

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

5 June 2025

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

Research scientists in Greece strike and demonstrate for improved pay and working conditions

Scientists and researchers in universities and research centres across Greece took part in a 24-hour strike May 29 to demand improvements in funding and conditions of employment. Protest rallies were held in Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and other cities.

The Panhellenic Federation of Employees in Research Centres and Institutions and Greek Confederation of Civil Servants' Trades Unions members demand full-time contracts, raised staffing levels, increases in pay and other improvements in benefits and working conditions.

They say the profession has long been demeaned and underfunded leaving research scientists precariously employed. They also report the sector is becoming increasingly militarised and losing its focus on social needs.

Seafarers on Greece-Italy ferry route in 48-hour strike to protest unsafe conditions and overwork

Seafarers on the Patras, Greece to Italy route held a 48-hour strike Tuesday to protest ferry staffing levels and other health and safety issues.

In a letter to the Greek Minister of Shipping, the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation members demand a doctor on every ship, the abolition of express routes, limits to overtime working, night stopovers between sailings and an enforced minimum level of personnel on all vessels.

Finnish airline workers in series of strike days for pay increases

Finnair employees at Helsinki airport held three strike days May 30, June 2 and June 4 to support their demands for pay increases.

The stoppage by aircraft and baggage handlers, maintenance workers, catering and customer service staff caused disruption to over 100 international and domestic flights. Further periodic strikes are planned throughout June.

The Finnish Aviation Union members say their pay only rose by 6.4 percent from 2020 to 2023, while the national average was 10.4 percent. The stalled pay negotiations with the service sector's employer body,

Palta, have already caused several walkouts and strikes this year.

Auxiliary workers at Charité Hospital in Berlin, Germany continue strike to force pay agreement

Around 3,500 workers at Charité Facility Management (CFM), the subsidiary contracted by Berlin's Charité hospital, went on strike May 30 as part of their ongoing dispute over pay.

The auxiliary workers are responsible for cleaning, patient transport, safety and security, technological support and other maintenance work at the hospital.

The Verdi union members have been striking intermittently since they began negotiations with the employer in February. They demand wage increases significantly higher than the 18 percent rise over three years offered by CFM.

Municipal Call centre workers in Paris, France strike over intolerable working conditions

Over 90 workers at the City of Paris municipal enquiry call centre went on strike Monday and Tuesday to protest their stressful work environment.

The Fédération Syndicale Unitaire members say they are understaffed despite being the first point of contact for all enquiries to the City of Paris municipal administration. The call centre receives over one million calls a year.

The tele-counsellors' work and break periods are timed and monitored throughout the day as they field questions and complaints for the under resourced city council. Inter-call pauses to record each query are timed to last 30 seconds. According to francebleu.fr, one worker said, "We each receive between 60 and 100 calls a day. It's a very intense rhythm and it never stops!"

Teachers at 28-school trust in England walk out over plans to extend working day

Teachers at schools run by the Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) walked out over plans by the trust to extend the working day by 30 minutes from September 2025.

The OGAT plan is for school to finish at 3 p.m. rather than the current 2.30 p.m., to comply with the Department for Education's advised 32.5

hours school week. Teachers' unions argue for break periods to be cut to achieve the figure.

The trust runs 28 secondary schools in England. NASUWT members at two OGAT schools in Worksop will begin five days of stoppages from June 10 while those at the Hindley school in Wigan, Foxhills in Scunthorpe and OGAT's Easingwold school in York began six days of stoppages Tuesday.

National Education Union (NEU) members at 14 OGAT schools in northeast England, northwest England, Yorkshire and the East Midlands began six days of stoppages Tuesday over the issue. The strikes will take place until June 19.

In a separate dispute, teachers and support staff belonging to the NEU at Goodwin Academy, Deal in Kent walked out on Tuesday protesting the school's plans to make five support staff redundant. Further stoppages are planned for June 12, 18-19 and 24-26.

Further strike by Scottish Water workers over unacceptable pay offer

Around 2,000 workers employed by state-owned Scottish Water began a seven-day walkout on Monday.

The Unison, Unite and GMB union members rejected an initial 3.4 percent pay increase and a subsequent 7 percent offer over two years. Workers held a one-day strike in March followed by two days in April. A proposed stoppage in May was suspended to allow talks on the new offer, which was subsequently rejected. The stoppage is expected to disrupt emergency repairs and hit maintenance and testing procedures.

The striking workers held a joint union demonstration on Wednesday outside the offices of Scottish Water in the Shieldhall district of Glasgow.

UK phlebotomists at Gloucestershire hospitals continue long-running strike over pay

Around 40 phlebotomists (blood sample takers) employed by Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in England are continuing their long-running strike begun March 17. The dispute now involves all the phlebotomists employed by the trust.

The Unison union members at Cheltenham and Gloucester hospitals voted by a 97 percent majority for the action. They oppose being on the National Health Service Band 2 pay scale earning £12.08 an hour. The level of pay leaves them struggling to pay bills. They argue that because of the skill sets needed to take blood, they should be on Band 3, giving them around £1 an hour more. They began the action after the failure of talks over a year to resolve the issue.

Protest by UK Oxfam charity workers over outsourcing threat

Tuesday saw protests by workers at development charity Oxfam outside Oxfam offices in London, Manchester and Oxford.

The Unite union members fear around 265 staff posts are at risk of redundancy because of Oxfam's "restructuring proposals". Unite claims Oxfam is seeking to outsource work in the publishing and training teams, and "replace secure jobs with casual work".

Nationwide strike by truck drivers in Iran enters second week

The nationwide strike of truck drivers in Iran which enters its second week has spread to around 160 cities, with at least 20 drivers arrested across several provinces.

Sparked by a big increase in insurance premiums and fuel price hikes, anger was exacerbated by the death of truck drivers and damage to trucks caught up in the port city of Bandar Abbas explosion on May 19. Other issues include unfair freight rates, high cost of spare parts and lack of insurance and welfare services.

The striking truck drivers have received statements of support from teachers' unions as well as other workers organisations and a group of lawyers. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, rapper Toomaj Salehi and filmmaker Jafar Panahi have issued statements in their support.

Heavily dependent on truck transport, the Iranian economy is being severely impacted by the ongoing dispute.

Protests by bakers begun May 17 are continuing, in cities including Ahvaz, Kermanshah, Mashhad and Qom. Bread prices have nearly doubled following a cut in flour subsidies. Some protesting bakers were confronted by security forces.

Around 70 percent of Iranians live below the poverty line, enduring an economic collapse exacerbated by US sanctions. The Trump regime is threatening to "obliterate" the country as part of its restructuring of the Middle East as it prepares war against China.

Ethiopian health workers' strike over staff shortages enters fourth week

The indefinite strike by Ethiopian health workers over pay and conditions is now entering its fourth week. The strike began May 13 after the government failed to respond to workers' 12 demands.

A senior doctor at the Black Lion Specialized Hospital in the capital Addis Ababa said he handles a large number of emergency cases alone. "I just finished my night shift," he said. "I worked the previous night at a private hospital, and today I'm back here. We are under intense pressure."

Working alone in the emergency department meant patients were left untreated. "I was the only doctor on duty," he said. "I watched patients suffer; patients who could have recovered if they had received timely attention."

Students at University of Zimbabwe in solidarity with striking lecturers

Students at the University of Zimbabwe have been demonstrating to show their backing for striking lecturers, holding their third demonstration May 27.

Zimbabwe National Students Union representative Darlington Chingwena said students' education had been "stolen" by the authorities, who neglected the university's staff. He also denounced the attempt to hire a scab workforce.

The lecturers walked out over one month ago over pay and improvements in working conditions, among other issues.

They are demanding their salaries be returned to their pre-2018 level when a junior lecturer earned US\$2,250. Their salaries have fallen to

US\$230.

Union tells Nigerian judicial workers to return to work

The strike by Nigerian judicial workers, who walked out on June 2 over pay, was suspended June 3 by the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria pending negotiations.

The stoppage was prompted by the failure to implement the minimum wage of N70,000, five months of pay arrears and lack of a pay rise of between 25 and 35 percent.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact