

The women's global strike and the growing movement against Trump

By Amy Goodman and Denis Moynihan

The Statue of Liberty went dark Tuesday, the day after President Donald Trump signed his revised executive order, dubbed the “Muslim ban 2.0,” excluding all refugees and people from six majority-Muslim countries. The darkening also foreshadowed the next day, Wednesday, International Women’s Day, which was organized as a strike this year: “A Day Without a Woman.” Lady Liberty, who for more than 130 years has proclaimed to the world “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” had disappeared, at least for a few hours, from the New York skyline.

International Women’s Day has been celebrated on March 8 for more than a century, but this year’s global day of action was marked with an added sense of urgency. A man who was caught on tape bragging about committing sexual assault is now the president of the United States. (“I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it ... Grab ‘em by the p***y. You can do anything,” Trump said in 2005 to former NBC host Billy Bush, on an “Access Hollywood” recording that was released last October. Billy Bush would lose his job over the scandal; Trump would get elected president just weeks later.)

The day after Trump’s inauguration, more than 4 million people protested from coast to coast, perhaps the largest political protest in U.S. history. The Women’s March on Washington alone was three times the size of his inauguration crowd the day before, a fact that clearly enraged the president.

Two days later, Trump would sign an executive order imposing a “global gag rule,” which bans U.S. foreign aid to any nongovernmental organization that provides abortion or even talks about it as an option. Trump also is pressuring lawmakers to pass the Republican bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The law would strip funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides a broad array of health-care services to more than 2.5 million Americans annually. Only 3 percent of its services are abortion-related, and no federal funding goes to provide abortions.

With events in over 50 countries, this year’s women’s strike is the largest in recent history. “March 8th will be the beginning of a new international feminist movement that organizes resistance not just against Trump and his misogynist policies,” the organizers’ website states, “but also against the conditions that produced Trump, namely the decades long economic inequality, racial and sexual violence, and imperial wars abroad.”

Just this week, a leaked document revealed that the Department of Homeland Security is considering a proposal to separate refugee mothers from their children if they are apprehended crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a video promoting the global action, people declare their reasons for participating:

“I’m striking on March 8th because I believe women should be free to make the decisions regarding their own bodies ... I’m striking on March 8th for equal pay and equal opportunity, because women’s work makes all other work possible and because it’s about time we start valuing women’s labor ... I’m striking on March 8th because when I go out, I want to feel free, not brave ... because women matter.”

As dawn broke over Washington, D. C., on International Women’s Day, Donald Trump tweeted: “I have tremendous respect for women and the many roles they serve that are vital to the fabric of our society and our economy.” This from the man who has been accused of sexual assault and sexual harassment by at least 15 women, half of them just during his recent campaign.

The women of the world and their male allies are judging Trump not on his words but on his deeds. They are engaged, they are enraged, and they are organizing across issues. Among the signs at the rallies on International Women’s Day was one that read “No Gag, No Ban, No Wall.” Another read “A woman’s place is in the revolution.” Trump is doing damage, daily, to pillars of progressive achievement for which people have fought, gone to prison, even died for, for over a century. But the resistance is growing, offering hope in a time of darkness.