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 metalworkers throughout Germany in warning strikes for pay increases

German metalworkers staged widespread warning strikes Monday, escalating their pay dispute with employers across the metal and electrical engineering industries, which employ around 3.7 million workers. Employees at major companies including Audi, Mercedes-Benz, Tata Steel, Bosch, Miele and Siemens Energy walked out, with more than 200 strike actions nationwide.

The IG Metall union members demand a 5 percent pay rise from November, alongside measures to protect jobs and production sites and provisions for profit-sharing in profitable sectors. They reject the employers' offer of a one-off payment equivalent to 1 percent of annual gross pay in July 2027 and a 1.3 percent wage increase from July 2028, over a proposed 26-month period. They say the offer is a real-terms pay cut amid rising living costs, and argue they should not bear the cost of the industry's difficulties while continuing to generate corporate profits.

University staff, secondary school teachers and students in Madrid, Spain organise combined strikes and protests over working conditions in education

Thousands of teachers and students across Madrid's public education system in Spain demonstrated Wednesday against chronic underfunding and deteriorating conditions, as the indefinite strike by non-university teachers entered its fourth week.

They were joined in a combined protest by workers and students from all six public universities, who began their own two-day strike Wednesday. They marched towards the headquarters of the right-wing Popular Party, which governs the region, demanding that the regional government negotiate over funding, staffing and working conditions.

The protesters denounce the deterioration of public education and the expansion of private provision. The university students and staff drew attention to the lack of resources, worsening working conditions and increased repression on the six public university campuses.

Public broadcasting workers in the Czech Republic strike for public media independence as thousands protest in Prague and other cities

Public television and radio workers in the Czech Republic staged a one-day strike Tuesday against plans by the right-wing coalition government of Prime Minister Andrej Babiš to overhaul public broadcasting finance.

They were joined by thousands of protesters, including broadcasting staff, university students, artists and supporters, who marched through Prague and gathered in Wenceslas Square. Demonstrations and student strike activities also took place in other Czech cities.

The proposals would abolish the existing monthly household broadcasting fee and replace it with funding from the state budget, cutting resources by around 15 percent. Workers warned that the changes would threaten the financial viability and editorial independence of Czech Television and Czech Radio, potentially leading to job losses, reduced programming and cancelled programmes.

Turkish miners march to Ankara over unpaid wages

Workers at ?mbat Madencilik's coal mine in Soma, Türkiye, have been protesting since October 27. That day, they began a march towards the capital, Ankara, to ask the government to intervene for their unpaid wages and accumulated back payments accrued over two years.

The Independent Mine Workers Union members demand payment of their outstanding earnings and an end to irregular wage payments. They say they have received only partial payments, with some wages outstanding for months, leaving them struggling to pay rent, meet household expenses and support their families.

?mbat Madencilik, which employs approximately 4,200 workers, blamed its financial crisis on an alleged unpaid coal debt of 1.475 billion Turkish lira owed by Konya ?eker, which operates the Soma B thermal power plant. Management claims it has no remaining funds to pay wages. The dispute has exposed how workers are being made to bear the consequences of financial conflicts between companies, while their basic earnings remain unpaid.

Further stoppages by UK North Sea oil workers

Around 170 workers employed by Apache on its seven North Sea oil platforms held a 24-hour stoppage beginning Wednesday. They are employed as electrical, mechanical, production and instrument technicians. Also included are telecom technicians and radio operators.

The Unite union members previously held a 24-hour walkout in October. They are protesting a 4 percent pay offer and their working conditions—particularly the company's seven-day clawback policy, meaning workers have to work additional days without extra pay. Unite

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also announced a further 24-hour stoppage on four of the seven platforms from November 13 and one on November 15 affecting the remaining three platforms. Apache's US parent company APA Corporation recorded a $1.4 billion profit for 2025.

In a separate dispute, offshore workers employed by the Wood Group as electrical, production, instrument and mechanical technicians at five North Sea oil platforms began a 48-hour stoppage Tuesday, following one in October. A further 48-hour stoppage is planned for November 17.

The Unite union members are protesting the Wood Group's intention to cut pay and working conditions for dozens of its workers with the threat of "fire and rehire."

Strike by care workers in Oldham, UK over pay

Monday was the final day of a four-day UK stoppage by around 80 care workers employed by Oldham-council-owned care provider MioCare. It follows a 24-hour stoppage on September 21 and a 48-hour stoppage from October 4.

The Unison union members are employed in the "extra care" department of MioCare to provide personalised support to people in assisted housing provision. They are demanding to be paid at the same rate as other MioCare staff who carry out similar roles but are paid £2.10 more. They are also demanding to be covered by the superior sick pay scheme.

Picket lines were mounted each day, and following the picket on October 31, the strikers held a march ending in Oldham town centre.

Catering and cleaning staff at London school strike over pay cut

Around 40 catering and cleaning staff at private Forest School in Snaresbrook in east London began a two-week stoppage Monday. They are employed by the Compass Group, which is under contract to provide catering and cleaning services.

The Unite union members are protesting Compass's proposal to pay them only for term times. This would mean being paid only 45 weeks a year rather than the current 52, a pay cut of up to 13.5 percent. Many of the workers are only paid just above the minimum wage.

The workers already held a one-week stoppage beginning September 28 over the same issue. The private school charges pupils nearly £11,000 a term. Compass reported a £1.5 billion profit for 2025.

Children's services staff in Suffolk, UK to protest planned cuts

Staff working for children's services provided by Suffolk County Council, England are to hold a protest rally outside the council's headquarters in Ipswich on Friday.

Unison union members are expected to be joined by families who would be affected. They are protesting planned cuts to child services and children's centres by the Reform UK-run authority. The councillors are due to vote on the proposals on November 9.

Ongoing protests in Iran over deteriorating living conditions

Monday saw protests by telecom retirees in several cities including Isfahan, Kermanshah and Tehran. They were protesting deteriorating living conditions and unpaid benefits. Monday was also the third day of a strike of drivers of transit line private sector buses in the city of Yazd, protesting the rising costs of oil and tyres.

On November 1, steel and iron foundry retirees gathered outside the governor's office in the city of Isfahan protesting the inadequacy of their pensions. There were also demonstrations that day by Social Security retirees in several cities, including Ahvaz, Kermanshah and Tehran, protesting ongoing high prices, increasing inflation and medical costs, among other issues.

On October 31, farmers protested in Garmsar over their restricted access to water rights from the Hableh-Rood River. In Zahedan, protesters gathered outside the Zahedan Oil Products Distribution Company to protest the reduction in kerosene rations in the lead-up to winter.

Iran's economy has been devastated as a result of decades of US sanctions and the recent naval blockade. It is also threatened by further US military attacks, and its Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz was attacked on November 2, the eve of the US mid-term elections.

Protests in Iraq over jobs and living conditions

Tuesday saw protests by thousands of northern Basra tribesmen. They rallied outside the West Qurna 1 oil field to demand jobs for local residents. Other demands include the improved water provision, public services and completion of health projects.

On Monday, Kirkuk residents protested the rising electricity prices charged by private diesel generators and the cutting of supplies by some of them. These costs are adding to the economic burden arising from the increased costs of goods and basic necessities. Protesters built barriers and set fire to tyres.

Kurdish language protesters in Syrian city of Hasakah

On Wednesday, Kurdish students in the Syrian city of Hasakah held a protest outside the provincial government building. They were demanding official status for the Kurdish language and for the introduction of Kurdish-language school curricula.

The protesters were attacked by a group of masked men arriving by motorbike from the city's southern neighbourhood, and some students were hospitalised. A similar protest took place in September in Qamis.

Nigerian electricity workers strike over pay and conditions, causing widespread blackouts

Electricity workers at the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) in Nigeria began a strike October 19 over unpaid entitlements, salary disparities and deteriorating working conditions. Members of the electricity workers' union shut down electricity feeders, cutting power supplies across Edo, Delta, Ekiti and Ondo states. Edo State was plunged

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into a four-day blackout, disrupting businesses, hospitals and other essential services.

Workers demand salary adjustments following introduction of the national minimum wage, harmonisation of salaries, payment of outstanding overtime, improved protective equipment and an end to delays in staff promotions. BEDC management claimed the industrial action had cost the company more than ?2 billion in lost revenue within two days.

Following negotiations convened by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment in Abuja on October 21, BEDC management agreed to immediately restore overtime payments and address remaining grievances within three weeks. The union agreed to suspend strikes in Delta, Ekiti and Ondo states, but the stoppage continued in Edo over unresolved local issues.

Doctors and university lecturers strike over unpaid entitlements in Nigeria's Oyo State

Doctors and dental officers employed by Nigeria's Oyo State government began strike action October 26 over unpaid allowances and salary grievances. The Association of Medical and Dental Officers members demand payment of outstanding allowances and restoration of salaries to medical personnel transferred from field assignments to the Ministry of Health. The strike disrupted services at public hospitals already suffering from staff shortages, inadequate equipment and deteriorating facilities.

Lecturers at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology in Ogbomoso began an indefinite strike on October 29. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) are demanding implementation of the 2025 federal government–ASUU agreement, payment of outstanding entitlements, including promotion arrears, and improvements to university facilities. The walkout disrupted academic activities, affecting thousands of students.

The simultaneous strikes intensified pressure on Oyo State Governor Seyi Makinde. Opposition All Progressives Congress politician Senator Sharafadeen Alli accused the administration of neglecting workers' grievances. Alli claimed he would ensure prompt payment of salaries and allowances if elected in 2027, while appealing to unions to enter negotiations. Both disputes remain unresolved according to the latest media reports.

Ghanaian judicial workers begin indefinite nationwide strike over unpaid salaries

Judicial workers across Ghana began an indefinite nationwide strike on November 2 over the government's failure to approve revised salaries and pay outstanding arrears.

The Judicial Service Staff Association of Ghana (JUSAG) members demand presidential approval of the 2026 salary review, payment of the new rates in November and arrears covering January to October. The union says repeated attempts to resolve the dispute since December 2025 have failed.

The walkout shut courts and registries across the country, disrupting hearings, bail applications and the processing of criminal cases. At Amasaman Courts near Accra, buildings were locked and deserted apart from security personnel. JUSAG instructed court registrars not to open their offices and drivers to surrender official vehicles, preventing their use to transport judges and other officials.

The government initially proposed paying salary arrears in three instalments without specifying dates, a proposal rejected by the employees. On November 3, the Finance Ministry announced that arrears would be paid in two instalments, in November and December. However, JUSAG President Samuel Afotey Otu said the strike would continue until revised conditions of service were formally agreed and outstanding demands addressed.

Kenyan university lecturers end month-long strike following pay agreement

Unions pushed through a deal to end the strike by lecturers and other university workers in Kenya that began on October 2, following a KSh20 billion pay agreement between unions and government. The strike, involving members of several unions, disrupted teaching and examinations at public universities across the country. Union leaders announced the agreement on October 28, with a formal return-to-work agreement signed on October 31.

The agreement covers salaries and allowances under the 2025–2029 Collective Bargaining Agreement. The government increased its offer from KSh11.96 billion to KSh20 billion following negotiations involving senior ministers. However, the settlement falls substantially short of the unions' original KSh98 billion demand. Lecturers will receive annual basic salary increases of 3.5 percent, compared with the 36–68 percent increases initially sought across different grades, alongside improvements to allowances.

The KSh20 billion is supposed to be released in three instalments over the 2026/27 to 2028/29 financial years, and workers were expected to resume duties on November 2. The return-to-work agreement is also supposed to mean the withdrawal of disciplinary proceedings against workers who participated in the strike.

Thousands of Festive Chicken workers in South Africa strike for living wage as bosses threaten mass dismissals

Thousands of workers at Festive Chicken, a subsidiary of Astral Foods, began an indefinite stoppage October 29 in Gauteng and Mpumalanga in South Africa demanding a monthly wage of R13,500. In a statement, the workers revealed that some employees are paid as little as R5,600 a month despite 45-hour weeks and years of service. On the company's farms, workers say they toil 48 hours a week for R7,300 a month, with no overtime pay for Sundays and public holidays.

The strike shut down production at facilities including the company's largest plant in Clayville, Olifantsfontein, which processes 2.3 million chickens a week. Chicken catchers, who collect birds from private and company farms across the province and beyond, joined the walkout. The workers say the strike is protected and plan to appeal to working-class communities to boycott Festive Chicken products.

After the 48-hour strike notice was issued, the company reportedly circulated letters threatening dismissal and branding the action unprotected. Workers say they were summoned individually and pressured to sign documents pledging not to strike, under threat of losing their jobs. The company also advertised vacancies through labour brokers, drawing dozens of desperate unemployed people to apply at one workplace as

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employees prepared to down tools.

The workers cite Section 67(4) of the Labour Relations Act, which protects participants in a protected strike from dismissal. Lawyers for Human Rights, acting on their behalf, sent the company a letter demanding an end to the intimidation and warning it would seek an urgent hearing before the Labour Court president if the conduct continued.

The workers pointed to the chasm between their wages and profits flowing to the top. Astral paid R342 million in dividends to shareholders between October 2025 and March 2026. According to the company's 2025 annual report, CEO Gary Arnold, who took up the post on February 1, 2025, received R27.9 million before tax for the financial year ending September 2025. Astral's brands, including Festive fresh chicken, Goldi frozen chicken and County Fair, supply supermarkets and fast-food chains, giving the strike the potential to disrupt a significant part of the food supply chain.

Johannesburg residents in South Africa protest as water crisis deepens after years of neglect

Workers across Johannesburg, South Africa took to the streets between October 28 and 30 chanting "Amanzi, awethu!" (Water is ours!) to demand a permanent end to the city's collapsing water supply.

The protests took place ahead of the local government elections held on November 4. Residents described a daily struggle for the most basic necessities. Rashida Mather, a dementia carer in Brixton who has suffered three strokes, must haul buckets of water up her street to look after a patient, while Gilly Pirrow, 93, in Parktown, who is physically unable to carry water from tankers, has been without a supply since early August. In Kensington, where outages of a week or more have been routine for years, protester Nonie Zulu said children are studying for exams without being able to bathe. In Melville, demonstrators blocked Main Road, declaring the municipality is denying them their constitutional right to water.

The authorities blame consumers. Johannesburg Water says its systems are "severely constrained" and is throttling supply to a list of areas from Soweto and Orange Farm to Sandton and Midrand, with Level 2 restrictions threatened if demand keeps rising. Rand Water, which says it is already pumping at full capacity, revealed that Johannesburg exceeded its water-use target every month from January to September 2026 and began restricting bulk supply to municipalities that overshoot.

The figures point to the real culprit. Johannesburg told the Auditor-General it lost more than 207 billion litres of water in the 2025 financial year, costing about R2.8 billion in revenue, and R10.3 billion over four years, money that could have repaired the network. The metro spent just 0.3 percent of its asset value on maintenance, against National Treasury's recommended minimum of 8 percent. Residents report that cracked, leaking reservoirs are bypassed, and a campaigner noted that the city historically starved Johannesburg Water of operational funds. Only in July did it begin returning 70 percent of water revenue to the utility, far from enough to clear the accumulated backlog.

Ravin Singh of the Johannesburg Water Crisis Committee pointed out that those in the affluent north water their gardens, fill their pools and hose down cement, "while those in the east [and other areas] do not get a drop."

Johannesburg municipal workers face police repression and criminal charges for demanding wages owed since 2016

Municipal workers protested October 26 to demand the City of Johannesburg implement the Political Facilitated Agreement (PFA), a collective agreement signed in 2016 with the aim of correcting income disparities across the city. South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) members demanded that the city manager address them. When he did not, they marched onto the M1 Freeway at Smit Street in Braamfontein, shutting it in both directions.

Sixteen workers were arrested, facing charges of public violence, malicious injury to property and contravening road traffic regulations, and later released with a warning by the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court. The case is postponed to December 3 for further investigations.

The sequence is familiar: a city administration that has ignored an agreement for 10 years refuses even to face the workers, and when they take their grievance to the streets, the response is riot police, arrests and prosecution.

Samwu called on its Johannesburg members to remain "resolute and united," but offers no strategy to unite municipal workers with other sections of the working class, such as the residents of Johannesburg who are enduring weeks without water. These struggles, over unpaid wages, collapsing services and state repression, spring from the same source: a political establishment that, even in the weeks before the November 4 local government elections, had no intention of meeting the needs of working people. Defending the 16 accused and winning the PFA payments will require workers to build rank-and-file committees independent of the unions.

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