

Workers Struggles: The Americas

Demonstrations in Ecuador as national strike against Noboa regime continues

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On Sunday, October 12, facing increasing repression, teachers and workers held demonstrations in cities across Ecuador, as part of the ongoing national strike against the elimination of fuel subsidies by the Noboa administration. Marches and rallies took place in the Andean cities of Quito, Ecuador's capital, Otavalo, and in the port city of Guayaquil.

A spokesperson for the National Educators Union declared: "The [national] strike is not just over diesel. It is over education, health, safety and decent jobs and wage equality." Other demands include the defense of Social Security and an end to mass layoffs.

The October 12 demonstrations took place on the 22nd day of the national strike, triggered by an end to fuel subsidies and initiated by indigenous organizations. Demonstrators also demand an end to government military repression.

In Quito the demonstrators were corralled by more than 5,000 troops.

On Sunday, October 7, a car caravan traveling through Southern Ecuador containing Ecuador's president Noboa provoked a group of 500 peaceful demonstrators on the highway into blocking the caravan and throwing stones. The government has denounced the demonstrators for "attempting to assassinate the president."

Argentine teachers stage protest strike

On Wednesday, October 8, thousands of educators in the industrial province of Buenos Aires carried out a protest strike over wage and benefit cuts mandated by the administration of fascist president Javier Milei.

The buying power of teachers' wages has been collapsing for some time. According to some estimates, a Buenos Aires school teacher now earns less than half what it takes to cover the cost of groceries for a typical family. Many teachers are forced to take second jobs and work until exhausted. Conditions are even worse in overcrowded schools in poor neighborhoods.

The attacks on teachers did not begin with Milei. They started with the Kirchner administration's attacks on teachers' benefits and the elimination of the National Fund for Teaching Incentives.

Mass protests in Cuba against Gaza genocide

Thousands of Cubans marched and rallied in solidarity with Palestine and against the Gaza Genocide on Thursday, October 9.

The marches took off from several squares in Havana and included students, young people, workers and the elderly. The marches met up at a rally of about 100,000 in the Anti-Imperialist Tribune of the city, across from the Office of US Interests.

The rally was addressed by Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canei.

In addition to demanding an end to the Gaza genocide and denouncing US complicity in that genocide, the demonstrators called for an end to the military occupation of the Caribbean Sea by the U.S. Navy and Air Force and a halt to military aggression against Venezuela.

Workers protest privatization of Rio de Janeiro Water in Brazil

Employees of the Rio de Janeiro State Water and Sewage Co. (CEDAE—Companhia de Águas e Esgotos do Rio de Janeiro) marched with 1000 supporters, including government workers, educators, students, and city residents, in Rio de Janeiro in repudiation of Governor Claudio Castro's proposal to privatize the only part of CEDAE that remains public: water production (The distribution sector has been already privatized).

The CEDAE workers charged that the privatization of water in 2021 has severely damaged the quality and cleanliness of drinking water in the city. At the same time water rates have gone up and working conditions for CEDAE workers have worsened.

CEDAE and other state workers are also demanding a 25 percent wage increase. Wages have been frozen in Rio de Janeiro State since the beginning of the Castro administration. Castro is an ally of fascist ex-president Jair Bolsonaro.

The same day a demonstration with over a thousand people marched from Largo do Machado to Guanabara Palace, the seat of the Rio de Janeiro state government, in Rio's South Zone. The demonstration was made up of state employees, professors from UERJ, CEDAE workers, and housing movements.

Chicago company to close plant as workers enter 5th month on strike

Mauser, a company that refurbishes steel drums used for the transport of chemicals, announced October 6 that they will shutter their Chicago plant

November 21 due to market dynamics that “have shifted, including reduced demand and heightened competition.” The decision comes as some 160 members of Teamsters Local 705 have entered their fifth month on strike over wages and benefits.

The Teamsters are taking no serious action to defend the jobs of workers except to request an injunction from the National Labor Relations Board, which is not even functioning under the Trump administration.

The workers, a majority of whom are Latino, are seeking contract language to protect against immigration raids. Workers also complain of exposure to chemicals in poorly ventilated working conditions.

Mauser packaging solutions came together in 2018 as a result of mergers. Today it has more than 170 facilities across the globe.

Contracts expiring for Sysco drivers and warehouse workers in San Francisco and Portland

Teamsters drivers and warehouse workers at facilities in Portland and San Francisco, operated by the giant food service Sysco, are preparing for strike action in support of demands for parity in wages and benefits with other similar operations that have Teamster agreements in the region.

Over 400 workers with Teamsters Local 853 at the Sysco facility in San Francisco voted unanimously October 6 to grant strike authorization as they move towards an October 31 contract expiration. “San Francisco is one of the most expensive places to live on earth, and we need a contract that keeps up with inflation,” said driver Andy Gonzalez in a Teamster release.

Meanwhile, another 270 members of Teamsters Local 162 in Portland are threatening to walk out as their contract has already expired as of October 11. The Portland workers’ contract lags behind those of other drivers and warehouse workers at Sysco, as well as that of workers at US Foods, a Sysco competitor.

Sysco, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Houston, Texas, is defined as a broadline food distributor, meaning it deals in large volumes of various products and caters to grocery stores, sports facilities and institutions such as universities. The company has 76,000 workers at 340 distribution centers in 10 countries. The company’s CEO, Kevin P. Hourican, garnered \$15.6 million in total compensation in 2024.

Cafeteria workers strike Sony Picture Entertainment in Culver City, California

Dozens of cafeteria workers at the Sony Picture Entertainment in Culver City, California, walked off the job October 7 as their demands for increased wages and benefits have gone unheeded. It is unclear if the strike by cooks, cashiers, dishwashers and other workers is of limited duration.

Earlier this year workers staged a walkout over “unlawful surveillance and interrogation” after UNITE HERE filed two unfair labor practices charges.

The workers operate under the contractor Wolfgang Puck Company, a subsidiary of the Fortune 500 Compass Group. Compass, a British multinational, employs 580,000 workers and is the largest contract food service company in Europe.

Windsor Titan Tool and Die workers unanimously reject massive concessions

Locked out auto parts workers in Windsor, Ontario, members of Unifor, voted unanimously last week to reject massive concessions demanded by Titan Tool and Die management. Prior to the July 31 lockout, management had already laid off 40 of its 65 workers. After the lockout was announced, Unifor officials meekly responded by pleading for a negotiated plant closure agreement.

Instead, company negotiators have presented a new contract proposal that seeks to obliterate virtually every significant clause in the previous agreement. The concession demands include a three-year wage freeze, a new permanent lower wage grid for new hires, complete elimination of cost-of-living and lump sum wage supplements, the massive slashing of the pension scheme that would cost workers \$13,500 over the life of the contract, mandatory overtime and elimination of retirement health benefits for many workers.

In late August, management removed the last of the raw materials and essential equipment out of the Windsor plant, transferring the materials to the company’s facility in Michigan. Titan Tool management had already begun to move some of its molds and product orders across the border shortly before its lockout began. Last April, after the union blocked a truck from carrying materials out of the premises, the company quickly received a court injunction allowing them to move material from the plant.

Citing the disruption to auto parts and metals markets arising from tariffs implemented by the Trump administration, a number of disputes have arisen over the past several months between auto parts/metals companies and workers over the removal of plant hardware. Contract strikes by 120 Unifor workers just north of Toronto at Toromont, a heavy equipment component refurbishing facility, and by 200 Unifor metal workers employed by Dajcor Aluminum in Chatham, Ontario also saw pickets alerted to suspected equipment and materials removals.



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