

Stellantis cuts 3,597 jobs in Italy, escalating global jobs bloodbath

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Auto giant Stellantis—maker of Jeep, Dodge, Chrysler, Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Peugeot and other brands—is escalating its global restructuring, producing thousands more casualties to workers’ jobs.

Stellantis announced this week 2,510 job cuts across three of its major plants in Italy: 1,560 at Turin’s historic Mirafiori plant, 850 at the Cassino factory and 100 at the Pratola Serra facility. On Wednesday, more deals were closed with the unions to cut an additional 1,087 workers at the Melfi, Pomigliano d’Arco, Termoli, Cento and Verrone plants.

In Italy as in other countries, CEO Carlos Tavares has been able to rely on the trade union bureaucracies to ram through redundancies.

Just a little over a week ago, during a press conference in Italy, Tavares boasted about the company’s record profits in 2023 and reassured that “Stellantis’ presence in Italy is not at risk.

“I want to say this loud and clear,” Tavares said. “Italy is one of our countries of origin, we love Italy and we feel an ethical responsibility toward our employees, whom I want to thank for everything they are doing.”

Significantly, he emphasized that “we have a good collaboration with the trade unions with whom we discuss daily about a responsible transition.”

The CEO went on to state that Stellantis was going to produce 1 million new vehicles in Italy by 2030 on the basis of a €1 billion incentive from the Italian government, and that billions more were to be invested, including a battery “giga factory,” to support the transition to electric vehicles (EVs).

None of this was ever meant to improve the lives of workers. On the contrary, the transnational corporation is carrying out a jobs massacre in country after country, for the purpose of enriching its major stockholders and executives, including Tavares himself.

In collusion with the CGIL-CISL-UIL trade unions, Stellantis is seeking to liquidate workers through what it calls “a voluntary incentivized exit,” in essence a glorified firing with the main goal of getting rid of older workers through an early retirement offer and an option to lay off younger recruits as well.

Since its formation via the merger of Fiat Chrysler and the PSA Group in early 2021, Stellantis has decimated jobs in Italy through such “voluntary” redundancies. In 2021, Stellantis employed roughly 55,000. Today, the number stands at 43,000, a fall of more than 21 percent.

For those eligible for retirement, they will get a six-month pay

incentive. If a worker is within four years of retirement eligibility and takes the buyout, the first two of those years would be paid at 90 percent of gross wages including unemployment benefits (NASpI), and the remaining two years would be paid at 70 percent.

The “offer” extends well beyond workers close to retirement:

- For those between 35 and 39 years: 12 monthly payments plus €20,000.
- Between 40 and 44 years: 18 monthly payments plus €20,000.
- Between 45 and 49 years: 24 monthly payments plus €30,000.
- Between 50 and 54 years: 30 monthly payments plus €30,000.
- From 55 years and over: 33 monthly payments plus €30,000.

The union confederations are fully responsible for this Faustian bargain. After UIL and CISL signed off on the layoff arrangement, their statements were the final stab in the workers’ back.

Luigi Paone, General Secretary for UILM-UIL, declared: “The numbers demanded by the company in Turin are high and this must make us reflect on the fact that the situation is increasingly dramatic.” What is omitted from the statement is the fact that, by signing, the union facilitated this situation to develop.

Even more revealing is the statement from Rocco Cutri, General Secretary for FIM-CISL: “The agreement allows the possibility of incentivized exits exclusively on voluntary basis by workers. This excludes the ability of Stellantis to fire unilaterally.” In other words, CISL wants to be part of the firing squad to make sure the company is not left alone with such a task!

FIOM-CGIL technically did not sign the deal. However, it continues to appeal to the most reactionary and dangerous forces. In a joint statement, General Secretary Michele De Palma and National Secretary Samuele Lodi appealed to the Italian government, led by the neo-fascist Giorgia Meloni: “The Prime Minister [Meloni] must summon Tavares before it’s too late.”

FIOM issued a more desperate appeal on Wednesday in light of the new wave of layoffs: “There’s no more time to waste. It is urgent that a meeting be convened at Palazzo Chigi with the Prime Minister and the CEO of Stellantis, Carlos Tavares. It’s time for everyone to assume their responsibilities to save the automotive industry in Italy.”

The reality is that it is Tavares who has been summoning governments around the world, extorting billions of dollars in incentives. Prime ministers and politicians of every stripe have facilitated this redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top with disastrous social consequences. Entire areas that used to

thrive as centers of production are now devastated by a process of deindustrialization, while social programs are sacrificed in favor of measures to boost the financial elite.

Large conglomerates like Stellantis have acquired an immense concentration of economic and therefore political power. In Italy, this is even sharper, since Stellantis is the only automaker in the country. As the government scrambles for hopeless national “solutions” to a global situation, it is trying to engage a second car producer, which according to rumors could be Tesla or Chinese automakers BYD, Great Wall Motors or Chery.

Tavares’ response to these possibilities was nothing short of a threat: “Should Italy make certain decisions, we will draw our own conclusions.”

The layoffs are the prelude to a new era of precarious work. In the name of “flexibility” and “protecting national jobs,” more experienced workers are expended while new, cheaper hires will be utilized on a temporary basis, with limited or any benefits. Casualization is threatening an entire generation of workers.

In the US, a similar process is taking place. After terminating more than 2,000 temporary workers, Stellantis is now hiring new ones. At Ford, hundreds of jobs are being cut at the Dearborn, Michigan, EV pickup plant, with workers forced to transfer to other plants or accept the loss of their jobs. At General Motors, senior workers were offered a \$50,000 bonus if they retired, but they are now being kept on hold indefinitely.

In all of this, the United Auto Workers union apparatus and UAW President Shawn Fain hold full responsibility.

The objective situation forcefully outlines the international character of the struggles ahead. There is no way forward on the basis of national measures by any bourgeois political leaders. Nor can there be any illusions in the trade union apparatus, deeply rooted in the nation-state and its unconditional acceptance of the capitalist system.

What is needed is the formation of internationally coordinated rank-and-file committees where workers democratically exercise their full power and take the decision-making process into their own hands.

Italian Stellantis worker: The corporations “exploit workers, enrich themselves and at the end they leave a pile of rubble”

Tommaso Pirozzi, a worker at the Stellantis plant in Pomigliano d’Arco, one of the plants affected by the incentivized layoffs, shared his views: “There is no political or confederal trade union organization that is truly opposed to Stellantis. You asked if unions are complicit: from a standpoint, that is true, even if FIOM is saying they didn’t sign. Now UIL is starting to drag its feet, this shows that things are really bad off.”

He continued: “[You can’t] limit yourself to saying you don’t agree, without engaging in real struggles to reduce this corporation to its knees. What they [confederal unions] are doing is very serious because they give illusions to workers that they are oppositional, when in reality they are not.”

Asked about the current waves of layoffs, he said: “Stellantis has given incentives in the past as well. This is a smart way to avoid workers’ industrial disputes. The law establishes that a company can lay off workers in times of crisis, according to certain characteristics such as new hires, workers with fewer family dependents or those not affected by labor related pathologies.”

He explained that in such cases, “Stellantis would have had to keep older unionized workers, many with health issues after 20-30 years on the assembly line and get rid of the younger ones.”

Tommaso further explained: “These attacks on rights, on wages, on work itself, are not only by Stellantis, but the entire world production system. Capitalism has become ravenous, out of control and while the powerful accumulate wealth and power, there are many attacks on the working class. We see it in the hundreds of new forms of precarious contracting that have emerged like teleworking and casualization. At the same time, there was an increase in the retirement age. These are just some of the policies imposed on the working class.”

He also strongly opposed war: “Article 11 of the Italian Constitution states that Italy rejects war as an instrument of offense against the freedom of other peoples and as a means of resolving international disputes. But they have always conjured up mechanisms to disguise through ‘humanitarian wars,’ or with the excuse to bring ‘help’ or similar idiocies. This has happened tens of times: Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia. Everything is delegated to corporations, which exploit workers, enrich themselves and at the end they leave a pile of rubble to the community.”

He concluded: “We are always at war because today someone decides in place of the people. What we need to do is break down this system.”



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