

## In Brief: Georgia

According to the [US Crisis Monitor](#), Georgia has recorded 337 demonstrations since May 24, 2020, ranking 15th in the United States (and 48th in terms of events per capita). **Of these 337 demonstrations, 93 percent (or 313) were recorded as peaceful.** 66 percent were related to the Black Lives Matter movement, 14 percent were COVID-19 related, and at least 5 percent were pro-police Back the Blue or Blue Lives Matter related.

These demonstrations are primarily concentrated in and around metro Atlanta: in Fulton County, which accounted for 83 demonstrations, as well as Clarke and Cobb, with 27 and 23 demonstrations, respectively. With two demonstrations, Turner County had by far the most demonstrations per capita, followed by Clarke County with 27.

In the broad count of contentious demonstrations, 7 percent of all demonstrations (or 24 of 337) were contentious. Contention includes any peaceful demonstration met by state (police, other law enforcement) or non-state (active counter-protesters, citizens) intervention. It also includes excessive use of force by the state or violence by/associated with demonstrators. Though significantly less in number, these events may be potential flashpoints for further contention.

Of these contentious demonstrations, 83% (or 20 events) involved state intervention into demonstrations, commonly police arresting demonstrators or using pepper spray or tear gas to break up protests. 54% (or 13) of the contentious demonstrations turned violent before police intervention. Only Fulton County saw more than two contentious demonstrations, with 14. All contentious demonstrations occurred in the greater Atlanta metro area, with the exception of one in Columbus, GA.

### Political violence and other risk factors

4 percent of all demonstrations in Georgia were met by counter protesters. Of these 13 events, 11 (or 85 percent) remained peaceful. 6 events (or 46 percent) took place in June. 8 events (or 62 percent) occurred in the Atlanta metro area or Athens, GA.

Georgia has seen 98 police-involved killings in 71 counties since September 2018.<sup>1</sup> Police shootings have not only been salient flashpoints for large-scale protests but may also undermine community trust in and cooperation with police, further impeding the state and community ability to respond to contentious events.

Georgia has experienced 40 anti-Semitic events and 34 occurrences of white supremacist propaganda since January 2019 with the majority of these events occurring in the greater Atlanta area, Columbus, Athens, and Augusta.<sup>2</sup> Preliminary analysis suggests that the presence or activity of extremists groups, like white supremacist groups, can be associated with future conflict.

### Select Counties with State & National Comparison

[May 24, 2020 - October 3, 2020]

County	Recorded Militia Present	Total Demonstrations	% Contentious (Protesters, State, or External)	% With State Intervention	% Met with Counter-Protesters
Fulton	Yes	83	17%	14%	4%
Clarke	No	27	7%	4%	11%
Cobb	No	23	-	-	-
Gwinnett	No	18	11%	11%	-
Chatham	No	18	-	-	-
DeKalb	Yes	17	6%	-	6%
Floyd	No	10	-	-	10%
Richmond	No	12	-	-	-
<b>Georgia</b>	-	337	7%	6%	4%
<b>National</b>	-	12,187	9%	7.5%	5%

Total demonstrations include all peaceful and contentious protests. Demonstrations with state intervention are police force intervention. Source: [US Crisis Monitor](#), [ACLEd \(2020\)](#)

### Actors of concern

The Southern Poverty Law Center mapped [38 hate groups in Georgia](#) in 2019, across a wide range of ideologies: white nationalist,<sup>3</sup> Black separatist, Neo-Confederate, and general hate.

<sup>1</sup> Includes all events from 6 Sept 2018 to 30 Sept 2020 from the [Mapping Police Violence data](#)

<sup>2</sup> Includes all events from Jan 2019 to 28 Aug 2020 from [ADL HEAT Map](#)

<sup>3</sup> Including neo-Nazi, neo-Volkisch, racist skinhead, Ku Klux Klan, anti-immigrant, anti-muslim, and hate music organizations.

Georgia hosts chapters of the nationwide militias the III Percenters and Oath Keepers, in addition to several local groups.<sup>4</sup> Since June 2020, eight Georgia counties have seen militia activity, primarily recruitment and training events. On September 19 2020, at a [pro-Second Amendment event](#) in Ringgold, GA, armed members of the Georgia III%ers joined a rally for Senator Kelly Loeffler and congressional candidate (and vocal Qanon supporter) Marjorie Taylor Greene, ostensibly to provide security.

## Election factors

In 2016, 51% of Georgians voted for Donald Trump, while almost 47% percent voted for Hillary Clinton. Most of Atlanta’s metropolitan counties cast a plurality of votes for Clinton, as did the counties surrounding the cities of Columbus, Macon, Augusta, and Savannah. Close races in 2016 and 2018 indicate that Georgia is emerging as a potential [battleground state](#) in the 2020 elections. Of Georgia’s 159 counties, 106 (or 66 percent) have recorded minority populations over 30 percent — a possible target for increased racially-motivated violence and/or intimidation ahead around the election.

## Incidents and trends of concern

Despite high-profile incidents such as the [police killing of Rayshard Brooks](#) (June 12 2020) and the May 29 2020 [riots damaging the CNN Center](#), Georgia has seen one of the lowest rates of demonstrations per capita in the United States (ranked 48).

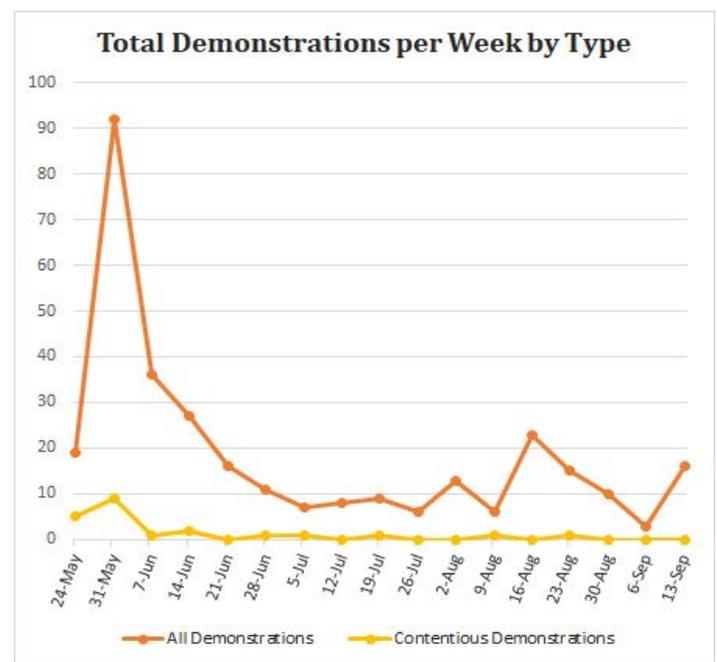
Athens-Clarke County, home to the University of Georgia, has seen the highest number of events with counter-protests present in the state. In all three cases, protesters rallied in support of Black Lives Matter and were confronted by counter-protesters chanting pro-police slogans. Only one of these counter-protests [turned violent](#) (on June 16 2020), when a pro-police protester dragged a BLM supporter [down a set of stairs](#); however, no injuries were reported. Earlier, on May 31 2020, police and National Guard soldiers [used tear gas](#) to disperse protesters in downtown Athens, having been mobilized by Governor Kemp’s declaration of a state of emergency.

On August 15 2020, several dozen III%er militia members, many carrying firearms and Confederate flags, [clashed](#) with several dozen anti-racist

protesters in Stone Mountain, GA, near the largest Confederate memorial in the country. Some demonstrators on both sides of the clash were armed, but no weapons were reported to be discharged. Police and National Guard soldiers dispersed the demonstrators after some demonstrators were injured.

Over the summer 2020, **17 demonstrations were explicitly linked to the debate over removing Confederate memorials.** Of these events, two involved the Sons of Confederate Veterans staging an [unopposed demonstration](#) in favor of keeping the monuments in McDonough, GA, while 11 demonstrations, predominantly in Atlanta and Augusta, called for removing the monuments. The remaining four demonstrations involved protesters and counterprotesters on both sides, as anti-racist protesters seek to remove them and other protesters seek to defend them. These contentious demonstrations occurred in Athens, Stone Mountain, Dalton, and Dublin.

The week of August 16 saw an increase in demonstrations, all of which were peaceful. The state-wide increase was primarily due to [demonstrators voicing their support of the U.S. Postal Service](#), in response to reports that President Trump and Postmaster General Louis DeJoy sought to slow down mail-in voting in advance of the November 2020 elections.



<sup>4</sup> 229 Militia, Georgia Militia, Georgia Martyrs