

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 Airbus workers in Spain strike for better pay and conditions

Workers at Airbus across Spain are on strike until July 31 after 3,000 walked out on July 1 at the Getafe plant, near Madrid. The strike then spread to all eight Spanish sites where more than 14,000 workers manufacture military aircraft, satellites and components for commercial jets.

The Independent Union of Aviation Professionals (SIPA) members are protesting years-long deterioration in working conditions, including below-inflation pay rises, stricter attendance monitoring, cuts to remote working and attacks on workplace benefits.

The strike has drawn support from the General Union of Workers and General Confederation of Labour federations and, more recently, Spain's largest Airbus union, the Workers' Commissions, after more than 90 percent of its members voted to back the dispute.

Civil servants in Greece walk out over government changes to employment conditions

On Tuesday, Greek civil servants held a five-hour nationwide stoppage and workers in Athens gathered in protest at the gateway to the Acropolis, marching alongside students towards the Parliament building.

The Confederation of Greek Civil Servants' Trade Unions members oppose the government's proposed constitutional revision of legislation, which they argue would undermine the constitutional guarantee of permanent civil service employment and weaken job security via new evaluation and disciplinary mechanisms.

Hungarian IKEA workers in first strike for 36 years demand pay improvements

Around 300 workers in Hungary's three IKEA stores held the first strike in the company's 36-year presence in the country with a two-hour warning strike July 9 and similar stoppages over subsequent days.

The Commercial Employees' Union members want a 6 percent pay rise for blue-collar employees, annual wage negotiations, greater pay

transparency and a collective agreement. They warn that further industrial action could be launched at any time if the company fails to meet their demands.

The dispute follows recent strikes by IKEA workers in Germany, France and Italy, highlighting growing opposition by retail workers across Europe to declining living standards and company attacks on wages and conditions.

App-based food delivery workers throughout Italy strike for guaranteed income and health and safety protection

Food delivery riders working for online platforms including Glovo, Deliveroo and Just Eat staged strikes across Italy July 15, with walkouts centred on Milan, Bologna and Florence to protest dangerous working conditions during the country's severe heatwave.

The strike was organised by the members of the New Work Identities section of the Italian General Confederation of Labour, representing atypical workers such as temporary staff, freelancers and "gig economy" workers.

The riders demanded guarantees that suspensions of deliveries during the hottest hours would not leave them without pay and called for stronger protections for workers exposed to extreme temperatures.

The strike underscores the need for guaranteed income, improved health and safety protections and recognition of the rights of app-based workers employed by multinational delivery companies across Europe.

Second union joins stoppage by UK school examination board over pay

Staff working for the UK's largest school examination board AQA are on strike this week. AQA sets and administers GCSE and A-level examination papers for around 1.4 million pupils—over half of all school pupils in England facing exams.

Around 400 Unison union members began seven days of stoppages on Monday. They took previous action over the same issue of pay. They will be joined by around 100 Unite union members, who are set to walk out on Thursday and Friday.

The workers are protesting an imposed pay structure four years ago that led to many lower paid workers struggling to get by. According to Unison and Unite, it would take a rise of more than 10 percent to make up for the erosion of pay through inflation. Both unions say around 10 percent of their members at AQA have to rely on foodbanks to survive.

Four AQA offices are involved in the action, Manchester, Guildford,

Harrogate and Milton Keynes. Some strikers will attend a lobby of MPs in Parliament on Friday.

UK Foreign Office civil servants walk out over restructuring proposals

Civil servants working for the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) walked out Thursday over proposals to restructure the department.

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) members voted for the action after the FCDO refused to rule out compulsory redundancies as part of the restructuring. They are also calling for meaningful consultations with unions and adherence to established civil service redundancy procedures. According to a *Civil Service World* report, some estimates put the number of jobs to be lost as part of the restructure at around 2,000.

Additionally, there will be a full-day stoppage July 22, a half-day stoppage July 23, and full-day stoppages July 29-30. The stoppages were announced following the failure of talks between the PCS, the FCDO permanent under-secretary and senior human resources officials at a meeting last week. Picket lines were to be mounted at three FCDO sites in London. Action short of striking is also taking place between July 17 and 30.

Strike by workers at UK rail maintenance company in Wales over pay

Workers employed by Spanish multi-national rail building and maintenance company CAF Rail on its Transport for Wales contract held near 24-hour stoppages Sunday and Monday evenings.

The Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) members are opposing a pay offer that fails to address years of declining living standards. They are also protesting the company's refusal to offer overtime to RMT members who had taken previous industrial action.

Picket lines were held at CAF Rail's Chester depot.

Walkout by bus manufacturing workers in Scarborough, UK over pay

Around 400 bus manufacturing workers employed by vehicle builder Alexander Dennis at their facility in Scarborough, England began a four-day stoppage Thursday.

The Unite union members rejected a 4 percent pay offer from the company, which did not address years of below-inflation rises. They 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 by only 15.3 percent. Wages lag around 20 percent behind the cost of living.

The workers held a previous six-day stoppage at the end of June. Unite states further walkouts could be scheduled if there is no resolution.

Strike of machine tool workers at Iranian factory over unpaid wages

A report by the Shahrokh Zamani Action Campaign notes a recent strike at the Machine Sazi factory in the northwestern city of Tabriz, Iran. The factory, established in 1969, produces machines and machine tools.

Around 1,600 workers at the plant walked out June 23 over two months' unpaid wages. They were also protesting the lack of a legal right to strike.

After decades of sanctions, the US has now resumed its blockade of ships in and out of Iran. It has also recommenced its military attacks on the country which is exacerbating its economic crisis.

Health workers at the Ebola treatment centre at Democratic Republic of the Congo hospital walk out after being unpaid

Health workers at the Ebola treatment centre at Rwampara General Hospital in Ituri province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), launched a strike on July 13 after going unpaid for two months.

The workforce—including epidemiologists, case investigators, drivers and gravediggers—shut the hospital and blocked access roads, burning tyres in protest. Workers declared they could not continue combating the deadly Ebola outbreak without receiving their wages, insisting they did not want to abandon their jobs but could no longer work without pay.

The strike comes as the DRC confronts the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak recorded in Africa. Since the outbreak was declared in May, authorities have confirmed 1,926 cases and 702 deaths, while the virus has spread beyond Ituri into two additional provinces. The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, circulated for weeks before being officially identified, complicating efforts to contain the disease.

Government officials attributed delayed wage payments to disputes over payroll lists, claiming they were verifying the identities of workers after allegations that ineligible names had been added. Chronic underfunding exacerbated by US aid cuts has undermined the response to the epidemic, with frontline health workers forced to fight for their pay while confronting one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases.

Academic staff at Nigerian university on indefinite strike over unpaid wages

Academic staff at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko in Nigeria's Ondo State began an indefinite strike July 10 over non-payment of their May and June 2026 salaries.

Following a union congress resolution, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) members are refusing to teach, supervise students, attend meetings or perform any official duties until salary arrears are paid.

ASUU stated that repeated demands for payment had gone unanswered by the university administration and the Ondo State government.

The strike brought academic activities at the state-owned university to a standstill and threatens to derail the institution's academic calendar. Second-semester examinations scheduled to begin July 20 are in doubt unless the dispute is resolved. Pay, working conditions and chronic underfunding are major issues affecting higher education in Nigeria.

Pikitup waste workers in Johannesburg, South Africa strike to demand permanent jobs

Casual workers at Pikitup, the municipal waste management company in Johannesburg, South Africa walked out July 8-9, disrupting refuse collection through protests at five depots while demanding permanent employment.

The largest action took place at the Avalon depot, where workers blocked the entrance, preventing waste collection vehicles from leaving. The protests have affected refuse removal services in several parts of the city.

The protesting workers are demanding that Pikitup end its reliance on insecure casual labour and provide permanent jobs. Thousands of municipal workers are employed on temporary or precarious contracts, enduring low pay, job insecurity and the constant threat of unemployment while performing essential public services.

The dispute has disrupted waste collection across Johannesburg, with the Avalon depot remaining the centre of the protest.

Battery workers at Metair South Africa strike over job losses

Workers at First Battery, a subsidiary of South African-based automotive components group Metair, walked out on indefinite strike July 6 after the company pushed ahead with 165 job cuts at sites in Benoni, Cape Town, East London and Durban.

The retrenchments follow a months-long Section 189 consultation process, during which the company maintained that workforce reductions were necessary to secure the long-term profitability and sustainability of the operation.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) responded to the job losses with a nationalist campaign including tariff protections against imports, plus proposed reductions in waste and scrap costs, improved maintenance programmes and other cost-saving measures.

Numsa argued the job cuts were due to management decisions rather than economic necessity. General Secretary Irvin Jim accused management of undermining South Africa's Automotive Masterplan Vision 2035 by relying on imported batteries rather than expanding local production.

The fight to defend jobs must be taken out of the hands of the corporatist union leaders and linked with workers in the auto industry internationally who face a massive jobs cull.



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