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Protesters break through a police security line

Thousands of anti-globalisation protesters have clashed with riot police in the Italian city of Naples.

An estimated 20,000 demonstrators gathered to protest against a meeting of the Global Forum - a conference of government and technology leaders being held in the city.

Police fired teargas and rubber bullets at demonstrators after they broke through barricades in an attempt to reach conference delegates from 120 governments.

Paving stones and smoke bombs were thrown from the crowds and rubbish containers were set on fire.

Witnesses said the central square looked like a battlefield as ambulances ferried the injured out.

Up to 80 people were injured in the violence, including one police commander who was taken to hospital with serious head wounds.

A journalist and photographer said they had been beaten up by the police, while protest organisers said a pregnant woman had been among those hurt.

An Italian television crew was also attacked by the protesters.



There were casualties on both sides

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The BBC's  
Frances Kennedy  
"Witnesses said  
the central square  
looked like a  
battlefield"

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## Helicopters overhead

Cars and offices were damaged in the protest, organised by the No Global Network, and shop windows were smashed,

Many store owners had shut their businesses in anticipation of the violence.

Helicopters circled overhead monitoring the clashes and about 100 people are reported to have been arrested.

"There are still areas of tension. We will have to be extremely vigilant for the next few hours," Reuters quoted police spokesman Nicola Izzo as saying.



The demonstrators gathered at the scene after arriving in Naples on trains from Milan and Palermo.

A total of 600 riot police had earlier been drafted into the city, and had sealed off the centre with barricades and riot vehicles in preparation for possible clashes. Some of the clashes turned ugly

The global forum, involving 800 delegates from governments and international organisations, has focused on how new technologies change the concept and practice of government.

While the forum has a section dedicated to the digital divide, and ways of ensuring electronic access to developing nations, the protestors say the Internet age is only exacerbating inequalities.

Tight security has been imposed at dozens of summits and high-level finance meetings throughout Europe and the United States since huge anti-globalisation riots wrecked a meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Seattle in 1999.

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