

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 Estonian teachers in national strike over pay and conditions

Education workers across Estonia held a nationwide one-hour warning strike over pay September 22, involving around 15,000 workers at more than 400 educational institutions. The action reflects growing dissatisfaction over wages, workload and responsibility.

The Estonian Educational Personnel Union members say their minimum pay fell 6 percentage points relative to the national average in recent years, despite repeated government commitments to raise teachers' pay to a competitive level.

The strike was timed to coincide with the preparation for the 2027 state budget and negotiations over the new minimum salary, with the next bargaining round scheduled for September 23. A union survey reported that 69 percent of teachers considered leaving the profession during the previous year.

Hundreds of workers at Apple retail stores in Italy hold one-day strike for better working conditions

More than 1,600 Apple Retail workers at all 17 stores in Italy went on strike their entire shifts September 18, coinciding with the launch of the latest iPhones. Pickets were held outside stores including Apple's flagship outlets in Milan and Rome.

The Filcams CGIL, Fisascat CISL and UILTuCS union members were protesting increased workloads, staff shortages and mounting pressure to meet hourly productivity targets. They say new procedures and overlapping job responsibilities have intensified pressure on staff.

The store workers demand permanent recruitment, the stabilisation of a proportion of temporary workers and voluntary increases in part-time hours according to individual store needs.

Train drivers at Vy rail in Norway walk out over pay and conditions differential after merger

On September 18, 46 locomotive drivers employed by Norway's state rail operator Vy began strike action causing major disruption to services.

The dispute centres on conditions arising from the integration into Vy of the former Flytoget, Oslo Airport Express train operation, where existing drivers are paid more.

The Norwegian Locomotive Drivers' Union members say the merger of Vy and Flytoget should not result in drivers losing pay or influence over where and when they work, particularly over their ability to plan family and leisure time.

Academic staff at Dundee University, Scotland begin five-week stoppage over job cuts

Academic staff at Scotland's Dundee University began a five-week stoppage Monday and are also taking action short of striking, such as refusing to undertake voluntary roles or cover for absent colleagues.

The University and College Union (UCU) members are responding to the jobs cull at the university. In November 2024, university management announced it would need to lose jobs to cover a £30 million deficit. Since then, around 800 jobs have gone through voluntary redundancies. Two weeks ago, the university announced it would need to cut another 154 jobs as part of its financial savings.

Despite around 149 applications for voluntary redundancy of the 154 posts slated to be cut the university refused to rule out compulsory redundancies. This is the sticking point for the UCU bureaucracy which has overseen the loss of thousands of academic posts across the UK through voluntary redundancies.

Action is being taken or on the horizon at several UK universities over job losses. Administrative workers and IT technicians at Essex University walked out Monday over the university's plans to cut 400 jobs while academics at Edinburgh University are set to begin a five-week stoppage Monday September 28 over plans to cull around 1,800 jobs.

Journalists at UK prestigious science magazine walk out over pay

Journalists working for the prestigious Lancet Group based in London walked out on Tuesday. The Lancet Group is owned by the Elsevier company and produces the weekly medical magazine the *Lancet* as well as around 30 speciality science magazines.

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) members are seeking an improved pay offer and voted by near 95 percent to strike after The Lancet failed to offer a "significant real terms pay increase". The NUJ members also took action short of striking last week and continued to do so after returning to work on Wednesday. Around 120 scientists across the world have signed an open letter expressing support for the stoppage.

Striking NUJ members formed picket lines at the two entrances to the Lancet Group London HQ. Elsevier reported profits in excess of £1 billion for 2025. According to the NUJ press release, its members at the Lancet have seen a reduction in the real term value of their salaries and are significantly worse off than they were five years ago. It is the first strike in the magazine's 200-year history.

Teachers walkout at two schools in northwest England over academy transfer plans

Teachers at Corpus Christi Catholic High School in Fulwood, Preston and at Cardinal Allen Catholic High School in Fleetwood, both in north west England, walked out Monday and Tuesday. They are protesting plans to transfer control from Lancaster County Council to the Master Ecclesiae Catholic Trust.

The National Education Union (NEU) members are opposed to plans to move all Catholic schools coming under the Diocese of Lancaster into one of three academy trusts. The NEU says the proposals would mean a loss of around 7percent in income and redundancies.

NEU members at the St Anthony of Padua Catholic Primary School in Liverpool, who have already taken action over proposals to move control to an academy trust, began a three-day stoppage Wednesday over the issue.

Furniture manufacturer workers in Melksham, UK strike over pay

Workers employed by Herman Miller at their factory in Melksham in Wiltshire, England were set to walk out for the day on Thursday. Herman Miller manufactures high-end office furniture and office accessories. It is a profitable company and manufacturers for high profile companies such as Amazon and Apple.

The GMB union members are seeking an improved pay offer. They already rejected three offers from the company as inadequate.

Indefinite stoppage by bread delivery drivers in Bristol, UK over pay

Around 60 delivery drivers employed by bread baking firm Hovis were set to begin an indefinite stoppage Thursday over pay.

The Unite union members rejected a 3 percent pay offer saying it would mean a cut in real terms. The Bristol based drivers seek parity with Hovis drivers in Belfast, who were offered additional benefits on top of the pay offer. The additional benefits include a two pence per item sold commission and enhanced holiday premium rates.

The action is expected to lead to bread shortages across southwest England.

Strike by Lebanese civil servants in response to soaring inflation and high cost of living

Wednesday and Thursday this week saw a strike by Lebanese civil

servants to be followed by the closure of public offices Friday and every subsequent Friday. They are demanding an increase in their transportation allowances.

Additionally van drivers this week blocked the main road linking Beirut and the Bekaa Valley protesting the hike in fuel prices.

The ongoing Lebanese economic crisis with growing inflation and the high cost of living is exacerbated by the rise in fuel prices resulting from the attacks of the US on Iran.

Tertiary education lecturers on indefinite strike in Sierra Leone over pay and conditions

Lecturers at Sierra Leone's public tertiary institutions (universities) began an indefinite nationwide strike on September 16 after the expiration of a 21-day strike notice.

The walkout halted academic activities across the public higher-education sector, with lecturers saying negotiations with the government failed to produce a concrete resolution to their demands regarding wages and conditions.

The Union of Academic Staff Associations members are demanding improved conditions of service, and a 100 percent salary increase for academic staff. The union initially proposed a much larger pay rise before reducing its demand, while also calling for improvements to welfare and service-conditions for lecturers in universities and other public tertiary institutions.

The dispute points to the wider crisis confronting higher education workers, who are pressing for substantial improvements in pay and conditions amid continued strain on Sierra Leone's inadequately funded public education system.

Health workers at University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria walk out in defence of unfairly dismissed colleague

Health workers at University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, Nigeria walked out on September 16 in defence of a sacked work colleague, disrupting sections of one of Nigeria's largest teaching hospitals.

The dispute centres on UCH management's refusal to reinstate Director of Pharmaceutical Services Adeyinka Ishola. He was disciplined following the sale of a tricycle associated with the pharmacy department, but a subsequent federal ministry investigation found him not guilty of fraud and recommended that he be reprimanded and reinstated.

On September 22, the Nigerian Union of Allied Health Professionals ordered a return to work for two weeks pending further negotiations with management.

the Nigerian Union of Allied Health Professionals (NUAHP), representing 13 of the hospital's 15 allied-health professions, began the walkout September 16,

Cocoa producers stop work over price cut

Cocoa producers across Côte d'Ivoire's began an indefinite marketing strike on September 16, instructing members to withhold cocoa from buyers and prevent beans being transported to the ports. The action is

continuing, with organisers campaigning in the major Haut-Sassandra cocoa-growing region and producers in Arrah joining the stoppage.

The National Agricultural Union for Progress (SYNAP-CI) members oppose the new farm-gate price of 1,200 CFA francs a kilogram, down from 2,800 CFA francs, a fall of more than 60 percent. Farmers also complain of unpaid or unsold cocoa left over from the 2025-26 harvest, rising costs, indebtedness and difficulties obtaining credit. Other demands include outstanding stocks to be purchased, the mechanism used to determine farmers' incomes revised and the head of the Coffee-Cocoa Council is removed.

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest cocoa producer, making the dispute potentially significant for the international chocolate industry if the stoppage spreads. As of September 21, SYNAP-CI was urging growers to keep buying depots closed and continue withholding their crop until the price is increased, warning that the action could broaden. The dispute highlights the precarious position of small cocoa producers despite the enormous revenues generated by the crop internationally.

Young people protest at the Kruger National Park in Nkomazi, South Africa to demand jobs

Unemployed youth staged a protest at the Kruger National Park's Malelane Gate in Nkomazi, South Africa and handed over a memorandum of grievances. The protesters said they had repeatedly applied for jobs at the park without success despite advertised vacancies

The protesters described years of unsuccessful job applications and want transparency over recruitment. They accuse local people of being excluded. The protest took place against the backdrop of South Africa's unemployment rate of 33.6 percent, with organisers saying young people were particularly affected by the lack of employment opportunities. Among 15-24-year-olds, unemployment is 60.9 percent.

The main union federations have abandoned the youth and refuse to wage a unified fight for jobs. COSATU is overseeing the proposed closure of the Rhodes processing plant in Tulbagh, which could affect 80,000 jobs in the wider agricultural and supply chain.



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