

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.

Thousands of auxiliary metalworkers in Asturias, Spain strike over pay and hours

Around 3,500 auxiliary workers in the metal and engineering industries of the Asturias autonomous community in Spain began a 72-hour strike Tuesday, to be repeated over the next two weeks.

The COOO, FICA and UGT union members demand that the employers, including multinational giant ArcelorMittal, pay an appropriate cost-of-living increase and regulate levels of overtime work.

Hospital and IT workers in Austria strike for improved pay and hours

About 1,700 non-medical employees at eight state-subsidised religious hospitals in Upper Austria held a 24-hour strike March 3. More than 800 demonstrated in the state capital of Linz.

The stoppage by the Vida union followed a previous one on January 22 and caused 55 operations to be cancelled. The workers demand a 35-hour working week.

In a separate dispute, IT workers across Austria began a 48-hour strike the same day, after six unsuccessful rounds of pay negotiations. The Union of Private Sector Employees, Printing, Journalism, and Paper, representing 90,000 IT workers, was demanding a 3.5 percent increase in minimum and actual wages. The employers had offered 2.5 percent.

On March 10, the union announced that it had accepted an offer raising the minimum wage between 2.7 and 3.1 percent, with actual wages rising only 2.75 percent.

Workers at Bulgarian state-run postal service in warning protests over low wages and poor conditions

On Monday, workers at the government-owned and subsidised Bulgarian Posts stopped work, holding warning protests outside city post offices nationwide, including in Sofia and Burgas.

The Trade Union Federation of Communications members demand a 5 percent salary increase, backdated to January 1. They say low wages and harsh outdoor working conditions are leading to staff shortages, with

workers leaving but not being replaced.

Hundreds of office workers at BASF chemicals in Berlin, Germany protest thousands of job losses

About 300 office workers at the Berlin service centre of German multinational chemical giant BASF demonstrated February 27 outside the offices, which employ 3,000. The HR, finance, IT and other administrative workers protested the potential loss of thousands of jobs when the company moves its business services to India.

The IG Bergbau, Chemie, Energie union members at the BASF Berlin service centre are particularly angry because in 2005 negotiations they were encouraged to accept lower wages and longer working hours as a sweetener to attract BASF to the capital.

BASF is the largest chemical producer in the world. After merging in the 1920s with companies like Agfa, Bayer and Hoechst, it became the IG Farben conglomerate. IG Farben used forced labour from Nazi concentration camps and developed the poisonous gas used in the industrial murder of the Holocaust.

Licensed taxi drivers in Cyprus strike for more help from government

On Tuesday, taxi drivers in Cyprus began an indefinite strike to demand that the country's taxi system be fixed and for greater protection as a profession. They drove in convoys through the capital, Nicosia, and delivered petitions to parliament, ministries of transport and justice, police, the road transport department and the taxi licensing authority.

The Cyprus Urban Taxi Union members complain of competition from unlicensed taxis and e-hailing platforms. They demand stricter controls, clearer rules, enforcement of existing laws and access to priority bus lanes at Larnaca and Paphos airports. They say their compliance with laws around vehicle licensing and insurance is putting them at a disadvantage.

Professional taxi drivers in Athens, Greece have been holding a series of ongoing strikes about the same issues, and have also complained about the mandatory requirement that all newly registered taxis be electric-powered.

All-out strike by dockers at Immingham, UK over unfair dismissals

Around 50 workers employed by Briggs Marine at Immingham docks in

England began an all-out stoppage on Monday. The company operates one of the UK's largest petroleum operating terminals, responsible for imports and exports of fuels across the globe.

The GMB members are protesting the unfair dismissal of colleagues. Grimsby Live reported that, "Workers on the ground at Briggs Marine claim the company is bringing in a replacement team from outside the area to continue operations during the strike."

Further strikes by staff at London hospital over outsourcing and bullying claims

Pathology and clinical engineering staff working for the Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust in London began a five-day stoppage Monday.

Unite members working in pathology are opposing plans to impose a new shift system they say will reduce their earnings. They are also protesting the failure of the trust to address claims of bullying, discrimination and harassment, even though these claims were upheld by an employment tribunal.

Unite members working as clinical engineers are opposed to the trust's plans to outsource their role to Siemens Healthineers. The engineers responsible for repairing and maintaining medical equipment say the transfer would erode their terms and conditions.

The action is expected to disrupt blood tests and other laboratory services, while the stoppage of clinical engineers will impact the maintenance of medical machinery.

Both sets of workers held a three-day stoppage in February over the same issues. Subsequent talks between Unite and the trust management have failed to achieve resolution.

The strikers planned to lobby outside the constituency office of Labour government Health Secretary Wes Streeting on Wednesday, asking him to intervene in the dispute.

Support staff at UK universities hold further stoppage over pay

Support staff working for Bristol University, King's College London, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Royal Northern College of Music walked out Tuesday and Wednesday. Picket lines were mounted.

The Unison union members rejected a below-inflation national pay offer of 1.4 percent for 2025/26 made by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association. They voted by an 89 percent majority to strike, having previously taken three days of action in February on this issue.

Unison union ends long-running strike of phlebotomists at hospital trust in Gloucestershire, England on promise of an independent review

The Unison union has sold out the long-running dispute of phlebotomists at Gloucestershire Hospitals Trust, ending the strike on the promise of an independent review.

Around 35 phlebotomists (blood takers) employed by the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust at the Gloucester Royal and Cheltenham General hospitals in England will return to work on

March 16. Next week would have marked a year on strike by the Unison union members who, because of their skill set, demanded to be paid at the higher band 3 rate rather than the current band 2 rate.

Phlebotomists working for other NHS trusts are paid the higher rate.

Announcing the return to work, Unison said, "Following talks with Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, staff have now accepted a deal that will see their pay and roles reviewed by an independent job evaluation panel... As part of the agreement, the trust has committed to recognise the specialist nature of the phlebotomy role and to consult staff on the future of the service."

Local government workers and civil servants begin nationwide stoppage in Ghana over pay

Local government workers and civil servants in Ghana began a nationwide strike on March 9, demanding an end to years of unfulfilled commitments by the government to improve the salary framework.

Yushawu Abdul-Latif, Northern Regional Secretary of the Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana, said discussions between the union and the government on the introduction of a special salary framework began in 2019 but were never resolved. Despite all the union's reminders to the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment over the years, he said there had been no progress.

Kenyan health workers' union ends stoppage in Nairobi based on flimsy promises

Health workers in Nairobi, Kenya have been told to return to work by the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) following a behind-the-scenes deal with Governor Abdulswamad Nassir. County officials and union leaders united in their call for workers to end the strike within 24 hours.

The strike began in early 2026 over unfulfilled agreements, unpaid dues and poor working conditions, causing public health services to grind to a halt.

KMPDU Secretary-General Davji Atellah claimed, "All doctors we presented to the county are to be promoted by April 1, 2026, and July 1." This follows years of a freeze on promotions.

County Executive Committee Member for Health Suzanne Silantoi, however, made clear that promotions would only take place if costs were kept within government-imposed spending limits.

On unpaid remittances that the union described as "financial sabotage," Atellah claimed vaguely, "When we reviewed [the outstanding payments], we found the pending time was two months. The county agreed they will pay one month in June and another in the next financial year."

Doctors resumed work after a court order was issued against them, but nurses, clinical officers, laboratory officers, nutritionists and pharmaceutical technologists had continued their strike.

Healthcare workers in Mahikeng, South Africa demonstrate to demand funding for crumbling health system

Hundreds of healthcare workers in Mahikeng, the capital of South Africa's North West province, demonstrated March 5 to demand funding to address the crumbling health system. The action is part of a Public Service Delivery Campaign.

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union members complain of chronic staff shortages, no facilities and poor pay. Clinics lack the basics—medicines, hot water and clean linen. Staff are overworked and underpaid, leading many to leave for work abroad, creating staff vacancies. Electricity outages are frequent. Patients' lives are put at risk after years of underfunding.

Due to extreme poverty, South Africa has a heavy burden of illness, such as TB and HIV. Around 80 percent of the population rely on the public healthcare system. The remaining affluent 20 percent enjoy high standards of healthcare in the well-resourced private sector.



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