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.

Hundreds of miners in Ankara, Turkey protesting unpaid wages and insecure employment met with state repression

Miners from Doruk Madencilik in Eski?ehir and Eti Gümü? in Elaz??, both controlled by Y?ld?zlar SSS Holding, are continuing their protests in Ankara, Turkey over months of unpaid wages. They demand all wages and other entitlements are paid, and an end to forced unpaid leave and improved job security.

The Independent Mine Workers Union members travelled to the capital after previous promises to settle their outstanding payments were not honoured. They repeatedly attempted to march to the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry but were surrounded and blocked by police. On August 10, dozens were detained outside the ministry and then subsequently released. The next day, police again prevented the workers from demonstrating, while Ankara authorities imposed a 15-day blanket ban on demonstrations, meetings, press statements and other protests across the capital.

Confectionery workers in Marseilles, France in ongoing strike over pay

Workers at Haribo's Marseilles confectionery plant, established in 1961, have been on indefinite strike, with two-hour daily stoppages, since late June.

The General Confederation of Labour union members are demanding 100 euros a month pay increase, improved recognition of seniority and higher bonuses.

The dispute also concerns Haribo's plans to expand production at its Uzès, Gard plant, where the company is investing tens of millions of euros in a new factory. Workers fear the restructuring will reduce production and staffing at the Marseilles site.

Haribo employs around 650 people in France and recorded €388 million turnover with €32 million in profits in 2024. They offered workers a 1.5 percent increase, amounting to €18 a month.

UK rail workers' stoppage at East Midlands Railway over safety concerns

Train conductors at East Midlands Railway (EMR) in England walked on Saturday in a dispute over safety concerns surrounding the company's new Class 810 "Aurora" fleet. The model was involved in the Bedford train crash June 19, killing driver Shaun Burton and injuring 162.

The stoppage was the second of three consecutive Saturday strikes by Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members. The dispute began in April after the introduction of the 810 trains, which have suffered faults including defective toilets, air conditioning, doors and communications, while trains have also reportedly been stranded on the track.

EMR rejected claims the fleet is unsafe, pointing out that the trains were licensed by the Office of Rail and Road after testing and regulatory approval, but acknowledged "reliability issues".

The RMT has noted that at least 16 units this month alone had required a full "auxiliary reset" leaving trains with no active safety systems including loss of communication between train drivers, dispatchers and trackside personnel.

Manufacturer Hitachi said modifications to the Class 810 fleet were being implemented, alongside increased maintenance and testing. RMT members are continuing industrial action to demand the trains are taken out of service while they are made fully safety compliant. The company insists that the fleet remain in service as remedial work proceeds.

Bus drivers at Arriva North London set to strike over dangerous work conditions during heatwave

More than 1,500 Arriva North London bus drivers are set to strike across eight garages in a dispute over dangerous working conditions during hot weather.

Unite members will take 20 days of industrial action between August and October, affecting services from Barking, Edmonton, Enfield, Grays, Palmers Green, Stamford Hill, Tottenham and Wood Green. The dates are 14 to 15 August, 18 to 21 August, 25 to 28 August, 4 to 5 September, 7 to 8 September, 18 to 19 September, 21 to 22 September, 2 to 3 October, 5 to 6 October, 16 to 17 October and 19 to 20 October.

Arriva have failed to provide adequate cooling in drivers' cabs. Most buses rely on air-cooling systems which have reduced temperatures by only two or three degrees during recent heatwaves, with cab temperatures reaching 40°C and above. Unite members reported heat exhaustion, heat stroke and dehydration. Fatigue caused by extreme temperatures poses a danger to drivers and passengers. Unite also accused management of bullying union representatives and members.

The strikes will cause widespread cancellations and delays across North London and Essex, with some action coinciding with closures on the Piccadilly Line. Arriva listed a €156 million pre-tax profit in its latest financial figures.

Workers from London's Institute of Cancer Research on indefinite strike over pay

Workers from the Institute of Cancer Research in London began an indefinite strike Monday over pay restoration. They first walked out on June 3 and 4, then June 9-11 and 15-18.

On Wednesday, a delegation of 30 Unite members attended union/management talks at government arbitration body ACAS, exceeding the four representatives that management expected.

Strikers said the mass delegation was to prevent management controlling negotiations behind closed doors and spreading contradictory information by email. Workers from across departments were present.

Management claims financial constraints. They have repeatedly attempted to divide workers by offering improvements to some groups while excluding professional services staff, but the workforce rejected this.

The dispute exposed growing anger over years of attacks on pay, including the removal of incremental pay rises.

UK council workers at Great Yarmouth Services in Norfolk walk out demanding parity pay

UK waste collectors, street cleaners, landscapers and grave diggers employed by Great Yarmouth Services in Norfolk walked out on August 7, 10, 11 and 12, affecting Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and surrounding villages.

Around one third of the workforce took part after the council rejected a demand for a 20 percent increase. The Unite members rejected a 3.3 percent offer and are demanding parity with workers carrying out the same jobs in neighbouring Norwich, Broadland and Lowestoft, where wages are almost 11 percent higher. The union said most striking workers are paid just 11 pence above the minimum wage.

The Conservative-led Great Yarmouth Borough Council denounced the demand as "totally unacceptable and unreasonable," claiming the proposed increase would cost taxpayers £1 million a year. The dispute exposes the continuing pressure on low-paid local authority workers, who are expected to accept near-minimum wages while councils plead financial constraints to oppose pay rises.

Edinburgh's National Galleries of Scotland staff in stoppage over cuts

Workers at Edinburgh's National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) began a series of stoppages against changes to staffing rotas. The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union members say this will result in galleries, rooms and floors being closed to visitors.

The first 24-hour walkout began August 7 at 7pm, coinciding with the opening of a new exhibition by photographer Catherine Opie at the National Gallery on The Mound. Further strikes followed on August 11—12. PCS members are also refusing to wear NGS uniforms as action short of a strike.

The dispute involves changes to working practices and staffing arrangements imposed by management. Reduced staffing levels for gallery attendants will make the closure of sections of the galleries "inevitable," threatening public access to the collections. NGS rejected the claims, saying that staffing have levels increased in recent years.

Further strikes are scheduled for August 16–17 and August 19–20. The action comes as Edinburgh prepares for the annual festival season, when thousands of visitors are expected in the city, placing added pressure on the galleries and their workforce.

Protests continue across Iran as living conditions plummet

Workers, retirees and other sectors continued to protest last week over unpaid wages and pensions, job losses, poverty and deteriorating living conditions.

Social Security retirees and retired telecommunications workers held protests in cities including Tehran, Shush, Kermanshah, Rasht, Mashhad, Ardabil, Yasuj, Tabriz and Ahvaz over delayed payments and broken promises. Social Security retirees called for nationwide protests on August 9 against poverty, the cost-of-living crisis, corruption and state repression. Pars Khodro retirees, numbering around 800 to 900, protested outside SAIPA over unpaid end-of-service benefits.

Workers in key industries also continued to fight job insecurity and deteriorating conditions. Fifty-two maintenance workers at the Salman Farsi Petrochemical Complex in Mahshahr, dismissed following the US-Israeli war and renewed missile attacks on nearby petrochemical facilities, wrote to the Khuzestan governor demanding reinstatement.

Workers at South Pars oil and gas platforms and the Pars I operational zone in Asaluyeh held another weekly protest against salary caps and worsening living standards. Nurses and other staff at two hospitals in Ilam protested delayed wages and benefits, while Kish Choob workers demanded payment of overdue wages and insurance contributions. Contract workers in Gorgan and sanitation workers in Babol also protested unpaid wages and benefits, with Babol workers demanding an end to subcontracting.

The protests are taking place amid continuing state repression. The "Tuesdays Against Executions" campaign entered its 132nd consecutive week, with actions reported in 59 prisons, while the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association again condemned the death penalty.

Families of six people killed during the January 2026 protests gathered in Shiraz to commemorate them. At Evin prison, guards reportedly assaulted and transferred six political prisoners, prompting other prisoners in Ward 7 to protest.

Unemployed young people in Boyer-Ahmad demonstrated against discriminatory hiring practices and demanded transparent recruitment and jobs for local youth, while poultry farmers in Fars protested the crisis facing their industry.

Decades of sanctions, the US blockade of ships in and out of Iran and military attacks on the country have devastated the economy.

Kenyan nurses and midwives continue strike, defying state pressure

Nurses and midwives across Kenya are continuing their stoppage begun July 29 despite court orders directing them to return to work, with the stoppage disrupting services in public hospitals.

On August 7, nurses marched to the Council of Governors (CoG) offices at Delta House in Nairobi, demanding governors sign an already negotiated collective bargaining agreement and submit it to the Salaries and Remuneration Commission for approval.

The Kenya National Union of Nurses and Midwives (KNUNM) members are demanding an increase in the uniform allowance from Sh10,000 to Sh25,000 in stages, an increase in the nursing allowance from Sh20,000 to Sh30,000 and a monthly Sh10,000 risk allowance. Other demands include permanent and pensionable contracts and placement on the payroll for Universal Health Coverage nurses, implementation of career progression guidelines and reinstatement of 48 nurses dismissed by Kisii County.

CoG chairman Ahmed Abdullahi declared the strike illegal and threatened action by individual counties against nurses who defied the court orders. He claimed negotiations over a new CBA were still under way.

Nigerian university workers walk out over unpaid wages

Lecturers at a growing number of Nigerian universities have begun indefinite strikes over unpaid wages and the failure to implement the 2025 federal government-Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) agreement.

By August 12, stoppages were under way at Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology (OAUSTECH), Adekunle Ajasin University (AAU), Imo State University, Nasarawa State University and Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University in Makurdi. The ASUU has authorised branches at 20 universities to prepare strike action, while Gombe State University lecturers have issued a 14-day ultimatum.

OAUSTECH lecturers are demanding implementation of a 40 percent salary review and payment of earned academic, academic tools, professorial, responsibility and supervision allowances. At Nasarawa State University more than 3 billion naira of entitlements is outstanding, while Imo lecturers are demanding salary and promotion arrears dating back to 2016 and other unpaid benefits. At AAU, workers are demanding implementation of the agreement and arrears backdated to January.

The dispute extends beyond these institutions. Academic and non-academic workers at Lagos State University have also withdrawn their labour over implementation of the 2025 agreement, a promised N50,000 palliative, a 20 percent salary increase and other benefits. At Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, lecturers stopped teaching, examinations, supervision and other academic work on August 12 after parts of their salary package remained unpaid.

University workers in Akure, Nigeria protest unpaid allowances

Non-teaching workers at the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), Nigeria, protested on August 6 over the non-payment of government-approved allowances. National Association of Non-Teaching Staff of Nigerian Universities members marched to the vice-chancellor's office, chanting solidarity songs.

The workers said they were excluded from payment of the Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Allowance and Earned Allowances, despite members of other unions receiving the money.

The union gave FUTA management a seven-day ultimatum to pay the outstanding entitlements or face legal action.

Workers and community members protest proposed closure of Premier Foods' Tulbagh fruit-canning plant in South Africa's Western Cape

Workers and community members protested outside Premier Foods' Tulbagh fruit-canning plant in South Africa's Western Cape on Thursday as the company began Section 189 consultations over its proposed closure.

The shutdown threatens around 3,500 permanent and seasonal factory jobs, more than 2,000 farm jobs and the livelihoods of some 200 fruit producers and suppliers. The plant processes up to 60,000 tonnes of fruit a year and purchases about R300 million in produce from local farmers.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions pointed to the reported R26.1 million remuneration of Premier Foods CEO Kobus Gertenbach for 2026, including a R17.4 million bonus. The company blames a plunge in global demand while prioritising executive pay and shareholder interests and shifting the burden of the crisis onto workers and the rural community. Premier also intends to disregard three-year supply agreements with fruit producers, leaving farmers facing losses after investing in the coming season.

Egyptian textile workers continue strike over broken promise on pay

Workers at Misr El Amria Spinning and Weaving Company in Alexandria, Egypt, have continued their strike into a twelfth day, forcing a complete shutdown of production. The stoppage began July 28 after management calculated a 12 percent special allowance on basic pay rather than the higher social insurance wage, contrary to an earlier pledge.

Management suspended operations, halted company transport and locked workers out of the factory. Police and Central Security Forces were deployed around the plant.

The workers are maintaining their demand that the disputed allowance be calculated on the social insurance wage and have begun filing complaints with the labour authorities over the lockout. Misr El Amria employees have mounted several strikes over wages and allowances since 2025, including a six-day stoppage in April and another action earlier this year over increased payroll deductions.

Thousands of Libyans take to the streets over power cuts during heatwave

Thousands of Libyans took to the streets of Tripoli and other western cities in late July over prolonged electricity cuts during temperatures exceeding 43°C. Outages lasting up to 14 hours a day rapidly turned protests over the power crisis into broader demonstrations against Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh and his Government of National Unity, accused of corruption and mismanagement.

Protesters blocked roads and entrances to government ministries with earth, stones and other debris, while demonstrations were also held outside the General Electricity Company of Libya and facilities linked to the National Oil Corporation. Demonstrators briefly forced the shutdown of the Mellitah Oil and Gas Complex, which supplies gas to Libyan power stations as well as exports to Italy.

The electricity grid remains plagued by damaged generating plants, ageing equipment, poorly maintained substations and theft of transmission cables, while widespread allegations of corruption surround state spending.

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