

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 flight and airport workers strike across Italy for better pay and working conditions

Airport and flight workers across Italy held 24-hour strikes Sunday, with nationwide walkouts by easyJet flight pilots and cabin crew, ground-handling staff, baggage workers, security personnel and air traffic controllers. Hundreds of local and international flights were delayed or cancelled at the major airports of Milan, Rome and Catania.

The members of CUB Trasporti, Uiltrasporti and several other unions were striking over pay, working conditions and other workplace grievances. The stoppage is part of growing unrest among aviation workers across Europe. In Germany, pilots have held four major strikes against Lufthansa this year in a fight for better wages and conditions.

Journalists at Agence France-Presse in Istanbul, Türkiye strike for a living wage

Journalists and media workers at Agence France-Presse's Istanbul bureau began strike action Monday, after four months of collective bargaining failed to produce an agreement over pay.

The Journalists' Union of Türkiye members are demanding wage increases that keep pace with soaring living costs. They say salaries have been steadily eroded by inflation, leaving many struggling to maintain their standard of living. They argue that official inflation figures bear little relation to reality.

The dispute takes place amid an increasingly hostile climate for journalists in Türkiye, where media workers face mounting political repression alongside worsening economic conditions.

Brewery workers in Flanders, Belgium stop work in protest at increased work and deteriorating conditions

Workers for AB InBev, the world's largest brewer, went on an indefinite wildcat strike July 3 in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium. They are protesting staffing shortages, rising workloads and management's refusal to meet workers' demands.

The stoppages disrupted production and distribution, causing delays of

beer deliveries.

The dispute reflects growing anger over intensified work schedules and deteriorating conditions following company restructuring. The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions and Union of White-Collar, Technical and Executive Employees members accuse the company of boosting profits by reducing staffing levels while increasing pressure on the remaining workforce.

Further stoppages by local government skilled workers at several UK councils over pay

Around 1,000 UK local government skilled tradespeople or craftworkers walked out Monday and Wednesday, following previous stoppages June 17, 18, 23 and 24. The targeted action affected housing maintenance and repairs at several local authorities, including Bristol, Southwark, Stoke-on-Trent, Newham, Leeds, Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

The Unite union members oppose the government employers' body pay offer of 3.2 percent for 2025. That offer followed 10 years of pay freezes and below-inflation offers. The offer also included removing apprentices from the agreement and a move to job evaluation, which Unite says will fail to recognise workers' skills.

Announcing this week's stoppages, Unite noted "more local authorities could join the dispute in the future." On Wednesday, some of the striking workers held a protest outside the Local Government Association national conference at the Bournemouth International Centre.

Teaching staff at Oxford school in England walk out over restructuring and redundancy threats

UK teachers at the Oxford Spires Academy secondary school in Oxford walked out Wednesday and Thursday, following a one-day stoppage on July 3.

The National Education Union members are protesting the centralisation of services by the school's parent academy, the Anthem Academy Trust, citing a lack of consultation on restructuring plans they fear will lead to redundancies. They also want an independent review of funding after trust senior managers were awarded "disproportionately" high pay rises.

Strike by academics at Scottish university over job cuts

Academics at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland walked out Monday and Tuesday, coinciding with graduation ceremonies at the university.

The University and College Union (UCU) members were protesting proposals by the university to cut jobs to save £4 million. The university is also proposing to cut research and scholarship time, diminishing the quality of teaching provided.

The UCU's main sticking point is the institution's refusal to rule out compulsory redundancies, indicating the union will accept voluntary redundancies.

Stoppage by rail staff at West Midlands Railway, UK over rest day working payments

Around 100 UK rail staff at West Midlands Railways (WMR) are to strike this weekend. It will impact services around Birmingham and between London and Birmingham. Roster clerks working for WMR will begin a 24-hour stoppage at midnight Thursday, while Duty Train Crew Managers and Control grades will begin a 24-hour stoppage noon on Friday.

The Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) members are seeking parity for rest day working payments in line with those paid to other unions.

The TSSA members previously took action in May over the same issue.

South African police shoot two dead in water protest

South African police opened fire and shot dead two residents of Ratanda, near Heidelberg, Gauteng province on Friday, during protests over a month-long water outage.

Demonstrations erupted as residents demanded the restoration of water supplies, but the protests were met with a heavy police response. Authorities confirmed that the Independent Police Investigative Directorate is investigating the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

Thirty-nine-year-old Siphon Motaung was fatally shot while visiting friends near the protest, despite reportedly not participating in the demonstration. Twenty-three-year-old Katleho Moloi died after allegedly being struck by rubber bullets fired by police during the protest. Their families have demanded a full accounting of the killings, with relatives describing the devastating loss and condemning the lack of official information surrounding the incidents.

South Africa faces an escalating water crisis due to lack of investment leading to lack of maintenance causing water leaks.

Municipal waste workers in Johannesburg, South Africa strike to demand permanent employment

The three-week stoppage by casual workers in South Africa contracted through Johannesburg's municipal waste entity, Pikitup severely disrupted refuse collection across large parts of the city. Workers walked out to demand permanent jobs, after years of casualisation through labour brokers without secure contracts.

Pikitup said the workers are not its direct employees but are employed

by third-party contractors. Substantial backlogs built up following the escalation of the dispute after marches on June 30. Refuse bins went uncollected for days, with rubbish overflowing onto streets and residential complexes.

Residents warned of mounting public health risks, including foul odours and conditions conducive to rats and other pests. Many were forced to purchase additional refuse bags and store or dispose of rubbish themselves, adding to household costs.

The strike has exposed the dependence of essential public services on precariously employed workers while leaving working-class communities to bear the consequences.

Johannesburg's waste collection system is near collapse due to lack of funding, ageing trucks and full landfill sites, causing residents to dump rubbish where they can.

Meanwhile, directly employed waste workers in Middelburg walked out on Monday over the threat of privatisation. The South African Municipal Workers' Union members are also demanding more trucks in working order.

Health workers treating Ebola patients in Ituri province, DRC strike over unpaid salaries

Frontline health workers in Ituri province, Democratic Republic of the Congo walked off the job July 7, in protest over months of unpaid salaries and Ebola response bonuses, threatening efforts to contain the country's worst-ever outbreak of the Bundibugyo strain of the virus. The strike involves doctors, nurses, laboratory staff, burial teams and other response workers who say they have not been paid since the outbreak was declared in May.

The workers also complain about shortages of protective equipment, medicines and other essential supplies while facing long hours, dangerous conditions and hostility from some local communities. They accuse the government of failing to honour repeated promises to pay outstanding wages and benefits, warning that they can no longer continue working without compensation.

The strike has disrupted treatment centres and contact-tracing operations in Bunia and surrounding areas as health officials struggle to contain an outbreak that has infected more than 1,700 people and killed around 580. While the Health Ministry says it is working to resolve the payment dispute, workers insist they will not fully resume duties until all outstanding salaries and allowances have been paid.

The World Health Organisation has warned that the outbreak is expanding faster than the response efforts, and the disruption will further undermine attempts to contain the disease and carry out newly launched clinical trials.

Attempts to contain the outbreak have been thwarted by cuts to aid, particularly after the dismantling of United States Agency for International Development by the Trump administration.

Health workers in Kenya protest after six years on temporary contracts

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) workers in Kenya demonstrated outside the Ministry of Health headquarters at Afya House in Nairobi July 8, demanding immediate transfer to permanent and pensionable terms after spending six years on temporary contracts.

The workers said their contracts expired in May and June without any formal communication from the government. They accused the authorities of forcing them to continue working while leaving their employment status unresolved.

The protesters demanded immediate issuance of permanent appointment letters, payment of outstanding gratuities, remittance of National Social Security Fund deductions and promotion and redesignation for eligible staff. They rejected any further contract extensions, insisting that Parliament had already allocated funds for their transition and accusing county governments of delaying implementation. Demonstrators also alleged that billions of shillings earmarked for the programme had been diverted into other projects.

The protest follows a nationwide strike notice issued by health unions warning that public healthcare workers would take industrial action if county governments failed to absorb more than 7,000 UHC workers into permanent employment. Union leaders said demonstrations would continue until all eligible workers receive permanent and pensionable appointment letters. They warned the government that the dispute could escalate.



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