

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 by French doctors over government budget measures

Thousands of French general practice doctors (GPs) began a 10-day strike Monday. Those taking part are employed as “medecins liberaux” (independent doctors). Doctors directly employed by the French state in public institutions are not involved in the action.

Organised in seven leading unions those on strike represent around 85 percent of France’s independent doctors. Medical staff at private emergency departments and maternity wards are also taking part in the stoppage.

They are taking the action to protest the French government’s 2026 budget measures which will restrict healthcare funding and regulate fees the doctors are able to charge. Other issues include limiting the initial issuance of sick notes to one month and the introduction of new digital management tools which they see as bureaucratic and which will add to workloads.

Theatre performers, musicians and technicians in Greece strike for improved pay and conditions

Theatres throughout Greece closed December 27, as actors, musicians, technicians and supporting staff held a 24-hour stoppage to draw attention to their poor wages and working conditions. Protest rallies and live performances showcasing demands took place in Athens under the banner, “The theatre is us!”

Members of the Hellenic Actors’ Association, Panhellenic Musicians’ Association and the Panhellenic Federation of Entertainment and Audiovisual Workers demand a new collective agreement across the theatre industry for increased wages and rehearsal pay, health insurance and better conditions as professional artists.

Greece has had several general strikes in 2025 over safety and privatisation sparked by the Tempi rail crash, and across the public sector against the New Democracy government’s law allowing a working day of up to 13 hours.

Spanish Amazon workers in O Porriño face police enforcement as they strike over working conditions

Picketing workers at the Amazon logistics centre in O Porriño, Vigo, Spain faced Civil Guard police when they tried to stop delivery vans leaving the warehouse as part of their one-day strike December 23.

The Galician Unions Confederacy members were protesting poor working conditions due to understaffing, gruelling work quotas, insecure temporary contracts and persistent health and safety violations.

Amazon exploits workers all over the world to extract its enormous profits. Jeff Bezos, Amazon’s largest individual shareholder, has an estimated wealth of between \$234 billion and \$254 billion.

Solar panel factory workers in Turkey on indefinite strike for cost-of-living pay increase

On December 30, 260 workers at Smart Solar, solar panel manufacturers in Gebze, Turkey marked their strike of 69 days with four mass demonstrations against the company’s offer of a 6 percent pay rise.

The United Metal-?? union members gathered outside the factory, at the firm’s headquarters, at another Smart Solar factory in Izmir and also at the Vespa Enerji factory in Kayseri, which has been used for strikebreaking. They demand at least a 50 percent rise, due to the high inflation and real wage losses in Turkey.

Firefighters in Belgium in protest strike over staff shortages amidst government austerity measures

Two hundred firefighters in Brussels, Belgium held a four-hour strike December 31 to demand increased staff recruitment and more officers allocated to guard duties. The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions members say there is a shortfall of 200 full-time equivalent firefighters, and the numbers of callouts are increasing.

According to *The Brussels Times*, the fire service spokesperson “emphasised the need to use resources efficiently for the benefit of taxpayers,” revealing that their decision is driven not by public safety but the spending cuts of Belgium’s right-wing coalition government.

Public employees in German federal states strike over pay and conditions

Thousands of German federal state employees went on strike December 18 and demonstrated outside the House of Representatives in Berlin. They

are demanding better working conditions and pay rises as part of the collective agreement currently under negotiation.

The Education and Science Union, United Services Union and Industrial Union of Construction, Agriculture and Environment members are also against cuts to services, especially in education where teachers demand smaller classes and more staff including social workers and psychological specialists.

Portuguese distribution workers strike for pay increases and better work/life balance

Distribution workers in Portugal held 24-hour strikes on December 24 and 31 at companies affiliated to the Portuguese Association of Distribution Companies.

The Union of Workers in the Service Sector members demand wage increases, decent working conditions, a proper work/life balance and professional development opportunities.

Staff at UK coal mining museum continue strike over Christmas holiday period

Around 40 staff working at the National Coal Mining Museum, near Wakefield, England continued their strike over Christmas. For some it was their second Christmas on strike, having taken part as young men in the 1984-85 miners' strike.

The Unison union members walked out August 20 after rejecting a derisory pay offer. The strike mandate has already been extended three times. It currently runs until January 28, but the workers are being balloted on a further extension, which could see the stoppage lasting into the summer. The result will be announced in January.

The stoppage has led to the suspension of underground tours. The popular visit to see Santa Claus underground was cancelled this year.

Unison noted, "The most recent pay offer from the museum included a £1 an hour rise for 'craftspeople' (which the museum defines as fitters and electricians) and 5 percent for other staff. For many of the workers, this would work out lower than the 80p an hour increase previously suggested."

Over 3,000 people have signed a petition calling for the museum's chief executive and board to stand down.

Bus workers in Cambridge, England to continue strike over cuts to overtime rates

Around 200 bus drivers and engineers working for Stagecoach East based in Cambridge held a one-day stoppage Monday.

The Unite union members had previously walked out December 17, 20, 22, 24 and 27. They are protesting a pay deal that would mean a 12 percent cut in the rate of weekday overtime and 20 percent at weekends and bank holidays. Further one-day stoppages are planned for Saturday and January 19 and 24.

Stagecoach made an operating profit of nearly £98 million in the last financial year.

The Unite union is overseeing the imposition of substandard deals on a

company-by-company basis, in opposition to a unified national struggle of all bus drivers and transport workers. Its recent sellouts over pay and conditions include disputes at Metrolink in Manchester, and Stagecoach, Metroline and First Bus in Greater Manchester.

Traffic enforcement staff in London Borough of Bromley walk out over pay

Traffic wardens and parking enforcement staff employed by outsource company, APCOA in the UK capital began a four-day stoppage Tuesday.

The GMB members are employed by the company to enforce traffic and parking regulations on behalf of the London Borough of Bromley. They previously held six days of strikes in their fight for a pay increase. They are currently paid £13 an hour, which is below the voluntary London Living Wage (LLW) figure of £14.80. LLW is calculated on the cost of essentials for living.

The workers want £17 an hour. The government mediation service Acas brokered talks between APCOA and GMB in November last year but so far APCOA has not made any new offer.

Storage heating manufacturing staff in Portadown, Northern Ireland walk out over pay

Around 30 staff employed by Glen Dimplex in Portadown in Northern Ireland walked out just after midnight on Monday for two days. They work in maintenance, supervision, administration and as engineers. Glen Dimplex manufactures electric storage heaters.

The Unite union members took the action after rejecting an inadequate pay offer. Their pay has been eroded by several years of imposed below-inflation pay rises. This week's stoppage follows a one-day walkout in December.

Oil terminal facility workers at Scotland's Sullom Voe strike over pay

Around 30 workers employed by facility management company Sodexo at the Sullom Voe oil terminal in northern Scotland held a 24-hour stoppage Wednesday.

The Unite union members, who work in various roles including as cleaners, mechanics and electricians, have taken previous action in a dispute over pay. They rejected an unacceptable two-year pay offer. Further strikes are planned for January 12, 14, 21 and 28.

In a separate dispute, around 60 workers employed by services company Altrad at Sullom Voe are set to walk out on January 12 and 26. The Unite union members, who work in roles including as painters and scaffolders, walked out December 1 and 15 in a dispute over a pay offer due to take effect in January 2025. Instead of offering a full consolidated (permanent) pay rise, the company offered two one-off payments.

Nigerian health workers' strike continues over pay and conditions

Nigerian health workers are continuing their stoppage over the government's failure to implement a new salary structure, as well as welfare and other issues. The strike is having a major impact on health services.

The Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) members walked out on November 15. The unions narrowed their demands down to implementation of the Consolidated Health Salary Structure (CONHESS), the official pay scale for health professionals other than doctors. Workers also want retention allowances and staff transport, as is provided for doctors and nurses.

JOHESU members cover 85 percent of the sector other than doctors and nurses, including dieticians, physiotherapists, optometrists, radiographer, medical laboratory scientists, medical social workers, clinical psychologists, medical social workers and dental therapists.

In Lagos state, JOHESU members are continuing their action, having joined the national strike December 2 over pay. Additionally, they are demanding regulation of pharmacies to bring them up to the same national standard as in other states.

Judicial staff out on strike in Ondo State, Nigeria

Judicial staff in Ondo State, Nigeria began strike action on January 5 over outstanding grievances on judicial autonomy and welfare.

Court premises across the state were kept shut on Monday morning, their gates locked. The striking workers complain of the deteriorating conditions in which they work, including how rainfall frequently causes court proceedings to be suspended.

The strike was announced by the Coalition of Magistrates, Presidents of Grade "A" Customary Court and Legal Research Officers (Ondo State Judiciary), which issued a statement on January 2.

Tertiary education staff strike in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Both academic and non-academic staff at tertiary institutions in Nasarawa State, Nigeria began an indefinite strike December 29 over the state government's failure to act on the new national minimum wage and the resulting adjustments in salaries.

Speaking to the media in Lafia after a meeting of union leaders, Samson Gbande (chairman of the Joint Unions of Nasarawa State Tertiary Institutions) said the strike would cover Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic, Lafia, the College of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Lafia, and the College of Education, Akwanga.

Gbande said the unions had engaged the state government several times without tangible results. The authorities are pressurising the union leaders to end the strike, saying they needed to have a "rethink."



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