

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.

Portuguese workers in nationwide general strike against government labour reforms, low pay and poor working conditions

Tens of thousands of workers in Portugal took part in a nationwide general strike Wednesday to demand salary increases and improved working conditions.

The stoppages had their greatest impact on air travel and regional and local rail and bus services. Health services, education, municipal services and the commercial sector were also heavily affected.

They sought to force the government to back down on its labour legislation, which includes easier dismissals, expanded employer control over working hours and outsourcing, weakened collective bargaining and attacks on maternity protections.

The strike was organised by the country's largest union, the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers. The second largest General Union of Workers did not take part, but affiliated unions were involved.

Civil servants at migrant processing centres in Portugal strike over staff shortages and poor working conditions

Workers at the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum in Portugal began a five-day strike Monday, protesting working conditions at the government institution, which processes residence applications for migrant workers.

The Union of Migration Technicians members are exhausted due to staff shortages and demotivated from doing work which is not valued. *The Portugal News* quoted the workers' union representative saying "the system is designed not to produce results." Workers also demand a specific career path and more funding for computer resources and improvements in buildings infrastructure.

Portugal's important tourist industry relies on migrant workers as part of an insecure, casualised low-paid workforce.

Thousands of teachers in Valencia, Spain continue indefinite strike against low pay, staff shortages and deteriorating conditions

Over 78,000 teachers in the Valencia region of Spain are still on an

indefinite strike begun May 11. Lessons are disrupted across public nursery, primary, secondary and vocational schools, and 25,666 university entrance tests affected. The teachers have held rallies in major towns and cities and built a protest camp of 30 tents in the historic centre of the city of Valencia.

The STEPV, CCOO, UGT, CSIF and ANPE union members demand substantial wage increases, smaller class sizes, more staff and reduced bureaucracy. They accuse the regional government of chronically underfunding public education, saying they have suffered a decline in real wages since 2010.

Academic staff at Nottingham University, England begin two-month strike over job cuts

Academic staff working for Nottingham University began a 61-day walkout on Monday, due to finish on July 31.

The University and College Union (UCU) members also held a one-day stoppage on May 22 and began a marking boycott May 20. They are opposing plans by university management to cut around 700 posts and 42 courses at the prestigious Russell Group university. The marking boycott is expected to affect student graduations this summer.

The university's "Future Nottingham" restructuring project is intended to prevent a forecast bankruptcy taking place in the late 2030s.

UCU members at Sheffield Hallam University have voted 87.7 percent for 18 days of strike action against job cuts, workload and pensions, which began May 27. The union refuses to mobilise its national membership in coordinated action against attacks on jobs and conditions in higher education, resulting in around 30,000 job losses over the past three years.

Support staff at London secondary school resume stoppages over threat to cut hours

Lead Learning Assistants (LLAs) at the Compass Learning Partnership (CLP) trust-run Woodfield secondary school in Kingsbury, Brent North, London walked out Tuesday and were set to strike Thursday and Friday. The school offers support to pupils aged 11 to 19 with special educational needs, including physical disabilities and autism.

The National Education Union (NEU) members previously walked out in December and January. They were opposing CLP's plans to cut their hours and hence pay. Following the previous action and intervention by Acas, the government-run mediation service, the CLP offered them free school dinners and a few extra hours. The LLAs described the offer as "throwing scraps to the dogs." The NEU accused the trust of threatening

to impose the cut in hours through “fire and rehire.”

This week’s action is part of a series of 13 days of intermittent stoppages this month, followed by 10 days of intermittent walkouts between July 1 and 17.

Strike by cancer research staff at London facilities over pay

Hundreds of staff working for the renowned Institute of Cancer Research (ICR) at its London facilities in Chelsea and Sutton began a two-day stoppage Wednesday.

The Unite union members, who work as researchers, lab support staff and in-site management rejected a 3.75 percent pay offer. Many of the staff earn only just above the London Living Wage figure of £14.80 an hour. Years of successive below-inflation pay rises have left them struggling with the increasing cost of living.

Further stoppages are planned for June 9-11 and June 15-18.

Stoppage by UK school examination board staff over pay

Staff working for the UK’s largest school examination board AQA are due to walk out Friday until Monday June 8. AQA sets and administers GCSE and A-level examination papers for around 1.4 million pupils, over half of all English school pupils entering examination.

Workers voted by a 77 percent majority for the action at a ballot held in April.

The Unison union members are protesting an imposed pay structure four years ago that led to many lower paid workers struggling to get by. According to Unison, it would take a rise of more than 10 percent to make up for the erosion of pay through inflation. They say around 10 percent of their members at AQA have to rely on foodbanks to survive.

Three AQA facilities are involved in the action, Devas Street in Manchester, Stag Hill House in Guildford and Garamonde Drive in Milton Keynes. A rally will be held with speakers at the Manchester picket line on Friday.

Nigerian oil workers at regulatory commission strike over wages and benefits

Workers at the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) launched an indefinite nationwide strike June 1, shutting down the commission’s offices over unresolved welfare and administrative grievances.

The stoppage followed the collapse of negotiations between union representatives and management over long-standing demands relating to staff welfare, promotions, training opportunities and funding. Administrative operations were brought to a standstill, despite some operational personnel remaining at work.

The NUPENG and PENGASSAN members are demanding wages and benefits comparable to those in the wider oil and gas industry, improved career progression opportunities and greater investment in staff development. Additional tensions arose over management’s preference for local training programmes instead of overseas courses, a policy workers say restricts professional development opportunities.

NUPRC was established in 2021 to manage oil exploration in Nigeria, one of Africa’s largest oil-producing nations. The shutdown of NUPRC underscores broader tensions within the oil industry, where workers are increasingly confronting issues of pay, workplace conditions and the distribution of resources.

Nigerian teachers in Oyo State continue strike over abducted students and colleagues

Teachers across Oyo State, Nigeria are continuing an indefinite strike begun June 1, after the abduction of 39 students and seven teachers from three schools in Oriire Local Government Area on May 15.

The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) members demand immediate rescue of the captives and stronger security measures to protect schools and surrounding communities. The action has shut schools across the state and was accompanied by solidarity protests supported by the Nigeria Labour Congress and other organisations.

Teachers reported growing fear among education workers, while parents expressed reluctance to send children to school amid continuing insecurity.

Mass kidnappings for ransom have become a recurring feature of social life in poverty-stricken Nigeria. Since the 2014 abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls, hundreds of students and teachers have been kidnapped in attacks on schools and communities across the country.

School transport operators in Eastern Cape districts in South Africa withhold services due to lack of pay

School transport operators are continuing a stoppage begun two weeks ago, disrupting transport services across the Amathole District and parts of the Chris Hani District in South Africa.

Dozens of school transport vehicles have been repossessed by banks after operators went unpaid by the provincial Department of Transport, leaving them unable to meet loan repayments. According to Eastern Cape South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO), some operators are still owed money dating back to last year, and at least 65 vehicles have already been seized.

Thousands of schoolchildren have been unable to attend classes, while families struggle to find alternative transport. At Ida High School in Indwe, pupils missed more than a week of schooling.

Parent Siphokazi Rola described how private transport costs quickly rose beyond the reach of many households, expressing concern that children, including those preparing for examinations, are falling behind academically.

SANTACO has entered discussions with the Department of Transport and given the government until the end of June to resolve all outstanding payment disputes. While some operators have reportedly begun receiving payments, provincial officials acknowledge that significant arrears remain.

The department says it is accelerating the processing of invoices through overtime work, system improvements and additional administrative capacity, while the education department has instructed schools to prepare catch-up plans for affected learners.



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