

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.

General strike against welfare cuts continues in Northern Cyprus with riot police again deployed against protestors

The general strike by workers in Turkish governed Northern Cyprus continued this week, with thousands of demonstrators again facing riot police at the legislature building in Nicosia on Tuesday.

Hundreds of workers eventually entered the building to demand the coalition government continue cost-of-living payments to public employees and retirees. The inflation rate currently stands at over 30 percent.

Early years teachers in Madrid, Spain strike for professional recognition and improved working conditions

Hundreds of early years teachers for children aged 0-3 in the community of Madrid, Spain went on indefinite strike Tuesday. They demonstrated outside the Ministry of Education with the slogan, “We don’t just look after children, we educate them.”

The CCOO and UGT union members’ demands include pay and hours parity with fellow 3-6 years workers, a reduction in the number of children per person in the city’s nursery schools and full recognition as teaching staff.

Spanish airport workers strike indefinitely in protest over pay shortfall

Ground staff including baggage handlers for the Groundforce company at 12 Spanish airports began indefinite intermittent stoppages March 30, to protest non-payment of agreed salary increases. The strike in three different time slots on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, organised by the CCOO, UGT and USO unions, caused flight delays throughout the Easter holiday period.

UK seafarers employed by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary walk out over pay

Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) seafarers held a 24-hour stoppage Tuesday. The RFA is a UK Ministry of Defence civilian-manned fleet which provides worldwide logistic support to the Royal Navy fleet.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) members voted by a 90 percent majority to walk out. They were originally set to hold a 48-hour stoppage in early March, but this was suspended for negotiations. They are protesting RFA management’s refusal to make a decent pay offer and its refusal to show it is complying with minimum wage legislation.

Announcing the proposed early March walkout, the RMT noted, “Seafarers can routinely work up to 12 hours a day but there remains no clear or transparent formula setting out how pay is calculated against those hours.”

A further stoppage is planned for April 16.

A ballot of RFA officers belonging to the Nautilus International union voted by nearly 90 percent to walk out over the same issue, but as yet no dates for action have been announced.

Walkout by Encirc glass container manufacturer workers in Cheshire, UK over redundancies

Around 100 glass container manufacturing workers employed by glass manufacturer and logistics firm Encirc at Elton in Cheshire, England walked out from last Friday until Tuesday this week. Encirc makes glass drink containers for drinks firms such as Baileys, Budweiser, Coors and Jameson.

The Unite union members are striking over the loss of around 30 jobs through redundancy. They previously took action March 28-30 over the threatened job losses, which have now taken place. They say the reduced workforce means increased workloads, posing health and safety issues and leaving them completely fatigued at the end of a shift.

There will be stoppages of the night shift April 16-28 and May 9-15.

Encirc states the redundancies are necessary because of increased costs and falling demand. According to Unite, Encirc’s parent company Vidrala made profits of £192 million last year.

Health staff at hospital trust in Greater Manchester, England hold 24-hour walkout over use of agency staff for overtime

Health staff working as nurses, clinical support workers and housekeepers in critical care units for the Northern Care Alliance Foundation Trust held a 24-hour stoppage Tuesday. The trust runs Fairfield Hospital in Bury, the Royal Oldham Hospital and Salford Royal Hospital.

The Unison union members are protesting the trust's use of the NHS Professionals agency to cover overtime. The staff doing overtime are paid at a lower rate than they would receive as directly employed National Health Service (NHS) staff. Additionally, they receive no pension contributions.

They held a 24-hour stoppage in March over the same issue.

Support staff at three Scottish universities set to walk out over pay

Around 1,000 support staff at Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow and Strathclyde universities are set to begin a 24-hour stoppage Friday. They work in estates, as security staff, cleaners, technicians, in libraries and as administrators.

The Unite union members are protesting an imposed 1.4 percent pay rise for 2025/26, with RPI inflation at 3.6 percent and set to rise over the attack on Iran. They are demanding a rise of RPI plus 3 percent or £3,000, whichever is the greater.

According to Unite, pay for university support staff fell by around 30 percent in real terms over the last 15 years.

Resident doctors in Nigeria begin indefinite strike over pay arrears and broken promises

Resident doctors in Nigeria announced the start of a nationwide indefinite strike from April 7, in a further escalation of the protracted conflict between health workers and the federal government.

The action, called by the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors, follows the government's decision to suspend implementation of the Professional Allowance Table, a key component of agreements reached after previous industrial action.

Among the central demands are the immediate reinstatement of the allowance structure, payment of outstanding salary and promotion arrears, and the release of funds for medical residency training. These issues have accumulated over several years, with repeated disputes underscoring the systematic erosion of healthcare funding and the intensification of exploitation within Nigeria's public health system.

Agreements are routinely signed and then disregarded by the government. Large numbers of medical professionals have voted with their feet, seeking opportunities abroad.

Union calls off Nigerian oil workers' stoppage within 24 hours

Oil workers at Seplat Energy, Nigeria's largest independent oil and gas producer launched strike action on April 3 after negotiations over a new collective bargaining agreement broke down. The action halted key operations across onshore and offshore facilities, but the union called it off after 24 hours.

Organised by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), the strike reflected mounting discontent over pay, conditions and broader welfare issues. Workers suspended production and export activities while maintaining only minimal safety functions. The walkout threatened significant disruption to national output at a time when the Nigerian state is under pressure to boost oil production

amid rising global prices.

PENGASSAN announced suspension of the strike following the intervention of management and the resumption of talks involving the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited. PENGASSAN instructed workers to return to their posts after Seplat issued written commitments addressing pay increases. Negotiations were set to continue for a revised agreement by mid-April.

The rapid reversal underscores both the strategic importance of the sector and the role of the union in ensuring operations were swiftly restarted across the company's sites.

Public transport workers in Guinea-Bissau strike over rising fuel costs

Transport workers in at least three regions of Guinea-Bissau launched strike action on April 7. This was in response to a government announcement of sharp fuel price increases combined with a ban on fare increases, meaning a sudden cut in their income.

The walkout by drivers of taxis, minibuses and other forms of public transport has disrupted commuters getting to their jobs, with workers denouncing the government-imposed price hike as intolerable under conditions of widespread poverty. The action emerges amid a broader surge in global energy prices, which has disproportionately impacted Africa, with many countries reliant on imported petroleum products.

The developing struggle in Guinea-Bissau follows a national transport strike in neighbouring Senegal and a broader wave of social unrest across the continent, as workers confront inflation and austerity.

National Union of Mineworkers ends pay strike at Afrimat's cement plant in South Africa

The National Union of Mineworkers ended a pay strike by workers at mining and materials group Afrimat in South Africa, with workers returning to work March 25.

The 130 workers at Afrimat's Lichtenburg cement operations were demanding a 7 percent pay increase rather than the company's 5 percent offer. They walked out on March 18. Afrimat said the union pushed through their offer, while the union said they won concessions regarding medical insurance.



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