

Walkout by postal workers in Orléans, France and Leipzig, Germany over pay and conditions; protests continue across Iran over collapsing living standards; teachers and local government workers in Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria continue strike over pay

## 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

### **La Poste postal workers in Orléans, France strike over increased workloads**

French La Poste postal workers in Orléans and surrounding Loiret regional municipalities began an indefinite strike Monday, protesting a planned reorganisation of their duties, which will create unmanageable workloads.

The Sud-PTT union members say that due to a decline in letters, La Poste plan to combine delivery rounds and add parcels and advertising material that was previously taken out separately. Mail will be delivered to the same number of addresses but with increased loads, fewer postal workers and within a shorter time span.

### **DHL postal workers in Leipzig, Germany strike for improved pay and conditions**

Several hundred German postal workers employed in Leipzig by multinational logistics giant DHL began a 36-hour stoppage Tuesday for better pay and working conditions. DHL, owned by Deutsche Post, delivers parcels for the brand.

The DPVKOM communication workers' union members demand a €500 annual pay increase across the board, an 8 percent wage rise and an additional thirteenth monthly payment per year, as part of a collective agreement with DHL.

### **Bulgarian public transport workers in capital strike for pay increase**

Public transport workers in Bulgarian capital, Sofia stopped work Monday and protested for more pay.

They blocked major roads in the city centre and demonstrated outside the government's Ministry of Finance and the Sofia municipality building. Workers from Varna, Plovdiv and Ruse cities also took part in the demonstration.

The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria and the Confederation of Labour Union members were offered a basic monthly salary increase of 100 lev, but are demanding BGN400 immediately, BGN500 in 2026 and BGN600 in 2027.

Average monthly wages in Bulgaria are BGN2,468, and inflation stands at 4 percent.

### **Workers at Ryanair in Belgium strike against flying over war zone**

Staff working for budget airline Ryanair out of Charleroi airport in Belgium began an indefinite strike Monday in protest at being forced to fly to Tel Aviv, Israel and Amman, Jordan.

The members of the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions in the CNE and ACV-Puls say they should not have to fly over dangerous conflict zones due to the extra risk involved and say any such flight duties must be completely voluntary.

### **French archaeologists strike over government funding shortfall**

Workers at the National Institute of Preventative Archaeological Research and Regional Archaeology Services in France held a strike April 1-11 to protest a funding shortfall, which has exacerbated a €15 million budget deficit from 2024.

The SGPA, CGT-Culture, SNAC-FSU and SUD Culture Solidaires union members say another 260 new researchers and technicians are needed to continue their safeguarding of France's architectural heritage.

## **Further stoppages by phlebotomists at Gloucestershire, England hospitals over pay**

Thirty-seven phlebotomists (blood sample takers) employed by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in England began a seven-day stoppage on Monday. It is the latest in a series of walkouts begun March 17.

The Unison union members working at Cheltenham and Gloucester hospitals voted by a 97 percent majority for the action. They oppose being on the NHS Band 2 pay scale. Their pay, £12.08 an hour, leaves them struggling to pay bills. They argue that because of the skill sets needed to take blood they should be on Band 3, paying around £1 an hour more.

They first raised their concerns over pay levels in March 2024. They put in a formal complaint in September of that year but talks failed to resolve the issue and strike action followed.

Unison members working as health care assistants at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust are to strike Thursday. They won a regrading claim to be paid on Band 3 because they carry out clinical duties but are in dispute over a backpay settlement. They walked out two days last week, with further stoppages scheduled April 22 and 28.

## **Academic staff at Scottish university walk out over job cuts**

Academic staff at Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen, Scotland walked out Tuesday over the threat of compulsory redundancies.

The Educational Institute of Scotland-University Lecturers Association (EIS-ULA) members voted by an 83 percent majority to strike over cuts and plans to impose up to 60 job losses through compulsory redundancies. RGU have pushed through 130 job losses via two voluntary redundancy severance schemes since November 2023.

The EIS-ULA announced further stoppages May 1 and 7, and plans for stoppages between September 8 and 12.

Middle East

## **Ongoing protests in Iran as workers and retirees respond to economic crisis**

Workers and retirees held protests across nearly a quarter of Iran's provinces on Sunday against economic and social conditions.

Social security retirees rallied in the cities of Ahvaz, Kermanshah and Shush. They were calling for pension increases and access to basic services.

Steel industry retirees demonstrated in the cities of Isfahan and Qaemahahr as well as in Sari and other cities in Mazandaran province. They were protesting the failure of pensions to keep up with the escalating cost of living as well as overdue pension payments. In Tehran, retirees rallied in front of the Steel Fund's offices to push their demands.

In the city of Gachsaran, contract workers employed by the Gachsaran Oil and Gas company protested outside the company's main office. They were demanding to be made permanent employees and to eliminate highly exploitative subcontractors.

Social and economic stress are feeding the ongoing stoppages and protests across Iran. The impact is heightened by US sanctions and threats of war. Under Trump, the US has placed naval and air strike forces within striking distance of the country.

## **Iraqi workers protest plans to sell off fertiliser plant to private investors**

Nearly 5,000 workers held a protest Sunday in Basra, Iraq against plans to sell the Southern State Company for Fertilisers to private investors. The company is currently under the remit of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals.

They appealed to the Iraqi Prime Minister and other MPs to halt the investment process. They fear it will result in big job losses and/or cuts in pay.

Africa

## **Teachers and local government workers in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory continue stoppage over pay**

Primary school teachers and local government workers in six area councils in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) around Abuja, Nigeria are continuing their strike until they receive promised salary increases.

The Nigeria Union of Teachers in the Federal Capital Territory and National Union of Local Government Employees members walked out March 24, over the lack of increases in line with the new minimum wage of N70,000.

They ignored reports that N4 billion was allocated for the increases by the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, refusing to return to work until their demands are met.

## **Strike threat at South Africa's Transnet ports and freight over pay**

Workers at South Africa's state-owned ports and freight rail company (Transnet) are poised to walk out, following the collapse of pay talks at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

The transport of coal, iron ore and agricultural goods would grind to a halt if the United National Transport Union (Untu) members take action.

Untu represents half Transnet's 46,000 employees. The company offered 6 percent over the next and following year, while the union wants 10 percent.

## **Picket protests sacking of super-exploited immigrant workers at recycling company in Boksburg, South Africa**

On April 11, more than 50 immigrant workers and supporters picketed M&N Waste in Boksburg, South Africa to protest unfair dismissal and super-exploitation.

They had worked for the recycling company between six and 26 years at less than the minimum wage of R28.79 per hour. One worker told *GroundUp* he was paid R18 an hour.

On February 7, the company suspended the workers after they took their case to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, which ruled in their favour for higher pay. The company justified the

sackings on the grounds of lack of work permits.

The Casual Workers Advice Office and Simunye Workers Forum said the company employed the workers from Malawi and Mozambique knowing they were without work permits.

### **University workers in South Sudan end strike**

On April 16, staff at the University of Bahr el Ghazal in South Sudan ended their six-month strike over non-payment of wages, after receiving their March salaries.

The university is attended by more than 4,000 students, who are taking their exams following the return to work.

### **Workers at confectionery factory in Egypt hold strike over non-payment of overtime**

Workers at the BLaban confectionery factory in Alexandria, Egypt walked out on April 7 over the employers' failure to pay overtime wages for hours worked during the month of Ramadan.

Many of the workers rely on overtime payments to meet family and financial obligations, especially with the rising cost of living. A worker explained, "We worked 12 hours a day while fasting, and in the end, they told us the meal was our overtime pay."



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