



December 15, 2023

QUEBEC STRIKE: IN DEFENCE OF SOCIETY

More than half a million people are on strike in Quebec this week, as public sector workers in the province – including teachers and nurses – continue to fight for better wages and working conditions. The strike is the biggest strike in Quebec history, illuminating just how fed-up. Quebec's workers are with Premier François Legault's policies that have supported businesses and the rich, while attacking workers and decimating public sector services.

Workers represented by the Front Commun, which consists of four labour organizations – the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec, the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec and the Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux – and other workers represented by the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement or the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec represent more than 10% of Quebec's entire workforce. The prospect of an unlimited general strike is beginning to emerge, as both sides remain at odds on multiple issues.

Quebec's public healthcare system has been left devastated with the loss of 20,000 workers fleeing from the unmanageable working conditions in hospitals and clinics in the last two years alone. Relatively low pay and difficult working conditions for family doctors have left hundreds of thousands of Quebecers without access to primary care, exacerbating the stress in over-crowded hospital emergency rooms. One hospital was recently described as being nearly 200% over capacity.

The education sector has also been under huge pressure, driving nearly 70,000 teachers to strike. At the beginning of the 2023 school year, over 8,500 teaching positions remained unfilled. The crisis is at a breaking point. Workers have stood up and declared that they are ready to put everything on the line because they can't afford for things to get any worse.

The Legault government continues to stall at the bargaining table, hoping that the strikes' popularity will diminish, as parents without childcare start losing patience, and as the cold weather pulls supporters off the picket lines. But the governments' tactics don't reckon with what the striking Unions and the overwhelming majority of Quebecers who support them, know: this is a fight for Quebec society and citizens are not going to give it up.

If you can, join a picket line. Supporting the strikers means supporting your access to free and high-quality healthcare, education, and other public services. If you can't make it to a picket line, show solidarity by posting a web graphic <https://www.frontcommun.org/outils-numeriques/>. Someday soon, we may be in the strikers' shoes, so pay the solidarity forward.

See you on the Picket Lines!

In Solidarity,

Jody Hutton
3rd National Vice-President

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/es cope 225

