

# International Solidarity with Ongoing Social Struggles in France

‘French workers and people show the way in resisting attacks’

Tuesday 26 October 2010, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 25 October 2010).

## **Philippines: PLM solidarity statement with the French resistance**

October 21, 2010 — The Partido Lakas ng Masa (Party of the Labouring Masses, Philippines) congratulates the French workers and people who are staging crippling strikes, setting up barricades and holding widespread marches against recent austerity measures being planned by the French government. The resistance of the striking oil workers, truckers, bus drivers, railway workers, teachers, posties, printers and dockers was joined by students and schoolchildren all over France. The protests, which started in May, are still going on and have already mobilised millions of people in Paris and various parts of the country. Twice on October 12 and October 19, more than 3.5 million people joined the general strike and took to the streets in protest.

The Partido Lakas ng Masa commends the blockade tactics being employed by the French unions and workers to paralyse oil refineries and bring the economy to a standstill. The paralysis is clearly aimed at defeating the plot of the Sarkozy government to implement the infamous “pension reform” which will dramatically reduce the rights of workers to access pensions. The reform is on top of recent laws that increase the retirement age from 60 to 62 years of age and increase the period of time workers must work to receive a full pension.

The whole of Europe is now in turmoil as capitalist governments resort to further austerity cuts that will dismantle remaining social welfare benefits. Massive austerity cuts which affect pensions and jobs of workers have been imposed in Greece and Portugal just a few months ago. France is now starting to implement it. On October 18, the British government declared it was doing the same to save the banks and the big transnational firms from collapsing.

Through strikes, barricades, blockades, and marches the French workers and people have shown the way how to resist the capitalist governments’ scheme to take apart the remaining welfare benefits in Europe. We are confident that the working class masses everywhere will take their cue from the French resistance.

Sonny Melencio  
Chairperson, Partido Lakas ng Masa

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## **Australia: Socialist Alliance salutes French workers**

*The following statement was released by the Socialist Alliance in Australia.*

Socialist Alliance salutes the millions of French workers and students who have taken to the streets in a wave of sustained demonstrations and strikes against the Sarkozy governments' attack on pensions.

In addition to national strikes days and protests called by the major union federations, ongoing strikes by oil workers, truckers, bus drivers, railway workers, teachers, posties, printers and wharfies are bringing France to a standstill; the country is now running low on fuel.

Mass meetings or workers assemblies are being held in workplaces each morning to discuss the strikes and decide on further actions.

Inspiringly, tens of thousands of university and high school students have joined the protests, blockading and shutting their own schools despite violent police repression.

The strikes and protests are a response to the pension "reform" bill in the French parliament that would raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 years and raise the qualifying period that workers must work to receive a full pension.

Despite mass popular opposition (polls show as many as 71% oppose the pension cuts), Sarkozy insists it is his "duty" to ram through the "reforms".

Faced with government intransigence and calls for further action from rank and file workers, French union federations have called for a further national strike on October 28 and street mobilisations on November 6.

The Sarkozy government argues that the cuts are necessary because of projected budget deficits. However, unions have pointed out that pensions could easily be funded by increasing taxes on the rich.

By cutting pensions, the Sarkozy government, which has given billions of euros of public funds in bailouts to the banks, is trying to force ordinary working people to pay for the economic crisis.

In conjunction with this full frontal attack on the rights of all French workers, Sarkozy has tried to divert social discontent with his austerity agenda by whipping up racism and fear against minorities.

This has included policies such as mass expulsions of Roma people and the passage of a law banning women wearing a "full" Muslim veil in public.

However, Sarkozy's scapegoating tactic hasn't worked; polls show that two-thirds of the population think strikes should continue. The protests are developing into a general rejection of Sarkozy's policies.

These savage pension cuts are part of a wider austerity agenda. As the world slides further into economic crisis, capitalist governments everywhere are increasingly trying to foist the burden of the crisis on to ordinary working people by slashing jobs and dismantling social welfare benefits.

At the same time, they are bailing out banks and propping up transnational corporations.

Similar measures have been imposed in other European countries such as Greece and Portugal. On October 18, the British government announced enormous cuts to public expenditure that will result in at least half a million public sector jobs being slashed. Millions of people will be left without vital public services, and poverty and inequality will be driven up.

Increasingly, so-called democratic governments are being exposed for what they are: entities that

rule on behalf of a tiny corporate elite, not the working majority.  
Extra-parliamentary action is necessary, not only to fight for basic rights, but to win real democracy.

The example of the French workers is an inspiration to workers everywhere and shows what is possible. If working people remain firm and united in their resistance they can win!

Make rich pay for the crisis, not the workers!

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## **South Africa: NUMSA Supports French Workers!**

NUMSA Media Release, 25 October 2010

### **NUMSA Supports French Workers!**

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) sends its unwavering and deepest feelings of solidarity forged through workers' international struggles for decent work and living wage with the refinery workers in France. The ongoing France's protests by refinery workers against President Nicolas Sarkozy's pension reforms is a direct rejection of global capitalism and a bipolar world order by workers – just right at the centre of global capitalism - Europe.

Our members across the length and breadth of our country salute our ally and sister union – CGT for their resolute and militancy in rejecting the proposed pension reforms in France.

This ongoing protest in France should be a lesson (although not identical to our South Africa case) for the broad section of workers in South Africa. In our country the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) which manages assets estimated to be at R740 Billion on behalf of government employees' pension funds. Already the chunk of R23,4 Billion of workers pension funds managed by PIC has been bloated to fund narrow BEE deals for the politically connected few and also to build opulent Malls such as Sandton City, Cresta and Pavilion for the rich in their suburbs, instead of addressing the historical and inherent apartheid developmental challenges of housing, health-care and infrastructure in working class and poor communities.

The France workers under the leadership of CGT should keep the red flag flying high in the interest of the workers and the poor. Their current struggle will remain an inspiration to the many struggles waged by workers for a better and alternative world order. France particularly Paris is revered by many workers across the globe for being the first assumption of power by the working class in world history – Paris Commune.

Castro Ngobese

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## **Indonésie: "Warm solidarity greetings"**

Dearest Comrades from Solidaires

Warm solidarity greetings from us in this rapid working people movement towards a real liberation!

Comrades,

Millions of working people from various sectors, students and ordinary people joined a march protest shows that our true power lies in the strong unity of our struggle.

Had we not agreed to consistently make this spirit of protest from millions of working people, students and ordinary people as a chain of solidarity that goes beyond country, nation or continent?

Comrades,

We have heard and read the story of your mobilization that woke up millions of people from all over the world. That is not only a great news to us but this mobilization is also a true inspiration for us, working people in the southern hemisphere and every part of this world, that to build up solidarity links, to pull off our strength, to harden our will are necessities to all of us, so that we can all stand up face directly the perpetrator of this world crisis: the capitalists and government who sacrifice its people for their petty interests, and say out loud: ENOUGH!

We, the central committee of Confederation KASBI (Congress of Indonesian Unions Alliance), extend our greetings and solidarity, for you have shown the world a tremendous step through millions of protests.

We strongly believed, that our solidarity which is built up today is a strong foundation for our future victory, the victory of the working people of the world

Hereby, with all of our members in Indonesia, we salute and wish you good luck, for our victory, now, tomorrow and the coming future.

Workers of the world, UNITE!

Jakarta, October 18<sup>th</sup> 2010

In warm solidarity,

Central Committee of Confederation KASBI

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