

CHRONOLOGY OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY EVENTS

Compiled by Jill Timms

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Note on the Chronology

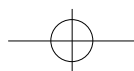
The aim of this chronology is to provide an account of global civil society events that took place in 2002. We seek to be as comprehensive as possible in covering the major events of the year and to offer an insight into the diversity and depth of civil society activities that have had global significance in terms of theme, participants, or resonance. This chronology offers a space for exploring and acknowledging the variety of activities and groups which can be described as part of civil society in the broadest understanding of the concept. It therefore differs from the usual end-of-year reviews in several significant ways. Our chronology does not focus on the events that have come to the attention of the world through mainstream media, and preference is not given to reports from Northern or Western countries. Our aim is to include the activities of all forms of civil society groups in all parts of the world, when they have significance beyond the local and national.

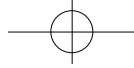
Thus, the Chronology of Global Civil Society Events contributes to the records section of the Yearbook as it offers a method of including events and actions without reducing the richness and diversity of the information we have to mere statistics. In the 2002 chronology we have been able to include civil society actions from over 70 countries.

To achieve this alternative chronology, we work with a team of global correspondents made up of activists, journalists, academics, students, and interested parties around the world who report to us on global civil society events. The chronology is not intended to be a complete list of all actions in all places, thankfully, that would be impossible! However, we are continually building up our team of correspondents to ensure that we cover all events with a global significance and hope you will consider joining us (please see the details below). As this team expands and as each chronology is written, our criterion of what constitutes a global civil society event is refined. Broadly, it includes civil society events which have implications beyond the confines of one nation or country. When deemed relevant, a number of other events, such as court rulings or election results, are included, when civil society is directly affected or has had an influence on bringing them about. We do not systematically list all local Social Forums; however, these are detailed as comprehensively as possible in the table on our website: www.lse.ac.uk/depts/global/yearbook. As the years go by, our criterion is repeatedly challenged by the growing number, diversity, and creativity of civil society events that come to our attention. We hope and expect this will continue.

Your opportunity to contribute to the Global Civil Society Yearbook

This chronology has been possible only through the contributions of our global correspondents, acknowledged above. We are very grateful to them all for their help, and we invite you to become a member of the team. The Global Civil Society Yearbook is a project that aims to reflect on and contribute to global civil society. As such, it is designed as an interactive initiative, a space for encouraging debate and understanding of civil society activity in a global context. As well as the chapters contributed by international academics and activists, we aim to





include inputs from as many other groups and individuals as possible through a variety of means. Central to this is our team of Global Civil Society correspondents, who play a vital role in helping us to record the events that have a global significance.

What does being a Yearbook correspondent involve? Correspondents are required to monitor and describe major civil society events in various fields in their country or region. This usually means writing only a few entries, unless it has been a particularly eventful year in your part of the world. At regular intervals the Yearbook team will be in contact with you for a report of these events, including for each details of date and place, description of what happened and how it has global significance, and, where possible, a reference to further information, such as a web site.

If you would like to become a correspondent, or know someone who might, or have any questions or any comments about this year's chronology, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Details of how to contact us can be found at <www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook>. All correspondents, as part of the Yearbook team, are officially acknowledged as contributors to the book and receive a complimentary copy of the Yearbook annually, as well as our thanks.

Global Civil Society Events of 2002

January

1 January Mass demonstrations greet the announcement of Eduardo Duhalde as Argentina's fifth new president in the two weeks since citizen protests forced Fernando de la Rúa to resign on 20 December. When it is also announced that full elections will not be held until December 2003, protesters go onto the streets banging pots and pans to demand immediate elections. In the capital, a force of 45,000 police and soldiers use tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the crowd, whilst Mr Duhalde pledges to work with businesses, unions, and NGOs to solve Argentina's serious difficulties arising from its foreign debt of \$132 billion, which the government has already said cannot be repaid.

15 January A peace organisation in the Middle East called 'Green Line – Students Set the Border' pitch

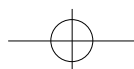
a tent at the site of an Israeli settlement. It names the tent 'Ma'aleh Miyus', a pun on a typical settlement name as it translates as 'Upper Disgust'. This is to protest against, and draw attention to, the dangers of extremist settlers dominating the political discourse regarding occupations.

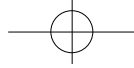
15 January Argentina experiences further demonstrations across the country, initiated by increasingly radical groups protesting against continuing economic hardships. Banks are targeted and smashed as citizens rebel against strict banking restrictions, which include the freezing of savings accounts and limits on cash withdrawals. The new president, Eduardo Duhalde, warns that if planned new economic measures do not work the country will fall into anarchy.

19 January The former head of the Ukraine President's office and current Ukraine parliamentary speaker, Mr Lytwyn, publishes the first governmental assessment of civil society in the Ukraine. The negative conclusion—that civil society could be dangerous for the country—triggers a nationwide public discussion on the state and role of civil society in the Ukraine, resulting in the publication of more than 30 articles, the majority of which counter the government's scepticism.

23 January In Venezuela, the biggest demonstrations in the country's history commemorate the end of Marcos Pérez Jiménez's dictatorship in 1958, which marked the beginning of Venezuelan democracy. Political parties, civil society groups, and trades unions join two rival marches, one supporting and one opposing the current president, Hugo Chávez.

Late January Under pressure from protesters, the Hong Kong government withdraws its proposed 15–20 per cent wage cut for Filipino maids, which it claimed would help ease the economic crisis. The proposed cut has been denounced by the Asian Migrant Coalition, the Coalition for Migrants' Rights, and other migrant and local labour advocates as being anti-migrant as well as constituting both racial and class discrimination as the cut targets only foreign domestic workers. This successful outcome results from protests by domestic workers from the Philippines, Indonesia,





Thailand, and Nepal, who also lobbied their respective governments; and formal appeals were made by Hong Kong-based diplomats.

30 January–5 February In Porto Alegre, Brazil, the second World Social Forum (WSF) is held, with 68,000 participants. Delegates travel from 131 countries and represent more than 5,000 associations. The forum aims to provide a space for the development of alternatives to the current form of globalisation and the neo-liberal policies that lead to it, as well as aiming to share ideas for protesting against and resisting current economic and social policies. In the forum's final statement, which is agreed by many of the associations, the activists describe themselves as a 'global movement for social justice and solidarity'. It is also decided that a range of regional and themed forums will be held before the WSF meets again in 2003.

31 January–4 February During the World Economic Forum (WEF), approximately 10,000 join protests against the policies of the WEF, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. For the first time in 31 years the event is not held in Davos, Switzerland. Organisers claim New York was chosen for security reasons and to show solidarity with the city since the 11 September terrorist attacks, but activists say it is an attempt to discourage them. Alternative forums are also held, such as the Counter Summit organised by Students for Social Justice. Protest organisers claim they are not an anti-globalisation movement but a global justice movement.

February

1 February In Munich, Germany, thousands of anti-war demonstrators hold a protest while 400 defence experts, representing most NATO countries, attend a major NATO defence summit there. Activists clash with police as authorities have obtained a city-wide ban on demonstrations for the duration of the summit.

2 February Citizens in Argentina who claim that the freeze on their savings imposed by the government is illegal have their case upheld by the Supreme Court, which rules that the measure is unconstitutional. The government immediately

announces a two-day bank holiday, closing banks and foreign exchange houses, to prevent a run on bank deposits.

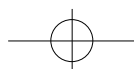
3 February The first international meeting of ATTAC takes place, facilitated by the WSF in Porto Alegre. Members from 40 countries are able to join the meeting, coming together for the first time to discuss issues of identity and to plan campaigns for the promotion of the 'Tobin tax'.

4 February Civil society activity in Venezuela continues to increase, as the country marks the tenth anniversary of the attempted coup d'état staged by Hugo Chávez, who later became the elected president. His supporters, Chavistas, celebrate the occasion, while his opponents, Antichavistas, resort to 'active mourning' by covering their houses, cars, and themselves in black.

17–24 February A civilian protection mission travels to Palestine, co-organised by the Association of Maghrebians Workers in France and the French Jewish Union for Peace. This is one of many groups of international peace activists who travel to the areas affected by the Israeli Defence Force incursions into Palestinian cities and refugee camps. The activists aim to offer support and protection to the Palestinians there and to provide them with necessities such as food, water, and medicines.

19 February In Amsterdam, the Netherlands, activists hold a protest at the opening of the Eye-for-Energy conference on carbon emission trading. The protesters are armed with water pistols, blue wigs, and 'farting gas' to emphasise that carbon trading 'stinks' and that the endless pursuit of profits by corporations will never solve the problem of global climate change. The activists demand an immediate 60 per cent reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, which is in line with UN scientists' recommendations.

20 February In Luanda, the capital of Angola, civil society organisations meet to discuss the continuing violence of the 26-year civil war. These groups, who represent non-political civic interests and include priests, academics, humanitarian officers, and traditional chiefs, call for an immediate ceasefire. In criticising the UN





Security Council's handling of the peace process, the coalition requests that a delegation of civil society organisations be allowed to address the Security Council so they can have an input in the process. Although civil society groups have been active in Angola for a number of years, the agreement on a unified position is described as a breakthrough.

27 February In Israel, 200,000 join a mass peace march in Tel Aviv. This is organised by the Peace Coalition, which brings together civil society groups from Israel, Palestine, and European countries, such as Peace Now, Women for Peace, and Ta'ayush et Gush Shalom. The aim is to strengthen and draw attention to the coalition's campaign against Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories and to support Israeli reserve officers who signed a declaration refusing to serve there.

27 February–6 March In Gujarat, India, Hindu volunteers returning from the disputed holy site of Ayodhya are killed in a train near Godhra station. Many are burnt alive, trapped in carriages allegedly set alight by bystanders. This is followed by days of large-scale violence between Hindus and Muslims. More than 2,000 people, mainly Muslims, are killed and many flee to relief camps. It is the worst communal violence in the country for over ten years. Religious, peace, and human rights groups begin to mobilise aid and, throughout the crisis, lobby the government to act. On 3 March students and faculty members from the Indian Institute of Management, the Physics Research Laboratory, and Gujarat Institute of Development appeal for peace through a sit-in and fast, while others organise a petition appealing for peace. The protests culminate in a mass peace rally on 6 March, organised by senior Gandhians and NGOs.

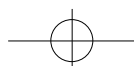
March

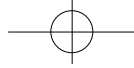
Early March Bahraini human rights activists receive official authorisation to establish the Bahrain Human Rights Association, the first independent human rights monitoring group in the country. This is accomplished with the support and encouragement of international human rights groups.

1–2 March The second meeting of the World Forum of Civil Society Networks (UBUNTU) is held in Barcelona, Spain, with approximately 70 people attending. Diverse global civil society actors, such as Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, global civil society networks, academics, and representatives of global alternative media, gather at the Parliament of Catalonia, in Barcelona. One of the main outcomes is an agreement to set up a process leading to the launching of a World Campaign to Reform International Institutions.

1 March–May A march by 3,000 former Daqing Oil workers to the company's headquarters in China marks the start of three months of protests in the north-eastern Chinese cities of Liaoyang, Daqing, and Fushun. These bring unprecedented numbers of unemployed and disaffected workers on to the streets. The first protest is a reaction to changes to pension premiums and an announcement that the company will no longer pay heating allowances. The campaign soon grows to involve wider employment issues, including non-payment of wages and pensions, insufficient severance pay, manoeuvres intended to bypass elected workers congresses, and unfulfilled government promises to help the unemployed. Demonstrations involve over 50,000 workers from many factories and mines, and last longer than any protest since the violent suppression of the 1989 Democracy Movement. Between 7,000 and 8,000 protest daily at Iron Man Square in Daqing, despite police roadblocks. To prevent copycat protests a total domestic media blackout is ordered. The campaign successfully attracts international attention and support on 4 March, as 20,000 activists block the path of a train heading for Russia. When organisers of the campaign are regularly arrested for such actions, the number of daily protesters increases correspondingly, and on some occasions only the elderly and retired demonstrate as they are less likely to be arrested.

8 March Women's groups use International Women's Day to highlight the specific difficulties of women around the world and to celebrate their achievements through a variety of activities. The UN declares a special focus on women in Afghanistan. In Bangladesh, a male-led march is organised to show solidarity with women who are disfigured by acid attacks, often thrown out of jealousy by





spurned admirers or husbands. The demonstrators call for tougher laws and punishments to stop the rising number of acid attacks in the country. The Colombian government imposes a six-hour curfew for men in the capital Bogotá, to allow women access to events organised by women's groups there. In Russia, the police let women off motoring offences, instead giving them gifts of perfume and flowers.

14–16 March A three-day demonstration is held in Barcelona, Spain, initially called by the Confederation of European Trade Unions, with representatives from the 15 EU countries. Protesters call for full employment and social rights. This coincides with the EU summit that marks the end of the Spanish EU Presidency. The event is also used by anti-capitalists and different civil society organisations both to protest at the policies of the EU and to hold a counter-conference to discuss alternatives. In preparation, the city launches its biggest security operation ever, with NATO AWACS surveillance planes patrolling the skies and jet fighters on alert. The Spanish authorities also temporarily suspend the free movement of EU citizens by bringing in passport checks that were made unnecessary by the Schengen Agreement of 1995. Despite this, it is estimated that 300,000 join the protests.

15 March The dramatic entry of 25 North Korean asylum seekers into the Spanish Embassy in China is found to be the result of months of collaboration between South Korean and overseas NGOs. The attempt was first proposed by a South Korean NGO based in China, and then supported by various domestic, Japanese, and European NGOs.

18–22 March In Monterrey, Mexico, the International Conference on Financing for Development is held, called by the UN. Simultaneously, peasants, indigenous organisations, and other civil society activists gather at the parallel summit, 'Social Assembly Another World is Possible', sponsored by the Foro Social Mexicano. They denounce the pauperisation of rural communities caused by policies of liberalisation and free trade, and emphasise their opposition to the Puebla-Panama Plan, which would convert southern Mexico and the whole of Central America into a free trade zone.

23 March In Rome, Italy, a mass demonstration and march with over one million workers takes place. Protesters travel to Rome from all over Italy on hired transport including 9,000 buses, 60 trains, 3 ships, and 2 planes. This is organised by trade unionists to defend labour rights, as the government plans to scrap legislation protecting employees from unfair dismissal.

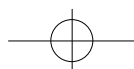
24 March In Tel Aviv, a conference is held to bring together peace activists from a variety of groups. The theme is 'Israel in a Time of National Crisis'.

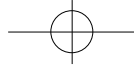
31 March In Ramallah, in the Palestinian Territories, an international civil society mission to support the Palestinian Authority Office under siege by Israeli troops is joined by a group of civil society activists including Jose Bové, the French peasant leader, members of the Genoa Social Forum, and a number of overseas activists. A group of these remain in the compound throughout the siege.

Late March–May In Azerbaijan, NGOs and international civil society groups working there learn by chance that parliament has passed a bill requiring organisations to register all grants with the central government before using the money. This has significant implications for the work of civil society and raises fears of government corruption and control. As the president has 54 days to sign the bill, the Eurasia Foundation organises a coordinated campaign with international organisations and the largest Azerbaijani NGO association. Major international donors, humanitarian NGOs, diplomatic representatives, oil companies, and local NGOs unanimously agree to fight the bill. As a result of protests held in the capital Baku and other regions of Azerbaijan, and the support demonstrated in Washington, London, Paris, and in European institutions in Strasbourg and Vienna, the bill remains unsigned.

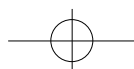
April

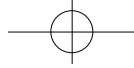
6 April The Italian Consortium of Solidarity and a coalition of European civil society groups bring 400 people from the rest of Europe and the head of the EU Commission, Romano Prodi, to Bosnia to discuss integration and cooperation in the Balkans. The event is held under the banner 'Europe From Below in Sarajevo'.





- 6 April** In Johannesburg, South Africa, a march to the home of Johannesburg's mayor takes place to protest against the privatisation of the state-owned electricity company, Eskom. Protesters claim that, to attract foreign investors, Eskom is disconnecting poor people who cannot afford the increase in bills while providing the 'cheapest electricity in the world' to minerals mega-corporations in South Africa, which produce vast carbon and sulphur dioxide emissions. As the protest reaches the mayor's house, a bodyguard shoots eight live rounds into the peaceful crowd, injuring two Sowetans. A total of 87 protesters face charges of 'public violence', a serious crime in South Africa, with 40 of those charged being elderly or children. Those charged later become known as the 'Kensington 87' and are the focus of an international justice campaign.
- 11 April** In Cairo, 217 Egyptian NGOs representing 10 million citizens address a plea to global civil society to defend the Palestinian right to life. They address a message to American President George Bush, the EU, the UN Secretary General, and the Arab League Secretary General, as well as to human rights organisations.
- 11 April** In Caracas, Venezuela, the federation of employers' associations, Fedecámaras, and the confederation of trade union workers, Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela, join forces to organise an Antichavista protest march to call for the resignation of Hugo Chávez. When marchers arrive at the presidential palace, 18 people die and 160 people are injured as a result of sniper fire. A government investigation into the incident remains open. A 24-hour coup d'état follows the march, led by the president of Fedecámaras Pedro Carmona and several military officers. All constitutional rights are suspended. However, due to international pressure and national mass demonstrations, President Hugo Chávez is returned to power, but approximately 40–60 protesters are killed during the events.
- 13 April** Approximately 5,000 Arab and Israeli peace activists join a convoy organised by 'Ta'ayush: Arab-Jewish Partnership' to bring humanitarian aid to the devastated town of Jenin.
- 15–19 April** In Washington DC representatives of rural workers from Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, England, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, USA, and Zimbabwe attend a forum on 'The Negative Impact of World Bank Land Policies'. The objective is to promote an encounter of international civil society organisations, NGOs, social and popular movements, and universities to reinforce the discussion of agrarian reform and the market proposals of the World Bank.
- 17 April** On the Worldwide Peasant Struggle Day, civil society organisations of farmers, rural workers, and peasants from around the world take part in a variety of activities to mark an international day of farmers' struggle. Co-ordinators of the campaign request that actions focus on the themes of seeds, the problem of patents, and the freeing of partners who are being persecuted or jailed. Actions include a Resistance is Fertile campaign in the Netherlands, involving the planting of eco-potatoes in GM test fields and the erection of DNA scarecrows, and land is taken by activists in Brazil and Guatemala. Other activities take place in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Honduras, India, Italy, Spain, and the USA.
- 21 April–5 May** The shock victory of the far-right National Front leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, in the first round of the French presidential elections sparks protests across Europe. These go on daily until he is defeated in the second round on 5 May. The largest protest is on 1 May, when 2 million demonstrate across France.
- 24 April** In London, a protest is held outside the Royal Albert Hall where Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State, is to address the Institute of Directors. Protesters claim he is a war criminal and should be tried for his involvement in past US foreign activities. Attempts to make a citizen's arrest fail, but judges in France and Spain make inquiries to Interpol about the visit as they wish to question him. The protests are part of an international campaign called Kissinger Watch, organised by the International Campaign against Impunity, working to highlight alleged war crimes of high-status figures.
- Late April** The founding conference of the Arab NGO Network is held in Beirut, Lebanon. The





network aims to contribute to the enhancement of relations of cooperation between national and international associations active in sustainable development, and international and regional funding organisations, and also to promote civil society involvement in efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development.

May

1 May Around the world, Labour Day is celebrated by demonstrations for employment rights and economic and social justice. In Australia, the main theme is the government's immigration policy. In Cambodia, rival protests are held. Members of the largest union demonstrate in the capital, Phnom Penh, to demand better working conditions, while another group describing itself as the parents of workers, though allegedly organised by the government, drives through the city on open trucks claiming the union leaders are trouble-makers. In China, the continuing protests by laid-off and disaffected workers in the north-eastern cities of Liaoyang, Daqing, and Fushun are highlighted. In France, 2 million protest in more than 70 towns and cities to oppose the far-right presidential candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen. In Berlin, Germany, activists clash with police as 10,000 protesters hold a street party. A general strike is held in Greece to mark the day, and activists march to both the US and Israeli embassies to call for an end to attacks on Palestinians. 3,000 sex workers from India, Bangladesh, and Nepal hold a demonstration in Calcutta, India, to demand the right to legal status and social security. In the Philippines, a rally of 40,000 anti-government demonstrators takes place. Naga City stages the largest protest ever outside the capital, Manila, as peasants, public employees, labourers, and transport workers fill the main streets carrying red flags and placards. Most protesters call for the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo amid greater poverty brought about by liberal economic policies and increasing militarisation of the countryside. In Russia, rallies are held in 500 towns and cities. In the capital Moscow 140,000 trade unionists gather, and in a separate rally 100,000 communists meet in Karl Marx Square. Arrests are made in Singapore as civil rights activists attempt to stage a demonstration that does not have the approval of

the authorities. In the UK, 15,000 march through the streets of London, for what is a peaceful protest after police intolerance dominated the event the previous year.

13 May Grass-roots-owned radio stations join together to form the Indonesian Community Radios Network in Jakarta, to defy the Government's planned new broadcasting law that would ban community media. After resistance also from corporate-owned radio and television stations, the government finally passes a new broadcasting law that acknowledges the community's right to broadcast.

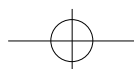
20 May A Middle East peace conference takes place in Shefaram, Israel, 'Towards New Strategic Partnership Between Jews and Arabs in Israel', involving civil society peace organisations from a number of nations.

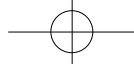
21 May In Argentina, tens of thousands of protesters take to the streets across the country to demand the free distribution of food and medicine to those who cannot now afford them. The high levels of unemployment and growing poverty are seen to be the result of the government's economic policies, which the demonstrators demand should be abandoned. This is followed by a 12-hour national strike.

26–27 May In Quito, Ecuador, civil society organisations from across Central and South America meet to participate in the Continental Campaign Against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americans (FTAA). Together they demonstrate their opposition to the creation of a hemispheric free trade area in the Americas.

27 May The Egyptian Shura Advisory Council, the Upper Chamber of the Egyptian Parliament, approves an NGO draft law which puts restrictions on the foreign funding of human rights organisations by requiring the prior authorisation of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

29 May A protest is called by trade union federations and civil society organisations representing the unemployed, students, and pensioners in Argentina. Tens of thousands join the protest, blocking all access roads into the capital Buenos Aires, striking





from schools and hospitals, and setting up other roadblocks throughout the country. Some activists wave Argentine flags while burning American ones. They claim that the government's deal with the IMF only brings more unemployment, poverty, and hunger to the people.

30 May An international campaign to promote migrant workers' rights in Japan and South Korea is launched to coincide with the FIFA World Cup 2002, to bring attention to the initiative. The campaigners claim that war and neo-liberal globalisation have caused an increase in exploitative international migration, and that current policies are anti-migrant and racist.

June

5 June International NGOs such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and the World Wildlife Fund join thousands of protesters at the Indonesia People's Forum in Bali, Indonesia. This is a parallel summit to challenge the Fourth Preparatory Committee Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The coalition rejects the results of the official meeting, claiming they are biased in favour of Northern countries' interests and do not accommodate peripheral voices from the civil society sector.

8 June It is announced that the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (Civicus) is to form a strategic partnership with OneWorld.net, an online network and portal of organisations working in human rights and sustainable development worldwide. Both organisations aim to strengthen civil society worldwide and to bring news of the sector to broader audiences.

9–13 June An NGO/Civil Society Organisation Forum on Food Sovereignty is held in Rome, Italy. This aims to set an Agenda for Action on Food Sovereignty, to be presented to the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation's World Food Summit to be held in Rome on 13 June.

20–22 June To coincide with the EU summit being held in Seville, Seville Social Forum organises two days of conferences, seminars, and grass-roots discussions on issues relating to immigration, social exclusion, and the casualisation of labour. The

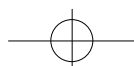
opening day is marked by a general strike organised by Spanish trade unions, with reports of up to 85 per cent support. The counter-conference ends with a 200,000-strong demonstration. During this, 300 international activists and immigrants lock themselves into Salvador University to protest against the anti-immigrant initiatives of the EU.

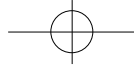
21 June In Israel, a demonstration named 'A Time for Peace in Jerusalem' is held with 1,000 European peace activists taking part. A planned human chain across the border between Israel and Palestine is banned by the Israeli authorities.

21–26 June A People's Summit is held in Calgary as an alternative to the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada. It is named the 'G6B' to reflect a focus on the needs of the entire global population of 6 billion. The small mountain resort of Kananaskis has been chosen as the site of the official summit as it is difficult to access. Organisers of the demonstrations call for an end to costly 'summit-hopping' and instead protests occur in different cities, the biggest in Calgary. Nearly 5,000 police are involved in the security operation, with the city purchasing two RG-12 armoured vehicles at a cost of \$1.1 million.

24 June The Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics in Europe takes place in Oslo, Norway, and is paralleled by the counter-conference 'South Meets North'. This is organised by the civil society network Oslo2002, with the final demonstration of the event drawing 15,000 protesters.

25–28 June In Sibo, Mali, in West Africa, the first counter-summit to the G8 to be organised by Africans takes place to protest against the dominant neo-liberal policies of international financial institutions and the agricultural policies of the World Bank. Participants include organisations of teachers, women, farmers, journalists, youths, and religious leaders, who have travelled from the rest of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, the Ivory Coast, and Senegal. The main themes of the summit are strategies for the reduction of poverty in Africa and the New Partnership Agreement for Africa's Development (NEPAD), both of which are also key issues at the official G8 summit. However, the summits differ in most other ways as the





participants in Africa are the ones suffering from poverty as well as discussing it. The choice of venue is significant since, in contrast to the luxury of the G8 leaders in Kananaskis, Siby has no transportation system, no clean drinking water, and no access to telephones. The meetings and workshops take place in the open air and in the classrooms of a local school.

26 June During a protest in Argentina against the economic crisis, two demonstrators are killed as police try to stop over 2,000 poor and unemployed demonstrators from blocking access to a bridge into the capital Buenos Aires. Others are seriously injured when the police use batons and tear gas to disperse them. The demonstration is part of a larger campaign against the problems faced by the increasing numbers of poor and unemployed. Since the forced resignation of the government in December, demonstrations have been held on a nearly daily basis.

28–29 June In Xalapa, Mexico, civil society organisations from Central America meet under the slogan 'Because People are First: No to the Puebla-Panama Plan'. The activists demonstrate against the plan to integrate Mexico and Central America to create a huge free trade zone.

July

1 July The world's first International Criminal Court (ICC) comes into existence in The Hague, empowered to prosecute individuals anywhere in the world (with the provision that the country has ratified the treaty) for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Civil society organisations, including women's groups, religious and human rights organisations, and peace activists, were seen to be instrumental in the drafting of the treaty, and their involvement has been seen as a significant success for global civil society. By this date, 74 countries have ratified the treaty; campaigners continue to put pressure on countries such as the USA, Russia, China, and Israel, which are refusing to do so.

1–5 July The first Preparatory Committee Meeting (PrepCom 1) of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is held in Geneva hosted by the UN, with a total of 969 participants

from state bodies, international agencies, businesses, and civil society organisations. This culminates in a broad agreement that the stakeholders must coordinate and consolidate their efforts to ensure that information and communication technologies benefit all the inhabitants of the world. Preparations for the WSIS, which will take place in December 2003, are deemed vital, as representatives of civil society claim it will be the first time the UN allows civil society to participate in the negotiations themselves.

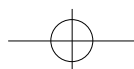
2 July In Syria, the founding meeting of the Independent Human Rights Society is held. The organisation aims to promote and monitor human rights in the country and to liaise with international human rights NGOs.

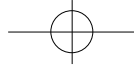
7 July After recent elections in Hungary, protests take place calling for a recount of the ballot papers, which are about to be destroyed as required by Hungarian law 90 days after the vote. The capital, Budapest, sees the first major civil disobedience action for ten years, bringing the centre to a standstill and blocking bridges. This leads to the court considering the demand for a recount due to allegations of election fraud and corruption.

9 July Activists call for Independence Day in Argentina to become 'A Day of Rage', with tens of thousands of protesters rallying on the streets of the country's cities to protest against the government's policies for dealing with the economic crisis. The groups involved include the unemployed, trade unions, students, and human rights activists.

14–19 July Geneva-based Mandat International convenes the World Civil Society Forum to promote cooperation among civil society organisations across the world, and to facilitate cooperation between organisations of civil society and the UN. A thousand participants attend, representing over 500 organisations from 70 countries, including many developing ones.

18–28 July The first Europe-wide 'no border camp' is initiated by the Noborder Network, organised by social movements from several European countries.





The camp consists of ten days of workshops and discussions around the central demand for 'Freedom of Movement and Settlement for Everyone'. Strasbourg is chosen because it is home to the central headquarters of the Schengen Information Systems (SIS), the database used to store details of immigrants, terrorists, political protestors, and 'anti-globalisation' protestors. About 2,000 people take part in the camp; and a sit-in of 1,000 protesters outside the European Court of Human Rights is organised under the slogan 'No border! No nation! Stop deportation!'

20 July To commemorate the anniversary of the death of Carlo Giuliani, who was killed by police during the anti-G8 summit protests in Genoa in 2001, a week of activities culminates in a march of 150,000 people. In the port of Genoa, at exactly the time Carlo was killed, dockers sound their horns, hundreds of balloons are released in Piazza Alimonda, 'illegal immigrants' from Pakistan, Senegal, and Morocco landing at the sea front are welcomed with a brass band and fruit, and activists occupying the Diaz school, which was the site of violent police raids the previous year, unfurl banners stating 'This time, please knock before entering!'

26–28 July The Tunisian Foundation Mohamed Ali for Workers' Culture, an NGO working on the education of workers and the study of labour conditions, holds a forum on labour and economic changes and their impact on the labour market. The event is attended by European and Northern African trade unions and NGOs.

28 July In South Korea, the US military's apology for the deaths of two girls struck by a military vehicle is rebuked by NGO activists locally and internationally. In response a major protest is held in central Seoul demanding justice.

August

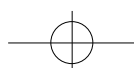
15 August A further hearing of the case against the Kensington 87, those arrested as a result of the march in Johannesburg on 6 April, takes place amidst strong protests in Johannesburg and around the world. The Jeppe Regional Courthouse in Johannesburg is surrounded by activists and human rights groups, and in London

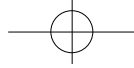
a demonstration is held outside South Africa House in support of those accused and to protest against the South African government's handling of the case.

22–24 August The Argentina Thematic Social Forum, which was planned at the WSF, opens in Buenos Aires with a march of 10,000 people. The themes of the forum are the campaign against the FTAA and neo-liberal policies, and alliance-building to help those in Argentina suffering from the country's economic crisis.

26 August–4 September The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) is held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and a counter-summit and protests held simultaneously by civil society organisations. Critics of the main summit, which is the follow-up to the 1992 Rio Summit on Climate Change, describe it as a failure and corporate washout, on the grounds that many aspects of the summit have been sponsored by multinationals and the outcomes benefit big business rather than the environment. NGOs use the opportunity to give 'greenwash' awards to those corporations which spend most on promoting their image of being socially responsible and environmentally friendly but which are allegedly guilty of major unethical practices.

31 August Coinciding with the summit in Johannesburg, a Global Day of Action Against a Corporate UN is marked around the world. In Croatia, groups distribute pamphlets on corporate greenwash and the global day of action. In Copenhagen, Nature and Youth, together with other groups, organise demonstrations in front of the parliament and in the main square. In Germany, a test field of Novartis and Agrevo genetically engineered plants is destroyed by environmental activists. In Amsterdam, a UN-Masquerade Parade with puppets, banners, samba band and dancers, as well as bicycle-powered music, attracts many activists. In Portugal, a group of activists attempt to wash the front of the offices of Monsanto, which they claim to be a 'greenwasher'. In Romania, a Food Not Bombs action is held, where information is also distributed on the corporate co-option of the UN and the WSSD. In Johannesburg, the World





Campaign for In-depth Reform of the System of International Institutions is launched, organised by the World Forum of Civil Society Networks (UBUNTU). In Barcelona, a protest takes place at the central office of the multinational Gas Natural and later at the local Greenpeace office, because the director of Greenpeace appeared in public together with the president of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. The protesters argue that these kinds of partnerships legitimise business. In Sweden, activists from Fältbiologerna, Friends of The Earth, Green Youth, Loesje, ATTAC, and other organisations take part in a demonstration marching backwards to symbolise the direction in which the Johannesburg summit is taking the environment. Protesters also dress as business-people to kick an inflatable planet around. A Reclaim the Streets party is held in the financial centre of Switzerland in Zurich. In the UK, London Solidarity holds a protest at the headquarters of Anglo American.

31 August In Ireland, campaigners occupy the Carrickmines Castle Site in County Dublin to prevent the construction of a controversial motorway. This is the culmination of a month of protests by environmentalist groups, joined by international activists who aim to protect the medieval archaeological site in the path of the planned motorway. The site is a significant find, containing approximately 80,000 artefacts. Campaigners successfully block further construction in a court case which reveals government corruption. The campaign is destined to continue for the remainder of the year, employing tactics from international environmentalists developed during previous campaigns.

Late August and September The Syrian government initiates a series of arrests of civil society actors who liaise with international human rights organisations. Those arrested include Habib Issa and Wahid al Bunni, who attended the founding meeting of the Independent Human Rights Society in Syria on 2 July, and Kamal Labwani, member of the Administrative Council of the Committees for the Defence of Human Rights. International agencies condemn the arrests and work to free them.

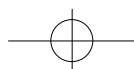
September

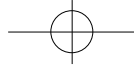
6 September In Mexico, a group of native communities have their legal challenge to constitution reforms rejected. The challengers were protesting over the changes made to the original package of rights they were promised by the government. The original package was offered as a result of pressure from sustained campaigns by Zapatistas and civil society groups working for the rights of indigenous peoples. These included native rights to have authority over their own land and to own the land collectively rather than only individually. However, before the reforms were approved, amendments were made which significantly reduced the Indian rights offered by the package. The failure of this court case challenging the changes results in the amended version being implemented.

7 September Social movements in the Americas mobilise for the annual Cry of the Excluded protest, a huge grass-roots demonstration originally started in Brazil to highlight and condemn social exclusion. The protests this year take on a special meaning as the day is used to focus attention on the Continental Campaign Against the FTAA. Rallies and protest marches are organised throughout the countries of the Americas.

9 September A statement is released by 230 civil society organisations in South Korea, supported by international groups, calling for a withdrawal of the new migrant policy. They claim the policy's real aim is to expel 260,000 illegal foreign workers by March 2003, after which the government will reinforce the 'industrial trainee system'. Activists describe this system as modern-day slavery. Activists have been staging sit-ins since the measure was announced in July, religious organisations held a nine-day hunger strike, and the National Human Rights Commission drew up a policy resolution to abolish the trainee system as it systematically violates the human rights of migrant workers.

11 September Commemorative events are held across the USA and the world to remember the terrorist attacks of last year. The organisation, September Eleventh Family Members for Peaceful Tomorrows, which has become an active peace organisation, writes an open letter to President Bush to express its concerns about a possible war in Iraq.





14 September Under the banner 'Another World is Possible', a day of action and a protest march is held by 40,000 protesters in Cologne, Germany, to protest against process of neo-liberal globalisation and against a possible war in Iraq. The action is organised by youth trade union movements, ATTAC Germany, and peace organisations.

16 September In Colombia, 125,000 people, mainly belonging to associations of farmers, farm workers, and peasants, meet to protest and to discuss a Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform. The event is considered a success, as it takes place despite attempts to prevent their protest against neo-liberalism and the FTA. The activists call for agrarian reform and the rights to life, to land, to work, and to organise. The mobilised farmers come under attack from public authorities, and two Spanish delegates are deported.

22 September The Countryside Alliance mobilises farmers and rural civil society organisations from across the UK for a march in London to highlight the problems faced by rural communities. An estimated 400,000 people take part as a result of much coordinated planning by concerned groups. A major theme is the protest against the proposed banning of hunting with dogs, although a spectrum of causes relating to rural life are represented. A counter-protest is also held by anti-hunt lobbyists.

25 September The citizens of Argentina turn out lights across the country in a mass protest against privatisation and the resulting rises in their utility bills. From 8 p.m. local time, protesters turn off lights inside and outside their homes for half an hour, and activists take to the streets with drums.

27 September Women's groups claim a victory in North Africa as 35 women gain seats in the 325-member Moroccan Parliament. In this first parliamentary election in the country since King Mohammed VI acceded to the throne in 1999, it had been determined that women would be guaranteed 10 per cent of the seats.

27–28 September In Washington DC, thousands of activists hold a two-day protest against international trading policies while the IMF and the World Bank hold their annual meeting. The event

is also used as an anti-war platform, with thousands protesting outside the White House against the threat of military action in Iraq. Confrontations occur with the police, who are out in force in the capital, and mass arrests take place.

28 September One of Europe's largest anti-war protests in recent years takes place as approximately 400,000 demonstrators march through the streets of London. The anti-war protesters, from many different groups and individuals from all walks of life, come to demonstrate their opposition to the threatened military action in Iraq.

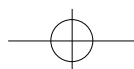
October

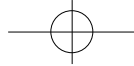
October In Bahrain, women's groups hold demonstrations in response to a new personal status law. This law establishes the minimum age for marriage as 16 for girls and 18 for boys, and requires men to provide support for divorced wives and minor children. However, as different versions will be enforced for different groups, demonstrators demand a unified law, rejecting the separate versions for Shi'ites and Sunnis.

5 October In Italy, a protest of one hundred cities against a possible war in Iraq draws 1.5 million protesters in a wave of local mobilisations.

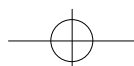
5–12 October A week of actions against the militarisation of space takes places worldwide under the banner 'Keep Space for Peace'. This begins with 1,117 non-violent activists being arrested during a protest at the NATO nuclear base of Kleine Brogel, in north-east Belgium, thought to be the largest number of arrests during a single action in the country. Groups travel from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Britain, France, and Finland to protest, numbering 2,000. A further example is a demonstration at Lakenheath airbase, UK, the biggest demonstration at the base since the 1980s.

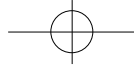
8 October In Belarus, human rights organisations and other NGOs meet to coordinate their campaign against 'political disappearances' in the country. Several prominent politicians, civil servants, business people, and a journalist have disappeared in Belarus since 2000. This is attributed to the actions of an alleged death squad under presidential command.





- Criminal investigations remain inconclusive, and protesters claim the government is not confronting the issue.
- 10 October** In Pakistan, general elections are held for the first time in three years of military rule, partly as a result of sustained campaigns by civil society groups such as Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Liberal Forum Pakistan, which campaigned with international support for the restoration of democracy. The new civilian prime minister is Zafarullah Khan Jamali. However, international democracy organisations claim this is only a minor success as President Pervez Musharraf, who came to power through a military coup in 1999, retains overall power and still has the authority to dissolve parliament and sack the prime minister.
- 12 October** On Columbus Day, celebrated in the USA as the day the explorer 'discovered' America, civil society organisations across Central America protest against what they claim is a new wave of colonisation in the form of the FTAA and the Puebla-Panama Plan. In El Salvador, activists successfully bring the nation to a standstill, halting commerce and blocking most major highways and border crossings, with 23,000 demonstrators in at least 14 locations. Actions also take place in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Nicaragua.
- 22 October** In Los Cabos, Baja California, Mexico, leaders from the countries that constitute Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meet. Meanwhile, trade unions demand the creation of a Labour Forum, and NGOs from the countries of the region participate in several parallel forums. The economic ministers in the region participate in a colloquium with NGOs and civil society leaders.
- 25 October–1 November** In Ecuador, a Continental Encounter of Organisations of the Field brings together farmers groups, trade unions, and civil society groups working on land reform from around South America. The focus of the conference is the struggle for agrarian reform in the continent, and it aims to share experiences and develop a global campaign of actions for agrarian reform.
- 26 October** The biggest anti-war demonstrations since the Vietnam War takes place in the USA, as 200,000 people march in Washington DC, 100,000 in San Francisco, and tens of thousands in other cities around the US. They announce the creation of a new anti-war movement to stop President George W. Bush's plans to wage war against Iraq.
- 27 October** Many civil society groups worldwide welcome the announcement of Luis Inacio Lula da Silva's victory in the Brazilian presidential elections. Popularly known as Lula of the Workers Party, Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), he has a strong civil society background, particularly through trade unions, and has been involved in the promotion of the WSF in Porto Alegre. He offers encouragement to civil society organisations by vowing to continue to promote civil society activity in the country and to help strengthen links internationally, as he supports much of the criticism made by many social movements against dominant neo-liberal economic policies.
- 29–30 October** In Cairo, Egypt, a forum is held by trade unions, NGOs working on democracy and workers' rights, employers, and universities, with participants from Egypt, Syria, the Palestinian Territories, Cyprus, Tunisia, Spain, France, Greece, and Italy. It is sponsored by the European Commission, with topics including Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the participation of civil society, the right of association of trade unions and employers, the consultative role of social agents as a means to developing and strengthening democracy, and social dialogue in Spain, Egypt, Syria, Palestinian Territories, Cyprus, Tunisia, and at European Union level.
- 31 October** Anti-war demonstrators in the UK use Hallowe'en to coordinate a day of protest against a possible war in Iraq. A major feature is an effort coordinated by university and college students to demonstrate via 'teach-ins', occupying lecture halls, and substituting normal teaching with debate on the war and protest methods. Marches, roadblocks, and cycle rides are held throughout the country, including a major transport bridge blockade in Wales, marches throughout cities in Scotland, Southampton's biggest ever protest in the form of a human roadblock, and the largest rally of the day in Parliament Square in London.





November

Early November Civil society organisations working for women's rights and equality in the Middle East claim a victory in Jordan. Legislation is passed enabling female citizens married to foreigners to pass on Jordanian citizenship to their offspring, and also allowing women to acquire passports without written permission from their husbands.

4 November Organisations making up the Anti-chavista movement in Venezuela hand over 1.5 million signatures to the National Electoral Council, demanding a consultative referendum to establish the extent of Chávez' support.

6–10 November As one of the regional forums planned at the WSF, the European Social Forum is held in Florence, Italy. This is seen to be one of the most successful events of global civil society so far in terms of the capacity to attract public attention and massive participation, and to make substantive proposals. The exact figure of participants is not known, since at 60,000 registration badges run out. Seminars and workshops focus on the three major themes of liberalism, war, and rights. The event culminates in a mass anti-war march through the city, with a record 1 million protesters estimated to have taken part. Despite security fears due to the problems met in Genoa last year, the event is described as peaceful.

14 November In Belarus, both chambers of parliament endorse a bill on charitable activity, which is the first law to be introduced to the parliament by the public. Furthermore, it overrules presidential versions of the bill. Civil society groups campaigned for the law because current legislation does not provide mechanisms for the work of NGOs, and the conditions for charitable activity are extremely harsh as there are no tax breaks on charitable donations and aid from abroad is subjected to 30 per cent tax. However, the bill has still to be signed by the president before it can become law.

14 November In Sydney, Australia, protests are held as trade ministers from 20 countries arrive for informal trade talks. The demonstrators, who include trade unionists, anti-capitalists, peace activists, and refugee advocates, march to the US

consulate and the offices of the company responsible for asylum-seeker detention centres.

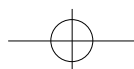
15–18 November The Uruguay Social Forum is held in the country's capital, Montevideo. The event starts with a march against the FTAA from the Plaza Libertad to the Esplanade of the University in Montevideo. During the three days, more than 100 hundreds events, including workshops, debates, and cultural events, take place.

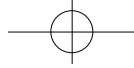
19–22 November Volunteers from across Spain and Europe travel to Galicia, Spain, to help limit the devastating environmental damage caused by the sinking of the Prestige oil tanker. Civil organisations, including trade unions and ecologists, and individuals constitute the 'Nunca Mas Platform' to coordinate emergency recovery actions in Galicia and together call for tougher national and international legal measures to prevent this type of ecological disaster being repeated. Civil society groups are seen to be key to the coordination of immediate action and their successful mobilisation of volunteers is seen to counter the lack of immediate action by the Spanish government.

20 November This date marks the 13th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations. However, leading NGOs working on children's rights make scathing attacks on the UN for using the occasion to promote the alliance between UNICEF and McDonald's, one of its major sponsors. An action alert is put out by the Alliance for a Corporate-Free UN, and the ensuing campaign results in UNICEF declaring that it intends to review its relationship with McDonald's in the coming year.

20 November In Katowice, southern Poland, 10,000 protesters march to demonstrate against the government closure of seven coal mines. Steelworkers and nurses join the miners in their protest as they also call for higher wages. Marching to the provincial governor's office, the protesters chant 'thieves' and then erect seven wooden crosses to represent the seven closures and the 35,000 miners that will be out of work as a result.

20–21 November A NATO summit in the Czech Republic is marked by a week of actions and demonstrations organised by anti-war protesters.





The main demonstration draws 4,000 activists to a march around the conference centre in Prague where the summit is being held.

23 November Irish peace activist Caoimhe Butterly is shot by Israeli forces in Jenin refugee camp as she tries to protect Palestinian children. This occurs during the same incursion as that in which UN worker Iain Hook is killed. Caoimhe Butterly is part of a peace group called Voices in the Wilderness, founded by Mary Kelly, an Irish American.

25 November The global trade union, the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), Greenpeace International, and the conservation organisation, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), take the unusual step of joining forces to appeal to UN Secretary General Kofi Anan for fundamental reform of the vast worldwide shipping industry.

30 November Australia's largest anti-war demonstration in recent years is held as 15,000 protesters march through Sydney, and further rallies occur simultaneously in the capital Canberra, Adelaide, and Melbourne. The demonstrators call for diplomacy not military intervention in Iraq, after Prime Minister John Howard has already committed Australian troops to support any American-led campaign.

December

2 December The fourth general strike starts in Venezuela, this time of indeterminate duration. Small, medium-sized, and large companies participate, as well as managers of the PDVSA oil company at the centre of the original dispute. Eventually banks, custom officers, and airports join the strike to bring the country to a virtual standstill.

2 December An anti-war protest in central London brings traffic in Whitehall to a standstill as demonstrators lie down in the road to represent the possible civilian victims of a war in Iraq. Many are wrapped in bandages daubed with red paint to represent the blood that could be shed.

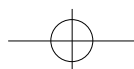
7 December The Miss World beauty contest takes place in London despite protests from women's groups. The contest arrives from Nigeria after

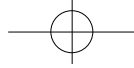
being forced to decamp when 200 Nigerians died in riots following a controversial newspaper article about the event. Some contestants had previously resigned from the contest in protest over conditions for women in Nigeria, and in particular over the case of a woman sentenced to death by stoning for adultery in northern Nigeria, where shariah law is practised. The organisers of the event come under strong criticism for not taking into account the religious context and the human rights record of the host country.

9–13 December The Asian Civil Society Forum is held in Bangkok, Thailand. This aims to promote cooperation and solidarity among NGOs in Asia engaged in advocacy activities with the UN. Around 200 organisations from Asia and, to a lesser extent, from other parts of the world are represented.

10 December Around the world, International Human Rights Day is used to highlight human-rights abuses and the campaigns of international human rights organisations. During a protest march in Indian-administered Kashmir, the leading human rights activist and chairman of the state's Human Rights Forum, Mohammad Ahsan Untoo, sets himself on fire to protest against alleged human rights abuses by the armed forces and police. He is not seriously injured. Peace activists in America initiate a Day of Human Rights Action and hold mass protests against possible war in Iraq and also against the conditions for prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. Demonstrations and marches are held in over 100 towns and cities in the US. In the UK, the occasion is used to highlight the plight of journalists imprisoned worldwide. Prisoners in Belarus, Burma, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Nepal, Russia, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan are the focus of the campaign.

12 December Demonstrations are held across Italy to protest against the arrest of 20 Italian activists who were centrally involved in the organisation of the European Social Forum in Florence in November. Several of the charges brought against them were made under laws enacted during Fascist rule of the 1920s and never repealed. 100,000 people demonstrate in Cosenza and 20,000 in Florence to call for the charges to be dropped.





12–15 December During the EU summit in Copenhagen, an alternative civil society forum is organised by 59 NGOs. The parallel summit includes numerous lectures, discussions, and demonstrations against attacks on the welfare state throughout Europe, the economic and social consequences of EU plans for eastward expansion, and the process of growing militarism, as well as EU policies on migration. The forum ends with a 10,000-strong Our World is Not for Sale demonstration outside Christianborg, the castle housing the Danish government. Fifteen activists are arrested, mainly for wearing masks, which is illegal in Denmark. It is later discovered that one of those arrested is an undercover police officer.

18 December International Migrants Day is celebrated around the world on or around this date by civil society organisations working for labour and migrant rights. A major theme of events is the need to ratify the UN Convention of 1990 for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Demonstrations to pressure governments into ratifying this are held in Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Ireland, Japan, and Indonesia. Forums and conferences are organised to promote awareness of this issue and others concerning worker's rights in Canada, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the USA. Many of these activities and others are highlighted and supported by the web-based portal for the promotion and protection of the rights of migrants, December18.net.

19–20 December Two days of protests take place in Argentina to mark the anniversary of the deaths during street protests one year ago which led to the downfall of President Fernando de la Rúa. Protesters use the opportunity to show their displeasure at the current government's handling of the economy, as they burn effigies of politicians and throw paint at the stock exchange.

20–21 December A Global Day of Disobedience is organised in solidarity with the people of Argentina and to protest against consumerist culture, on the retailers' busiest day of the year. In London's Oxford Street, The Wombles with other groups organise a Free Shop where books, CDs, toys, and clothes can be 'bought' for free, a mobile kitchen gives away free vegetarian burgers and

other food, and free dancing lessons are offered. Similar actions are organised by Disobbedienti in Italy, JNM in Belgium, Yomango in Spain, Black Revolution in Switzerland, and other groups in Jordan, Finland, the US, and Germany.

20–22 December The Moroccan Social Forum takes place in Bouznika, northern Morocco. Participants are from a diverse range of civil society groups, and workshops are held under the banner Another Morocco is Possible.

26 December In Shefaram, Israel, A Day of Civil Hearing is held, which brings together peace activists from Palestine, Israel, and a number of other countries to discuss the current conflict.

27–30 December The Thematic Social Forum Palestine, which was planned at the World Social Forum, is held in Ramallah, the Palestinian city under siege by Israel. This is jointly organised by Israeli and Palestinian groups. A total of 750 activists take part, 500 from Palestine and 250 from around the world. Delegates have problems getting to the venue, with some Belgians, Spaniards, and Filipinos being sent home on their arrival at Tel Aviv airport. The forum's main aim is to integrate the problems of the Middle East into the agenda of global civil society.

31 December In Australia, protests are held at refugee asylums in Sydney and the remote centre of Woomera in the South Australian desert. Detained refugees and human rights and immigrant advocacy organisations call on the Australian government to end mandatory detention of all asylum seekers, including children. They also call for an end to the policy of diverting all refugee boats, which mainly contain Afghan and Middle Eastern asylum seekers, to the Pacific Islands. These policies have brought criticism from international refugee organisations as well as from the United Nations.

