

# Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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## London underground rail workers to hold week-long series of stoppages over working conditions

From Friday, the London Underground rail system (the tube) will be hit by a week-long series of walkouts by staff.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) members are suffering fatigue due to extreme shift patterns and are calling for a shorter week. Different grades will walk out at differing times, beginning Sunday until September 11. Grades involved include signallers, controllers, drivers and engineering staff.

Transport for London, which runs the tube, expects the whole network to be “severely disrupted.”

In a separate dispute, Ruislip Depot Operational Managers plan a 24-hour stoppage Friday over pay parity.

RMT members working on the Docklands Light Railway also plan to strike on September 9 and 11 over pay and conditions.

## Bus workers at London company strike over unpaid backdated pay settlement

Around 2,000 bus workers including drivers, engineers and controllers at London United and London Transit were on strike Monday following a previous one-day stoppage August 29. The stoppage impacted over 50 routes in west London.

The Unite union members at the Westbourne Park, Shepherd’s Bush, Park Royal, Stamford Brook, Hounslow and Fulwell depots stand to lose hundreds of pounds. First Bus took over the companies earlier in the year and failed to honour all elements of a pay deal backdated to December last year. The London United subsidiary is also trying to change the pay anniversary of some of its staff.

In a separate dispute, around 1,000 Unite members employed at six depots of bus operator First West in the south west of England are set to walk out Thursday through Sunday and again September 16-19. They rejected a two-year below-inflation pay offer. First West buses serve areas around Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

## Pathology staff at London hospitals walk out over pay

Around 800 pathology staff working for Health Services Laboratory and The Doctors’ Laboratory in London began a three-day stoppage Wednesday.

The Unite union members are based at seven NHS hospitals in north London, including Barnet Hospital, North Middlesex and the Royal Free. Responsible for blood and tissue testing, they are performing tasks carried out by senior colleagues but not being paid the correct rate. Additionally, as they work for a privatised service, they are paid less than staff directly employed by the NHS carrying out similar roles.

They are also calling for improved working conditions, including an increase in sick pay and additional leave.

## Security staff at UK parliament strike over pay and conditions

Hundreds of security staff at the Palace of Westminster (UK parliament) in London began a 24-hour stoppage Wednesday.

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) members are taking action over pay and conditions. They are protesting plans to cut six days from their annual leave entitlement, and pay stagnation. A further 24-hour stoppage is planned for September 10, and a work-to-rule and overtime ban is being imposed September 1-12.

## Canteen staff at UK refinery in Fawley continue strike over pay

The mainly female canteen staff at the UK Fawley oil refinery in Hampshire are continuing their programme of stoppages, striking Monday through Friday. They began the series of walkouts on July 25. A solidarity picket is planned for Friday.

The Unite union members, employed by the Compass Group to provide catering services at the refinery are demanding a pay increase, rejecting the 3.3 percent offer. Currently they are paid just above the minimum wage. Compass, the world’s largest catering provider, earned over £1 billion in profits in the six months to March 2025.

## National Coal Mining Museum workers in Wakefield, England extend strike over pay

Staff at the National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield, England, who began their strike on August 20, extended their planned action by a further four weeks until October 12.

Around 40 Unison union members rejected a pay offer of 5 percent or 80p an hour, whichever is the greater. The museum management said any additional offer would be unaffordable. Unison announced the extended action after the museum's chief executive quit talks that had been underway.

Many of the strikers are former miners who lost their jobs following the defeat of the 1984-85 national miners' strike—paving the way for the destruction of the mining industry under the Tory government of Margaret Thatcher.

As a result of the stoppage, underground tours are not taking place, but the museum, which relies on charitable funding, remains open.

### **Refuse workers in Birmingham, UK vote to extend ongoing strike beyond Christmas**

Refuse workers in the city of Birmingham, England have voted by a 99.5 percent majority to renew their mandate to strike until March 2026.

The over 350 Unite union members began intermittent strike action in January this year and have been on an all-out stoppage since March. They are opposing the Labour-run council's plans to cut safety-critical jobs and the pay of loaders and drivers by £8,000-£10,000 respectively.

The council, which plans cuts of £300 million across all services, has organised scabbing operations overseen by the Starmer government to try to break the strike.

### **Thousands of school secretaries and caretakers in Ireland on indefinite national strike for pensions and other benefits**

Around 2,600 school secretaries and caretakers in Ireland began an indefinite national strike August 31 in support of their demand to be included in the public service pension scheme and for other benefits, including sick pay and bereavement leave.

The Forsa public service trade union members held a rally outside the Department of Public Expenditure's offices in Dublin, asking that teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and other school staff do not take on their work while they are on strike. Many SNAs have refused to cross picket lines.

### **French utility workers at government-owned multinational EDF strike for pay increase and reduced tax on energy**

Workers at French government-owned multinational utility company EDF began 72 hours of strikes Monday in support of wage increases and other demands. The stoppage caused a drop in electricity and affected nuclear energy production.

The General Confederation of Labour union members want a 9 percent rise for those on the lowest salary and a reduction in value added tax on gas and electricity back to 5.5 percent from a recent increase to 20 percent. They also demand higher on-call payments.

### **Shipyards workers in Yalova Altinova, Turkey strike for pay and**

### **decent working conditions**

Around 200 workers working for construction company Kolin Holding at Sefine Shipyard in Yalova Altinova, Turkey began an indefinite stoppage after the employer made unilateral changes to their working conditions.

The Union of Port, Dock, Ship Building and Repair Workers members say the company insisted that they work Saturdays and extend their 8 a.m.-5 p.m. working day to 8 or 9 p.m. The workers demand pay increases, to be paid on time, and for overtime to be voluntary.

### **Protests by contract and permanent oil workers in Iran over pay**

Sunday saw protests by contract workers employed by the Gachsaran Oil and Gas company. They were demanding the elimination of contract companies acting as middlemen and taking a cut of their pay.

Permanently employed workers at the Offshore Oil Company in the Khark region also held a protest the same day. Their demands included removal of the pay cap and restrictions on the level of retirement pay.

The protests by oil workers are part of ongoing regular strikes and protests by Iranian workers and retirees, 30 percent of whom live below the poverty line. They are responding to the impact of the ongoing crisis of the Iranian economy, exacerbated by US imposed sanctions causing economic losses of approximately \$1.2 trillion and US/Israeli bombardment.

Sanctions by the UK, France and Germany will further decimate the economy, as part of NATO's plan to restructure the Middle East in its war pivot to China.

### **Israeli high school students hold strike over Gaza hostages**

Israeli high school students at around 70 schools held a one-day strike Monday. They were protesting the Israeli government's failure to set up a deal for the return of hostages being held in Gaza. Actions taken by the students included locking school gates shut and blocking roads.

### **Academic staff at university in Ondo State, Nigeria on indefinite strike over pay and funding**

Lecturers at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA) in Ondo State, began an indefinite strike August 28, protesting non-payment of their salaries and arrears. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) members' action brought academic activities to a standstill.

A letter to the state government signed by ASUU-AAUA Chairperson, Boluwaji Oshodi, and Secretary, Olusegun Taiwo said "the major problem we are facing is funding. The state government is not funding the university. As I speak now. We are being owed two months' salaries (July and August)."

The letter also lists other arrears amounting to billions of Naira in total.

### **Cheap labour scheme refuse workers at Msunduzi Municipality, South Africa strike to demand permanent jobs**

Refuse collectors at Msunduzi Municipality, South Africa walked out on August 27 to demand permanent jobs under conditions where waste management is understaffed. Residents complain of an unreliable service.

In frustration, the workers overturned bins outside the City Hall in Pietermaritzburg, which prompted officials to organise a clean-up. The municipality obtained a court order to prevent interference with municipal activities and threatened strikers with dismissal and “no work, no pay.”

The strikers are part of the Expanded Public Works Programme, a government scheme exploiting the jobless as cheap labour, supposedly to help them back into work.

### **NUMSA rams through sellout deal at Macsteel, South Africa to end stoppage against job losses**

The strike by workers at Macsteel in Johannesburg, South Africa begun August 22 against redundancies has ended after the union pushed through a sellout deal.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) agreed to 39 compulsory and 253 voluntary redundancies at Macsteel, South Africa’s leading steel supplier.

### **Non-clinical staff at Dora Nginza hospital, Eastern Cape, South Africa walk out over unpaid overtime**

Staff at Dora Nginza hospital, Eastern Cape, South Africa walked out on Monday and staged a picket to demand five months’ unpaid overtime.

The wildcat strike was organised independently of the health unions Nupsaw, Nahawu, Denosa, Hospera and PSA. A Nupsaw spokesman said only clinical staff received up-to-date overtime pay.

### **Liberian volunteer teachers protest at home of president to demand permanent jobs**

Volunteer teachers from state schools protested Monday outside the residence of President Joseph Nyuma Boakai. They are demanding the government keep its promises by employing them after years of unpaid labour in classrooms across Liberia.

Placards included, “No employment for volunteer teachers, no instruction,” “Qualified teachers deserve salaries,” and “Stop exploiting volunteer teachers.” Spokesperson of the National Volunteer Teachers Association, Patrick Walker said they were speaking on behalf of over 2,000 volunteer teachers nationwide.

After gathering outside the President’s residence, they were moved by police to Rehab Junction, several miles away.

### **Academics on go-slow at University of Liberia**

Academics at the University of Liberia voted unanimously on August 29 to stop performing their duties until they have a Collective Bargaining Agreement addressing salary disparities, poor sanitation, lack of promotion and social security, and other grievances.

The University of Liberia Faculty Association (ULFA) members began their action a few days before the start of the new term, threatening to disrupt classes for thousands of students at the country’s main public university.

Staff also complain of dilapidated facilities, late payments, and inadequate support for lecturers on study leave.

### **Moroccan delivery workers in 48-hour strike**

Moroccan delivery drivers working for Glovo held a 48-hour strike in Casablanca from September 1, with a sit-in in front of the company headquarters at Casablanca Finance City. This is their third such protest in recent months.

The strike is in opposition to low pay, and what the couriers describe as “inhumane” working conditions. Drivers are calling for implementation of an algorithm that respects traffic laws and health and safety standards.

“We demand an immediate increase in the base rate to cope with the high cost of living and the degradation of purchasing power,” said the Moroccan Labour Union. Couriers are also demanding the doubling of night rates, since late deliveries are risky, and compensation during national and religious holidays. They are also calling for full payment for cancelled orders.



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