

French healthcare, transport and employment agency workers strike over pay and staff shortages; protests by teachers across Iran against wages and conditions; striking South African Clover food workers' indefinite stoppage against pay and job cuts in eleventh week

## 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 healthcare workers hold widespread strikes over low pay and staffing levels

Workers throughout the French healthcare system took part in numerous strikes this week, denouncing low pay and stressful working conditions which further deteriorated during the pandemic.

On Tuesday, a national one-day strike and numerous local protests were called by the unions in the health and social care sector, denouncing the low pay levels and the treatment of those they care for resulting from poor staffing levels and management. *France Bleu* interviewed one educator at a care home for young people, who said he graduated 10 years ago. Only four of the 25 people in his class are still in social work. He said, "We are asked to be profitable, sometimes to be subordinates of the national police," and criticised the service which abandons children the moment they come of age.

The National Union of Midwives (ONSSF) called another four-day national strike from January 27, as part of a long-running dispute over pay and staffing levels in midwifery, *Le Figaro* reported. Most of the unions representing midwives ended a strike movement after accepting a pay rise in November, but the ONSSF said a large part of that increase was money that was already promised, and have called several strikes since.

Nurses in the A&E and surgery departments at Yves-Le Foll hospital in the Breton town of Saint-Brieuc began an indefinite strike, treating patients as usual but refusing administrative duties. *Le Télégramme* reported that the General Confederation of Labour called the strike over low staffing levels, and was calling for an additional nurse to be hired to improve the workload.

*Le Télégramme* reported that around 30 resuscitation assistants in Lorient were on strike on Tuesday, after they were excluded from a 100-euro bonus paid to nurses and managers in their department. On Wednesday, workers at the local healthcare centre in the town of Plomeur held another walkout following a one-hour stoppage two weeks ago, to oppose a recently announced plans to "return to financial balance,"

according to *Ouest France*.

### French transport workers continue wave of strikes over pay

Public transport workers across France continued a wave of industrial action in the past two weeks to defend their pay and working conditions.

On January 28, traffic regulators on the bus and tram network in Besançon began an indefinite strike called by three unions to oppose a planned below-inflation pay rise, according to *L'Est Républicain*. The management of the service, which is operated by Keolis, said that between 3 and 5 percent of all employees on the network are taking part in the stoppages, but there were major disruptions.

In the city of Nancy, where the local transport network is also run by Keolis, unions representing transport workers filed a strike notice covering the period from January 31 to May 22, *ici-c-nancy.fr* reported. The unions denounced "the deterioration of working conditions" and "a refusal to standardise the rotation of rest."

Transport workers at Transdev in Occitania also continued an indefinite strike begun on January 19, according to *France Bleu*. One of the unions representing the 370 workers at Transdev Ouest Occitanie pointed out that drivers work long hours for the minimum wage.

There were also numerous one-day stoppages over pay, including 450 bus, tram and metro drivers in Lille, another city whose transport network is run by Keolis. Coach drivers in Finistère are on strike this Friday, to demand a pay rise on their current hourly rate of 11.14 euros, according to *Le Télégramme*. *Lyon Mag* reported that bus and tram drivers on Lyon's transport network TCL, also a Keolis concession, will be on a one-day strike next week to oppose plans to divide the bus and tram operations into separate companies.

### National strike at French unemployment agency

On Tuesday, workers at the French unemployment agency walked out on a one-day national strike to demand better pay and staffing levels.

According to *Le Figaro*, around 14,000 workers, a quarter of all employees of the service, stopped work, including a third of workers who walked out for an hour.

The 10 unions who called the strike said workers at the service have lost purchasing power for more than ten years, and half earned less than 2,000 euros per month. In addition to pay demands, they said recent changes to unemployment regulations increased their workload, and the widespread use of fixed-term contracts meant they were constantly training new hires.

### **Union calls off waste collection strike in Marseille, France**

The Force Ouvrière (FO) union announced on Wednesday that it had reached a deal with the city of Marseille, ending a strike of waste collection workers which began on January 18.

The strike began when FO accused the city of reneging on a promise to pay a 100-euro bonus for Sunday work, which it made in negotiations during a two-month long strike last year. According to *France Bleu*, the pay rise reached this week between FO and the city includes a mere 40-euro monthly pay rise.

Despite it being illegal to hire strike-breakers in France, the city brought in private sector companies to collect waste during the strike, claiming there was a risk of waste from the city contaminating the ocean. On Saturday, a court order also demanded the lifting of pickets at depots, threatening a 250-euro fine per day for each worker on the picket line.

### **Hungary: 20,000 teachers in warning strike over pay and workloads**

On Monday, around 20,000 teachers in Hungary joined a two-hour warning strike, defying government threats that it was “illegal.” According to *Telex*, the Democratic Union of Teachers (PDSZ) and Teachers’ Union (PSZ) called the strike to demand a pay rise and reduction in workloads. The unions, however, also oppose vaccine mandates, despite coronavirus cases in Hungary continuing to rise.

The unions said twice as many teachers signed up to participate in the strike, but many were intimidated by the government or were self-isolating due to COVID-19 and unable to take part. The government continued to insist the strike is illegal, despite a court ruling to the contrary last week.

### **Italian nurses join national strike to demand more staff and pay rises**

Nurses throughout Italy joined a one-day national strike called by the NurSind union on January 28, denouncing their exhausting working conditions. Also, they have not been paid a bonus, which was included in the government budget in 2020.

According to *ANSA*, NurSind says thousands of new nurses are needed in many regions to meet the basic needs of the population, including 4,000 in Piedmont, Italy’s second-largest region.

Hundreds of nurses joined protests in regional capitals across Italy, including in Rome where they symbolically “gave blood” to represent the sacrifices they make through the pandemic.

### **100-day strike of municipal workers over pay and job security in Bakırköy, Turkey sold out by union**

Last week, the Belediye-İSİD union announced that it had signed a deal with the city government in Bakırköy, Turkey, which did not meet what the union called its “red line” when the strike of municipal workers began on October 25.

*Evrensel* reported the 290 workers walked out against the imposition of a pay freeze, but demanded the city also provide job security and more rights for contract workers. Neither is included in the new agreement.

The pay rise agreed by Belediye-İSİD is, according to *Evrensel*, 6 percent for 2020, 8 percent for 2021, and 11 percent for 2022. The government’s official inflation rate reached 36 percent in December, but the independent Inflation Research Group said that the real cost of living is increasing at a rate of more than 82 percent year-on-year, making the new contract a massive cut to workers’ living standards.

### **Strike continues at Polish bus manufacturer Polaris**

Workers at the Polaris bus manufacturing plants in the Polish region of Greater Poland continue an indefinite strike which began last week, demanding a pay rise of 800 zloty. Polaris made record profits last year, according to *Strajk.eu*, and is a subsidiary of the Spanish multinational CAF.

The strike was called by the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ) and Solidarity union among permanent workers, with around 2,700 eligible to join the strike. Workers on fixed-term temporary contracts were told by the unions they should cross the picket line, as the company may not renew their contracts if they joined the strike.

A crowdfunding campaign set up by OPZZ and Solidarity raised over 172,000 zloty in nearly two weeks for the strike fund.

### **Works council ends walkout by tram drivers in Zaragoza, Spain, while bus drivers remain on strike**

On Monday, one day before an indefinite strike of tram drivers in the Spanish city of Zaragoza was due to begin, the works council announced it had signed a pre-agreement with the operator Tranvías de Zaragoza at the Aragonese Mediation and Arbitration Service and was calling off the strike.

*Europa Press* reported the agreement is a three-year deal concerning the long-running pay dispute, which is now being put to a vote of workers, although seemingly no other details were made public. Tranvías de Zaragoza is a joint venture between the Zaragoza City Council and a consortium of private companies, including the multinational vehicle manufacturer CAF.

Bus drivers in Zaragoza are in a separate dispute with the operator, the multinational Avanza Group, and continued their partial strikes, stopping work between 12.30 and 2.30pm this week, according to *Aragón Noticias*.

### **London Underground drivers continue stoppages over Night Tube rostering**

Drivers on the Central and Victoria lines on the London underground are continuing their Friday and Saturday night stoppages, begun January 7, until June. They also took action at the end of last year.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) members oppose plans by Transport for London to scrap a 2016 agreement that established a dedicated grade of Night Tube drivers—favoured by female staff and carers. The Night Tube service, suspended at the start of the pandemic, was reintroduced last month. All drivers are now forced to work at least four weekend Night Tube shifts per year.

An RMT press release on the latest weekend strike called on the London Underground bosses to re-enter negotiations to end the dispute.

### **Hospital security workers at London hospital begin a six-week strike over pay and conditions**

Security staff at Great Ormond Street Hospital in the UK capital began a six-week strike on Thursday.

The United Voices of the World members are seeking parity on pay, sick pay, annual leave, parental leave and career progression with staff directly employed by the National Health Service (NHS). They are employed by outsourcing company, Carlisle Support Services.

Carlisle is owned by Tory party donor and billionaire, Lord Ashcroft. The company made £6 million in profits in 2019.

The union is supporting a group indirect racial discrimination legal claim against the hospital, on the grounds of structural racism against the mainly black, brown and migrant workers. The issue of worse pay and conditions, however, affects all outsourced workers, as for example at St Barts hospital, where a separate dispute is also under way.

The workers held a three-day strike in early December over the same issue.

### **Outsourced workers at London hospital begin two-week walkout over pay and conditions**

Outsourced staff working for Serco at St Barts hospital in London began a two-week strike on Monday. The Unite union members provide cleaning, portering, catering and reception services at the hospital.

They are seeking pay parity with directly employed NHS staff at the hospital, who earn up to 15 percent more than outsourced staff. They are also protesting excessive workloads and accuse management of bullying.

### **Unite union suspends strike of bus drivers in Greater Manchester, England over pay**

On Thursday, the Unite union announced the suspension of the strike by around 300 First Bus drivers. The workers, based in Oldham near Manchester, struck in December and January and planned another stoppage Friday and February 7–9.

First Bus made an “improved offer” but no details have been made public. The drivers are being balloted on the offer and should they accept, Unite said the dispute will end. Otherwise, further scheduled strikes will go ahead said the union.

The press release quoted Unite regional officer Dave Roberts: “From the

beginning of this dispute, Unite has made clear that it believed it could be resolved through negotiations. Once First Manchester returned to the negotiating table with an improved offer progress was made.”

The drivers’ current basic rate of pay is just £12.40 an hour. The drivers also wanted any settlement backdated to August 1, 2021. The company had opposed this and the press release announcing the strike’s suspension gives no information on this.

Speaking to WSWS reporters earlier in the week before the announcement of the strike’s suspension, one driver said, “They are offering us £13.50 an hour, which is a lot more than what we are getting, but with no back-pay from last August. They will only do back-pay from November. We have said we will go back for £13.10 an hour and full back pay and our rotas back.”

Over the past months, Unite has agreed below-inflation pay deals at bus companies across the UK, keeping all the disputes separate.

First Bus parent company FirstGroup made an operating profit of £224.3 million last year, with reserves of more than three quarters of a billion pounds.

### **Stagecoach drivers at Cambridge bus company accept new pay offer after threatened strike called off**

Around 400 drivers, engineers, cleaners and shunters working for Cambridgeshire Stagecoach subsidiary, Cambus, have accepted a pay offer from the company.

The Unite union members had voted by a 96 percent majority to strike after rejecting an insulting offer of 1.5 percent from April 2021 and a further 1.5 percent from December for 2021/2, after suffering a pay freeze since last year.

Unite had suspended a 10-day strike due to begin January 4. The actions of Unite were consistent with its prevention of unified action across the UK’s largest private bus operator as all out strike action was due to start at Stagecoach Yorkshire.

The divisive agreement means Peterborough based Cambus workers will get a 12.2 percent rise over 18 months from April 2021 to October 2022 plus a £300 lump sum. Those based at Cambridge and Fenstanton will get a 7.4 percent rise over the same period plus a £500 lump sum. Cambus bus workers had suffered a pay freeze for the previous 2 years which make a mockery of the claims made by Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham’s that this is a “a significant pay deal” from the standpoint of defending workers living standards.

### **Following series of strikes, UK school postpones decision to become an academy**

Around 100 teachers at the Newham (NewVic) sixth form college in east London took 12 days of strike actions over the last few months.

The National Education Union (NEU) members were opposed to plans by the school to become an academy. Following the strikes the NewVic management called off immediate plans to academise, saying it will not go ahead with the plans until 2025.

### **Planned walkout over teachers’ excessive workloads at Bristol, UK school called off by union**

Teachers at the Gordano School in Portishead, near Bristol, England voted overwhelmingly to strike in protest at the excessive workloads at the school. The school is run by the Lighthouse School Partnership.

The National Education Union (NEU) members planned six days of walkouts. The first strike, planned for Thursday, was called off at the last minute by the NEU for talks later this week.

### **Airline support staff at London Heathrow airport to strike over pay**

Around 400 workers employed by Menzies Aviation at London's Heathrow airport are to hold a 72-hour stoppage beginning February 11.

The Unite union members are employed to provide ground handling services, while a separate group refuel British Airway planes. The ground handling group provide services for a range of airlines including Lufthansa and Air Canada. The walkouts are in response to Menzies Aviation's refusal to enter into pay negotiations.

At the height of the pandemic the company fired over 800 of its employees and re-employed them on inferior terms. According to Unite many suffered big cuts in pay, with some losing £9,000 a year.

### **XPO logistics workers in England to strike over pay**

Around 400 UK drivers and warehouse workers employed by logistics firm XPO are to strike over low pay. The Unite union members will walk out for a week beginning Monday February 7, and again on Monday February 21.

The XPO depots affected include Gloucester, Hounslow, Luton, Motherwell, Sheffield and Wakefield. XPO is under contract to deliver motor vehicles for Mercedes and VW, among others, as well as delivering supplies for Velux Windows and Tata Steel.

### **Aerospace workers at UK firm ballot over pay**

Workers employed by Collins Aerospace in Kilkeel, County Down, Northern Ireland, rejected a below-inflation pay offer from the company.

The Unite union press release of January 27 said it would move to a ballot. This could go ahead in days, but the union said it hoped the company would come back with an offer "that meets our members' expectations."

### **Local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ballot over derisory pay offer**

Unite is balloting its local government members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over a 1.75 percent pay offer. The ballot of its 70,000 members across over 300 local authorities closes on February 25.

The Unison union balloted its membership in local government over the same pay offer. Members voted by a 70 percent majority to reject it. However, with a turnout of less than 15 percent, no action will be taken by the union as the turnout was below the 50 percent level legally required to

strike.

### **Santander bank workers in UK accept union-recommended below-inflation pay offer**

UK Santander staff voted by a near 90 percent majority to accept a "final" below-inflation pay offer being made by the company, as advised by the Communication Workers Union (CWU).

The offer was for £1,000 across the board, which for most staff would be consolidated.

Some workers will not automatically receive a one-off £250 unconsolidated lump sum. According to the union the £250 payment applies "to everyone apart from those with a 2021 performance rating of 'Not Achieved.' Even they have the potential of a pro-rated increase being retrospectively applied in September 2022 pay if they successfully complete a documented coaching plan by August 1. Similarly, anyone who successfully appeals a 'Not Achieved' rating will retrospectively be awarded the £250 'cash' payment."

With RPI inflation at 7.5 percent, the CWU said that there would be "a 2% increase to S1/G1 and S2/G2 pay range midpoints." The deal means entry-level employees will be paid just £10.41 an hour.

Speaking about the sellout, the CWU national officer for Santander, Sally Bridge, said, "We've managed to conclude, in constructive and business-like talks with management, a 'final' offer from the Bank which provides a level of certainty for members in a world where very little is 'certain' just at present."

### **UK Atos workers to ballot over pay**

UK workers employed by Atos conducting disability benefits assessments are to ballot for strike action, after they refused to accept an inferior pay offer.

The Public and Commercial Services union members seek a five percent increase, with a minimum £1,300 rise for the lowest paid, plus a one-off £600 payment.

Atos initially offered a one percent rise, which workers rejected. Atos then came back with an improved offer of a two percent rise for workers on or below £30,000, or a 1.5 percent across the board rise. This was rejected in negotiations.

The ballot closes February 7.

### **Bus drivers in Swindon, UK to ballot over pay**

Around 70 UK bus drivers working for Stagecoach West are to ballot over low pay. They are currently paid £12 an hour.

The ballot of Unite union members begins on February 7, and closes February 21. A ballot of Stagecoach West drivers at six other depots including Bristol, Cheltenham and Gloucester is already taking place, involving 380 drivers in total. The delay in balloting the Swindon drivers was to allow them to vote on the company's final offer, which they rejected.

The Unite union refused to put a central pay demand in the series of pay disputes that have taken place at Stagecoach and other companies across

the UK since autumn of 2021. The union bureaucracy isolated these disputes from each other by not calling for national action, which would have had a powerful impact, bringing the whole company's operation to a halt.

### **Bus drivers working for Arriva in London and southeast England to ballot over pay**

Around 1,300 UK bus drivers working for Arriva are balloting for strike action over pay. The ballot closes March 1.

The Unite union members rejected a 1.5 percent pay offer from the company. The depots taking part in the ballot are Brixton, Croydon, Norwood and Thornton Heath in London, Dartford in Kent and Grays in Essex.

### **UK financial regulatory workers return majority in consultative ballot over attacks on pay, jobs and conditions**

Staff working for the UK Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) voted by an 87 percent majority in a consultative ballot over proposals by the FCA to cut jobs and pay and impose an appraisal system being pushed by FCA CEO, Nikhil Rathi.

FCA staff are responsible for monitoring and regulating companies providing financial services in the UK. The Unite union members may now proceed to a full ballot for industrial action, but Unite appealed to Rathi to return to negotiations and called on mediation service Acas to intervene.

### **Asda supermarket distribution workers in Britain ballot for new pay offer**

UK distribution workers employed by supermarket giant Asda are currently balloting over a new pay offer from the company.

The ballot of GMB union members closes on February 14. They previously voted by a 94 percent majority in a consultative ballot as willing to strike over the company's refusal to make a meaningful pay offer. Should the workers reject the pay offer, a ballot for industrial action will be held.

### **Unite union calls off strike action by drivers at Scottish drinks logistics firm**

Around 200 drivers, cask handlers and forklift truck drivers working for Glasgow-based Cartyne Transport, Scotland voted to strike after the company made a derisory pay offer. However, following talks between Unite and Cartyne, drivers accepted a pay offer. According to Unite, the offer represents a 19 percent pay increase. The hourly rate for drivers will increase from £12.60 to £15, and after working nine hours the hourly rate would be £17.

### **Unite union ends dispute at Scottish Clyde nuclear submarine base as workers agree new pay deal**

Around 70 workers at the Royal Naval Armaments Depot Coulport, Scotland ended their overtime ban and series of 24-hour strikes, after accepting a new pay deal agreed by the union.

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 stoppage. They were protesting ABL's refusal to meet a 3.8 percent pay claim lodged by Unite.

The workers accepted a new pay deal which comprises a £600 one-off payment for 2020, together with a 3.5 percent increase from August 2021.

### **Unite union sells out strike of dock workers at Sheerness, UK over job cuts**

On Tuesday, the Unite union announced an end to the dispute by dockers working for GB Southern Terminals at Sheerness, on the Thames and Medway estuary in England. Five days-a-week strikes planned for February and March were called off. The dockers had walked out each Thursday in January.

Workers opposed plans by the employer to cut 75 percent of jobs or 50 jobs by imposing "fire and rehire" measures. The company also planned to cut overtime through the use of time off in lieu, and restrict skilled work rates to specific tasks.

The company has not taken the threat of job cuts off the agenda. A Unite press release of February 1 quoted Unite regional officer Phil Silkstone that, "GB Terminals have now taken fire and rehire off the table and we are confident that ongoing talks over job cuts can be resolved without the need for further industrial action."

The dockers are responsible for unloading Volkswagen cars off ferries arriving at the terminal.

### **Hospital workers in south London protest after employer stops COVID-19 payments**

Workers employed by contractor G4S to provide cleaning and portering services at Croydon University Hospital NHS Trust in the UK capital held a protest at midday on Monday.

Their employer stopped paying COVID sick pay. Instead, workers off sick with COVID will have to rely on statutory sick pay. The protest was supported by the doctors' union the BMA. The union representing the G4S workers, GMB, threatened strike action if G4S does not revoke the measure.

Middle East

### **Protests by teachers across Iran against wages and conditions**

On Monday, teachers in Iran held protests in many cities including Tehran, Shiraz, Tabriz and Isfahan against low wages, poor working conditions and against the detention of teachers following previous

protests. In Tehran, protests were held outside the Iranian parliament.

The protests on Monday followed strikes and sit-ins by teachers in around 300 cities the previous day. The past weeks have seen retired steel workers and teachers protest across Iran over the failure of pensions to keep step with the rising cost of living. The Iranian economy has been battered by US economic sanctions.

### **Lebanese lorry drivers strike against increasing poverty**

Lebanese lorry drivers held a strike on Wednesday, to protest the deteriorating economic conditions.

Organised by the Land Transportation Unions and Syndicates, protestors blocked roads in Tripoli and Beirut among other cities. The Education ministry called on schools and universities to close in anticipation of the chaos caused by protests.

### **Union kowtow to legal block on strike by Israeli teachers over change in COVID-19 regulations**

Last week, the Tel Aviv labour court in Israel ruled a planned strike of teachers illegal.

The teachers intended to strike against changes to COVID-19 regulations, which would allow children exposed to the infection to attend school rather than having to quarantine. The Education Ministry and teachers' union met on Sunday, and came up with an agreement to distribute testing kits to all teachers and for all students in special education to be tested.

Africa

### **Striking South African Clover food workers' indefinite strike against pay and job cuts in eleventh week**

Around 5,000 striking workers at the Clover food and beverage group across South Africa are still in deadlock with management, after a second round of negotiations took place last week in Pretoria. Workers demand Clover stop further retrenchments, factory closures and salary cuts and reinstate all dismissed workers.

The General Industrial Workers Union of South Africa, the Food and Allied Workers Union and the South African Federation of Trades Unions (SAFTU) members are in the eleventh week of an indefinite protected strike, begun November 22. SAFTU say they "will scale up the fight" to gain more support for the strike.

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. They also propose a 20 percent reduction in wages as the only way to stop further redundancies.

### **Security guards employed by health centres in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa strike over late wages**

Hundreds of security guards at clinics in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area, Eastern Cape, South Africa went on strike January 26, and protested outside health centres over the ongoing late payment of wages. They also want to be employed directly by the provincial health department.

The employer, Silver Solutions Security say they have not been paid by the health department. Meanwhile, two nurses were robbed at gunpoint at a clinic in Gqeberha and health centres are turning patients away due to security concerns.

### **Foreign truck drivers in South Africa stop work in protest over attacks**

Foreign truck drivers in South Africa went on strike this week to protest attacks on them by local people, desperate for driving jobs themselves. In the past, scores of foreign lorries were destroyed by arson.

The drivers are organised by the Crossborder Drivers Association of the Southern African Development Community area who say they "seek to eliminate the exploitation and manipulation of cross border drivers."

### **Special needs school workers in Eastern Cape, South Africa strike for back pay**

Workers at schools for learners with special needs in Eastern Cape, South Africa are on strike over the non-payment of R9 million in overtime wages dating back to 2015.

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union members have not worked so far this year.

### **Teachers in Abuja, Nigeria strike over unpaid arrears**

Primary school teachers in the Nigerian capital city of Abuja walked out on indefinite strike on January 26, to protest over unpaid promotion arrears and other issues. The Nigeria Union of Teachers said they were striking reluctantly as children's education was affected by the pandemic. A previous strike in December ended when they were promised payment, but the promise was broken.

One striker told the media, "The thing is, we also have children at the secondary level... We all need this money to sort out various challenges at home. We have appealed and are still appealing to them to pay us. We have suffered enough."

Teachers' demands include payment of teachers' promotion arrears from 2014 to 2018, payment of 2020 and 2021 annual increments, and promotions for qualified teachers.

### **Teachers in Zomba, Malawi walk out to protest non-payment of salary**

More than 200 teachers left their classrooms to angrily protest not getting paid their salary for January. The teachers went to the office of the

district commissioner in Zomba to mount the angry protest, despite the rain. One of those demonstrating explained that she had been unable to pay her rent.

While the teachers were demonstrating, the union was inside in a meeting with officials.

### **Moroccan workers facing refinery closure mount protest**

About 250 workers from the Samir oil refinery in Morocco marched to their company headquarters to protest the planned closure of their workplace.

The refinery used to employ over 1,000 workers, with another 5,000 others depending on the refinery for their jobs.

The Trade Union Council of Confédération Démocratique du Travail union is limiting the workers' demands to calling on the government to "save what can be saved," in the words of Al-Hussein Al-Yamani, general secretary of Syndicat National des Industries du Pétrole & Gaz Naturel.



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