

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

Hundreds injured by riot police in protest against anti-worker legislation in Buenos Aires; Three contract workers suffer burns at ExxonMobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas

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

## **Hundreds injured by riot police in protest against anti-worker legislation in Buenos Aires**

A peaceful protest against anti-worker legislation backed by the fascistic Milei administration was attacked by police in Buenos Aires February 11. Some 560 demonstrators had to be assisted by volunteer medical squads participating in the event. Three Hundred were severely wounded and 70 were arrested.

Masses of workers had marched and rallied in downtown Buenos Aires protesting new legislation proposed by the Milei administration and approved by the Senate, that attacks jobs, wages, working conditions and the right to strike.

As in previous demonstrations, police used tear gas projectiles fired at close range. Federal gendarmes also used water cannons and pepper spray. As has now become the norm, members of the press were singled out for attack and detention.

The new law allegedly designed to “modernize” working conditions, gives corporations a free hand in changing wages, hours, working conditions and vacation times. It also gives employers the right to fire workers at will.

Demonstrations against the new legislation also took place throughout the week across the country, including in the industrial city of Cordoba, where protesting education workers were also assaulted by police.

## **Mexican students, educators and workers show solidarity with Cuba**

On February 14 students, educators and workers lined up in

Mexico City’s central Zocalo Square responding to a drive for food and medicines for Cuba, as part of a protest against the Trump administration-imposed oil blockade against that island-nation. The drive was organized by the “Va por Cuba” collective and the “José Martí” Association of Cuban Residents in Mexico.

Throughout the day, youth, retirees, blue- and white-collar workers, and educators arrived with supplies. The collection will continue through February 22 and will be shipped to Cuba.

## **Mexican Cultural Center workers fight for wages, working conditions and proper jobs**

Contingent workers employed by the “Cineteca Nacional”, a cultural institution that promotes and preserves Mexican cinema rallied in protest on February 14 in Mexico City demanding an end to the firm’s abusive and exploitative practices. Out of the 340 workers employed by Cineteca, 270 are contingent part time workers, with no formal contracts. Workers that have complained in the past have been victimized by management, emphasizing their mistreatment under the administration of Vicente Cázares and how government authorities have ignored their complaints.

The workers, mostly young, carried red, white and black cardboard signs defending culture and denouncing contingent work. One read: “The love for movies is shown by supporting workers.”

The workers also demand wage increases and better working conditions. “There are not enough workers to carry out all the tasks required of us,” declared one of the demonstrators; “our part-time status is affecting our health; we are overworked under conditions of lack of health insurance and economic insecurity —our January wages are still owed to us.”

The demonstrators have not been paid their January wages

and plan to continue their protests until their demands are met.

### **Nurses launch three-day strike at West Anaheim Medical Center**

Registered nurses at West Anaheim Medical Center plan to hold a three-day strike beginning February 16 reported California Nurses Association/National Nurses United. There are about 360 nurses at the facility and contract talks have dragged on an entire year. The nurses voted to authorize strike action January 14.

According to CNA/NNU statement the nurses are striking “to protest the administration’s refusal to address RNs’ deep concerns about patient care, retention and recruitment of nurses, and safe staffing.”

The nurses join thousands of other medical workers on strike in California and New York City. The strike is one of multiple labor actions affecting Southland hospitals. Thousands of nurses at Kaiser Permanente facilities across California continue their strike, while more than 3,000 Kaiser pharmacy and lab employees concluded a three-day strike last week.

Registered nurses and other licensed medical professionals at Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center are set to start a five-day strike.

### **Three contract workers suffer burns at ExxonMobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas**

Three contract workers received burns while working on transport operations at the ExxonMobil oil refining complex in Beaumont, Texas according to media reports February 13. The injuries were reportedly caused by hot steam or condensate during operations.

Two of the three workers were taken to a burn treatment center. No fire was reported. No other information has been released by management or state safety officials. ExxonMobil claimed a “comprehensive investigation is underway.”

The ExxonMobil Beaumont facility is a complex that includes a refinery, chemical plant, polyethylene units, and lubricant operations. The facility has a long history of safety failures, abetted by the collaboration of the United Steelworkers bureaucracy with management and state regulators.

### **Ontario Special Care Center workers mark 12 weeks on the picket line**

More than 240 special care workers at Central West Specialized Developmental Services (CWSDS) have been on strike since November 19, 2025. CWSDS is a provincially funded organization. The workers, members of Ontario Public Service Union (OPSEU) Local 249 provide critical care and support to adults with developmental disabilities, many of whom have complex care needs.

Workers are demanding a “fair wage” to compensate for years of miserable increases even as the cost-of-living skyrocketed. They also seek redress of difficult working conditions spurred by low retention rates and understaffing. Management has offered a pathetic wage increase of 8.25 percent over 6 years, which averages out to only 1.38 percent per year. Even provincially mandated individual disability rate increases are higher than what management is offering the care workers. Meanwhile, CWSDS CEO Patricia Kyle received a recent 10 percent spike in her own 6 figure compensation.

The union proposes a pay hike of 12.25 percent over 6 years which averages a meager 2.04 percent wage increase per year. Union leadership has since then signaled a willingness for further “flexibility” in negotiating an end to the dispute. As management continues to stonewall, union officials have been reduced to a meek appeal to the entrenched employer to simply “take responsibility, address safety concerns, and return to the table ready to negotiate a fair deal.”

The employer had been preparing for a significant showdown since the summer. Failing to reach a tentative contract in negotiations, it requested a 'No Board' report required by the labour board this past September which started a countdown that permitted a legal lockout that could begin as early as October 9. Management immediately began relocating patients, hiring contract workers that were supposed to be trained by the threatened union workers and forcing a “last offer” contract vote. Workers, overwhelmingly rejecting the miserable contract offer by 97 percent, then voted to strike and began picketing on November 19.

Management’s moves to relocate patients from small group homes in outlying regional areas to its central facility in Oakville, Ontario has caused an uproar amongst parents and social activists. For striking workers, who are well-versed in the developmental needs of the people in their care, the relocations have only served to precariously re-institutionalize people who were thriving in group homes. Since the relocations began, two people have died in the Oakville facility and another relocated person was severely injured in a brutal attack. Picketing continues at the Oakville center.



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