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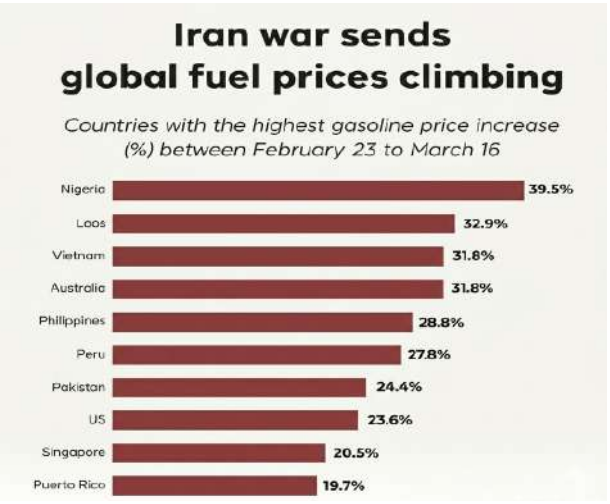
NEEDLESS HIKE IN FUEL PRICE

It is difficult to understand how and why the government would turn what should be good fortune into collective misfortune. The sharp rise in the global price of crude oil should ordinarily be good news for Nigerian workers. Higher crude prices should translate into increased revenue for the federal, state and local governments. These resources could be used to fund development, improve public services and cushion the crushing weight of multidimensional poverty facing millions of citizens.

But rather than seize this opportunity to provide relief, the government and the private sector have once again chosen a path that deepens the suffering of the masses. Instead of palliatives or social protection, we are confronted with yet another hike in fuel prices — a nearly 40 percent increase between February and March alone, making Nigeria the worst-affected country in the world according to Global Petrol Prices data. No other nation on that list — not Laos, not Vietnam, not even the United States — came close.



The question is this: how do the working people of an oil-producing country suffer more from rising crude prices than countries that produce no oil at all?

The answer lies in a series of deliberate policy choices that have left ordinary people exposed and unprotected. Nigeria is a crude oil exporter but a petroleum products importer. For decades, the country exported its crude in raw form and imported refined products back at global market prices — a structural contradiction that should have been resolved long ago.

The removal of the fuel subsidy in May 2023 by the Tinubu administration stripped away the one buffer that shielded citizens from the full violence of global price swings. And the collapse of the naira since then has compounded the damage further. Petroleum is priced in dollars, every depreciation of the currency means we pay more at the pump even when international prices stay flat. When global prices also rise, the combined effect is devastating. This has been made worse as crude oil exports have increased and petroleum products imports have reduced over the last month, strengthening Dangote's monopoly position. At the same time, major corporations and fuel marketers continue to report strong profits.

Into this crisis, the Dangote refinery was introduced as a solution. We were promised much cheaper fuel and an end to the import dependency. When a litre of petrol cost less than ₦200, this promise seemed plausible. Today, after the most recent price hike, a litre costs around ₦1,500. The refinery, despite operating at full capacity, has not delivered the price relief that was promised. A promise was made. That promise has not been kept. Who should be held responsible?

What ought to have been a source of joy has become an instrument of bitter regret for millions of workers already struggling to survive. We need to demand that the NLC/TUC takes action to protect our lives. The Governor of Oyo State has increased salaries for all staff. We need a much larger increase in salaries across the whole country.

IVA VALLEY COAL MINERS' STRUGGLES OF 1949 – STRIKE AND MASSACRE - By Izielen Agbon

The Iva Valley massacre of November 1949 arose from a rising wave of class struggles from the end of the World War in 1945. These were not restricted to the mines and included the 1945 General Strike (lasting 45 days from June 22 to early August 1945). The miners struggles were against the colliery management, the Colonial State and even, at times, their own trade union leaders. The miners introduced imaginative approaches included go slow action and occupations of the mines. Their wives and partners were also involved in supporting protests.

The massacre of 21 miners resulted in mass protests and rioting across the South East. In Owerri 15,000 people protested and a workers' leader was shot dead. A rally was held in Aba and a march and riot in Port Harcourt where another two workers' leaders were shot dead by the police. Protests were also held in Onitsha and Calabar. The petite bourgeoisie called for "self-government of Nigeria Now!" The protests were called off by the Zikist Movement after an appeal from the trade union leaders. The commission of enquiry recommended the payment of £400 compensation to the family of each of the murdered coal miners. It also emphasised the need to separate politics from the trade union movement and the need to remove militant or "reckless and self-serving" trade union leaders.

The full article is available to read from:

https://socialistlabour.com.ng/iva-valley-coal-miners-struggles-of-1949-strike-and-massacre/

The recording of the Socialist Labour public meeting on this topic is available here: https://tinyurl.com/ekczh867

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EUROPE AND NIGERIA: A TALE OF TWO STRATEGIES FOR THE GLOBAL ENERGY CRISIS - By Baba Lawan

The global energy landscape is once again under strain, as tensions in the Middle East push crude oil prices upward. While some governments are taking proactive steps to cushion the impact on citizens, others are leaving people exposed to rising costs. This contrast is clear between countries like Germany and the Netherlands; and Nigeria. It reveals differences in governance priorities and crisis management.

In Europe, fuel prices in March 2026 have risen to between €1.75 and €2.00 per litre. Recognizing the urgency, governments in Germany and the Netherlands have moved quickly to design relief measures. Germany is considering temporary fuel subsidies, tax reductions, and price caps to shield households and businesses. The Netherlands, on the other hand, is exploring direct payments to affected households, incentives for businesses to control price increases, and support for public transportation. These strategies reflect a broader principle: governments must actively manage crises to protect citizens and stabilize the economy.

In contrast, Nigeria's response has largely been limited to advisories. The Minister of Finance has warned that rising global oil prices may increase inflation, leading to higher transport and food costs. While these warnings are valid, they do little to ease the immediate burden on citizens. So far, there have been no clear proposals for subsidies or direct financial support to mitigate the impact.

This difference raises important questions about policy priorities. European governments understand that sudden energy price increases can destabilize households and markets, so they combine immediate relief with long-term stability. Nigeria, despite being an oil-producing country, has been cautious about intervention due to concerns over fiscal sustainability and past subsidy mismanagement. While these concerns are valid, they should not prevent temporary and targeted support during extraordinary circumstances.

The stakes are high. Fuel costs influence not just transportation but also food prices, production costs, and household spending. In a country where many people spend a large share of their income on basic needs, even small price increases can have serious consequences. Europe's approach shows that timely intervention can reduce these ripple effects and protect both citizens and economic stability.

Critics often argue that subsidies are costly and prone to misuse, especially given Nigeria's past experiences. However, when designed to be temporary, targeted, and transparent, such measures can act as effective stabilizers rather than long-term burdens.

Lastly, the contrast between Europe and Nigeria highlights a key lesson: awareness of a crisis must be matched with action. Germany and the Netherlands show that well-designed policies can protect citizens and maintain stability. The Nigerian Government has both the resources and the opportunity to do the same. The real question is whether it has the political will to act.

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US/ISRAEL ATTACK on IRAN and Lebanon

By Amina Usman

We are all horrified by the combined attacks carried out by the USA and Israeli forces against Iran and Lebanon. These assaults began even as negotiations were ongoing between the American and Iranian governments. We unconditionally condemn this aggression and acknowledge the widespread protests in the US, including the largest demonstrations in American history at the end of last month.

The Government of Iran has the right to defend itself against foreign aggression and the assassination of its leaders. At the same time, we recognize that this government is deeply unpopular and repressive toward ordinary people. By its own admission, Iranian security forces killed at least 3,000 people during the mass protests in January. The head of police recently called for protesters to be shot "like the enemy," showing that the government continues to face deep opposition.

The war also allows the theocracy to use nationalist rhetoric to mobilise the masses behind it. There is a real possibility that the regime may emerge from the conflict strengthened, just as the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union emerged from the Second World War and endured for an entire historical period before eventually collapsing. This development could have grave implications for the class struggle of Iranian working people and their legitimate quest for economic and political justice.

However, the conditions that forced the Iranian working people onto the road of struggle will not disappear. If anything, these conditions will be intensified by the war, sharpening the contradictions between the regime and the masses.

The mass struggles of 1979 that removed the Western-backed Shah were initially led by oil and other workers, who developed Shoras — soviets or organs of popular power. However, the Ayatollahs under Khomeini exploited divisions on the left to seize power and proclaim an Islamic state. This marked a counter-revolution, and the left paid a terrible price for failing to lead — a price still borne by the working people of Iran today.

No historical analogy is perfect, but Britain after the Second World War offers a lesson. Workers voted out Churchill, the war leader, and elected a Labour government that implemented progressive reforms. Many of these — such as the National Health Service, still free at the point of delivery — remain available to the British working class. Despite the war, the collective consciousness of workers had not forgotten how the Tories starved and mistreated them during the 1920s and 1930s.

We must now discuss how mass protests — beyond the Shi'ite demonstrations already held in several cities — can be organized in Nigeria against the US/Israeli attacks on Iran and in solidarity with the Iranian people.

We demand an immediate halt to the US/Israeli attacks on Iran and Lebanon. We express our solidarity with the Iranian people in their struggles for democracy and justice. We call on the Nigerian Government to end its cooperation with US and Israeli security forces.

For Socialist Labour's immediate reaction to the attack on Iran, read the following statement:

https://socialistlabour.com.ng/stop-the-us-israeli-attacks-on-iran/

For background on the history of Iran, see this free booklet:

https://ivavalleybooks.com/2025/07/29/revolution-and-counter-revolution-in-iran/

For more background on the January 2026 uprising in Iran, by an Iranian historian, see:

https://tinyurl.com/4443jxy3

HARSH EXONOMIC POLICIES, VIOLENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE DISPLACED THE POOR - By Bashir Bello

In recent times, a new class of beggars has emerged across the nation. They are not the familiar physically challenged individuals or the Almajirai children commonly seen on our streets. Rather, they are families, mostly women and children, who have been displaced by violent conflicts, insurgency, and natural disasters.

Some were forced to flee thriving communities due to insecurity, while others lost their ancestral homes and farmlands to the devastating effects of climate change. With little or no government support, many now survive solely on the mercy of sympathetic members of the public. Homeless and vulnerable, they sleep wherever they can find space: on pavements, in markets, motor parks, and under bridges.

A troubling question arises: what has become of their breadwinners? In many cases, the men have been killed in conflicts. Others, overwhelmed by economic hardship and social pressure, have abandoned their families. A few remain nearby, but keep their distance during the day, allowing women and children to beg while they reappear at night perhaps out of shame or societal expectations.

This situation presents a looming social crisis; a ticking time bomb that demands urgent attention. Many of these displaced women are raising large numbers of children on the streets, often without access to education, healthcare, or basic social support. Growing up in such harsh conditions increases the risk of social exclusion, crime, and instability in the future.

While many citizens observe from the comfort of their homes, often in denial or indifference, the number of displaced families continues to grow. Informal settlements are gradually forming in major cities; in markets, parks, and transport hubs.

The danger of this trend is obvious; more people are falling into the poverty trap. What the regime of Bola Tinubu is implementing today are clearly capitalist reforms. As across the world, the few rich are becoming fantastically wealthy while the rest of us are becoming poorer.

The withdrawal of fuel subsidy alone triggered a chain reaction that has shaken the very foundation of the economy. The cost of transportation has skyrocketed, food prices have become unbearable, businesses are collapsing, and the ordinary citizen is being pushed closer to the edge of survival.

If this trajectory continues unchecked, we may soon find ourselves living in a society where survival depends on borrowing. Credit cards and consumer loans will become the new lifeline, not out of prosperity, but out of desperation. Millions of Nigerians could end up indebted to powerful financial institutions, trapped in cycles of repayment that offer no real escape.

This grim reality already visible in the so-called "motherland of capitalism," the United States, where debt has become a permanent feature of everyday life. The critical question therefore is not whether reforms are necessary, but whose interests these reforms truly serve; the working people or the bosses?

It is therefore time for governments, civil society organizations, and the trade unions to look beyond temporary security measures and address the root causes of displacement: unemployment, rural neglect, climate challenges, and persistent violence. Only by tackling these fundamental issues can we prevent a deeper humanitarian and social crisis.

DAVID HUNDEYIN MAY NOT BE A FALSE PROPHET - By Omole Ibukun

Ibukun's core structural argument is compelling and worth taking seriously. The distinction between the populist establishment and the populist anti-establishment is analytically useful. The point that Hundeyin's work sustains conflict rather than building alternatives cuts deep. This is a familiar problem: radical energy captured by charismatic individuals rather than channelled into organised collective power.

Omole Ibukun's full article is available from:
It's a valuable piece https://tinyurl.com/2jh44za3

WORLD BANK CONDEMNS ITS OWN POVERTY INITIATIVE - By Drew Povey

The World Bank accepts that social support is needed, at least for the very poor, with the introduction its free market neoliberal reforms. It has congratulated the Tinubu administration for ending fuel subsidy and allowing the exchange rate for the naira to be determined by the so-called free market. However, in a report issued in late 2025, the Bank admitted the complete failure of its social support programs. It had fully supported these in Nigeria, whilst admitting that Tinubu's reforms had increased poverty. The fuel price increases and wider inflation, resulting from the end of fuel subsidy, pushed another 8 million into poverty according to the World Bank.

The World Bank report says that: "These Programs are vital in combating poverty by providing essential resources to help the poor meet their basic needs." (page xiii) But then admits that the programs have failed in Nigeria despite its direct support. At no point in the report is the alternative approach of ending fees for primary education and health even considered. Despite the fact that this approach would provide a more comprehensive coverage, and reduce corruption and leakage of funds. The report indirectly supports this view by saying that the school feeding program targeted the poor as it was restricted to public schools that the poor attend and that it increased attendance (and so reducing the massive out of school population of children in Nigeria – in 2023 UNESCO estimated this to be perhaps 20 million children across primary and secondary aged children – the highest in the world).

The full article is available to read from this link:

https://tinyurl.com/2y8v4f9y

TINUBU'S UK STATE VISIT: DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT OR DISTRACTION?

By Abadom Lawrence Amechi

President Tinubu's state visit to Britain will ensure the Government's alliances with the Nigerian ruling elite don't jeopardise the interests of British companies. Britain's interests in Nigeria are selfish – they've watched Nigeria's democracy struggle, benefited from corrupt politicians laundering stolen funds, and even supported questionable leaders to power. Despite this, the relationship continues.

The issue is not just what the Nigeria government does, but how they do it – feasting while people suffer.

It has become the pattern of President Tinubu to engage in wasteful foreign trips. The trip to Turkey almost took the entire machinery of government. A lot of people believed that the president's many trips haven't yielded any fruit. The world is neither deaf nor dumb. Nigeria needs to put its house in order to attract investors and boost its diplomatic standing.

The full article can be read here:

https://www.nationalrecord.com.ng/tinubus-uk-state-visit-diplomatic-engagement-or-distraction-by-abadom-lawrence-amechi/

Further details of the agreements made with the British Government can be found here:

https://tinyurl.com/5n7ek58y

DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY ON RAPE CULTURE: BAN ALL MISOGYNISTIC TRADITIONS NOW

- By Oluwatosin Adeyemi

Reports emerging from Ozoro community in Delta State, of a cultural festival in which women were openly harassed and violated, are not only disturbing—they are a damning indictment of a society that continues to tolerate, excuse, and, in some cases, normalize sexual violence against women.

This is not an isolated outrage. It reflects a deeply entrenched rape culture, where the bodies of women and girls—regardless of age—are too often treated as objects to be controlled, violated, and discarded. From infants to the elderly, no demographic is spared when a culture of impunity emboldens perpetrators and silences victims.

Historical and cultural practices have long reinforced this dangerous mindset. In some communities, young girls were betrothed or effectively pushed into forced marriages. Families receiving the bride price long before the girls reached maturity. When they eventually come of age, these girls could be abducted and compelled into marriage under the guise of tradition. Such practices are not merely customs—they are systems of control that strip women of autonomy and dignity.

Equally troubling are traditions that institutionalize the exclusion and subjugation of women. The "Oro festival" in parts of Yorubaland, for instance, enforces restrictions that confine women indoors under threat of harm. While culture and tradition are often defended as heritage, no cultural practice should supersede fundamental human rights or legitimize gender-based discrimination.

Let it be stated unequivocally: any culture, festival, or tradition that enables harassment, intimidation, or violence against women is not heritage—it is oppression. It is indefensible.

The continued existence of such practices underscores a broader systemic failure. Despite the presence of legal frameworks criminalizing rape and sexual assault, enforcement remains weak. Accountability is inconsistent, and survivors are frequently denied justice. Laws without implementation are meaningless.

There is an urgent need for decisive state action. Governments must treat the prevalence of sexual violence as a national emergency. This requires not only strengthening enforcement mechanisms but also pursuing widespread public education campaigns that confront harmful gender norms, challenge victim-blaming, and promote respect for women's rights.

Community leaders, traditional institutions, and religious bodies must also be held accountable. Silence or complicity in the face of abuse is unacceptable.

We cannot claim progress while half of our population continues to live under the threat of violence justified by culture. Every practice that legitimizes the oppression of women must be abolished, revoked, and outlawed without hesitation.

The protection of women's rights is not optional—it is a fundamental measure of any just society. This is an area where socialists and our trade unions need to be more active.

SOCIALISM FROM BELOW AND THE RANK-AND-FILE STRATEGY

Socialist Labour believes that socialism can only be achieved through the self-emancipation of the working class — "socialism from below." This principle is inseparable from the rank-and-file strategy, which emphasizes the central role of ordinary workers in the labour movement.

Socialism from Below

Socialism from below insists that workers must lead their own struggles. Rooted in Marxist principles, it highlights:

- The collective liberation of the working class.
- Radical democracy within trade unions and workplaces.
- The workplace as the central site of struggle.
- Strikes as a weapon to disrupt capitalist profits.

Through collective action, workers gain confidence, laying the foundation for mass uprisings and ultimately socialism — a free and democratic association of producers.

Centrality of the Workplace

The workplace is strategic for building collective action and workers' power. Workers are essential to production, and workplaces bring together diverse groups, creating opportunities for solidarity. While capitalism fosters divisions, collective struggles can overcome them. Trade union struggles often extend beyond wages to broader social issues such as fuel prices, healthcare, education, and housing.

Working-Class Consciousness

Workers' consciousness develops unevenly. Broadly, three layers exist: passive members, militant activists, and the labour bureaucracy. Struggles are episodic; workers do not engage continuously. Radical ideas can mobilize small groups, but widespread shifts in consciousness occur through collective struggle. Reformism, especially among union leadership, remains a persistent challenge.

The Role of Unions

Trade unions are vital for defending workers' rights and nurturing class consciousness. They provide platforms for collective organization and political self-activity. Yet union officers often prioritize stability over militancy, creating tension between leaders and rank-and-file members. Strong unions are necessary, but they must be democratized from below.

The Rank-and-File Strategy

The rank-and-file strategy emphasizes the power of ordinary workers. It advocates independent collective action, stronger connections between socialists and the labour movement, and the development of militant workers within unions and workplaces to lead struggles. Recent examples include the Federal Workers Forum in Nigeria, which has mobilized thousands through social media and protests in Abuja and Ibadan. The Elegant Nurses Forum is another initiative. More emphasis, however, must be placed on organizing within existing trade unions.

Challenges and the Future

The labour movement today is weaker, dominated by top-down unions and unsuccessful reformist parties. The rank-and-file strategy must therefore focus on democratizing unions through grassroots organization. Transitional politics are essential — linking immediate worker demands to broader socialist goals.

Despite frequent major strikes, especially in the public sector, union membership in private and informal sectors remains low. Even large strikes, such as those of ASUU and JOHESU, were largely passive. Consequently, the real value of wages has fallen sharply over the last 25 years.

To reverse this decline, rank-and-file organizations must be revitalized. Bottom-up, democratic trade unions are essential. The ultimate goal is to link labour struggles to broader socialist movements, fostering political independence from capitalist parties like the APC and PDP.

We would welcome any comments on the above statement and suggestions on how we can organise better within individual workplaces and trade union branches.

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SUDAN: A WAR FINANCED BY REGIONAL POWERS - By Paul Martial

The civil war in Sudan is part of a complex web of alliances between regional forces and neighbouring countries with divergent political agendas. They are only united by their desire to crush popular movements that bring about radical change. But it does demonstrate that regional powers and even smaller countries are able to follow their own agendas rather than those of the major global powers.

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) captured the city of El-Fasher in Eastern Sudan in late October, 2025. This highlights the fact that Sudan is experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Sudan, which has about 50 million inhabitants, has seen more than a quarter of its population displaced. More than 150,000 people may have died in the conflict.

This is a consequence of a war between Burhan, leader of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Hemetti, leader of the RSF. Both supported the dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir, brutally suppressed the 2019 popular revolution and are devastating the country in their quest for their own personal power.

The SAF benefits from the support of Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. While the RSF is massively backed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), although they deny this. Part of this support is paid for with Sudanese gold exported mainly through unofficial channels. The RSF was previously fighting in Yemen, funded by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The Egyptian Government considers Sudan to be its back-yard and so is worried by insecurity and the rise of militant Islamists. It also provides support to Eritrea against Ethiopia who is building a dam across the Nile whose waters Egypt is so dependent upon. Burhan was welcomed by the Egyptian president himself in early December 2025 on an official visit.

Military equipment for the RSF is smuggled through bases in Eastern Libya (despite previous Egyptian support), Chad and even Kenya. Chad chose to break its military agreements with France to ally itself with the UAE and is earning hundreds of millions of dollars in the process.

UAE also pays for support for the RSF from the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and South Sudan. The latter provides a rear based for the RSF in its capital Juba, but also the area disputed with Sudan, Abiyi. This is despite South Sudan traditionally relying on US aid and exporting its oil through Sudan.

The President of Kenya opened his country to the RSF for the announcement of their own 'government' in early 2025. This is despite the RSF being under US sanctions for "genocide" in Darfur. Kenya is helping to transport weapons into RSF controlled territories. This coincides with a surge in Kenyan gold exports to Dubai, many observers note (which may well have come from Sudan).

The United States and European governments would rather continue to have the support from regional powers like Saudia Arabia, Egypt and the UAE. Thus they prefer to ignore one of the major humanitarian disasters of the current world.

TRUMP MOVES HEALTH SPENDING TO THE MILITARY

In 2024, the US Government's support to the health sector in Nigeria was equivalent to around 50% of the Federal Government's health budget for that year. This does not demonstrate the generosity of the US Government, but the meagre amount invested in public health in Nigeria.

The US Government's health aid to Nigeria has now largely stopped as Trump moves funds from health to military spending. But the Federal budget for the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare only increased by 12% from 2025 to this year. As a result, many more people will die as they can no longer afford essential health care.

At least four Tomahawk missile warheads were found in Nigeria after reported U.S. airstrikes were carried out in Sokoto State. Two were recovered near Offa town, one in the Zugurma community and another in Jabo village.

Each of the 16 cruise missiles launched at Sokoto cost around $1.3 million according to the Washington Post. At least four completely missed their target.

Summary of Workers Strikes - March 2026

We need your assistance *to ensure that this monthly report is comprehensive. Please submit details of any strikes in your state or community. All these strikes need our support and solidarity. We call on all trade union branches to send messages of support and to organise solidarity visits to any strikes in their localities. To read more about how to organise effective strikes, see: https://tinyurl.com/solidarityunity*

Nurses, members of National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives at the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital, Kaduna started a strike on 12th February. The strike was because the hospital management had failed to address grievances that had lingered for over two years.

The University of Lagos (UNILAG) chapter of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) directed its members to down tools indefinitely from 11th March over unexplained cuts in January and February salaries. The strike was suspended the same day as the University promised to pay the Earned Academic Allowances, the professorial allowance for excess workload and other irregular deductions within 48 hours.

The industrial action embarked upon by Law Officers Association of Nigeria in Kano started on 11th March. It was suspended two days later. Kano State Government now has 21 days to begin implementing the report of the committee set up to review the Associations demands and challenges.

The members of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria, JUSUN, Abia State chapter commenced an indefinite strike on 16th March. This was related to staff welfare and independence of the judiciary in the state.

Members of the Amalgamated Union of App Based Transporters of Nigeria working for Uber, Bolt, and inDrive in Lagos and Ogun State started a three day strike on 16th March. The strike is over the rising cost of fuel and the commissions the companies take. The drivers are demanding that the commission is reduced to 10%. After the strike the companies were picketed by the drivers. A similar strike was held in Abuja in February.

The Taraba State University chapters of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) suspended their month-long strike on 18th March following an agreement with the state government to pay ₦500 million. The strike was over outstanding welfare issues, including salary-related concerns and other conditions of service.

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