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## Thousands gather at conference centre in Prague

By Independent Digital's reporter in Prague

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Under intense sun, with a helicopter circling overhead, about 1,000 protesters are currently blockading Kvetna - a major road in Southern Prague that leads to the conference centre where the IMF's 55th annual meeting is being held.

The Pink Group, so-called because of the balloons and flags protesters have used to identify themselves, initially left Namesti Miru after they had circled the square, then joined red, yellow, and blue teams possibly totalling in excess of 20,000 people.

Currently there is a sense of stand off with the pink team's samba band giving the protest a festival atmosphere.

In other quarters the situation has been entirely different. Communicating via mobiles phones, a popular accessory in this eastern European city, protesters have been sharing news of water cannon attacks, tear gas bombardments and baton charges.

The Yellow group, led by Italian-based protest group Ya Basta, has been excessively gassed after attempting to storm a heavily fortified police barricade.

Water cannons are now arriving within the pink area, which is adding to a growing sense of unease.

Speaking from within the facility, an IMF spokeswoman who refused to give her name said the atmosphere among delegates was "one of nervousness".

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