

# Italy's Amazon workers on 24-hour national strike

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Amazon workers in Italy held their first 24-hour nationwide strike on Monday as unions claimed that employees were being pushed harder

than ever during the coronavirus pandemic.

The US e-commerce giant employs around 9,500 people in Italy, but unions say the protest also involves suppliers and delivery drivers.

In a joint statement, the unions said employees are called "indispensable" but "are not treated as such," describing them as "an army of some 40,000 workers who never stop."

The Filt Cigl, Fit Cisl and Uiltrasport unions claimed that an average of 75 percent of workers respected the strike, rising to 90 percent in some areas. Amazon put the participation rate much lower, at less than 10 percent.

"Amazon made huge profits thanks to the pandemic-era boom in online commerce and it is right that it should share part of these profits," the unions said.

Workers should have lower work burdens, better pay, more union rights and an indemnity in case they fall ill with Covid-19, unions said, accusing Amazon of refusing to talk to them.

Drivers, they said, have come under huge pressure as online orders boom during the pandemic, delivering as many as 180-200 packages per day.

As its profits have continued to rise, Amazon has come under increasing pressure over the past year to improve pay and working conditions.

Amazon country manager Mariangela Marseglia said the company respected workers' right to "express their position."

The Seattle-based company, she said, offers "a safe, modern and inclusive workplace, with competitive salaries that are some of the

highest in the industry, benefits, and great opportunities for career growth."

Last month, Amazon said profit in the fourth quarter of 2020 more than doubled to \$7.2 billion from the same period the previous year, while revenue climbed 44 percent to a record \$125.6 billion.

The company announced last week the opening of a new distribution centre in Italy's north and the creation of 900 new jobs, expanding its workforce to 10,400.

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