

Thousands of UK Border Force workers announce Christmas period strike

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Arriving passengers queue at UK Border Control at the Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport in London, June 29, 2021. (Photo by Reuters)

London, December 8 (RHC)-- Thousands of Britain's Border Force workers have announced a Christmas period strike over pay, joining thousands others of striking employees in various economic sectors across the country.

The workers' Public and Commercial Services Union announced the industrial action on Wednesday. It said the protest move stands to affect passport booths at Heathrow and Gatwick airports as well as Birmingham Airport, Cardiff Airport, Glasgow Airport, Manchester Airport, and the Port of Newhaven.

The union's General Secretary Mark Serwotka said around 2,000-3,000 staff would be involved in the walkouts on December 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30 and 31. Asked why the union had picked the Christmas period to take industrial action, the union chief said: "Those people will lose pay when they go on strike. They do it as a last resort and the job of the union is to ensure that the action that we call is noticed."

British workers in various sectors from lawyers to nurses, drivers, and airport ground personnel have held strikes this year as the country faces its highest inflation and worst cost-of-living crisis in generations. So far, the workers' demand for a pay increase has been rejected by government officials, saying it could not afford high increases that match the soaring inflation, and even if it could, such monetary increases would further fuel inflation.

UK inflation accelerated in October to a 41-year peak at 11.1 percent on runaway energy and food bills. Last month, food costs rose again, with shop prices of groceries shooting up over 12 percent higher than a year before. The British government continues to blame the war in Ukraine and the COVID pandemic as the main factors behind the economic downturn.

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