

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.

Strike of Iranian aluminium workers enters seventh week

The strike by around 4,000 workers at the Arak Aluminium Company (IRALCO) entered its seventh week on Wednesday. IRALCO is one of Iran's biggest aluminium manufacturers.

The stoppage, begun in August, has disrupted production at the state-owned facility. Demands include regular payment of wages, upgraded equipment and higher safety standards. Workers are also calling for the removal of the company CEO and head of security. They accuse the current manager of failing to uphold safety standards, which led to the deaths of two workers.

The bitter dispute by aluminium workers is part of ongoing regular strikes and protests by Iranian workers and retirees against the collapse of living standards, exacerbated by US sanctions. Recently announced sanctions by the UK, France and Germany will further decimate the economy--part of the US/NATO restructuring of the Middle East as a stepping stone to war against China.

Brewery workers for multinational AB InBev in Jupille, Belgium strike for improved pay and working conditions

Transportation workers at the AB InBev brewery in Jupille, Belgium, which employs 600, held a 48-hour wildcat strike Tuesday following safety concerns after a worker was injured by a forklift.

The General Labour Federation of Belgium members are angry that sickness absence is being more stringently monitored. The organisation said members are under pressure to work when unwell, putting them at greater risk of accidents. They also demand a pay increase and more staff.

American-Belgian multinational giant AB InBev is the largest brewer in the world. It made \$5.85 billion dollars profit globally in 2024.

KLM ground staff at Schiphol Airport, Netherlands stop work for improved cost of living pay award

KLM airline ground staff, including baggage loaders, customer service workers and airplane handlers at Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands held a two-hour warning strike Wednesday. Over 100 flights were cancelled.

Another four-hour stoppage is planned for September 17.

The Federation of Dutch Trade Unions and Christian National Trade Union Federation members demand a pay award commensurate with the cost of living and proportional to KLM staff from other departments represented by different unions.

Taxi drivers in Attica, Greece protest difficult working conditions

Taxi drivers in the Attica region of Greece, including the capital Athens, held a work stoppage Tuesday and Wednesday. They are protesting new government regulations, which favour multinational companies and online taxi hailing applications.

The Attica Taxi Drivers Union members blocked roads and demonstrated outside the Ministry of Tourism. They demand more support for professional taxi drivers and complain of unfair competition and taxation, reduced bus lane access and forced electrification.

Protest at use of agency staff to break Birmingham, UK refuse workers' strike

Around 30 striking refuse workers in Birmingham, England held a protest Tuesday outside offices of the Job&Talent job agency in the city.

Birmingham City Council is using agency staff in its attempts to break the ongoing strike of refuse workers. Around 350 Unite union members are striking against the council's plans to cut refuse workers jobs and pay.

The Labour-run council plans to cut safety-critical jobs and the pay of loaders and drivers by £8,000-£10,000 respectively. This is part of a cuts package of £300 million across all services.

The workers, who have been on all-out strike since March, recently voted to extend their stoppage into next year. The council has organised scabbing operations overseen by the Starmer government to try to break the strike.

The Unite union has organised a march in support of the striking refuse workers on September 20. The march will end outside the Birmingham City Council chambers where a rally will be held.

Strike by academic staff at Edinburgh University, Scotland over job cuts

Academic staff at Edinburgh University began a five-day stoppage Monday. The stoppage coincides with freshers' week, when new students are inducted at the university.

The University and College Union (UCU) members oppose plans to cut 1,800 jobs at the university to save £140 million. The stoppage follows a one-day stoppage in June. They have also been undertaking action short of a strike including working to contract, not volunteering for duties and not covering for absent colleagues since the June walkout. For the UCU bureaucracy, the main issue is the university's refusal to rule out compulsory redundancies.

UK universities face 10,000 job cuts. There have been strikes at individual institutions, but the UCU is opposed to coordinated action across the sector. Departments and vital research are threatened. The UCU has a history of betraying previous struggles over pay, conditions and pensions.

Care workers at Scottish charity strike over pay parity

Around 650 care staff employed by the Enable Scotland charity based in Glasgow and Lanarkshire walked out Tuesday and Thursday this week. The charity provides care for people with learning difficulties and their families.

The Unison union members are seeking pay parity with NHS staff. Unison accuses the Scottish National Party-run government of reneging on an April 2022 agreement to match carers' pay with NHS rates. NHS staff on the Band 2 pay scale earn £13.22 an hour, while Enable Scotland staff are on £12.60. Unison estimates Enable staff to have been underpaid around £5,500 since April 2022.

Striking workers held a rally outside Airdrie town hall Tuesday morning.

Crew of UK-based research vessel strike over pay and conditions

Around 30 crew members of the Cefas Endeavour, based in the port of Lowestoft, England, began a four-day walkout Tuesday. The Cefas Endeavour is an ocean-going research vessel owned by a government body, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The Unite union members, employed by Guernsey-and Isle of Man-based AW Crewing, rejected a 6.5 percent pay offer. They are seeking pay parity with AW Crewing staff who are paid more for doing an equivalent role on other vessels. Their other demands include a fixed 28-day rota. Currently, they can be made to work for 39 days in a row with as little as 72 hours' notice.

Ancillary hospital workers at Airedale hospital, England to strike over pay and terms parity

Around 150 hospital workers comprising catering, domestic, portering and security staff at Airedale hospital in West Yorkshire, England are set to walk out Friday.

The GMB union members voted by over 90 percent for the action. They are employed by AGH Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Airedale NHS Foundation Trust. The workers, who are employed on

inferior pay and terms to NHS directly employed staff, are seeking parity with them.

Some of the workers and their supporters protested outside the hospital on Monday. Further stoppages are planned for September 15-16.

Westbury residents in Johannesburg, South Africa protest water shortage

Residents in the Westbury suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa have been protesting the lack of water supply, press report.

The ongoing water problem has left residents without water for nine consecutive days; a situation they say has been ongoing for years. In response they barricaded roads with burning tyres and rocks.

The police maintained a heavy presence, including with helicopter surveillance. Protesters reported the police firing rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades.

Refuse workers in Durban, South Africa walk out and stage picket after wages are cut in half

On Monday, refuse workers held a stoppage and picketed the solid waste depot in Durban, South Africa to demand their pay, which was more than halved, was restored.

In March, workers were informed their wages would be slashed from R8,400 to R4,000 a month. The EThekwin municipality contracts refuse collection out to several companies. The workers are responsible for collecting rubbish from the streets and loading it onto trucks.

During the picket, a municipal truck drove straight into the strikers, wounding three, who were taken to a clinic.

Nigerian resident doctors in Federal Capital Territory hold seven-day strike over pay and staff shortages

Doctors in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria began a seven-day strike on September 8, as the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) failed to address long-standing concerns. These include understaffing, inadequate welfare, unpaid salaries, unexplained deductions and long working hours, with a resulting impact on staff morale.

One patient appealed to the FCTA to address the doctors' demands, saying ordinary Nigerians suffer the most from their inaction. She came from home in Masaka, Nasarawa State for an appointment at the Asokoro General Hospital but was turned back and asked to come next week. A nurse noted that many patients were discharged due to the absence of doctors.

The doctors began a strike in January over the same issues. That was ended by the Association of Resident Doctors without achieving its objectives.

Nigerian oil and gas workers strike over right to join a union

Nigerian oil and gas workers walked out Tuesday, after Dangote Refinery banned their employees from joining the union of their choice.

The strike was called by the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas and was joined by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria, the Natural Oil & Gas Suppliers Association of Nigeria, the Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners, and the Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria.

The union leaders called the strike off the following day. All parties agreed, “That the process of unionisation shall commence immediately and be completed within two weeks... and that the employer will not set up any other union.”

School students at school in Nairobi, Kenya protest over corporal punishment

Students at St George's Girls' High School, Nairobi, Kenya staged a protest September 7 after a pupil was allegedly assaulted by a teacher. The students were outside observing the “blood moon” during the lunar eclipse.

Videos and photos shared online show students, some in pyjamas, staging a sit-in and later proceeding to the nearby Royal Media Services offices. They chanted slogans against the use of corporal punishment, including, “Wanatuchapanga [They cane us].”



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