

CHRONOLOGY

CHRONOLOGY OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY EVENTS

Compiled by Jill Timms

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Introduction

Here we present an alternative record of global civil society through a chronology of diverse events that have involved or had significance for civil society beyond national borders. This chronology allows us to present qualitative descriptions of global civil society activity, data which are difficult to record statistically. Through this we aim to offer a flavour of the vast range of actions being employed to campaign, engage and protest. We also aim to highlight activity in areas of the world often not reported by the mainstream media.

This edition of the chronology records events that have taken place between May 2006 and April 2007. It is important to note that we present a sample of events to achieve the above aims, and due to the nature of the data we do not intend this chronology to be a comprehensive record of all global civil society actions. Instead, we hope that this resource will draw attention to the diversity of activity and offer an indication of major themes and sites of struggle. Our selection of events is partially limited by our reliance on reports from our global network of correspondents and the availability of information via the Internet in an accessible language. We continue to include the growth of social forums, as these are reported as being of significance. In addition to our descriptions of these in the chronology, please also see Map 9.12 on page 327.

Invitation to join our network of global civil society correspondents

The Global Civil Society Yearbook initiative has been interactive from the beginning. Engagement with civil

society activists, policy makers, students and academics has been an integral part of each stage of the research, including, for example, a range of seminars in different parts of the world and public lectures. The chronology is an ongoing part of this engagement strategy. As well as welcoming feedback about the content of the chronology each year, we offer an open invitation to our readers to become one of our global civil society correspondents. We strongly urge you to consider joining our network.

The chronology is compiled largely from reports offered by our global network of correspondents. The network has been growing since 2000 and is mainly comprised of activists, journalists, academics, non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers, and students, who work, study or have an interest in civil society activity. We are keen to expand this network to as many parts of the world as possible. Each correspondent submits a short report of any event they believe should be recorded in the chronology.

Would you be interested in submitting an entry, or do you know someone who might be interested in joining the network? Every correspondent who has an entry published is acknowledged in the Yearbook and will receive a complimentary copy of *Global Civil Society 2008/9*. You will be making a valuable contribution to our understanding of changes in civil society. To find out more and to submit an event, please visit <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/correspondents.htm>

Global Civil Society events

May 2006–April 2007

May 2006

1 May

International Labour Day inspires diverse actions around the globe to promote workers' rights. These include a march in Dhaka, Bangladesh to call for improvements to factory conditions and for the USA and Europe to drop import tariffs, which protesters claim are destroying the garment industry. Ten thousand people protest in Macau, China, calling for an end to corruption and improved working conditions. In Croatia a rally is held at a disused tobacco factory in solidarity with the 50 workers who barricaded themselves in to protest against the allegedly unlawful privatisation of the industry. In Cuba one million workers gather in Havana's Square of Revolution to hear President Fidel Castro, and are given red t-shirts by the government to celebrate Labour Day. In the EuroMayDay parade, a pan-European event in 22 European cities, 200,000 people demonstrate against social and economic precariousness. Protesters call for an end to the erosion of job security brought about by increased flexible, casual and temporary working practices. In Indonesia 100,000 hold a strike against the introduction of a new labour law that promotes flexible contracts and reduces job security. In Moscow 25,000 activists gather for a rally to promote workers' rights. Despite an official ban, protests are held throughout Iran against low pay, poor conditions and the persecution of workers. In Turkey, one million people take part in demonstrations to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1977 May Day march, which ended with 34 people being shot or trampled to death when a gunman opened fire on the crowd. In the USA 'A day without immigrants' is organised to highlight their poor working conditions and lack of rights. This is supported by a boycott of US goods called for by Sub Commandante Marcos in Mexico, who declares 'A day without gringos'. Workers and the unemployed in Harare, Zimbabwe, hold a rally to call for improved working conditions and some union leaders call for the removal of President Mugabe.

1 May

One hundred farmers in China's Guangxi province join an international relay hunger strike focusing on rights violations in China. Launched in February by human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, the relay hunger strike is for months joined by human rights activists and Chinese people across 29 provinces as well as members of Chinese communities overseas.

1 May

In Hyderabad, a counter-summit to the annual general meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is held as 97 civil society organisations from throughout Asia come together as the People's Forum against the ADB. The group criticises the policies of the ADB, claiming they are causing rather than alleviating poverty.

3 May

Eight weeks after news broke of how Chinese hospitals were killing thousands of detained Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, protests to bring this to international attention are held in Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, and the USA. Some of these include mock organ-removal operations.

3–4 May

Activists in San Salvador Atenco, Mexico, hold a series of protests against the construction of an airport and the relocation on informal merchants. The movement receives immediate support from international human rights and environmental groups, including Human Rights Watch.

4–7 May

Some 35,000 people register to participate in the fourth European Social Forum. This takes place in Athens, Greece. Over 80,000 activists take part in the closing rally. A major theme throughout the event is the need for more cooperation between activist groups and the issue of whether political parties should be able to participate in the forum.

5–15 May

Farmland in Pyeongtaek, south of Seoul, becomes the centre of a standoff between the South Korean government and farmers and their supporters. The farmers are due to be evicted to facilitate the expansion of a US military base. The local Daechuri Elementary School becomes the makeshift headquarters of the activists attempting to protect the land from the authorities. The protest turns violent and over 100 demonstrators are arrested after 3,000 troops raid the school. Further protests are held throughout the country. Some 6,000 supporters of the farmers stage a candlelight vigil in Seoul demanding the cancellation of the US plan and the release of activists. A rally in the rural town brings together more than 3,500 activists and students, despite the deployment of 18,000 police to block all roads surrounding Daechuri.

6 May

Over 80 civil society organisations participate in the third Chicago Social Forum.

8 May

Women's rights groups organise in South Africa under the banner 'How free are we?' to protest against the acquittal of former Deputy President Jacob Zuma from a rape charge and to call for greater support for the victims of gender-based violence. Outside the courthouse demonstrators wear kangas, (wrap-around cloths), to protest at Zuma's argument that the complainant had provoked the sexual encounter by wearing such a cloth while she was a guest at his house. This is organised by the One in Nine Campaign, so named because only one in nine rapes are reported in South Africa.

8 May

In Saint-Malo, France, the local Pays de Saint Malo Social Forum is held. A major aim is to explore the effects of globalisation on the local population.

10–13 May

The second Alternative Summit of Social Movements from Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, is held in Vienna, Austria, to coincide with a meeting of the heads of state. This four-day event focuses on social alternatives in a new era of Europe–Latin American relations.

11 May

Families exiled from the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean and their international supporters celebrate a victory after the UK High Court rules they were unlawfully removed and should be allowed to return to all but one of the Islands. This international campaign has been active since the islanders of the British colony were exiled in the 1960s and 1970s, when the UK government leased the largest island of Diego Garcia to the USA to use as an airbase.

11 May

Organisations campaigning for women’s rights and protection against gender-based violence celebrate victory in Colombia, when the legal ban on abortion is partially lifted for cases when women have been raped.

14–18 May

In Jakarta, Indonesia, the Asia Pacific People’s Conference on Rice and Food Sovereignty is held. Organised by La Via Campesina and the Federation of Indonesia Peasant Union, this event brings together peasants, land rights activists and NGOs from Asia and the Pacific region. The final declaration is entitled ‘Rice is life, culture and dignity’.

17 May

2,000 people take part in the Pirkanma Social Forum in Tampere, Finland. This is the second time the forum has been held. It includes a ‘Market of opportunities’ to promote the work of civil society organisations.

18 May

In Turkey, over 25,000 demonstrators take to the streets to defend the country’s secular status. This follows the murder of a leading judge who was involved in rulings that confirmed a ban on wearing the headscarf in public institutions and universities.

18 May

Following sustained pressure from the people of Nepal and international human rights organisations, Parliament votes overwhelmingly to strip King Gyanendra of his powers. The royal family will in future be subject to tax and the country officially becomes secular, rather than Hindu.

19–21 May

The Netherlands Social Forum is held in Nijmegen, The

Netherlands. Dozens of workshops and debates take place, with the aim of reinforcing cooperation between people working to resist current forms of capitalist globalisation.

19–21 May

In Brisbane, Australia, the Brisbane Social Forum is held.

22 May

Following extensive campaigning against discrimination and social and cultural exclusion in Ecuador, the Collective Rights of Black and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples law is promulgated.

25 May

The thematic social forum ‘Gendering the WSF 2007 process’ takes place in Nairobi in preparation for the world forum to be held there next January.

27 May

Human rights groups protest against the trade deal negotiated between the EU and Turkmenistan, claiming that the EU is ignoring the human rights abuses allegedly carried out under President Saparmurat Niyazov because it is interested in the country’s gas reserves.

June 2006

2–3 June

The second la Vall Social Forum is held in la Vall d’Uixó-País Valencia, Spain.

4 June

Activists travel from South Korea to Washington, despite being warned against this by their government, to protest against negotiations taking place between the two countries regarding a free trade agreement. They are supported by US peace and social justice groups when they hold a demonstration outside the White House.

4 June

An estimated 44,000 Hong Kong residents, as well as activists in New York, London, and other cities, mark the 17-year anniversary of the massacre of students and others who demonstrated for greater democracy in Beijing in 1989. The vigils and rallies commemorate the hundreds who were killed. Demonstrators call upon the Chinese authorities to recognise the atrocities, to release all pro-democracy activists and compensate victims’ families.

5–6 June

By exercising universal jurisdiction, a Spanish National Court judge begins hearing testimony in a lawsuit brought by a Tibetan human rights group against former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin and other top officials, over genocide and crimes against humanity in Tibet.

8 June

An international forum on the future of the UN is held in Seoul, focusing on the contribution of civil society organisations to

promoting reform, transparency and accountability in the UN.

9 June

Over 1,000 anti-violence demonstrators dress in black and line the boardwalk in Copacabana, Brazil. The protestors lie down, playing dead, to represent the number of murders committed in the city so far this year.

10 June

In Poland over 2,500 campaigners take part in a lesbian and gay pride march, despite a two-year old ban on the event and threats from right-wing groups.

14–18 June

In France, the second Paris 14e (arrondissement) Social Forum is held.

15 June

An international day of action is held to demonstrate solidarity with 468 homeless families currently threatened with eviction from the empty building they have been occupying for the last four years in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Demonstrations are held outside Brazilian embassies in Paris, Tokyo and Lisbon.

15–17 June

The Austria Social Forum is held in Graz, Austria.

16–18 June

The Southeast Social Forum, held in Durham, North Carolina is attended by 550 participants. The focus is on building towards the first US Social Forum to be held next year and developing networks between people and organisations working for social justice.

18–20 June

An international forum on 'strategies for the debt repudiation' is held in Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi Declaration on Debt Repudiation is supported by activists from 35 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America. The statement emphasises a series of challenges that need to be overcome and reinforces the determination of the groups to cooperate in this goal.

19 June

Rallies in over 25 countries mark the birthday of Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

19–23 June

Environmentalists and activists from 18 countries come together to discuss and protest against the deterioration of the global ecosystem during the fourth annual World Life Culture Forum in Ilsan, South Korea.

22–24 June

The second Migrations World Social Forum is held in Madrid, Spain, bringing together 3,391 participants from 870 organisations. These include people from 53 different countries. The main themes discussed are immigration and asylum, and political and social oppression.

23–25 June

In Barcelona, Spain, the second European Caravan for Freedom of Movement is organised by the No Borders network.

23–26 June

In Vancouver, Canada, the World Peace Forum is held under the banner 'Cities and communities: working together to end war and build a peaceful, just and sustainable world'.

28 June

Following sustained campaigning by women's rights groups, women in Kuwait stand in elections and vote for the first time.

July 2006

1 July

Whistles are given out to 50,000 pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong, under the banner 'Make yourself heard'. This is the ninth anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China.

2–7 July

In Lille, France, a network of leftist activists from Brazil, Canada, France, Morocco, Niger, Israel, Palestine and South Africa, and partners in the Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, Hungary, Russia, Pakistan and Algeria, meet for an intense summer school in civil society campaigning methods.

3 July

3,000 people take part in the second Democracy Social Forum held in Santiago, Chile. Over 200 organisations are brought together by the event.

5 July

Anti-American activists begin a five-day march over 91 km from Seoul to Pyeongtaek to protest against plans to expand a US military base south of Seoul.

5–9 July

The Caribbean Social Forum is held in Martinique, focusing on the key issues of Caribbean identity, the impact of imperialism and the Caribbean as a natural habitat in danger.

6–9 July

The second Midwest Social Forum is held in Milwaukee, USA. The 1,000 participants represent a doubling of numbers from the previous year. The proceedings include preparation for the first US Social Forum next year.

8 July

The global problem of access to water is the focus of an event in London bringing together international activists to network and coordinate strategies under the banner 'Challenging the corporate water takeover'.

11–13 July

In Korea 60,000 rally against free trade agreement negotiations with the USA, organised by 280 trade unions, farmer groups and civil society organisations. Some 100,000 union workers also take part in a one day strike in support of the protest.

11–15 July

Demonstrations are held as leaders of the G8 meet in St Petersburg, Russia, in which many of the protests focus on environmental issues. Activists condemn the 'commodification of the earth' through increased investment in oil, gas and coal production as well as the expansion of the nuclear energy under the banner of 'energy security'. Worldwide protests are coordinated against the G8 and climate change in at least 35 cities as part of an International Day of Direct Action against Climate Change. The rallies in St Petersburg are limited by the detention of hundreds on their way to the city and by a ban on planned marches. The second Russian Social Forum is held at Kirov Stadium, St Petersburg, to coincide with the event.

12 July–13 August

Peace and international human rights groups begin to coordinate global actions as bombing breaks out between Israel and Lebanon. During the next month of bloodshed, protests are held in cities throughout the world in solidarity with the many civilian casualties and in condemnation of the indiscriminate nature of the attacks.

15–17 July

A People's Forum is held in Gao, Mali. A major theme is the G8 summit and the consequences for Africa.

16 July

One million people demonstrate on the streets of Mexico City against alleged electoral fraud, as left-of-centre Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is defeated by only 0.6 per cent by conservative Filipe Calderón.

20 July

Falun Gong adherents and supporters in at least 74 cities across 33 countries and six continents protest on the anniversary of seven years of the spiritual discipline's persecution in China. The demonstrations, torture re-enactments and candlelight vigils call for the release of all Falun Gong practitioners from labour camps and prisons, and commemorate the 3,000 followers who have been killed.

21–23 July

The second Triple Border Social Forum is held in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay. Civil society organisations from Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay take part to network and coordinate actions against militarisation and free trade treaties.

25–27 July

In Kaduna, Nigeria, the North West Zonal Social Forum is held.

26 July

Environment campaigners gather in Iceland to protest against the plan to build gigantic hydroelectric dams that are solely designed to fuel an Alcoa aluminium smelter. Environmentalists claim this will destroy the habitat of many endangered plants and animals. They stress the need to protect Europe's largest remaining wilderness as corporations seek to exploit its unique geothermal terrain.

27 July

As the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) negotiations break down in Switzerland, trade justice campaigners call attention to the continued poverty caused by WTO policies in the poorest regions of the world.

28–30 July

The Maine Social Forum takes place in Lewiston, Maine. The main theme is 'Reflecting the global in the local'.

29–30 July

The Western Kenya Social Forum takes place in the lakeside city of Kisumu with fisher folk, people living HIV/AIDS, small farmers, youth groups, community broadcasters, women and human rights activists as the main groups of participants.

August 2006**2 August**

Humanitarian aid is sent to North Korea by South Korean NGOs for the first time since its suspension after the North's controversial missile testing programme. The aid is reinstated due to food shortages brought by severe flooding.

4–13 August

An anti-G8 camp is held in Heiligendamm, Germany. Activists come together, mainly from Europe, to prepare for the campaign against the G8 to take place in Germany in 2007.

7 August

Two years ahead of the scheduled 2008 Beijing Olympics a coalition of international human rights organisations issues a statement saying that the International Olympic Committee is failing to follow the Olympics' mission. The coalition further calls upon athletes, national committees and sponsors to take action in response to continuing human rights abuses in China.

8 August

International organisations working for gay and lesbian rights express outrage at the Ugandan national paper *Red Pepper*, when it publishes the names of 45 men it says are gay. The newspaper claims this is part of a campaign to 'rid our motherland of the deadly vice' and goes on to publish a similar list of alleged lesbians the next month.

14 August

Organisations campaigning for the rights of indigenous people celebrate victory as the Nukak tribe of Amazonian nomads return to Colombia. This isolated tribe fled after fighting engulfed their forest. However, under international pressure the Colombian government has created a safe haven for them. The tribe leader later commits suicide; his tribe continues to suffer from the consequences of the drugs wars, with the population dropping from 1,200 to 500 in 20 years.

16 August

La Via Campesina issue a statement to denounce the aggression against the civilian population of Lebanon, demanding an immediate halt to the war, the retreat of Israeli forces and the placement of an international peacekeeping force under the direction of the UN. This is an example of many such statements offered by global civil society groups to show solidarity with the Lebanese people and to contribute to a campaign of pressure on the Israeli government.

16 August

Indigenous rights groups condemn an amendment to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act in Australia that allows land to move into private ownership. Campaigners claim this will mean that ancestral land could now be bought by outsiders and call on the Australian government to overturn the change.

19 August–3 September

The fourth People's Global Action European Conference takes place in various cities throughout France.

21 August

Under pressure from humanitarian civil society organisations, particularly the Red Cross, the South Korean government agrees to provide one-time emergency aid to North Korea after recent devastating floods.

22 August

The Kibera Social Forum is held, focusing on housing, human rights and the how slum dwellers might be able to participate in the World Social Forum to be held in Kenya in January.

22 August

International human rights groups call for boycotts of Yahoo, Google and Microsoft after claiming that they have been complicit in politically repressive activities in China.

25 August

On the first anniversary of hurricane Katrina, which devastated parts of the United States, activists cycle through 22 cities as part of a critical mass against climate change and to demand 'Climate Justice'.

26 August–4 September

Environment campaigning groups and activists meet in Yorkshire, UK, to hold a camp for climate action. Over 100 workshops are held to share experience and knowledge, and promote cooperation, including training in non-violent direct action.

31 August–3 September

In Bari, Italy, representatives from 44 civil society groups come together under the banner 'The enterprise of a different economy' to demand alternative budget priorities in order to promote policies based on peace, environment, social justice and income redistribution issues.

September 2006

1–2 September

The Social Work Social Forum takes place in Santiago, Chile, the first to focus on the theme of social work. Events are organised under the banner 'Another world is possible and social work makes its contribution'

7–8 September

In Mexico City, the thematic Social Forum of Information, Documentation and Libraries is held, organised by Latin-American library and documentation associations.

8–10 September

The third regional Parana Medio Social Forum takes place in Argentina. A major focus is the issue of access to water.

9–24 September

The town of Die, in south-east France, holds an East-West cultural festival for intercultural dialogue and understanding. Participants come from Russia, the Balkans, Turkey, Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

13 September

A protest against violence in Colombia is led by the wives and girlfriends of gang members. The women in Pereira refuse to have sex with their partners until they commit to giving up violence, as part of the campaign, 'Violence is not sexy'.

13 September

The Chinese authorities begin a crackdown on civil liberties activists, arresting over 100 in a month, creating new media restrictions and starting investigations into any environmental and charity campaigners who have foreign funding. This is seen to be linked to the high-profile Olympics due to take place in Beijing in 2008.

13 September

In Mexico, environmental activists protest against a project by corporations including Monsanto and Dupont with the Mexican government, to define a bio-security framework for research with transgenic corn. Demonstrations are held under the banner 'Genetic independence cry', and a network of activists called 'In defence of corn' claim that transgenic corn imported from the USA is already polluting native grains.

14–16 September

The second Youth Social Forum is held in Paraná, in the Entre Ríos province of Argentina.

15–16 September

Mass demonstrations are held in Taiwan in response to corruption allegations against President Chan Shui-bian. On 15 September 400,000 Taiwanese demonstrate peacefully in Taipei, calling on the president to step down. The following day 200,000 rally in Chen's support without incident.

17 September

In Mombasa, Kenya, the Coast Social Forum takes place.

17–24 September

Days of protests throughout Hungary are held after a confession by Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany is made public. He admits his government had 'lied morning, evening and night' to get re-elected. Far-right groups hijack early demonstrations leading to riots and over 150 people are arrested. At the largest protest 20,000 gather in the main square in Budapest to call for Gyurcsany's resignation.

18 September

To promote peace and co-existence, a convoy of five caravans arrive in Kampala from different parts of the country to begin the second Ugandan Social Forum. The events focus on the theme 'Build Uganda: our country, our struggles'.

18–24 September

In Nantes, France, the Pays Nantais Social Forum is held in a former cigarette factory. Major themes of the forum are the resurrection of democracy, human rights and political duties.

22 September

The first One Web Day takes place, with events and virtual events taking place around the world to draw attention to the impact of the worldwide web on daily life and to celebrate the achievements of web-based activism. Plans are laid to make this an annual event.

22–24 September

The first Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean Regional Social Forum is held in Quebec, Canada.

23 September

In Canada, the local Ottawa Social Forum takes place.

23 September–15 October

The Alpes-Maritimes Departmental Social Forum is held, focusing on social and immigration issues in southern France.

24 September

Environmental protestors breach security at Nottingham East Midlands Airport in the UK, making a chain across the runway and labelling all airports 'climate change factories'. A Baptist minister holds a remembrance service on the runway for the victims of climate change and preaches on the dangers of increased air travel from a mobile pulpit brought by the Plane Stupid activists.

25 September–15 October

The Alps Social Forum takes place in Valbonne, France, its third meeting.

30 September

In Harare, the Zimbabwe Social Forum is held, with strong youth involvement.

October 2006**2–4 October**

Demonstrations against climate change are held in Mexico to coincide with the G8 + 5 Climate Summit. The actions begin with 10,000 pro-democracy activists marching through Mexico City to

mark the 38th anniversary of the Tlatelolco Massacre, when the Mexican army and federal police opened fire on protesting students.

7 October

An International Day of Action and Mobilisation for Migrant Rights coordinates actions worldwide. Most of the demonstrations take place in Europe and Africa, calling for equal rights for migrants and the closure of all detention centres.

9 October

Protests are made around the world when North Korea carries out nuclear testing. Anti-nuclear campaigners, peace activists and environmentalists condemn the action and call for a renewed global effort to create a worldwide nuclear ban.

10 October

Child and labour rights campaigners mark a victory in India when a new law is established making it illegal for children under 14 to work in the service industry.

10 October

As part of the fourth anniversary of the World Day Against the Death Penalty, an international human rights watchdog launches an anti-death penalty network in Seoul.

12–15 October

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, the first international Social Forum of Ancestral Wisdoms brings together activists and civil society organisations from throughout the Americas on the anniversary of Christopher Columbus' 'discovery' of the New World. Members of indigenous communities discuss struggles over identity and culture under the pressure of capitalist globalisation and the development of a network of indigenous lawyers, and a charter is signed pledging to spread the knowledge of ancient ways and wisdom for promoting sustainable living.

13–15 October

In Almada, the second Portuguese Social Forum takes place, with a focus on strengthening civil society.

13–15 October

The first Borders Social Forum is held in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. This initiative came out of meetings between organisations and activists from Mexico and the USA at the World Social Forum in Venezuela. The forum protests against the 'wall of death' currently being built along the Mexican border by the US authorities and focuses on creating a space for integration and cooperation between social movements in the North and South.

14 October

The Turku Social Forum is held in Finland.

15–22 October

Artists and activists are brought together in Lima, Peru, for the third Solidarity Culture Forum. Events focus on promoting democracy and engagement through art and culture.

16 October

In Lilongwe, Malawi the Southern African Social Forum is held.

17 October

An International Day of Action in Solidarity with Bolivia takes place to generate a variety of activities across the globe in solidarity with the people of Bolivia.

18 October

International human rights group condemn the Chinese authority's ban on 'Snow Lotus', a university AIDS NGO working in the western region of Xinjiang, after the organisation publicises news that a local middle school had expelled students with hepatitis B.

19 October

The Russian government suspends the activities of more than 60 foreign NGOs, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The authorities claim that new procedures to allow the closer monitoring of NGO activity have not been followed by these organisations.

19-22 October

The Norwegian Social Forum takes place at the Oslo Congress Centre, with 17,000 participants and 40 civil society organisations taking part.

21-23 October

The national Thai Social Forum is held in Bangkok.

25-29 October

After three years of preparations, over 2,000 people participate in the first Mozambique Social Forum. This is held in Maputo, Mozambique. Workshops, seminars and cultural events are held under the banner 'Another Mozambique is possible'.

26 October

The Bahrain Centre for Human Rights website, together with another 21 sites, is blocked by Batelco, Bahrain's main Internet service provider, in what campaigners argue is an attempt to stifle criticism of the government ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

27 October

In Nyeri, the Central Kenya Social Forum is held.

29 October

Rallies in Canada, the USA, Hong Kong, Indonesia and other countries are held in support of Jia Jia, a Chinese official seeking asylum in south-east Asia after he had promoted the Nine Commentaries, a book critical of the Chinese Communist Party, and called for the Party's disintegration.

November 2006

1 November

Human rights activists celebrate victory in China at the overturning of the conviction of Chen Guangcheng. This 'barefoot' rural lawyer, who is blind, has been responsible for exposing the forced abortions and sterilisations carried out by the authorities as part of the one-child policy of the Chinese government.

1-4 November

The thematic World Forum on Education is held in Caracas, Venezuela.

3-6 November

In Niamey, the national Niger Social Forum is held, although organisers claim the event is marred by a campaign of harassment by the authorities.

4 November

In Rome 200,000 people from social movements, trade unions, parties and groups on the left demonstrate to demand the protection and the extension of workers' rights.

4-5 November

The Aarhus Social Forum is held in Denmark.

5-6 November

In Coquimbo, Chile, the local Coquimbo and La Serena Social Forum is held with a strong focus on education.

6 November

A Senegalese woman whose son drowned two months before trying to leave the country, claims that, she has since prevented all boats leaving her area loaded with would-be migrants trying to reach the Canary Islands.

7 November

As the death sentence is imposed on Saddam Hussein for crimes against humanity, protests are held in several cities. Lawyers in Jordan hold a one-hour strike, Palestinian schoolchildren march in Jenin and throughout Iraq people take to the streets, some in celebration. International human rights organisations call on leaders to condemn the use of the death penalty in all cases.

8 November

In Maldives, a mass march and other protests calling for constitutional reform are cancelled following what the organisers describe as sustained government harassment. It is rumoured that the protest could have initiated a military coup and over 100 activists were arrested during the preparations for it.

9-13 November

The Indian Social Forum takes place in Delhi. Participation by African NGOs helps to create strong networks and strategic alliances between Indian and African activists, in preparation for the next World Social Forum to take place in Nairobi.

11 November

The national Pakistan Social Forum is held in Lahore, with peace being a central focus.

12 November

The Libournais Social Forum is held. This is a sub-forum of the Gironde regional forum.

17 November

The Central Kenya Social Forum takes place in Whisper Park, Nyeri, Kenya. Many of the events focus on preparations for the World Social Forum to be held in Nairobi in January.

17–19 November

The first Puerto Rican Social Forum takes place in Rio Piedras. Building on the theme of the World Social Forum, the event uses the banner 'Another world is possible, another Puerto Rica is possible'. People from over 110 organisations take part.

17–19 November

In Heidelberg, the Network of Local Social Forums in Germany is held.

18 November

In Milan 50,000 people and in Rome 20,000 demonstrate and under the banner the 'Rally for peace and justice in the Middle East' organised by dozens of civil society groups, political parties and local authorities.

19 November

A G20 Alternative Forum is organised by the Melbourne Social Forum Organisation in Australia. This open public forum is held as a democratic alternative to the closed G20 meeting of trade ministers taking place simultaneously in Melbourne. The discussion and workshops focus on promoting alternative policies to address debt relief, poverty and climate change, and renewing strategies of the global justice/alter-globalisation movement.

19 November

Human rights activists are refused entry to Beijing's 'Human rights in China' exhibit. One protester is arrested for displaying a sign that reads: 'We wait with bitterness for human rights in China'.

21–24 November

In Lagos, the Nigerian and West African Social Forum is held. A major aim of the forum is to work towards a regional event.

22 November

The Association for the Struggle of Transvestites and Transsexual Identity in Argentina wins its legal battle when the Supreme Court rules that it must be afforded legal recognition.

23 November

Tens of thousands of Lebanese pay tribute to assassinated Christian politician Pierre Gemayel, turning his funeral into a display of defiance towards Syria and Hizbollah.

23–26 November

In Natal, Brazil the Potiguar Social Forum is held.

25 November

The first Araucania Social Forum takes place in Temuco in the south of Chile. The music of the Mapuche people opens this regional forum, with people from over 40 organisations taking part. The main areas of focus are the poverty and environmental conflict which affect the area.

25 November

Hundreds of veiled students demonstrate in Alexandria in protest against insulting comments made by the Egyptian Minister of Culture against the veil. The demonstrators demand the resignation of the minister.

25–26 November

The Chile Social Forum, the second national forum, is held in Santiago and begins with a 'Children's march for another world'. Over 170 self-organised events are held, including a mock judgement by environmental pressure groups against the multinational Barrick Gold Corporation to highlight alleged human rights violations during their mining in Chile.

26 November

25,000 demonstrate in Turkey against a visit by Pope Benedict XVI following his recent remarks on violence and the Prophet Muhammad.

29 November

In Bolivia, a major new land reform bill introduced by President Evo Morales is hailed as a progressive step by campesinos and indigenous peoples and their supporters. This will involve the redistribution of up to 20 million hectares of land and aims to undo some of the years of discrimination against indigenous peoples. The passing of the bill is the culmination of several weeks of protests both in favour of and against the change.

December 2006

1 December

Hizbollah joins its pro-Syrian allies to organise a protest in Egypt against the Lebanese government. Some 5,000 demonstrators camp overnight in central Beirut to block access to the governmental palace and 800,000 join the rally to call for the resignation of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and what is described as his 'western-backed' government.

3 December

Protests are held outside Chinese embassies in Japan, Belgium, Germany, the UK and the USA against China's forced repatriation of North Korean refugees.

6–9 December

The Social Summit for Peoples Integration takes place in Cochabamba, Bolivia to coincide with the meeting of the South American Community of Nations Presidents. There are 5,000 participants from across Latin America, with areas of focus including access to water, native towns, the environment and alternatives to free trade agreements.

8 December

One of the key activists in the conception of the World Social Forum, Chico Whitaker, is presented with the Right Livelihood Honorary Award. The awards, described as an alternative to the Nobel prize, aim to honour the vision of those working on behalf of the planet and its peoples.

10 December

The Bangladeshi Mohammed Yunus is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his pioneering microcredit finance schemes through which millions of impoverished people have been lent very small sums of money.

10 December

People take to the streets throughout Chile at the announcement of the death of the former dictator Captain General Augusto Pinochet. Some mourn and other celebrate, accusing him of being responsible for the disappearance of thousands of people and a catalogue of human rights abuses during his 17 years in power. The Chilean government deny him a full state funeral.

10–12 December

The Migrant Forum in Asia, a regional network of more than 260 migrant workers associations, NGOs and trade unions, organise an alternative ASEAN Film Festival on Migration in Cebu City, Philippines. The aim is to draw attention to issues of undocumented workers, forced migration and internally displaced persons.

11 December

In Paris, the Congress of the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions to Aid Citizens takes place, with a new leadership elected after a year of crisis. This is supported by a broad spectrum of NGOs and activists.

12 December

Over 4,000 people take part in the Social Summit for the Integration of Peoples held in Cochabamba in Bolivia. This coincides with the second Summit of the Presidents of the South American Community of Nations.

13 December

Indigenous rights groups and the Kalahari San Bushmen celebrate victory as the High Court in Botswana rules that their eviction from ancestral lands in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve was both unconstitutional and unlawful. The government had evicted the Bushmen four years ago, and although the case was fought by the poorest citizens of Botswana, it was the longest and most expensive in the country's history.

14–15 December

The first Algerian Social Forum takes place in Tipaza. A major aim is to facilitate the building of Algerian civil society and to link with the principles of the World Social Forum.

16 December

In Milan 20,000 people demonstrate in a rally 'For a new policy on immigration' to coincide with the International Day of Migrant People.

29–30 December

In Kathmandu the first Nepal Youth Social Forum is held with the aim of creating a 'youth vision for a new Nepal'. The forum focuses on building coalitions between existing social movements to raise

collective campaigns for peace, inclusive democracy and sustainable development.

30 December–2 January

A first encounter of the Zapatista Communities with the Peoples of the World takes place in Chiapas, Mexico. The focus is on sharing ways to organise, confront and overcome neo-liberalism. Many of the participants, including children, attend wearing balaclavas to remain anonymous.

30 December

The execution of Saddam Hussain sparks protests in many parts of the world, by both his supporters and those who call for an end to the death penalty. Demonstrations include a rally by 3,000 in Jordan, violent clashes in Iraq and India, protests by the Vatican and a hunger strike by an Italian member of the European Parliament.

January 2007**12–14 January**

The local Ivry Social Forum is held in France, a relatively small but very active forum.

15 January

Anti-war activist Brain Haw, who has been holding a vigil outside the Houses of Parliament in London for six years, has an exhibition of his protest installed in the internationally renowned Tate Britain art gallery. An official line, marking a new exclusion zone for unlicensed public protests close to parliament, falls within the gallery building. The exhibition of the protest falls half on one side and half on the other side of the line. Although the new law was developed in an attempt to stop protests such as Haw's, his demonstration continues in a scaled-back form.

19 January

People take to the streets in Istanbul to protest against the murder of Hrant Dink, a prominent Turkish–Armenian journalist who frequently wrote about one of the most sensitive issues in Turkey, the mass killing of Armenians during the final days of the Ottoman empire. Dink was shot outside the *Agos* newspaper offices where he had been editor-in-chief. Later, more than 100,000 people showed solidarity with his work for reconciliation by joining the five-mile funeral procession.

20–25 January

The seventh World Social Forum takes place in Nairobi, Kenya, under the banner 'People's struggles, people's alternatives'. Over 75,000 people attend from 110 countries and 1,400 organisations take part in the first WSF to be held solely in Africa. A whole range of issues are discussed and experiences shared, aiming to overcome neo-liberal globalisation and develop alternatives. Major themes are the principles of forum organisation, the future of the forum and how to ensure it is accessible to as many participants as possible.

20 January

Tibetan Youth Congress activists arrive in New Delhi after a weeklong bicycle ride in protest against the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The group's core slogan is 'No Olympics in China until Tibet is free'.

20 January

The local Auxerre Social Forum is held in France.

24 January

The fifth Local Authorities Forum takes place in Nairobi as part of the seventh World Social Forum held in the city.

27 January

In Washington, 400,000 take part in a 'United for peace and justice' march to demand an end the Iraq war. This is one of the largest anti-war mobilisations in the USA in recent years and brings increased public interest through the participation of well-known figures such as Susan Sarandon, Jane Fonda, Danny Glover and Tim Robbins. Three Nobel peace laureates send their support in an open letter from the World Social Forum in Nairobi. The march is organised ahead of a Congress vote to send an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq.

February 2007

9 February

Around 16,000 workers in the textile and garment sector in Egypt end a one-week sit-in protest against the refusal of their management to pay them. The sit-in ends when the Egyptian Minister of Manpower and of Investment assists the company to make the payments.

9–10 February

Maghreb Social Forum takes place in Nouakchott, Mauritania. This is the second such forum held.

10 February

The fourth local Val de Bievre Social Forum is held in France.

14 February

Labour activists in Wales step up a global campaign against the closure of a Burberry factory in Treorchy, the Rhondda Valley. Demonstrations under the banner 'Keep Burberry British' are held simultaneously in London, New York, Chicago, Strasbourg and Las Vegas. The campaign brings together anti-corporate and labour rights groups and focuses on harnessing the global media, often via celebrities. The protesters argue that moving the factory to China is not only unethical, because the Treorchy plant is working at a considerable profit, but conflicts with the 'Britishness' which Burberry stresses throughout its marketing.

17 February

In Italy, 150,000 peace activists demonstrate in a rally under the banner 'Against the war and the war bases, for peace and justice: the future is in our hands'.

23 February

Every Friday approximately 100 Israeli, Palestinian and foreign

protesters stage a demonstration in Bil'in against the West Bank barrier. This week, the second anniversary of the barriers construction is marked by hundreds more joining the protest. Israeli police use water cannons to disperse the rally. The International Court of Justice has ruled the barrier illegal, but the Israeli government claims it is necessary for security.

23–27 February

A World Forum for Food Sovereignty takes place in the village of Sélingué, Mali. Participants number 600 people from five continents and represent all sectors of society with an interest in agricultural and food issues. They aim to reaffirm the right to food sovereignty and to clarify its economic, social, ecological and political implications. Organisers give the forum the name 'Nyéléni 2007' after a legendary woman farmer in Mali.

22 February

Small shopkeepers and anti-globalisation protesters hold demonstrations in India as Wal-Mart executives visit the country ahead of a plan for the company to enter the retail sector there.

March 2007

1–4 March

More than 600 people are arrested as days of mass protests involving more than 4,000 turn violent in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The demonstrations begin when left-wing activists are evicted from a youth centre they had been occupying since 1982. The site has been sold and legal protests that have been going on for several years over the squatters' right to stay have now failed.

3 March

Over 500 Chinese sent by the Beijing Tourism Bureau to parade for the 2008 Beijing Olympics in Hollywood are met by hundreds of human rights activists demanding 'Freedom before Games'. Event organisers attempt to block off the demonstrators by parking four large tourist buses in front of them and using high-decibel loudspeakers to block out the sounds of their protest.

4 March

In Tehran 33 women are arrested during a protest against discriminatory laws on child custody and polygamy and to show solidarity with five women arrested under these laws last year. Women's groups say they have been suffering increasing intimidation from the authorities since they launched a petition to challenge the laws.

4 March

More than 2,000 demonstrators in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, take to the streets to protest against the killing of at least eight civilians by US forces as part of an ambush. International peace and human rights groups express concern over alleged indiscriminate shooting by US soldiers following a suicide bomb attack.

5 March

Xanana Gusmao, the President of East Timor, threatens to use emergency measures to prevent further demonstrations in the capital of Dili. Thousands of protesters gather to express their concern over a raid by Australian-led peacekeepers on the base of the rebel leader Alfredo Reinado, during which four rebels were killed.

5 March

In Uganda judges and lawyers hold a strike to protest against raids on their courts by government troops. They claim these raids are threatening the independence of the country's judiciary.

5 March

Minghui Radio, a station set up and run by overseas Chinese and international volunteers, begins broadcasting into China 24-hours a day via a Eutelsat satellite. The broadcasts consist of information prohibited in China.

5 March

Violent protests erupt in Jharkhand, India, when a member of the national parliament is killed. Maoists are suspected of the murder of Sunil Mahato and widespread disruption ensues.

5–9 March

In Quito, Ecuador, activists come together to promote the abolition of foreign military bases. A coalition of anti-bases activists, individuals and organisations working in campaigns for disarmament, demilitarisation and peace and justice, coordinate a No Bases Network. The gathering particularly expresses its solidarity with the Ecuadorian people in their campaign against the Manta base.

7–9 March

Demonstrations are held in several parts of Brazil in the build up to President Bush's visit to the country. A mine, a bank and other corporate property are invaded to draw attention to the impact of corporate business on the poor. Over 15,000 activists are involved, including many landless farmworkers who march to Sao Paulo, where President Bush arrives to forge an ethanol energy alliance with Brazilian president.

8 March

International Women's Day is marked around the world by over 500 events in at least 49 countries. These include a silent protest against violence in Taipei, a march for equality in Brazil, an assembly of Manitoba chiefs in Canada, and a Right to Play campaign in Tanzania to promote female inclusion in sports. In Iran, a strong police presence disperses women trying to gather outside parliament in Tehran to demonstrate over the arrests of 33 women earlier in the week. These detained women are now on hunger strike over their treatment when they tried to protest against discriminatory laws.

10 March

In New York, hundreds of students and other activists form a

human chain across 12 city blocks connecting the Sudanese and Chinese missions to the USA in an effort to highlight the Chinese Communist Party's backing of the genocidal Khartoum regime.

10–11 March

An international seminar on the Indo-US nuclear deal is held in Mumbai, India, organised by the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation.

12 March–4 July

An international campaign is launched after BBC reporter Alan Johnson is kidnapped in Gaza City. He was the only journalist permanently based in the Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians support the campaign for his release and demonstrations are coordinated in cities around the world. The Hamas government helped to secure his eventual release after 114 days of captivity.

15 March

As the UK Parliament gets ready to vote on the future of the Trident nuclear weapons programme, large demonstrations are held by international disarmament campaigning groups and peace activists, including a peace camp at the Faslane, marches in central London and the unfurling of a banner on the Scottish Parliament building, which reads 'Whatever they vote, Trident is still wrong!'

17–20 March

Anti-war demonstrations are held in cities throughout the world to mark the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, including 20,000 marching for peace in Spain and over 1,000 protests, marches, demonstrations and vigils held across the USA calling for immediate troop withdrawal.

18 March

An estimated 5,000 people march through the streets of Hong Kong calling for universal suffrage. Of the seven million Hong Kong residents, only 800 individuals – mostly appointed by Beijing – are allowed to elect the Special Administrative Region's new leader.

19 March

A demonstration is held outside the European Commission's Trade Department in Brussels by international water activists. Under the banner 'Water out of free trade negotiations! Water is a human right!', they claim it is unfair for EU trade talks to demand that developing countries open up their water sector to European multinationals.

21 March

Anti-racism events are held in cities around the world to mark International Day for the Elimination of Racism on the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa. On this day in 1960, 69 anti-apartheid demonstrators were killed when they stood up against the pass laws which were designed to regulate the movements of black Africans.

21 March

An international campaign saves the life of Knut the polar bear

who had been rejected by his mother. Some animal rights activists believe the bear should be killed as it would need to be reared 'unnaturally' by humans.

24 March

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rome treaty, the origin of the EU, a common declaration is made by international branches of the alter-globalist movement ATTAC, including Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Jersey, Norway, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

28 March

An international conference on participatory budgeting is held in Malaga, Spain, to share and respond to the conclusions of the Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy at the World Social Forum in Nairobi this year.

29 March–1 April

In Cairo, the Egyptian Social Forum is held.

April 2007

1 April

Protests are held in Iran, the largest outside the British Embassy, against what the Iranian authorities claim was a violation of Iran's territorial waters by British navel personnel. Fifteen personnel captured by Iranian forces are later released.

7–8 April

In Concarneau, France, the local Contre-Feux Social Forum is held.

12–14 April

The eighth International Free Software Forum is held in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

13–15 April

In Sweden, the regional Ostergotland Social Forum is held consecutively in the two towns of Norkoping and Linkoping.

20 April

A global day for trade justice is marked by demonstrations in many cities calling for an end to unfair EU trade deals with poor countries. As part of this, a march in London takes their message to all 26 EU embassies.

20–22 April

In Australia, the third Melbourne Social Forum takes place with the theme 'Change the political climate: turn up the heat!'.

21 April

The Freiburg Social Forum is held in Switzerland, including mobilisation for protests against the G8 summit to be held in Germany later in the year.

21–22 April

In Helsinki, Finland, the sixth national Finnish Social Forum takes place. A major focus is the Finnish government's asylum policy and the campaign against forced deportations.

21–22 April

In Germany, the local Berlin Social Forum is held.

24 April

Hundreds of activists gather in New York's Wall Street area to call upon Fidelity Investments to divest from PetroChina, a Chinese oil company believed to be helping to fund the genocidal Khartoum regime. In response to student pressure, Harvard University divested from PetroChina in 2005, an action that was later followed by dozens of other universities.

29 April

Over one million people take part in a rally in Istanbul in support of secularism and democracy. This is the largest in a series of actions in response to a tense stand-off between the Islamist-rooted government and the army, over presidential elections. Over 600 civil society organisations have been involved in planning the protests.