

Marches and Protests Hit the Streets on May Day Around the World



Havana, May 1 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of people across the globe hit the streets on Thursday for mass rallies marking International Workers' Day. In a number of places, mass demonstrations were held to mark the date.

International Workers' Day is celebrated as a public holiday in more than 80 countries around the world. The one country that prominently stands out where it is not celebrated is the United States -- where the commemoration actually began. May 1st commemorates the struggle that Chicago workers, unionists and Leftists went through in 1886 to fight for an eight-hour work day. Violent protests broke out on May 1, 1886 as 35,000 workers rallied on the streets of the U.S. city of Chicago to demand better working hours.

Today, Turkish police used water canons and tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters who tried to defy a Labor Day ban on demonstrations on Istanbul's Taksim Square, the scene for months of protests against the government.

Indonesian police said some 33,000 workers rallied across the capital Jakarta. Unions said up to two million workers were out in force to demand better working conditions in Southeast Asia's most populous

nation. Among the workers marching for Indonesia's first May Day national holiday were women who used to earn less than \$1 an hour making Adidas shoes, until they were fired.

In Moscow, more than 100,000 people marched through Red Square to celebrate May Day, the first time the annual parade has been held on the vast cobblestoned square outside the Kremlin since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In Seoul, around 5,000 South Korean workers rallied outside the main railway station in the afternoon, but this year's traditional May Day trade union gathering has been overshadowed by the ferry disaster that has claimed the lives of hundreds of people, many of them schoolchildren. Workers marched to City Hall to pay their respects to the victims of the April 16th disaster at a temporary memorial.

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