

Postal workers in Boën-sur-Lignon, France, walk out over attacks on jobs and conditions; teachers and civil servants protest in Kurdistan Regional Government area of Iraq over pay arrears; electricity workers in Kaduna State, Nigeria strike against mass sackings

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.

Postal workers in Boën-sur-Lignon, France strike in protest over working conditions

Postal workers at La Poste, the largest mail delivery provider in France, walked out January 30 in Boën-sur-Lignon, Loire and protested in the town against new mail systems which decrease letter deliveries and maximise parcel numbers.

These cost cutting measures will lead to job losses and increased workloads. News website *francebleu* reported one worker saying, “The postman’s job has become a parcel delivery job. It’s a physically tiring part of our daily lives, as we carry up to 30 kilos.”

Postal and logistics workers across Europe and globally are facing similar attacks by state-owned and corporate carriers aimed at slashing jobs and boosting profits.

Romanian transport workers protest staff shortages due to government cuts

Overworked employees at the state-aided subway company Metrorex, in Bucharest, Romania protested Monday by refusing to take fares for the day. This is in advance of full strike on February 10.

The Social Liberal Union of Subway Workers members say they cannot cope with the fatigue and stress from work after the government cut subsidies to the transport industry by freezing recruitment.

Fish farm workers in Limassol, Cyprus on indefinite strike over pay

Workers at the Sagro Aquaculture fish farm in Limassol, Cyprus began

an indefinite strike Monday. Salary shortfalls going back to 2019 are currently leaving them without any income.

The Segdamelin-PEO (Cyprus Agricultural, Forestry, Transport, Port, Seamen and Allied Occupations Trade Union) members are also taking legal action in the labour court to restore unpaid overtime pay and salary deductions not deposited into their health insurance and pension funds.

Further stoppages by housing maintenance staff in northwest England over pay

Hundreds of staff working for Livv Housing based in Knowsley in northwest England walked out on Monday until the end of the month over pay.

The Unite and Unison union members are employed by Livv in its call centre and as repair and maintenance staff servicing the 13,000 properties the housing association runs across Knowsley.

After years of below-inflation pay rises, the workers are demanding more than the 5 percent on offer to restore their pay levels.

They have led a determined fight, having held stoppages in October, November and last month. This will be their longest-running stoppage.

Livv has reserves of more than £110 million. Unite says further stoppages will take place if there is no resolution.

Refuse collection workers in Birmingham, UK escalate programme of stoppages over pay cuts

The series of strikes by around 350 UK waste collection workers employed by Birmingham City Council is being escalated.

The Unite union members began their action in January with a planned four days a month of stoppages. From their walkout on Tuesday, however, they have upped the action to 12 stoppages in February and 13 in March.

They oppose the council’s plans to abolish safety-critical Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) posts. This will affect around 150 WRCOs, who will lose around £8,000 a year as a result.

They also began an overtime ban on January 2. The industrial action began after talks between the union and council broke down. The council refused to consider stopping or delaying abolition of the WRCO role.

In September 2023, Birmingham council effectively declared bankruptcy and its financial position has deteriorated. On Tuesday, the authority announced plans to cut £148 million in spending, including £20 million from city operations such as bin collections. It will also cut £83 million from adult and children's social services and raise council tax by 7.49 percent.

UK Civil Aviation Authority workers to walk out over pay

Around 450 Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) workers based at Gatwick Airport near London are set to walk out for 24 hours on Thursday.

The CAA is a statutory corporation responsible for overseeing and regulating civil aviation in the UK.

Members of the Prospect and Public and Commercial Services (PCS) unions have rejected a pay offer. The CAA offered 4 percent for the lowest paid and 3 percent for others, plus a £1,000 non-consolidated payment.

PCS members held a previous stoppage on January 16-17. Prospect members have been taking action short of striking by working to rule and refusing to work overtime.

The current walkout is the first such action since the 1980s.

Ongoing protests by teachers and civil servants in Kurdistan Regional Government area of Iraq over pay arrears

Teachers and civil servants in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)-controlled area of Iraq have been protesting delays in payment of their salaries. They have not been paid for December or January.

Over the weekend, they protested outside the United Nations office in the city of Sulaymaniyah. Some teachers have been taking part in a hunger strike and had to be given IV drips after collapsing.

The arrears are affecting around 1.25 million public employees and pensioners in the KRG area. There is a long-standing dispute over budget allocation between the KRG and the Baghdad-based Iraqi government. A meeting between the two on January 31 failed to resolve the matter.

Further widespread protests in Iran over deteriorating economic conditions

Sunday saw protests in Tehran, Iran by victims of a fraudulent financial scheme, King Money, in which they lost money. Some lost life savings. They denounced the government's inaction.

On Monday, Iran Telecommunications Company retirees held protests across around 14 cities over their inadequate pensions. Cities affected included Bakhtiari, Kermanshah, Ilam and Tehran.

That day, workers in Tabriz at the Charkhesgar Company, which manufactures industrial machinery, also walked out. They were protesting poor working conditions and low wages.

Inflation is 31.7 percent and the poverty rate around 30 percent, aggravated by US sanctions. Living standards will deteriorate further as

the Trump administration carries out its imperialist agenda in the Middle East, including escalating war plans against Iran.

Electricity workers on strike against mass sackings in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Electricity workers employed by the Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company (KAEDCO) in Kaduna State, Nigeria began an indefinite strike February 3. They are opposing the mass sacking of 900 workers, announced January 31.

Even before the sackings, workers had voiced frustration over mistreatment by KAEDCO management over previous years, citing non-payment of the new minimum wage and other issues.

Chairman of the National Union of Electricity Employees, Sheyin Wakili, said "We are not against the management's decision to disengage staff, but we reject the failure to fulfil legal obligations. The conditions of service stipulate that disengaged staff must receive their full entitlements, which management has refused to pay."

The strike has left residents and workplaces in Kaduna and neighbouring states Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara in darkness.

Teachers in Northern Cape, South Africa on work-to-rule over pay, funding and conditions

Teachers in the Northern Cape, South Africa began a work-to-rule this week, working seven hours a day.

The South African Democratic Teachers Union and South African Teachers Union members protested the "shambolic" state of education in the Frances Baard District.

They delivered a memorandum of grievances to the Department of Education, which they picketed. Temporary teachers have not been paid for January, some classrooms have no electricity, there is lack of teaching support material, or transport and school meals for pupils. A collective agreement determining pay progression and bonuses was not implemented. Vacant posts remain unfilled, and there is no support staff.

Teachers are expected to work weekends and during the holidays without pay. The work-to-rule means they will refuse to do overtime, marking and class preparation.

The Northern Cape Department for Education reported a budget shortfall of R600 million for 2024/25.

Unemployed doctors and pharmacists in South Africa demand jobs as health workers march for more funding

Around 150 unemployed doctors staged a sit-in January 27 outside the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health in Pietermaritzburg, demanding jobs.

The South African Medical Association members condemned the ANC government's response, which was to tell them to search for employment in the private sector or abroad.

Doctors and other health workers from across the country are marching this week to the National Treasury in Pretoria for more funding for healthcare and to end staff shortages.

SABCNEWS reported unemployed pharmacists picketing the Department of Health in Limpopo on February 4. The newly qualified workers also demand employment.

Workers at Kimberley Foundries in South Africa on indefinite strike

Workers at Kimberley Engineering Works Foundries in South Africa's Northern Cape walked out in an indefinite strike February 3. Workers are picketing the plant daily.

Around 70 National Union of Metalworkers have been put on "short time," called into work when needed and paid only for hours worked. Pay has been docked from R55 to R33, and annual bonuses are affected.

The dispute has gone to arbitration at the Metal and Engineering Works Council.

City council workers in Harare, Zimbabwe on go-slow to protest non-payment of wages

Workers employed by Harare City Council in Zimbabwe began a go-slow at the start of February to protest their poor conditions and two months without being paid.

The suffering of the Zimbabwe Municipalities Nurses and Allied Workers Union members is worsened by the declining value of the Zimbabwean dollar.

Firestone workers in Liberia mount go-slow protest

Firestone rubber plantation workers in Liberia began a go-slow protest January 30 in opposition to the miserly monthly stipend given to retired employees. A stoppage is planned to begin February 6.

The National Timber, Wood Construction and Allied Workers Union of Liberia and the Firestone Agriculture Workers Union members also cite lack of care for sick employees.



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