

# 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.

## **Thousands of public sector workers in Brussels, Belgium in one-day strike and protest against austerity**

Thousands of public service workers stopped work June 23, and hundreds protested in the Belgian capital, Brussels against austerity measures, job cuts and the continued underfunding of essential public services.

The strike and demonstration, organised by public sector unions and social organisations, brought together around 1,300 participants including hospital staff, social workers, childcare workers, teachers, municipal employees and public welfare workers. They demand increased staffing, higher pay and an end to government cuts that have intensified workloads and degraded services.

## **Rail workers in the Netherlands in national strike against austerity attacks on state pensions and benefits**

Rail workers at the national rail operator NS and bus, tram and metro lines across the Netherlands, held a four-hour public transport strike June 24, bringing all rail services to a standstill between 4 and 8 a.m. and causing knock-on disruptions afterwards.

The FNV trade union members are protesting the government's planned cuts to unemployment and disability benefits and proposals to accelerate increases in the state pension age. They warn that further strikes could follow.

## **Stoppage by hospitality workers in Greece against low pay and intolerable working conditions in the tourism industry**

Food and tourism workers across Greece held a 24-hour nationwide strike Tuesday, demanding substantial wage increases, full pay for overtime, collective agreements across the industry and improved health and safety.

Strike rallies took place nationwide, with a main demonstration outside the Labour Ministry in Athens.

The Panhellenic Federation of Food and Tourism Workers members said they face 13-hour shifts, widespread violations of working-time

regulations and systematic breaches of labour laws by employers. Seasonal workers continue to receive only three months of unemployment benefits, despite soaring living costs.

The hospitality workers say their exploitation is exacerbated by the chronic labour shortage in tourism, as workers are driven to escape the intolerable conditions.

## **IKEA workers in Germany and France strike for better pay and working conditions**

Thousands of workers went on strike June 19 at IKEA stores across Germany as part of an ongoing retail collective bargaining dispute. The strike, affecting 31 of IKEA's 54 German outlets, followed earlier nationwide walkouts in May and June.

The Verdi union members demand a 7 percent wage increase, with a minimum monthly rise of €225, on a 12-month agreement. Retail sector employers offered a staggered increase of 2 percent from November 2026 and a further 1.5 percent from August 2027 under a two-year deal.

Verdi accused IKEA of pursuing cost-cutting and planned job reductions while refusing substantial wage improvements, although the union continues to limit workers to isolated warning strikes instead of organising a broader unified struggle across the retail sector.

In France, 60 IKEA workers from the Arden store, near Orléans, walked out on June 18 in protest at working conditions. The CFE-CGC union confederation members complain of overwork due to high staff turnover and IKEA's refusal to recruit replacements despite continued high corporate profits.

## **Thousands of essential public sector workers in Cyprus strike over poverty wages**

Thousands of hourly paid public sector workers in Cyprus held a 24-hour nationwide strike Wednesday, shutting down services across government departments, public hospitals, schools, museums and other state facilities.

The workers, employed in low-paid essential jobs, demand a new collective agreement with a wage increase to match the cost of living, backdated to January 2025.

The SEK, PEO and DEOK trade union members have received pay rises of barely 1.5 percent annually for the last 17 years despite soaring inflation and housing costs. Many of them earn little above the minimum wage despite the country having the highest growth rate in the European Union.

### **Staff at UK rail support company walk out over pay**

UK rail staff working for Carlisle Support Services employed on a contract with Northern Rail began a 48-hour stoppage on Saturday.

Carlisle employees operate as revenue collection staff and gate line operatives for Northern Rail, which provides rail passenger services across the north of England.

The action follows previous stoppages by the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members pushing for a pay increase. Carlisle Support Services staff are paid the Living Wage Foundation figure of £13.45 an hour, above the statutory National Living Wage of £12.71 an hour, the minimum wage. However, Carlisle has refused to negotiate with the RMT over its call for a higher wage.

Picket lines were mounted at Skipton and Manchester Victoria rail stations.

### **Strike by academic staff at a London university over attack on jobs and conditions**

Academic staff at London South Bank University (LSBU) were on strike Monday and are scheduled to walk out again Thursday.

The University and College Union (UCU) members are opposed to plans by LSBU to terminate the contracts of all academic staff and create a two-tier workforce. LSBU plans to tear up national and local agreements and divide the workforce into two separate tracks.

The tracks will be “teaching and research” (T&R) and “teaching and scholarship” (T&S). They will be pitted against each other in a redundancy selection process. For both tracks working time will increase without any corresponding pay increase.

Additionally, all new T&S staff will be employed by a subsidiary company which will exclude them from industry standard Teachers’ Pension Scheme and leave them outside the national pay framework. UCU wants the government mediation service ACAS to be involved, but the university management refused arbitration.

UCU members voted in May by an 89 percent majority to walk out in opposition to the plans. The striking academics held a rally outside the LSBU Hub at noon on Monday.

The UCU refuses to mobilise its members in national coordinated action against attacks on jobs and conditions in higher education, although many other institutions are implementing similar measures. Around 30,000 jobs have been lost over the past three years, with job cuts most recently planned at Goldsmiths in London, the University of Sheff, Sheffield Hallam and Nottingham Universities.

### **Strikes by doctors in Northern Ireland over pay**

Specialist and consultant doctors working for the National Health Service (NHS) in Northern Ireland began a 24-hour stoppage on Thursday.

The British Medical Association (BMA) members rejected a Review Body on Doctors’ and Dentists’ Remuneration which recommended a 3.5 percent pay rise.

A recent planned stoppage of resident doctors in the NHS in England over pay was called off at the last minute by the BMA. They are currently being balloted on the “new offer,” which is basically a dressed up previously rejected offer.

### **Strike by teaching staff at London schools over pay**

Teaching assistants (TAs) at Richard Cobden and Primrose Hill primary schools in the London borough of Camden are on strike this week, following previous stoppages.

The Unison union members are demanding their pay scale be raised from level 3 to level 4 to reflect the nature of their duties. Other TAs in the borough are paid at the higher level.

In a separate dispute, Lead Learning Assistants (LLAs) employed by the Compass Learning Partnership trust at Woodfield, a special educational needs (SEND) school in the London borough of Brent, were set to strike on Thursday, Friday and June 29. Further stoppages are also possible in early July. The LLAs are responsible for supporting teenagers with complex needs.

The National Education Union members are opposing plans to “fire and rehire” 47 LLAs in a long-running dispute. The proposals could mean them losing around £4,000 a year in pay. Following previous action, the trust offered free school meals and a few extra hours. This was dismissed by the workers, who likened it to “throwing scraps to dogs.”

### **Legal aid workers in South Africa protest staff shortages and budget cuts encroaching on the right to legal aid[subhead]**

Resident doctors at the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH) in Sagamu, Ogun State began a 10-day warning strike June 24 over the non-payment of revised professional and specialist allowances, worsening staff shortages and deteriorating working conditions.

The stoppage was approved at a general meeting of the Association of Resident Doctors after the Ogun State government failed to respond to an earlier ultimatum or commit to implementing the outstanding payments.

The doctors are demanding immediate payment of revised allowances and arrears, as well as the release of the 2026 Medical Residency Training Fund. They say chronic understaffing has left remaining workers facing excessive workloads, burnout and prolonged working hours. The union also cited poor welfare conditions, including inadequate accommodation, poor-quality meals and growing security concerns within the hospital.

The dispute has severely disrupted services at one of Ogun State’s major public hospitals.

### **Protesters block main roads in Ibadan, Nigeria**

Hundreds of protesters blocked sections of the busy Iwo Road corridor in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria on June 22, demanding the immediate rescue of pupils and teachers abducted in the Oriire Local Government Area.

The demonstration brought traffic to a standstill for several hours as residents, youth groups and community members denounced the failure of authorities to secure the release of the victims.

Carrying placards reading, “Government Must Act–End Kidnapping in Oyo State” and “End Insecurity Now,” protesters called for urgent action by the state and federal governments. Demonstrators also demanded greater protection for students, farmers, traders and local communities amid growing concerns over a wave of kidnappings and violent attacks across the region.

The protest follows weeks of public anger over the abduction of dozens of pupils and teachers in Oriire. The Nigeria Union of Teachers, backed by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) previously organised strike action over the abduction of schoolchildren.

The NLC has threatened wider solidarity action if federal and state authorities fail to address the security situation and secure the release of abducted victims. Union leaders are responding to growing anger in the working class against impoverished living standards, which have led to kidnappings for ransom.

majority of Kenyan security and cleaning workers reported that floods, storms and other severe weather events made their jobs more dangerous and resulted in lost income.



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### **Furnmart shopworkers in Namibia strike to demand pay rise**

Workers at Furnmart & Home Corp stores across Namibia began strike action June 22, after negotiations over wages and allowances broke down.

The action, organised by the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU), follows a ballot in which 467 employees voted in favour of a strike, while 157 opposed it. The dispute stems from negotiations that began last year and failed to produce an agreement on pay and working conditions.

Workers are demanding an 8 percent wage increase, a monthly housing allowance of N\$500, one day’s holiday per month and safety boots for drivers and shop assistants. Management offered a 5 percent pay rise and rejected the demand for a housing allowance, leading to a deadlock that was referred to the Labour Commissioner’s office. Conciliation efforts failed, and an unresolved dispute certificate was issued, clearing the way for industrial action.

The strike is expected to affect Furnmart branches nationwide. The rising cost of living faced by retail workers means many struggle to meet housing and other basic expenses. While MANWU has indicated it remains open to negotiations, workers have signalled their determination to continue the struggle until meaningful improvements in wages and allowances are secured.

### **Thousands of security guards in Kenya demand unpaid pay increase**

Thousands of private security guards marched through Nairobi, Kenya on June 17 to demand implementation of a 12 percent wage increase announced by President William Ruto during this year’s Labour Day celebrations.

Organised by the Kenya National Private Security Workers Union (KNPSWU), the demonstration saw workers deliver petitions to parliament, the Ministry of Labour and the Private Security Regulatory Authority, with a warning that a strike could follow if their demands remain unheeded.

The guards accused many security firms of refusing to implement the wage increase while continuing to violate labour regulations. Low pay, insecure employment and poor working conditions remain widespread across the industry.

The protest also highlighted the impact of extreme weather on security workers. According to a recent survey cited by UNI Global Union, a large