

CHRONOLOGY

CHRONOLOGY OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY EVENTS

Compiled by Jill Timms

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About the chronology

In this, the fifth, edition of the chronology, we present details of global civil society events that took place between May 2004 and April 2005. The chronology seeks to offer an alternative portrayal of activities around the world, which are often not reported in mainstream media but which involve, or have some significance for, civil society beyond the boundaries of a single country.

We have gathered the information presented here from the contributions of our network of global civil society correspondents. We provide details in the following sections about how you could become part of this team.

The growth of civil society activity beyond the local and national, and our growing awareness of it, mean that it would be impossible to present a comprehensive directory of all events, or even of all events related to a single issue. Therefore, we offer a record that indicates the diverse nature of civil society activity and its significance, and that covers more areas of the globe than conventional chronologies of world news. Our chronology also includes activities that are not easily represented in statistical accounts of civil society: for example, innovative campaigns, spontaneous protests or local gatherings.

With regard to social forums, we have included all the forums – local, thematic and global – that we are aware of, as detailed in Map 6.1 (page 196), because feedback from our correspondents suggests that their proliferation is a significant development that should be monitored. It should be noted that these entries are limited to those forums with active websites or of which correspondents have notified us.

Invitation to contribute to the development of the chronology

We invite our readers to contribute to the evolution of the chronology, which is currently under review, with the aim of developing a database of global civil society that is freely accessible worldwide. The first step of this initiative is to research the usefulness of information contained in the chronology.

We are interested in how the data is used, who uses it, how helpful it is and how we can improve it. To this end we have designed a short questionnaire, which can be found at: www.lse.ac.uk/dept/global/chronologyquestionnaire

Everyone who completes this questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw, the winner of which will be invited to participate in a forthcoming seminar at the London School of Economics to discuss the evolution of the chronology. Details of the conditions can be found on the website.

Since 2000, we have developed a growing network of correspondents in many parts of the world, who regularly update us on events taking place in their locality. We rely on the contributions of each team member for the data in the chronology. Our thanks go to all those who have worked with us on this edition.

We need to increase the scope and range of the network, in terms of both areas of the world covered and the diversity of correspondents. We invite you to join the team, which entails keeping us updated about activities and events in your field or area of the world. Each correspondent who contributes information that is included in the chronology receives an acknowledgement, a complimentary copy of the Global Civil Society Yearbook, and, of course, our thanks. We are exploring innovative ways to develop our collaboration with correspondents. If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a correspondent, or know someone who might be, please visit: www.lse.ac.uk/depts/global/correspondents.htm

This is an exciting time for global civil society, and our chronology is one of the ways in which we hope to contribute to, as well as to monitor, these interesting developments.

Global Civil Society events, May 2004–April 2005

May 2004

- 1 May** Celebrations and actions are held throughout the world on Labour Day in support of workers' rights. As ten new member states join the European Union (EU), mostly from Eastern Europe, 10,000 people rally in Brussels as part of the wider global justice demonstrations.
- 5 May** Thousands of Maori protesters march outside Parliament in New Zealand over plans to nationalise the shoreline, which they claim belongs to them. The action is supported by campaigners for the rights of indigenous peoples and environmentalists.
- 7–8 May** The Stockholm Social Forum, Sweden, is held, with nearly 200 events taking place. The forum concludes with a march and rally focusing on the charter of the forum.
- 19 May** In London, UK, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair is hit by four condoms filled with purple flour. These were thrown into the chamber of the House of Commons as part of a public campaign by Fathers4Justice, which lobbies for men divorced or separated from their partners to have greater access to their children. Their protests often involve members dressed as superheroes scaling national monuments.

June 2004

- 3–5 June** The Austrian Social Forum takes place with the participation of secondary school pupils, who discuss issues relevant to them.
- 4–5 June** The Mapuche Social Forum in Villarrica-Pucon, Chile, attracts some 500 participants, mostly indigenous peoples and their organisations.
- 4–6 June** The Midwest Social Forum, also known as the RadFest, takes place at the Lake Geneva Campus of Aurora University, US. The central goal of the forum is to contribute to social movement building by providing organisers, activists, community members, and intellectuals with the opportunity to come together to discuss issues, strengthen networks, and devise strategies for progressive social, economic, and political change.
- 10 June** Indigenous demonstrations are held during the meeting in Quito, Ecuador, of the Organization of American States, with activists demanding

the rejection of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and the resignation of President Gutierrez.

- 12 June** Some 10,000 protesters from trade unions, farmers' organisations and NGOs converge on the Asian Strategic Insight Roundtable, a regional conference of the World Economic Forum summit, in Seoul, South Korea.
- 23–25 June** The Boston Social Forum hold a one-off parallel event to the Democrat Convention taking place in the city as part of the US presidential campaign.
- 25–27 June** The Triple Frontier Social Forum is held in Puerto Iguazu, Argentina. This regional forum addresses issues concerning Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, and is held close to where all three borders meet.

July 2004

- 1 July** 500,000 people take part in Hong Kong's biggest ever pro-democracy demonstration against the system whereby the Chief Executive is elected by only 800 people.
- 9 July** Amid much interest from peace activists around the world, the International Court of Justice in the Hague, the Netherlands, rules that the controversial West Bank Barrier, a 425 mile-long wall being constructed by Israel to keep Palestinians out of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, is illegal.
- 19–21 July** In San Salvador, El Salvador, the Central American Forum is held. Although it is not called a 'social' forum, the event is inspired by the World Social Forum and discusses opposition to the FTAA and Plan Pueblo Panama, which aims to develop trade and tourism links as well as road links across Central America.
- 25 July** 1,500 protesters tear up a field of experimental genetically modified (GM) maize in Toulouse, France. Leading farmers' activist Jose Bove says this represents a new wave of international activism against GM trials.
- 25–30 July** The Americas Social Forum is held in Quito, Ecuador, with some 10,000 participants. There is a strong anti-FTAA and indigenous orientation.
- 27–29 July** The second Moroccan Social Forum draws 1,200 participants from all over the country, and small delegations of Arab, African, American and European NGOs.

29–31 July The third World Education Forum is held and preceded by regional education forums in São Paulo, Brazil, Guadalajara, Mexico and Barcelona, Spain.

August 2004

2 August In Canada, workers at a Wal-Mart store in Jonquière, Quebec, have their right to vote to unionise confirmed by the Quebec Labor Relations Commission. Labour campaigners see this as a significant victory over the company – one of the world's largest retail employers – which until now has not allowed formal union involvement in its labour relations. However, before the contract with the union is finalised, Wal-Mart closes the Jonquière branch. The commission launches legal action against Wal-Mart.

2–4 August The Peru Social Forum takes place in Tambogrande. Although a similar forum was held the previous year, it was called 'Towards a Peru Social Forum'.

14–15 August The first Paraná Medio Social Forum focuses on the theme 'In Defence of Cultural and Biological Diversity'.

18–21 August The inaugural conference of the Globalisation Studies Network (GSN) is held in Warwick, UK.

26–28 August In Buenos Aires, Argentina, the Social Forum of Information, Documentation and Libraries is held, organised by Argentinian and Mexican library associations.

29 August Nearly half a million citizens gather in Manhattan, New York, US, the day before the Republican National Convention to protest against US involvement in Iraq and to oppose the re-election of George W Bush at the forthcoming US presidential election. Leading the protest are members of United for Peace and Justice. Republican New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who had sought legal action to stop protestors from gathering in the city, amasses a police force of more than 37,000, including state and federal officers. The protest passes off peacefully.

29 August More than 400 citizens, many from the Industrial Workers of the World union, gather in New York City to protest an appeal by Starbucks Coffee Company against a National Labor Relations Board ruling that would allow individual Starbucks stores to vote on union representation.

September 2004

1 September In Kenya, a campaign is launched by the Masai peoples to win the return of ancestral territory in Laikipia, which was claimed by white farmers under a British colonial treaty of 1904. The campaign is mounted on the expiration of the treaty.

3–7 September The Mineiro Social Forum themed on 'Sovereignty and People's Participation' takes place in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

8–19 September An international cultural festival, named the World Culture Open, takes place simultaneously in the cities of New York, Seoul, and Pyongyang. Performing groups from 70 different countries and 354 NGOs participate in this 'cultural olympics'.

14 September Representatives of international human rights groups call for the scrapping of the South Korean National Security Law. This follows a gathering of activists from home and abroad before the International Conference for National Human Rights Institutions opens in Seoul to discuss human rights violations related to international conflicts, including war and terrorism in Iraq and Russia.

16–19 September The Uruguay Social Forum is held in Montevideo for the third time. It attracts several thousand participants, and for the first time is held in a decentralised location in Montevideo-West rather than the usual city centre, with discussion of further decentralisation to promote the spread of the forum elsewhere in Uruguay.

17–19 September At an aboriginal reserve near Montreal, Canada, the Montreal Social Forum is held. On two previous occasions it has taken place under the alternative name of the 'Third Citizens' Summit' of Montreal.

17–19 September In Beirut, Lebanon, a meeting 'Where Next for the Global Anti-War and Anti-Globalization Movements?' brings together nearly 250 participants from the Arab region and around the world, including the Stop the War Coalition, Focus on the Global South, Hizbullah, ATTAC, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Egyptian Anti-Globalization Group.

17–19 September The Sydney Social Forum, Australia, takes place, with hundreds of participants taking part in more than 70 workshops, many focusing on how peoples' rights and access to basic services

have been privatised around the world and how the neoliberal agenda can be reversed. The end of the forum coincides with 'End the Lies' rallies across Australia.

- 19 September** A peace meeting originally planned to be held in Kashmir takes place in the Netherlands before the annual summit between the EU and India. Participants from Kashmir, India and Pakistan share their experiences with peace activists from Kosovo, Palestine, Northern Ireland, France and the Netherlands.
- 23 September** The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and the Save Coast Action Committee Badin hold a one-day hunger strike in Karachi to protest against a World Bank-backed drainage project that they claim will damage coastal livelihoods and biodiversity.
- 23–25 September** The Corrientes Social Forum takes place in Argentina, focused on 'Foreign Debt – the Mother of all Ills'.
- 24–25 September** The second Bretagne Social Forum is held in a social centre in Rostronen, Brittany, France. The major themes of the forum are culture, solidarity economy, agriculture/environment and politics.
- 25–26 September** The Alpes du Sud Social Forum is held in Veynes, France. Participants attempt to re-appropriate the city as a space for debate and collective action. The event includes marching bands and a strong emphasis on the sharing of local food.
- 25–28 September** The Czech Social Forum in Prague attracts about 100 participants.
- 25 September–2 October** The Pays Nantais Social Forum meets in a former cigarette factory in Bayonne, France, under the banner 'Our World is Not for Sale'. Among the many themes discussed are the environment and agriculture, the social forum process, international solidarity and economic alternatives.
- 29 September–2 October** A symposium on 'New Tactics in Human Rights', organised by the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Ankara, Turkey, attracts 500 participants from all over the world.

October 2004

- 1–3 October** The Danish Social Forum is held in the Christianshavn neighbourhood of Copenhagen. Approximately 1,000 people take part in a range

of activities including marches, discussions, workshops and a cultural programme of film, music and theatre.

- 2 October** Saharawi activists (from Western Sahara) stage protests in southern Morocco and occupied Western Sahara, seeking to create an 'intifada'. The Moroccan government is enraged by South Africa's official recognition of Western Sahara, which is currently pursuing self-determination to gain independence from Morocco.
- 2–30 October** A Monster Tomato Tour takes place in Turkey as part of a European anti-GM campaign, organised by a coalition of 30 Turkish civil society groups, united in the 'No to GMOs Platform'.
- 8 October** The Limousin Social Forum discusses local issues such as agriculture, tourism, and the environment. It contributes to a network of local social forums in France.
- 8–10 October** In various sites in Dublin the Irish Social Forum is held, with the dominant issue being preparation for joining the European Social Forum in London the following week.
- 9–12 October** The Capixaba Social Forum is held in Brazil, and is also run as a regional forum for the state of Espirito Santo.
- 15–17 October** The third European Social Forum (ESF) is held in London. Criticisms about lack of democracy and of inclusiveness in the process leads to several counter-forums in areas designated as autonomous space, meaning that they are self-organised and not part of the official ESF process. These parallel events are collectively referred to as 'Beyond ESF'.
- 16 October** The Lot et Garonne Social Forum is held as a French departmental forum for the people of department 47.
- 19–22 October** The Malawi Social Forum takes place in Lilongwe, Malawi, with the full support of the government.
- 21–23 October** The Southern Cone Social Forum, organised by university lecturers and academics in Rosario, Argentina, explores the theme 'Earth and Food'.
- 21–24 October** In Oslo, the Norway Social Forum adopts a conference format to facilitate discussion of globalisation. It is decided that the national forum should skip a year (the next being held in 2006), and instead efforts will focus on helping develop local social forums.

23 October The first Valparaiso local Social Forum is organised in Chile.

28–29 October The New York City Social Forum focuses on the strengthening of transnational civil society activity in North America. The forum continues to develop its elaborate system of consensus building.

28–30 October In Harare, the second Zimbabwe Social Forum is held, despite an attempt by government to ban it. The focus is largely anti-neoliberal but also anti-government. There is a people's tribunal, a youth tent and faith-based input.

28–30 October The Alpes-Maritimes Departmental Social Forum takes place in Valbonne, France. This is the third time the forum is held and is run in Ariane, a migrant area, after initial problems with local authorities about public buildings being used for the forum are resolved.

30 October 50,000 people in Rome, Italy, demonstrate against the coalition forces in Iraq.

November 2004

4 November The Vietnamese Association of Victims of Agent Orange files a class action law suit in a New York court against Monsanto and 36 other manufacturers of Agent Orange.

5–6 November In São Luis, Maranhão, Brazil, the Maranhense Social Forum takes place.

5–6 November In La Serena, Chile, the Coquimbo and La Serena Social Forum is held.

5–7 November The third Argentina Health Social Forum is held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, focusing on local, national and international health policy and links to environmental concerns.

8–9 November An International Forum on Global Democracy is held in Peru.

9–13 November 700 people join together for discussions and cultural events in Makurdi, Nigeria, for the Nigerian Social Forum.

10 November Activists of NGOs working for the rights of overseas Koreans gather in Seoul to discuss ways to improve their rights and strengthen national identity.

11–12 November The Alagoas local Social Forum is held in the Federal University of this Brazilian city.

12–13 November The Basel regional Social Forum takes place in Switzerland, with a strong Roman Catholic input.

12–13 November The Paris-Central Social Forum is

held in France, combining local themes such as the new plans for Les Halles, water services and social exclusion, with national themes on wages and social security, and theoretical concerns with democracy.

16–20 November The VIII Annual Meeting of the Global Forum for Health Research takes place in Mexico City, attracting more than 700 participants from governments, civil society and the health profession.

18–20 November 600 people, including 150 leaders of international civil society organisations and social movements, attend a 'Reclaim our UN' international seminar in Padua, Italy, on the future of the UN and the international institutions.

19–28 November The Les Mureaux Val de Seine Social Forum is held in Aubergenville, France. This is the second time the forum has taken place, and plans are already started for the third event, which will have a stronger focus on politics through culture.

20–21 November The Chile Social Forum in Santiago, using the Argentine model, pledges to develop local, regional, and thematic forums in future.

22–28 November In Kiev, mass public protests about vote rigging erupt after the election of Viktor Yanukovich as Prime Minister of Ukraine. Despite sub-zero temperatures, the protests continue and the 'Orange Revolution' forces a new election to be held that results in the election of the opposition party's Viktor Yushchenko.

24 November More than 200 citizens protest near the Tucson Convention Center, Arizona, US, in a bid to deter some 1,500 South American delegates from signing the Andean Free Trade Agreement. Delegates meet for five days during the sixth round of talks to discuss trade agreements between Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and the US, while Bolivia observes the talks. Protestors include members of the Colombian Network Against Free Trade, human rights groups, labour rights activists, and peace and environmental groups.

24–27 November The regional Nordeste (north-eastern) Brazilian Social Forum is held for the first time.

25 November Students, professors, civil servants, and social movements protest against the 'Labor, Sindical and University Reform', in Brasília, Brazil. More than 20,000 people march through the Esplanada dos Ministérios, calling for more participation in the process of reform to be allowed by students' move-

- ments, workers' syndicates and research institutions.
- 26 November** Eleven British activists protest outside the Icelandic embassy in the UK against the building of the Karahnjukar dams.
- 26–27 November** The Kenya Social Forum includes a demonstration and presentation of a memorandum against the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that will take place in Nairobi in March 2005.
- 26–27 November** The Carioca Social Forum is held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- 26–28 November** Planned to coincide with Dutch EU presidency, the Netherlands Social Forum facilitates the exchange of ideas and the strengthening of networks to promote social action.
- 27–28 November** The Val de Bièvre local Social Forum takes place in Aubergenville, France, with a total of 26 affiliated organisations.
- 28 November** The Melbourne local Social Forum, Australia, 'A Festival of Possibilities', takes place.

December 2004

- 3–6 December** In the south of Spain, the Malaga Social Forum takes place and nurtures its strong Latin-American connections.
- 4–5 December** A meeting of UK Local Social Forums in Sheffield exchanges experiences in order to promote future support and collaboration.
- 10–14 December** The UK North West Social Forum is held in the city of Manchester, under the theme 'Cross-community and Cross-border'.
- 10–14 December** In Lukasa, Zambia, the third African Social Forum takes place, despite internal struggles that have threatened to stop the event. As well as exploring 'Popular Resistance and Alternatives', there is also discussion about putting Zambia forward as one of World Social Forum venues in 2006, when the event will be decentralised.
- 11–12 December** The Kyoto Social Forum, the first forum in Japan, attracts 300 participants. Topics discussed include trade unions, refugees, environmental issues, the US base in Okinawa, relationships with North Korea, food security, and Japanese war crimes.
- 12 December** In Cairo, Egypt, the newly formed Kefaya, or 'Enough' movement, holds its first protest to demand radical political and constitutional reforms.
- 16 December** Anti-monarchy activists stage demonstrations in the main cities of Saudi Arabia. Six people are arrested.

- 20–22 December** More than 100 activists representing Somali civil society organisations, institutions and individuals gather in Mogadishu for the Somali Social Forum.
- 24 December** In Nunavut, in the Canadian Arctic, 155,000 Inuits agree to file a petition with the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights against the US's lack of action against global warming, which they argue threatens their existence.
- 26 December** International civil society organisations play a key role in bringing emergency relief when a colossal earthquake in the Indian Ocean just west of Sumatra results in a tsunami, devastating coastal populations in Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma and Thailand, as well as in South Asia. The official death toll reaches 125,000 with five million people homeless by the end of 2004. This results in new alliances between international and local organisations, and a general renewed interest and donations to aid organisations internationally.

January 2005

- 1 January** The EU announces that 2005 will be 'The Year of the Mediterranean' and that civil society participation in Euromed policies will be a priority.
- 1 January** The 'Make Poverty History' campaign is launched, mobilising a coalition of development agencies, faith groups, NGOs, trade unions and many others, on issues of trade justice, debt cancellation and better aid for the eradication of global poverty.
- 5 January** In Sierra Leone, a two-day general strike that has brought the capital of Freetown to a virtual standstill ends after the government agrees to increase the minimum wage to the equivalent of US\$13 a month and to cut income tax and fuel duty. The result of collaboration between the major trade unions, the protest is seen as a positive sign that the country is returning to normality after the civil war, which ended in 2001.
- 6 January** Thousands of Zambians protest in Lusaka demanding that a new constitution be adopted before presidential and parliamentary elections in 2006.
- 17 January** HIV and AIDS campaigners around the world praise Nelson Mandela for revealing that his son, Makgatho, died of an AIDS-related illness and for highlighting the plight of the millions of people living with HIV and AIDS in Africa.
- 18–22 January** The fourth Pan-Amazonian Social

Forum takes place in Manaus, Brazil, under the banner 'Another Amazon is Possible!'

- 19 January** After more than 40 years of campaigns, Edgar Ray Killen, a former member of the Ku Klux Klan, is charged with the murders of a local black man and two white students who were helping to register black votes in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in 1964. The continuous campaigning for his conviction included the making of the 1988 film 'Mississippi Burning'.
- 20–23 January** Hundreds of relatives of the victims of the three-day siege and massacre during 1–3 September 2004 in Beslan, Russia, hold a protest for three days against the lack of progress by the inquiry, blocking a major road in North Ossetia.
- 26 January** Tens of thousands of public schoolteachers in Zambia embark on an illegal strike to press for better wages and housing benefits.
- 26–31 January** The fifth World Social Forum takes place in Porto Alegre, Brazil, with 155,000 participants. The event is organised around several territories, that is, spaces designated for the major themes of the Forum, within which all the events for that theme take place. It attracts the largest number of young people to attend a World Social Forum, with 35,000 registering for the youth camp. It is agreed that for 2006, several forums will be held simultaneously in different parts of the world, replacing the single-location format of the WSF. In 2007, the WSF will again be in a single venue – in Africa – but the country and city have yet to be confirmed.
- 29 January** In Caracas, Venezuela thousands of protesters demonstrate against the abduction of a Columbian rebel leader from Venezuelan territory. This abduction was allegedly a result of provocation by the US.
- 29–30 January** The Ivry Social Forum in France is described as a permanent local open space for the maintenance and development of collective action. The forum takes an unusual form because organisers are responsible for managing a permanent building and have developed as a special association, with open membership and with all action taken in the name of individuals or groups but not the forum itself.

February 2005

- 6 February** Human rights campaigners in Chile and internationally react angrily to the Supreme Court's ruling that investigators looking into the human rights abuses allegedly committed during the era of Augusto Pinochet, the former President, have six months to present their evidence. This means that 365 cases need to be prepared before July.
- 12 February** Activist Sister Dorothy Stang is murdered after more than 30 years working for sustainable development in the Amazon, in particular with the Landless Workers Movement. Dressed in white and carrying candles, her supporters throughout Brazil protest against agro-businesses' destruction of the environment and local farmers' livelihoods. The police suspect Stang's murder was a contract killing by local ranchers, and 2,000 officers are sent to track them down.
- 14 February** After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in Beirut, a tide of mass demonstrations for and against the Syrian presence in Lebanon shakes the country for weeks. International pressure against the Syrian presence is led predominantly by the US. The campaign leads to an announcement in March 2005 that Syrian troops will be withdrawn.
- 17–23 February** Students protest against increased fees, problems with accommodation, and racist student representative councils in universities across South Africa. Violence breaks out on several campuses where tyres and the South African flag are burned. Police arrest students at the Universities of Limpopo and Pretoria.
- 19 February** In Rome, 500,000 people demonstrate for the liberation of the Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena, who was kidnapped in Iraq on 4 February.
- 19 February** The European Court of Human Rights rules that two British environmental campaigners were treated unfairly when the British government refused to grant them legal aid for their defence against a libel case brought by McDonald's. Helen Steel and David Morris, who have gained international support from environmentalists and anti-corporate activists, are granted £24,000 compensation and costs. The so-called 'McLibel Two' were sued for handing out leaflets containing allegations about the company's unethical behaviour, including low wages, some of which were proved to be true. The firm's action in response

to the leaflets and the resulting trial is described by business analysts as one of the worst public relations failures ever, costing the company £10 million in legal costs.

- 22 February** In what is dubbed the 'Chintz Revolution', 10,000 pensioners in St Petersburg, Russia, hold a rally against economic reforms that are reducing their welfare benefits substantially.
- 25–27 February** The second Alberta Social Forum is held in Calgary, Canada, following its first incarnation in 2003. Strong links are maintained with the Ontario Social Forum.
- 26 February** In Anapu, Brazil, President Lula de Silva creates the world's largest environmental protection area, a ten million-acre forest. This follows international outrage in the wake of the murder of Dorothy Stang, a nun who was fighting for the rights of small landowners.

March 2005

- 1–7 March** Roads and highways throughout South Africa are blockaded by 30,000 truck drivers demanding a wage increase.
- 3 March** In Freetown, Sierra Leone, students, lecturers and their supporters demonstrate against the government as university students have not been paid their grants and lecturers have received no wages for the year so far. Strikes by the lecturers also result in exams being cancelled.
- 8 March** International Women's Day is celebrated around the world.
- 9 March** More than 250 San Francisco State University students and faculty protest against US military recruitment on college campuses across the country. Protestors aim to prohibit recruiters from the US Air Force and the Army Corps of Engineers from campuses. Many activists belong to the group Students Against War.
- 9 March** In Beirut, three weeks of anti-Syrian demonstrations culminate in a massive, Hizbollah-organised rally that fills a central square. Demonstrators support Syria's rejection of a UN resolution calling for the complete and immediate withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon.
- 11 March** Marches are held throughout Spain to mark the first anniversary of the Madrid train bombings. An international summit on terrorism is held in Madrid as part of the remembrance.
- 12 March–6 April** To mark the 75th anniversary of the Salt March, when Gandhi led a march to demonstrate the power of non-violence, events take place in Copenhagen (Denmark) and Stockholm (Sweden), with Committees of the Salt March handing over bags of salt with political messages on them to parliamentarians.
- 14 March** Nearly a million people gather for an opposition rally in Beirut a month after the death of Rafik Hariri. They protest against the presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon.
- 15–22 March** In Niger, the Democratic Coordination Committee of Civil Societies in Niger coordinate a 'dead city' action involving 150,000 protesters to press for the removal of a 19 per cent value added tax imposed by the government on certain basic products. This new financial law is introduced by the government under pressure from the IMF. The leaders of the movement are arrested, then released under judicial control and negotiate with the government to resolve the crisis.
- 18–20 March** The Perth Social Forum, Australia, described as 'the biggest artistic event ever', takes place. A dominant theme is access to and the promotion of artistic forms of resistance.
- 19–20 March** On the second anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, an international day of action against the occupation takes place. Demonstrations include 50,000 protesters in London, a 100,000-strong demonstration in Rome, a march of 4,500 in Tokyo that is coordinated with the arrival of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and other marches in Stockholm, Istanbul, and some Australian cities. In several US cities, demonstrators march behind mock coffins draped with the country's flag.
- 22 March** World Water Day launches the 'Water for Life' decade, which calls on the global community to strengthen efforts to increase access to water and sanitation for all, in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals.
- 23 March** 70,000 people from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands march in Brussels against the proposed European Commission Directive on Services in the Internal Market – the so-called 'Bolkestein Directive' – which makes it legal to offer pay and benefits to foreign workers that are similar to levels in their home countries. Campaigners argue that this would lower salaries and benefits for workers generally.

24–27 March The Third Cairo Conference Against War and Globalization is held in Egypt, structured similarly to social forums, as independent, yet relevant, activities are organised under its umbrella. A students' forum and peasants' and workers' forums are organised as part of this, where grassroots activists share experiences and ideas from struggles around the world.

26 March In Osh, Kyrgyzstan, thousands of protesters march on the streets demanding a new election, after alleged vote rigging results in the unpopular Askar Akayev winning the presidential election by a landslide.

28 March 3,000 people flee Baluchistan in Pakistan, in the wake of riots involving local tribes people. The unrest follows the alleged rape of a female doctor by a soldier.

31 March A grassroots Chinese campaign to keep Japan out of the United Nations Security Council has gathered some 22 million signatures, increasing the chances that China will block Japan's bid to join, organisers claim.

April 2005

1–3 April The Ostergotland Social Forum is simultaneously held in Linköping and Norköping, Sweden.

2 April The 1.2 billion members of the Roman Catholic Church hold vigils across the world after the death of Pope John Paul II. The Vatican becomes a centre for pilgrims during the Pontiff's final hours, afterwards at his funeral and during the election of his successor. Religious and human rights groups across the world raise awareness of the importance of the new pope's views on issues such as the role of women in the church, homosexuality, and the use of contraception, particularly in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

6 April After four years of coordinated campaigns, the trial begins of 28 Italian police officers for alleged vicious attacks on protesters and for fabricating evidence against them at the 2001 G8 summit in Genoa.

9 April The Libournais Social Forum, a sub-forum of the Gironde regional forum, France, takes place.

9 April Civil rights organisations condemn the creation of a volunteer force, Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, to patrol the Arizona–Mexico border for 'observation purposes' only. Campaigners accuse them of racism, and point out that they

endanger official patrols, which do not coordinate with them, and also raise concerns that some of the volunteers carry guns. Although there have been no incidents involving guns, the practice is seen to be threatening and contradictory to the force's ostensible purpose of observation.

9–10 April In Helsinki, the national Finnish Social Forum is held for the third time.

10–16 April The largest ever mobilisation of civil society action on trade issues takes place, as more than ten million people in more than 80 countries take part in a Global Week of Action on Trade, part of the ongoing Make Poverty History and Poverty Zero campaigns. Many diverse initiatives against the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and regional and bilateral trade agreements are organised, under the slogan 'Trade Justice, Not Free Trade'.

12 April In Guatemala City, an Indian activist, supported by indigenous rights campaigners, wins his case against key military officials. Rigoberta Menchu, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was racially abused during a court hearing to decide whether he could stand as a presidential candidate.

14 April Mass protests are held in China following the publication of eight new textbooks in Japan that are said to play down the country's role in wartime atrocities. Continued public interest, encouraged by the government, later results in the spread of protests throughout China, with rallies and marches in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Chengdu and Shenyang.

16 April In Baghdad, Iraq, tens of thousands of Shia Muslims loyal to the radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr demonstrate to mark the second anniversary of the fall of Saddam Hussein and to demand the withdrawal of coalition troops.

18 April In Dongyang, China, thousands of peasants riot in protest at pollution from chemical factories that has ruined crops and been linked to deformities in babies. A news blackout is imposed by the government.

25 April In Togo, there are street protests over alleged vote rigging. The elections had been called only after a public outcry when Faure Gnassingbe, the son of the late president, Gnassingbe Eyadema, was sworn in, in defiance of the country's constitution. Faure Gnassingbe went on to win the presidential election but the protests continued.

