

Call centre workers in Spain strike for pay rise; South African Sibanye-Stillwater gold miners' pay strike continues; protests across Iran over cuts to food subsidies; educators walk out across France over pay, conditions and resources

## Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

19 May 2022

*The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.*

### Europe

Doctors in Turkey held a two-day strike on Tuesday, following a 48-hour stoppage two weeks ago, to demand improved pay, working conditions and pensions. They are also demanding COVID-19 be considered an occupational disease, noting health workers are infected at a rate 10 times more than the average in society and have died at more than four times the average rate. A final two-day stoppage is planned for next week.

On May 13, two Spanish unions reported that over 100,000 workers in call centres joined a national strike while the unions negotiate a new collective agreement with the Association of Customer Experience Companies.

The Workers' Commissions and General Workers' Union said that 85 percent of the 120,000 workers in the sector walked out to demand a real pay rise, that the costs of working from home be compensated, and that more workers be moved to permanent contracts. Around 30,000 workers are on a temporary contract.

If no contract is agreed, the unions only threatened to call a one-day strike each month.

Healthcare workers throughout Spain continue to fight against the degradation of their working conditions and services, with multiple major protests and strikes nationwide.

Workers at the Aljarafe hospital joined another one-day strike on Thursday, following a previous stoppage in March. The unions accused hospital management of failing to apply the collective agreement from 2021, including not applying the pay increase for 2022. A previous planned strike, on April 28, was suspended by the unions for a meeting at the Andalusian mediation service.

More than 100 people marched in Pamplona on Saturday, for a rally marking the sixth one-day strike of care home workers, *Europa Press* reported. The four unions representing care home workers in Navarre are calling for the employers and local government to negotiate a collective agreement, particularly for the 6,000 workers on precarious

contracts.

On Monday, workers in specialised healthcare and mental health at Osakidetza, the Basque health service, joined a one-day walkout and protested in major cities, following three previous such stoppages. They demanded increased hiring in a sector where nearly 60 percent of workers are on temporary contracts. According to *Europa Press*, the unions denounced Osakidetza and the Department of Health for imposing "abusive" minimum service requirements, banning many workers from joining the strike.

Doctors in Madrid, as well as ear, nose and throat doctors in Santiago de Compostela, and care home workers in Gipuzkoa, continue indefinite strikes, which have also faced high minimum service requirements.

Teachers in Catalonia joined a two-hour strike on Tuesday, as part of a long-running dispute with Spain's Ministry of Education over the imposition of new working conditions and changes to schools.

The main issue is the change in the start of the school year, leaving one week less to prepare classes. Also, cuts made by the Catalan government ten years ago were never restored, and teachers oppose a new requirement to prove they are fluent in Catalan. The unions called separate strikes over a ruling of the High Court of Justice of Catalonia that at least 25 percent of classes must be taught in Spanish.

Another 24-hour strike was called for May 25, and more are planned for June. The Minister of Education attempted to divide the strike, proposing a deal which would improve conditions, but only for teachers in primary schools.

Metalworkers in the Spanish provinces of A Coruña and Álava held separate strikes this week, in disputes over pay and working conditions in the sector.

In A Coruña workers joined a two-day strike on Wednesday, following two 24-hour walkouts earlier in May. The unions report that 5,000 people joined a mass demonstration, with 16,000 called to stop work.

The unions are negotiating a new collective agreement, which they say will maintain workers' purchasing power as well as limit the use of temporary employment. One participant in Wednesday's rally was brutally arrested for "insulting the police," according to *el Español*. A video posted on social media by the Galician Union Confederation shows three police officers sitting on the man while others swing batons at the crowd opposing the arrest.

On Wednesday, workers in Álava also joined a 24-hour strike during negotiations of a collective agreement, which have been ongoing for four

years. According to *Europa Press*, the unions plan two more strikes later in May. They are demanding an above-inflation pay rise, a cut in working hours and temporary employment, and additional health and safety measures.

Last week, the unions representing Finnish municipal workers, including in schools, daycare centres and public transport, accepted a pay deal ending the dispute which saw 81,000 workers strike the week before.

The five-year deal will increase pay by one percentage point more than the rise agreed for the technology sector each year. This is guaranteed to result in a fall in living conditions and worsened understaffing in municipal services, as inflation soars and the wages in the technology sector also stagnate.

In January, the Industrial Union called off a strike of 40,000 workers in the mining, metalworking and technology sectors, accepting a two percent pay rise. Inflation at the time was 4.4 percent, and has since risen to 5.7 percent.

The two nurses' unions voted against the same deal when it was proposed by the national conciliation service and maintained their threat to call for a mass resignation of nurses after the summer if a better offer is not put forward. A strike of nurses was called off by both unions after the Social Democratic government threatened to bring forward a strikebreaking "Patient Safety Act." The mass resignation was proposed by the unions to keep control of the dispute without coming into conflict with the government, but labour market researcher Mika Helander told *YLE* that the government may still pass a law to force nurses who have resigned back to work, "a bit like conscription."

Teachers and other school workers throughout France and in French schools abroad protested and walked out this week against deteriorating working conditions and lack of school resources.

Workers in the 200 agricultural colleges in the CNEAP network nationwide joined short stoppages called by the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) on Wednesday against the imposition of a new collective agreement, which would increase working hours by up to 10 percent. According to the union it would cost some workers as much as 130,000 euros over their career. The CFDT's main demand is that the agreement should increase salaries by one percent per year with seniority, which it says itself meets "neither inflation nor the increase with seniority we had before."

On Tuesday, a dozen teachers and the principal joined a one-day strike at the Nelson Mandela School in the town of Saint-Herblain, together with parents and students, to demand additional contact hours, a pay rise, and for the school to be designated "REP+," which would lead to additional resources as the students come from deprived areas. It lost this designation in 2015, according to *Ouest France*. The unions invited Jean-Luc Mélenchon of the pseudo-left La France Insoumise to address the strike rally, but kept the walkouts limited, with only one other stoppage last Friday. Parents of children at the school have been protesting since April and began occupying the principal's office three weeks ago.

Three unions representing teachers employed by the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE) called a strike for Thursday, denouncing planned changes to working conditions proposed in a draft of the new legal framework for teachers seconded to AEFE. According to the unions, the new framework includes attacks on sick pay and fails to deal with issues over recruitment. The AEFE network includes 552 schools in 138 countries, with 380,000 students, around two thirds local children and one third French children studying abroad.

Around 20 workers at the aircraft manufacturer Daher near the French town of Saint-Nazaire continue an indefinite wildcat campaign of daily two-hour stoppages, which they began almost three weeks ago, according to *Ouest France*.

They denounced the unions at the company for signing a pay agreement with the Airbus subcontractor two months ago, telling the paper, "The

unions are not playing their role, they did not ask our opinion before accepting. We even had to agree not to strike, at their request." Pointing to the enormous rise in prices, especially of food and fuel since the deal was signed, they are demanding hourly wages be increased by one euro, as well as a higher shift bonus and payment for training new hires.

The next twenty-four-hour strike by around 270 UK train conductors at TransPennine Express (TPE) takes place on Sunday. The series of 24-hour strikes, which began on February 13, is to continue until June 5, with an additional 24-hour strike on Saturday June 4, covering the Queen's Jubilee bank holiday weekend.

TPE runs services across the north of England including between Liverpool and Hull via Leeds, Manchester and Huddersfield, as well as services to Newcastle and Edinburgh. It expects to run a much-reduced service on Sunday because of the strike.

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

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

The ballot of around 40,000 UK rail workers employed by Network Rail (responsible for rail infrastructure) and 15 Train Operating Companies (TOCs) closes on May 24.

The RMT members face the threat of 2,500 job cuts on Network Rail, many in safety-critical roles. Those working for TOCs also face job cuts, pay freezes and attacks on terms and conditions. Should it go ahead, it would be the biggest national rail strike for decades.

As well as disruption to passengers, a strike could hit distribution of food and fuel. A *Railnews* website article of May 16 reported emergency plans have been discussed at government cabinet level in the event of walkouts by rail staff.

UK Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps attacked a proposed strike, telling the *Daily Mail* newspaper it is the "last thing the country needs." Referring to the £16 billion emergency bailout given to the rail companies during the COVID-19 lockdown, Shapps told the *Times* newspaper, "We've supported a network that was carrying nobody."

Staff at Euston and Green Park underground rail stations on the London Underground system are to hold a 24-hour strike on June 3.

The RMT members are protesting ongoing intimidation and bullying by a manager at the stations. The RMT also claim the manager oversaw unjustified sackings of colleagues. The strike coincides with the Queen's Jubilee bank holiday.

Transport for London which runs the underground rail system states that should the strike go ahead it will keep the stations open.

Port workers in Lerwick, the Shetland Islands, Scotland are to resume industrial action on May 25, when they will impose an overtime ban. The resumption of industrial action follows the breakdown of negotiations.

The Unite union members, comprising engineers, electricians, joiners and general operatives, oppose detrimental changes to their pay and conditions. These include basic pay, overtime rates, pension contribution and cuts to standby and call-out payments.

The port services liners as well as oil and gas production platforms. The port's turnover for 2020 was £9.5 million, and it was given the Port of the Year award for 2021.

Teachers at Walthamstow Primary Academy in Waltham Forest in the UK capital held the second of a series of three-day strikes this week. A final strike is scheduled for next week.

The NEU members are protesting poor working conditions and bullying by management, and claim they are wrongly underpaid. They held previous strikes over the same issue.

Around 300 UK construction workers employed by multinational oil refinery services contractor, Altrad at the Ineos refinery at Saltend in Hull held an unofficial walkout Wednesday and Thursday last week.

They were protesting the late payment of wages as well as frequent errors in calculating their pay.

Lecturers at five colleges in the northwest of England held a one-day strike on Wednesday. After the stoppage, the lecturers began a programme of working to contract, not covering for absent colleagues or vacant posts.

The University and College Union (UCU) put in for a pay increase of a minimum 8.5 percent, against management's offer of two percent. Due to take part were 900 staff at Burnley College, Bury College, City of Liverpool College, Hopwood Hall, Nelson and Colne College Group and Oldham College.

On the eve of the stoppage, the UCU at Bury College agreed a six percent deal, as opposed to the two percent originally offered by management. UCU President Jo Grady said it was an "amazing deal," despite the Retail Price Index inflation rate hitting 11.1 percent. Staff at Manchester College are holding a rally over the issue on Friday and working to rule from May 23.

Lecturers at Furness college near Lancaster, England walked out Wednesday, after rejecting a one percent pay offer.

The UCU members voted by a 93 percent majority for the stoppage. Further walkouts are planned for June 8 and 9.

Striking refuse lorry drivers, loaders and street cleaning staff in Rugby, England, working for Conservative-controlled Rugby council, held a rally on Thursday outside Rugby Town Hall. It coincided with the annual meeting of the council at which the mayor is elected. Their strike for a pay rise, begun on April 26, has been extended until June 15.

The Unite union members are low paid. Street cleaners start on £17,100 a year, rising to £19,200 after five years, while loaders begin at £19,200, rising to £21,300 after five years. The Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) drivers start at £21,300, reaching £23,400 after five years.

An ITV News website article of April 26 reported that some of the workers must resort to food banks. Also, the council would not pay above the nationally agreed 1.75 percent rise.

Traffic wardens in the English county council of Wiltshire held a second one-day stoppage on Tuesday. It followed a one-day strike on May 7.

The GMB members voted by a 100 percent majority on a 92 percent turnout to strike in protest at the council's proposal to cut unsocial hours payment by between 10 and 20 percent. The GMB has yet to announce dates for stoppages.

The proposal will also affect other Wiltshire council staff, including highway, leisure centre, care and social work staff. The cuts would mean social workers losing around £7,000 a year, while the traffic wardens will lose around £2,000 a year.

The council intended to begin the cuts in overtime rates in April but following the opposition by workers suspended the plans. However, the plans have not been withdrawn, and the council intends they come into effect in June with some minor cosmetic changes.

Workers employed by outsourcing company Mitie at St Georges hospital in Tooting, London are to walk out for 24 hours on May 30.

The GMB members are protesting low pay, which has been exacerbated by some being underpaid by up to £800. Further stoppages are planned for June 6 and 7.

In a separate dispute, ancillary staff at Roehampton hospital in London employed by outsourcing company Sodexo voted to strike over pay. However, the GMB suspended the action for four weeks for negotiations.

Around 150 UK workers employed by Wabtec at its rail maintenance depot in Doncaster in South Yorkshire are balloting over a below-inflation pay offer and attacks on conditions. The US-based international company offered a below-inflation two-year pay increase and wants to cut breaks and impose extra working hours for no extra pay.

The ballot of the Unite union members closes on May 23. Wabtec is threatening to impose changes via fire and rehire methods if it is unable to negotiate them.

UK operatives at the wind farm company Orsted Walney are to ballot for industrial action over victimisation. The Walney wind farm is in the Irish Sea off the Cumbrian coast.

The RMT union members oppose a colleague being victimised for raising health and safety issues. According to the RMT, the colleague was the victim of ageism and had their pay withheld for nine months.

Health staff working for outsourcing health company OCS at health facilities across northwest England, including Blackburn, Blackpool and Preston are balloting for industrial action.

The Unison union members employed as caterers, cleaners and porters are seeking parity of working conditions with directly employed National Health Service (NHS) staff. They want the same sick pay and unsocial hours premiums enjoyed by directly employed NHS staff. The OCS workers were seeking pay parity with NHS staff and OCS agreed to match pay to NHS rates from April 1 but would not backdate it to May last year, when the workers raised the issue.

The ballot closes on June 7.

Around 100 University of Dundee support staff in Scotland are balloting over pension changes.

The Unite union members oppose the university's plan, announced in March 2021, to close its Defined Benefits Pension scheme and replace it with an inferior Defined Contributions Pension scheme for grades 1-6. The changes would mean the pension of a worker with 20 years' service would be £1,600 a year less on retirement.

The proposals were rejected by 94 percent in a consultative ballot. Unite members held a strike in October last year, but further action was called off after Dundee agreed not to impose the defined contributions scheme. The University now proposes to keep the Defined Benefits scheme but not allow any new members. Also, it would raise the age of access from 65 to 68 and decrease the scheme's accrual rate from 1/80 to 1/100 of salary.

The ballot closes on June 10.

Around 300 Unison members at Dundee also took industrial action over the same issue.

Checking in and ground handling staff working for British Airways airline at Heathrow airport are to ballot for strike action.

Hundreds of GMB and Unite union members voted in favour in recent consultative ballots. The workers are angry that a 10 percent pay cut imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic was not reinstated. Management had their pay restored.

Bar staff working at the St James' Tavern (SJT) in the seaside town of Brighton, England are balloting for possible strike action.

The United Voices of the World (UVW) union members demands include an end to zero-hour contracts, a minimum pay increase to £11.50 for all staff and a full sick pay scheme. Some of the workers also accuse the SJT management of discrimination including transphobia, sexism and anti-semitism and are suing.

A planned week-long strike of bus workers working for Translink in Northern Ireland, due to begin May 17, was called off by the GMB and Unite unions after the employer made an improved pay offer. Previously a week-long strike from April 25 and a one-day stoppage on May 6 were suspended by the unions after the company made a new offer, but the workers, who work as drivers, cleaners and shunters, rejected it.

The initial pay offer was for three percent, but this was increased and subsequently rejected. The unions put in a below-inflation pay claim of six percent.

The bus workers will ballot on the new offer.

Over 300 workers employed by Menzies Aviation at London's Heathrow airport voted to accept a pay offer. The Unite union claims the offer represents a 10 percent pay increase and in addition Menzies will

enter negotiations over a contractual sick pay scheme. In February the workers voted to walk out over the firm's refusal to enter pay negotiations.

The Menzies workers 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.

Following the latest one-day strike last week, the Sandwell Leisure Trust announced it will reverse its March 2021 decision to remove the workforce from national pay and terms conditions covering local authority staff.

The 300 workers employed at nine leisure centres run by Sandwell Leisure Trust in the English Midlands held a series of strikes since March 2021.

The Unite, GMB and Unison union members were fired and rehired in March 2021, when the trust removed the workforce from national pay terms.

Sandwell Leisure Trust, an independent company with charitable status, runs the leisure centres on behalf of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough council.

Staff at Lloyds Banking Group held a protest outside the bank's annual general meeting on May 12 at the International Conference Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Unite members were given a recent pay settlement which left them struggling financially as the cost-of-living crisis grips. According to Unite, some of the bank's staff cannot afford to heat their homes, while others pulled out of the pension scheme to meet costs. According to a Unite press release announcing the protest, Lloyds made £5.9 billion in profits last year and paid out £1.4 billion in dividends to shareholders.

Cleaners employed by outsourced company DOC at the Royal Opera House in the UK capital are to hold a protest on Friday.

The Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIWU) union members are protesting low pay and poor working conditions and want compensation for continuing to work throughout the pandemic.

## **Middle East**

There have been protests in cities across Iran over the government's ending of subsidies on many basic food items, including bread, cooking oil and dairy products.

Some prices have tripled. Removing the subsidies, the Iranian government awarded cash payments to qualifying Iranians, but the majority are impacted by the price rises. The protests were met with harsh responses by security forces with unconfirmed reports of four deaths.

Dozens of bus drivers and other bus workers employed by the Tehran Bus Company in the Iranian capital went on strike on Monday. They were protesting the failure of the Supreme Labour Council to implement a promised 10 percent pay increase. The strike brought parts of Tehran to a standstill.

On May 12, teachers in Iran held rallies across 40 cities including Tehran, Ahvaz, Isfahan and Shahreza. The rallies were organised by the Coordinating Council of Cultural Trade Unions.

The teachers were protesting the arrest of teachers in previous demonstrations as well as defending free education for Iranian children.

Drivers employed by the Dubai-based taxi-hailing app company Careem in Jordan held a three-hour strike Sunday. They were demanding a reduction in commission fees, paid to Careem, from 20 to 15 percent.

The Israeli Medical Association held a one-day strike Thursday. They were protesting lack of security at hospitals, which led to attacks on

medical staff. The most recent was an attack on medics by a patient's relatives at the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem on Monday. Medics provided emergency cover during the strike.

The Israeli Teachers' Union filed a dispute on Sunday. It threatened a strike over pay, saying schools will not reopen in September after the summer break unless a suitable pay offer was made.

The Finance Ministry is currently proposing to raise a teacher's starting salary from NIS 6,800 to NIS 8,200 a month. In addition, teachers with up to 15 years' experience will get a NIS 100 bonus but this will not be paid to teachers with more than 15 years' experience. These measures would mean more than half of teachers would see no rise at all.

## **Africa**

The strike at Sibanye-Stillwater gold mines in South Africa, begun March 9, is entering its eleventh week. 30,000 miners want a R1,050 monthly rise, while the company is offering R850 a month including living-out allowance.

The miners' unions, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), met with the employer again May 17, but are still in deadlock. The unions offered concessions, halving their proposed living-out allowance for new starters, but refuse to extend the dispute to Sibanye-Stillwater's platinum mines despite impending wage negotiations in the platinum sector.

Sibanye-Stillwater's CEO received R300 million (\$119m) in pay and shares in 2021.

In 2019, AMCU ended a five-month stoppage at Sibanye-Stillwater, accepting a deal they previously called "slave labour" when it was first agreed by the NUM and Solidarity unions.

More than 3,500 workers at ArcelorMittal South Africa, employed at plants, blast furnaces and coke batteries across the country, were temporarily prohibited from striking by an interim ruling from the Johannesburg Labour Court. The company applied for an interdict on the grounds that some of their steel production could be deemed an essential service.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) members walked out May 11 to demand an across-the-board 10 percent pay increase, a housing allowance, 80 percent medical aid fees contribution and an end to the insourcing of temporary workers—40 percent of workers are employed through labour brokers. Meanwhile, ArcelorMittal are offering five percent and two percent in cash payment.

ArcelorMittal make 60 percent of the steel in South Africa, and the multinational made a gross profit of \$21 billion for the year ending March 2022. The company was criticised for its poor health and safety record. Last year, three workers died in an explosion at a South African plant.

In October 2021, NUMSA called off a nationwide strike by 155,000 steel and metalworkers just as it entered its third week and was beginning to have a strong impact on the auto industry and South African economy.

Up to 12,400 tax and customs duty collection workers at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) are to strike nationwide on May 25.

The Public Servants Association (PSA) and National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) members have been in wage negotiations with SARS through the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Talks have reached a deadlock, with the tax body refusing to offer any pay rise despite inflation in the country running at 5.9 percent in April. The PSA are demanding a 12 percent increase, while NEHAWU want 11.5 percent for their members.

South African fare collection workers employed by Xtremetec, Tshwane

Rapid Transit and Tshwane Affected Investment Operation—subcontractors for the city bus service provided by the City of Tshwane municipality in Pretoria—marched May 13 to the City Hall and demonstrated over pay and conditions.

The NUMSA members stopped work on May 11 to demand an increased travel allowance of R2500, a night shift allowance of R60, and medical cover with 80 percent paid by the company. They plan to intensify their action if they do not receive a favourable response from the City of Tshwane administration.

A strike by sawmill workers at York Timber Holdings, Mpumalanga, South Africa, ongoing since late April, was temporarily prohibited by the Labour Court after the employer applied for an interdict, accusing the employees of using intimidation, harassment and vandalism.

The NUMSA members were striking over the regrading of their jobs. Any further strike action they take is now unprotected, and the company is threatening workers with disciplinary action.

Municipal workers in KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa stopped work May 16 due to grievances with management.

The South African Municipal Workers Union members include electricity, waste management and administration workers.

Polytechnic lecturers at the Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic in Bauchi, Nigeria will join the national strike by polytechnic and university lecturers over the underfunding of further and higher education.

The national two-week strike by Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics members begun May 16 is due to last until May 30. In addition to the broken promises on revitalisation funds of N15 billion, polytechnic lecturers have also long been denied entitlements including promotions and annual pay increases.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities members also walked out of universities on February 14 over salaries, the delay in release of revitalisation funds and the adoption of new payroll software. The strike has been extended each time it is due to expire.

Around a tenth of the 5,300 workers at a coal mine owned by Vulcan Minerals in Mozambique went on strike May 11 after the mine was taken over from Brazilian mining company Vale.

The strikers at the Moatize mine in the central province of Tete demand compensation from Vulcan after its takeover of the mine in a deal worth \$270 million.

Vulcan issued a statement saying that the strike is illegal because they did not receive prior notification.

Estate workers at Forrester Estate in Mashonaland, Zimbabwe walked off the job at the beginning of May to demand part of their salaries in US dollars. The strike brought production at Mashonaland Central's largest tobacco and peas exporter to a standstill, when there are many hectares of crops to be harvested.

Several other areas were affected by strikes, including Gurungwe, Birthday and California in the tobacco farming area of Mvurwi, with Forrester Estate being the company most affected.

The Harare-based *Herald* said on May 16 the strike was called by a “workers’ committee,” but the General Agriculture Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) would be instrumental in ending the strike.

Government agencies such as the Ministry of Public Service and National Employment Council, as well as the police, failed to get the workers to return to work.

Zanu-PF MP for Mazowe North, Campion Mugweni, blamed “money changers” who are “ripping off tobacco farmers during this selling season” rather than the economic crisis and government policies aimed at driving down wages.

Both Mugweni and GAPWUZ general secretary Austin Muswere call for negotiations with management to end the strike. Muswere stressed the strike leaders “understand the situation that the company is in regarding

financial challenges and problems,” but wanted a “blended wage” with a component paid in US dollars.

As of May 13, all government employees other than teachers and the police are on strike in Um Rawaba in North Kordofan as Sudan continues to be rocked by protests. Government departments and offices in the area are closed, including health care. The strikes are in response to inequality and low pay.

Two women were reported to have died at a hospital in the area. They arrived in Um Rawaba having come from Abbasiya town in South Kordofan for treatment. However, all state employees including doctors were on strike, so they failed to get help.

Medical laboratory workers were reported to be joining the strike on Sunday, May 15. They demand improvements in their conditions of employment and working environment.



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