

# Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

22 May 2026

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

## **Thousands of Spanish doctors continue monthly strikes and demonstrations for statutory improvements in pay and conditions**

On Monday, thousands of doctors across Spain began a fourth monthly week of strike action, part of a series of indefinite intermittent strikes against the government's proposed reform of the national health service framework statute.

Many hundreds also demonstrated in cities and towns across the country. They carried banners such as, "It's not a vocation, it's exploitation" to show their anger at increased workloads, long hours and years of deteriorating conditions.

The doctors, members of six major medical unions, demand a separate statute governing their pay and conditions, to include limits on working hours, higher pay, improved professional classification and dedicated negotiations with local government authorities. They also call for early retirement provisions, increased on-call pay and compensation for lost bonuses.

## **Teachers in several regions of Spain stop work over low pay and poor working conditions**

Thousands of teachers across several regions of Spain including Valencia, Aragon and Catalonia have been on strike at various periods since May 11 in opposition to low pay, excessive workload and deteriorating conditions in public education.

The most significant action developed in the Valencian Community, where around 78,000 teachers were called into an indefinite strike affecting preschool, primary, secondary and vocational schools. Teachers in Catalonia also began a new wave of rolling strikes and protests to extend through May and June. This follows mass walkouts earlier in the year.

The members of five different teaching unions demand substantial salary increases, smaller class sizes, reduced bureaucracy and improved staffing and resources. Teachers have warned strikes could carry on indefinitely, stating that conditions in public education have become intolerable after years of austerity and underfunding.

## **Thousands of teachers at French-speaking Belgian schools in 10-day**

## **strike against austerity cuts**

On Monday, thousands of teachers at French-speaking schools in Brussels and Wallonia, Belgium, began a strike until May 27, when the government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation will vote on implementation of budget deficit reduction measures.

The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions of Belgium-Education members denounce the proposed austerity plans, which include a 10 percent increase in teaching hours for upper secondary school teachers, a stricter sick leave policy and the raising of tuition fees for higher education students.

## **Workers at Procter and Gamble in Turkey strike for cost-of-living pay increase**

Eighty-nine workers who produce powder and liquid detergents for US-based multinational consumer goods manufacturer, Procter and Gamble (P&G), in Gebze, Turkey, went on strike May 12 against a 5 percent pay offer.

The Lastik-?? union members have been in negotiations with P&G's representative, K?PLAS, the Turkish Chemical, Petroleum, Rubber and Plastics Industry Employers' Association, for nearly six months. The workers demand a 15 percent pay increase but have been offered 5 percent for the first six months, followed by 40 percent of the rate of inflation for each six-monthly period over the next 18 months.

According to the April estimate by the Turkish Statistical Institute, annual inflation in Turkey is running at 32.37 percent. P&G's gross profit for the year to March 31, 2026, was \$43.644 billion.

## **Cleaners in Norway strike for salary and sick pay increases**

Last week, 650 cleaners across dozens of companies in Norway went on strike for better pay and conditions. The Norwegian Union of General Workers members demand pay increases that match the cost of living and are comparable with national collectively bargained rises. The cleaners also want sick pay to be awarded immediately rather than after 16 days, during which time they are forced to claim welfare benefits.

## **Learning assistants in West Dunbartonshire, Scotland walk out over grading row**

Learning assistants employed at 28 primary schools run by West Dunbartonshire local authority held a one-day stoppage Wednesday.

In April, the Unison union members voted by a near 98 percent majority to strike. They argue that the nature of their duties means they should be regraded to a higher pay rate.

Announcing the strike, Unison noted that “staff provide personal care to children with disabilities, behavioural challenges and complex medical needs, but their expertise is not reflected in their pay... the mostly women workforce feels undervalued.”

### **Further stoppages by child social work management staff in Bath, UK over pay cuts and restructuring**

Child social work managers and deputy managers employed by Bath and North East Somerset Council in England began a three-day stoppage Wednesday.

The Unison union members are taking the action following a regrading pay scheme, which was undertaken without any prior negotiations. It led to some management staff being on pay levels below the staff they manage.

The management staff voted 100 percent for the action at the beginning of the year, on a 94 percent turnout. They held a one-day stoppage on March 19, with protests outside council meetings in the Bath Guildhall.

They are also protesting further restructuring plans that could lead to five redundancies and force social workers to undergo role changes.

### **UK walkout by *Newshour* and *The World Tonight* journalists at BBC over rota**

Around 30 BBC journalists working for *Newshour* and *The World Tonight* held a one-day stoppage on Monday, picketing the London Broadcasting House headquarters. The stoppage coincided with the first day in post of the BBC's new director general, former Google executive Matt Brittin.

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) members are protesting imposed changes to rotas. These will be shorter but will result in an additional 26 days of attendance with no additional pay but an increased workload. Following the stoppage, the NUJ members will take part in action short of a strike.

In his first day in post, Brittin announced the BBC urgently needed to make budget cuts of around £500 million, with a threat to around 2,000 jobs.

### **Bus control staff in London hold further walkout over rota changes**

Around 150 bus control staff working for Transport for London (TfL) began a two-day stoppage Thursday. The bus and network traffic controllers carry out safety-critical roles such as dealing with incidents, managing bus stations and implementing diversions in responding to emergencies.

The Unite union members are taking action in opposition to TfL's changes to the controllers' rosters, which mean increased weekend working and having to cover further distances to reach unfamiliar

locations. Delays in reaching a particular site on schedule could lead to disciplinary measures.

The controllers held a two-day stoppage over the same issue on April 23.

### **Protests by Syrian farmers as government sets low wheat price**

Sunday and Monday saw farmers' protests across Syrian provinces including Raqqa, Deir Ezzor, Hasakeh, Daraa, Hama and Idlib. Some cities have seen sit-down protests lasting days.

The farmers were protesting the Syrian government setting this season's purchase price of first-grade durum wheat at \$330 per ton. This price is below the cost of production, a situation exacerbated by the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz sending prices of oil and fertiliser rocketing.

Farmers were hoping for a higher price this year, as heavy rain had led to higher yields. Previous years saw low yields after droughts and the destructive impact of the civil war.

The Syrian government hoped this year's improved wheat crop yield would restore its position as a net wheat exporter.

### **Over 700 arrested in Kenya during mass protests over soaring fuel prices**

Over 700 protesters have been arrested across Kenya following nationwide demonstrations and transport strikes over soaring fuel prices, new taxes and the rising cost of living.

According to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), 710 people were detained over alleged protest-related offences. The Rift Valley region recorded 259 arrests, Nairobi 189 and Central Kenya 142. The protests erupted alongside a nationwide matatu strike that paralysed transport, stranded workers and students, and deepened anger against the government of President William Ruto.

The Kenyan ruling class has responded to the growing social unrest with police repression and threats of further crackdowns. The DCI warned that while demonstrations are constitutionally protected, “criminal actions” during protests would attract legal consequences.

### **Lecturers at University of Cross River, Nigeria, begin indefinite strike**

Lecturers at the University of Cross River in Nigeria began an indefinite strike May 20 over unpaid salaries, welfare issues and the failure of management and government authorities to implement agreements reached with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

The ASUU branch listed 11 demands, including the immediate payment of wage award arrears dating back to January 2023, settlement of outstanding promotion arrears and earned academic allowances, and the remittance of union check-off dues owed since 2017.

Union chairman Patrick Ushie said repeated meetings with university management had failed, with officials claiming they lacked the funds needed to meet workers' demands. He said the university currently receives inadequate government subventions and accused the state government of ignoring appeals from workers.

Academic workers have repeatedly clashed with federal and state

authorities over broken agreements, poor infrastructure and delayed salaries, while governments divert vast sums to debt repayments and business interests.

### **Local government workers hold two-week strike in Benue State, Nigeria**

Local government workers across Benue State began a two-week warning strike on May 14, shutting down activities in all 23 local government areas over unpaid wages and unresolved welfare issues. The strike was called by the Benue State chapter of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) after the expiration of ultimatums issued to the state government.

In a strike notice signed by NULGE state president Joshua Adah Adiniya and secretary Aseneshi Musa Yusuf, the union accused the state government of ignoring repeated attempts to resolve the dispute through negotiations. Workers are demanding payment of outstanding March and April 2026 salaries, implementation of delayed promotions, settlement of pension remittance issues, reinstatement of workers disengaged in 2011 and 2012, and payment of accumulated salary arrears.

### **Union ends public service workers' stoppage over pay and conditions in Ghana**

Workers at Ghana's National Identification Authority (NIA) have been told to end their nationwide strike and resume services after a meeting of the union with the National Labour Commission and government officials.

The industrial action, called by the Public Services Workers' Union, disrupted Ghana Card registration and identification services across the country as workers protested worsening conditions, delayed salary adjustments and the government's failure to address their longstanding grievances. NIA workers accused the government of ignoring repeated appeals, while inflation and rising living costs eroded incomes.

During the stoppage, registration centres across Ghana were shut down. This affected access to services linked to banking, healthcare and public administration, demonstrating the central role played by public sector workers in maintaining essential state functions.

The end of the strike resolves none of the underlying issues confronting Ghanaian public sector workers. The intervention of the National Labour Commission, which works with trade union leaders to shut down strikes, reflects concerns within ruling circles over the spread of labour unrest as inflation and social inequality cause mounting opposition among workers and youth.

### **Temporary road workers at Sol Plaatje Municipality in South Africa protest job cuts**

Municipal road workers, many on temporary contracts, at the Sol Plaatje Municipality in South Africa walked out May 15, protesting against plans to terminate 137 jobs at the end of May. They are demanding permanent posts.

South African Municipal Workers' Union members burned tyres outside the Ashburnham municipal offices, denouncing the municipality's

refusal to provide guarantees of continued employment. The workers, many employed on rolling six-month contracts, insisted they would not accept dismissal while basic infrastructure backlogs and deteriorating road conditions, including potholes, remain unresolved across the city of Kimberley.

The workers condemned the exploitative conditions under which they have laboured for years. Some report monthly stipends of only R3,500, despite extensive service. They accused municipal authorities of favouring politically connected individuals for permanent posts while long-serving workers are discarded.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**