

Mass demonstrations in Brazil press for shorter workweek; British Columbia nurses launch job action

Workers Struggles: The Americas

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

Brazil demonstrations press for shorter workweek

Mass demonstrations took place on Tuesday June 30 in many cities across Brazil, including all 14 provincial capitals, during Mobilization Day for A Shorter Work Week. The demonstrations demanded that the Lula administration cease blocking the passage of a constitutional amendment to replace the six-day work week (with only one day of rest) with a 5-day 40-hour workweek.

Protest marches began early in the day in Porto Alegre, Recife, João Pessoa and Río de Janeiro, and continued throughout the day across Brazil.

The demonstrations were led by the Brazilian Popular Front, the People Without Fear (Povo Sem Medo), the Workers Trade Union Federation (CUT), the Central Union Forum (Foro de Centrales de la Union) and the Life Beyond Work (Vida Além Trabalho).

The amendment was approved by the House of Deputies over a month ago, but has been blocked in The Senate, preventing its being sent to the Constitution and Justice Commission, to formalize the measure.

Buenos Aires police attack striking science workers

On Wednesday July 1, a one-day protest strike and rally by workers employed by the National Council of Scientific and Technical Investigations (CONICET) was violently attacked by Buenos Aires police. The main issue in the nationwide protest was the Milei administration's attack on the Argentine Scientific system, and the recent firing of 400 scholars.

In Buenos Aires the demonstrators were attacked by police and military gendarmes as they attempted to block Santa Fe Ave in downtown Buenos Aires.

According to a report from the Government Workers Union (ATE) the troops stampeded onto the demonstrators, violently pushing them with their shields, causing many to fall to the ground.

ATE also stated, "CONICET is experiencing one of its worst moments. We have already lost 3,000 investigators across the country, creating a crisis for scientific production and public technology."

In addition to the rehiring of the fired workers, the protesting scientists are demanding higher wages, and the reinstatement of health benefits.

Native tribes protest illegal mining and drug traffic

On Tuesday July 3, representatives of native tribal organizations rallied at the Peruvian Congress building in Lima to demand immediate approval of a measure granting Indian tribes the right to veto illegal mining and drug traffic in the Amazonian region of Peru.

The lack of legal recognition of the rights of native people is seen as an obstacle to the measures that they are already taking to protect the environment, deforestation and criminal gangs.

A previous protest on June 24 was ignored by Congress.

Massachusetts transit workers strike over wage cuts and mandatory Saturdays

Merrimack Valley Transit workers continued their strike over the July 4th holiday after walking out on July 1. The 138 drivers, mechanics and cleaners, members of Teamsters Local 170, rejected two of management proposals before walking off the job affecting bus services for 10 communities in Massachusetts' Middlesex and Essex counties.

The rejected proposals contain a 25 percent wage increase over the course of a three-year contract. However, management also wants to abolish a longstanding policy where drivers receive overtime for Saturday shifts which are voluntary.

According to the Teamsters, the policy will wipe out any gains from the wage increase. In addition, Merrimack Valley Transit wants to make Saturday work mandatory by incorporating it into drivers' regular schedule.

The Teamsters are now pressing for a one-year agreement while continuing to negotiate on a longer contract.

MyMichigan Health nurses in city of Alma on three-day strike

Nurses at MyMichigan Health in Alma, Michigan, launched a three-day strike July 3 after hospital management broke off negotiations in the wake of the issuing of a strike notice by the Michigan Nurses Association. MyMichigan put forward a provocative offer that dictated a wage freeze in year one, followed by 1 percent increases in years two and three.

The MNA has filed six charges with the National Labor Relations Board that detail a vindictive retaliation by management after nurses granted strike authorization and issued the strike notice. The charges include the

fact that MyMichigan withdrew its contract proposals, forbid nurses to trade shifts and barred the accrual of PTO on weekend overtime despite clear contract language permitting the practice.

The nurses old contract agreement expired back on February 16. No new negotiating sessions have been set.

MyMichigan Health covers a 26-county region with a total of 11 medical centers and 8,800 employees.

Workers at Woodward MPC in Niles, Illinois prepare for strike

Scores of workers at aerospace company Woodward MPC held a practice picket June 30 following a 71 percent membership strike authorization vote. The approximately 850 workers, members of United Auto Workers Local 5101, are locked in a contract battle, with negotiations stalled for months and the company committing numerous unfair labor practices.

The workers are fighting for pay parity with other aerospace shops as well as a better pay progression, more time off and job security. Pay currently ranges between \$16-\$27 an hour while the average pay in the industry is \$28-\$43 an hour.

The company produces components for both commercial and military aircraft for companies including Boeing and the U.S. Government.

The workers voted to affiliate with the UAW last year, but Woodward MPC has refused to recognize the new union. The last negotiation session was in October 2025 and the company offered only \$1.

Boston Harbor tugboat workers strike over wages

Tugboat workers, employed by the Boston Towing & Transportation, who safely tow big boats in and out of Port of Boston went on strike July 3 over wages after a month of negotiations failed to produce an agreement. Engineers, mechanics and tug operators, members of Teamsters Local 25, are demanding a 10 percent wage increase in year one of a three-year contract.

“[T]hey’re just not budging,” Brett Sheehan, a deckhand, told *The Boston Globe* in relation to the stalemate in negotiations.

The strike began one day before July 4 fireworks on the Charles River Esplanade. But the strike is expected to have a bigger impact this coming weekend when some 60 tall boats enter the Port of Boston for the Sail250 event when an estimated four million people will pack the harbor.

British Columbia nurses launch job action

More than 60,000 nurses in the province of British Columbia are in the first week of limited strike action in pursuit of improved staffing levels to alleviate high stress and extreme exhaustion amongst the workforce and better service for patients. In this regard, the nurses are demanding that the New Democratic Party government make good on its 2023 agreement to redress unsatisfactory nurse to patient ratios which the NDP continues to ignore.

The nurses have been without a contract since October 2025. Last week, after earlier rejecting by a vote of 67 percent a tentative contract offer that had been unanimously recommended by the BC Nurses Union

officialdom, nurses demanded job action. The proposed deal failed to properly address nurse to patient ratios and offered only a 12 percent wage increase spread out over 4 years—an actual real wage cut after the years of wage eroding inflation calculated over the life of the last contract.

As nursing is designated an essential service, a full-scale walkout is not allowed by anti-worker labour laws, but nurses are still permitted to work-to-rule, such as taking all their own breaks, refusing to work non-essential overtime and refusing work that is not in their job description.

Due to constant low staffing in the hospitals, nurses often cover for administrative staff when they went on break, performed clean-ups and processed doctors’ paperwork.

The union hasn’t had formal negotiations with the Health Employers Association of B.C. since their failed attempt to push a settlement on the membership last May. Negotiations are, however, expected to re-start this week.

Vancouver outside municipal workers step up strike actions

More than 100 parks workers went on indefinite strike this past Sunday in their contract fight with Metro Vancouver. The workers’ duties include cleaning parks, garbage collection, attending to needed repairs, maintaining trails and providing immediate first aid to those in the park. There are 25 parks impacted by the strike in the Metro Vancouver region. Due to essential worker legislation, 15 members of the park staff must remain on duty. Metro Vancouver is the regional government that provides and co-ordinates services for 21 municipalities across British Columbia’s Lower Mainland.

The park workers strike is the latest job action amongst the 700 workers employed as outside workers for Metro Vancouver. They are members of the Greater Vancouver Regional District Employees’ Union (GVRDEU). Workers are demanding health and safety improvements, job security against contracting out and recruitment and retention processes to maintain staffing levels. On June 15, all non-essential workers carried out a one-day strike.

Also involved in the contract struggle are water and sewage workers who have been conducting a ban on overtime, standby and acting role jobs since May 24. The workers operate six regional wastewater treatment plants, monitor air quality and build infrastructure. Most workers in the key water and sewage installations have been designated as essential and cannot legally strike.



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