

Danish nurses organise wildcat stoppage and mass resignation to protest pay and working conditions; French transport workers continue wave of strikes over pay and conditions; South African gold miners at Sibanye-Stillwater poised to join strikes of dairy and store workers over pay; protests in Lebanon over continuing economic crisis

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 transport workers continue wave of strikes over pay and conditions

A wave of strikes by French transport workers to demand pay increases and improvements to working conditions and services has continued in the past week, with bus, tram and train drivers stopping work.

On November 26, bus and tram drivers in Greater Avignon began a two-day strike over pay, following two previous days' stoppages. According to *France Bleu*, the Workers' Force (FO) union is demanding a pay rise in line with inflation of three percent and wants an agreement in advance with the operator Tecelys, which will take over the Greater Avignon transport network in 2022.

Around 180 bus drivers in the Somme and Oise departments walked out on Monday, to denounce issues with scheduling and other working conditions. *France Bleu* reports that drivers' schedules are sometimes changed at the last minute, and they have also complained of Transdev management failing to implement local and company agreements. The unions abandoned additional demands for a bonus for working through the pandemic and for COVID-19 be recognised as an occupational disease.

Drivers of the national rail company SNCF's regional express transport (TER) trains also began a strike on Monday. On Sunday, drivers at the TER depot in the northern city of Amiens stopped work, and the unions filed an indefinite strike notice. The *Courrier Picard* reports that the dispute is over pay, working conditions and opposition to the opening of train services to private competition. The main rail unions also called a strike from Monday evening until Wednesday morning of TER drivers in the central region of Auvergne.

School bus drivers in the region of Centre-Val de Loire continued their

pay strikes on Monday, as did drivers for CFTA Centre-Ouest, which also runs school bus lines in the town of Brive-la-Gaillarde, last Friday.

On Saturday, drivers in the Bibus public transport network in Brest held the final one-day strike in a months-long dispute over working conditions, as the unions signed an agreement with RATP-Dev the same day. *Ouest France* reports comments from a union spokesman that the agreement involves hiring an additional three drivers, and "reviewing" driving hours.

French national one-day strike in health and social care

On Tuesday, the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) union called a national one-day strike and numerous protests of health and social care workers. The CFDT opposes the exclusion of many workers from the 183-euro bonus paid to some healthcare staff following last year's "Ségur" healthcare review.

The CFDT's strike notice called for equalisation of salaries in the public and private sector, improvements to staffing ratios, and increased funding for the sector.

A recent wave of strikes and protests in the French healthcare system also continued. Anaesthetist nurses demonstrated in Paris on November 25, following a week's total stoppage earlier in November, to demand their salary be increased to recognise their substantial training. On Wednesday, FO reported that over 350 paramedics joined another protest in Paris.

Non-medical staff also held walkouts, with workers in Brest Regional University Hospital's equipment sterilisation service stopping work on November 23, and in the cafeteria on November 25. *Le Télégramme* reported that the strikers denounced the lack of a regular salary scale and the physical demands of the job. Workers at the laundry in Charcot hospital in Caudan came out on a one-day strike on Tuesday, to demand increases to pay and staffing levels.

Strikes begin at French pharmaceutical company Sanofi during pay dispute

Around 1,000 workers at the French pharmaceutical group Sanofi joined a one-day warning strike on November 25, as collective bargaining negotiations began between the company and unions.

According to *Le Télégramme*, the unions want a three percent pay rise, only just above current inflation, after the company offered 0.8 percent. Last year workers received only a 0.6 percent pay rise, while *Le Télégramme* reports that Sanofi's profits increased by almost 19 percent in a year. Another one-day strike is planned for December 8.

German unions sell out public sector pay strikes

On Monday, the German trade unions reached an agreement with the federal states that will see real wages of 1.4 million public sector workers fall significantly over the next two years.

Verdi, the Education and Science Union and the Industrial Union for Construction, Agriculture and the Environment members have walked out in numerous one-day warning strikes in education, healthcare and other public services since negotiations began in October. The unions demanded only a pay increase of either 150 euros (300 euros in the health sector) or a five percent pay increase, while inflation was already at 5.2 percent.

The unions have now accepted a deal which includes a one-off payment of 1,300 euros but freezes pay for a year, and then increases wages by 2.8 percent for the year after.

Also, Verdi shut down a dispute with Asklepios at the three private mental health clinics in Brandenburg with another below-inflation pay deal. Workers held a total of 18 days of warning strikes and demanded workers in east Germany be paid the same as in Asklepios clinics in the west. Verdi reported that workers in the east were paid up to 10,600 euros less per year than their western colleagues. The new deal includes a 1,200-euro one-off payment and a pay rise of 7.5 percent spread over 33 months. This is the equivalent of a 2.7 percent annual rise, well below inflation and coming nowhere near closing the gap between wages in the east and west.

Danish nurses organise wildcat stoppage and mass resignation in protest at pay and working conditions

Hundreds of nurses throughout Denmark held another one-hour stoppage on Monday morning, to demand improvements to their pay and working conditions. There have been dozens of such wildcat walkouts, in opposition to the government and the Danish Nurses' Council (DSR) union, since a strike of thousands of nurses over pay was shut down by parliament in August.

Attempting to buy off the anger of nurses, Denmark's most populous region, Zealand, announced it planned to set aside 30 million kroner for nurses' pay, approximately 1,500 kroner per nurse.

The trade unions reacted furiously to suggestions that nurses should receive a pay rise above the deal imposed in August, which was rejected twice by DSR members. The chairperson of the FOA social care workers' union said if the nurses received a pay increase, it would cause a "Third World War" in the trade union movement and raise the prospect of strikes in other professions. The Trade Union Confederation said it opposed the

prospect of a pay rise, because wages in the public sector should not rise by more than the private sector. Tellingly, the FOA warned that if the nurses' strikes succeeded, other unions would have "their own Luca Pristedes."

Luca Pristed is a nurse who emerged as a leader of the wildcat strike movement in September. After the recent campaign of wildcat strikes, Pristed announced plans for a mass collective resignation of nurses on Tuesday, saying he hoped as many as 1,000 nurses would join him in handing in one month's notice. According to *Politiken*, over 800 people joined a Facebook group set up to coordinate the resignations. Under the tightly regulated system of corporatist regulations governing industrial action, mass resignations are banned as a form of industrial action not controlled by the state.

Legal experts said in the Danish media that the Labour Court may rescind the resignation notice and issue fines to any nurse taking part in collective action, and order the DSR to get them back to work, so Pristed urged nurses to cite personal reasons when handing in their notice.

Public sector strike in Catalonia, Spain strike against temporary employment

Workers throughout the public sector in Catalonia, Spain, held a one-day strike on Tuesday to oppose the widespread use of temporary contracts.

Workers in transport, education, healthcare, and other sectors stopped work to demand permanent hiring for many of the approximately 32 percent of public sector workers on temporary contracts. According to *el Periódico*, the strike call covers 200,000 workers, and 20,000 people joined a demonstration last month.

Strikes in Spain are legally required to meet "minimum service" requirements, where the impact of the strike must be minimised. The government imposed high requirements on Tuesday's strike, demanding that 85 percent of public transport services be maintained, 100 percent of many medical services including vaccinations and 25 percent of outpatient care, as well as requirements in education and childcare.

Minimum services were not only imposed in essential service sectors, as 50 percent of usual public service radio and television broadcasting was also maintained.

Strike at Piraeus dock in Greece over collective bargaining

Workers at two piers in the port of Piraeus, in Greece, held one day of a planned 48-hour strike on Wednesday, to demand the company sign a collective agreement with the ENEDEP union.

The operator, COSCO, initially refused to negotiate with ENEDEP as it is not the recognised union and applied for a court injunction to ban the strike but announced on Wednesday that negotiations would begin on December 17, and ENEDEP suspended the strike. According to *The Press Project*, ENEDEP denounced COSCO for manipulating the recognition process to ensure a company union was recognised.

COSCO workers in Piraeus held seven days of strikes last month, after the death of one of their colleagues. The strikes ended when the company agreed to "many of the demands" of workers, ENEDEP reported. The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) called a 48-hour stoppage in support of November's strikes in Piraeus. On December 10, PNO has called for a new 48-hour strike over its own pay dispute with employers.

Union of Mine Workers ends strike in Bosnia and Herzegovina

On Wednesday, the Union of Mine Workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached an agreement with the national energy company Elektroprivreda, ending a strike in the state company's coal mines begun on November 23.

The strike began alongside a protest of miners in Sarajevo to denounce new regulations on work performance, which would have reduced basic salary from around 425 euros to 285 euros and require working more. Workers also demanded the removal of Elektroprivreda's director, Admir Anđelić.

The union reported that most of the miners' demands were met, including an increase in the price paid for coal, and that the regulations on performance would be reviewed. According to *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, Anđelić will remain in charge of Elektroprivreda, but the director of the Kreka coal mine will be dismissed. There were numerous strikes and protests at the Kreka mine over working conditions and months-long delays in the payment of wages.

Strike over pay by scaffolders continues at steel plant in Scunthorpe, UK

Around 60 scaffolders employed by contractor Actavo at the British Steel plant in Scunthorpe, England have been on indefinite strike for nine weeks.

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

Staff at electrical appliance depot in Cardiff, Wales hold third strike over pay

Around 100 staff at Panasonic's depot in Cardiff, Wales held a third strike on Monday, and mounted a picket.

The GMB union members had their pay frozen last year. This year, 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. Workers demand a five percent pay rise.

A further strike is planned for December 6. A GMB press release November 29, announced further strike dates would be announced soon. It also noted that talks involving GMB and Panasonic, brokered by government mediation service Acas, would take place Tuesday.

Education Welfare Officers in Northern Ireland begin 15 days of stoppages over pay

Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) in Northern Ireland walked out on Monday, beginning 15 days of stoppages.

The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance members are seeking pay parity with Health and Social Care Trust workers. They have carried out industrial action short of a strike since May. A shortage of EWOs led to a backlog of cases. In July, it was reported that around 800 cases remained unallocated.

UK General Practitioners vote in favour of industrial action in opposition to government demands over face-to-face meetings with patients

UK General Practitioners (GPs) voted by a more than 80 percent majority in an indicative ballot to take limited industrial action.

The British Medical Association members oppose government demands they meet patients face to face, to limit the spread of COVID. The GPs voted to agree to withhold information about how they set up appointments and will refuse to issue COVID-19 exemption certificates, given when there is a medical reason for not wearing a mask. Around 35 percent of GPs took part.

British Council staff vote in favour of strikes against privatisation and redundancies

Staff employed by the British Council, the UK's cultural and educational body, voted by an 80 percent majority in an 80 percent turnout to strike in a consultative ballot.

The Professional and Commercial Services (PCS) members are demanding no compulsory redundancies and oppose the privatisation and outsourcing of their jobs. The British Council employs staff across the world. The PCS said it will raise the willingness of members to strike when it meets with the British Council.

Rail catering workers based in Scottish capital announce new round of strikes over management bullying and harassment

Rail catering workers at Rail Gourmet at Edinburgh Waverley train station, Scotland have announced a three-day strike beginning December 31.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members have held intermittent stoppages since July. They originally voted by 100 percent to strike, protesting bullying and harassment by management which led to a breakdown of industrial relations. Rail Gourmet provides food and drink on the LNER rail service between Edinburgh and London.

Ballot of local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over below-inflation pay offer recommended by the union

This week a ballot of around 350,000 local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland began, to close January 14.

The Unison members work in refuse collection, school support, social services and other local government roles. They were offered a 1.75

percent pay increase. Those on the lowest pay point were offered 2.75 percent. With the Retail Price Index inflation rate at six percent, these offers represent a cut in real terms. Over the last decade, the value of local government pay has fallen by around 25 percent. Unison is calling for a yes vote.

It was announced this week that local government workers in Scotland belonging to Unison voted by a 75 percent majority to accept a pay offer of between 3.4 and 4.7 percent backdated to January.

Bus workers in Cambridge, UK ballot over pay

Around 400 UK bus workers employed by Cambus are balloting over pay. The Unite members, including drivers, engineers, cleaners and shunters rejected a pay offer of 1.5 percent from April this year plus another 1.5 percent in December for the year 2021/22.

The bus workers have not had a pay rise since 2019. The ballot closes December 16.

Cambus, part of the Stagecoach conglomerate, operates from depots at Cambridge, Fenstanton and Peterborough.

Refuse collection drivers in Coventry, UK ballot over pay and conditions

Around 70 UK refuse collection drivers working for Coventry City Council are balloting over pay and work arrangements over the Christmas period.

The Unite union members' ballot closes December 6. The HGV (heavy goods vehicle) drivers earn as little as £22,000 a year. There is a UK-wide shortage of HGV drivers, and other councils increased pay or made retention payments to keep refuse collection drivers.

A vote in favour of industrial action could lead to strikes before Christmas.

Luxury retail car chain technicians in England to ballot over pay

Around 175 UK technicians working for luxury car Mercedes-Benz Retail Group (MBRG) chain will ballot over pay.

The technicians, based at nine retail outlets including Croydon, Heathrow and Watford, began balloting on Thursday until December 20. MBRG refused them a pay rise this year, following no rise last year.

Terminal illness specialist nurses at UK's Marie Curie charity in consultative pay ballot

UK nurses working for terminal illness charity Marie Curie are taking part in a consultative ballot.

The Royal College of Nurses (RCN) members are balloting over a new pay offer. They previously rejected a two percent offer by an 80 percent majority. The ballot closes on December 14.

Teachers at Newcastle, UK school to ballot over pension changes

UK teachers at the Newcastle High School for Girls are to ballot over proposed changes to pensions.

The NASUWT members oppose proposals by the trust which runs the school to withdraw from the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The school is one of 23 independent schools across England and Wales run by the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST).

The National Education Union (NEU) is currently balloting its members across the GDST over the same issue. The ballot closes December 6.

Community union ends long-running strike against pay cuts at UK shoe distributor in Street

On Wednesday, the Community union announced the ending of the strike at Clarks shoe manufacturer's Westway distribution centre in Street, Somerset.

Around 100 Community union members began their strike on October 4. They voted by an 88 percent majority to oppose management's "fire and rehire" threats. The firm was taken over in February by Lion Rock, a Hong Kong-based private equity firm. Lion Rock wanted to cut overtime rates, reduce pay, cut sick pay, reduce parental leave and cut redundancy and call-out pay.

The stoppage was well supported by local people, with several protest marches held in the town. In mid-November, Clarks agreed to take part in talks with Community brokered by government mediation service Acas.

In the December 1 press release, headed "Fire-and-rehire defeated", Community said its members accepted a new offer from the company. It gave no details but in a joint statement issued with Clarks said, "Community and Clarks announce that following a process of mediation with Acas, an agreement has been reached in respect of the industrial dispute at the Clarks Westway Distribution Centre.

"We are pleased that a resolution has been reached that works in everybody's interests, protects Community members' livelihoods, and recognises their loyalty to Clarks."

Following pay offer to DHL workers in southwest England, Unite union calls off dispute

The 140 drivers working for DHL on contract to deliver to Sainsbury's supermarkets in southwest England accepted a 14 percent pay offer.

The Unite union members began balloting in early November, after DHL put forward an unacceptable pay offer. DHL then entered negotiations and made the new offer which was accepted by the drivers. Due to a combination of COVID-19 and Brexit the UK faces a severe shortage of HGV drivers.

Union calls off hospital workers strike at UK's Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust hospitals

UK hospital workers at four Berkshire hospitals planned to walk out for five days over pay and conditions from Monday. The GMB union called

the action off after reaching an agreement with the employer.

The GMB members, who work as housekeepers, cleaners and catering staff transferred from direct NHS employment to NHS Property Services (NHSPS). The NHSPS aimed to attack NHS pay and conditions.

The full details of the settlement have not been made public. GMB Senior Organiser Asia Allison said, “we were finally able to work out a deal that allows NHSPS to develop new organisational procedures,” while claiming it “protects our members’ original NHS contracts, bandings and ultimately pay.”

Unite union ends strike threat at Stanlow, UK oil refinery after negotiating deal

On Tuesday, Unite announced a proposed strike at the Essar-owned oil refinery at Stanlow, Ellesmere Port will not take place as workers accepted a new pay offer.

The 400 workers at the refinery, owned by the Indian multinational Essar Oil UK, voted by a 98 percent majority to strike over pay and pensions.

The deal accepted by the workers is for a backdated increase to January 2021 of just 1.5 percent, and a 6.2 percent rise from January 2022. Retail Price Index inflation is already at 6 percent and rising.

The Stanlow refinery in Ellesmere Port supplies about a sixth of the UK’s road fuel. It is one of the UK’s six oil refineries, which supply 85 percent of fuel demand.

Unite revokes ballot call after a UK food manufacturer offers pay deal

The Unite union was preparing to ballot its members working for food manufacturer, Bakkavor in Lincolnshire and Newark, England. The company offered new starters a £250 one off payment after 16 weeks work but refused to pay similar incentives to existing workers.

Unite revoked the ballot after the company put forward a pay offer for the entire workforce. Under the deal workers in the Bourne, Holbeach, Newark and Sutton Bridge factories will receive a rise of between one and eight percent, depending on their role and previous pay rate. Workers at the Bakkavor factory in Spalding, who were already on a higher pay rate, will be given a £100 one-off payment. The £250 payment to new workers was withdrawn.

Protest by university maintenance and estate workers against outsourcing at UK’s Cambridge University

On November 26, UK estate and maintenance workers at Cambridge University protested outside the university Senate House.

It followed a previous protest on November 12. The Unite union members oppose the threat by Cambridge University to outsource around 50 estate and maintenance posts. They voted in a consultative ballot to ballot for industrial action if the university goes ahead with its proposals, which would mean an attack on pensions and conditions.

A Unite union press release of November 24 said it entered talks with Cambridge University over the proposals. The university said it will not

push ahead with the proposals before Christmas.

Housing workers hold protest in Glasgow, Scotland over pay award

On November 25, workers employed by the Link Group housing association protested outside the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow, Scotland over pay.

The Unite union members work in many roles for the Link Group including as cleaners, electricians, benefit advisors and housing officers. The protest coincided with a Scottish Housing Awards ceremony. Link awarded only a one percent pay rise this year. It increased its rent fees by 2.5 percent. The Link Group houses around 15,000 tenants across central Scotland conurbations including Edinburgh, Falkirk and Paisley.

Protest by Churchill Group train cleaners in London

Train cleaners employed by the Churchill Group held a protest on November 26 outside company headquarters in London over pay and benefits.

The Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union and RMT members demand parity over pay, sick pay and travel facilities with directly employed rail franchise staff. They clean trains and stations for Thameslink, Southern, Great Northern, Southeastern, HS1 and Eurostar across southeast England.

Middle East

Protests in Lebanon over continuing economic crisis

Monday saw big protests in Lebanon against the continuing economic crisis and cost of living. The economic crisis has left 75 percent of Lebanon’s six million population living in poverty.

Protestors blocked roads and highways in major cities including Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli. They used mounds of burning tyres to create the roadblocks, including one on the road to Lebanon’s international airport. Taxi drivers in Beirut blocked off Hamra Street, one of the city’s major economic and diplomatic hubs. The Lebanese currency hit a new low this week, having lost 90 percent of its value since 2019.

General strike call in Tunisian city over refuse collection crisis

A Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts spokesman in the Tunisian city of Sfax put out a call for a general strike on December 10.

The call was made in response to an environmental crisis in the city of around a third of a million caused by the non-collection of domestic and other waste. This waste built up on the streets of Sfax for two months. A landfill in the nearby town of Agareb, used for the waste of Sfax, closed in September after waste from the site polluted the surrounding area.

Palestinian refugee relief workers one-day strike

Workers employed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNWRA) held a one-day strike Monday.

The strike was held in the five areas where UNWRA operates, the West Bank, Jordan, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. They were protesting UNWRA's decision to make the workers take unpaid leave and its decision to revoke its annual bonus payment. The workers stated they would begin an open-ended strike from Thursday if UNWRA did not backtrack.

Africa

South African gold miners reject latest pay offer and head for strike

South African miners in a three-year pay award dispute with Sibanye-Stillwater multinational, owners of three gold mines employing 31,000, are heading for strike action. Negotiations under supervision of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) resulted in a rejection of the employer's final offer.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), Solidarity, and UASA union members demand pay rises comparable with those negotiated with other major South African gold mining operations.

The coalition of unions requested a certificate of non-resolution from the CCMA November 24, and all parties will meet again December 13 to finalise picketing rules and issue the certificate, after which the unions may give 48 hours' notice of any strike.

In 2019, AMCU sold out a five-month stoppage at Sibanye-Stillwater Gold. It accepted a wage agreement, already signed off by the NUM and Solidarity, which it previously called a "slave labour deal."

Thousands of dairy industry workers across South Africa defy company threats and continue indefinite strike over pay and jobs

Over 4,000 South African workers employed by the Clover food and beverage group are now in the second week of an indefinite protected strike begun November 22. They are protesting pay cuts, redundancies and longer working hours.

The company threatened that only non-striking workers will receive their Christmas bonus or "13th cheque," despite this breaching the Labour Relations Act, which states workers choosing to strike cannot be discriminated against and employers cannot reward workers who do not exercise their right to strike.

The General Industrial Workers Union of South Africa and the Food and Allied Workers Union members say Clover wants to close several factories and save R300 million by retrenching 1,400 workers and introducing 12-hour days, worked over four days in every six, without overtime pay.

After mediation, Clover offered workers a 4.5 percent rise but also gave a Labour Relations Act restructuring notice indicating a potential 20 percent reduction in wages to avoid some of the redundancies. The firm further plans to increase workloads by reducing the number of delivery assistants per truck.

Massmart store workers' pay strike continues across South Africa

The stoppage by thousands of employees at Walmart-owned Massmart, the largest general merchandise, liquor and DIY retailer and wholesaler of basic foods in South Africa, entered a second week on Saturday.

The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union members walked out demanding a 10 percent pay increase at Massmart's Builders division, the reinstatement of staff retrenched at Game stores and improved allowances for Makro store employees. They are threatening to intensify stoppages if their demands are not met within 48 hours.

South African security guards in KwaZulu-Natal schools demand meeting with provincial government over "slave" wages

School security guards in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa are demanding to meet the provincial member for education to protest what they call "slave" wages.

Guards were employed at a rate of R3,500 a month, but have only been paid R2,300, below the minimum wage. They are aggrieved that the treatment is from a government department.

The leadership of the National Teachers' Union and the Public Servants Association will raise the issue with the provincial government's Executive Council.

Shark protection workers at KwaZulu-Natal beaches in South Africa protest unfair work conditions

Employees at the government run KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board (KZNSB), Umhlanga, South Africa protested November 25 at treatment from management.

The staff, including researchers, seamen and general workers, represented by the South African Liberated Public Sector Workers union, protest bullying from senior managers, unfair salary structures and understaffing across the organisation. They say the culture of bullying caused the resignation of three workers.

Airport workers disrupt flights in Lagos, Nigeria over work-related fatality

Air traffic controllers in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, and other cities disrupted flights for two days. On November 23, morning flights in Lagos were grounded for around five hours, causing flight plans to be overthrown for the day.

The action was prompted by the death of Aniekan Effiong in the early hours of November 22, while on duty at Abuja tower. Effiong was the ninth employee to die of stress-related health problems in just two years.

Airports at Kaduna, Katsina and Kano do not have purpose-built control towers, and have few, if any, facilities. Other airports have no basic features like chairs, safety fittings or conveniences for promoting comfort. Many buildings used as control towers are in poor condition.

The nine deaths were due to "poor working conditions and inadequate staffing," according to the Nigerian Air Traffic Controllers' Association

(NATCA). This is an indictment of the union itself, which is incapable of protecting the lives of its members—from stress, overwork and the pandemic.

Malawi mass protest over rising cost of living and corruption

Around 10,000 people staged a protest in the Malawian capital of Lilongwe against rising prices and state corruption. The peaceful demonstration was attacked by police using tear gas.

The protest marked growing disillusionment with the government that came to power in 2020 with promises to create one million jobs. Rising anger is heightened by the pandemic.

Protesters said they would take to the streets again if the government failed to act on their demands within two weeks.

Ghanaian teachers return to work after strike over salary delays suspended by unions

Teachers in Ghana returned to work on 27 November, after a strike over salary delays and related issues which remain unresolved. The unions said they “decided to exercise good faith to suspend our strike.” The strike began on November 16.

In addition to the delays in payment of salaries, the teachers oppose attempts by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission to move them onto a different payroll.

In August, the University Teachers Association of Ghana, the Ghana Association of University Administrators, Senior Staff Association of Universities of Ghana and the Teachers and Educational Workers' Union signed a memorandum of understanding with the government, bringing a previous strike to an end. The government, however reneged on its promises.



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