

# Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

31 July 2025

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## Portuguese aviation services workers in series of strikes for improved pay and conditions

Ground handlers working for multinational Menzies Aviation at Lisbon airport and other Portuguese airports held a four-day strike July 25, the first of five planned four-day weekend strikes extending through August.

The stoppage led to dozens of cancelled and delayed passenger and cargo flights.

The Metalworkers' and Allied Industries Union and Transport Union members demand an end to a below minimum wage base salary. They also want night shift payments and general improvements to wages and working conditions.

Menzies Aviation provides services at over 300 airports in 65 countries. In 2024 its global revenue was \$2.6 billion, an increase of 20 percent from 2023.

## French pharmacists continue work-to-rule over financial threat to state-funded provision of medicine

Pharmacies across France have been on an indefinite work-to-rule since July 1, refusing to co-operate with local health services emergency out-of-hours schedules and insisting on up-front payments for free medicines during those hours. They also threaten further reductions in operating hours if changes are not made to the government provision of medicines.

The Union of Community Pharmacists' Unions and the Federation of Pharmaceutical Unions of France members protest recent cuts in government health spending, which mean discounts for pharmacies purchasing generic medicines have reduced from 40 to 20 percent. They also complain of the administrative work and financial insecurity involved in 'third-party payments,' whereby they have to wait to be reimbursed by the government for those medicines free to the public.

On July 23, after a meeting with pharmacists' unions, the government proposed the generic medicine subsidy be reduced to 33 percent rather than 20 percent, but pharmacists say this is still not enough to safeguard the existence of thousands of pharmacy outlets across the country, particularly in already poorly served rural areas.

## Public transport workers in Sardinia, Italy strike over inadequate

### working conditions

Employees for ARST, the publicly owned regional transport company in Sardinia, Italy, held a one-day strike July 26 to protest long-standing grievances about working conditions. Bus, rail and tram services were all brought to a halt.

The ORSA TPL transport union members have many unaddressed complaints concerning hostile management, a two-tier workforce, poor computer technology implementation, lack of meal vouchers, missing allowances and other substandard working conditions.

## Train drivers in Hull, UK vote to continue series of strikes over sacking of driver

Train drivers working for Hull Trains, which runs trains from Hull/Beverly to London King's Cross have voted to continue their series of intermittent stoppages.

The ASLEF union members began their programme of walkouts in February. They took the action in support of a driver ASLEF claims was dismissed for raising safety issues. An ASLEF official, quoted in a *BBC News* report July 25, said, "Hull Trains has been telling our members that they wish to sort out this issue but it's nearly a month since their last meeting with ASLEF and the silence is deafening."

The re-vote means action could continue until February next year, with Hull Trains saying services can be cancelled at short notice because of the action.

## Workers at hotel chain in Glasgow, Scotland to strike over pay and conditions

Hotel workers at the Village Hotel in Glasgow, Scotland are set to walk out on Saturday until August 31. They are employed in the food and beverage department at the hotel. Village Hotel runs 33 hotels across the UK.

The Unite union members voted by 100 percent for the stoppage. Their demands are to be paid the real living wage of £12.60 an hour and for this to be paid to all employees regardless of age. They also want paid breaks and for backdated wages for under 21-year-olds paid at the same rate as workers at the Edinburgh Village Hotel.

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

Protests continue across Iran in response to deteriorating conditions of life. On Saturday, owners of industrial units in the Chahardengeh, Khorramdasht and Siah Sang industrial zones held protests over recurring power outages.

The same day saw protests by merchants in the Salehabad Bazaar in Tehran over power cuts affecting their businesses. Meanwhile poultry farmers in Khorasan Razavi protested the state of their industry.

On July 21 and 22, protests took part in the city of Sabzevar in northeastern Iran over chronic power and water outages. Protestors holding marches and rallies were met with police attempts to disperse them but were able to prevail. There have also been recent protests in the cities of Nasimshahr and Marvdasht over water shortages.

July 20 saw protests by Social Security retirees in Rasht and Tehran over the inadequate level of pensions.

The same day drivers protested outside the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade in Tehran over vehicles they had bought but which have been held up at the Iranian border. Also, truck drivers in Zarand protesting tariffs and unequal division of orders held a demonstration.

July 20 also saw a rally at the Khorasan Steel company over management practices. In Tehran merchants at the Grand Bazaar protested over exorbitant rents.

With 70 percent of Iranian workers living below the poverty line, they are suffering the consequences of prolonged deteriorating economic conditions. These conditions have been exacerbated by US sanctions. The Trump regime's recent bombing raids were carried out as part of its attempts to reorganise the Middle East in the run up to war against China.

## **Airport workers at Israeli airport strike over staff shortages**

July 25 saw ground staff at Israel's Ben-Gurion refusing to load and unload baggage on incoming and outgoing planes. Reported in the *Jerusalem Post*, airport workers' committee chairman, Pinchas Idan denied it was a strike but "simply a lack of staff."

Idan said management were warned about staff shortages, had in fact wanted to cut around 100 jobs but transferred them to part-time posts.

## **Doctors in Lagos, Nigeria hold three-day strike over pay deductions**

Doctors in Lagos, Nigeria held a three-day strike starting on July 28 to protest the unilateral deduction of money from their salaries by the state government.

The Medical Guild, which represents doctors and dentists called on "our compassionate [State] Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu to kindly intervene" to restore the deducted amounts.

The Nigerian Medical Association has issued a three-week notice, to begin on July 30, of an indefinite stoppage in opposition to the federal government's failure to address long-standing demands.

## **Nigerian nurses and midwives begin national strike**

Nigerian nurses and midwives began a national strike at midnight on Tuesday, after the expiry of a 15-day ultimatum issued by the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives.

The strike is to demand an increase in allowances for night and weekend shifts, as well as allowances for call duties, which often involve staff spending their own time on duty and providing emergency services.

## **Pilots at South African airline FlySafair continue stoppage over pay and safety**

Pilots at budget airline operator FlySafair in South Africa are continuing their strike begun more than two weeks ago over pay and conditions.

The 220 Solidarity union members, two thirds of the pilots at FlySafair, rejected the company's latest offer in a 90 percent vote. The sticking point is the refusal of FlySafair to restore the fixed pattern of rosters of six days on two days off, then six days on three days off. The company introduced flexible algorithm-driven rosters to compensate for staff shortages. The new rosters impact work/life balance, family life and safety due to long, irregular hours in the air.

The pilots also demand pay is restored to pre-COVID levels. They want a rise of 10.5 percent, as opposed to the employers' offer of 5.7 percent. Solidarity released a public statement on Monday stating: "...this strike is not about greed. It is about safety...This year alone, 37 highly trained, experienced pilots resigned...These are professionals who have sacrificed years of their lives and small fortunes in training, only to find themselves working under conditions that disregard their well-being.

"While the technology promised efficiency, the reality has been brutal: minimal rest, brutal schedules, and zero regard for basic human needs. The pilots asked for one weekend off a month. The response? The algorithm doesn't like rules."

FlySafair propose a joint roster committee consisting of pilot and company representatives. Talks are ongoing.

The pilots' union SAA Pilots Association at South African Airways and Solidarity at Lift airlines have allowed the respective companies to fly FlySafair passengers between Durban and Cape Town.

## **Liberian truck drivers hold protest over control of routes being privatised**

Liberian truck drivers held a protest on the streets of the capital, Monrovia to oppose the concession agreement between the Government of Liberia and the private Liberia Traffic Management Inc. (LTMI).

Drivers oppose transferring control of main transport routes, traffic management, and other core functions to a private firm. The agreement was signed on September 11, 2018, between the Government of Liberia and LTMI to modernise, digitise, and manage the country's transportation and traffic systems with a focus on generating profits. The agreement was activated following a Supreme Court ruling on May 28, 2025.

Frankin Sisco, a driver with 17 years' experience, said LTMI officers routinely issue fines of up to US\$150, while police officers impose separate charges, leading to "double punishment." He also said the judiciary are biased in favour of enforcement officers.



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