

Teachers strikes in Catalonia, Spain; French teachers in Marseille walk out; childcare workers in Belgium walk out over pay and conditions; miners at Sibanye-Stillwater, South Africa on pay strike for four weeks; weeks-long pay strikes by UK refuse workers in Coventry, and Chep pallet workers in Manchester

## 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**

### Teachers' strikes continue in Catalonia, Spain against attacks on work conditions

This week, teachers in Catalonia, Spain held the final two days of a five-day strike called by the unions against changes imposed by the Catalan government in schools.

According to one union, a protest and march to the Ministry of Education in Barcelona was attended by 40,000 people on Tuesday, while the police say 10,000 were there, *Europa Press* reported. The strike and protests were also supported by student organisations, and *Crónica Global* reported that parents of children with special needs joined a teachers' protest on Wednesday.

The main issue is the change in the start of the school year, leaving a week less to prepare classes. Also, cuts made by the Catalan government ten years ago were never restored, and teachers oppose new requirement to prove they are fluent in Catalan.

Teachers walked out for one day last week, after the High Court of Justice of Catalonia ruled that at least 25 percent of classes in school must be taught in Spanish.

### Spanish manufacturing workers begin indefinite strike against Nordex closure

Workers at the wind turbine manufacturing plant in the Valencian town of La Vall d'Uixó began an indefinite strike last week on March 25, to oppose the closure of the site and the loss of 110 jobs. Employer Nordex announced in January that the plant would close and production would

move elsewhere, "with the excuse of market competitiveness," the Intersindical Valenciana said, according to *Europa Press*.

Nordex is a multinational manufacturer of wind turbines. Its owner, Spanish conglomerate Acciona, reported profits of 332 million euros on revenue of 8.1 billion euros in 2021.

### Pay strike planned from Friday of 28,000 industrial workers in Norway

Fellesforbundet (United Federation of Trade Unions), Norway's largest private-sector union, issued a strike notice for 27,600 industrial workers on Sunday, with a strike to begin after the end of this week's compulsory negotiations on Friday.

The collective agreement between Fellesforbundet and employers' organisation Norsk Industri is for industries which compete on the world market, including shipbuilding and auto manufacturing, *Reuters* reported. While asking Norsk Industri for a real-term pay rise, the union wrote on its website that its agreement would "ensure that wage growth does not weaken Norwegian competitiveness" and would set the pattern for pay deals in the rest of society.

### Widespread strike in daycare centres in Belgium

Childcare workers in Belgium joined a one-day strike on March 25 against understaffing and overwork in the sector.

*Het Laatste Nieuws* reported that 90 percent of both public and private-sector daycare centres in the city of Ghent were closed, and 400 workers protested. A protest planned in Brussels was cancelled as US President Joseph Biden was visiting the capital. One union spokesperson said the ratio of supervisors to children was one to four in the neighbouring Netherlands, but in Belgium one worker could be looking after nine children.

## French transport workers in Paris strike over privatisation and worsening conditions

On March 25, public transport workers at the French state-owned Autonomous Parisian Transportation Administration (RATP) stopped work to oppose plans to open the capital's transport network to private competition.

According to *20 Minutes*, RATP management insists that to win tenders in bidding against private bus companies it will extend the working day by 40 minutes and eliminate six rest days, in return for a 70 euro monthly pay rise. The unions at RATP also called for a pay rise, while the company says pay negotiations are over and it will unilaterally impose the 2.7 percent offered in February.

## Teachers in Marseille, France, strike against cuts to school resources

On Tuesday, around 100 teachers protested in Marseille during a strike against continued cuts to the resources and teaching hours in the schools.

*France TV Info* reported protestors denouncing the fact that nearly 2,000 class hours were cut in the last five years from primary schools designated "REP+," which indicates their pupils come from the most deprived areas. According to *France Bleu*, teachers in different schools and colleges throughout Marseille have been walking out since March 14, but Tuesday was the first unified strike.

The number of hours allocated in each school is decided by the French government annually, and there have been numerous protests and strikes nationwide in recent weeks against cuts. Last week, *France Bleu* reported that around sixty teachers in the city of Tours walked out on strike on March 22 against a cut in both class hours and jobs, and the next day around fifty teachers from several schools in Dijon protested outside the Academy of Dijon to demand more resources.

## Municipal workers in Northern Cyprus strike over possible job losses

Municipal workers in Northern Cyprus held a one-day strike last week, with another planned for Friday, after the government proposed a bill reducing the number of municipalities. The unions say this would endanger the employment of thousands of workers.

*Dialogos* reported that on March 21, many public services in the internationally unrecognised republic were stopped and a rally took place in Nicosia. This Friday's strike was called by many unions in the public and private sector, to oppose both the municipal reform bill and an increase in the cost of living.

## Dock workers in Taranto, Italy walk out following death of colleague

Workers at the Italian port of Taranto stopped work for an hour at the end of each shift on March 23, following the death of their colleague Massimo De Vita. According to ANSA, De Vita was crushed by a steel

frame which fell while wind turbines were being moved.

Italy had one of the highest rates of strikes due to workplace deaths in Europe even before the pandemic. Official statistics from the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work show that 46 workers were killed in workplace accidents in January, up from 41 in January 2021. After reports of these deaths reach the press, the unions called a one-day strike, or for several hours, to defuse the anger of workers.

## Sacked workers at Xiaomi-Salcomp in Turkey continue protests

Workers fired from the Xiaomi-Salcomp electronics factory in Istanbul, Turkey continued protests this week. They demand the rehiring of those who want their jobs back, and for the many who were terminated just before they became eligible for redundancy pay to be compensated. *Evrensel* reported on Monday that at a protest in front of the factory, workers shouted slogans demanding their jobs and condemning the Türk Metal union for abandoning them.

The opening of the factory, financed by two China-based multinationals, was celebrated by the government last year, and Xiaomi-Salcomp received large amounts of state aid. Two weeks ago it announced it was downsizing and fired 110 workers.

## Four-hour strike in Greek banks during collective bargaining

Workers in bank branches throughout Greece stopped work for four hours on Monday, following the call of the Federation of Banking Employees of Greece (OTOE) during its negotiations with employers for a new collective agreement. According to *ef.syn*, the employers offered a 4.75 percent increase, which was refused by OTOE as inflation is currently 7.2 percent and expected to average 6 percent over a year.

## Rally of striking refuse drivers employed by scab-organising Coventry Labour council in England after vote to renew strike mandate in pay dispute

A rally took place on Saturday in Coventry in support of the 70 UK refuse collection lorry drivers, on all-out strike against Labour Party-run Coventry council since January 31.

Coventry council hired a replacement scab workforce mobilised through its wholly owned arms-length company, Tom White Waste. It set up sites across the city where waste can be dropped off. The sites are guarded by privately hired security staff.

The Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) drivers' pay starts at just £22,183 a year. It takes 11 years of service to reach the top of the pay scale. There is a UK-wide shortage of HGV drivers, and some councils increased pay or made retention payments to keep refuse collection drivers.

The Unite union members recently voted by a 94 percent margin to continue their stoppage, which could run into the May local elections. They had to reballet as the mandate for the current action ran out March 24.

The Labour-controlled council recently suspended shop steward, Peter Randle, on what Unite said were bogus charges.

## **UK university academic staff in further industrial action over pay, pensions and conditions**

Following 10 days of strikes at nearly 70 higher education institutions across the UK in February and early March, academic staff at 39 universities were on strike from March 21 to 25. This week saw 27 universities striking from Monday through until Friday. The workers are striking over pay, pensions and conditions.

Among the universities taking part this week were a number in London and others in Manchester, Bradford, Brighton, Keele, Kent, Liverpool and Sheffield.

This week's strikes coincided with the publication of a survey of university academics in which two thirds of respondents said they were likely to leave the sector over the next five years. They cited pension cuts, pay and working conditions. University management aims to attack pay and working conditions and extend casualisation.

The Universities Superannuation Scheme's joint negotiating committee (JNC) recently imposed massive attacks on pensions, meaning workers in the higher education sector losing tens of thousands of pounds. The JNC—comprising five employers' representatives, five from the University and College Union (UCU) and a chair—was set up in 2018 and was presented by the union as a concession from employers to justify their sell-out of the 2018 pensions dispute.

## **Indefinite pay strike continues by Chep pallet production workers in Greater Manchester, England**

The stoppage by around 70 UK workers at Chep in Trafford Park, Greater Manchester is now entering its eighteenth week. The indefinite strike began on December 17, after workers rejected a one percent pay offer.

The Chep workers recently rebalotted to continue the strike, with 94 percent in favour. The Unite union members, who make pallets for companies like Heinz and Heineken, are paid £1,000 less than workers at other Chep sites. Trafford Park workers voted 75 percent to strike against a two percent offer. They are pushing for five percent this year, and five percent for next year, which with inflation at 8.2 percent and rising would still be a wage cut.

The company withdrew without explanation an offer put on Monday including holiday pay, which the workforce found favourable. Chep, part of supply chain company the Brambles with headquarters in Australia, recorded profits of £150 million last year. Monday to Friday 24-hour picketing at the Manchester site is ongoing.

At an online rally hosted by the Manchester Trades Council, in support of the striking Chep workers on Wednesday night, a worker suggested spreading the strike to other Chep plants.

## **Local government workers in Northern Ireland announce further day's strike over pay offer**

Following a one-week walk out last week, local government staff at all 11 Northern Ireland (NI) local authorities, Education Authority, NI Housing Executive and several colleges announced a further stoppage on Friday.

The Unite union members rejected a derisory 1.75 percent pay rise,

following an 11-year pay freeze. Inflation is running at 8.2 percent. The workers at the different authorities and bodies voted by big majorities, in most cases by more than 90 percent for the action.

## **Further strike by train conductors at TransPennine Express in England over pay**

Around 270 train conductors at TransPennine Express (TPE), which runs services in the north of England, held a further 24-hour strikes on Sunday. They began a sequence of Sunday walkouts on February 13.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members are calling for an end to the pay gap between them and other TPE workers. The dispute also concerns a new agreement covering rest days and Sunday working. The agreement covers the use of new technology for payment. The TPE conductors are calling for a 2p payment per transaction for checking tickets via new technology, in line with conductors working for Northern Trains who get this.

The train conductors voted by an 85 percent majority to strike.

## **University staff at Staffordshire University, UK strike over proposals to introduce two-tier workforce**

Academic staff at Staffordshire University, England walked out Monday and Wednesday to oppose the university's plans for newly appointed staff to be employed by a wholly owned subsidiary company on different contractual terms. A further one-day stoppage is planned for April 7.

UCU members voted to strike by a 70 percent majority. Newly appointed staff will not be eligible for the defined benefit Teachers' Pension Scheme but would instead be eligible for the inferior defined contribution Staffordshire University Pension Scheme.

The staff fear the introduction of a two-tier system would be the prelude to an attack on the pay and conditions of all staff.

## **Further strikes by Higher Education administrative staff at eight UK institutions over pay**

Administrative staff at eight UK Higher Education (HE) institutions are holding a further two days of stoppages over pay. Involved are Birkbeck (London), Brighton University, City (London), Edinburgh Napier, University of Gloucester (one day only), Kings College London, Leeds University and the School of Oriental and African Studies. The walkouts are over pay, although at the last two institutions the dispute is also over attacks on pensions.

The Unison union members are taking the action from March 24 to April 8. They are protesting the imposition of a 1.5 percent pay rise from August 2021, which followed a pay freeze the previous year. Unison estimates HE administrative staff have seen a 20 percent cut in spending power over the last decade.

## **Workers at aviation manufacturer in Gloucester, UK strike over pay**

Around 90 UK workers employed by Dowty Propellers, a subsidiary of GE Aviation Systems Limited, are continuing their series of strikes. Since March 4, they have been walking out each Friday.

The Unite union members voted to strike in November, after rejecting a two-year pay offer of 4.5 percent. Unite delayed action hoping to negotiate a deal. According to Unite, GE management have been photographing and filming strikers while lawfully picketing. Management also insisted on workers presenting a sickness certificate from day one of any sickness absence rather than the usual five days.

#### **Car parts workers in County Durham, UK continue strikes over pay**

Around 200 UK workers at the NSK Bearings and AKS Precision Ball in Peterlee are continuing their one-day pay strikes each Wednesday and Saturday. They began their action on March 24. Strikes are scheduled for the next four weeks.

The Unite union members rejected a 1.6 percent pay offer. The two factory sites are owned by NSK Europe, which made an £80 million profit in the last financial year. The sites make bearings for car manufacturers including Renault, Toyota and VW.

#### **Refuse collectors in Sussex, England continue strike over pay**

Around 60 UK refuse collectors, street cleaners and recycling workers in Adur and Worthing in Sussex are continuing their strike begun March 14. The strike was due to last two weeks but was extended to four, and according to the GMB union may now last until April 23. Rubbish is beginning to pile up as a result of the stoppages.

The GMB union members voted by a 100 percent majority on a 90 percent turnout to walk out for higher pay. The employer is refusing to negotiate with the GMB, claiming they only recognise the Unison union.

Talks due to take place Tuesday between the GMB and the council broke down. The council asked the GMB to suspend the action. Unison, which originally negotiated a pay deal for the refuse collectors, has now lodged a formal complaint with the Trades Union Council over the actions of the GMB and asked it to intervene.

The council has extended the opening hours of its tip sites to allow residents to drop off domestic waste.

#### **UK confectionery workers in York hold rally and plan a further stoppage over pay and conditions**

Following a series of two-hour stoppages, UK workers at Fox's sweet factory in York held a rally outside the factory on Monday. The workers were joined by York Labour councillors. A full-day stoppage is scheduled for April 14.

Fox makes well-known brands including Glacier Mints, Mint Humbugs and Poppets. The parent company is Irish-based multinational Valeo Foods, which has its Yorkshire headquarters in Pontefract and another factory in Cleckheaton.

The GMB members are protesting a below-inflation pay offer. Also, the lowest paid workers were excluded from a one-off payment, others stand to lose two days leave, and the company gave notice to end collective

bargaining at the site.

The workers twice rejected the pay offer from Fox, who refused to improve it despite making an improved offer at its Pontefract site

#### **Oil refinery workers at Fawley, UK set to walk out over derisory pay offer**

Around 100 workers at the US-owned ExxonMobil oil refinery at Fawley, England plan to walk out on April 8, 25 and May 6.

The Unite union members representing around a third of the workforce at the site are employed by three contractors, Altrad Services, Trant Engineering Limited and Veolia Services. The workers rejected a 2.5 percent pay offer over two years. Unite is calling for a one-year deal in line with inflation. Around a sixth of petrol filling stations and all UK airports are dependent on supplies from Fawley.

#### **Strike vote by UK post office staff in opposition to pay freeze**

UK staff working for the Crown Post Office as counter staff, administrators and in supply chain services voted to strike in opposition to a pay freeze imposed by the employer.

The Communication Workers' Union (CWU) members voted by more than 97 percent for industrial action on a 70 percent turnout. The CWU has not set a date for a stoppage but instead called on the Post Office to make an acceptable offer or enter meaningful negotiations.

#### **Aircraft manufacturing workers at Broughton, Wales set to strike over pay offer**

Around 3,000 workers at plane manufacturer Airbus at their Broughton site in North Wales plan to walk out from April 7. The Unite union members rejected the pay offer from the company.

#### **Scottish water workers to walk out over pay**

Around 50 Scottish workers employed by Veolia Water in Edinburgh and the Lothians plan to walk out after rejecting a 2.6 percent pay offer.

The Unite union members work as plant operatives, engineers and administrative staff. They voted by a 94 per majority on an 83 percent turnout to strike from April 7 to 13, followed by a continuous stoppage from April 21. Veolia Water manages waste water treatment at 15 sites across the Edinburgh and Lothian region.

#### **Airport baggage maintenance engineers to strike at London Heathrow airport over pay**

Around 160 engineers working for Vanderlande Industries at London

Heathrow airport are due to strike April 7 to 10, in the run up to Easter.

The Unite members are responsible for maintaining baggage handling systems. They voted by a 97 percent majority on a 77 percent turnout to walk out to demand an improved pay offer.

#### **Ancillary workers at Croydon hospital in London set to walk out over pay**

Workers employed by outsourcing company G4S to provide domestic and portering services at Croydon hospital in the UK capital are to walk out on April 4. They voted by a 98 percent majority on a 61 percent turnout to strike.

The GMB members are protesting G4S's refusal to pay the London Living Wage or occupational sick pay.

A protest organised by GMB was held outside the hospital on January 31, against G4S's ending of occupational sick pay for workers testing positive for COVID-19. Without sick pay, workers are forced to come into work with symptoms.

A GMB press release stated, "GMB urges Croydon NHS [National Health Service] to take the contract back in house and place all of the workforce on NHS terms and conditions. Otherwise, we face a strike which could cause the hospital to grind to a halt."

#### **Dates announced for walkout by recycling and refuse workers in North Somerset, UK over pay**

Around 100 UK refuse and recycling workers at the North Somerset Environment Company are to strike April 12-13, 16-17 and 21-22.

The GMB members turned down a 1.75 percent pay offer. The company, wholly owned by North Somerset council, serves 88,000 homes.

#### **Gas distribution workers at UK firm ballot for strike action after rejecting below-inflation pay offer**

Around 2,000 UK workers employed by natural gas distribution firm, Cadent are balloting after rejecting a four percent pay offer. Cadent, which made a £900 million operating profit last year, is the largest of the four major gas distribution companies.

The ballot of GMB members closes April 8. According to the GMB, walkouts could begin April 22.

#### **Refuse collection workers in Manchester, UK balloting over pay deal**

Around 200 UK refuse collectors working for outsourcing company Biffa on a Manchester City Council contract are balloting after rejecting a 1.75 percent pay offer from Biffa. Biffa's offer is the same pay offer made to council workers. The offer means workers being paid only 64 pence above the hourly minimum wage rate.

The Unite and GMB union members are balloting separately, but the

ballots both close on April 12. Biffa is responsible for disposal of the domestic waste of nearly a quarter of a million households in Manchester.

#### **Scottish fishing protection staff in ballot over pay**

Around 80 staff employed by Scottish government body Marine Scotland are balloting after the Scottish government imposed a two percent pay rise.

The Unite union members are responsible for monitoring fishing in Scottish waters to ensure no illegal activity is taking place. The ballot closes on April 25.

#### **Staff at Richmond upon Thames, UK college ballot over fire and rehire proposals**

The 127 UK teaching staff at Richmond upon Thames College indicated in a consultative ballot their willingness to be balloted for industrial action. This follows plans by college management to fire and rehire the entire workforce on new inferior terms.

The UCU members would lose 13 days leave under the enforced new contract. Those refusing to sign up would be fired.

#### **UK pharmacy workers ballot for strike over inadequate pay offer**

Around 1,000 workers at UK pharmaceutical company GSK are balloting for industrial action after rejecting a pay offer.

The Unite union members rejected a pay increase of 2.75 percent as well as a four percent offer with strings attached. The ballot closes April 19. GSK makes products such as Sensodyne and Panadol, as well as many prescription medications.

The Unite union members work as engineers, technicians, warehouse workers and labourers. The sites balloting are at Montrose and Irvine in Scotland, Ware in Hertfordshire, Worthing in Sussex, Barnard Castle in Durham and Ulverston in Cumbria.

Around 150 GMB union members working for GSK at Barnard Castle are also balloting over the same issue. The ballot closes April 8.

#### **Teachers at London school ballot for strike over cancellation of talk by author**

In a consultative vote teacher at John Fisher Catholic state school in Croydon in south London voted by an 87 percent majority to ballot for strike action.

The National Education Union members are protesting the actions of the Southwark Archdiocese (catholic church area body). The Archdiocese intervened to cancel a planned talk at the school by author, Simon James Green. Green writes books for young adults featuring gay characters. The Archdiocese also sacked several school governors who had been in favour of the invitation to the author.

The ballot for industrial action closes on April 13.

## **Unions suspend stoppages by council workers in Glasgow, Scotland over broken promises on equal pay**

The GMB and Unison unions suspended planned strikes by around 12,000 Glasgow council workers, mainly women, over equal pay broken promises. The action was scheduled for March 29-30. The suspension follows assurances from Glasgow council that it expects to make interim payments by October, but strikes for April 20-21 remain scheduled.

In 2018, several thousand Glasgow City Council workers, predominantly women, walked out, demanding to be paid in line with male workers carrying out equivalent roles. The council agreed to recompense the workers, but there were major delays in ending the dispute. The settlement figure was around £500 million.

## **GMB union calls off strike by refuse workers in Solihull, UK after workers accept new offer**

The GMB union called off a proposed five-day strike by around 100 refuse collection workers employed on the Amey waste collection contract for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, England due to begin Monday.

Workers rejected a 4.21 percent pay offer from the company and demanded a higher offer. Amey made a new offer of 5.26 percent which was accepted by a 56 percent majority in a ballot. Under the new offer the refuse workers will get a minimum of £10 an hour. This is only 50p above the UK national minimum wage figure due to take effect from April.

May workers refused to back the union-recommended deal with GMB Organiser Dave Warwick saying, "It was a close vote, with the membership split pretty much down the middle."

## **Proposed strike of HGV drivers in UK delivering poultry products called off by GMB union**

HGV drivers working for Avara, England delivering chicken to restaurant chains accepted a new pay offer. The increase will take their pay up to a minimum of just £13,000. They voted to strike after rejecting a previous pay offer.

## **GMB union calls off strike of refuse workers in Barrow, UK after accepting below-inflation increase**

The GMB union called off a planned strike of refuse workers in Barrow, England due to take place Wednesday to Friday and another three days next week. The workers held three-day stoppages March 9-11 and March 16-18.

The workers employed by FCC Environment, responsible for collecting refuse from around 33,000 homes in Barrow, voted unanimously to walk out. They rejected a pay offer from FCC of 2.2 percent, demanding a three percent increase, later reduced to 2.8 percent. They returned to work under

the terms of the original 2.2 percent offer.

Regional GMB organiser Michael Hall was quoted in the local The Mail saying, "Unfortunately, the industrial action has been cancelled due to affordability. The membership can still hold their heads high, and they have drawn a line in the sand for future pay talks."

## **UCU cancels planned strike by staff at Sheffield college, England over pay**

On Monday, the UCU announced the cancelation of eight days of strikes by staff at the University of Sheffield International College, England the first of which was due to take place Wednesday.

The academic staff voted by a 79 percent majority on an 86 percent turnout to strike. The college refused to pay a cost of living rise and improve holiday allowances. Workers will get a three percent rise—a real terms pay cut—and an equalisation of holiday leave so that all staff get 30 days a year.

Staff prepare international students for courses at Sheffield University, including improving their English, with students paying up to £22,000 a year.

### **Middle East**

## **Strikes by teachers in Syrian Autonomous Administration area over pay and conditions**

In the past week teachers in the Syrian Democratic Forces-controlled area in north and east Syria announced strikes. Teachers in Al-Qahtanyah, Al-Arishah, Al-Tabaqah and Deir Ezzor are pushing for a pay rise and improved working conditions.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported an outbreak of strikes in the Syrian Autonomous Administration.

## **Ongoing strike of Israeli Foreign Ministry workers disrupts issuing of visas**

The ongoing strike by Israeli Foreign Ministry Workers' Union members is impacting the issuing of visas by overseas Israeli embassies. It is leading to a backlog of those seeking to emigrate to Israel. The Foreign Ministry workers are in a dispute over unpaid overtime.

## **Strike by doctors in West Bank over security concerns**

Doctors organised by the Palestinian Doctors' Syndicate in the West Bank stopped work on Sunday, after a medic was verbally and physically attacked while working in the emergency department of Jenin hospital. The syndicate called for the arrest of the perpetrator and described the situation in the emergency department as "security chaos."

### **Africa**

## **Miners at Sibanye-Stillwater, South Africa mark fourth week of strike with demonstrations**

Hundreds of striking gold mining operatives at multinational Sibanye-Stillwater blocked a major highway outside Johannesburg, South Africa March 25, and marched to the firm's headquarters to stress their demand for a R1,000 a month pay rise. The company are offering R700, and locked out the miners in response to the strike.

The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) and National Union of Miners (NUM) members walked out on March 9. The Solidarity and UASA unions undermined the stoppage by accepting the company's offer.

AMCU also demand the arrest of Sibanye-Stillwater's Chief Executive over accidental deaths at their South African mining operations and want the government to revoke the company's mining license and put the mines under black only management.

In 2019, AMCU sold out a five-month stoppage at Sibanye-Stillwater, accepting what it previously called a "slave labour deal" agreed by both the NUM and Solidarity.

The Johannesburg-based company is the world's largest producer of platinum, with operations in gold and base metals in the Americas as well as South Africa.

## **South African local authority uses court injunction and police against municipal workers on wildcat pay strike**

Scores of striking workers at the City of Tshwane municipality in Pretoria, South Africa were instructed March 24 to stop their unprotected strike with an interdiction from the Labour Court. Both the South African and Tshwane police departments were ordered to enforce compliance with the court order.

The workers, including some South African Municipal Workers Union members, began a wildcat strike two weeks ago over unpaid salary increases. They blocked streets with burning waste, closed municipal depots and caused power outages. Many have already been given dismissal notices.

The court instructed the union to present the workers' case at a further court hearing but not until April 28, by which time workers will have faced four weeks of intimidation.

## **Hundreds of South African taxi drivers demonstrate in Cape Town against harsh licensing conditions**

Hundreds of taxi drivers in Western Cape, South Africa drove in convoy to Cape Town and then marched to the provincial government offices on March 24, causing widespread disruption in the city centre.

The drivers, represented by the Cape Organisation for the Democratic Taxi Association and the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association, presented a list of demands to the Western Cape Premier threatening to take the provincial government to court if they are not met.

They want an end to harassment by law enforcement staff and say their taxis are impounded for operating without permits. However, it takes over three months to obtain a permit and the drivers need to work. They also complain about excessive fees needed to release their vehicles, three times the cost charged in neighbouring Eastern Cape province.

## **South African census fieldworkers threaten to stop work over unpaid wages**

Fieldworkers employed by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) for the country's 2022 census picketed outside the government department headquarters in Pretoria last week. They were protesting a failure to pay them, and lack of organisation within Stats SA.

The workers, many of them young people and students, refuse to complete enumeration of outstanding households for the second phase of the census when they have not been paid for work done so far. They are particularly aggrieved as the outstanding work is likely to be in areas identified as unsafe.

The rate of unemployment in South Africa is over 35 percent, one of the highest in the world.

## **Nigeria university strike reported to be solid**

University workers on a two-week strike in Nigeria begun March 27 achieved a high degree of solidarity according to media reports.

Most universities were brought to a complete standstill by the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Education and Associated Institutions (NASU) members in both Lagos and Abuja (the commercial and federal capitals) and Uyo.

The strike is due to irregular salary payments, non-payment of hazard allowances and non-payment of arrears for the national minimum wage. Another issue is poor funding of state universities, especially for staff not involved in teaching.

SSANU President Mohammed Ibrahim said, "We are appealing to spirited Nigerians to appeal to the FG to live up to its expectations, its promises, we had an agreement in 2009, this is 13 years after, less than half of the demands have been implemented..."

## **Construction workers in Lesotho strike, union suspends action**

Construction workers on a road project from Marakabei to Monontša in Lesotho walked off the job March 22-23 to demand salary increases.

The workers are employed by China Geo Engineering Corporation (CGC) and are members of the Construction, Mining, Quarrying and Allied Workers Union (CMQ). CGC made clear its refusal to increase salaries by applying to the courts to stop the strike taking place. The CMQ agreed to meet with CGC in the presence of government officials, and agreed to suspend the strike for as long as the talks were continuing and for at least two months.

In 2018, CGC was given a M900 million government contract to construct a 60-kilometre road providing a new link between Lesotho and South Africa.

Elsewhere in Lesotho the United Textile Employees union that represents factory workers is participating in a corporatist body called the Wages Advisory Board with trade union, employer and government representatives. Workers suspect they face a below-inflation pay offer.

Workers won a 14 percent increase last year after they held strikes from

May 10 to June 7. Two workers died in the clashes between the police and army and the striking workers. Living standards are falling due to a drop in the Lesotho currency.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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