

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.

Spanish doctors in further monthly nationwide stoppage against government's cost-cutting health reforms

On Monday, thousands of doctors in Spain began their fifth week-long nationwide strike, part of an ongoing series of monthly stoppages directed against the government's proposed reform of the national health service framework statute.

Organised by a coalition of major trade unions including the Spanish Confederation of Medical Unions (CESM), the strikes have been backed up with demonstration rallies in major cities calling for a defence of the public health system against the new legislation.

The doctors demand a 35-hour working week, full recognition and payment of overtime toward pension entitlements, and a flexible retirement model that accounts for the physical toll of medical practice.

The workers agreed to a temporary pause over the summer months to prevent the collapse of an already overstretched system, but they plan to resume and escalate the conflict in September if their demands are not met.

Healthcare workers and teachers in Romania strike and demonstrate over new public sector pay laws

Healthcare and sanitation workers in hospitals across Romania held a warning strike June 9, organised by the union Sanitas, against a proposed public sector pay law.

The action follows a protest by more than 10,000 healthcare and social assistance workers outside parliament in Bucharest last week. It marks an escalation of opposition to government plans affecting public sector employees.

Workers say the proposed legislation would cap or reduce the wages of more than half of employees in the healthcare and social assistance sectors. They warn the measures would further undermine living standards and worsen staffing shortages.

On Wednesday in Bucharest, around 4,000 teachers and education workers from across the country also demonstrated against the proposed new salary law. Organised by the country's major education unions, the protest began outside government headquarters before marching to parliament.

Teachers say the legislation would freeze or reduce the salaries of more than 44 percent of teachers and education staff. The protesters demanded

decent wages, improved funding for schools and an end to policies that further undermine education workers' living standards.

The strike and demonstrations reflect growing resistance among Romanian public sector workers to attacks on wages implemented under government austerity programmes.

Teachers face police hostility during protest in Ankara, Turkey for improved pay and conditions

Teachers employed in Turkey's private education sector demonstrated in Ankara Sunday against low pay, precarious working conditions and the government's failure to fulfil previous promises to address their demands.

Hundreds of Private Sector Teachers' Union members gathered at the Ministry of National Education intending to march to parliament. Police blocked their way and detained 41 people, who were later released following demands from workers. Workers accused the police of using violence, including against family members and children attending the rally.

The teachers vow to continue and escalate their campaign unless the government addresses the issues of low wages, insecurity and deteriorating conditions.

Portuguese early years and primary school teachers in national strike over low pay, staff shortages and overwork

Pre-school and primary school teachers in Portugal held a national strike Monday, closing or severely disrupting at least 138 schools in 62 municipalities. The action, called by several teachers' unions, had its greatest impact in the Lisbon region and other coastal areas.

The teachers demand parity with colleagues in other sectors of education, including a reduction in teaching hours to 22 classroom periods per week, lower retirement ages and relief from pastoral and administrative duties.

The strike reflects growing opposition to excessive workloads and staff shortages. A recent survey of more than 7,000 teachers found that 86 percent considered single-teacher instruction a profession leading to rapid burn-out, while 72 percent complained of a lack of staff in schools.

Local government craftworkers' stoppage at several UK councils over pay

Around 1,000 UK local government skilled tradespeople or craftworkers began a two-day stoppage Wednesday. The targeted action affected housing maintenance and repair workers at several local authorities including Bristol, Southwark, Stoke-on-Trent, Newham, Leeds and Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

The Unite union members are taking action against the local government employees' body pay offer of 3.2 percent for 2025. The derisory offer came on top of ten years of pay freezes and below-inflation offers. It also included the removal of apprentices from the agreement and a move to job evaluation, which Unite says will fail to award workers for their skills.

A further two-day walkout is planned for June 23. Unite say more local authorities could join the dispute in future.

Strike by rail infrastructure parts manufacturing workers in Scunthorpe, UK over pay

Workers at German-based rail infrastructure company Vossloh in Scunthorpe, England walked out on Monday.

The GMB union members rejected a below-inflation pay offer. GMB says the offer contrasts with a 5.5 percent pay rise offered to Vossloh workers in other countries and a 10 percent bonus paid to company directors.

Currently the Scunthorpe facility is engaged in manufacturing rails being used to build an extension to the Manchester tram system. The Vossloh workers previously held strikes in October and November 2023, also in opposition to a below-inflation pay offer.

Strike by biomedical scientists at two UK hospitals over unpaid holiday pay

Biomedical scientists working at Blackburn and Burnley hospitals, part of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust in England, began a five-day stoppage Monday. They are responsible for interpreting diagnostic tests including blood tests.

The Unite union members are taking the action to protest the Trust's refusal to pay staff outstanding holiday pay amounting to thousands of pounds. They are also raising concerns over understaffing.

They will hold further five-day stoppages in the weeks beginning June 22, 29 and July 6.

Hotel staff in Walsall, UK walk out over pay and union recognition

Hospitality, gym, events, reception and housekeeping staff employed by Village Hotel at Walsall, England began their programme of strikes with a protest on Wednesday evening. The protest began at 5pm, coinciding with the venue hosting a big screen showing of England's first game in the football World Cup.

The Unite union members' demands include being paid the Living Wage rate of £13.45 an hour, parity of pay for younger workers carrying out the same role as older workers and for Village Hotel to recognise Unite for collective bargaining.

The timetable of stoppages is June 17-21, 23, 26-28, 30, July 2, 4, 7 and 10. The action is expected to disrupt the hotel's programme of big screen

viewings of World Cup football matches.

Protests in Iraqi city of Basra over power outages

Hundreds of Basra residents in the Iraqi district of Zubair held a protest last week outside the Al-Jahiza power station. They were demanding an end to regular power outages as the summer temperatures soar, and a continuous energy supply rather than the current rationing of four hours followed by cuts of two hours.

Residents say the outages exacerbate the health problems caused by living close to Iraq's largest oil fields.

Iraq's power-generating ability has been hit by cuts in gas imports from Iran following the joint Israel/US attacks on that country which began in February. Monday saw similar protests in the Shuaiba area of Zubair, where demonstrators say they have been hit with power outages of up to eight hours.

Iraqi farmers protest over wheat prices

Sunday saw protests by farmers in the southern Iraqi governate of Muthanna. They gathered outside the governate administration office in Samawa, where they arrived on their tractors. The same day, farmers protested in the city of Kut in the eastern governate of Wasit.

The demands of both protests were the same. They called for the procurement price of wheat paid by the government to be restored from the current rate of \$458 a ton to its previous level of \$556 a ton. They also demanded money owed for crops they had already delivered, as well as debt relief from agricultural loans and equipment instalments.

Municipal workers in Germiston, South Africa continue ten-month strike to demand permanent jobs

Municipal workers employed as security guards and cleaners in Germiston, South Africa have intensified their strike, which has lasted ten months, demanding permanent employment from the city.

The strike, which began last September, has spread from Boksburg to Germiston. The Municipal and Energy Contract Workers Union (MECSU) members' key demand is ending years of fixed-term contracts.

MECSU highlighted that billions of rands earmarked for insourcing have been redirected to external service providers, showing that city officials prioritise contracts and profits over workers' rights and job security.

Hundreds demonstrate in Durban and Johannesburg, South Africa over severe housing crisis

On June 12, land activists, including 800 in Durban and 300 in Johannesburg, demonstrated to protest a proposed amendment to the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land (PIE) Act.

The protest, led by supporters of the shack dweller movement Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM), was a response to government attempts to criminalise land occupations and dismantle constitutional protections that poor and landless communities fought hard to secure. Marching to key government offices, the activists made clear their opposition to a bill that threatens to punish those occupying land without the owner's permission with steep fines and prison time, while also allowing evictions without guaranteeing alternative housing.

The bill removes court obligations to ensure displaced families have somewhere else to go, a requirement legally upheld in previous Constitutional Court rulings. This will expose thousands to homelessness.

ABM's leadership rejected the state's framing of the amendment as a crackdown on "illegal" occupation rather than an assault on the right to live.

Around five million people live in informal settlements in South Africa without basic amenities, due to the housing crisis in what is one of the most unequal countries in the world.

Municipal waste-collection workers in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa walk out over pay grading

Municipal waste-collection workers in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa launched a protected strike last week. They are demanding an upgrade in their salary grading from T3 to T5.

The strike, triggered by ongoing grievances over unfair remuneration and the city's failure to address their demands within a seven-day ultimatum, has led to disrupted services and garbage piling up in the city, including key intersections blocked by barricades of waste and burning tyres.

The strike coincides with Pietermaritzburg preparing to host the Comrades Marathon, a major international event expected to bring thousands of visitors to the city. Despite the municipality's assurances that contingency plans are in place to maintain essential services, the disruptions have already affected key areas in the city centre.

South African Municipal Workers' Union representatives report little progress since meeting with city leadership, with workers refusing to back down until their grading issue is resolved satisfactorily.

University academics in Benue State, Nigeria continue strike

Academic staff at Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi in Benue State, Nigeria are continuing their indefinite stoppage begun June 1 over disputes with the university's governing council. The strike has entered its third week, disrupting academic activities and threatening to draw in other university unions.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities members allege violations of established regulations, including appointments and administrative decisions being made solely by the governing council leadership, ignoring the university's governing statutes and decision-making structures.

The dispute has also fuelled broader allegations regarding the management of university resources and procurement procedures. Staff members have called for investigations into the handling of major education funding projects, while criticism has mounted over the Benue State government's failure to intervene and resolve the crisis.

Resident doctors in Lagos hold warning strike

Resident doctors at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital began a three-day warning strike on June 15. They are protesting unpaid allowances, delayed welfare payments and deteriorating working conditions.

The Association of Resident Doctors said the action was prompted by the Lagos State government's failure to honour previous agreements on remuneration and staff welfare, warning that further industrial action could follow.

Among the doctors' grievances are non-payment of promotion arrears, delays in implementing revised professional and specialist allowances, and continued suspension of work on residential accommodation for resident doctors. The workers also criticised delays in disbursing the Medical Residency Training Fund, accusing state authorities of failing to match pay improvements granted to doctors employed by the federal government.

Doctors also condemn the increasing assaults against and harassment of health workers, describing them as a threat to an already overstretched healthcare system. The dispute highlights the mounting pressures facing medical workers in Nigeria, where low pay, poor working conditions and chronic underfunding continue to fuel labour unrest and accelerate the departure of skilled professionals abroad.

Retirees in Lagos, Nigeria protest unpaid pensions

Retirees from the now-defunct Arab Bank and Assurance Bank in Nigeria staged a protest in Lagos on June 10, demanding payment of pension benefits, gratuities and long-overdue arrears.

The demonstrators, representing about 1,020 former employees nationwide, rallied outside the office of the Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD), accusing government agencies of neglecting their claims for more than two decades following liquidation of the banks.

The pensioners demand to be paid the N32,000 minimum pension benefit approved for federal retirees, saying many currently survive on less than N10,000 per month. Protesters carried placards denouncing the failure of PTAD, the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation to address their grievances. They also want payment of outstanding arrears dating back to 2009 and question what has happened to assets belonging to the liquidated banks.



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