

Healthcare workers in Croatia in national strike over pay and conditions; daily strikes and protests continue across Iran over dire social conditions; hundreds protest docking of American flagged ship carrying arms to Israel in Morocco

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 Croatian healthcare workers in national strike over pay and conditions

Medical workers in Croatian hospitals began an indefinite national strike Monday which affected patient scans, x-rays, blood tests and other procedures.

The 4,000 Zajedno (Together) union members, including radiographers, nurses and other technicians, are demanding a 20 percent rise on basic pay and bonuses for unsafe working conditions. They also complain of staff shortages.

Netherlands pharmacy workers strike nationally for better pay and conditions

Thousands of pharmacy workers across the Netherlands went on strike Tuesday and protested in capital city, The Hague, demanding higher wages and reduced workloads.

The Federation of Dutch Trade Unions and the Christian National Trade Union Federation members have conducted a series of regional strikes over the last nine weeks. They want a 6 percent raise backdated to July, pay for all hours worked, increased staffing and more safety in the workplace.

Rail infrastructure workers in Netherlands walk out for pay rises

Rail workers with ProRail, responsible for the network infrastructure of the state-owned Dutch Railways, held a morning strike in North Holland on Wednesday and a similar one is planned for Friday. The strike had a

wide impact throughout the Netherlands.

The Federation of Dutch Trade Unions members want a 15 percent increase for the lowest grades and 10 percent for the higher earners. ProRail have offered an average of 5.2 percent.

Private healthcare workers across France strike for a living wage

Nurses and care workers at several private hospitals and clinics in France, including the cities of Brest and Lyon, stopped work Tuesday in protests for salary increases.

The strikes were called by the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), the French Democratic Confederation of Labour and Workers Force, in response to pressure from members, many of whom are barely paid above the statutory minimum wage. In Brest, workers employed by France's major private healthcare provider, Elsan, have had salaries frozen since 2017.

The stoppages by health and care workers are part of an upsurge of strikes against massive job cuts and ongoing austerity, which will involve rail workers, civil servants, airline workers, farmers and others in the coming months.

French Airbus aircraft painters on indefinite strike for pay increase

Over a hundred French technicians at Satys, a sub-contractor for Airbus, have been on indefinite strike since October 28 for a pay increase at their two sites in Nantes.

The CGT members paint and seal aircraft in a confined space and are demanding a pay premium due to the pain and discomfort of working conditions.

Strike by office staff at Ford UK plants over pay

Hundreds of office staff working for the Ford UK motor company at its Dagenham site in East London and its Halewood site in Speke on Merseyside were on strike this week over pay.

The Unite union members are protesting Ford's proposal to offer its office staff no permanent pay offer for 2024 and a one-off payment. Additionally, Ford want to make 2025's offer performance related, as well as to change the long-standing sick pay scheme and change the collective bargaining agreement it has with Unite.

The office staff at the Dagenham site are out each day this week, Monday to Friday and held a demonstration on Wednesday outside Gate 20. The office workers at its Halewood site in Speke on Merseyside began a three-day stoppage Wednesday.

The action at Speke and Dagenham follows a one-day stoppage on October 30 by around 1,000 Ford office staff including the Speke and Dagenham workers but also involving office staff at Daventry, Dunton and Stafford.

Ford's office staff have been in dispute over the issue of pay since August 22 when they began action short of a strike. Ford managers are also taking action short of striking over pay. Their pay offer is a "performance related merit award, which they are not guaranteed to receive".

According to Unite, Ford reported a net yearly income of \$4.3 billion on revenues of \$176 billion for 2023.

Oil platform safety shelter workers in Dundee, Scotland begin three-month strike over pay and conditions

Around a dozen technicians working for Safehouse Habitats, based in Dundee, Scotland began a three-month stoppage on Monday. Safehouse Habitats manufactures and maintains safety shelters on offshore oil and gas platforms.

The Unite union members began the action after the company refused to make a pay offer this year. Also, the company is trying to change the sick pay scheme.

The current scheme gives six months on full pay, which the company wants to replace with minimum statutory sick pay. The workers had already given back around 3 percent in pay when the sick pay scheme was introduced two years ago.

Safehouse Habitats, which produces and maintains the shelters for big energy companies such as Chevron, Ineos and Shell, has assets of over £5 million.

Pay strikes continue at housing association in the West Midlands, England

Around 200 UK housing repair and maintenance workers employed by the Citizen Housing Association in the West Midlands were on strike Monday and are scheduled to walk out Friday.

The Unite union members work as administration staff, construction workers, electricians and gas engineers for the housing association, which has around 30,000 properties in Birmingham, Coventry, Hereford and Worcester. They rejected a 4 percent pay offer from Citizen Housing. Unite is seeking a 9.2 percent minimum raise.

Ten days of stoppages are planned altogether, with four already taken since the end of October before this week's action. Further stoppages are planned for November 18, 22, 25 and 29.

Continuing protests across Iran over poverty, work and social conditions

Protests by workers continue each day across Iran over employment and social conditions and growing poverty.

Saturday saw protests by female taxi drivers in Mashhad demanding improved working conditions. In Shiraz nurses at the Namazi hospital held a further stoppage demanding improved pay and conditions. In Tehran construction workers rallied outside the Ministry of Energy protesting violation of contracts and labour rights.

On Sunday newly retired teachers protested outside the Ministry of Education in Tehran. Their demands included payment of overdue wages, improved pensions and prompt payment of retirement bonuses. Also in Tehran, Isfahan steel industry pensioners protested against their inadequate pensions and restricted access to basic services.

Pensioners rallied in Ahvaz, Haft, Shush and Tappeh protesting the inadequacy of their pensions in the face of the rising cost of living and against the government's mismanagement of social security funds.

On Monday, retired teachers in Tehran took to the streets. Meanwhile retirees from the Telecommunications Company of Iran held protests in several cities including Esfahan, Hamedan, Ilam, Rasht and Tabriz over the low levels of pensions and diversion of monies to shareholders leaving pensioners short.

Disabled people in Yazd in central Iran rallied outside the Welfare Organization against the low levels of benefits and called for the implementation of Article 27 of the Law for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Workers at the Abadan Petrochemical company in the city of Abadan walked out demanding fair contract terms and better working conditions.

Tuesday saw casual oil workers employed at eight refineries of the South Pars Gas Complex strike. Among their demands were for previously dismissed workers to be reinstated, an end to security measures against protesting oil workers and for administrative and support staff to have a work pattern of 14 days on and 14 days off.

Iran's unemployment rate was almost 10 percent in 2023. According to the International Monetary Fund, inflation stands at 31.7 percent this year. The collapse in living standards, exacerbated by US sanctions, grows ever worse in the face of US and Israel war preparations against the country.

Hundreds in Morocco protest the docking of ship carrying arms for Israel

Hundreds of people in Morocco gathered in Tangier to protest the docking of the American flagged Maersk Denver on November 9, asserting the vessel was transporting arms to Israel.

National Secretariat of Moroccan Front in Support of Palestine demonstrators chanted, "Whoever welcomes Israel's ships is not one of us."

The Denmark-based company Maersk also announced the same day that "one of its container ships was prevented from entering the Spanish port of Algeciras" while denying it was carrying weapons for Israel.

Kenyan teachers continue stoppage over funding as talks fail to start

Teachers in Kenya are continuing their strike over funding despite the Labour Court declaring it an “unprotected” strike and demanding talks with the National Assembly Education Committee resume.

The Inter-Public Universities Councils Consultative Forum (IPUCCF) failed to provide proof as promised of the government's commitment to Sh4.3 billion of extra funding for higher education institutions, for two weeks running.

IPUCCF Chairman Fred Simiyu Baraza claimed the delay was due to teachers rejecting the government's initial offer of Sh1.6 billion.

Bus drivers in Tshwane, South Africa take solidarity action with sacked colleagues

Around 33 South African bus drivers closed the gates of Tshwane city's C De Wet bus depot November 7 after learning they had been dismissed for striking earlier in the year.

The South African Municipal Workers Union members walked out May 7 and 8 in an unprotected strike, demanding to see the City Manager over salaries and overtime.

After appealing to fellow drivers, only 128 drivers turned up for the morning shift on Monday in solidarity, so 146 buses out of 160 ran causing delays.

Staff at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria protest over unpaid salaries

Staff at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, staged a protest over unpaid salaries and allowances. The Federal Government refused to pay them for more than five months' work. The National Association of Academic Technologists members carried placards denouncing the government.

The grievances date back to an agreement made between the government and the union in 2009, which contained specific allowances and benefits for the technologists.



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