

Workers Struggles: The Americas

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The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature
Latin America

Guatemala bus, transit and delivery drivers hold protest strike

On July 20 bus drivers, taxi drivers, and delivery drivers blocked roads in Guatemala City and Mixco, demanding fuel subsidies, and higher wages. Upon the intervention of police forces, the strikers agreed to reopen routes every 20 minutes.

Short-route drivers' union leader Gamaliel Chin raised the demand that price controls on fares be lifted, pointing out that they have been frozen since 2013.

The striking drivers denounced the refusal of the companies they work for, to negotiate their demands. The owners, in turn, claim that there is no money to provide raises, particularly since the explosion in fuel prices that result from the US war on Iran. Guatemalan authorities have budgeted a subsidy of US \$1.00 per gallon of diesel fuel, and US \$0.65 per gallon of gasoline.

Honduras peasants demand an end to the confiscation of their lands

Peasant members of the People's Peasant and Indian Alliance, together with inhabitants of coastal Afro-Indian communities, marched and rallied on July 20, demanding an end to the confiscation of their small farms that has accelerated since the Nasry Asfura administration took power six months ago, following approval by the National Legislature of laws that make it easier to dispossess peasants of their lands so their minerals, and touristic resources can be exploited by capitalist firms. The same legislation makes it easier for the courts to persecute people who defend their rights over their lands and defend forests and the natural environment (now defined as 'terrorists')

The demonstrators blocked roads in towns and cities across Honduras, including the southern routes into Tegucigalpa, Honduras' capital.

Nurses protest critical nurse shortage in Paraguay

The Paraguayan Nurses Association (APE) is demanding that the Santiago Peña administration resolve the critical shortage of public nurses, supplies and equipment.

The nurses rallied at the Health and Social Welfare ministry in Asunción, the nation's capital, on July 22 demanding that an end to part-time contracts, the hiring of more nurses and health workers, and an increase in supplies and equipment be included in the 2027 national budget. At the rally, the demonstrators denounced the Health Crisis that is taking place and pointed out that both nurses and public hospitals and clinics, and their patients, are suffering the consequences.

"We have hospitals that have no running water; that don't have electricity; don't have minimal infrastructure; not to mention supply shortages," declared a leader of the Doctors Union, which has declared its intention to strike on August 24 through 28.

Argentine retirees march against Milei

On Wednesday July 22, older adults mobilized at the National Legislature in Buenos Aires against the Milei administration. The protesters denounced the loss of 300,000 jobs and the budget cutbacks mandated by the International Monetary Fund.

The Buenos Aires municipal government responded to the peaceful march by sending several hundred police, that surrounded the legislature and blocked traffic in the vicinity of the building.

Many of the older adults described the collapse in their living conditions; "we are protesting over our hunger wages, over the poverty we are going through, over everything that needy people are facing," declared Victor, one of the demonstrators. Another demonstrator, a retired hospital worker said: "I march driven by the crisis in this country, of pensioners, and of society. The government survives by instilling fear and repression against people."

United States

Picket line clash between striking workers and sheriff's deputies at C&H sugar in California

Contra Costa County Sheriff's deputies arrested nine strikers and supporters and sent another to a hospital during a July 21 protest at the C&H refinery in Crockett, California. Some 90

members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 6 went on strike back on June 15 over overtime pay, sick time healthcare and retirement benefits.

The previous day, C&H hired non-union workers to unload a ship they had directed to the Crockett Refinery. Members of ILWU Local 10 from multiple northern ports responded by launching a solidarity strike and joined Local 6 strikers on the picket line.

The following day, some 400 workers blocked the entrance to the plant. One vehicle crossing the picket line struck a worker and sent him to the hospital. A second vehicle is believed to have struck another worker.

Sheriff's deputies attempted to gain control of the scene over a five-hour period. Later in the day when the picket line had shrunk to about 150 and more law enforcement arrived, they moved in. Local 10 President Michael Villeggiante instructed workers to move, but a number refused to do so and they were assaulted by police.

Vestis corporation manager in Las Vegas engages in harassment and retaliation against workers

Some 120 drivers at Vestis corporation in Las Vegas, Nevada, voted unanimously July 23 to authorize strike action over workplace harassment. Teamsters Local 14 had filed an unfair labor practice charge the previous week over threats of retaliation.

Secretary-Treasurer Jason Gately issued a statement, saying, "For more than a year, Teamsters have faced threats, harassment, intimidation, and disrespect from a service manager at the Las Vegas facility that has created a hostile and unsustainable work environment — and it must stop immediately. In one specific example, a Teamster says he was denied permission to leave to be at the hospital for the birth of his child. We have raised these concerns repeatedly through the chain of command — before this contract expired on May 1 and again at the bargaining table — but regional management has failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the conduct."

Teamsters Local 14 is currently in negotiations with Vestis. The old contract agreement expired back on May 1. Vestis, formerly Aramark Uniform Services, provides uniforms and workplace supplies through facilities in 44 states and territories throughout North America.

Adams MultiMedia workers in Skagit, Washington state strike over wages and AI

News workers for three media outlets located in Skagit, Washington, owned by Adams MultiMedia went on strike July 24 to obtain annual wage increases to offset the rising cost of living. The three news operations being struck by Pacific Northwest

Newspaper Guild are Anacortes American, Skagit Valley Herald and Stanwood Camano News.

The workers, represented by the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, make as little as \$19.10 an hour in a state where Indeed.com estimates the median pay for journalists is \$49,000 a year. When negotiations commenced nine months ago, Adams MultiMedia refused to offer any pay increase. In recent negotiations they have offered a 2 percent annual wage increase.

"We have to be able to afford to live here in order to work here," striker Emma Fletcher-Frazer told La Conner Community News.

Workers were informed by management that Adams MultiMedia wants "no limitation on the use of Artificial Intelligence." This would include the generation of news content.

Adams MultiMedia is based in Minnesota and run by Mark Adams, the son of billionaire Stephen Adams. Since the company's founding in 2013, it has acquired more than 127 newspapers in 20 states and Washington, D.C.

Canada

Nova Scotia Power workers issue strike notice

About 800 workers, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) are set to strike as early as this Wednesday. The issuance of a notice to strike follows on from the rejection of a tentative contract put before them by union officials. It was the second time that the utility workers had voted to reject a proposed agreement. They are pursuing improved wages, benefits and working conditions. Essential Services regulations in the province require a significant percentage of the striking workers to remain on the job.



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