

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.

Greek teachers, students, civil servants and cultural sector workers in 24 hours of strikes and protests

Thousands of teachers, school students and university students demonstrated across Greece October 21, with around 20,000 people marching in Athens. They are demanding increased funding for public education, higher teachers' wages, the filling of staff vacancies and repairs to unsafe school buildings.

Greek Primary Teachers' Federation union members called a 24-hour strike, which was supported by secondary school teachers' federation members. Students protest overcrowded classes of up to 27 pupils, high canteen prices and accommodation costs, and demand improved university facilities and greater freedom to transfer between institutions.

Civil servants joined the action through a nationwide work stoppage called by the ADEDY public-sector confederation. Hospital doctors struck over pay, staffing shortages and the deterioration of public health services, while university administrative staff and special education workers also took industrial action. They demand substantial wage increases, permanent recruitment, restoration of the thirteenth and fourteenth salary payments and greater funding.

Workers throughout Greece's cultural sector staged the same day a 24-hour strike to demand that state spending on culture be raised to 1 percent of the national budget, alongside higher wages, permanent jobs for contract workers and an end to outsourcing. They also oppose the transfer of public cultural responsibilities to private companies and demand the return of five major state museums to the Archaeological Service.

Teaching assistants across Portugal strike for better pay and working conditions

Non-teaching staff at schools across Portugal, including operational assistants, administrative staff and specialist and senior technicians, staged a 24-hour strike October 19, closing numerous primary and secondary schools and disrupting education in districts including Lisbon, Coimbra, Setúbal, Viseu, Aveiro and Faro.

The National Union of Education Professionals members protest low wages, job insecurity and the lack of professional recognition and career progression. They demand dedicated career structures reflecting their specific responsibilities, arguing that many remain trapped in precarious employment without adequate opportunities for advancement or

recognition of their work within the public administration.

The strike exposed the dependence of Portugal's public education system on poorly paid and undervalued support workers, whose duties include supervising pupils, maintaining school facilities and providing administrative and other essential services.

Artists, musicians and technicians at theatres across Italy strike for a living wage

Workers at theatres across Italy are striking over pay and the renewal of a national collective agreement that expired in April 2021. The dispute affects both permanent theatre employees and performers engaged on individual contracts, whose minimum daily pay typically averages little more than €71 gross.

The Slc-Cgil, Fisl-Cisl and Uilfpc-Uil union members called a national stoppage after negotiations with the employers' organisation Federvivo broke down. They accuse management of failing to offer adequate increases to compensate for inflation.

At Milan's Teatro alla Scala, workers staged a full-day strike October 20 that was supported by more than 450 workers. Orchestra musicians, chorus members, dancers, technicians and other staff demanded a 15 percent increase in gross annual pay. The strike forced the cancellation of the opening performance of Charles Gounod's *Faust*.

The national dispute is set to escalate, with a further strike by theatre employees and contracted performers scheduled for October 27. Unions have also called for a halt to overtime until the dispute is resolved and announced a national demonstration in Rome for November 9.

The conflict highlights mounting tensions over wages and public funding in Italy's cultural sector, as workers resist employers' attempts to impose contract settlements that fail to compensate adequately for the rising cost of living.

Strike by hospital workers at two London hospitals over pay and conditions

Around 300 hospital workers employed by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust began a three-day stoppage Monday. Those involved work as cleaners, food service assistants, porters and store operatives.

The Unite union members are protesting low pay, being currently on band two earning £15.89 an hour while facing the high living costs associated with working in London. They are also protesting alleged racist and bullying behaviour by management, concern over the use of bank contracts for overtime opportunities, inadequate safety equipment and

poor facilities.

They held a three-day stoppage over the same issue in September. A picket line was established outside St Thomas' Hospital on Monday, while on Tuesday they picketed Guy's. On Wednesday, they marched to the Prime Minister's residence at Downing Street. Unite has warned of further stoppages in the autumn and New Year if the dispute remains unresolved.

Walkouts by parking enforcement staff in London Borough of Lewisham

Parking enforcement staff operating in the south London borough of Lewisham walked out Monday and Tuesday and are scheduled to strike Friday. They work for contractor NSL, contracted by Lewisham council to enforce parking restrictions.

The Unison union members are protesting over pay, being paid £1.70 an hour less than parking enforcement staff carrying out similar roles in the nearby London boroughs of Camden and Westminster.

They took several days of action over the same issue in July and September. They initially also protested NSL's refusal to recognise Unison for negotiations. NSL has now recognised the union, but Unison say it has yet to set up meaningful negotiations.

Healthcare workers in Wiltshire and Somerset, UK walk out over staff shortages and excessive workloads

Healthcare staff at private provider HCRG Care Services in Bath, Chippenham and Swindon in south-west England launched a 24-hour stoppage on Wednesday. They operate out of the Orbital Centre in Swindon, the Chippenham Community Hospital and Bath's St Martin's Hospital.

The Unison union members voted by an 85 percent majority for the action. They are protesting severe staff shortages and excessive workloads, which they say are putting patients at risk and leaving them struggling to cope. They also demand HCRG recognise Unison for negotiations.

HCRG is one of the UK's largest providers of private community health and care provision. It provides NHS and local authority-commissioned services across the country.

Teachers at London school strike over victimisation and excessive workload

Teaching staff at Oaks Park High School in Ilford in East London are set to walk out Thursday and Friday. The National Education Union (NEU) members are protesting the ongoing victimisation of Bill Stockwell, an NEU representative at the school. He is also secretary of the Redbridge NEU branch.

The strikers are also calling for a reduction in their workload and for management to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

Lebanese University professors continue stoppage over employment status

The Committee of Contract Professors at Lebanese University announced they will continue the stoppage begun at the end of September. The professors across all departments of the university are demanding to become full-time permanent employees.

The Lebanese University based in Beirut is the country's only state-financed university.

Lebanon continues to experience economic turmoil, with annual inflation currently over 17 percent. The economy is predicted to contract by 6.4 percent this year. Ongoing Israeli military attacks only exacerbate the situation.

Continuing worker protests in Iran

On Monday, telecommunication retirees demonstrated in several Iranian cities, including Ilam, Isfahan and Ilam. They protested outside governorate offices, accusing the government of looting their pensions. The same day, investors in the Pishgaman Institute (an investment cooperative) in Yazd held a street protest against the loss of money they had invested.

The previous day saw protests by social security retirees in Ahvaz, Kermanshah, Rasht, Shush and Tehran, while steel and iron smelting retirees protested in Isfahan. Both sets of retirees were protesting the inadequacy of their pensions faced with high prices and the impact of inflation.

The impact of decades of US sanctions and the ongoing naval blockade have devastated Iran's economy. The threat of more military attacks by the US is exacerbating the crisis further.

Healthcare workers strike over pay and conditions across Nigeria

Healthcare workers in Kwara and Katsina States in Nigeria have begun strikes over pay and conditions, highlighting wider unrest among public healthcare workers.

Doctors employed by the Kwara State government began a seven-day warning strike October 15 over unpaid allowances, salary deductions and worsening working conditions. The walkout involves members of the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria, the National Association of Government General Medical and Dental Practitioners and resident doctors at Kwara State University Teaching Hospital. The strike followed the expiry of a 14-day ultimatum.

The doctors demand implementation of the 2025 Consolidated Medical Salary Structure, payment of outstanding accommodation allowances for 2025 and 2026, and reversal of a compulsory 2 percent salary deduction for the Kwara Health Insurance Scheme. They are also demanding the recruitment of additional doctors and renovation of accommodation for junior medical staff.

The strike, scheduled to continue until October 22, disrupted treatment at state hospitals, leaving patients facing delays in receiving medical care.

In a separate action, health workers in Katsina State in the north of the country launched a seven-day warning strike over pay and conditions, which disrupted the services at public hospitals. The walkout by members of the Assembly of Health Care Professionals followed the state

government's failure to meet their demands for improved remuneration and welfare. The workers rejected a proposed 15 percent pay increase as inadequate.

The strike severely affected services at the Turai Yar'adua Maternal and Child Hospital in Katsina, where surgical wards were largely deserted and patients faced delays in receiving treatment. Relatives of patients expressed concern over the lack of medical attention, including for those suffering complications following surgery.

The union suspended the strike from midnight on October 18 on the basis of empty promises made in talks with Governor Dikko Radda. The government said it would reopen negotiations over the Consolidated Health Salary Structure and professional allowances and establish a joint technical committee to examine outstanding grievances.

Kenyan university lecturers demonstrate in Nairobi as nationwide strike continues

Striking university lecturers in Kenya marched through Nairobi October 15, demanding higher pay and outstanding salary arrears. The Universities Academic Staff Union members began their nationwide strike on October 2, following the expiry of a seven-day notice. The walkout disrupted teaching at the public universities, with no classes being held for the third consecutive week.

The lecturers are demanding the passage and full implementation of the 2025–2029 agreement, alongside payment of Sh7.9 billion in outstanding salary arrears from previous agreements. Union officials rejected a government counter offer of Sh12 billion as inadequate, following an earlier proposal for annual pay increases of just 4 percent. Negotiations between the unions and university employers broke down again on October 12, with the unions accusing the government of reneging on commitments it made to end the previous strike in November 2025.

On October 15, lecturers demonstrated outside government buildings in Nairobi, including the National Treasury, where they presented a petition demanding implementation of the CBA. Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba previously called for lecturers to return to work, claiming outstanding arrears had been cleared. The unions dispute the government's position.

Senegalese trade unions call three-day general strike over pay and conditions

A coalition of 13 trade unions in Senegal called a 72-hour general strike October 21-23, following a protest march in the capital, Dakar, on October 20. The Front for the Defence of Senegal (FDLN) includes unions representing workers in education, healthcare, higher education and electricity. The action was called over the government's failure to implement previous agreements on pay, pensions and working conditions.

Workers are demanding improved pensions, an increase in the retirement age from 60 to 65, payment of outstanding benefits and implementation of a housing allowance of 100,000 CFA francs. They accuse the government of failing to honour commitments signed in May 2025.

Prime Minister Ahmadou Al Aminou Lo asked union leaders to call off any action for three months, but then declared the planned general strike unlawful, threatening participants with salary cuts and disciplinary action. The dispute comes amid mounting economic pressures, with Senegal's

public debt having reached around 132 percent of GDP by the end of 2024 and the government seeking to enforce budget cuts.

Workers employed by eThekweni municipality in Durban, South Africa stage picket over low pay and grading

Around 100 general workers employed by eThekweni municipality in Durban, South Africa picketed outside City Hall on October 22 demanding an increase in their salary grading from category eight to category ten. Workers from different departments also demanded unpaid performance bonuses and shift allowances and called for the resignation of the city manager. The protesters were not represented by a union, voicing their grievances with placards and singing.

Workers described mounting financial hardship and anger at being paid less than municipal employees doing comparable jobs in other metropolitan areas. Thanduxolo Mgobhozi said deductions for medical aid and funeral policies left him without money within two days of receiving his wages each month, forcing him to rely on loan sharks to survive.

The dispute has dragged on for years. According to the Municipal and Allied Trade Union of South Africa, the category ten grading was supposed to be implemented around 2019, but the municipality repeatedly sought extensions, citing financial difficulties. In 2024, hundreds of eThekweni workers staged another protest over wage disparities. The South African Municipal Workers' Union reported that general workers in eThekweni earned around R10,000 a month, compared with approximately R13,900 in Tshwane and Ekurhuleni.

The latest protest underscores the continuing struggle of municipal workers against low pay and unfulfilled promises, amid frustration with union representation and a failure by the municipality to resolve longstanding demands.



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