

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.

Romanian health workers in national walkout over government health cuts

Doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers across Romania staged a two-hour warning strike July 20. The action affected hundreds of hospitals and healthcare facilities between 9 and 11a.m., with only emergency services and around one-third of normal medical activity maintained.

The SANITAS Federation members protest the government's proposed salary legislation, which they say entrenches pay inequalities across the health sector. They also oppose a freeze on recruitment that has intensified already chronic understaffing.

The health workers warn that the government's austerity measures threaten both their livelihood and patient care. It is reported that an indefinite nationwide general strike will follow on July 28 if the government refuses to meet their demands.

Ancillary staff at London hospital walk out over parity claims and union recognition

Dozens of ancillary staff working in catering, cleaning and security for outsourcing firm ISS at Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield, north London began a three-day walkout on Wednesday. This follows a stoppage July 15-17.

The GMB union members voted by a 95 percent majority for the action. They are seeking parity of terms and conditions with directly employed National Health Service (NHS) staff. They are also seeking union recognition.

Further stoppages are planned if there is no resolution.

Strikes planned at UK rail company over safety fears

Rail staff working for East Midlands Railway (EMR) are set to walk out on August 1 and the following two Saturdays. EMR runs express services from the East Midlands area of England to London. It also covers Yorkshire and the North West region of England.

The Rail Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members plan the stoppages over safety fears following the introduction in April of a fleet of

810 passenger trains. Announcing the stoppages, the RMT said, "EMR has been sending trains into service that are likely to fail and require a full reset which leaves the train with no active safety systems including loss of communication between train drivers, dispatchers and trackside which has occurred at least three times in the last week alone."

EMR driver Shaun Burton was killed June 19 when his Corby to London St Pancras train ran into the back of a stationary train. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees has called for an independent worker-led inquiry to prevent another disastrous incident.

Strike of housing association workers in London over pension attacks

Staff working for the East End Homes (EEH) housing association in London's Tower Hamlets borough were on strike Monday through Wednesday. They work as administrators, caretakers and housing officers responsible for around 4,000 homes.

The Unison union members voted by a 100 percent majority for the action in June. They are opposed to plans by the housing association to move the workers from their current Defined Benefit pension scheme to an inferior Defined Contributions scheme. It would mean workers losing thousands of pounds a year pension income.

Staff were assured their pension scheme would be protected when they were transferred from Tower Hamlets Council to EEH back in 2002.

The staff, who held six days of stoppages in early July, are set to walk out July 27-31.

Belgian firefighters in Brussels strike over staff shortages and poor working conditions

firefighters in Brussels, Belgium held a 24-hour strike from July 21, the country's National Day, to July 22, protesting staff shortages, worsening working conditions and planned restructuring.

The General Union of Public Services members oppose proposed staffing cuts, the removal of emergency vehicles, compulsory personnel transfers, changes to staff benefits and the introduction of an annual evaluation system, which they say will intensify pressure on already overstretched crews.

The firefighters' action follows strikes on December 31, 2025 and February 12 this year over chronic staff shortages. There are a shortfall of 200 full-time equivalent firefighters, while the number of call-outs is increasing. Firefighters insist that adequate staffing and resources are essential to guarantee public safety.

Engineers for the Republic of Ireland Electricity Supply Board strike for overtime pay

Around 20 engineers employed in the Engineering and Major Projects division of the Irish state-owned Electricity Supply Board (ESB) began industrial action July 15, imposing a ban on non-emergency out-of-hours work. The engineers are responsible for designing, upgrading and maintaining key electricity infrastructure across the Republic of Ireland.

The Unite union members demand overtime pay commensurate with fellow workers on premium overtime rates. The engineers receive an “excess hours” allowance which was frozen from 2001 to 2025 and has conditions attached, which they say does not pay them for hours actually worked.

The industrial action will remain in place until the ESB management addresses the disputed pay arrangements and the engineers' concerns.

West Bank protest over planned school demolition

Palestinian teachers supported by students held a protest outside their primary school in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on July 15. They were protesting plans by Israeli defence forces to demolish the school, which was built in 2016 and serves 190 students.

Israel has carried out a series of such demolitions of Palestinian homes and infrastructure over recent years, often citing lack of building permits.

Protests in Yemen over deteriorating living conditions

Last week saw protests in several southern Yemeni governorates. The protests were in response to deteriorating service and economic conditions. In particular, they are protesting the costs and provision of basic services, electricity, fuel and water. Yemen has suffered years of conflict, leaving it one of the poorest countries in the Middle East.

Protests in Iraq over power shortages

Residents of the central Iraq city of Najaf protested Sunday against ongoing cuts to the electricity supply. They blocked the Najaf-Kufa road and marched to the governorate and provincial council headquarters.

Iraq depends on Iran for around a third of the natural gas used in its production of electricity. The ongoing attacks on Iran by the US have impacted the supply of natural gas.

The Ministry of Electricity apologised in parliament for the disruption to electrify supplies citing the regional conflict as well as aging infrastructure, lack of funding and rising summer demands.

Health workers in Mozambique extend nationwide strike

Health workers across Mozambique have extended their nationwide strike for a further 30 days. They came out against the government's failure to address longstanding demands over wages, working conditions and the chronic lack of medicines and medical supplies in public health facilities.

The action called by the United Association of Mozambican Health Workers (APSUSM) continues as a total stoppage of work in health units across the country. Workers insist the crisis in the public health system is worsening.

APSUSM said hospitals and clinics remain plagued by shortages of essential medicines, equipment and basic supplies, undermining patient care and placing impossible burdens on health workers. Union leaders say the government has failed to respond adequately to repeated complaints over deteriorating conditions, prompting workers to prolong the strike despite its impact on already overstretched health services.

The extension of the strike underscores the deepening crisis confronting healthcare workers in Mozambique, where low pay, poor working conditions and chronic underfunding have fuelled repeated industrial disputes. The continuing stoppage shows the workers' determination to fight for improved conditions despite mounting pressure from the authorities.

Kenyan doctors in Kisii County begin indefinite strike

Doctors at Kisii County Referral and Teaching Hospital have begun an indefinite strike after repeated delays in the payment of their salaries. This follows a warning issued by the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU).

The industrial action has severely disrupted services, affecting outpatient clinics, specialist care and other non-emergency services. Doctors withdrew their labour over what they say is the county government's persistent failure to pay them on time.

The strike follows mounting tensions between the union and Kisii County authorities. In June, KMPDU warned that doctors would progressively scale back services if salaries were not paid by agreed deadlines, arguing that chronic delays had caused severe financial hardship for health workers. The union said repeated appeals to county officials had failed to resolve the dispute, leaving doctors no alternative but to strike.

The Kisii dispute is the latest involving Kenyan health workers over delayed wages, staffing shortages and the failure of national and county governments to honour agreements. Healthcare workers have increasingly turned to strikes and protests as they confront deteriorating working conditions, while patients bear the consequences of repeated disruptions to already overstretched public health services.

Congolese health workers fighting Ebola come under attack, continue their dispute over pay arrears

More than a dozen attacks on health facilities and medical personnel have severely disrupted efforts to contain the rapidly expanding Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ituri province. Treatment centres, burial teams and healthcare workers have come under attack from hostile groups, forcing some humanitarian organisations to withdraw staff from high-risk areas and limiting access to infected communities as the outbreak continues to spread.

The deteriorating security situation has compounded an already deepening crisis for health workers. Medical staff have staged strikes over months of unpaid wages while working under hazardous conditions, with more than 100 healthcare workers infected during the outbreak. The violence, combined with staff shortages, insecurity and the absence of an approved vaccine or treatment for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, has undermined contact tracing and delayed urgently needed care.

The attacks reflect the broader social and political crisis confronting workers in eastern Congo, where decades of conflict, poverty and mistrust of the authorities have fuelled hostility towards the official Ebola response. International health agencies have warned that unless the safety of healthcare workers can be guaranteed and the necessary resources provided to combat the epidemic, efforts to contain one of the country's worst Ebola outbreaks will remain dangerously compromised.

Miners' strike in Eswatini declared illegal

Workers at Maloma Colliery in Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) began strike action July 13, after rejecting the company's proposed two-year wage offer of a cumulative 9 percent increase—5 percent in 2026 and 4 percent in 2027. The miners, members of the Amalgamated Trade Union of Swaziland, blocked access to the mine as negotiations over pay broke down.

The Industrial Court declared the strike unlawful after the company filed an urgent application, ordering workers to end the stoppage and cease obstructing access to the mine. Management demanded that workers get back to work before they would consider changing their offer.

The court ruling underscores the growing together of the employers and the state in Eswatini and throughout Africa. The dispute reflects growing anger among miners over their declining pay relative to rising living costs.

Egyptian paper workers hold sit-down strike over unpaid wages

Workers at EMAK Paper in Egypt have continued their sit-in for more than a week, demanding payment of overdue wages and improvements to working conditions.

Workers say management has failed to resolve their grievances despite repeated appeals, leaving them determined to maintain their protest until their demands are met. The dispute escalated as workers accused management of attempting to wear them down rather than negotiate a settlement.

The action follows other labour struggles across Egypt, including strikes and sit-ins by textile, agricultural and other industrial workers over unpaid wages, low pay and worsening conditions, reflecting growing opposition to the impact of the country's deepening economic crisis. Despite legal restrictions and intimidation, workers in a number of sectors have continued to organise strikes and sit-ins in defence of wages, jobs and basic working conditions.

Union calls off strike by Phokwane municipal workers, South Africa

A strike at Phokwane Municipality, South Africa has been called off by the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu).

The municipal workers issued a memorandum of demands to the municipality June 19, accusing management of failing to address salary disparities, implement upgrade of the municipality from Grade 2 to 3, appoint interns, absorb contract workers and improve skills development.

Concerns were also raised about the unsafe condition of the municipal building, which could collapse at any time. Workers said they had been forced to work in hazardous conditions without adequate safety equipment. They called for provision of personal protective equipment and appropriate tools.

The strike disrupted refuse collection, with residents dumping uncollected rubbish outside municipal offices and spreading litter around the streets of Hartswater last week.

On July 15, the Labour Court issued an interdict ordering an end to the strike. The court ordered removal of any locks or obstructions preventing access to the municipal building, closed since July 10. The court also barred Samwu members from further strike action, including picketing, but workers continued their action, saying they would strike until their demands were met.

Samwu stepped in, calling off the strike after a meeting with management on July 20. The union agreed with management that "service delivery must continue," ordering a return to work the following day. Management have issued timelines for the issues in the memorandum and committed to implementation of agreed actions, while deferring "some matters" to "a council resolution."



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