



## Strike hits Italian ports

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Dockworkers are staging strikes across Italy to protest the death of two workers early Friday at a port near Venice.

Longshore workers at Genoa, Italy's largest port, will stop work for 24 hours following the end of the Friday shift, and Gioia Tauro, the nation's biggest container transshipment hub, is also facing disruption.

Media reports late Friday said strikes had already spread to ports across the country.

The walkouts followed calls by three of Italy's biggest labor unions for a nationwide strike to protest alleged lax safety standards on the waterfront.

Workplace safety has become a major issue across Italy following the death in December of seven workers in a Turin steel plant owned by ThyssenKrupp of Germany.

The two dockworkers died after being overcome by fumes while cleaning the hold of a bulk carrier that had delivered grain at Porto Marghera near Venice. Dockworkers at the port immediately began a 24-hour stoppage and police have sealed off the ship.

-- Bruce Barnard