

# Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

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## **Tens of thousands of Portuguese workers march in Lisbon against anti-worker laws and continuing austerity**

Up to 100,000 people marched through the centre of Lisbon, Portugal on Saturday, protesting proposed coalition government legislation which attacks workers' democratic and social rights in the name of "competitiveness."

Members of the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers and other unions also demand an increase in their wages, which are the lowest in Europe. A general strike is planned for December 11.

## **Greek doctors in nationwide strike for improved pay and conditions**

Doctors and other health workers in public hospitals across Greece held a 48-hour strike November 6 to protest working conditions, staffing levels and low salaries.

The Federation of Unions of the Hospital Doctors of Greece, the Panhellenic Federation of Public Hospital Workers and other medical union members demonstrated outside the Ministry of Health in Athens to demand that health funding be increased after years of budget cuts.

## **After-school workers in Paris, France strike to demand permanent posts and training**

Hundreds of after-school activity leaders and play assistants at 620 schools in Paris, France began a two-week strike Monday. They demand the city council recruit thousands more staff in secure permanent positions rather than using temporary workers each year.

The Syndicat Unitaire des Personnels des Administrations Parisiennes members say more professional training is required and recruiting short term workers creates insecurity in the workforce, affects child safety and reduces the quality of care given to students. Only 3,500 of 8,500 positions are filled by permanent trained staff.

## **Turkish Swatch workers strike for more pay and better working conditions**

Workers employed by Swiss company Swatch Group in Turkey began a strike Monday in support of their pay demands.

The 150 Koop-?? union members are employed at stores and offices in Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya. They want a 30 percent pay rise, increased meal and travel allowances and improved working conditions. The employer offered a 25 percent rise, with inflation in Turkey currently at 33 percent.

Swatch Group is the largest watch company in the world, employing 31,000 people in 50 countries.

## **Academic staff at Dundee University, Scotland and Sheffield Hallam University, England walk out over job losses**

Academic staff at Dundee University, Scotland began a five-day stoppage Monday, after which they will take action including working to contract and refusing to cover for absent colleagues and voluntary duties.

The University and College Union (UCU) members walked out earlier in the year over threatened job losses and management's refusal to rule out compulsory redundancies. They recently renewed their strike mandate over job losses by a 72 percent majority vote.

A rally at the Queens Hotel in Dundee was set for Thursday, marking one year since staff were informed by email that because of a £30 million deficit, compulsory job losses would be imposed.

Giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament recently, Dundee's interim principal Professor Nigel Seaton announced further job losses on top of the 300 already agreed through voluntary severance.

In a separate dispute, UCU members at Sheffield Hallam University walked out Tuesday through Thursday this week. Tuesday's stoppage coincided with the graduation ceremony. They are protesting the university's cull of academic and support staff roles. Around 500 jobs were lost in 2024, with a further 170 gone since May this year. For the UCU, the main bone of contention is university management's refusal to rule out compulsory redundancies. They are happy to negotiate voluntary severances.

Further stoppages are planned for next week and the beginning of December. UCU members at the University of Sheffield also plan action over job losses. Next week, they begin a series of stoppage days until mid-December.

UCU members at Lancaster University in northwest England are

working to rule, refusing to cover for absent colleagues and not doing work outside their job description. Lancaster University, which has 1,300 academic staff and 1,700 professional services staff, is seeking to cut around 400 posts to save around £30 million. It refuses to rule out compulsory redundancies.

### **Leonardo aerospace workers in UK strike over pay offer**

Around 3,000 UK aerospace workers employed by Italian-based multinational Leonardo at sites in Yeovil, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Basildon and Luton were on strike Wednesday and Thursday.

The Unite union members rejected the latest pay offer of 3.6 percent. RPI inflation stands at 4.5 percent. A previous stoppage planned for November 5 was suspended after the company made its latest offer. When this was rejected, this week's action went ahead.

Additional stoppages at the Edinburgh and Basildon sites will take place November 14-18, 19-20, 21-23 and 24-25. There will be a further stoppage at Yeovil November 25-28.

Leonardo, the world's twelfth largest defence firm, made profits of over 1.5 billion euros in 2024. Its Yeovil site is the only end-to-end rotary wing manufacturing facility in the UK.

### **Further strikes by Iranian oil workers over pay and conditions**

Last week, around 15,000 oil workers in Iran's South Pars gas complex walked out, demanding improved pay and working conditions. The South Pars field accounts for 40 percent of the country's income and 70 percent of its energy production.

On Tuesday, around 3,000 oil workers protested at the headquarters of the Pars Gas Complex in Assaluyeh. Their demands include improved pay, permanent jobs, better working conditions and an end to the use of contractors, who as middlemen cream off their pay. They also demand a two-week on, two-week off rota for administrative and support staff.

Earlier in the month, contract oil workers rallied outside the presidential office in Tehran demanding the regime keep its promise of eliminating middlemen. A large proportion of Iranian gas and oil workers are employed by contractors rather than as direct employees.

The struggle of Iranian workers is driven by worsening living conditions and a collapse in the economy. The deterioration is exacerbated by the reimposition of UN sanctions, as the US and NATO seek to destabilise the area in preparation for trade and military war against China. Iran has seen nearly 4,000 protests and strikes across all sectors.

### **Nigerian resident doctors continue national strike over salary arrears and conditions**

Nigerian doctors are continuing the national strike begun on November 1 to demand payment of arrears. They have rejected

government claims that their grievances have been addressed. Many hospitals are currently running only a minimal service, with nurses working but no doctors.

The government claim to have released nearly N12 billion. The Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors members said the majority have yet to receive anything and they will continue their strike until they do.

The strike follows years of broken government promises, unpaid salary arrears and allowances, lack of promotions, and substandard working conditions.

### **Cabin crew continue pay dispute with South Africa's airline FlySafair despite lockdown**

Cabin crew attendants at South Africa's low-budget airline FlySafair are continuing their dispute over pay.

The SA Cabin Crew Association members rejected the company pay offer of 6-7 percent and an annual bonus of 7.5 percent. The company responded by locking out the workers from the beginning of November.

### **Security guards in South Africa at Cape Town building project strike over wage arrears**

South African security guards at a Cape Town building project walked out on Monday over unpaid wages.

The workers are employed by three subcontractors contracted by the City of Cape Town to build pavements at Illitha Park. They have either been paid late, or not at all since October.

One protester told *GroundUp*, "We told the [construction] workers we will allow them in, but we won't let them out. We have no money to buy food for our families... I'm hungry."

### **Special educational workers hold protest in Dakar, Senegal**

Special education workers in Senegal held a sit-down protest November 10 outside the General Directorate of Judicial and Social Protection in the capital city, Dakar.

The National Union of Special Education Workers of the Ministry of Justice members highlighted the injustices imposed upon them by the Senegalese government. Most work in the field and do not have cars. They demand more resources, training, and responsibility allowances.



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