

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

## Striking Mexican educators reject government offer, prepare for 2026 World Cup protests; Nova Scotia care home workers to vote on tentative contract

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

### **Striking Mexican educators reject government offer, prepare for 2026 World Cup protests**

Following a week of protests and highway blockades by educators, members of the CNTE union, the Sheinbaum administration presented an offer on wages and pensions to striking teachers, which the union rejected for failing to address educators' main demand for decent pensions.

Since the protest strike began, President Sheinbaum has refused to meet with strike leaders. Negotiations have involved lesser government officials, who claim that there is no money.

The strikers had been setting up encampments near Mexico City's Zocalo Square, causing millions in losses for surrounding businesses. They now plan to set up an encampment at the World Cup Fest zone, bringing in the families of the 43 disappeared Ayotzinapa students, and teachers from other cities.

The strikers plan to protest during World Soccer Cup games by blocking Mexico City's airport and the Azteca Stadium, where the games will take place, during the first week of the World Cup. The CNTE members slogan "sin solución, no rodará el balón" [ "with no solution, the ball will not roll" ] describes the next step in their fight.

### **Guatemala protests against rising cost of public transportation**

On June 1, inhabitants of Santa Elena Barillas, a city south of Guatemala City blocked roads leading to the capital demanding

affordable transportation and denounced arbitrary fare increases imposed since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Demonstrators pointed out that working class and peasant families that depend on public transportation to get to work or school, are also being hard hit all across the board by rising food inflation. In addition to the high fares, workers and peasants transporting merchandise to markets are charged 20 to 30 quetzales extra per load, a charge that they consider arbitrary. The high fares and their arbitrary nature have caused physical conflicts between bus riders and drivers.

The demonstrators demanded that local authorities intervene.

### **Honduras**

Following an intense day of protest on June 1, doctors in Honduras public hospital system have suspended their tasks in protest against the right-wing neo-liberal policies of the Nasry Asfura administration. The doctors' strike reflects increasing social tension against the government's pro-business policies.

The doctors are demanding payment of delayed wages for doctors and retirees, the re-hiring of laid-off doctors and increases in wages that correspond to inflationary conditions. The strikers are also demanding an increase in medical benefits for all.

The daily 12-hour protest exempts emergency care. In conjunction with the protest strike the doctors have set up information assemblies at various hospitals.

### **Chicago nurses to strike June 11 over firings of colleagues involved in organizing**

Some 400 registered nurses at Saint Mary of Nazareth

Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, will hold a one-day strike June 11 to protest the firing of at least 6 nurses involved in an organizing campaign as they fight to improve staffing ratios and other issues. According to documents obtained by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, management fired the nurses claiming they trespassed on hospital property on their off-hours.

The firings commenced one day after nurses filed a petition for union representation with National Nurses United.

Nurses cite a sharp deterioration in working conditions and material support in the wake of the 2025 acquisition of eight hospitals, including St. Mary of Nazareth, from Ascension by California-based Prime Healthcare.

“We have always had staffing issues in the ER, but they have gotten worse since Prime took over,” Karlie Thorn, one of the fired nurses, told the *Sun-Times*. “It’s just not safe for us to have 25 people in the waiting room and each nurse already has four to five patients.”

Patient ratios had been one nurse for every five patients. But as nurses have quit due to worsening conditions, management has overridden the old ratio and increased it to as many as seven patients per nurse.

Prime Healthcare’s CEO Prem Reddy has been involved in several legal settlements involving fraud and over-billing. Among them, in 2018 he settled a charge for \$65 million alleging he submitted false claims to Medicare at 14 hospitals in California. In 2021 another charge was settled for \$37.5 million involving kickbacks and overcharging for medical services.

### **Picket line clash injures two as strike continues against Charleston, West Virginia beverage operator**

A picket line clash between workers and a security guard occurred May 28 as 50 Teamsters drivers and warehouse workers continue their strike against The Beverage Market in Charleston, West Virginia. According to Teamsters Local 175, the strike began May 12 after the owners sought to “increase insurance premiums by 900 percent” and “eliminate significant portions of... employees’ retirement.”

One worker was attacked on the picket line and injured while another worker’s mother was knocked to the ground suffering scrapes and bruises. The Kanawha County Sheriff’s department is supposedly investigating the incident. Local 175 secretary-treasurer Luke Farley said the guard “is still out by the picket line trying to intimidate members.”

The union and management resumed negotiations May 24 but according to the union there had been “no real progress” while the company continued to “demand concessions” and “provide zero reasons for its punitive behavior.”

### **Nova Scotia care home workers to vote on tentative contract**

After an eight-week strike by thousands of workers at long-term care facilities, leaders of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) announced that a tentative agreement has been reached. The tentative contract was announced this past Saturday by union officials who advised that picket lines would come down by Monday at all 36 strikebound care homes.

The union leadership has unanimously recommended that the membership vote to ratify the deal.

Details of the proposed settlement have yet to be announced. An earlier unsuccessful proposal by the employers bargaining team in late May had offered a basic wage increase for low-paid workers that would bring them to \$23.57 an hour by the end of the contract term in 2028.

That offer would still leave many earning below the “living wage” in the province.

The contract, said the union, would be first presented for a vote within 72 hours of the Saturday announcement. The agreement would initially be presented to the membership at the St. Vincent’s Nursing Home in Halifax which has acted as the lead bargaining unit in the dispute. If it is ratified there, then all other union locals involved in the contract dispute across the province will also vote. If the proposed deal is not ratified, union officials say the strike will resume.

At the height of the strike, some 3,600 workers joined the walkout. Essential worker agreements provided for a minimum number of employees to continue to attend to their duties. The strike involved continuing care assistants and support services, which includes environmental, housekeeping, kitchen and laundry staff; occupational therapy and physiotherapy aides, licensed practical nurses and maintenance workers.

The workers, most of them on extremely low pay, have been without a new contract since October 2023 as the Conservative government continued to “slow walk” negotiations. The workers are demanding improvements to address the cost-of-living crisis, chronic understaffing and to bring their pay—often less than \$19 per hour—in line with other care workers in Atlantic Canadian provinces. Similarly skilled care workers in nearby Prince Edward Island, for instance, earn \$10 per hour more than their Nova Scotia colleagues. Beyond wages, workers are fighting for better staff retention, guaranteed hours and protections against burnout, with some workers reporting they are forced to take on multiple jobs just to make ends meet.



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