



# INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA & BIPHOBIA

A Worldwide Celebration of  
Sexual and Gender Diversities

**MAY 17**

## SUMMARY REPORT 2015

THIS REPORT PROVIDES ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT  
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA 2015.

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“Millions of people around the world observe the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia on 17 May. I believe in and strive to achieve a world rooted in tolerance, freedom and equality; a world where we are all free to live a life of dignity. There are no exceptions. Human rights are for everyone, no matter who you are or whom you love.”

UN SECRETARY GENERAL BAN KI-MOON



United Nations' Free and Equal campaign screens new video on Times Square for IDAHOT.



Bangladesh • "Respect diversity, support love" is the theme of the campaign for IDAHOT 2015



Russia • The IDAHOT Rainbow flashmob in St. Petersburg is Russia's biggest public LGBT event ever.

# Editorial

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May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 saw once again an impressive celebration of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia and, in many places around the world, the Day is now firmly written into local agendas as one of the most important annual landmarks for mobilisation, often interweaving festive, cultural and political actions.

In some places, organisers hosted hugely visible events such as Pride marches or iconic public buildings lighting up in Rainbow colors. In other places, where public visibility is forbidden by harsh laws and a violent social climate, activists still invested all possible spaces to make themselves heard, resisting in public spaces and occupying virtual spaces when denied the streets.

Throughout the world, thousands of members of the LGBTI community shared their stories, their words and their pictures, or simply raised their voices as a visible part of their society.

The global focus this year on LGBTI Youth provided an important lever to place more focus on the effects of homophobia, transphobia and biphobia in the day-to-day lives of LGBTI youth.

This year also, after the IDAHO Committee explicitly included biphobia in the name of the day, an impressive proportion of stakeholders also included this specific issue in their mobilisations.

Records show that over 1300 events reaching over 120 countries took place again this year, including in at least 30 countries of the 76 where homosexuality is illegal.

The Day also proved once more a powerful platform for allies to voice their support, and many public authorities joined in; from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to

several heads of UN agencies, International institutions from Europe and the Americas, Embassies and heads of States such as Barack Obama.

At local levels, police stations, County authorities, medical facilities, schools and universities and many other public and private bodies passionately marked the day, often by raising the rainbow flag.

Supportive voices from allies rose from many places, including from iconic football club FC Barcelona.

But beyond the high level of mobilisation and its wave of visibility, individuals too took ownership of the Day. From a couple from Trinidad and Tobago who organised their honeymoon to coincide with the day to a rainbow cake ordered to celebrate the Day in Ireland, youtubers crafting special videos and cartoonists posting special contributions, these are the best signs that the Day has firmly captured the imaginations of people across the world.

Imagination is definitely a keyword, with the Day settling in as an essential moment to witness creative campaigning unfold around the globe. This year again, the Day has shown its great added value as a moment of triumph of courage and imagination, and a beacon for the fight against intolerance and disrespect.

We hope that the few snapshots presented below will incite everyone to further explore on our site the diversity and scope of the global celebration of sexual and gender diversities.

**Tamara Adrian**  
Chair, IDAHO Committee

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# International



Allies speak out for IDAHOT 2015: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

**UN** agencies have been particularly visible again this year.

The Free and Equal campaign released a special video, which was screened for a whole day in New York's Times Square, celebrating the contribution of LGBT people to all parts of society. Meanwhile, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon spoke out on LinkedIn, emphasizing the need for action to eradicate homophobic and transphobic discrimination in the workplace.

UN special procedures mandate holders and regional human rights bodies, including from Africa, released a joint statement highlighting the Human Rights abuses of LGBTI children and youth. Adding her voice to this call for justice and equality, the Director General of UNESCO pointed to evidence that LGBTI young people are overwhelmingly exposed to stigma, discrimination and violence, often with tragic consequences.

Heads of UNAIDS, UNDP, UN Women and the World Bank also made powerful statements, alerting on the tragic effects of stigma and the injustice of discrimination.

All major European institutions marked the Day, including through their presence at the 3<sup>rd</sup> international IDAHO conference hosted this year in Montenegro and which gathered over 200 representatives from institutions, governments and NGOs to reflect on policies both at individual member State and at collective European levels.



Heads of international institutions commemorate IDAHOT 2015.

The Day traditionally marks the release of much awaited reports:

ILGA released the update of its State-sponsored Homophobia report, which details the legal situation for sexual and gender minorities worldwide. The European branch of the organisation issued reports and maps on the legal and social situations in Europe, while the Trans Murder Monitoring project updated its reports on the level of hate crimes targeting Trans people worldwide. Other comparative global reports and studies marked the Day, some with a focus on social climates toward LGBT people, another on how States score on their implementation of the right to education for LGBTI students.

For many international organisations and movements, the Day provides an ideal platform to engage their broad constituencies over a joint action. A global alliance of Youth-focused organisations initiated a joint “thunderclap campaign”, led by LGBTI Youth network IGLYO which reached over 1.3 million people. Still in solidarity with LGBTI youth, the global It Gets Better project mobilized all 10 of their affiliates for a vast and diverse program of online and offline actions across the world.

The faith-based international Gionata project mobilised its members over IDAHOT-prayers and services, with 29 events in 5 countries, while LGBTI sports federations mobilised member clubs across the world.

It would be impossible to give credit to all the mainstream international organisations which took action in one way or another. International youth organisations held public discussions or released pedagogical guidelines and tools.

Organisations working for freedom of expression published writings and testimonies. Organisations working on the right to health highlighted the devastating effects of homo/trans/biphobia on sexual and mental health of LGBTI young people.

Many IDAHOT initiatives have inspired others over the course of time. Flag raising has become a popular way to mark the Day. Rainbow Flashmobs are also a favorite across many countries. And after Brisbane bridge was lit up in rainbow colors last year, many other building across the world got inspired in 2015.

Buildings around the world illuminate in rainbow colors for IDAHOT 2015.





# Europe



Georgia • After two years of cancellation under threats, activists manage to organise a peaceful IDAHOT gathering.



Sweden • ART-ivists join the global celebrations.

## In Europe, over 35 countries in the region saw colourful events and activities, from Azerbaijan to Ireland, from Murmansk to Gibraltar.

Creative activists took to the streets of Albanian capital Tirana on their bikes for a (P)ride, hugged for free in Lisbon, froze still on Athens' main city square to protest inaction, held hands on the streets of Budapest, planted daisies under the Eiffel Tower in a "Guerilla gardening" attack. A "Rainbow bus" toured cities in Lithuania while the first ever rainbow-colored 'black' cab rode the streets of London, and made media headlines.



Turkey • Thousands join Ankara's now traditional May 17 march, closing off a week-long programme.

In London activists dressed in 6 colors to form a human rainbow while they built a Rainbow balloon arch in Madrid. In Poland, it was statutes that were draped in rainbow colors. In Azerbaijan, activists publicly demonstrated their citizenship by cleaning up a heavily polluted beach. In Switzerland, restaurant tables were set with special mats alerting on the situation for LGBT people worldwide.

Major events in the region included Pride marches in Brussels, Berlin and Ankara, where it closed off a cycle of events which included an international Human Rights conference. Once again, activists in the United Kingdom managed to organize an impressive number of events in at least 40 towns and cities, keeping the country on the top 5 list of countries with most IDAHOT celebrations.

## But also the rest of Europe was shining in Rainbow colors.

In Germany, activists in at least 14 cities released balloons with messages of love and respect into the skies while in Belgium 301 municipalities in the province of Antwerp alone raised the Rainbow flag on official buildings.

Newcastle Bridge in the UK as well as the entire Grand Place in Brussels were among the many public building around the world which illuminated the night in Rainbow lights. Activists marched for equality in Austria or Poland and held candlelight vigils in Slovenia and Armenia.

Solidarity with LGBT movements in very homo/transphobic contexts was actually the objective of many mobilisations around western Europe, with special initiatives in the UK, France, Spain, Denmark, Sweden or Norway.

In many places in eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Caucasus, activists bravely faced virulent social opposition and successfully organised IDAHOT events. Support of Embassies and allies played an important role in several places. In places like Ukraine, Armenia, the Czech Republic, Serbia or Croatia, organisations managed to navigate the delicate line between safety and visibility.

Organisations also actively reclaimed public spaces in the centre of Sarajevo, where billboards shared the universal message “Let people kiss whomever they want”.

Marches and balloon releases were organised throughout 16 cities in Russia. While arrests and attacks marred some events, including in Moscow, St. Petersburg however saw the biggest successful public LGBTQI celebration in Russia yet with over 350 participants.

Sadly incidents were also seen during the IDAHOT celebrations in Moldova, where representatives of conservative and religious movements disrupted the events.

A lot of attention focused this year on Georgia, where IDAHOT events had for the past two years caused major counter demonstrations which led to violence and cancellations. Days after the European Court of Human Rights condemned the Georgian government for not ensuring the safety of LGBT demonstrators, a symbolic gathering was organised successfully this year on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Lituania - UK - Berlin • Among hundreds of IDAHOT events across Europe.





# Asia Pacific



Philippines • Transgender activists and friends get together at IDAHOT celebrations.

**In at least 20 countries in the region, IDAHOT was celebrated with a variety of activities and creative campaigns.**



Cambodia • Rainbow Cyclo for IDAHOT 2015.

**T**hailand, Indonesia and the Philippines especially saw vast programmes of events, with a specifically strong mobilisation of the Transgender communities.

In other parts of the region, actions included a hug-In action in Mumbai, a Flashmob action at a bank headquarters in Colombo, an online Campaign in Bangladesh titled 'Respect Diversity, Support Love', Artivism with the "Love Bus" in Mongolia, a 'bike pride ride' in China, and many other creative actions.



South Korea • Over 1,000 people join the IDAHOT 2015 celebrations.

The week-long celebrations at the Bangkok Art & Cultural Center – which was illuminated in Rainbow Colours the entire time - offered an academic and cultural programme to hundreds of daily participants, in the presence of authorities, allies and celebrities. Cambodia celebrated a ten-day long Gay Pride with workshops focusing on LGBTQI Youth and in Indonesia at least 40 events were on the agenda for the IDAHOT celebrations.

Striking mobilization was achieved in Seoul where 103 organisations from all kinds of civil society hosted the biggest IDAHOT festivity in the country with over 1,000 participants. Despite the pouring rain organisers in Vietnam have recorded a fantastic turnout as well with over 1,000 people 'Celebrating the Rainbow' in Ho Chi Minh City. And in Myanmar, the diversity of LGBT faces was made visible through a national photo exhibition.



China • Activists in Beijing celebrate IDAHOT with UNDP and UNESCO support.

In Japan, activists mobilised across 13 cities, reading out messages calling for acceptance of diverse sexuality on the streets or staging choruses, living libraries or public discussions.

With the global focus issues on LGBTI Youth, young voices were particularly prominent this year across the region. The “Loud and Proud” campaign driven by young MSM and Transgender people from the region and focusing on IDAHOT as a key annual landmark brought voices from China, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines to the forefront this year.



Japan • 5<sup>th</sup> celebration of IDAHOT in Kobe.

Also focusing on the global theme was the special exhibition ‘Growing Pains’ in Hong Kong and Macau, which was shown in the weeks leading up to IDAHOT in around eight Universities, Colleges and other institutions. The presentation also included a specific focus on the challenges which young intersex people face.

In mainland China, this issue was given public visibility through several events, including with the support of Unesco’s national office. The UN agency’s regional office also was a key player of IDAHOT events in Thailand.



Indonesia • IDAHOT celebrations in Jakarta.

In Nepal, LGBT organisations focused on the immediate needs of marginalised Transgender people who were particularly vulnerable to the effects of the devastating earthquake, underlining the relationship between community solidarity and the fights against social stigma.

Sadly, incidents were reported from Kyrgyzstan where a group of nationalist vigilantes attacked a private IDAHOT party, with luckily no casualties. Central Asia remains one of the most difficult regions for sexual and gender minorities.

In Fiji, the stories of LGBTI young people were aired on community radios for a whole IDAHOT week, which closed off with an evening of creativity and free expression.



Vietnam • ‘Celebrating the Rainbow’ on IDAHOT 2015 in Ho Chi Minh City.

Honk Kong • ‘Growing Pains’ lectures.





# Africa



Lesotho • IDAHOT 2015 march.

**Once again, LGBTQI people and their allies in sub-Saharan Africa managed to organize and gather on and around May 17 to celebrate sexual and gender diversities.**

**O**ver a dozen countries saw IDAHOT celebrations despite the high risk of violence in many of these places. In several countries in the region the day provided an opportunity to share the stories and experiences of LGBTQI people, most of which highlighted the importance of empowering and supporting LGBTQI Youth.

The digital media project 'None on Record', for example collected powerful video testimonies from LGBTQI people across the continent and the diaspora and disseminated them throughout the region.

Organisations in Botswana highlighted the lives of young LGBTQI with an art and theatre performance, meanwhile in Kenya IDAHOT was marked by several events including an anti-bullying campaign, specifically highlighting the problems LGBTQI Youth face. Also focusing on the global theme of LGBTI Youth, an online campaign brought voices from young women from Nigeria.



South Africa • Activists demand Hate Crime Legislation.

In South Africa, online campaigns targeted specifically the education system, by collecting and disseminating video testimonies from students.

Others in South Africa chose to highlight positive happy voices from LGBTI people, as a way to empower individuals and show the power that lies within the community; others still focused on discrimination in the workplace.

In Lesotho the Day was marked by a colorful community march. In Mauritius and Mozambique, poster and photo competitions were held and results displayed.



Uganda • 240 people gather for an outdoor community event.

Even in extremely hostile contexts, activists managed to organise very precious moments for community building: In Uganda, where homophobia has been stirred up by politicians for years, an impressive crowd of 240 people gathered for a massive picnic.

In no less homophobic Cameroon, activists organised a gay-straight football game, to celebrate the possibility of peaceful acceptance of sexual minorities by the mainstream majority.

While in Liberia, the effects of the Ebola outbreak on Homophobia and the LGBTI community in the country was the subject of the IDAHOT discussions, in Tunisia feminists boldly organised a public festival, with exhibition, screenings and performances of various works produced by women from the Arab-speaking world.

And in Egypt, activists celebrated this year again May 11 as the EDAHO, the Egyptian Day against Homophobia, drawing a bridge between the international day and a locally relevant date, as May 11 marks the anniversary of the arrests on Cairo's Queen Boat back in 2001.



Tunisia • An international Feminist arts festival marked May 17.

The campaign "I'm not a criminal I'm just different" was mainly developed online but also featured a panel discussion and a photo exhibition. The campaign also extended over neighboring Sudan.

Activists from the region found rare and precious support from African institutions this year, as the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights joined the collective IDAHOT international Human Rights experts declaration on LGBTI Youth.

# Latin America and the Caribbean



Cuba • Cubans close off two weeks of IDAHOT celebrations with a massive march in La Havana.

**In this region particularly, the Day has often evolved into a full week of action, with a special mention for Chile, Brazil and Cuba which have stood out by the diversity of activities and the number of participants.**

In Chile more than 50,000 people marched in a historic parade in the streets of Santiago, where families, activists and the general public demanded that the government enact a law on gender identity. Other activities included the creation of a rainbow-flag colored zebra crossing and the raising in more than 36 municipalities and 10 embassies of the rainbow flag.

In Brazil, activists registered more than 177 activities in at least 19 states, from the Amazon region to the Uruguay border, almost systematically addressing the global focus issue on LGBTI youth and massively mobilising teachers, students and educational authorities.

The Cuban 'Jornada' against homophobia was held for the seventh time this year, with events in Havana and multiple cities which included a mass symbolic wedding of same-sex couples celebrated by religious leaders and Mariela Castro.

In Venezuela, efforts to get the government to recognize the Day officially failed under pressure from conservatives but activists nevertheless raised their voice and held visibility activities that ended with the fourth march against homophobia which saw thousands of people march through the streets of Caracas.

Pride marches were also held in all of the Central American countries, without exception, as part of wider programs. In Costa Rica, these wider activities included a video spot campaign against discrimination featuring 7 high level politicians.



Brazil • This IDAHOT march is one among almost 200 events in 19 states throughout the country.

Activities in Mexico continue to grow every year, and more and more people joined the celebrations that unfolded over almost two continuous weeks of artistic, academic, festive and online activities celebrating sexual and gender diversities. A giant “besatón” kiss-in was one of the culminating events of these celebrations, mobilising hundreds of people on one of the city’s busiest squares.

Kissing against discrimination was also on the menu in Ecuador and Paraguay, with the now traditional “besatón” on the Parliament steps.

Film festivals have also throughout the years become a popular way for organisations to mark May 17 and were included in the calendar of events in Bolivia, Honduras and many cities in Brazil.

In Peru, activists invested the Day as a key milestone in their strategy to achieve civil unions for same-sex couples, with the presentation of the annual situation report on human rights abuses against LGBTQI people.

Thematic national conferences are almost systematically part of the program, as the Day provides a key moment for advocacy. In Colombia, the national conference focused on adoption and same-sex marriage. In Uruguay the main focus was on the rights of Trans people, while it was on the fight against so-called “conversion therapies” in the Dominican Republic and on homophobia and racism in Ecuador.



Venezuela • The IDAHOT march has over the years become a core annual event for LGBT rights.

Even though criminal sanctions against homosexuality are still in place in Belize, the global focus issue on youth provided an entry point for the country’s special envoy for women and children to call for acceptance of diversities and for ending human rights abuses against children. Youth was also the key focus of mobilisations in Guyana and Suriname.



Chile • 50 000 demonstrate on the annual IDAHOT march.

In almost all countries in the region, online campaigns were launched by organisations, but many online initiatives were also launched by individuals, creating the buzz on the net and getting the IDAHOT hashtags trending in many countries.

Alone the videos which were made by Youtube celebrities especially for the day scored more than 75,000 views and mentions of the Day in Spanish on Twitter increased 1200% from last year, giving an indication of the increasing popularity of the Day in the region.



Peru • Free hugs and protests mark the Day in Lima.

Last but not least, regional organisations were actively involved in many local events, but also developed specific actions. The Organisation of American States issued a specific declaration and the regional UNAIDS office, in collaboration with the IDAHO Committee, developed and disseminated infographics on the situation of LGBTI youth in the region.



# North America



USA • US leaders speak up for IDAHOT 2015.

**From small local actions to cross-national events, North America might have seen this year its most active IDAHOT so far.**

For the second consecutive year, President Barack Obama used the Day to officially reaffirm the country’s commitment to advancing the rights of LGBTI people in the USA and worldwide. He was joined by statements from Joe Biden, John Kerry, Randy Berry, Susan Rice, and Nancy Pelosi, amongst other high level US officials.

A Congressional Resolution was introduced in Washington with support from over 60 co-sponsors *“in support of the goals and ideals of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia”*.

In Canada, many cities including Toronto and Vancouver raised the rainbow flag over the city halls and federal politicians and party leaders issued specific statements.



Canada • In Toronto members of the Asian-Canadian LGBTI community gather to celebrate May 17.

In both Canada and the US authorities also used their power to promote the day on an international level. Embassies and High Commissions from both countries helped to promote the day across the world by supporting activists and holding their own activities.

But most mobilization was of course secured by LGBT groups and their allies at local levels.

Across North America several leading organisations supported the day in various ways. In the USA, the “It Gets Better” project mobilised their global affiliates worldwide, declarations were issued by the American Psychologist Association, the Human Rights Campaign, Advocates for Youth, and many others.



Quebec • At the University of Montreal the rainbow flag marks IDAHOT 2015.

In Canada, all Provinces saw some form of activity, from a film festival in British Columbia, to a series of events focusing on the Canadian-Asian LGBT community in Toronto or schools marching in Ontario. In the Canadian province of Quebec, the Day is traditionally marked by a statewide campaign with dozens of local events, which this year celebrated the positive contributions of all allies to LGBTI people at every level.



# Oceania

**In Australia events were seen across the country, in every state and territory.**

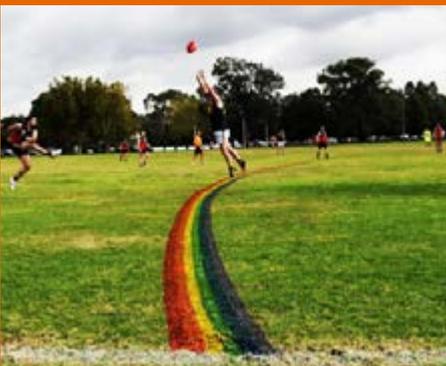


Australia Finger nails go rainbow color for IDAHOT in Australian schools.

From the individual activists that challenged themselves to combat homophobia to the larger groups that worked together on numerous issues, Australia proved to be one of the most active countries in the world for the day.

In Brisbane an iconic scene emerged with the help of local activists and authorities who once again lit the city's Storey Bridge and the City Hall in the colours of the rainbow flag. The rainbow flag was also flown on Sydney city hall and many local councils in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. In Victoria, many Police stations, businesses, charities and agencies also joined in raising a rainbow flag for the entire weekend.

Around the country May 17<sup>th</sup> celebrations were marked by memorial services, message writing campaigns, live music, spoken word performances, puppetry, mural paintings, visual art and choir performances, community picnics, a prom night, sports events, a nail-painting workshop and even a mass same-sex wedding in Sydney. The world of Rugby also chimed in with the second annual Pride Cup timed to coincide with the Day to celebrate diversity and inclusion in sport.



This year's Pride Cup is scheduled to coincide with May 17. Sport at its best!

The day was also supported by many young people who wore purple as part of a national campaign and mobilised to encourage the community to #BeBetter through social media. Many other youth-focused actions were also organised in Melbourne, Sydney, Victoria and several other towns and cities by young people engaging with the issues that faced their local communities.

In New Zealand the day was also successfully marked by several groups. Activists from across the country worked in local settings to engage with mainstream audiences and helped to bring the message of the day closer to the broad society. As well as actions being seen from professional LGBT groups many events were also organised by communities of young people, especially university students, who helped create some of the country's most successful events.



School girls in Victoria "pledge to make their school free from homophobia, transphobia and biphobia".

In both Australia and New Zealand a special focus on indigenous communities also helped promote engagement with the very unique issues often facing LGBT individuals within the region's native population. In Australia a coalition of groups marked the day with a special focus on issues facing LGBTI individuals in the indigenous community, while in New Zealand a traditional Maori gathering was held to celebrate and promote diversity in the country, with a special focus on youth and marginalised groups.

Several officials at State and Federal levels have joined the chorus with special declarations, tweets and posts.



**INTERNATIONAL DAY  
AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA,  
TRANSPHOBIA & BIPHOBIA**

A Worldwide Celebration of  
Sexual and Gender Diversities

**MAY 17**

Since 2005, May 17 has been dedicated to the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), marking the day in 1990 when the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

It constitutes an annual landmark to draw the attention of decision makers, the media, the public, opinion leaders, local authorities, etc. to the alarming situation faced by Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender or Intersex people, and all those who don't conform to majority sexual and gender norms.

The sheer diversity of social, religious, cultural and political contexts in which gender and sexuality are expressed, makes it impossible for the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia to take one specific form or agenda. It is a moment when everyone can take whatever action they wish.

The Day has been given official recognition by many authorities at all levels, from city councils to parliaments and governments. European institutions, UN agencies and many other bodies mark the Day each year with special events



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[www.dayagainsthomophobia.org](http://www.dayagainsthomophobia.org)



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The International IDAHO Committee was established by the founders of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia in 2005. Its missions is to inspire, support, and document the global mobilisations around May 17.

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