

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

15 October 2026

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

Tens of thousands of teachers and students in Madrid, Spain strike and protest over educational funding, pay and conditions

Teachers and students across the Madrid region in Spain began an indefinite strike in public non-university education Wednesday, demanding better pay and working conditions and increased funding for schools. The action involved around 65,000 teachers, with thousands of teachers, students and supporters blocking traffic and rallying at Madrid's Puerta del Sol.

Members of Spain's two largest union confederations demand reduced class sizes and teaching hours, more staff, a cut in bureaucratic workloads, improved school facilities and salary increases of €600 a month. They also oppose educational segregation and the regional government's prioritisation of private education.

The opening day was marked by violent police charges against students and workers picketing at the Complutense University of Madrid, leaving several demonstrators injured and five people arrested.

Transport, education and municipal workers in Belgium hold one-day strike against government attacks on pay, conditions and public services

Thousands of public transport workers and other workers in Belgium held a nationwide strike Monday against government budget cuts and attacks on public services. The strike disrupted trains, buses, trams, the metro, schools, childcare, public broadcasting, postal deliveries and municipal services.

The action followed a mass demonstration in Brussels on October 9. It reflects widespread anger over government austerity measures which threaten workers' pensions, incomes and access to public services, while pursuing cuts to fund military spending and reduce the budget deficit.

Workers at the former ILVA steelworks in Italy strike to save jobs

Workers at part state-owned Acciaierie d'Italia, the former ILVA steelworks, continued their stoppage Wednesday against plans to suspend production in Taranto, Genoa and Novi Ligure. The plans threaten directly

and indirectly more than 8,000 jobs.

After a 24-hour nationwide strike Monday, unions called a further 48-hour action, opposing a government response that relies on temporary wage-support schemes rather than guaranteeing jobs and a viable industrial future for the plants.

In Genoa, workers on their third consecutive day of strikes marched through the city and occupied the prefecture to demand written guarantees that the plant will keep operating. In Taranto, workers and contractors blockaded roads near the steelworks and the Eni refinery, disrupting fuel distribution across southern Italy. At Novi Ligure, where workers walked out Monday, 550 families face waiting until late December for furlough payments.

The government is seeking investors and an industrial plan before an October 20 court decision that could suspend production permanently.

Solar panel workers in İzmir, Turkey continue strike for pay and reinstatement after mass sackings

Workers at Smart Solar's solar-panel factory in Aliağa, İzmir, Turkey, are continuing their walkout and protest against mass dismissals, unpaid contractual entitlements and management's attempts to prevent workers choosing their own union.

The dispute escalated after Smart Solar failed to honour agreements reached following a four-day production stoppage in September. The 83 dismissed workers demand reinstatement, payment of outstanding wages and inflation adjustments, recognition of their union rights and an end to workplace intimidation.

They had left the TES-İŞ union to join the Enerji-Sen union, which they say better represents them.

Workers have set up a protest tent and round-the-clock pickets outside the factory. On Tuesday they marched into the centre of Aliağa, joined by local residents and other organisations.

Camden workers in four disputes protest Labour council cuts and pay

Hundreds of striking workers from four separate disputes rallied outside Camden Town Hall, London, on October 6 over cost-cutting by the Labour council and pay.

Traffic wardens, teaching assistants and teachers from Camden joined housing workers from neighbouring Tower Hamlets. Members of the Unison union and the National Education Union (NEU) chanted "Low pay, no way."

Over 100 traffic wardens, outsourced to private contractor NSL, part of the multi-million-pound Marston Holdings, are in the second week of an eight-week strike. They are demanding a £2 an hour pay rise, seven extra days of annual leave and sick pay from the first day of absence.

Teaching assistants at Primrose Hill and Richard Cobden primary schools are fighting to be regraded from scale 3 to scale 4. “We just want the council to pay us fairly and to treat us with respect,” one told the rally. NEU members at Great Ormond Street Hospital and University College London Hospitals School are striking over the dismissal of a representative, and East End Homes workers have held a series of strikes over pensions.

London South Bank University workers strike against divisive contracts, staff at other universities take action over job cuts

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) at London South Bank University walked out all last week against management’s attempt to tear up existing contracts and impose a two-tier workforce. The dispute has been running since March. Students have written letters to management in support of the strikers.

Management is moving staff it believes can bring in research money onto a new “teaching and research” contract and others onto a “teaching and scholarship” contract, while new hires are employed by a wholly owned subsidiary. A workforce of around 400 academics is now split across three types of contract.

The restructuring has cost 150 jobs through compulsory or voluntary redundancies, leaving remaining staff overworked.

The union is in partnership with management over imposing redundancies. The UCU branch is negotiating over the teaching and research contract, while members insist that no one is left behind.

At Durham University, UCU members are taking indefinite action short of strike over increased workload. This follows job cuts that came after the UCU accepted voluntary severance schemes.

Members of the EIS-ULA union at Glasgow Caledonian University are continuing their strike action this week over staff cuts, while the university holds £95 million of cash reserves.

At the University of Nottingham, academic staff began discontinuous strike action October 5, due to run until December 11 over cuts to jobs and courses.

The UCU will not mobilise its members in unified action, within one institution or nationally, to save jobs and courses.

School staff “without a home” in Barrow-in-Furness, England in stoppage over excessive workload

Staff at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary in Barrow-in-Furness, England, were on the picket line again on Wednesday, joined by pupils and parents, in a fight over crushing workload. They demand compensation for working in exceptional circumstances. Members of the National Association of Head Teachers union also walked out on Wednesday. Further action is planned for November 9–10.

The dispute stems from January 2023, when staff evacuated the building after a routine inspection found the floor was rotten and at risk of collapse. Teachers and school leaders have since been shuffled across multiple sites under what they call “exceptional working arrangements,” keeping the school running through nearly three years of disruption.

Headteacher Simone Beach told BBC Cumbria that children “deserve teachers in front of them who are not exhausted.”

Staff at Oasis Academy Immingham in England walk out over funding and to defend jobs

Teachers and support staff at Oasis Academy Immingham, a secondary school in North Lincolnshire, England, are on strike over the way funds are being managed by the academy trust.

The NEU members struck for two days last week and are striking this week. Last year the trust, Oasis Community Learning, dropped a restructure that would have cost three jobs after NEU members balloted for action, and promised a plan to boost pupil numbers and invest in the school. Workers say the promise has not been kept.

Dan Taylor of the NEU said on the picket line that the five-year investment plan the trust proposed last year has seen “no progress.”

Health workers in Greater Manchester, England strike over overtime pay

Health workers at four hospitals in Greater Manchester, England, returned to picket lines October 2 and 5 as part of their long-running fight to win back proper overtime payments.

The Unison union members are theatre nurses and recovery staff for the Northern Care Alliance (NCA) at Salford Royal, Royal Oldham, Fairfield General and Rochdale Infirmary hospitals.

Strikers are furious NCA management broke the national Agenda for Change contract by forcing worse overtime pay on them. Under that contract, workers get normal pay plus 50 percent for overtime shifts. But bosses now use the internal National Health Service (NHS) agency NHS Professionals, which pays below their normal daily rate.

A similar dispute has erupted at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading, where around 100 porters struck last week as management pushes them off Agenda for Change rates onto the lower NHS Professionals rate.

The GMB union members say they are “being pushed towards poverty” and rejected a recent management offer to bridge their loss of earnings until next March.

Union representative Sergio Dias said workers are losing about £7 an hour, hundreds of pounds a month.

Tram workers in Nottingham, England walk out over pay

Tram workers in Nottingham staged another two days of stoppages on October 3–4.

The GMB union members’ action hit the last two days of the city’s Goose Fair, which is attended by tens of thousands.

Workers plan 18 more strike days over weekends leading up to and over Christmas unless moves are made on the present 3.3 percent pay offer. GMB is demanding 4.1 percent, lower than the 4.3 percent inflation rate for housing.

UK workers at Oxford University Press finance department strike over job losses

Over 30 members of the Unite union in the finance department at Oxford University Press (OUP) in Oxford, England, began their second week of strikes October 5. They previously struck for two weeks last month in their fight against job cuts.

OUP plans to offshore almost the entire finance department to India, in partnership with EXL Service, a multinational corporation based in the US with AI data centres around the world.

EXL Service boasts about innovations for “streamlining back-office operations” and “50 percent cost savings.” It has cash reserves of almost £330 million, profits of almost £50 million last year and its CEO pockets well over £1 million annually.

The OUP strikers hung a large “Shame on Oxford University Press” banner on the railings in front of the building until management ordered security to stop it.

Public sector workers in Lebanon strike over pay

The Public Administration Employees Association of Lebanon called a general strike of all public sector workers Friday over pay and travel subsidies. Seven years after public sector salaries collapsed, workers are still out of pocket over the costs of commuting to work.

The Association is demanding a daily allowance equivalent to 10 litres of petrol. The Finance Ministry has proposed an allowance equivalent to only five litres.

The Association said public sector salaries “end on the road.” The government has approved fuel subsidies to the private sector while treating state employees “as if they do not pay the same cost of gasoline.”

Since the financial collapse, pay has been made up of basic salary, allowances and additional payments that vary across ministries, with increases paid as allowances rather than in basic salary. The Association is demanding a unified salary scale that incorporates such increases into basic pay and standardises benefits across the sector.

The Association is also closing public administrations every Friday in its dispute over salary scales.

Workers in Nigeria’s Federal Capital Territory strike in solidarity with teachers over lack of promotions

Workers in Nigeria’s Federal Capital Territory (FCT) began an indefinite solidarity strike October 7 over the promotion and career progression of teachers. Members of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Nigeria Union of Teachers in schools, hospitals, government offices and other establishments walked out.

The dispute centres on a policy making teachers’ promotion dependent on vacancies being available, which the NLC says leaves many teachers stuck on the same grade for years. Their demands include removal of the vacancy requirement, promotion examinations for teachers who became eligible in 2025 and reversal of the demotion of some directors and the dissolution of the education boards’ management teams.

The strike remained unresolved as of Tuesday. FCT Minister Nyesom Wike ordered implementation of a “no work, no pay” policy against strikers. The Trade Union Congress told its own affiliated unions not to

join the stoppage, claiming it was not consulted over the strike call.

Health workers on strike in Ogun State, Nigeria after colleague stabbed

Health workers at the Federal Medical Centre in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, began a 72-hour warning strike Monday after a medical laboratory scientist was allegedly stabbed by a patient’s relative while on duty. The action was called by a Joint Action Committee of five unions covering nurses, allied health professionals and non-academic staff. The stoppage is due to end Thursday.

Workers demand the arrest and prosecution of the assailant, full medical and psychological support for the injured worker and a strengthening of security throughout the hospital. They also want stronger procedures against attacks on staff.

Kenyan university lecturers continue stoppage over pay arrears

Lecturers at Moi University in Kenya say they will remain on strike until more than Sh4.2 billion in outstanding salary and pension obligations are settled, even if the nationwide public-university strike is resolved.

Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) members at Moi joined the national walkout begun October 2, but say longstanding local grievances must be addressed before they return to teaching.

The union says around Sh1.2 billion is still owed under the 2017–2021 and 2021–2025 collective agreements, while more than Sh3 billion in pension contributions remain unpaid. Moi lecturers accuse university management and the government of failing to implement negotiated agreements.

The nationwide strike also remains unresolved after lecturers rejected a reported Sh12 billion government offer over the new 2025–2029 collective agreement. UASU and other university unions announced a mass protest in Nairobi for Thursday as the dispute escalates.

Gig-economy Takealot drivers across Pretoria West, South Africa down tools over poverty pay

Delivery drivers for online retail giant Takealot switched off their apps across Pretoria West, South Africa, on October 9, after nearly six months of fruitless negotiations with management.

More than 200 drivers joined the action, which is centred on the company’s Pretoria West hub and includes drivers for Takealot-owned Mr D, meaning Pick n Pay grocery deliveries will also be hit. Nearly 40 drivers gathered at a pickup hub, refusing to be photographed, a sign of the fear of retaliation hanging over workers who have no formal protections.

Drivers demand the base rate is raised to R50 per parcel and the fuel levy restructured to reflect the soaring cost of living.

The base rate was frozen at R27.50 per parcel for over four years, even as fuel prices increased around 46 percent since January. Drivers report spending an average of R1,200 a week on petrol alone, with weekly earnings of between R800 and R1,600 before expenses.

Drivers must also cover vehicle maintenance, repairs, airtime and data

out of their own pockets. Josinta Grabie, a mother of three, said her weekly income barely covers petrol and data, leaving “nothing for food for my family.” Drivers’ representatives said they are treated like full-time employees but denied any employment benefits or protections.

Takealot just posted its first-ever annual profit, an adjusted operating profit of about R180 million for the year to March 2026, while drivers say the R2.12 per order fuel levy fails to keep pace with petrol prices.

Residents in South African township march to demand basic amenities

About 100 residents of Khayelitsha, the sprawling working-class township outside Cape Town in South Africa, marched on Tuesday to the offices of the state-owned utility Eskom and then to the city’s municipal offices, demanding reliable, affordable electricity and an end to the squalor in their streets.

The march was organised by the civic groups Cry of the Xcluded and Amadoda Qotho. The marchers complained of frequent outages, exposed transformers, faulty prepaid meters and repairs that never come. They are demanding Eskom fix faults within 48 hours and secure transformers within seven days.

Resident Thandokazi Manisi told *GroundUp* that some households have been without power for weeks or months. Callers to the call centre are kept on hold until their airtime runs out, and logged calls send out no technicians. Residents are forced to pay fixers to repair transformers themselves. Bongeka Moshani, whose supply was cut when wires were vandalised two weeks ago, cooks on a paraffin stove and warned that live wires endanger children.

At the municipal offices, marchers demanded the City of Cape Town repair broken drains, where sewage runs into the streets amid flies and stench. Protester Siyabulela Magwaca said disabled residents struggle to get around, and wheelchair users must touch the sewage as they push themselves along: “It sticks to their fingers.”

Their memorandum also called for streetlights, skills training for unemployed youth and pothole repairs.

Farm workers march to Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa demanding land for housing

About 150 farm workers marched to Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa, on October 7, calling on Public Works Minister Dean Macpherson to release public land for housing. They carried placards reading, “We want land for housing” and “We want justice.”

The march capped the three-day National Farm Worker Platform, hosted by the Women on Farms Project, which brought together about 15 farm worker organisations from across the country, including the Casual Workers Advice Office, the Rural Women’s Assembly and two farm and food workers’ unions.

The workers handed in a memorandum that said limited access to land causes inhumane conditions in farming communities and demanded that public land go to farm workers and dwellers who have often lived and worked on it for generations.

Carmen Louw, co-director of the Women on Farms Project, said evictions have increased in the Stellenbosch area, and workers need housing and land to grow food for their families. Engela van Schalkwyk of De Doorns said her mother lived and worked on a farm for nearly 60

years and was forced from the home she had known all her life on retirement. “The farmers are getting richer,” she said, “but our farm workers own nothing.”

Residents from informal settlements in Gauteng, South Africa in protest march to demand housing

Dozens of residents from informal settlements across Gauteng, South Africa, marched October 8 to Premier Panyaza Lesufi’s Johannesburg office, demanding to know what had become of housing applications some have waited on since 1996.

Led by the Unemployed People of South Africa, workers and poor families came from Soweto, Midrand, Roodepoort, Randburg and Randfontein. Their many memoranda, and an August petition of 100 signatures asking only for confirmation of their applications’ status, had gone unanswered.

Because of the housing shortage, the number living in informal settlements may be up to 5 million. The settlements, comprising shacks, lack basic amenities such as running water, toilets, electricity, rubbish collection and roads.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact