken place over the next four weeks beginning Saturday.

The drivers accepted a new offer of an 8.5 percent rise for drivers with less than six months service and 5.3 percent for those with over six months service.

### **Unite union calls off planned strike by lorry drivers in Basildon, UK as company offers improved pay deal**

Unite called off a planned strike by around 80 UK drivers working for Wincanton, Essex after they were offered pay rises of between 20 and 30 percent depending on the shifts they work. The drivers are under contract to deliver to Argos stores.

### **Unite union suspends strike of ancillary staff at Dundee University, Scotland over pension changes**

On Monday, Unite suspended strike action by ancillary workers at Dundee University, Scotland with effect from Tuesday.

The workers were holding stoppages to protest the university's plan to move from a defined benefits pension scheme to a defined contributions pension. It would have meant some lower paid workers losing up to half the value of their pensions.

A Unite press release said the university's management team "will now work with the trade unions to explore all Defined Benefit options."

### **UK driving examiners accept deal after PCS union suspends strike over increasing workload**

Driving test examiners working for the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) voted by a 90 percent majority to accept an agreement after a two-day planned strike due to have begun October 18 was suspended by the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union.

Around 1,000 DVSA staff voted for the stoppages over plans by management to increase the number of driving tests the examiners are expected to do from seven to eight a day. DVSA management agreed to postpone the introduction of the eighth test for at least a year. The PCS will hold meetings with the DVSA over workloads.

### **Protest by fast food delivery workers over parking facilities in London**

Fast food delivery workers employed by UberEats and Deliveroo, protested outside McDonald's fast food outlet in Dalston in London on Wednesday. They also refused to take orders from the outlet.

The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain members were protesting McDonald's refusal to let the delivery riders use its parking facilities while waiting for orders. Following the protest, the workers planned to march to Hackney town hall.

### **Protests by retired Iranian steel workers over pensions**

Retired steel workers held protest rallies in Isfahan and Khuzestan on Sunday. They were protesting the deterioration of their living conditions as the value of their pensions diminish.

It follows similar rallies in other cities. The Iranian currency lost around 80 percent of its value over the last few years. Iran has been subject to an ongoing economic boycott by the United States.

### **Strike and protest by Iranian auto workers over wage arrears**

Iranian auto workers in Tabriz employed by the Khodro company walked out on Sunday. They held a protest rally the same day over wage arrears stretching back several months.

### **One-day general strike in Tunisian city following death at rubbish tip protest**

A general strike took place in the town Aguerb, Tunisia on November 10. It was organised by the UGTT trade union and involved public and private sector workers. A protest march also took place.

The strike and march were to protest the death of 35-year-old Abderrazek Lacheheb, who died the previous day at a protest against the re-opening of rubbish dump. He died after being tear-gassed by security forces. The landfill site was closed in September following protests against the dumping of toxic chemical waste at the site meant only for domestic waste.

Africa

### **Libyan doctors continue indefinite pay stoppage**

Libyan doctors are continuing their strike begun in early November into a second week. It is mainly over low pay and lack of recognition of the role played by health workers in the pandemic.

The strike excludes those involved in emergencies and urgent operations.

Head of the Libyan General Medical Council Mohamed Al-Ghouj reported that some hospitals “have been suffering from a cut in doctors’ salaries for four or five years.”

### **South African bus drivers at company in Pretoria wildcat strike for pay**

Bus drivers employed by Putco in Tshwane, Pretoria, South Africa carried out a wildcat strike November 5. They oppose the company

applying to the Labour court for an exemption for payment of annual bonuses, which they say is unaffordable.

The company was forced to agree payment of the 2020 bonus but intended to head off workers’ demands for the 2021 payment through negotiations with their union.

Putco, a listed company providing services in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces with a fleet of 1400 buses transporting over 230,000 passengers daily, is the biggest commuter bus operator in the country.

### **Casual health workers in Mpumalanga, South Africa demonstrate for permanent employment, salaries and benefits**

Community Health Workers (CHW), Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners and Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers in Mpumalanga province, South Africa protested October 29 outside the provincial legislative buildings. They are demanding to be absorbed as permanent workers into the health service.

The National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers members want the same salary and benefits as permanent staff and say the health care system could not function without them. The workers, casually employed on fixed-term contracts, serve the poorest sections of South African society.

The EPWP is a discredited African National Congress government scheme in which unemployed people do temporary work in the public sector but without the salary or benefits afforded to direct employees. CHW and ECD workers are often employed semi-informally in community settings where most families are on a low income.

### **Local government workers in Kenyan capital ready for strike**

Over 6,850 members of staff at the Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS) in Kenya are preparing to walk out over the delay in the payment of their October salaries.

The Kenya County Government Workers Union delayed calling a strike, instead sending letters to the NMS management calling the non-payment “saddening” and making a “humble appeal” for them to change course. No date has been given for the start of the strike.

### **Ugandan junior doctors to strike over pay**

Over 1,400 Ugandan junior doctors are set to take strike action over the government's refusal to increase their salaries and improve their conditions as promised.

The president of the Uganda Medical Association (UMA) described the junior doctors as “our first-line workers” but failed to address why they were neglected after they put themselves at risk by working through the pandemic. The government promised to increase their pay a month after they walked out in May, in order to secure a return to work.

In Uganda, junior doctors must do one year of clinical practice in hospitals to get a license to practice.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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