

Protesting pension reforms, French working class shuts down the country

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Photo: CGT

On Tuesday, March 7, the French workers took to the streets across the country denouncing the government's controversial new pension reforms. Trade unions also participated in a general strike on Tuesday as part of their campaign for a 'total shutdown' of the country, while the French Senate is deliberating on the pension reforms bill. The protestors organized massive demonstrations in 200 cities and towns across the country, as well as picketed workplaces and blocked roundabouts in major city centers, as was done at the time of the yellow vest protests. Student-youth groups also organized blockades in 39 [universities](#) across France. The strikes have affected transport, schools, the energy sector, industries, municipal services, and government offices, among others.

The mobilization on Tuesday was the seventh major day of action organized against the pension reforms. Protests began on January 19 this year—organized by the coordination of trade unions, leftist parties, and student-youth groups—and millions of people across France have already taken part so far, demanding that the reforms be rolled back. Specifically, protesters have demanded an increase in wages and pensions, and that the retirement age be brought down to 60.

According to [L'Humanite](#), 65% of people in the country support the strikes and protests against the pension reforms proposed by Emmanuel Macron's government, which call for an increase in the retirement age from 62 to 64 and also stipulate a mandatory 43 years of service before one is entitled to a full pension or benefits.

The pension reforms bill underwent two weeks of [debate](#) in the National Assembly, the lower house of the French Parliament, but was passed over to the Senate before it could be voted on because of disagreements about raising the retirement age. While trade unions and the left-wing coalition New Ecological and Social People's Union (NUPES) have continued their opposition to the bill in the streets and in parliament, the Macron-led neo-liberal government expects to pass the bill with the support of legislators from center-right parties.

On Tuesday, leader of the French Communist Party (PCF) Fabien Roussel [said](#): “Today, [...] the coordination of the unions calls for France to ‘stop’ against the unfair pension reform that the government wants to impose. The working world hasn’t been this united in a struggle for decades. We can win and push back the government.”

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)

