

# Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

12 June 2025

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

## Thousands of Dutch rail workers in national strike over pay and employment conditions

Thousands of workers at NS, the national rail company of the Netherlands, held two 24-hour stoppages June 6 and June 9, bringing the entire network to a halt and stopping trains to international destinations. Further strike days are planned.

As part of their negotiations with NS, the VVMC and FNV Spoor rail union members demand a 7-8 percent annual pay increase. NS are offering 5.75 percent over 27 months. The workers also want equality around the requirement to work night shifts, reducing work hours with age and other employment conditions.

## Museum workers across Portugal hold one-day strike for fairer pay

Hundreds of public workers in museums, galleries, monuments and archaeological sites across Portugal refused to work Tuesday June 10, a national holiday in the country.

The National Federation of Public and Social Services Workers' Unions members demand extra pay plus overtime rates for working on public holidays. They say the pay problem has been going on for years, with successive government administrations refusing to deal with the issue.

Around 1,000 staff work at the government-run Museums and Monuments of Portugal, which manages 38 publicly owned historic buildings. In 2023, they received over 5 million visitors.

## Waste workers in Angoulême, France strike for pay increase

Waste collection operatives and processing workers at seven sites in the city of Angoulême, France have been on strike since June 2, leaving garbage uncollected.

The General Confederation of Labour members demand an increase

in premiums paid for unsocial hours, professional experience and other bonuses which were last reviewed in 2019. Talks with the municipal employers are ongoing.

## Taxi drivers in Athens, Greece strike in protest at new road rules limiting access to bus lanes

Taxi operators in Athens, Greece stopped work 3 p.m. to midnight Wednesday in protest at changes in road rules that restrict their access to bus lanes.

The Athens Taxi Drivers Union members are complaining at a legislative change in the Road Traffic Code which limits taxi drivers' use of bus lanes to pick-ups and drop-offs only. They see it as an attack on their ability to make a living.

## Health staff at hospitals in Nottingham, UK strike over back pay

Hundreds of health care assistants (HCAs) working for Nottingham University NHS Trust hospitals, the Queen's Medical Centre and City Hospital began a week-long strike Monday.

The Unison union members are seeking back pay covering years when they were paid on Agenda for Change pay band 2, despite performing duties such as taking blood and inserting cannulas. They should have been paid on the higher band 3 level.

The HCAs have already held 10 days of stoppages over the issue since April. In negotiations between the trust and Unison, the trust has only offered an extra day's leave as recompense.

## Strikes by teachers at school in Wigan and school in London, UK

Teachers at the Nugent House school in Billinge area of Wigan began a three-week discontinuous strike on Monday. The school, which caters for children with special needs, is run by Nugent Care Ltd.

The National Education Union (NEU) members took the action after Nugent failed to make a pay offer for 2024/25. A lobby of Nugent Care offices in Edge Lane, Liverpool will take place on Friday from 8.30 a.m.

In a separate dispute, NEU members at Leytonstone school in Waltham Forest, London walked out Tuesday and Wednesday. They are opposed to changes to the school day and increasing workloads, and have health and safety concerns. Further stoppages are planned for June 17-19.

### **Further stoppages by UK Civil Aviation Authority over pay**

Staff working for the Civil Aviation Authority based at Gatwick Airport near London and at Canary Wharf in London walked out Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Public and Commercial Services and Prospect union members have rejected a non-consolidated £1,150 payment unilaterally imposed in August 2024, and are seeking an inflation-linked pay rise for 2024/25. They have been in dispute since early 2024.

They took previous action, including two days of stoppages last week, and plan further walkouts June 17-18.

### **Ongoing protests in Iran as economic conditions deteriorate**

Monday saw protests by retirees of the Telecommunications Company of Iran (TCI) in the cities of Bijar, Kermanshah, Sanandaj, Shiraz, Tabriz, Tehran and Zanjan.

Among their demands were for welfare allowances for 2022 and 2023 to be updated in line with inflation and for TCI to comply with a 2010 agreement for pensions to be linked to cost-of-living rises.

With the incomes of 70 percent of Iranian workers below the poverty line and an ongoing economic collapse, intensified by US sanctions, protests by workers across sectors are a regular occurrence in Iran. Under Trump the US threatens Iran with obliteration as it seeks to reorganise the Middle East as a prelude to launching war on China.

### **Ghanaian nurses and midwives in national stoppage over broken promises on pay**

Ghanaian nurses and midwives walked out on an indefinite national strike on June 2 in response to the failure to implement the 2024 collective agreement, which covered salaries, allowances, and working conditions.

The Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association members are determined to stay out until their demands are met.

Initially the strike affected only outpatient departments, but on June 9 the strike escalated to cover all nursing services, paralysing healthcare across the country.

The National Labour Court issued an injunction to declare the strike illegal. The nurses and midwives are not paid the salary they were promised.

### **Teachers in schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa on work-to-rule in protest at education system collapse**

Teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa began a work-to-rule this week, affecting June exams for matric (final year high school) pupils. Extra classes for matric pupils were cancelled, while some schools have already informed parents that exams are postponed.

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union members are protesting the collapse of the education system due to lack of funding to provide enough staff, resources, special needs and extra-curricular activities. Providers of stationery for schools have not been paid either. Classrooms are dilapidated, and basic amenities such as toilets and electricity are lacking in many schools.

Teachers will confine their work to seven hours in the classroom, with no extra tuition for pupils due to sit exams.

### **Lecturers at University of Zimbabwe continue strike**

Lecturers at the University of Zimbabwe are continuing their strike, now ongoing for around 60 days. The lecturers are demanding a return to their pre-2018 salary of US\$2,250 a month for junior staff, instead of the pitifully low \$230 a month they were receiving prior to the strike.

A spokesperson for the Association of University Teachers said, "There is no teaching happening at the university. No supervision is taking place. A few scabs have been hired to replace... lecturers on strike."

### **Union suspends stoppage by clinical officers in Kilifi, Kenya over pay and conditions**

Clinical officers in Kilifi County, Kenya are returning to work following a four-day strike.

Kenya Union of Clinical Officers branch chairman Joshua Shoka said the union has given the county government until June 30 to implement the agreement the union signed up to.

The strike was called over salary delays, lack of promotion, inadequate medical cover and other grievances.



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