

Compiled by Marlies Glasius, with contributions from Andres Falconer, Zafarullah Khan, Svitlana Kuts, Ahmad Lutfi, Alejandro Natal, Yahia Said, Shameem Siddiqi, Sunna Trott, and Barbara Wisniewska.

Note on Chronologies

Chronicles of the year, often published by newspapers, magazines, or in mass-produced books, are a familiar sight in news agencies and bookshops at the end of each year. They recapitulate the events of the past year that, so they tell us, are supposed to be worth remembering. In the last year, many lists of events and personalities of the century have also come out. These lists tend to concentrate on political leaders and celebrities, and if they are called 'world events' they often concentrate mainly on the North/West. In these pages, we try to focus on different events, giving centre stage to global civil society, showing globalisation from below, and giving more attention to the South and East. These chronologies can become a useful reference tool but they can also help us to build a global collective memory that looks beyond the handshakes of great power leaders.

This is a somewhat novel approach to world history and we are still in the process of learning how to do it. We have developed some criteria and we have begun to set up a network of correspondents. Their input is gratefully acknowledged, but we need many more. *Events of the Decade* and *Events of 2000* should not be seen as a definitive list of what happened in global civil society. On the contrary, we are hoping to improve our effort over the years, with your help.

If you have comments on the present effort, or if you are interested in becoming a correspondent for our next Yearbook, please let us know. We are looking for people who take an active interest in the activities of global civil society in their part of the world. We would like to have a mix of journalists, students and academics, and activists/practitioners, with men and women, young people and older people from all regions of the world represented. Correspondents should have a helicopter view of civil society activities in their region, embracing activism on more than one type of issue (for instance peace, human rights, the environment, consumer activism), and more than one country.

When is something important enough to be a 'global civil society event'? Our criterion was that, in our entirely subjective opinion, the event resonated, or had implications, beyond national boundaries. While this is a chronicle of global civil society events, government actions are occasionally included when they had significant impact on, or were a reaction to, global civil society. A little background on major 'governmental' events is given as context at the beginning of each year.

Elections are reported when they are the first democratic elections ever, or in a long time, in a country. This is based on the idea that there is a strong relationship between the development of civil society and democratisation. Referendums of historical importance have also been included.

Peace processes are also given much attention. Again, although there can be strong civil society resistance to war, in the long run civil society and peace are mutually dependent. In some peace processes (usually the more successful and lasting ones), civil society is given a role while in others it is not. We have decided to include both types.

Whether civil society can be violent or not is a hotly debated issue, but for the purposes of this chronology manifestations of non-state violence, from relatively benign ones to guerilla armies, assassins, and terrorists are included. Whether or not one thinks these are part of civil society, they certainly deeply affect civil society, and it would be strange to ignore them.

We have not systematically included natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes, simply because we did not know where to begin. Nevertheless, their impact on civil society is clear and they tend to have consequences for both local and global civil society. This is one of the areas we hope to expand next year.

Global Civil Society Events of the Decade

1989

*This is the year in which the communist regimes of eastern Europe are toppled and the Iron Curtain is lifted. In China, on the other hand, the pro-democracy movement is crushed. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini declares author Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* offensive and issues a fatwa sentencing him to death. The Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua meet in Honduras, taking some first steps towards an end to the civil wars and the return of democracy in the region. US troops invade Panama, seeking the capture of General Manuel Noriega.*

6 February Members of Poland's communist government hold Round Table talks with representatives of the hitherto illegal Solidarity trade union to negotiate changes in the system of government. The talks eventually lead to an agreement on partially free elections, to be held in June.

Mid-April Chinese students and other supporters of freedom of speech and democratisation occupy Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China.

4 June Soldiers of the Chinese army take control of Tiananmen Square by force, causing many casualties. Pro-democracy activists are arrested or flee abroad in the following days.

19 August After a 'Pan-European picnic' near the Hungarian-Austrian border town Sopron, organised by the Hungarian Democratic Forum, hundreds of East Germans cross the recently opened border into Austria.

23 October After many months of peaceful protest meetings at the Nicolai church in Leipzig, East Germany, every Monday evening, the protesting crowds swell to hundreds of thousands, chanting 'We are the people' and demanding political freedoms, freedom to travel, and the resignation of the communist regime.

7–11 November In preparation for independence, the United Nations organises the first democratic parliamentary elections in Namibia, which have a 97% voter turn-out. The South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) wins the elections.

9 November Spontaneous celebrations are held on the Berlin Wall as citizens of the two German republics cross the border, popping champagne and beginning to demolish the Wall.

17 November A student march in Prague, commemorating the killing of two students during the Nazi occupation, turns into a protest against the communist regime. Riot

police respond with batons injuring scores of peaceful demonstrators.

25–29 November A crowd of 700,000 Czechoslovaks turn out to protest against the violent suppression of the demonstration two weeks earlier, and demand the resignation of the communist government. In what has become known as the 'Velvet Revolution', the communist government of Czechoslovakia, the second in two weeks, steps down and hands over power to Civic Forum. Former dissident Vaclav Havel accepts the presidency.

14 December The first democratic elections in 16 years are held in Chile. The elections follow a plebiscite held a year earlier, which was designed to keep General Pinochet in power for another eight years, but which was defeated by a No campaign, led by a broad coalition of centre and left-wing figures. Patricio Aylwin becomes the first democratically elected president of Chile since the overthrow of Salvador Allende in 1973. General Pinochet remains Senator for life and chief of staff of the armed forces, however.

17 December Romanian troops and policemen attack protesters in Timisoara, causing many casualties. Unrest spreads to Bucharest and other parts of Romania.

25 December In Romania, the people and the army wrest control from the Securitate, the secret service. Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu are captured and executed after a perfunctory trial.

1990

This year marks the official end of the Cold War. At the Paris Summit, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) turns itself into a permanent organisation (OSCE) and adopts a declaration committing all CSCE states to free elections, multi-party systems, and the rule of law. NATO and the Warsaw Pact issue a joint declaration marking the end of the Cold War, and a US-Soviet summit reaches an accord on disarmament. The German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany are reunited. In August, Iraqi troops invade and occupy Kuwait. The UN Security Council condemns the invasion, demands immediate withdrawal, and proclaims economic sanctions against Iraq.

11 February After decades of anti-apartheid struggle inside and outside South Africa, ANC-leader Nelson Mandela is released from prison.

11 March After an overwhelming victory by the nationalist Sajudis movement in the first multiparty elections in the Baltic republic, the newly elected Lithuanian parliament declares independence. Soviet President Gorbachev issues an ultimatum to withdraw the declaration. Two weeks later, Soviet army and KGB troops enter Vilnius and occupy Communist Party buildings, printing presses, and the Prosecutor's office. Estonia and Latvia also declare independence later this spring.

18 March The first and last democratic elections of the German Democratic Republic take place. By electing the new Alliance for Germany, the East German electorate approves the move towards the unification of Germany.

6 April More than 50 members of Nepal's People's Movement are killed by gunfire. Subsequently, however, the king of Nepal gives in to their demands, and Nepal is transformed from an absolute monarchy into a constitutional democracy.

7 April 300,000 people march for independence in Vilnius, Lithuania. A week later, Gorbachev issues a second ultimatum: the Lithuanian parliament should rescind independence or face an economic blockade. An oil and gas embargo is introduced.

27 May While its leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is kept under house arrest, the National League for Democracy wins 82% of the vote in the first democratic elections in Burma in 30 years. The military regime refuses to cede power, however.

29–30 September The World Summit for Children takes place in New York. 45 NGOs participate in the Summit.

16 December Jean-Bertrand Aristide sweeps the polls in the first democratic presidential elections in Haiti.

1991

This is the year of the Gulf War. A coalition led by the United States and authorised by the UN Security Council conducts aerial bombardments of Iraq; Iraq fires Scud missiles at Israel in retaliation. Six weeks later, coalition forces invade Kuwait and Iraq. The UN Security Council sanctions, adopted before the war, remain in place to this day. A coup is committed against Soviet President Gorbachev; the failure of the coup spells the end of the USSR. This is also the year in which apartheid is repealed in South Africa.

11–13 January After a final ultimatum by President Gorbachev, Soviet troops storm vital buildings, including the television tower, in Vilnius, Lithuania; the independent news agency Interfax is closed in Moscow. 14 people are killed.

17 January Half a million people participate in the burial of the victims in Vilnius. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church participates in the Catholic mass and condemns the murder. Russian paratroopers heed calls by Russian President Yeltsin to refuse deployment in the Baltic Republics.

20 January After more people are killed in Latvia, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrate across the Soviet Union to protest against the crackdown on the Baltic states and demand independence for the republics. In Moscow, 100,000 supporters of Russian President Boris Yeltsin turn out. In Baku, Azerbaijan, a million people participate, commemorating 130 victims killed by the

Soviet army in a crackdown on pro-independence demonstrators a year earlier. Ten days later, Moscow announces the withdrawal of paratroopers from Lithuania, paving the way for independence.

27 February After months of civil unrest, a caretaker government organises the first free and fair elections in Bangladesh in many years. They are won by Khaleda Zia's BNP, with the Awami League, also led by a woman, a close second.

Early March After defeat in Kuwait, uprisings against Saddam Hussein take place both in northern and southern Iraq. An estimated 1.5 million people flee their homes as a result of the ensuing bloodshed.

17 March A referendum on the preservation of the USSR is held. Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and the Baltic states refuse to participate.

18 May North-west Somalia declares unilateral independence as 'Somaliland'. No other states have recognised it to date, and development assistance is given only through voluntary aid agencies.

25 June The parliaments of Croatia and Slovenia declare independence from Yugoslavia. Fighting breaks out between supporters of independence and the Yugoslav army. Within five days, an agreement is reached to withdraw federal troops from Slovenia.

7 July The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly organises a meeting in Belgrade titled 'Disintegration of Yugoslavia–Integration of Europe', which attracts 150 activists, intellectuals, and politicians from eastern and western Europe. This meeting, the first since the beginning of the crisis, sets the stage for civic responses to the war in Yugoslavia.

19–21 August While Soviet President Gorbachev is on vacation in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, KGB General Vladimir Kryuchkov, Vice-President Gennady Yanayev, and a group of co-conspirators announce that he is ill and declare a state of emergency. They send tanks into the streets of Moscow and ban all but Communist Party media as well as any demonstrations or gatherings. Russian President Boris Yeltsin reacts by barricading himself in the building of the Russian Parliament, where he is joined by thousands of civilians, a number of buses, and several armoured personnel carriers. A day later, the coup collapses, having failed to secure support from the army. Coup leaders are arrested. Gorbachev returns to Moscow significantly weakened.

Late September 400 anti-war activists from all over Europe, and thousands from Yugoslavia itself, take part in a peace caravan which travels through Trieste to Rijeka, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Subotica, Novi Sad, and Belgrade, culminating in Sarajevo. In Sarajevo, thousands form a human chain linking a mosque, a synagogue, an Orthodox church, and a Catholic church.

- 30 September** General Raoul Cedras takes over power from Haiti's first democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The military fires bullets at people in protest demonstrations, and randomly in the poor areas, where support for Aristide is strong. Hundreds are killed.
- 23 October** The four parties in the Cambodia conflict and 19 other interested states sign the Paris Peace Accords, a comprehensive political settlement which is to include repatriation of over 360,000 refugees, arrival of UN peace-keeping troops, and free elections.
- 30 October** A Peace Conference on the Middle East is opened in Madrid. Delegations from Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation attend. The Conference is chaired by the United States and the USSR.
- 12 November** Indonesian troops open fire on an unarmed demonstration in support of independence in Dili, East Timor, killing more than 100 people. The massacre galvanises solidarity groups in western and Lusophone countries and causes many new ones to spring up, leading to a sustained campaign to expose human rights violations and promote East Timorese independence.
- 26 December** The Front Islamique du Salut wins 188 out of 430 seats in the first round of the first democratic general elections in Algeria since 1963, despite the fact that its leaders, Abbas Madani and Ali Belhadj, have been imprisoned. The army thereupon cancels the second round in elections and cracks down on the FIS. The country quickly descends into civil war.

1992

This year marks the birth of the European Union. The heads of state and government of the European Community sign the Maastricht Treaty, turning the organisation from a predominantly economic association into a political one. This is also the year in which the war in former Yugoslavia escalates. Failing to intervene in Bosnia, the international community intervenes in the conflict in Somalia. The Earth Summit in Rio with unprecedented participation from NGOs undertakes to address issues of climate change and bio-diversity.

- 16 January** After a year and a half of negotiations, the government of El Salvador and the armed opposition movement FMLN sign a formal peace agreement and agree a ceasefire and disarmament programme, to be monitored by the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (UNOSAL).
- 17 March** In South Africa, a 'Whites only' referendum is held on whether to end the policy of apartheid. 68.7% of the voters vote 'Yes', while 31.3% vote 'No'.
- 29 April** A US jury finds the four police officers not guilty of committing any crimes against Rodney King, despite the fact that George Holiday had captured the savage

beating King received a year earlier on videotape from his apartment across the street. Riots break out in Los Angeles.

- 18 May** 30,000 Thais defy a curfew, rallying against the military rule of general Suchinda and demanding that he step down. The army opens fire on the crowd, killing dozens and wounding hundreds. In response, rioters burn government buildings and vehicles. A week later Suchinda resigns, paving the way for democratic elections.
- 3 June** The Australian High Court hands down a landmark decision in the struggle for Aborigine emancipation, known as Mabo 2. It recognises that before 1788 Australia was not *terra nullius* but belonged to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.
- 3–14 June** The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit) takes place in Rio de Janeiro. It produces two conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and three non-binding declarations. Some 2,400 representatives of NGOs attend the Conference; 17,000 people take part in the parallel NGO Forum.
- 19 July** Two months after the murder of Italian mafia-prosecutor Giovanni Falcone, his wife and three escorts, his colleague Paolo Borsellino and five police escorts are killed by another massive bomb in Palermo, Sicily. The citizens of Palermo take to the streets in protest. Women hang bed sheets out of the windows with slogans like 'Enough!' and 'Thank you Falcone and Borsellino' written on them.
- 29 August** Following months of growing political turmoil and street demonstrations, Brazilian President Collor is impeached by Congress on charges of corruption, and Vice-President Itamar Franco is sworn into office. Subsequent to this mass mobilisation, a Citizenship Action against Hunger and Misery and for Life is launched in Brazil by activist Herbert de Souza, known as 'Betinho'. The campaign leads to the creation of over 5,000 all-volunteer committees throughout the country to raise and distribute food donations for the poor. The success of the campaign following the impeachment crisis spurs interest in civil society and inspires numerous other civic initiatives.
- 29–30 September** The first multiparty elections are held in Angola. MPLA-PT wins 54% of the vote, UNITA 34%. However, UNITA takes up arms again after losing the elections and plunges the country back into war.
- 4 October** After nearly two years of negotiations, the government of Mozambique and the armed opposition movement RENAMO sign the final protocols of a General Peace Agreement. They invite the United Nations to participate in monitoring implementation of the agreement.
- 12 October** Governments in Spain and the Americas celebrate the fact that Christopher Columbus first set

foot in the Americas 500 years ago. Indigenous people and sympathisers all over the continent stage manifestations mourning the near-obliteration of the native population and the environmental destruction that followed the 'discovery' of the Americas.

6 December Officials of the Hindu nationalist party BJP lead a march to the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya, which is built over the remains of a Hindu temple. The crowd climbs the centuries-old mosque and demolishes it by hand and with explosives. Thousands of people lose their lives in the ensuing violence in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the United Kingdom.

1993

In this year, the intervention in Somalia fails. The forces of Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aidede attack and kill United Nations soldiers. Footage is shown of American bodies being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, causing an about-face in the US's willingness to involve itself in the conflict. The United States and the Russian Federation sign the START II treaty, further limiting of the number of nuclear weapons they hold. China breaks the moratorium on nuclear testing. In the United States, eighty members of the Branch Davidian sect die by fire as the FBI raids their headquarters in Waco after a 50-day siege.

13 January After many years of exertions by NGOs and concerned scientists, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons (Chemical Weapons Convention) is signed in Paris.

22 February At the instigation of human rights organisations, the UN Security Council adopts a resolution establishing an International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (abbreviated as ICTY). The tribunal, based in The Hague, will prosecute persons who have been responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in former Yugoslavia since 1991.

24 May The first NGO International Conference on Landmines is held in London bringing together representatives of more than 50 NGOs to build a strategy for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL).

23–28 May Over 4 million Cambodians cast their votes in elections supervised by the United Nations. The PDK, successor party to the Khmer Rouge, does not participate. The elections take place without major violent incidents. Observers declare them free and fair.

14–25 June The United Nations World Conference on Human Rights is held in Vienna, Austria. It recommends the establishment of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights and the study of the possibility of an International Criminal Court. More than 2,400 representatives of about 1,300 NGOs take part in the NGO Forum.

23 July A gang of hooded, off-duty military policemen opens fire on a group of 50 street children in downtown Rio de Janeiro; eight are killed in this 'Candelária Massacre'. Public outcry and international mobilisation eventually succeed in bringing nine men to court.

13 September After 14 months of secret negotiations, sponsored by Norway, Israel and the PLO sign the Oslo Agreement according to which Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip and from Jericho within five years, and a Palestine Authority will be established there. Israel and the PLO officially recognise each other.

21 September Russian President Boris Yeltsin dissolves the Russian Parliament and calls for early parliamentary elections. Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi and the Parliament declare this decision unconstitutional and claim the presidency. Two days later, the parliament holds a session in defiance of Yeltsin's decree. 2,000 protesters gather round the White House in support of the Parliament, but its call for strikes and civil disobedience fall on deaf ears. A day later, Yeltsin's troops encircle the Parliament and cut off water and electricity.

3 October 15,000 protesters break the siege of the Russian Parliament and join the rebellious parliamentarians. After receiving arms from the Parliament, the demonstrators move on to attack the mayor's office and the TV tower. The next day, troops storm the parliament building after a nine-hour battle. Tanks fire their canons at the building. 150 people are believed to have died in two days of fighting, and 1,500 people, including many parliamentarians, are arrested. Yeltsin purges opponents in Moscow and the regions, banning a number of groups and media outlets including the communist *Pravda*.

1994

This is the year of the genocide in Rwanda. The war in Bosnia continues and Sarajevo is under siege. The United States intervene in Haiti, pressuring the military junta to step down and go into exile. At the end of the year Russia attacks the secessionist republic of Chechnya. The World Trade Organization is established to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

1 January As a result of civil society pressure in Canada, Mexico and the United States, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and North American Agreement on Labour Cooperation (NAALC) come into force along with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

1 January The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) takes seven towns in Chiapas, Mexico, and its leader, Subcomandante Marcos, issues the First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, declaring war on the Mexican government and army but also protesting against neo-liberal ideology, and in particular NAFTA. The Mexican

army begins a bloody counter-offensive against the Zapatistas.

25 February An Israeli settler opens fire on a crowded mosque in Hebron on the West Bank, killing 48 Palestinians.

6 April The presidents of Rwanda and Burundi are killed in a mysterious air crash. Rwandan soldiers and Interahamwe begin a genocide in which between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsis and tolerant Hutus are slaughtered.

26–29 April Multiracial parliamentary and presidential elections are held in South Africa. The ANC wins 62.6% of the vote and Nelson Mandela wins the presidential election.

1 May Brazil's three-times Formula One champion Ayrton Senna dies tragically during a race in Italy. Thousands mourn publicly at his funeral at São Paulo and millions watch live TV coverage. Senna's sister soon establishes the Ayrton Senna Institute, which becomes one of Brazil's leading educational charities.

14 July More than 1 million Rwandans flood into the eastern Zaire town of Goma in four days. Cholera breaks out and as many as 50,000 people die within a matter of weeks. A huge international aid effort, costing 2 billion dollars in the first two weeks alone, is launched.

5–9 August Nearly 7,000 Mexican civil society activists attend the first 'Aguascalientes Forum' in the jungle of Chiapas, convoked by the Zapatistas, who call on civil society to 'defeat them' by achieving a peaceful transition to democracy.

5–13 September The UN Conference on Population and Development takes place in Cairo. It is attended by 1,254 accredited NGOs from 138 countries. More than 4,200 representatives of over 1,500 non-governmental organisations attend the parallel NGO Forum '94.

29 September At the 50th anniversary of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, activists submit the Manibeli Declaration, signed by 326 groups from 44 countries, asking for a moratorium on World Bank funding for big dams. This date also marks the beginning of an international campaign against the activities of the Bank and Fund called 'Fifty Years is Enough!'

8 November The UN Security Council adopts a resolution establishing an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, with its seat in Arusha, Tanzania, which will prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other serious crimes against humanitarian law committed in Rwanda during 1994.

11 December Russian President Yeltsin sends troops into Chechnya to put an end to three years of chaotic independence under the leadership of Jokhar Dudayev. According to a poll, 70% of Russians oppose the decision to send troops in. The opposition intensifies as the war drags on. Russian intellectuals, artists, and journalists widely proclaim their opposition to the war, and the

independent media provide damning information on army brutality and incompetence. The leading anti-war group, the Soldiers' Mothers, holds daily protest vigils outside military headquarters and the parliament and in Chechnya itself. It also provides advice to deserters and searches for missing soldiers and prisoners of war.

1995

This year marks the culmination and end of the war in Bosnia. The UN safe area Srebrenica falls to the Bosnian Serb army. The Bosnian Serb army separates the men from the women and children and they are led away and killed. Richard Goldstone, the prosecutor of the Yugoslavia Tribunal, indicts Bosnian Serb political leader Karadzic and military leader Mladic on charges of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. NATO, with the backing of the United Nations, begins to launch air strikes against Bosnian Serb troops attacking Sarajevo. The Mexican economy is rescued by a \$20-billion aid programme. Just before celebrating its 50th anniversary, the United Nations' financial crisis deepens, and it has to borrow from the Peacekeeping Fund.

17 January An earthquake strikes the region of Kobe and Osaka in south-central Japan, killing more than 5,000 people and causing hundreds of thousands to lose their homes. The relief effort by volunteers triggers a debate within Japan about the need to support non-profit organisations, which eventually leads to a new law.

6–12 March The World Summit on Social Development takes place in Copenhagen. The official Summit is attended by approximately 2,300 representatives from 800 accredited NGOs and over 2,800 journalists. About 12,000 NGO representatives attend a parallel NGO Forum which adopts an Alternative Copenhagen Declaration.

20 March A nerve gas attack by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in the Tokyo underground kills eight people and injures thousands.

10 July Burmese opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house arrest.

4–15 September The Fourth World Conference on Women takes place in Beijing. It adopts the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Despite restrictions imposed by the Chinese government, representatives from 2,100 non-governmental organisations and 5,000 journalists attend the Conference. About 25,000 people participate in the independent NGO Forum '95, which the Chinese authorities have allocated to a location more than 50 km from the official conference site.

5 September France carries out the first of a series of underground nuclear explosions in French Polynesia. A consumer boycott strikes French wine and other products in response to the nuclear explosions, causing Bordeaux exports to drop by 5% almost immediately. Six months

later, French President Chirac announces the end of France's nuclear tests in the Pacific region.

19–22 October One week after the ceasefire in Bosnia, hundreds of people from the former Yugoslav republics and from other European countries gather for a general assembly of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly in war-torn Tuzla to discuss the role the international community and civic initiatives from both Bosnia-Herzegovina and abroad can play in the solution of the conflict in Bosnia.

24 October The 50th anniversary of the United Nations is commemorated with the largest gathering of world leaders in history. Meanwhile, the first 'People's Assemblies' are held, one in San Francisco, and one in Perugia, Italy. This sparks a host of new initiatives; by 1997, ten People's Assemblies are held in cities including Tokyo, Wellington, Perugia, Sao Paulo, London, and Los Angeles.

4 November Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by a religious nationalist after addressing a peace rally attended by tens of thousands of Israelis in Tel Aviv.

10 November Ogoni leader Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other leaders of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) are executed by the Nigerian government after an unfair trial.

21 November The Dayton Agreement on peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina is initialled by Serbian President Milosevic, Croatian President Tudjman, and Bosnian President Izetbegovic. Bosnia-Herzegovina will have a new constitution, and the peace agreement will be implemented by the Implementation Force (IFOR) which will be under NATO command. The sanctions against Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) are conditionally suspended.

1996

Ethnic violence breaks out in Zairean refugee camps; a UN-backed relief mission for 1.2 million Hutu refugees starving in eastern Zaire allows hundreds of thousands to return to Rwanda. The United Kingdom is alarmed when scientists conclude that Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease can be caused by eating beef from cows who suffered from BSE or 'mad cow disease'. Russian President Boris Yeltsin is re-elected in a hotly contested campaign boosted by a controversial multi-billion rescue package from the IMF.

20 January PLO leader Yasser Arafat becomes the first-ever elected leader of the Palestinians following elections held in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

12 February The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist begins a 'people's war', seeking to destroy the constitutional monarchy and aiming to establish a Maoist people's democracy.

17 April Brazilian police troops open fire on demonstrators from the landless peasants movement (MST) who are blocking the road in the Brazilian state of Pará. 19 are killed and 51 injured. Commanders of the operation are later acquitted in a trial that mobilises international attention.

7 May In India, Phoolan Devi, the low-caste 'Bandit Queen' who was jailed for murdering the high-caste men who gang-raped her, is elected to Parliament. The Hindu nationalist party BJP emerges as the largest party nationally.

4–13 June The Second UN Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat II) takes place in Istanbul. More than 6,000 participants from 1,500 organisations take part in the NGO parallel forum.

10 July After Danish beer company Carlsberg drops its plans to establish a brewery in Burma because of the military regime's human rights record, its Dutch competitor Heineken also succumbs to public pressure and sells its interests in a Burmese brewery.

27 July Government-linked thugs attack and clear the party headquarters of Indonesian opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, breaking up the free speech forum that had been established in the back garden. The attack sparks riots in Jakarta.

27 July–3 August The Zapatistas convoke the First Intercontinental Meeting for Humanity and Against Neo-liberalism in Chiapas, Mexico, attended by 3,000 people from 44 countries.

30 July Four women are cleared by a British jury of charges in the 'Ploughshares trial'. They had attacked and damaged a Hawk fighter plane due for export to Indonesia. The women argued that the plane would be used to reinforce repression in East Timor and that by smashing it they had averted a greater evil.

30 August The Russian government finally succumbs to pressure to end the unpopular war in Chechnya. Secretary of the Russian Security Council General Lebed and Chechen Chief of Staff Maskhadov sign a peace agreement. The treaty calls for the withdrawal of Russian forces from the republic and for elections at the end of the year. A decision on Chechnya's future political status is postponed until 31 December 2001.

10 September After many years of lobbying by anti-nuclear activists and NGOs, the United Nations finally adopts the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

14 September The first multiparty elections take place in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska.

27 September The Afghan capital Kabul falls to the fundamentalist Islamist Taliban. They impose restrictions based on hard-line interpretations of Islam, including banning women from work and education and introducing punishments such as stoning to death and amputations.

13–17 November The World Food Summit is held in Rome. The parallel NGO Forum is attended by 1,300 NGO representatives from 80 countries.

17 December Members of the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA) take guests hostage at a cocktail party at the Japanese embassy in Lima, Peru, demanding release of hundreds of MRTA prisoners. Hostages released in subsequent days sing their captors' praises. Four months later, Peruvian military forces storm and take over the embassy, killing all 14 MRTA revolutionaries.

29 December A peace agreement is signed in Guatemala City between the President of Guatemala and various armed opposition groups.

1997

This is the year of the 'Asian crisis'. The Thai currency, baht, collapses, and other south-east Asian currencies follow. Conditions attached to IMF rescue packages spark mass protests in South Korea and other afflicted countries. In accordance with the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, the United Kingdom hands over authority over Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China. The 'one country, two systems' principle is supposed to guarantee democracy and civil rights in Hong Kong. After 32 years in power, President Mobutu of Zaire flees Kinshasa, surrendering power to the anti-Mobutu alliance led by Laurent Kabila, who renames the country Democratic Republic of Congo. The Khmer Rouge put their long-time leader Pol Pot on trial. In Britain, the sheep 'Dolly' is created by cloning.

Late January The collapse of pyramid investment schemes leads to demonstrations and chaos in Albania as popular groups seize arms from the government's caches.

2–4 February Over 2,900 people from 137 countries attend the Microcredit Summit in Washington DC, which launches a campaign to reach 100 million poor people with microcredit facilities by 2005.

5–6 February In Ecuador, 2 million people go on strike and march against President Abdala Bucaram's corrupt government, prompting the Ecuadorian Congress to vote him out of office.

21 February After three months of street protests, peaking at 500,000 demonstrators, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic accepts the election results and opposition leader Zoran Djindjic is installed as mayor of Belgrade.

17 April Thousands of landless Brazilians reach the capital Brasilia after a two-month march to pressure the government to implement land reform. The streets are lined with people to welcome them.

23 May The people of Iran overwhelmingly elect moderate cleric Muhammad Khatami as President, marking the first serious challenge to the religious conservative establishment.

16–17 June A European Council Meeting aimed at revising the Maastricht Treaty takes place in Amsterdam. Demonstrators from various EU states are arbitrarily detained in Amsterdam during the summit.

31 August Diana, Princess of Wales, dies in a car crash in Paris. Millions mourn her death.

17 November 69 people are massacred by militant Islamists at the temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Upper Egypt, including 58 foreign tourists. This marks the culmination and the end of an eight-year insurgency by radical Islamists against the Egyptian regime.

3–4 December 121 states sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of antipersonnel mines and on their destruction, known as the Mine Ban Treaty, in Ottawa, Canada. A People's Treaty endorsing the Mine Ban Treaty is signed by thousands of people around the world.

11 December In Kyoto, Japan, the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change draw up the Kyoto Protocol, a treaty that would, after entering into force, require industrialised nations to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases according to specific targets and timetables. The majority of the approximately 3,000 NGO representatives in attendance at Kyoto are of the opinion that massive restrictions on global energy use are critical and overdue.

18 December South Korea elects Kim Dae Jung, a former democracy activist who has been imprisoned, kidnapped, and exiled by the former military dictatorship, to the presidency.

30 December More than 400 Algerian villagers are murdered by the Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA) on the first evening of Ramadan. It is the biggest massacre in the Algerian civil war, which has already claimed tens of thousands of civilian lives.

1998

This is a year of renewed conflict in Africa and former Yugoslavia. Eritrea occupies an area in Ethiopia to which it claims to have title, and the two countries go to war. The armed opposition against President Kabila takes control of the eastern part of Congo. Despite international negotiations, the repression of Kosovar Albanians, and armed resistance to it, begins to escalate. Bombs explode at the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing more than 200 people. The US suspects that Osama bin Laden, a Saudi millionaire who lives in Afghanistan, is behind the bombing, and launches missiles against sites in Sudan and Afghanistan in retaliation. President Clinton narrowly survives an impeachment procedure. The aftershocks of the Asian crises sweep Russia and Brazil. The collapse of multi-billion dollar hedge fund LTCM threatens to spread to developed markets. The US Federal Reserve's rescue of LTCM

and successive interest rates cuts prevent an all-out meltdown. Hurricane Mitch claims 10,000 lives in Central America.

11 January More than 10,000 Indians stage a sit-in to protest against the building of the Maheshwar Dam on the Narmada river, which would displace thousands of people.

1 March 300,000 rural Brits take part in a march on London to ask attention for the problems faced by people living in the British countryside, including fears for the future of hunting and other field sports, and concern at the problems facing livestock farmers.

10 April The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement (Good Friday Agreement) is signed in Belfast by representatives of eight political parties, including Sinn Féin and unionist parties, and by British Prime Minister Blair and Irish Prime Minister Ahern.

26 April Two days after presenting a comprehensive report on human rights violations in Guatemala during the civil war, bishop Juan Gerardi Conedara is battered to death.

12 May Four Indonesian students are shot dead by the army following a peaceful demonstration against the Soeharto regime. The shootings spark massive riots in six of the country's largest cities. Days later, hundreds of thousand students and members of the public pour into the streets, and thousands march to the parliament, which they occupy for several days. On 21 May, after 32 years in power, Indonesian President Soeharto is finally forced to resign, handing over power to his Vice-President, B. J. Habibie.

16 May 70,000 people form a human chain around the city centre of Birmingham, UK, where the leaders of the G8 are supposed to be meeting, in support of debt relief for developing countries. The G8 leaders have moved their summit to the countryside, however; only British Prime Minister Tony Blair comes to meet the demonstrators.

22 May In referendums in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, a great majority votes in support of the Good Friday agreement.

28 May Two weeks after India carries out a number of underground nuclear explosions, Pakistan explodes five nuclear devices. Both in India and Pakistan, peace groups emerge and create transnational links with each other and with other countries in an effort to oppose nuclear escalation.

1 June—Hundreds of children from over 50 countries reach the International Labour Organisation in Geneva at the end of a global march against child labour.

17 July A diplomatic conference in Rome adopts a Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, with its seat at The Hague. The NGO Coalition for an International Criminal Court now shifts its campaign towards achieving state ratifications.

23 July The Burmese police stops opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from leaving Rangoon to meet other members of the National League for Democracy. She spends six days sitting in her car by the side of the road in protest. The authorities eventually seize her car and drive her back home against her will. These stand-offs are repeated a number of times over the next few years.

15 August The Real IRA detonates a bomb in the centre of Omagh, Northern Ireland, killing 28 people and wounding more than 200. The people of Northern Ireland are appalled, and public opinion in both communities turns further against sectarian violence.

20 September After leading a demonstration of 30,000 people against Prime Minister Mahathir, former Malaysian finance minister Anwar Ibrahim is arrested, sparking further demonstrations.

14 October France withdraws from the negotiations by the member states of the OECD on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) which had met with widespread civil society resistance. The negotiations are subsequently halted.

16 October Former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet is arrested in London after an extradition request from Spain, where he is charged with having ordered torture, executions, and disappearances. The subsequent criminal process rekindles the idea that courts may have 'universal jurisdiction' for crimes against humanity, even when they are committed by heads of state.

15–17 November 38 national Jubilee 2000 Campaigns and 12 international organisations meet in Rome to decide on a common policy and strategy in their campaign for a one-off cancellation of the unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries by the year 2000.

3 December The Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations (CONGO), which consists of the NGOs accredited to the United Nations, celebrates its 50th anniversary.

9 December After years of lobbying by human rights organisations and resistance from certain governments, the UN General Assembly finally adopts the Universal Declaration for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

10 December The 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is celebrated, and victims of human rights violations are commemorated, all over the world.

1999

This is the year of the Kosovo war. Peace talks between the Serbian government and various Kosovar Albanian delegations at Rambouillet fail. NATO begins to bomb Serbia while Serbia steps up ethnic cleansing against Kosovar

Albanians. After two months, Milosevic accepts peace terms. NATO and Russian forces are deployed in Kosovo. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is indicted by the Yugoslavia Tribunal on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Kosovo. After obtaining permission from Indonesian President Habibie, an Australian-led United Nations force lands in Dili, East Timor, which has been burnt to the ground by militias. In response to several explosions in Moscow, which are blamed on Chechen terrorists, Russia begins a second war against Chechnya.

- 15 February** Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan is captured and flown to Turkey in unexplained circumstances after turning up at the Greek embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. The arrest sparks passionate protests from Kurds all over Europe. He is subsequently sentenced to death in a trial behind closed doors.
- 24 March** After the initial decision has been overruled because one of the Lords had links with Amnesty International, a party in the proceedings, the British House of Lords rules again in the case against Augusto Pinochet. It rules, with a four to three majority, that he can be extradited, but only on charges of torture committed after 1988. While Pinochet supporters are aghast, former victims, some of whom have been holding a vigil outside the House of Lords, see this as a moral victory. Human rights groups, however, criticise the judgment as too conservative in its interpretation of international law.
- 11–15 May** The Hague Appeal for Peace conference, a conference only of civil society organisations, is held in the Hague, the Netherlands. It adopts the The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the Twenty-first Century.
- 16 August** A devastating earthquake hits the town of Izmit, near Istanbul, in Turkey. More than 15,000 people are killed, and more than 600,000 become homeless. While the government's response to the earthquake is sluggish and inadequate, citizens in many European countries set

up a huge relief effort. The response from Greek citizens, in particular, initiates a softening in the historic fear and hostility between the Greek and the Turkish peoples.

- 30 August** The people of East Timor vote in a UN-monitored referendum on independence. Despite months of intimidation and violence, 98.6% of those registered turn out to vote, and 78.5% support independence.
- 4 September** On the day the UN announces the result of the vote in East Timor, militia violence, funded and organised by the Indonesian army, escalates, killing thousands and causing most of the population to flee.
- 14 September** Nineteen Pakistani political parties form the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), which aims to dislodge Nawaz Sharif's government. The government responds by arresting more than 1,000 opposition activists in order to prevent a rally in Karachi. A month later, army chief General Pervez Musharraf stages a successful coup against Sharif.
- 16 September** In a referendum, Algerians overwhelmingly vote in favour of approving President Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika's law on civil concord. According to this law, the result of long and largely secret negotiations with the armed wing of the FIS, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), thousands of AIS members and other armed groups are pardoned, provided they lay down arms.
- 8 November** More than 1 million people march for a referendum on independence in Aceh, Indonesia.
- 30 November–3 December** The World Trade Organisation holds a conference in Seattle. Governments fail to come to an agreement, and the talks collapse. Approximately 50,000 people, including trade unionists, environmentalists, farmers, development workers, and anti-capitalist campaigners, demonstrate, sometimes violently, in the streets. The police reacts by using teargas against the crowds.

Global Civil Society Events of 2000

January

- 1 January** Communal violence in the Egyptian village of al-Kosheh leaves 21 people dead and 44 wounded. The incidents follow allegations of police brutality against Christian Copts related to a murder investigation. Reports on the incident result in increased state harassment of local NGOs that were involved in documenting the incident.
- 5 January** 14-year old Ugyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Karmapa Lama and third most important spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, flees China, crossing the Himalayas to reach the Dalai Lama in India.
- 12 January** An NGO called People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), led by Park Won Soon, brings together 412 South Korean organisations in a campaign called Civil Action for the 2000 General Election (CAGE). It releases lists of politicians on the Internet whom they consider unsuitable to run in the upcoming elections because they are corrupt, have violated the election law, have been involved in a military coup or anti-human rights career, or are not diligently carrying out their parliamentary duties. In the end, 59 candidates out of 86 on the final list fail to win seats.
- 15–21 January** Ecuadorian indigenous groups, oil workers, and students protest against President Jamil Mahuad's announcement that his country will exchange the plummeting national currency, the sucre, for the US dollar to fight the country's financial crisis. Aided by soldiers, indigenous groups occupy Congress. After a brief coup attempt, Mahuad agrees to step down in favour of Vice-President Noboa, who plans to continue the dollarisation plans.
- 18 January** The Petrobrás refinery spills 1.3 million litres of oil into Rio de Janeiro's Guanabara bay, Brazil. A clean-up and animal rescue effort mobilises hundreds of volunteers.
- 24 January** In an unprecedented event, Somali human rights activists, writers, aid workers, and other civil society figures meet in the port city of Bossasso, Puntland, to discuss the future role of civil society in reshaping Somalia. In contrast to twelve previous failed initiatives which aimed to secure peace among Somali warlords, this peace plan, supported by Djibouti President Guelleh, is based on Somalia's emerging civil society.
- 30 January** A dam isolating a lagoon at a Romanian gold mine breaks. Around 100,000 square metres of toxic sludge contaminated with cyanides and heavy metals spill into nearby rivers, reaching the Hungarian border several days later. Virtually all aquatic life in Hungary's upper Tisza river is killed. 'Funerals' and mourning ceremonies for the river are held all along the banks.

February

- 3 February** On the basis of a complaint filed by eight human rights organisations a week earlier, Senegal brings Hissene Habre, the former dictator of Chad, to trial on charges of torture.
- 4–9 February** The citizens of Cochabamba, Bolivia, demonstrate and blockade roads in protest against the privatisation of water, which has more than doubled its price. The army and police use violence against the demonstrators, and the government declares martial law, but finally agrees to rescind the contract with US water company Bechtel.
- 8 February** While refusing to recognise the National Women's Union headed by prominent feminist Nawal El-Saadawi, President Mubarak of Egypt establishes a National Women's Council, headed by his wife. He also plans to establish a similar state-sponsored National Human Rights Council later in the year.
- 15 February** In a referendum, Zimbabweans vote against a proposal that would have given President Robert Mugabe even wider executive powers, as well as allowing the seizure of land from white farmers. It is the first victory for the new opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change, which evolved from the labour movement.
- 21 February** This day is recognised by UNESCO as International Mother Language day, in remembrance of the Bangladeshi shot on 21 February 1952 when they demanded that Bengali be the official language of what was then East Pakistan.
- 21–28 February** A demonstration by Christians in the northern Nigerian State Kaduna, protesting against the governor's intention to implement Islamic *sharia* law, sparks sectarian violence all over the country.
- 22 February** After two weeks of heavy rain, cyclone Eline hits Mozambique. Despite an international rescue effort, at least 200 Mozambicans die and a million become homeless, some of them stranded in trees or on rooftops for many days.
- 27–29 February** 20,000 miners in the north-eastern Chinese city Yangjiazhangzi clash with the police and army when they protest against being laid off with insufficient compensation. The riots do not come to the attention of the outside world until more than a month later.
- 28 February** Backed by Robert Mugabe's government, Zimbabwean veterans, or supposed veterans, of the war of independence, begin to seize farms of white landowners. The violence and intimidation are also turned against the Movement for Democratic Change.
- 29 February** Along with over 2,000 supporters, 90-year old Doris Haddock, known as Granny D., reaches Washington, DC after walking 2,800 kilometres from Los Angeles to show members of Congress her concern about campaign finance reform.

29 February In response to criticism from NGOs, De Beers, the world's largest diamond company, announces that its diamonds will henceforth carry a guarantee that they have not been bought from armed groups in conflict areas.

March

2 March British Home Secretary Jack Straw allows the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet to fly home on the basis of his ill-health. This follows his arrest two years earlier and a legal decision in 1999 that, in principle, he can be extradited to Spain to face charges of torture. The announcement is followed by protests as well as demonstrations of support for the former dictator in England, Spain, and Chile.

2 March After a five-year international environmental campaign, President Zedillo of Mexico cancels plans to build one of the world's largest salt plants in Baja California, a joint venture between the Mexican government and Japan's Mitsubishi company. The campaign, supported by more than 50 Mexican and many US environmental groups, included a consumer and investor boycott, newspaper advertisements, billboards, and a letter-writing effort that sent more than 700,000 pieces of protest mail to Zedillo and Mitsubishi.

12 March Pope John Paul II asks God's forgiveness for the Catholic Church's past sins, including its treatment of Jews, heretics, women, and native peoples. Jewish and gay groups criticise the statement, however, for not explicitly mentioning the holocaust and not mentioning homosexuals at all.

17 March Hundreds of members of a cult called the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments are burnt to death in an act of mass murder in Uganda.

18 March Disenchanted with the corruption of the ruling party and undeterred by mainland China's threats, 76% of the Taiwanese electorate vote for the opposition. Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bian wins the presidency, ending 50 years of Kuomintang rule.

19 March Two weeks after a leaking sewer pumped contaminated waste into the Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon, killing more than 30 tons of fish, 10,000 residents of Rio de Janeiro, wearing white T-shirts, link hands around the lagoon to protest against the rising level of sewage in the sea.

23 March The government of Papua New Guinea and various groups in Bougainville sign the Loloata Understanding, which provides for Bougainvillean autonomy and opens the way for a referendum on autonomy in the long run.

April

15–17 April Tens of thousands of people blockade the streets surrounding the IMF and World Bank buildings in Washington, DC, where the annual board meetings are

held, in protest against the policies of the financial institutions. Meetings are delayed by the blockade, and some delegates fail to make it through. Over 600 demonstrators are arrested.

22–30 April Cuban-Americans in Florida organise strikes and demonstrations in protest against the seizure and return to Cuba of six-year-old Elian Gonzalez.

22 April The governments of Brazil and Portugal celebrate the 500th anniversary of the 'discovery' of Brazil by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral. Thousands of indigenous people attempt to stage a protest march near the site where Cabral set foot on land, in Porto Seguro, against the slavery, exploitation, and marginalisation of indigenous people that followed the 'discovery'. They are turned back by the police with teargas.

24 April–19 May The Review Conference of the Parties to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) takes place in New York. 141 NGOs, mainly peace and disarmament groups, monitor the conference.

26 April Thousands of Iranian students boycott classes and attend rallies in protest against the closure of 13 progressive newspapers and against the failure to proclaim the definitive results of the first round of parliamentary elections in February, in which reformists won a sweeping victory. The government closes three more newspapers the next day.

30 April The 25th anniversary of the fall of Saigon is commemorated, celebrated, or mourned, in the United States and Vietnam.

May

22–25 May The Millennium Forum, a 'civil society only' conference, takes place at UN headquarters in New York. The topics of discussion are peace, security and disarmament; poverty eradication; human rights; sustainable development and the environment; globalisation; and democratisation and strengthening of the United Nations and other global institutions.

27 May A quarter of a million people march across Sydney's Harbour Bridge in Australia on Corroboree 2000, a march for reconciliation between the aborigine population and other Australians.

31 May Hong Kong's last Vietnamese refugee camp is officially closed. Over 100 people refuse to leave, however, saying that they cannot afford housing in Hong Kong.

31 May While IMF officials are visiting the country, tens of thousands of Argentines, supported by trade unions and Catholic Church leaders, demonstrate against the 'financial dictatorship' of the IMF, calling for 'fiscal disobedience'.

June

5–9 June The UN General Assembly devotes a special session in New York to 'Women: 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century'

(also known as Beijing +5). More than 1,000 NGOs are accredited as observers. They compile an NGO Alternative Global Report on gender issues.

13 June After a general strike and a series of riots in which at least 20 people die, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo reaches an agreement with trade unions to reverse his decision, taken earlier that month, to double petrol prices.

26 June Two separate groups of researchers, a private US research team and a public-funded consortium of scientists from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, and Japan, both announce that they have completed rough drafts of the human genome. The discovery sparks hopes that advances will be made in human health but also concerns that the knowledge will be subject to private patenting, thus exacerbating the differences in treatment available to the rich and the poor. Indigenous peoples are particularly concerned that the information garnered from their genetic material will be turned into private profit rather than benefiting their communities. Further concerns are raised about the possibility of using the technology for eugenic purposes or human cloning.

26–30 June The UN General Assembly devotes a special session in Geneva to the 'World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World' (also known as Copenhagen +5). The summit features more than 150 parallel events, in which representatives of governments, NGOs, universities, and the business sector, as well as various UN agencies, take part.

30 June Tens of thousands of French farmers and other anti-globalisation protestors gather in Millau, France, where French farmer José Bové stands trial for attacking the local branch of McDonald's hamburger restaurant a year earlier.

July

1 July Egypt arrests one of the country's foremost activists, the academic Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Chair of Egypt's Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies. His imprisonment followed the initiation of an ambitious plan for his Center to monitor the country's parliamentary elections in November.

2 July After 72 years of a single ruling party, the leader of the opposition Vicente Fox wins the presidential elections in Mexico. Civil society organisations played an important role in pressing the government for fair play, transparency, and respect for the elections results.

22 July The second oil spill this year causes public indignation against Petrobrás, Brazil's state-owned petroleum enterprise. Four million litres of oil leak into Iguaçú and other rivers in the Brazilian state of Paraná.

25–28 July The International Roma Union (IRU) holds its first Congress in ten years in Prague. More than 250

delegates from almost 40 countries meet to discuss such themes as the situation of the Roma in Kosovo, restitution for Romani victims of the Holocaust, and the standardisation of the Romani language, and to approve a new programme, statutes, and new leadership of the IRU.

28 July Tens of thousands of Peruvians, chanting 'the dictator will fall', are pitched against 40,000 riot police in Lima to mark the inauguration of President Alberto Fujimori's controversial third term. At least six people die and more than 80 are wounded in the subsequent riots.

August

8 August The Supreme Court of Chile confirms the decision of a lower court to strip Augusto Pinochet of his parliamentary immunity, opening the way for a domestic prosecution for a series of disappearances throughout the country, known as the Caravan of Death.

13 August Delegates selected from Somalia's main clans, who have formed a 'transnational assembly' in Djibouti, elect a new Somali President, Abdulkassim Salat Hassan. The proceedings are witnessed by members of the Somali diaspora and international observers. Warlord Mohamed Aided and break-away regions Somaliland and Puntland do not recognise the new President.

14–16 August The so-called *Observatorio de las Americas* is launched in Morelia, Mexico. It brings together NGOs and academics in an effort to build a monitoring mechanism, based in civil society, to the process of integration of the Americas in a common free-trade area (FTAA). Participants include scholars and NGOs from the whole continent as well as leaders of international agencies such as WTO and WHO.

15 August As a result of South Korean president Kim Dae Jung's 'sunshine policy', 100 North Koreans and 100 South Koreans are allowed to visit their relatives in the other part of the country for a four-day reunion after nearly 50 years.

17–23 August 20,000 Chinese farmers engage in riots over rising taxes, looting government buildings and the houses of officials.

24 August Ricardo Miguel Cavallo, one of the torturers of the 'dirty war' in the 1970s in Argentina, is captured in Mexico, following strong pressure from Argentine, Spanish, and Mexican civil society organisations. The Mexican government decides to arrest Cavallo even though he has not committed any crime in Mexico and is not required by the Argentine government or Interpol. Both Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón and the French authorities request extradition.

28–29 August Over 1,000 representatives of all of the world's major religions, including the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shintoism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism, as well

as indigenous religions from nearly every continent attend the Millennium Summit of Religious Leaders in New York. Nearly all sign a declaration entitled 'Commitment to Global Peace', which states that 'there can be no real peace until all groups and communities acknowledge the cultural and religious diversity of the human family'.

September

2–7 September More than one million Brazilians vote in an unofficial referendum on debt repayment and the IMF. More than 90% answer 'no' to the question whether the Brazilian government should maintain its agreement with the IMF. On 7 September, Brazil's Independence Day, thousands of demonstrators back up this message with their 'Cry of the Excluded' manifestation in different cities.

6 September Only days after the people of East Timor have celebrated the first anniversary of their vote for independence, militias attack UNHCR staff in West Timor and kill three staff members. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies withdraw from West Timor, where approximately 100,000 people are still detained in refugee camps.

6 September 16 Congolese environment experts and traditional chiefs who are meeting to discuss the protection of gorillas in their area are killed by a Hutu militia.

16 September Thousands of Peruvians celebrate outside the presidential palace in Lima when President Alberto Fujimori announces his resignation over a corruption scandal.

11–13 September The World Economic Forum, which normally meets in Davos, holds a regional meeting in Melbourne. Between 10,000 and 20,000 protestors, including people from church groups, trade unions, and NGOs, try to shut down the summit, expressing the opinion that the organisation is elitist and unaccountable.

23 September On the eve of the IMF-World Bank Meeting in Prague, Czech President Vaclav Havel hosts a debate between IMF and World Bank executives and their critics, moderated by UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson.

26–28 September Approximately 12,000 activists gather in Prague where the annual IMF-World Bank meeting is held. The meeting is disrupted, and demonstrators clash with the police, leading to many arrests.

28–29 September Hard-line Israeli politician Ariel Sharon makes a provocative visit to the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem, a sacred place to Jews and Muslims, sparking renewed violence between Palestinian protestors and Israeli police. A day later, six Palestinians are killed and nearly 200 wounded at the shrine, and the violence spreads.

October

Early October Palestinians and sympathisers demonstrate against Israeli violence in, among other countries, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Syria, Denmark, and South Africa.

5 October Tens of thousands of people from all over Serbia come to Belgrade to demand that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic step down in favour of the real winner of the presidential elections held two weeks earlier, Vojislav Kostunica. They storm the parliament and the television tower, and Milosevic eventually concedes power.

16–18 October At a peace conference in Costa Rica, Colombian and international peace, human rights, and humanitarian assistance groups voice opposition to 'Plan Colombia', the US aid package that proposes to combat coca-growing in Colombia mainly through military means.

23 October The G20, a group consisting of the G7 countries and the major developing countries as well as the IMF and the World Bank, meets in Montreal, Canada. Protestors throw balloons with paint at the hotel where the meeting is held. They are disbanded by police with teargas and pepper-spray.

23 October–3 November The Pacific Arts Festival takes place on the islands of New Caledonia, welcoming more than 2,000 guests from 24 Pacific states.

24 October Surrounded by people from the Narmada Valley and sympathisers, Medha Patkar, the leader of the Save the Narmada Movement, goes on a five-day fast in protest against the Indian Supreme Court ruling that the building of the dam is not harmful and construction can be resumed.

25 October Environmental groups in Russia collect 2.5 million signatures for a referendum that would prevent the country from importing nuclear waste as a source of income. The authorities declare more than 600,000 signatures invalid, however, so that the groups do not reach the required threshold for a referendum.

28 October Ibrahim Rugova's moderate party, the Democratic League of Kosovo, wins the first democratic local elections in Kosovo. Most members of the remaining Serb minority in Kosovo boycott the elections.

November

5 November 25 years after his death, Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie is given a state funeral in Addis Ababa, attended by members of the Ethiopian Orthodox church and a few hundred Rastafarians from abroad. Most Rastafarians refuse to recognise the ceremony, however, because they believe the emperor/god is immortal.

8 November When it becomes clear, the day after the US elections, that George W. Bush has won Florida, and hence the elections, by the narrowest of margins, voters in Palm Beach, Florida, complain that the 'butterfly ballot'

was too confusing, triggering the first of many court cases over the elections.

8 November South Africa reacts with horror to a video which shows an all-white police squad setting its dogs on three (probably immigrant) blacks in what they call a dog-training exercise. The South African Broadcasting Company receives 500 calls an hour about the video, and the newspapers and radio stations are flooded with outpourings of anger and horror for days to come. The policemen in question are immediately arrested.

18 November Thousands of activists build a dyke around the conference centre where the UN Conference on Climate Change is taking place in The Hague, in order to illustrate the dangers of climate change and rising sea levels. The US negotiator falls victim to the Dutch radical practice of 'taarting': a whipped cream pie is thrown into his face. Governments fail to come to an agreement in limiting CO₂ emissions at the conference.

December

5 December The International Year of the Volunteer is launched with events in 57 countries.

7 December An impeachment trial on charges of corruption begins against President Jose Estrada of the Philippines. In a protest styled 'People Power II', at least 30,000 of his opponents march around the Senate building to register disapproval of his corrupt and opulent lifestyle.

8–12 December More than 2,000 people from Spain and Italy spend four days in Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria as a sign of solidarity with their plight. The Polisario Front releases 200 Moroccan prisoners of war to move the drawn-out peace process forward.

13 December The US Supreme Court rules that recounts of the Florida ballot are invalid, bringing the five-week election confusion to an end and giving the presidency to George W. Bush. Many voters feel disenfranchised, however, and some continue to take legal action.

27 December The governments of Nepal and Bhutan come to an agreement to facilitate repatriation of 100,000 Nepali-speaking refugees who were forced to flee Bhutan ten years earlier. The refugees themselves are not represented in the negotiations, however.