

Journalists in Greece strike over pay and conditions; unrest continues across Iran over plummeting living standards; college staff in Oyo State, Nigeria on indefinite strike over pay

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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Greek journalists in national strike for improved pay and conditions

Journalists throughout Greece held a 24-hour strike on Tuesday for a collective bargaining agreement to include a 10 percent salary increase and other pay improvements.

The Pan-Hellenic Federation of Journalists' Union members' demands include more pay and time off in lieu of weekend work, compensation for working in dangerous areas, pay for copyright and measures to end job cuts.

The journalists' walkout follows the recent mass protests and general strike sparked by the Tempio 2023 rail crash, against the backdrop of decades of austerity cuts including by the Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) government (2015-2019).

Public transport workers in Flanders, Belgium strike against worsening conditions due to cuts

Workers at the publicly owned De Lijn transport system in Flanders, Belgium held a one-day strike on Wednesday, affecting bus and tram services across the region.

The General Union of Public Services, Confederation of Christian Trade Unions and General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium members are protesting cuts in the public sector, causing them to work longer and more irregular hours. These have a detrimental effect on their family and social lives.

UK Eurotunnel maintenance workers strike over pay

Around 12 workers employed by Folkestone-based Eurotunnel Services Ltd began a series of weekly 24-hour strikes on Sunday.

The Unite union members employed as drivers and maintenance workers rejected a pay offer from the company. They perform highly skilled, safety critical work for Eurotunnel and Le Shuttle, maintaining the tunnel structure and track.

Eurotunnel is a highly profitable company, recording profits of nearly £0.5 billion for the last financial year. Further strikes are planned for the next four Sundays, March 16, 23, 30 and April 6.

UK train drivers at Hull Trains strike over sacking of colleague

UK train drivers working for Hull Trains held a 48-hour stoppage beginning March 7.

The action by Aslef union members is in response to a driver being sacked for raising safety concerns. The 48-hour walkout will be repeated every Friday until the end of April. The sacked driver had more than 20 years' experience as a driver.

Support staff at Strathclyde University, Scotland, begin strike over pension attacks

Hundreds of support staff at Strathclyde University, Scotland began a two-week stoppage Monday over attacks on their pensions. The strikers plan to hold a rally at the main campus site at 9.30 a.m. on Friday.

The Unite union members, who work as cleaners, maintenance staff, security staff and laboratory technicians, rejected university plans to transfer them from their current Strathclyde Pension Fund to an inferior one, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).

At a meeting on March 7, the strikers rejected plans by the university to soften the attack by a one-off increase plus ongoing pension contributions to the new scheme. They would still stand to lose thousands of pounds by transferring out of their current scheme.

The Unison union has accepted the plans to transfer to the USS scheme.

Ongoing protests across Iran as social and economic conditions

deteriorate

Protests took place in the Iranian capital, Tehran on Monday. Volunteer teachers rallied to protest the government's refusal to give them employment contracts despite having the required qualifications.

Tehran also saw protests outside the National Inspection Office by customers of the state-owned Maskan Melli housing company. They paid money over years for homes that did not materialise.

Qeshm in the south of the country saw protests by boat owners against plans to pass ownership of the wharf to a private company. They fear fee increases would impact their livelihoods.

Cities across Iran including Abbas, Bandar, Bijar, Marivan and Sanandaj witnessed protests by retirees of the Telecommunication Company of Iran. They demanded the government implement the law for pensions to rise in line with inflation.

On Sunday, truck drivers from the Turkish border area held a further protest in Tehran outside the National Inspection Office. They were demanding the release of their trucks illegally seized by government authorities, depriving them of their livelihoods.

The same day, Social Security Organisation retirees protested in Ahvaz. They were demanding increased pensions and improved health and social conditions. In Mazandaran, steel industry pensioners also protested at their inadequate pensions.

Protests continue to roil all areas of Iran as deteriorating economic and social conditions affect vast swathes of the population. Embedded rising inflation is exacerbated by US sanctions and war plans, which are fuelling the unrest.

Tertiary college workers on indefinite strike in Oyo State, Nigeria

Tertiary college workers including teaching and non-teaching staff in Oyo State, Nigeria began an indefinite strike on March 10. They are demanding implementation of a 25 to 30 percent pay rise to match inflation and the new minimum wage.

The strike brought activities to a halt at five state-run institutions: the Polytechnic in Ibadan; the Oke-Ogun Polytechnic in Saki; Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa; Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora; and Oyo State College of Education in Lanlate.

The Joint Action Committee of unions called on State Governor Seyi Makinde to intervene in the strike, claiming he would push through the salary increase, minimum wage and increase state funding. The unions called a two-day "warning" strike on February 6 and 7 without achieving any improvement.

A similar indefinite strike started March 11 in Adamawa State over the same issues. A previous seven-day "warning" strike had begun on February 27, also without any resulting improvement.

Manganese mineworkers in Eastern Cape, South Africa walk out over pay and conditions

A strike began March 3 at Tradekor Ltd and Thembis's People in the Eastern Cape, South Africa over pay and conditions.

The National Union of Mine Workers members want pay linked to the cost of living, job grading and safety measures at work. The workers mining manganese risk neurological damage unless strict safety measures

are in place.

South African Pick n Pay shopworkers protest at store in east of Pretoria over closure

Shopworkers at a South African Pick n Pay store in Silverton Shopping Crossing in eastern Pretoria went on strike after hearing the store would close on March 17.

The 51 EEF members were given two weeks' notice with no prospect of severance pay. A protest outside the shop, guarded by a ring of police, was joined by other workers in the shopping centre.

Public Works scheme workers in Johannesburg, South Africa demand permanent posts and an end to nepotism

On Monday, Expanded Public Works Programme workers contracted to Pikitup marched to the office of Johannesburg's mayor demanding permanent jobs.

The Democratic and Aligned Workers Union of South Africa members demand the waste management company end its practice of nepotism and that work be brought in-house. The EPWP workers earn up to R120 a day, less than the minimum wage.

Introduced in 2003, the EPWP employs workers on short-term contracts, supposedly to give them skills and help them into permanent employment. In fact, they are used as cheap labour on infrastructure projects, in social services, environment and waste disposal jobs.

South African Metrobus drivers in Johannesburg strike for pay rise

Drivers employed by Johannesburg Metrobus in South Africa began a stoppage on March 3. Commuters had to find alternative means of transport.

The South African Municipal Workers Union members are demanding a pay rise.

Kenyan boda boda operators paralyse transport in two-day protest

Boda boda (bicycle and motorcycle taxi) operators brought transport and businesses to a halt in the towns of Migori, Rongo and Uririr in Migori County, Kenya on March 10 and 11. They are protesting a weekly levy of 50 Kenyan shillings imposed on them by the county authorities.

Boda boda operator Titus Omondi said, "We want to be exempted from paying taxes to the county. We earn what is not even enough for our families hence we cannot afford to pay KSh 50 they are demanding from us every week."

Another protester Jeremy Oduor said, "All they do is collect fees from us but the roads are pathetic. Let them improve the roads before imposing [levies]."



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