



AS IT IS

World's Workers Rally for Higher Pay, Time Off, Safety on May Day

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The first day of May, known as May Day, is considered a day to celebrate workers around the world.

On Monday, however, workers around the world took to the streets to express their unhappiness about the money they make, their time off, the high cost of living and the age of retirement.

In the former Soviet Union, May Day was a time to celebrate communism. But on Monday in Russia, celebrations were overshadowed by the country's war with Ukraine.

In Europe

In France, workers want the government to reconsider a decision to increase the retirement age by two years, to 64. Police said they were concerned about protests getting larger if other groups joined in. Some groups there are protesting climate change. Others are concerned about how the 2024 Summer Olympics will affect life in Paris.

In Spain, labor union members said their pay has not gone up to match inflation and the higher cost of living.

In the Spanish capital of Madrid, a group of lawyers said old-fashioned rules that require them to be on duty every day of the year must be changed. Lawyers have used social media to show themselves working from the hospital or on days that family members died.

Police in Turkey prevented protesters from reaching Istanbul's main square, Taksim. More than 10 protesters were arrested. Taksim Square is where many people died after a **stampede** broke out during a May Day event in 1977.

In Asia

In South Korea, thousands of people attended the largest May Day protests since 2020. One protester shouted, "The price of everything has increased except for our wages. Increase our minimum wages!"

In Japan, workers, lawmakers and **academics** gathered in Tokyo's Yoyogi Park to demand higher pay. They criticized Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's plan to put more money into Japan's defense budget. The leader has said he plans to look at raising pay for workers.

Indonesian workers marched against a new law called the Job Creation Law, which they say will only help business owners.

Thousands of workers in Taiwan protested labor policies ahead of the 2024 presidential election there. They said they did not like President Tsai Ing-wen's labor decisions.

In Pakistan, government restrictions on gatherings prevented large public **rallies**. However, smaller groups gathered indoors to demand more support for workers and higher wages.

In the Middle East

Workers in Beirut, Lebanon marched through the streets. They included members of **unions** and migrant domestic workers. The country is in the middle of an economic crisis. About 75 percent of people in Lebanon are living in poverty because of high inflation.

I'm Ashley Thompson.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on a report by the Associated Press.

Words in This Story

stampede *-n.* a situation where a large group of frightened or excited people or animals run in an uncontrolled way to escape something; an often scary and dangerous situation

academic *-adj.* used to describe a person such as a professor or researcher who is involved in life at a university

rally *-n.* a public meeting to support or oppose something

union *-n.* an organization of workers formed to protect the rights and interests of its members

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