

Thousands shout Cut War, Not Welfare during protest in London over cost of living crisis

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Demonstrators march in central London on June 18, 2022. (Photo by Reuters)

London, June 20 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have taken to the streets in central London over the government's lack of response to the cost of living crisis.

Workers marched to Parliament on Saturday, calling on the government to take action for better pay and job conditions. Demonstrators held banners reading "cut war not welfare" and "end fuel poverty, insulate homes now."

The event organized by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) has called for a "decent pay rise for public sector workers" and a £15 minimum wage.

The union said its research suggested workers have lost almost £20,000 since 2008 because pay has not kept pace with inflation.

The TUC said there was "harrowing" evidence of the impact the crisis on families, with workers suffering the "longest and harshest" squeeze on earnings in modern history.

The general secretary of the TUC, Frances O'Grady, said Prime Minister Boris Johnson was "cynically abandoning" his commitment to a high-wage economy.

"Let me say this to Boris Johnson – don't you dare shift the blame for inflation on to working people," she told crowds. "Don't you dare, not after a decade of austerity, privatization and pay cuts. Don't you dare tell working families we have to put up with more pain," she added.

Johnson said earlier this month that the surge in inflation meant the government could not simply spend more to support people through the cost of living crisis. He said to increase wages sharply would risk fueling further price rises.

"When a country faces an inflationary problem, you can't just pay more and spend more. You have to find ways of tackling the underlying causes of inflation," said the prime minister. He said earlier that the country would get through the crisis and "come through on the other side strongly."

The United Kingdom, with an inflation rate at a 40-year high of 9 percent in April, is struggling with a huge rise in the price of energy.

Economists say Britain is expected to have the highest inflation among the counties of the Group of Seven (G7) not just this year, but also in 2023 and 2024.

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