Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

30 July 2026

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

Doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers in Romania strike indefinitely for improved pay and conditions

Healthcare workers at more than 400 hospitals and nearly 480 healthcare facilities across Romania began an indefinite nationwide strike July 28, after the government failed to respond to a two-hour warning strike held July 20.

The SANITAS Federation members, including doctors, nurses, ambulance staff and other healthcare workers are opposed to the government's proposed new pay law, which would deepen wage inequalities and reduce income for many employees.

The workers also demand an end to chronic understaffing and improved working conditions, warning that years of austerity and underfunding have pushed Romania's public health system deeper into crisis.

Italian rail workers stop work in protest over poor pay and conditions

Rail workers across Italy held a 24-hour national strike from the evening of July 23 to July 24, disrupting high-speed, long-distance and regional services operated by FS Italiane, Italo and Trenord.

The CUB Trasporti union members oppose deteriorating working conditions and privatisation, and demand wage increases in line with inflation, improved health and safety protections and shorter working hours. They also want safeguards for apprentices and night-shift workers, an end to outsourcing, and lower retirement ages.

The walkout was part of a continuing wave of industrial action across Italy as workers resist declining real wages, worsening conditions and government-backed restructuring.

Postal workers in Corsica, France strike against attacks on working conditions

Postal workers at French postal service, La Poste's sorting centre in Ajaccio, Corsica began an indefinite strike July 27, bringing the processing and distribution of letters and parcels across the southern Corsica region to a standstill.

The CGT and STC union members protest chronic understaffing, deteriorating working conditions and management's refusal to address their demands. Years of job cuts have left the sorting centre unable to function safely or efficiently, forcing remaining staff to take on excessive workloads while postal services steadily decline.

Further stoppage by facility management workers at Northern Ireland government offices over working conditions

Workers employed by French-owned facility management company Sodexo are on strike Monday through Friday this week at Northern Ireland government offices. Sodexo workers are employed as receptionists, porters, kitchen staff and cleaners at UK government offices Erskine House and Carne House in Belfast.

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) members are opposed to plans by Sodexo to cut hours, make redundancies and change job roles. The workers received letters from Sodexo saying individual consultations were completed and the changes will be imposed.

Two weeks of stoppages were previously held over the issue.

Workers at Northern Ireland sawmill walk out over derisory pay offer

Around 150 workers at Balcas Timber, Enniskillen began a week-long stoppage on July 24.

The Unite union members rejected a pay offer of only 50p extra an hour for the next two years. They previously held three separate one-day stoppages over the issue. According to Unite, many of the workers earn little more than the minimum wage of £12.71 an hour and rely on overtime to get by.

Balcas Timber is part of the UK-wide timber processing company Glennon Brothers, which returned a pre-tax profit of nearly £19 million in its latest results.

Strike by maintenance staff at London hospital over two-tier pay

Hospital maintenance staff working as painters and decorators, electricians, joiners and plumbers for South London and Maudsley NHS Trust began a seven-day stoppage Tuesday. They provide estate and maintenance services at Bethlem Royal, Lambeth, Lewisham and Maudsley hospitals in London.

The Unite union members voted by a 97 percent majority in opposition to two-tier pay. Some workers on the lower band 3 level are doing the same work as colleagues on band five. Additionally, some have been on the lower level for up to 25 years. The Unite members have also raised concerns over the strategic performance director, Kathryn Magson, who heads the estates section, accusing her of bullying. They also accuse the trust of wrongly insisting that for workers to attain higher pay they must hold an NVQ Level Three.

Tunisians mount protests over power and water cuts during heatwave

Protests have erupted across Tunisia over widespread electricity and water cuts during a heatwave that has pushed temperatures as high as 50°C. Demonstrators burned tyres and blocked roads in Menzel Abderrahmane, while protests were also reported in Zaghouan, Nabeul, Monastir and Sousse.

The outages, which began July 12, have disrupted homes, businesses and essential public services.

Families joined demonstrations on foot and in vehicles, denouncing cuts that have left sick and elderly people without reliable refrigeration, air conditioning and medical equipment. Abderrahmane Mami Hospital in Ariana reported an influx of patients suffering from chronic respiratory failure due to the extreme heat and electricity interruptions. Some protesters warned that Tunisia's youth were approaching the point of "another revolution" if the crisis continued.

The state electricity company STEG said it was imposing rolling blackouts to prevent the national grid from collapsing. The protests reflect mounting anger over deteriorating public infrastructure, inflation and falling living standards, combined with the government's escalating repression of any opposition.

Protests across Libya over electricity cuts and collapsing infrastructure

Protests by thousands took place across the Libyan capital Tripoli on July 26 over prolonged electricity cuts and rising power costs.

Demonstrators blocked major roads with burning tyres, gathered outside the West Tripoli power station and prevented employees from entering government and commercial buildings. Young protesters in Souq Al Jumaa also forced the closure of a telecommunications office while displaying signs condemning Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

Residents of Tripoli and surrounding districts are suffering blackouts lasting up to 10 hours a day. Protest groups demand action over corruption, collapsing electricity, water, education and healthcare services, alongside shortages of fuel, cash and medicines.

Car workers at BAIC assembly plant in South Africa's Coega Special Economic Zone continue six weeks' pay stoppage

Around 350 autoworkers at the Beijing Automotive Industry Corporation (BAIC) assembly plant in South Africa's Coega Special Economic Zone are continuing their stoppage begun June 15.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) members are fighting poverty wages imposed by a Chinese state-linked automaker operating with the full backing of the African National Congress-led government.

After a mass layoff in mid-2025, dressed up as retooling for new models, workers were forced to sign new contracts slashing their pay to a fraction of industry standards—R48 an hour against the R121 paid elsewhere for entry-level work, R84 against R163 for spray painters, R48 against R180 for welders.

Many workers came from General Motors, Goodyear, Mercedes-Benz and VW. Skilled hands discarded during restructuring, they are only exploited anew by BAIC, which refuses to join the industry's National Bargaining Forum.

The R11bn plant was built as a flagship project of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), a state entity holding a 35 percent stake to lure foreign investment into the Coega zone.

The Department of Labour found that BAIC clears the national minimum wage—currently R30.22 an hour.

NUMSA frames this as a fight to preserve "industrial policy" and force BAIC into the bargaining structure. The demand is not the abolition of the two-tier wage system across the industry, nor unity with autoworkers internationally who face the same restructuring at the hands of the same globally integrated auto companies, but that BAIC be brought into the framework other bosses signed up to in order to "prevent unfair competition."

Workers hired since mid-2025 face wages of just R40 an hour, and roughly 200 of the plant's workforce remain on short-term contracts renewed monthly. NUMSA refuses to appeal for solidarity from autoworkers in China, where BAIC is based, or to workers internationally facing the same race to the bottom.

Workers at waste management Pikitup in Johannesburg, South Africa remain on strike demanding permanent jobs

Around 300 casual workers at Pikitup, the municipal waste management company in Johannesburg, South Africa remain on strike after walking out July 8-9, disrupting refuse collection. The workers demand 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 streets of Johannesburg are choking with uncollected refuse. Hardest hit are working-class townships like Alexandra, where families are reduced to handling raw garbage by hand, rats and stray dogs drag refuse into the dense housing, and where children, the elderly, the sick and disabled bear the brunt of a public health emergency created from above.

The South African Human Rights Commission has warned that the accumulating filth violates residents' constitutional rights.

Workers were promised permanent jobs in 2023, but when new positions did open they went to relatives of Pikitup management and local councillors.

Behind Pikitup's failures lie the City of Johannesburg's mounting unpaid debts to Eskom and Rand Water, a municipal finance system unable to guarantee basic utilities or secure employment for the workers who keep the city functioning.

Nigerian resident doctors continue strike over poor living conditions

Resident doctors at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Nigeria continued their strike on July 27, with the industrial action entering its eighth day and disrupting healthcare services.

The Association of Resident Doctors launched the walkout after prolonged negotiations with hospital management failed to resolve basic welfare demands. The doctors warned that services would remain affected until immediate action was taken to improve their working conditions.

The doctors are demanding the completion of their residential quarters and the restoration of meals for staff working call duty. Renovation of the accommodation has remained unfinished for more than 18 months, forcing doctors who work shifts exceeding 24 hours to sleep in cars, hospital lounges and other unsuitable places. The union said call-duty meals are essential because doctors attending emergencies overnight cannot leave their posts to find food.

Lawyers begin indefinite strike in Nigeria's Kwara State

Law officers in Nigeria's Kwara State Ministry of Justice began an indefinite strike July 27 after the state government failed to respond to a seven-day ultimatum over longstanding welfare demands.

Law Officers Association of Nigeria (LOAN) members accuse the state government of ignoring their appeals over unpaid allowances and the harmonisation of salaries and conditions of service.

They demand payment of the outstanding 2020 furniture allowance, unpaid furniture and robe allowances for 2024-2026, and implementation of an agreed salary structure in line with magistrates in the Kwara judiciary. The association suspended a three-day warning strike in October 2025 after receiving assurances that its grievances would be addressed, to no avail.

The strike is expected to disrupt legal and administrative work across the Kwara State Ministry of Justice, including prosecutions, legal advice to government departments and other public legal services.

Health workers strike in Bunia, eastern Congo, as Ebola infections rise

Health workers at the Elikya Ebola Treatment Centre in Bunia, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo began a stoppage over unpaid performance bonuses as the country's Ebola outbreak continues to escalate.

Doctors, nurses, hygienists, ambulance drivers and security staff walked off the job last week, disrupting treatment in one of the hardest-hit areas, as confirmed infections approached 3,000 and the death toll exceeded 1,300. Workers said many had not received the allowances promised for carrying out dangerous frontline work since the outbreak began.

The strike follows similar action by staff at Bunia General Hospital and highlights the mounting crisis confronting healthcare workers battling the epidemic.

The outbreak, centred in Ituri province, has overwhelmed an already under-resourced health system struggling with shortages of staff, equipment and medicines.

Kenyan healthcare workers strike over insecure contracts, unpaid salaries and broken agreements

Healthcare workers in Kakamega County, Kenya began an indefinite walkout on July 20, bringing outpatient and other non-emergency services at public hospitals and clinics to a standstill.

Kenya Union of Clinical Officers, the Kenya Environmental Public Health Union and the Civil Servants Workers Union members accuse the county government of failing to implement the 2025 salary review and refusing to sign a recognition agreement permitting collective bargaining.

At the same time, a nationwide strike by thousands of Universal Health Coverage workers entered its third day on July 23, disrupting services across several counties. Workers demand permanent and pensionable contracts for UHC staff, signed appointment letters, inclusion in the July payroll, long-overdue promotions and salary arrears and formal recognition of their unions.

Nationwide, unions said county administrations had ignored court rulings and a KSh8.9 billion budget allocation intended to transfer UHC workers from precarious contracts onto permanent terms.

Strikers marched through Nairobi to the County Assembly and the headquarters of the Council of Governors, declaring that they would not return to work until appointment letters were issued and their demands implemented. Health Cabinet Secretary Aden Duale sought to shift responsibility onto county governments, claiming the national government had already transferred the required payroll funds.

In addition, the Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives (KNUNM) has issued a seven-day strike notice, warning that nurses and midwives across the country will down tools on July 29 if the government fails to address unresolved labour disputes.