

# *Ford Factory Workers in Turkey Go on Strike*

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Bursa, May 23 (RHC)-- Workers at the Ford Otosan automotive manufacturing company in Turkey have staged a strike in a wave of walkouts by the country's major car makers over a deepening labor dispute.

Two factories in Turkey's western region of Kocaeli operated by Ford Otosan have stopped production. According to a report by Turkey's Dogan news agency, the employees stopped working in solidarity with their counterparts at Fiat and Renault factories in Turkey.

Ford Otosan, however, rejected the report, saying the work stoppage was because of parts shortage caused by recent industrial actions at other firms. The company is equally owned by the multinational US-based Ford Motor Company, and the Turkish Koç Holding.

The strike wave began on May 13 as workers at the largest car factory in Turkey, a plant in the northwestern city of Bursa run by Oyak Renault, laid down their tools. On May 14, employees of Tofas, a joint venture between Fiat and Koç Holding, also followed suit.

The strikers are demanding a pay raise similar to those seen at other industrial firms in the northwestern city of Bursa, where one factory is said to have recently raised wages by as much as 60 percent.

The walkouts come ahead of the June 7 parliamentary election and at a critical time for the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), under which car production has grown.

Turkey produced over one million cars and commercial vehicles in 2014, compared to 346,565 recorded in 2002, according to figures released by the Paris-based International Organisation of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers.

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