

UK Airport, Railway and Postal Workers Walk Off the Job



London, December 19 (RHC)-- A multi-industry walkout on a nationwide scale has started disrupting rail, airline and postal services in the UK, raising serious concerns among authorities in the run-up to Christmas. Nearly 3,000 workers at about 300 of Royal post offices across the UK began strikes on Monday that would continue on Tuesday and Saturday, stepping up a dispute over pension changes, job security and closures.

Arranged by the Communication Workers Union, the five-day strike would also see workers holding demonstrations outside the headquarters of the Business Department. This is while members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union at Southern Railway, one of the UK's biggest train operators, began another two-day strike on Monday.

The industrial action by the railway workers, coupled with a continuing ban on overtime by drivers, is expected to affect Southern Railway's 300,000 passengers. Members of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association and RMT on London Underground have announced the overtime ban in a dispute over jobs and closure of ticket offices.

In the aviation industry, nearly 2,000 cabin crews working for British Airways have announced a walkout for Christmas and the Boxing Day (December 26). The action came after the cabin crew, represented by Unite, rejected a 2-percent raise in their salaries, which the union said were supposed to be between

£21,000 and £25,000 annually but, in reality, started at just over £12,000 plus £3 an hour flying pay.

The industry will be further plunged to chaos on Friday and Saturday, when Unite members employed by Swissport as baggage handlers and other ground staff will stage a walk out at 18 airports over pay.

Meanwhile, pilots at Virgin Atlantic will start a “work to contract” action from Friday in a row over union recognition. The Professional Pilots’ Union (PPU), which represents 70 percent of Virgin’s 900 pilots, has urged the authorities to recognize it as the only union the airline deals with. The PPU also wants the British Airline Pilots Association (Balpa) to be de-recognized.

Negotiations with Virgin Atlantic have been ongoing for almost two years with little progress, according to the PPU.

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