



Analysis

EU

Security at international summits: not for protesters

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The institutionalised policing of summit protests by host countries incorporates calculated human rights violations

Protests at international financial and political summits have become a regular occurrence all over the world. Providing security at these events involves large-scale police operations that have become increasingly harmonised among host countries and that, as a rule, infringe protestor's basic political and human rights. A standard procedure is the mass arrest of demonstrators that lacks a legal basis, the majority of whom are released without charge or face broad generic charges. The investment in securing summits, both financial and in terms of personnel is increasing. Furthermore, several institutions to regulate security at summits have emerged at the European and international levels.

G20 in Toronto

The denial of the fundamental right to protest through 'security' measures was seen during the last G20 summit held at the end of June in Toronto, Canada. In fact it was a combined summit of the G8 and the G20. Because of the size of the latter conference, which joined the G8-conference at relatively short notice, the summit took place in central Toronto rather than the rural neighbouring town of Huntsville, the original venue for the G8-summit. This meant the creation of a 'Red Zone' with restricted access and secured by a high metal fence that ran through the city. An estimated 30,000 people, who lived or worked in this area, required special passes to get in (or out) while others were

denied access. The Toronto summit had a security budget of US \$ 833 million for "planning and operations related to policing and security" alone; the entire summit cost more than US \$ 1.2 billion. [1]

Even before protests had started, organisers reported alarming infringements of protestor's political rights. The heavy-handed police approach became clear when initial demonstrations were permitted only within police cordons, where everyone was searched before entering. Houses were raided - in one instance the wrong one - and police detained those deemed to be involved in planning activities, as also happened to demonstrators arriving by bus from French-speaking Quebec.

The situation escalated on the second day of the summit (26 June) when the main demonstrations were to take place. A small group of protestors announced that they would go to the financial centre, adding that they would not shy away from taking militant action. After some damage had been inflicted to offices and shops, and two police cars had been set alight, police began arresting people *en masse*.

Two months after the summit, the Canadian Solidarity Network, which was set up by and for protesters, summarised events as follows:

We now know that between June 21-27, 2010, at least 1,100 people were held for long periods,

either on the streets or in a makeshift jail that was built specifically for the purposes of housing people speaking out against the G8/G20 policies. Many thousands more were detained and questioned but we have no reliable way to ascertain exact numbers at this time. Of the 1,100 people actually held, we believe that at least 306 had charges laid against them.

Of these 306, it is our understanding that presently, at least four are still in prison, their bail either denied or they are awaiting bail hearings. Arrests continue to occur with the most recent that we know of taking place in Hamilton on the night of August 26th. Those in jail are Indigenous people, Indigenous solidarity activists, environmental justice activists and low-income people unable to put up large sums of money as bail.

304 people appeared in court on August 23, 2010. 104 of these people had their charges withdrawn or stayed or considered completed by the (in)justice system. Many people were coerced into paying sums of \$50-100 and were 'diverted' or were asked to turn in 'guilty' pleas.

Approximately 33 did so in the end. This was an obvious ploy to allow the police to save face and not explain why the ridiculous charges, long detentions and mental trauma had to take place in the first instance. Many people were told to take the 'deal' or face further repression. Despite this coercion, dozens of people refused to take the 'deal' insisting that they would take their charges to trial to assert their ability to organize in the face of repression.

232 people (at least) continue to face ongoing prosecution and criminalization and will be returning to the courts in the months and years to follow.

Of these 232 people, plus the arrest on August 26th, it is our current understanding that at least 110 face conspiracy and counselling charges. Conspiracy charges do not require authorities to prove that any so-called illegal activity even took place, only shared intent or encouragement of so-called illegal activity. The test for evidence is sufficiently lowered for conspiracy charges and is thus an easy way for the police and the courts to criminalize dissent and silence outspoken critics. This is one of the most worrisome tactics of the G20 'security' attack and the establishment of the Integrated Security Unit and must be loudly and publicly opposed. Of the people facing conspiracy and/or counselling charges, two are presently in prison, while the courts and the prosecution are attempting to put two back in jail.

18 or so that face the gravest conspiracy charges have been released on extremely difficult bail conditions. Many are under house arrest, unable to use laptops, cell phones, and internet, associate with loved ones or friends or join or organize public demonstrations..."

(Community Solidarity Network communiqué 30.8.10)

(<http://g20.torontomobilize.org/node/475>)

South Korea in November

The next G20-summit will be on 11-12 November 2010 in South-Korea. Trade Unions opposed to the austerity measures promoted by the G20 and implemented by local government, plan to protest at the summit and the government has announced that it will use a staggering 400,000 police officers to counter demonstrations. [2] The pattern set at Toronto looks set to repeat itself.

The progressive newspaper, *Hankyoreh*, made the following observations on the planned measures:

"Street vendors are disappearing from Seoul. The reason is the "street stall cleanup effort" undertaken by the city, which has formed 88 "special street maintenance teams" totalling around 400 people for the G-20 summit. Meanwhile, migrant workers are quaking with fear about possible deportation. On the pretext of "establishing public order for the G-20 summit," the National Police Agency recently embarked on a full-scale crackdown on foreigner crime, and the Justice Ministry has been undertaking a focused crackdown on undocumented migrant workers.

A number of measures that have emerged in the name of preparations for the two-day, one-night event attended by foreign heads of state are prompting concerns about human rights violations. Full-body scanners for airport security searches were installed at four airports on June 30, including Incheon and Gimpo International Airports. The National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) commented on the problematic nature of the scanners, but the government went ahead with plans.

A "Special Law on Escort Security and Terror Prevention in order to successfully host the G-20 summit" passed the National Assembly in May amid objections from civic groups, which called it "an unconstitutional notion of actually using military forces to prevent assemblies and demonstrations from taking place." Meanwhile, the Justice Ministry will be requiring all foreigners entering the country as of August 15 to provide fingerprint and facial identification information."

(The *Hankyoreh* 7.7.10:

http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/429239.html)

A general pattern

As globalisation proceeds and international summits become more important as - often symbolic - policy events, the security around them has become

increasingly institutionalised. In his dissertation, sociologist Christian Scholl studied security operations around six recent summits in Europe. His findings are published in the book *Two Sides of a Barricade; (Dis)order and summit protests in Europe*. [3] It reveals the extent of authorities' plans to suppress protests and the degree of international cooperation. Scholl describes this development as a continuous process of "mutual disturbance" (protesters trying to disturb the summit vs. authorities trying to disturb the protestor's plans). Particularly alarming, although not unsurprising, is the increasing amount of media manipulation and 'psy-ops' applied to these policing operations. Another largely overlooked fact, is the growth of the European (and international) security-industrial complex through institutions such as the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF, with its headquarters in Vicenza, Italy), the European Police Training College (EPTC) and the European Security Research Program (ESRP). [4]

Managing crowds

Research by activists opposed to the 2007 G8-summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, describes the extent of international cooperation around its security. [5]

In the Alt-Spenrath surface mine, German, British and Dutch police practiced how to expel demonstrators. Water canons from the participating countries were brought in [...] the police in Baden-Württemberg organised a comparable training exercise with Swiss police, to prepare for combined operations during the European Soccer Championship in 2008. [...] At the European Police Academy (CEPOL) in Hampshire, Great Britain, tactics and collaboration were analysed. EU Member states are required to participate in the "Instruction, Training and Exertion (ITE) programme..."

The basis for international police cooperation was the Prüm Convention (Schengen III), signed by Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Austria and France in 2005. [6] With non-EU states, such as Switzerland, bilateral conventions were signed.

As a rule a few days before a summit the Schengen-convention is suspended and border controls are reintroduced. Thousands of activists have been denied entry to participate at larger summit protests, following the exchange of information on them. Less well known is the fact that protestors are hindered from travelling by their own authorities. It is thought that this first happened to German demonstrators at the 2001 Genoa G8 summit, when people deemed to be "troublemakers" had to present themselves daily at their local police station"

After the Genoa and Gothenburg summit protests in 2001 EU working groups were created to develop

security standards. The EU Council's Football Handbook became the basis for the Police Handbook for public order. Then the Handbook for security at large international events in the EU was published. In 2007 they were amalgamated into one Handbook covering both public order (protests) and counter-terrorism.

There is also cooperation with countries outside the EU. In 2006 the International Permanent Observatory on Security during Major Events (IPO) began as a working group in the UN with a headquarters in Turin, Italy. The IPO advises and aids national governments on relevant security questions

Footnotes

- 1) BBC report 24 June 2010:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10385483>
- 2) Korea Times 3.8.10
<http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/> website faulters?
- 3) University of Amsterdam 2010:
<http://dare.uva.nl/record/342633>
- 4) A handy overview can be found in this presentation-factsheet:
http://euro-police.noblogs.org/files/2010/08/factsheet_2010.pdf
- 5) See Managing Crowds:
<http://www.gipfelsoli.org/Home/7839.html>
- 6) See
<http://www.statewatch.org/news/2005/aug/Pr%FCm-Convention.pdf>

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