

In Brief: Minnesota

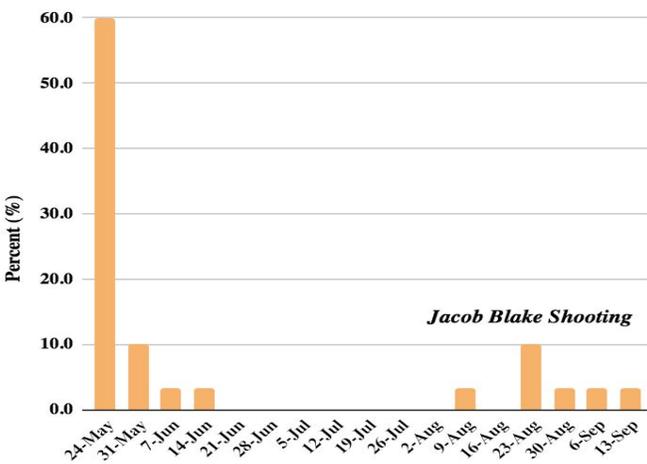
According to the [US Crisis Monitor](#), Minnesota has recorded nearly 200 demonstrations since May 24 — ranking 24th in the United States (and 38th in terms of events per capita). Minneapolis/St. Paul¹ and Duluth have seen the bulk of activity, with their respective counties accounting for 75 percent of all demonstrations.

Of the 197 demonstrations, 71.1 percent were related to the Black Lives Matter movement, of which 80.7 percent were peaceful. 9.6 percent of all demonstrations were COVID-19 related, and only one percent were related to the “Back the Blue” or “Blue Lives Matter” movement.

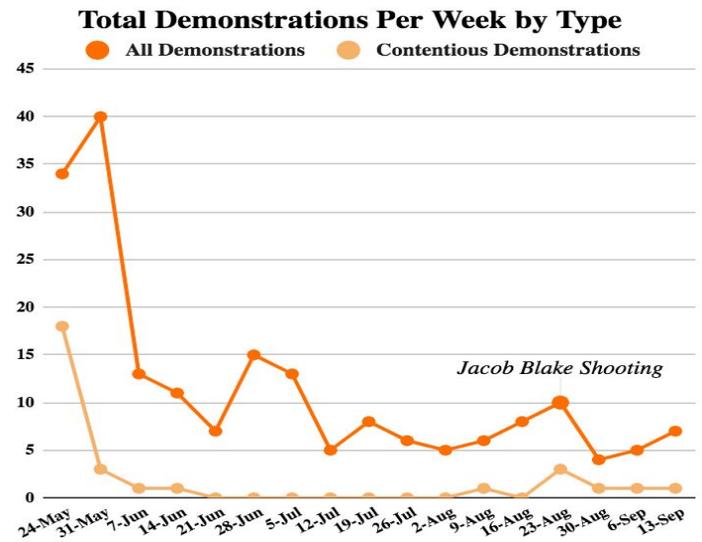
85 percent of all demonstrations (or 167) were recorded as peaceful. In the broad category of contentious demonstrations, 30 events were recorded as contentious. Contention includes any peaceful demonstration met by state (police, other law enforcement) or non-state (active counter-protesters, citizens) intervention, as well as excessive use of force by the state or violence by or associated with demonstrators. Though significantly less in number, these events may be potential flashpoints for further contention.

Of the 30 events recorded as contentious, 67 percent (20 events) occurred in the seven days following the death of George Floyd (May 26-June 1), with another small spike occurring in the week following the shooting of Jacob Blake on August 23.

Distribution of Contentious Demonstrations Over Time (As a Percent of Total Contentious Demonstrations)



93 percent of all demonstrations from June 2 onwards have been recorded as peaceful.



The spike in peaceful protests in late-June and early-July is partially explained by a series of demonstrations held by Oromo Ethiopians over the [death of singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa](#) in Ethiopia.

80 percent of all contentious events across Minnesota (25 events) were met with some form of police intervention, and just under a third of those saw the use of tear gas, pepper spray or other munitions by the police as a crowd control measure. 20 percent of all contentious demonstrations were either met by counter-protesters (2 events) or armed non-state militias (3 events).

Other political violence & risk factors

Four percent of all demonstrations (or 8 events) saw the presence of counter-protesters — 63 percent of which remained peaceful. 75 percent of these events occurred in the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

Minnesota saw 25 police-involved deaths in 15 counties since September 2018.² 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 ability for the state and community to respond to contentious events.

¹ Minneapolis and St. Paul is generally considered to be a seven-county region consisting of: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties.

² Includes all events from 6 Sept 2018 to 6 Sept 2020 from the [Mapping Police Violence data](#)

Minnesota has recorded 32 anti-semitic events and 107 occurrences of white supremacist propaganda over the past year, with the majority of these events occurring in the greater Minneapolis / St. Paul area and the counties surrounding the metropolitan area (Stearns, Rice, and Steele Counties).³ Preliminary analysis suggests these incidents can be associated with future conflict.

Actors of Concern

In 2019, the Southern Poverty Law Center [mapped 12 hate organizations in Minnesota](#) (6 statewide) across roughly five ideologies: white nationalist,⁴ anti-Muslim, general hate, radical traditional catholicism, and Black separatist.

Other groups present at protests over the past several months include: Aryan Cowboys, [Three Percenters](#), [Boogaloo Bois](#), and [small armed “community patrols”](#).

Select Counties with State & National Comparison

[May 24 - September 19, 2020]

County	Recorded Militia Present	Total Demonstrations	% Contentious (Protesters, State, or External)	% With State Intervention	% Met with Counter-Protesters
Anoka	7	2	29%	29%	-
Dakota	4	1	50%	25%	-
Goodhue	6	0	-	-	17%
Hennepin	59	11	20%	19%	2%
Olmsted	6	0	-	-	-
Ramsey	52	5	15%	10%	4%
St. Louis	18	2	11%	11%	11%
Stearns	7	1	14%	14%	-
Washington	5	3	60%	60%	20%
Minnesota		197	15%	13%	4
National	-	12608	9%	7%	5%

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

Election Factors

Minnesota is one of five “[states to watch](#)” in the upcoming presidential election. In 2016, Hillary Clinton won all 10 electoral votes with 46.4% of the vote (to Donald Trump’s 44.9%).

Mahnomen, Nobles, Ramsey, and Hennepin counties have recorded minority populations over 30%⁵ — a

³ Includes events from 31 Aug 2019 to 31 Aug 2020 from [ADL HEAT Map](#)

⁴ Includes neo-Nazi, neo-Volkisch, racist skinhead, Ku Klux Klan, and hate music organizations

⁵ Mahnomen county has a population of 5,423 and is entirely located within the White Earth Indian Reservation.

possible target for increased racially-motivated violence and/or intimidation ahead around the election.

Incidents and trends of note

On September 12, more than [100 people, some carrying long guns and wearing body armor, rallied outside of the Minnesota Capitol](#) in support of President Trump and against the statewide pandemic policies. The demonstration was organized by the Minnesota Patriot Alliance. About 14 counter-protesters also showed up in opposition — police arrested two of the counter-protesters. Several reports note the presence of an unidentified right-wing armed group “watching” the demonstration from cars with weapons and nationalistic iconography.

On June 15, a [St. Cloud police officer was shot in the hand](#) while detaining an 18-year-old suspect. Following the arrest, rumors that the police had killed a black man quickly spread on social media, sparking a protest in front of the city’s police station. According to the Police Department, the crowd damaged property, but was dispersed through the use of “chemical irritants”.

On May 25, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man, died after being handcuffed and pinned to the ground by a police officer. George Floyd’s death [sparked national and international protests](#) against police brutality and systemic racism:

- **Over two-thirds of all contentious protests in Minnesota occurred in the seven days following George Floyd’s death.**
- Of the 20 contentious events that occurred in this seven-day period, all but one occurred in the seven-county Twin Cities region — one occurred in St. Louis County (Duluth City).
- 26 peaceful protests occurred over this same time period. 10 (38%) occurred in one of the seven Minneapolis-St. Paul counties and four occurred in St. Louis County. The remaining 12 were spread across 11 small, micropolitan, and rural counties.

On May 27, a man was filmed smashing windows of a local Minneapolis business. The search warrant affidavit for the suspect asserted that the vandalism “[created an atmosphere of hostility and tension](#)” and set off a chain reaction of arson and looting. The suspect is a member of the Hells Angels and an associate of the Aryan Cowboys.