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## Thousands prepare for G8 battle

By DENIS BARNETT in Genoa, Italy  
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THOUSANDS of Italian troops and police have enforced a no-go zone in Genoa, turning the ancient port into a ghost city to protect Group of Eight leaders from anti-globalisation demonstrations.

Protesters poured out of special trains at the city's Brignoli railway station in the early hours yesterday to prepare for a showdown with the world leaders meeting from today.

Some of the activists wore protective body padding.

Thousands of anti-globalisation activists were planning three days of demonstrations culminating in a march by up to 100,000 people tomorrow.

"I am for direct action, non-violence," said Alberto Lambertini, 35, reflecting the views of many.

But several groups, including radical White Overalls members, have threatened to breach the high-security "red zone" around the 13th century Palazzo Ducale, in the heart of Genoa's old merchant city.

The 4sq km area is protected by 20,000 police and paramilitary forces, some equipped with automatic rifles, sidearms, helmets and riot shields and cut off from the rest of the city by 4m steel gates.

The tight security follows anti-globalisation violence at the European Union summit in Sweden in May.

The leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US arrived last night and Russian President Vladimir Putin is due today.

Poverty, disease and poor nations' debt will feature high on the agenda of the two-day summit.

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