

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.

Hundreds of striking offshore service and drilling workers disrupt Norwegian oil production

Offshore oil workers in Norway are continuing strike action, begun June 15, as part of an ongoing dispute over pay. Employers have responded with lockouts affecting around 1,000 workers. Further strikes are threatened if current negotiations fail.

The Norwegian Union of Energy Workers members rejected the wage agreement accepted by the larger Styrke union, saying the settlements tied to Norway's tariff or collective bargaining model should not be applied across the board. The agreement covers 7,500 workers.

As in previous Norwegian oil disputes, the government has used its power to impose compulsory arbitration if it judges that energy supplies or other "vital national interests" are threatened, a measure repeatedly used to suppress industrial action in the strategically important and extremely profitable petroleum sector.

Thousands of German shop workers in one-day strike against poverty wages

Retail workers across Germany staged warning strikes June 26, with thousands walking out at over 100 retail and wholesale workplaces in support of their regional contract negotiations. Stoppages affected major chains including Lidl, Penny, Amazon, H&M, Zara, Primark and Ikea, and demonstrations were held in several cities.

The Verdi union members demand substantial pay increases to offset soaring living costs, including a monthly wage rise, higher trainee pay and a permanent minimum hourly wage of €14.90.

Surveys show most retail workers struggle to cover basic living expenses, while employers have offered below-inflation increases spread over two years.

French video game workers strike and protest job cuts outside major studios

Workers in France's video game industry held a nationwide strike June 25 against mass layoffs, studio closures and worsening working

conditions. Strike action and workplace protests have been organised at several studios facing redundancy programmes, with warnings of further action to follow.

The Video Game Workers' Union members accuse game companies of using restructuring, outsourcing and AI-driven cost-cutting to eliminate jobs while refusing workers' demands for secure employment, higher pay and improved conditions.

More than 1,000 jobs have been lost or are under threat across major studios such as Kylotonn, Ubisoft, Nacon, Don't Nod and Quantic Dream. The dispute in France reflects the wider crisis in the global video game industry, where thousands of jobs have been cut despite years of strong profits.

Emergency services operators in Portugal hold week-long strike for professional recognition

Emergency telecommunications operators at Portugal's Civil Protection authority began a week-long strike June 27, demanding the creation of a dedicated professional career structure and greater recognition of their role in co-ordinating emergency response operations.

The Independent Union of Forestry, Environment and Civil Protection members say they perform highly skilled work essential to disaster responses but remain undervalued and without a recognised career path.

The strike coincides with the approach of Portugal's high-risk wildfire season. The timing was chosen because this is one of the few periods when the work of emergency telecommunications staff receives public attention.

Further stoppage by staff at UK cancer research facility over pay

Hundreds of workers at the UK's Institute of Cancer Research began a two-week strike Monday at its London sites, Sutton and Chelsea.

The Unite union members rejected a 4 percent pay offer in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. The employer also refused to implement an incremental pay system and to address pay restoration. Several years of below-inflation pay rises have left many staff earning just above the voluntary London Living Wage figure of £14.80 an hour.

The workers took nine days of intermittent strikes in the first half of June.

Bus manufacturing workers in Scarborough, UK walk out over pay

The strike begun on June 25 by around 400 bus manufacturing workers employed by vehicle builder Alexander Dennis at their facility in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, ended Wednesday.

The Unite union members rejected a 4 percent pay offer from the company, which did not address years of below-inflation rises. They had voted by an 81 percent majority for the action. Announcing the stoppage, Unite noted that for the period August 2021 to May 2026 RPI inflation increased by around 35 percent while the Dennis workers' pay rose only by 15.3 percent. This means wages lag some 20 percent behind the cost of living.

Unite states further stoppages could be scheduled if there is no resolution.

Lecturers at a Glasgow university in Scotland walk out over job cuts threat

Lecturers at Glasgow Caledonian University walked out Tuesday through Thursday. The strike coincided with student graduation ceremonies. Further stoppages are planned in line with graduation ceremonies on August 4, September 7, 8 and 10.

The members of the Educational Institute of Scotland University Lecturers Association (EIS-ULA) are opposing plans by the university to cut around 100 jobs in an effort to help reduce a projected £10 million shortfall.

The EIS-ULA says the university should use some of its £95 million cash reserves and has put forward alternative cost-cutting plans. For the union, the main issue is the threat of compulsory redundancies. Staff fear job cuts will lead to increased workloads and impact the range of courses offered.

Walkout by hotel hospitality staff in Manchester, UK over union recognition and working conditions

Hospitality staff at the Kimpton Clocktower hotel in Manchester, England, walked out Tuesday in a dispute over working conditions and union recognition. The hotel is part of IHG, one of the world's biggest hotel chains. IHG's operating profit last year was \$1.27 billion.

The Unite union members are seeking union recognition, an end to unfair contracts offering no job security and work rotas announced with little notice, making life planning difficult. Following a delegation visit by around 12 staff to the hotel's Human Resources office in March to raise grievances, two Unite representatives were sacked. A third is currently under disciplinary procedures and could lose their job.

Further stoppages are planned for Saturday and Sunday, as well as July 11-12. A petition in support of the workers has so far gathered over 1,300 signatures.

Rail cleaning staff in Liverpool, UK strike over pay

Around 30 rail cleaners working for Churchill in Liverpool were on strike Tuesday. Churchill is contracted to clean for Merseyrail, which runs rail services across Merseyside.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members were

demanding Churchill maintain its usual practice of paying 20p an hour above the national living wage figure, currently set at £12.71 an hour.

RMT Regional Organiser Jimmy Brown said their demand would only cost Churchill an extra £18,000, while the company had made profits of over £15 million last year.

Protests by workers over deteriorating living conditions continue across Iran

Protests by workers across Iran are continuing as living conditions decline.

Among protests on Monday was one by medical staff in the city of Tabriz. They gathered in front of the university's Medical Science building to protest their inadequate salaries.

In Ahvaz, retirees and former workers at the Haft Tappeh sugar cane company demonstrated in 50-degree heat. They were protesting that despite paying health insurance when working for the company, they were now expected to pay higher than expected fees for health treatment.

The same day, contract drivers protested for a third consecutive day in front of the Presidential Administration in Tehran, demanding their employment status be formalised as promised in 2021.

Also in Tehran that day, healthcare workers demonstrated in front of the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organisation. They were protesting low wages, staff shortages and heavy workloads.

Monday also saw protests by workers at the Iran Bark wool weaving factory in Rasht. They were protesting non-payment of several months' wages and other issues.

Decades of US sanctions and the blockade of the Hormuz Strait are exacerbating the collapse in living standards in Iran, against a backdrop of intermittent military attacks and threats as the current fragile ceasefire threatens to unravel.

Sudanese teachers in Khartoum State strike over non-payment of wages and poor working conditions

Teachers in Sudan's Khartoum State began a strike June 24 to protest the continued non-payment of salaries and worsening living and working conditions. The action, called by the Sudanese Teachers' Committee, is part of an escalating campaign by educators who can no longer survive amid the country's deepening economic and humanitarian crisis.

The committee said the strike will continue until the authorities pay salary arrears and meet teachers' longstanding demands. The walkout left classrooms across Khartoum without teachers. Years of civil war have devastated schools and displaced millions of children.

Teachers insist improving pay and conditions is essential to restoring the education system. The dispute follows a series of teacher protests across Sudan over delayed salaries, low wages and deteriorating conditions, as workers bear the brunt of the country's ongoing conflict and economic collapse.

Steelworkers facing uncertain future in Magboro, Ogun State, Nigeria protest over threat to jobs

Workers staged a protest outside the WEMPCO Group of Companies in Magboro, Nigeria demanding clarification over the employment status of thousands of workers. Security personnel reportedly forced employees to leave the premises while production was still underway.

More than 10,000 workers at the plant face an uncertain future.

The Steel and Engineering Workers' Union of Nigeria union opposed the stoppage, urging the parties involved to resolve the dispute through legal channels.

One dead, major road blocked as protests in Kiamaiko, Kenya enter second day

Residents of the Kiamaiko area in Nairobi, Kenya blocked sections of the Outer Ring Road for a second consecutive day June 27. They are demanding information on the whereabouts of Abdul Aziz Mulo, known as "Zizou," who disappeared after being taken by suspected security officers.

Protesters erected barricades and burned tyres, bringing traffic to a standstill as they denounced a growing pattern of enforced disappearances.

The previously peaceful demonstration became violent after police moved in to disperse the crowd. One person was reportedly shot dead and several others injured during clashes, while motorists were stranded for hours as roads remained blocked. Residents insisted the protests would continue until the authorities disclosed Mulo's whereabouts or produced him before a court.

The protest reflects mounting public anger over abductions and police abuses in Kenya, following nationwide demonstrations marking the anniversary of the 2024 anti-government protests. Human rights organisations and local residents condemned the disappearances and demanded an end to arbitrary detentions.

Nigerian students protest against harassment by army

Students at Osun State University (UNIOSUN) in Osogbo, Nigeria, blocked the Obokun Road on June 30 to protest the alleged assault of students by newly recruited Nigerian Army personnel.

The demonstration, joined by university staff and representatives of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), followed reports that army recruits raided off-campus hostels, assaulting male students, harassing female students and stealing mobile phones and other valuables.

Carrying placards reading "Students are not safe," "Our Girls are not Animals," and "We demand justice," protesters marched from the hostels to the main road, bringing traffic to a standstill. Students alleged that several women were forced to strip and were sexually assaulted, while male students were beaten during the incident. The university's vice-chancellor, Professor Clement Adebooye, joined the protest and condemned the attacks after meeting affected students.

The Nigerian Army said some of the recruits suspected of involvement had been apprehended and the Commandant of the Depot Nigerian Army in Osogbo had ordered an investigation into the allegations. Student leaders insisted those responsible must be held accountable, warning that protests would continue until justice is secured and guarantees are provided for the safety of students.

Union sabotages municipal workers' pay stoppage in Msunduzi, South Africa, suspends strike

The pay strike by municipal workers in Msunduzi, South Africa has been suspended by the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU).

The strike, which disrupted refuse collection and other municipal services for nearly three weeks, was set to resume after earlier talks failed to produce an agreement. SAMWU's decision followed assurances that a special council meeting would consider outstanding worker demands.

The dispute centres on workers' demands for regrading general assistants from salary level T3 to T7 and the resolution of longstanding salary disparities through a comprehensive job evaluation process. Union officials welcomed the municipality's indication that accounting firm Deloitte could oversee the grading exercise, as advised by the South African Local Government Association, while stressing that any agreement remains subject to approval by the municipal council.

Municipal workers in Dr AB Xuma Local Municipality in Eastern Cape, South Africa continue sit-in over wage deductions

Municipal workers in the Dr AB Xuma Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape, South Africa continued their sit-in last week, winning the support of hundreds of residents under the banner of the Ngcobo Yethu Civic Organisation.

The SAMWU members accuse the municipality of deducting money from their wages for the South African Revenue Service, medical aid, provident fund and the Unemployment Insurance Fund without transferring the funds to the relevant institutions. Protesters submitted memoranda on Monday to police and municipal officials, demanding the removal of Municipal Manager Khathutshelo Mulaudzi, whom they hold responsible.

Employees also reported receiving threats of suspension for participating in what management labelled an "unlawful" strike. Municipal Speaker Mandilakhe Kondile acknowledged concerns over the missing contributions but offered only assurances that the matter was being investigated.

Civic leaders advanced demands on immigration and local hiring to divert attention from the underlying responsibility of the state and municipal authorities for the social crisis. The central issue remains the defence of workers' wages, benefits and conditions against austerity and administrative failures.



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