

Teachers in Greece begin stoppages over punitive assessments; ongoing protests and strikes in Iran as living standards collapse; Nigerian workers in some states in week-long strike over non-implementation of minimum wage

## 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 in daily and weekly work stoppages until Christmas

Primary school teachers in Greece are to stop work for one hour daily, and secondary school teachers for a morning or afternoon shift each day until December 23. They are protesting against punitive government teacher assessment regimes in the classroom.

The Teaching Federation of Greece and the Greek Federation of Secondary State School Teachers members held a one-day national strike in October for better conditions in schools, pay improvements and an end to harsh teacher evaluations.

### Strike by Turkish family doctors and medical staff over new pay rules

Primary health care doctors, midwives and nurses in Turkey began a stoppage from Monday until December 6. They are protesting new regulations that affect their pay and working conditions.

The Turkish Medical Association and Istanbul Family Medicine Association members at family medical centres first staged a walkout November 6-7. They say that under the recent directives, their pay is being cut by 30 percent but will supposedly be recompensed according to the number of patients treated.

The doctors see the so-called "Torture Regulation" arrangement as increasing workloads at the expense of healthcare quality. According to *Hürriyet Daily News*, they already receive the lowest salaries of all Turkish doctors.

### Hundreds of Turkish metal workers in strikes for pay increase

Five hundred metal workers at four Turkish factories owned by Hitachi Energy and other companies went on strike Wednesday as part of their 5 percent wage demand.

The striking United Metal Workers' Union members are among 2,000 factory workers from 11 different transformer manufacturing companies, represented by the Turkish Employers Association of Metal Industries, offering a rise of 3.65 percent. Strikes in the other factories are to follow.

### Building workers in Cyprus strike for pay improvement

Over 500 concrete and cement workers at companies across Cyprus have been on strike since November 7, demanding better pay for overtime work. The Cyprus Workers' Confederation members also want a €29 per week wage increase over the next three years.

### Strike by staff at Unite union London office

Staff working in the National Bargaining and Disputes Support Unit at the Unite union's London HQ in Holborn went on strike Tuesday.

The GMB members took out a collective grievance after Unite failed to suspend managers accused of bullying. They were victimised by Unite and suspended prior to the stoppage. The strike is scheduled to last until Friday.

### Journalists at major UK newspaper hold 48-hour stoppage over sale of paper

Journalists at the UK's *Guardian* and sister *Observer* paper began a 48-hour strike Wednesday.

The stoppage by National Union of Journalists (NUJ) members is the first by *Guardian* journalists for over 50 years. They oppose the proposed

sale of the *Observer* to Tortoise Media, which first became known in September. Tortoise Media is run by James Harding, a former *Times* editor and director of BBC News.

A *Guardian* article said Tortoise had “put forward plans to continue publishing the *Observer* on a Sunday and build the title’s digital presence,” combining the paper with Tortoise’s podcasts, newsletters and live events.

The NUJ members fear the sale would jeopardise Guardian Media group owner Scott Trust’s commitment to continue publication of the *Observer*.

If the sale goes ahead, *Observer* journalists have been told they can either take voluntary redundancy with enhanced terms or transfer to Tortoise Media on existing terms.

The NUJ members voted by a 93 percent majority to walk out on a 79 percent turnout.

### **Traffic wardens and CCTV staff in London borough of Hounslow strike over pay**

Traffic wardens and CCTV operating staff in the London borough of Hounslow were due to begin a walkout today, scheduled to last until January 27 next year. They are employed by outsourcing company NSL, which provides traffic monitoring services for Hounslow council.

The Unite union members rejected an inadequate pay offer from NSL. NSL is part of Marston Holdings, which had revenues of £326 million last year with an operating profit of £31.7 million.

The workers had previously threatened to strike over an outstanding 2023 pay claim agreed by their former employer, Serco. NSL took over the contract in December 2023, supposedly on the same terms and conditions, but initially refused to meet the agreed claim. Unite called off proposed strikes in September when NSL and the council offered a new deal, which was accepted.

The current stoppages are expected to severely impact parking enforcement over the busy Christmas period.

### **Ongoing protests in Iran over pensions, pay and social conditions**

On Monday, retirees of the Telecommunications Company of Iran (TCI) held rallies in various cities demanding overdue pensions and protesting the inadequate level of their pensions eroded by inflation.

The protests took place in several cities including Isfahan, Sanandaj, Rasht, Urmia and Zanjan. Protests also took place in the capital city, Tehran, where retirees gathered outside TCI provincial headquarters to push their demands.

In Astaneh-ye Ashrafiyeh, in Gilan province, residents held a protest against a newly installed rubbish incinerator, which they say damages the environment and affects their health.

Students and environmental activists rallied in Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province to protest the building of dams, which they say will damage the protected Dena ecosystem, deprive farmers of water and threaten biodiversity.

In Ilam, former workers of the Arghavan Petrochemical Company, along with their families, protested outside the office of the provincial governor. They demanded financial assistance after being laid off at short notice.

On Tuesday, disabled people protested in the city of Sari, gathering outside the Welfare Organisation office. They called for the government

to implement a law requiring it to meet the basic needs of disabled people.

Also Tuesday, schoolchildren in Ezhiyeh rallied to protest inadequate heating in their schools. In Mashhad, parents of special needs children held protests against the high cost of transport to take the children to school. They were previously promised free transport.

In Mashhad, workers at the Tus power plant rallied for overdue wages and improved working conditions.

Unemployment in Iran was almost 10 percent in 2023, with inflation hitting 31.7 percent this year. Living standards have been badly hit by US sanctions and are set to grow worse as US and Israel war preparations against the country escalate.

### **Workers in several states in Nigeria in week-long stoppage over minimum wage**

On December 2, workers in Nigeria downed tools for a week in several states including Kaduna, Ebonyi, Nasarawa and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) members demand the implementation of the minimum wage of N70,000. A minimum wage of N75,000 was announced in Ebonyi, N70,500 in Nasarawa, N72,000 in Kaduna and only N70,000 in FCT.

The weekend before the strike, NLC President Joe Ajaero listed Abia, Oyo and Ekiti states to begin strike action but the state chapters of the NLC backed down. Workers in Sokoto and Akwa Ibom states may join the walkout.

### **Nigerian electricity workers disrupt supply in Federal Capital over welfare demands[subhead]**

Most staff at state-run polytechnics in Nigeria joined a warning strike beginning December 3 over pay, conditions and funding.

In Kaduna State, the strike was solid. The Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics members plan to stay out for two weeks.

### **Union sells out steelworkers’ fight to defend jobs at ArcelorMittal, South Africa**

The metalworkers’ trade union has ended the indefinite strike to defend jobs at three of ArcelorMittal South Africa’s eight plants.

Workers walked out from November 14, after the company announced 107 jobs would go from Coke Making Battery 6 and 7. The Newcastle plant is also threatened with closure, affecting 3,500 jobs.

The National Metalworkers Union of South Africa (NUMSA) accepted a sellout deal after the company agreed to voluntary redundancies and said workers could apply for vacancies in other areas.

NUMSA general secretary Irvin Jim said, “Unfortunately, the company has been left with no option but to restructure its operations, leading to job losses.”

### **South African Airways pilots begin walkout over pay**

Pilots at South African Airways (SAA) began indefinite strike action on Thursday over pay.

The South African Pilots Association reduced its original demand for a 30 percent increase to 15.7 percent plus benefits. SAA countered with 8.46 percent.

Pilots' salaries were cut by 50 percent during SAA's business rescue operation, while other staff lost 10 percent.

### **Cleansing workers protest independently of union over unpaid backpay in South African municipality**

Workers refused to collect rubbish in Ray Nkonyeni Municipality, South Africa in a wildcat protest over six months unpaid backpay.

Workers began their action over a week ago, in rebellion against the SA Municipal Workers Union, which accepted a payment of three months unpaid wages.

### **Taxi drivers' protest in Durban, South Africa causes major disruption**

From November 29, taxi drivers blocked roads into Durban, South Africa for four days, causing major congestion.

The drivers are in dispute with the transport department over operating licenses, permits and taxis being impounded as unroadworthy.



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