French public transport workers continue wave of strikes over pay and conditions; shop workers at major South African retailer on indefinite strike over pay and job cuts; rail workers in Nigeria hold three-day strike over unpaid wages and conditions

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

French public transport workers continue wave of strikes over pay and conditions

Public transport workers in France are continuing strikes over pay and conditions this week, after a continued deterioration of working conditions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Monday, bus drivers on the public transport network in Lyon began a three-day strike, the latest in a series to denounce the danger they face from increasing passenger violence. The stoppages began after somebody fired a gun at a bus returning to a depot in September and have continued despite an agreement signed between the operator Keolis and the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and Workers' Force unions, who do not represent a majority of the strikers. On Monday, in the city of Metz, tram and bus drivers also held a one-day strike as part of a pay dispute with Keolis.

Train drivers on regional lines for the national rail company SNCF held a one-day strike on Wednesday, to demand a pay rise, and hundreds joined a protest outside the company headquarters called by the CGT and Solidaires unions. According to *Le Figaro*, long-distance rail lines were excluded from the stoppage, and two of the four largest unions in the rail sector did not call on their members to join.

As part of a long-running dispute over working conditions, bus and tram drivers in Brest held a further one-day strike on Monday. Bus drivers protested in September over injuries sustained by driving over speed bumps repeatedly, and held numerous stoppages since then over the state of the vehicles and other conditions.

Another strike on the city's "Bibus" public transport network, run by RATP-Dev, is planned for November 27, while coach drivers at a Transdev subsidiary in Brest are on an indefinite strike over working conditions since the start of October, according to *Ouest France*.

In Reims the CGT and Solidaires unions called a one-day walkout of bus and tram workers on Thursday, at the same time as a vote of the local government on whether to terminate its contract with Transdev. Workers want the public transport network to be taken back under the municipality's direct control.

Midwives and other healthcare workers in France continue strikes over pay and staff shortages

Midwives in French hospitals continued several stoppages this week against deteriorating working conditions, while other strikes continue across the healthcare sector. *Ouest France* reported that on Monday, midwives at one hospital in Vannes had been on indefinite strike for a month.

The midwives say they intend to continue until their demand for an increase in salary reflecting the level of their training is met. On the same day, 27 midwives in Amiens who have been on strike since October 22 held a demonstration to draw attention to their low pay and staffing levels.

Anaesthetist nurses nationwide began a strike on November 8, which ends on Friday, also to demand salaries in line with the training and responsibility of their job. A demonstration is planned in Paris on November 25.

Undocumented workers in French post office strike to demand regularisation and humane working conditions

On Monday, around 40 undocumented immigrant workers in Essonne, outside Paris, walked out to oppose their exploitation at work, according to *Ouest France*.

They reported that subsidiaries DPD, part of the French national postal company La Poste, sanctioned abusive working practices through "a cascade of subcontracting," and denounced incorrect pay, unpaid hours and punishing schedules. The strikers also demand they are provided with official immigration status.

La Poste denied any responsibility for the situation, claiming that there was no proof of "any link between (the strikers) and DPD France."

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Long-running strike at Fiat Plastic in Serbia against pay cut continues

Workers at the Fiat Plastic auto parts plant in Kragujevac, Serbia, are continuing their indefinite strike begun in January. The strike began to oppose a 300 euro pay cut, but the strike committee stated it intends to continue until not only has the pay cut been reversed but all the machinery removed during the strike is returned.

The strike initially began as a one-hour-per-shift stoppage but escalated to an all-out strike in February. The workers involved set up their own independent union and strike committee, condemning the main Serbian trade unions for abandoning them. Their organisations met representatives of Fiat and the Serbian government, but negotiations proved to be a dead end. Speaking with *Danas*, the president of the strike committee said, "The Government of the Republic of Serbia has openly sided with employers and consciously against workers, which we are witnessing every day in our country, and not only in Serbia." He also denounced the government for conducting two "fake" labour inspections, in which none of the company's abuses during the strike were addressed.

According to *Danas*, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Serbia plans to stop production on Friday until after Christmas, but the Fiat Plastic workers previously stated that they will continue their strike even when production of cars is stopped, to prevent the company from stockpiling parts.

Migrant construction workers in Zrenjanin, Serbia begin strike over living conditions

The Serbian media reported that construction workers on a site in Zrenjanin began a strike on Wednesday, following an investigation by *N1* which revealed appalling living conditions on the site.

Most of the workers are from Vietnam, and the site is building a tyre factory for the China-based manufacturer Linglong. The Sloga union accused the construction company of stealing passports and human trafficking.

After a worker at the site was fired for speaking to the media, a video was posted online of security guards attempting to prevent him from leaving the site. He was able to leave after local activists and many construction workers surrounded the guards to prevent them from blocking the car containing the whistle-blower.

Workers at the site told *N1* their accommodation was crowded, dirty and had no heating. The investigation revealed there was not enough hot water for even a fraction of the workers to bathe or wash clothes. Residents in Zrenjanin report that the local tap water is too contaminated to drink, but workers told *N1* they had no other source of water on the site.

Indefinite pay strike of metalworkers in Cádiz, Spain

On Tuesday, metalworkers in the Spanish province of Cádiz began an indefinite strike in a pay dispute with the Federation of Metal Entrepreneurs (Femca). Workers constructed barricades as the government deployed police armed with riot gear to the picket lines.

Questions were raised in the Senate about the use of force by police against metalworkers, including pepper spray and rubber bullets. According to *Europa Press*, trains were temporarily blocked by pickets in the city of Cádiz, and a local building and two cars were set alight, including an unmarked police car. A lorry driver was also injured by a projectile.

After picketing disrupted the flow of traffic, the Workers' Commissions and General Workers Union called on strikers to "concentrate our actions on the accesses to the main work sites" and minimise disruption to commuters.

Femca is offering a 3.5 percent pay rise, claiming workers' demands for a 7.5 percent pay rise over three years and a reduction in working hours would lead to "the disappearance of the industry in Cádiz."

Dutch unions call off strikes in university hospitals after agreeing new pay deal

Last week, the Dutch trade unions agreed a new collective agreement for workers in university hospitals and called off the strike planned for November 25. There have been numerous one-day stoppages during the negotiations, with more workers involved each time. According to the *Leidsch Dagblad*, the upcoming strike would have involved at least 10,000 workers.

The new collective agreement includes a pay rise of at least 75 euros per month, and an increase in shift allowances. Statista reports the average monthly salary including bonuses in the Netherlands is around 3,100 euros, so with inflation at 3.4 percent, a pay rise of at least 105 euros would be necessary to keep up with the rising cost of living.

Greek transport workers hold 24-hour strike after fatal incident

On Thursday, transport workers on the Athens metro and tram lines, as well as bus drivers, held a 24-hour strike after the death of a colleague on Tuesday.

According to *ef.syn*, late at night the driver of a railway maintenance vehicle discovered the brakes were not operational. Three of the five passengers onboard jumped off early and suffered minor injuries, but by the time the remaining two jumped off, the train was travelling over 50 kilometres an hour. Petros Giamalis, a 41-year-old foreman, was killed, and the other was left in critical condition.

Two railway unions called a 24-hour strike, and the Athens Labour Centre laid the blame at the door of the government, for allowing rail contractors to ignore safeguards to maximise profits. Workers called for a thorough investigation of the incident, and for those responsible to be punished.

Public sector strike in Portugal in pay dispute

Last Friday, many workers in the public sector in Portugal joined a one-day strike as part of a pay dispute following the failure of the state budget to pass in October.

Many unions called off planned strikes after the budget collapsed, but following a pay offer of a mere 0.9 percent from the government, thousands of teachers and workers in healthcare and sanitation joined the remaining one-day stoppage.

Lusa quoted leaders of the teachers' unions and Common Front of Public Administration Unions, who said 95 percent of schools were closed by the

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strike, and “many, many thousands of workers” took part.

Negotiations between the unions and the government began again on Monday.

Warning strikes across German public sector in wage dispute

Public sector workers in Germany held several warning strikes to support pay demands in the current collective bargaining round. The unions want a minimum five percent, or 150 euro pay rise from the federal states, and have been negotiating since early October.

On November 8, over 200 workers at a mental health clinic in Wiesloch held a warning strike at the call of the United Services Union (Verdi), in support of the main pay demand. They are also asking for an additional 300 euros for nurses’ monthly salaries after the difficulty of working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* also noted that Verdi linked its demands with its opposition to vaccine mandates for healthcare workers, despite skyrocketing case numbers.

This week, the warning strikes included workers at university hospitals, day-care centres and school on Tuesday, as well as tax administration workers and traffic police, at the call of Verdi and the Education and Science Union. On Wednesday and Thursday, there were further warning strikes at public libraries, road construction sites, training colleges and other workplaces.

March by striking shoe manufacturer workers in Street, Somerset, UK over fire and rehire

Hundreds of striking shoe manufacturing workers and their supporters marched through the town of Street, in Somerset on Saturday, to highlight their strike against fire and rehire.

Around 100 UK workers at the Clarks shoe manufacturer’s Westway distribution centre in Street are continuing their strike, begun October 4, over a fire and rehire threat. The Community union members voted by an 88 percent majority to walk out. 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.

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

Fourth and final week of strikes by London College of Art staff over workload and casualisation

Staff at the Royal College of Art in London are in their fourth week of strike action.

The University and College Union (UCU) members oppose casualisation and excessive workloads. 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.

Strike of workers at heating manufacturer in Portadown, Northern Ireland over pay

A strike by around 100 workers at Glen Dimplex in Portadown, Northern Ireland began on November 10, for a pay increase.

Glen Dimplex, owned by Irish billionaire Martin Naughton, makes electrical heating appliances. The Unite union members voted by a 96 percent majority to walk out, demanding a 13 percent pay rise to bring their wages up to the living wage. The strike was planned to last three days. On November 11, management announced they would meet workers’ demands. The rise, which takes their pay to just above £10, is backdated to April.

Nottingham, UK tram drivers in 24-hour strike over pay

UK tram drivers at the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) held a 24-hour stoppage on November 6. The GMB union members rejected two pay offers from NET, the latest one being a three percent rise. A further 24-hour strike is called for November 23.

East Midlands rail workers in England to resume strike over safety

Senior conductors and train managers working for East Midlands Railways, England are to resume stoppages over safety fears and pay.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members walked out previously over the issue of only having one manager or senior conductor on the Class 360 trains. These trains compose four-carriage units, coupled to make eight-carriage or 12-carriage trains. No interconnecting corridor between the units makes operating them with one person unsafe.

Twenty-four-hour strikes by both senior conductors and managers will take place December 4.

Overtime ban by workers at Scottish nuclear submarine base over pay

Around 70 workers at the Royal Naval Armaments Depot Coulport, Scotland began an overtime ban on Tuesday.

The Unite union members are employed by ABL Alliance to maintain the nuclear weapons systems used on nuclear submarines. They voted by around 90 percent to strike, and by 95 percent to take action short of a strike. They are protesting ABL’s refusal to meet a 3.8 percent pay claim lodged by Unite.

UK university academics announce strike dates over pay and pension cuts

Academic staff at 58 UK universities are to walk out from December 1 to 3.

The UCU members voted in ballots by more than 70 percent to strike

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over pay and conditions and, separately, to oppose cuts to their pensions. Staff have seen pay fall by around 20 percent over the last 12 years. The use of temporary contracts has increased.

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. Under the proposed changes, the value of pensions will fall by around 35 percent.

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

Goldsmiths University, London academic staff ballot over fire and rehire threat

Academic staff at Goldsmiths University in UK capital are currently balloting over proposals of fire and rehire.

The UCU members face the threat of a fire and rehire restructuring pushed by the Senior Management, which will lead to 52 redundancies.

UK DIY supermarket chain delivery drivers to strike over pay and victimisation

Around 400 UK drivers working for Wincanton, delivering DIY goods for B&Q from its Worksop distribution centre, are to strike from November 28.

The Unite union members oppose a below inflation pay offer and victimisation of a Unite union rep. The industrial action, due to begin November 28, consists of a repeating cycle of seven days' strikes, followed by seven days of banning overtime. The cycle of action will run until February 20.

Staff at four Berkshire, UK hospitals to hold five-day strike over contract changes resulting from privatisation

UK cleaners, porters and caterers at four hospitals in Berkshire, including the King Edward VII hospital in Windsor, will hold a five-day stoppage beginning November 29.

The GMB members voted by 100 percent to walk out. They oppose changes to their contracts resulting from the privatisation of services. They were transferred from direct NHS employment to NHS Property Services.

NHS Property Services plans to completely reorganise the whole service, changing job titles, descriptions and pay bands. The changes break links to NHS pay rates to the detriment of the workers.

Scottish nurses register willingness to strike over pay

Last week, Scottish nurses returned a 60 percent majority in favour of a stoppage to protest the pay offer of four percent made back in May.

A turnout of around 30 percent was recorded by Royal College of Nursers (RCN) members taking part in the indicative ballot. Ninety percent indicated a willingness to take action short of strike action.

The four percent offer is around the same figure as the current CPI inflation figure. Nurses have suffered a decade of low pay rises.

The RCN said it will consider the result before any subsequent action.

Security staff at London hospital to strike over pay parity

Security staff at Great Ormond Street Hospital, London will strike from December 6 to 9.

The United Voices of the World (UVW) union members are contracted to work at the hospital. They seek parity of pay and conditions with directly employed NHS staff, including annual leave, sick pay, parental leave and career progression.

Health staff in Wales ballot over fresh pay offer

NHS staff in Wales are currently balloting until December 13 over a fresh pay offer.

NHS Wales made an improved pay offer above the three percent offered earlier in the year, which was overwhelmingly rejected by GMB members. The offer consists of one-off unconsolidated one percent rise and an extra day's leave, on top of the original three percent offer.

Protests across England by midwives to highlight staff shortages

Sunday will see protests in cities across the UK highlighting the shortage of midwives.

Protests are planned for every town and city with a maternity unit. According to a recent Royal College of Midwives survey, 60 percent of midwives are considering leaving the profession. For every 30 newly qualified midwives entering the profession, 29 leave.

Offshore service workers, Scotland vote to strike over cuts to pay and conditions

Around 300 workers employed by Ponticelli UK Ltd and Semco Maritime Ltd, Scotland voted by over 90 percent majorities to strike over cuts to pay and conditions.

The Unite union members service Scottish offshore oil and gas plants. They plan to walk out and carry out an overtime ban from early December until late February 22.

River Thames London ferry workers vote for further stoppages

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Fifty-eight workers on the Woolwich Ferry, which crosses London's Thames, voted for further strikes over the Christmas and New Year period.

The Unite union members were involved in a long-running dispute both with their current employer, Transport for London (TfL) and previous employer Briggs Marine Contractor Ltd. No specific dates were set for the stoppages.

The workers carried out over 30 strike days this year over various issues—including agreement on a new pay and reward scheme, excessive use of agency staff, victimisation of union representatives and a lack of adequate health and safety training to new employees.

A ferry service across the Thames at Woolwich has been in place since the 14th century.

Local government staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to ballot over pay

Local government and non-teaching school staff will ballot over a 1.75 percent pay offer (2.75 percent for those on the lowest pay).

Around 375,000 Unison union members will take part in the ballot between December 1 and January 14. Nearly 80 percent who voted in an indicative ballot voted in favour of balloting for strike action.

With inflation currently standing at around four percent, the offer is a cut in real terms. According to Unison, local government staff have lost around 25 percent of the value of their pay in buying power since 2010. The last local government pay strike was in 2014.

Teachers at school in Preston, UK to ballot over academisation plans

Teachers at St Matthew's Church of England Primary School in Preston are to ballot for industrial action in opposition to academisation plans for the school.

The National Education Union members already voted unanimously against the plans to move the school from local authority control to the Cidari Multi Academy Trust. Under academies, which are publicly funded but privately run, teachers' pay and conditions are threatened.

GMB union suspends strike at recycle centre over safety concerns in Sandwell, UK

The strike of more than 100 workers at the Sandwell domestic recycling centre, run by outsourcing company Serco, was suspended on Monday by the GMB union.

Monday's proposed stoppage was part of a planned 12-day programme of strikes following five previous one-day 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 is entering further talks with Serco, but says the programme of planned strikes will be reinstated if the talks make no progress.

Housing association workers in northwest England being balloted over pay offer

Around 230 workers employed by Onward Housing and Hyndburn Home Repairs Ltd in England are balloting over a one percent pay offer.

The Unite union members work for the housing association, which is based in towns and cities across the region including Liverpool, Manchester and Runcorn.

Ballot of UK court workers over introduction of new digital platform system

UK staff working for Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) are taking part in a consultative ballot over the introduction of a new digital platform, the Common Platform.

The ballot of Public and Commercial Services (PCS) runs until December 2. The new platform was introduced in September last year. Workers fear it could lead to the loss of 3,000 jobs. In addition, workers are concerned that the platform had many technical problems, leading to delays and resultant stress for HMCTS workers.

Natural England staff in consultative ballot over pay

Workers employed by government body Natural England are taking part in a consultative ballot over pay.

The ballot of PCS union members closes November 24. The remit of Natural England is to protect and restore the natural world. It is part of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), but staff are paid less than those in other DEFRA departments. Another issue is the lack of pay progression compared to other parts of DEFRA.

UK Porton Down research staff ballot over pay

UK staff at the Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) at Porton Down and two other sites are balloting over a derisory two percent pay offer.

The ballot closes on December 2. The Prospect union members work on chemical and biological warfare issues but were also involved in research on the COVID-19 pandemic. Should they decide in favour of industrial action it would be the first by DSTL staff.

Workers at two Morrisons distribution centres in England ballot over pay

Around 1,100 UK workers at two Morrisons supermarket distribution centres in Wakefield, Yorkshire and Northwich, Cheshire are balloting

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over pay.

The Unite union members oppose the three percent pay rise offered to most of the workers, while the lowest paid are offered two percent. Both figures are below the current inflation figures, a cut in real terms. The ballot closes November 30. Industrial action could begin mid-December in the run-up to the busy Christmas period.

Unite union declares end to jobs campaign at aero engine plant in Barnoldswick, England claiming future of plant is secure

The Unite union declared an end to its campaign over jobs at Rolls-Royce aero engine plant in Barnoldswick, England.

Last week, Unite announced that its members voted to accept an offer from Rolls-Royce in which the company committed to no compulsory redundancies for five years and to maintain production at the factory for 10 years.

Towards the end of last year, Unite members took part in a nine-week-long series of strikes at the factory, ending in January. Rolls-Royce wanted to cut the workforce by transferring around 350 posts to its Singapore facility. Five hundred finish inspectors, machinists, electricians and instrumentation staff voted by a 94 percent majority to strike.

On January 8, the company and Unite agreed a deal. According to the *Lancashire Telegraph*, the deal would save the 350 jobs earmarked to be transferred overseas. The company said it would establish a training centre of excellence. Subsequently Rolls-Royce was pushing for only 200 jobs to be retained on site.

Over the summer 17 specialist aero engine engineers held one-day strikes over fears about long-term job security at Barnoldswick. Unite then balloted all its members at the factory, but negotiations took place resulting in the current deal.

Rolls-Royce is the major employer in Barnoldswick, and began production at the site in 1943.

Unite avoids strike at rail engineering company at Birkenhead, England after accepting below-inflation pay deal

In October, Unite union members at Faiveley Transport Ltd in Birkenhead, England voted overwhelmingly to strike after rejecting a two percent pay offer.

Faiveley produces braking systems for train companies. Following the vote, the company and Unite held further negotiations and agreed on a below inflation 3.4 percent pay offer backdated to April this year which was accepted by the workers. The workers were also offered an additional 0.6 percent for using new equipment, but this is dependent on reaching productivity levels.

GMB union suspends strike of Sheffield, UK refuse workers over pay

A strike by around 100 refuse collection workers in Sheffield employed by outsource company Veolia, due to take place on November 15, has been suspended by the GMB union, along with a continuous strike to begin November 22.

The suspension follows a four-hour strike on November 8. That strike was postponed from November 1, when the GMB put a three percent pay offer for one year followed by a further three percent the subsequent year. The deal was rejected by the workers, who had already voted by 80 percent to walk out after rejecting a previous below-inflation pay offer.

A new two-year deal will be put to the refuse workers. The deal consists of a three percent rise in year one, followed by 3.5 percent in year two. In addition, they will get a one-off £250 payment.

GMB union suspends strike of UK cash machine workers over pay

A planned strike by around UK 1,100 G4S workers responsible for filling ATM cash machines was called off by the GMB union.

Workers voted to strike after rejecting a 2.5 percent pay offer from G4S. Workers will consider a new pay offer of 7.5 percent, with 3.5 percent backdated to July.

Protest by Cambridge University staff over outsourcing plans

On November 12, administration, estates, helpdesk and store employees at Cambridge University protested outside the Senate House.

The Unite union members oppose plans by the University to outsource work done by around 50 maintenance and estate workers, leading to attacks on pensions and conditions.

Middle East

Protests by teachers across Iran over pay and conditions

On November 11, teachers across Iran held protests against low pay and working conditions.

Organised by the Coordinating Council of Teachers' and Cultural Trade unions, protests took place in 74 cities, including Tehran. Teachers held banners calling for the release of imprisoned teachers, free education for all and the implementation of career progression.

Africa

Shop workers at major South African retailer on indefinite strike over pay and job cuts

Thousands of South African employees at Massmart stores, majority-owned since 2010 by retail giant Walmart, commenced an indefinite strike Friday to protest low wages, lay-offs and redundancies. They also call for a boycott of the company's 229 stores from November 22.

Massmart is the largest general merchandise, liquor and DIY retailer and wholesaler of basic foods in South Africa.

The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union members previously stopped work May 27, holding demonstrations in Durban and Johannesburg against store closures, reductions in working hours, demotions and redundancies. The company is ignoring their demands.

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Confectionery workers in Durban, South Africa on indefinite strike for pay increase

Workers at Beacon Confectionary, a subsidiary of Tiger Brands, South Africa's largest food company, entered the second week of an indefinite strike Wednesday, shutting down the Durban, KwaZulu-Natal sweet factory.

The African Meat Industry and Allied Trade Union members began a protected strike when the company offered a three percent rise after workers demanded seven percent. Inflation in South Africa is currently at five percent.

Congress of South African Trade Unions affiliates, the Food and Allied Workers Union and the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union members at Tiger Brands in neighbouring Gauteng province may join the strike.

Drivers and mechanics at South African national bus company threaten strike over non-payment of wages

Workers at the Autopax company, a subsidiary of the state-owned Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), threaten to stop work if their full salaries for October and September are not paid. On October 29, they marched to the Department of Transport in Cape Town demanding Autopax is investigated, citing corruption at the company, but have received no response.

Numsa and South African Transport and Allied Workers Union members at Autopax, employing over 900, have carried out sporadic stoppages since April to protest late salary payments, making them unable to afford food and rent.

Workers are also aggrieved that promised pay increases have not materialised. They blame management incompetence and call for the resignation of the CEO of PRASA.

Striking municipal workers in Mpumalanga, South Africa dismissed for refusing to return to work

On November 12, the local municipality in Middelburg, Mpumalanga province, South Africa dismissed 400 workers, including civil engineers, firefighters, electricians and parks services employees, for taking part in protests and strikes stretching back three months. The municipality intends to sack 100 more by November 15.

The South African Municipal Workers Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union members were on strike over wages and outsourcing since September 21. They were given an ultimatum by management to return to work by November 8, as the municipality alleged the strike was unprotected and therefore illegal. Workers say senior municipal officials and leaders are corrupt and the sackings are politically motivated.

African National Congress staff in South Africa picket over continuing delays in salary payments

African National Congress (ANC) staff demonstrated outside the discredited ruling party's Luthuli House HQ in Johannesburg, South Africa Monday, and intended to join further pickets with ANC staff across other provinces on Friday.

The staff, aggrieved over late salary payments and failure to make medical aid and provident fund contributions, suspended an earlier strike in order to provide support to the ANC party in the local government elections on November 1. They demand the ANC pay the salaries owed and recognise the majority National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union as their representative in future negotiations.

The ANC blame their cash flow problems on the new Political Party Funding Act and continue to fob off the staff, some of whom have not been paid since August.

Taxi drivers march to South African government department demanding fair pay from e-hailing services such as Uber

Over 100 drivers employed by e-hailing services marched to the South African Department of Labour and Department of Transport in Cape Town Friday, demanding a review of the industry regulations and commission charged by service providers such as Uber. They gave the government seven days to respond, or they will protest further.

The drivers, including some E-hailing Drivers Association members, say Uber charges them 25 percent of the cost of every ride whereas they want the fee changed to 13 percent. They also say the companies drop prices without consulting the drivers, who must pay for fuel, insurance, vehicle servicing and cell phone data.

Workers at South Africa's arbitration body threaten strike over pay offer

Staff at South Africa's Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) are threatening to strike after being offered a below-inflation 1.5 percent pay offer. Around 90 percent of the CCMA employees are members of the Commission Staff Association, an in-house trade union, which reduced an initial pay demand of 10 percent to six percent.

CCMA workers were overwhelmed by an increased workload and a massive backlog caused by severe budget cuts to the arbitration service. Workers using the CCMA can wait more than two years for cases to be heard at the Labour Court, putting pressure on them to capitulate before an appeal is heard.

Rail workers in Nigeria hold three-day strike over unpaid wages and conditions

Nigerian rail workers began a three-day walk out on November 18.

The Nigeria Union of Railway Workers and Senior Staff Association of the Nigerian Railway Corporation held back growing anger among the rail workers for a long period. Workers' grievances include non-payment of promotion arrears since 2018, unpaid monthly salary payments (many since 2019), refusal to improve conditions, and demolition of railway workers' homes without providing alternative accommodation.

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On November 13, the Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi met the union leaders, who came out saying they were open to further talks.

Hundreds of teachers strike in Zimbabwe

Hundreds of teachers refused to attend their schools in Zimbabwe on November 15, beginning a 12-day strike for better pay and conditions of service.

Attendance in schools dropped to 57 percent, although the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe and National Teachers Union of Zimbabwe represent only a small proportion of total teacher numbers.

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