

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

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The *World Socialist Web Site* invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.

Argentina

## Airport workers strike

Airport workers, members of the State Workers Union (*Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado, ATE*), announced a strike at 27 Argentine Airports in Argentina. At issue are unpaid wages by the government agency, National Civil Aviation Administration (ANAC).

A union spokesperson also denounced the Milei administration's cancellation of agreed to wage increases for airport workers as well as its continuing attacks on the entire working class, including wage cuts and layoffs.

A recent study by the Argentine Center for Political Economy indicates that real wages by government workers, including airport employees, fell 34.1 percent between November 2023 and November 2025.

The strike will begin on February 2 involving all airport employees, including air traffic control workers, airport fire fighters, sanitation workers, inspectors, and white-collar employees. All flights will be affected, except those of humanitarian nature or involving emergencies.

Peru

## “March for Sacrifice” reaches Lima

On Wednesday, January 27, a “March for Sacrifice” led by the families of the more than 50 protesters murdered and countless wounded victims of government “massacre of Peru” in 2022 and 2023, reached Lima, Peru’s capital. Several columns converged in Lima from the city of Juliaca in the Department of Puno, 140 kilometers

southeast of Lima, after traveling for three days. In addition to Juliaca, the marchers were joined by citizens of other cities in Southwest Peru.

Accompanying the demonstrators were oil and transportation workers and young workers and students who are part of the ‘Generation Z’ movement. In addition to the opening of the long-postponed investigation into the repression of 2022-2023, the demonstrators demanded the resignation of current right-wing President Jose Enrique Perez Jeri, a thorough investigation of the killings and an end to government and police impunity.

The date chosen for the entry into Lima, January 27, commemorates the third anniversary of the death of the last victim of the 2022-23 massacre, Victor Santisteban, who has struck in the skull by a projectile during a demonstration in Lima on January 28, 2023.

On their way to Lima, the demonstrators were watched, harassed and blocked by government security forces demanding to see their identification documents.

Mexico

## First Brands declares bankruptcy, workers occupy plants

US auto parts manufacturer First Brands recent bankruptcy declaration and its closure of its “maquiladora” plants in northern Mexico is leaving thousands of low wage workers unemployed along Mexico’s northern border.

Faced with the plant closures, workers have organized factory occupations independently of their corporatist trade unions, assuring that “no machines will leave the buildings!”

Occupations are taking place in plants in Mexicali, Baja California, Matamoros, Tamaulipas and Ciudad Juarez. Many of the thousands of unemployed workers have yet

to be paid. First Brands is the owner of 25 auto parts brands, including Autolite, Tridonex, Trico and Hopkin.

As reported last October in the *World Socialist Web Site*:

The fact that First Brands owner Patrick James went from a secretive small-scale businessman, with a history of defaults and questionable financial practices, to the owner of a business, with connections to some of the biggest names in the financial world, is bound up with the rise of private credit over the past decade.

Worker occupations are taking place in Matamoros and Ciudad Juarez. At a plant in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, Texas, a worker said, “this is our guarantee, all the material and machinery in the plant, because we are all fighting for our rights.”

More than 3000 workers are being expected by their unions and government representatives to pay for the bankruptcy with their jobs and incomes, at a huge social cost. Government officials in both cities made excuses for First Brands, and the trade unions, called for workers to “stay calm.”

United States

### **Healthcare workers strike two Orange County California hospitals over wages and unsafe staffing levels**

Over 300 healthcare workers at two Kindred hospitals in California’s Orange County went on a three-day unfair labor practices strike January 27 to demand increased wages and safe staffing levels. Members of the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW), comprising nurses, therapists and housekeepers, face a starting pay of \$21 an hour, ranking them among the lowest paid in Orange County.

The NUHW is asking for a 6.5 percent wage increase while Kindred management has offered a mere 2.5 percent wage hike, which is under the official 2.7 percent inflation rate. In a union survey, 64 percent of workers report they face understaffing and 70 percent complain they cannot provide safe and timely care due to heavy

workloads.

During the course of the last two years one out of four workers have left the two hospitals due to low wages and chronic understaffing. The facilities were cited between 2022 and 2025 by the California Department of Public Health for more than 80 substantiated investigations and fines of \$22,000. The two hospitals, located in Brea and Westminster, are part of a 79-facility hospital system owned by ScionHealth, a private equity fund.

Canada

### **Montreal municipal workers set for one-day strike**

Six thousand six hundred blue collar workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), are set to strike on Wednesday, February 4 for 24 hours in pursuit of a new collective agreement. The workers have been without a contract since the previous deal expired 13 months ago. Should the strike proceed, it will be the first labour stoppage among this section of workers since 2009.

Although workers last September voted for job action including an indefinite strike, union officials have opted for a one-day stoppage in order to “pressure” city officials. The workers are demanding a significant wage increase. City officials are insisting that workers must bear the brunt of ongoing “financial challenges” in the municipal budget.

As part of legal essential services requirements under the provincial labour code, the union and city management must agree on a list of essential workers who must report for work during the labour stoppage.



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