

## In Brief: Ohio

According to the [US Crisis Monitor](#), Ohio has recorded over 400 demonstrations since May 24 - ranking 7th in the United States (and 37th in terms of per capita). **Of the 403 demonstrations, 91 percent (or 367) were recorded as peaceful.** Nearly 80 percent of demonstrations were related to the Black Lives Matter movement, and 9 percent were related to COVID-19. Ohio has seen at least 23 pro-police demonstrations, including “Back the Blue” or “Blue Lives Matter.”

These demonstrations are concentrated in a few counties, with Franklin, Cuyahoga, Montgomery, Hamilton, and Summit counties accounting for 195 demonstrations. Athens County had by far the most demonstrations per capita, with 9 demonstrations.

In the broad category of contentious demonstrations, 9 percent of all demonstrations in Ohio were contentious in this period. Contention includes any peaceful demonstrations 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.

Specifically in Ohio, 7 percent of demonstrations were met with state intervention and 4 percent were met with counter-protesters. Of the 23 contentious events, 9 percent saw the use of tear gas, pepper spray, or rubber bullets by police to disperse or control crowds. Of the demonstrations associated with the Black Lives Matter movement, 24 percent (or 20 demonstrations) were contentious.

### Political violence and other risk factors

Ohio has the same percentage of contentious demonstrations as the national average, however, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, and Stark counties have a significantly higher percentage of these events than other counties in the state.

Ohio saw 47 police-involved killings in 7 counties since September 2018, mostly in Franklin, Montgomery, and Cuyahoga counties.<sup>1</sup> Police shootings have not only been salient flashpoints for large-scale protests but also

undermine community trust in and cooperation with police, further impeding the ability for the state and community to respond to contentious events.

Ohio recorded 35 anti-semitic events and 244 occurrences of white supremacist propaganda over the past year, with the most antisemitic events occurring in Cuyahoga (11) and white supremacist propaganda overwhelmingly distributed in Franklin and Hamilton.<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 - September 22, 2020]

County	Recorded Militia Present	Total Demonstrations	% Contentious (Protesters, State, or External)	% With State Intervention	% Met with Counter-Protesters
Athens	No	9	-	-	1%
Clermont	Yes	3	100%	-	100%
Cuyahoga	No	52	2%	2%	2%
Franklin	Yes	64	14%	14%	2%
Hamilton	No	26	19%	19%	4%
Montgomery	No	27	15%	15%	4%
Stark	Yes	11	36%	27%	9%
Summit	Yes	26	12%	8%	-
<b>Ohio</b>	-	403	9%	7%	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 \(2020\)](#)

### Election factors

In 2016, 52 percent of the Ohio popular vote went to Donald Trump. Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Athens, Summit, Mahoning, and Lucas counties voted mostly (i.e. 50-65%) for Hillary Clinton.

Four of Ohio’s 88 counties (5%), Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, and Lucas, have nonwhite populations exceeding 30 percent - a possible target for increased racially-motivated violence and/or intimidation ahead around the election.

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

<sup>2</sup> Includes all events from 31 Aug 2019 to 31 Aug, 2020 from the [ADL HEAT Map](#)

## Actors of concern

The Southern Poverty Law Center mapped [31 hate groups in Ohio](#) in 2019, across roughly four ideologies: white nationalist,<sup>3</sup> Black separatist, Neo-Confederate, and general hate.

Five counties, Franklin, Stark, Summit, Clermont, and Columbiana, have seen militia activity since June 2020. Actors present in Ohio demonstrations included three unidentified communal militias in Clermont, Franklin, and Stark counties.

## Incidents and trends of note

Between May 26 and June 14, Ohio recorded 238 demonstrations, of which 24 were contentious. These contentious demonstrations occurred mostly in Columbus and Cincinnati. These events included rioters throwing rocks and bottles at police, looting, and damage of property, including police cars and buildings. Police employed rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse crowds.

At a demonstration in Columbus on May 30, police used pepper spray on demonstrators, while protesters threw rocks and bricks at police and set off fireworks. [A Black Congresswoman and the City Council President were pepper sprayed](#) by police; [a journalist was also pepper sprayed](#) by police. Five people were arrested. On June 1st, police used tear gas and rubber bullets. [Three Ohio state University student reporters were pepper sprayed](#) despite showing press passes.

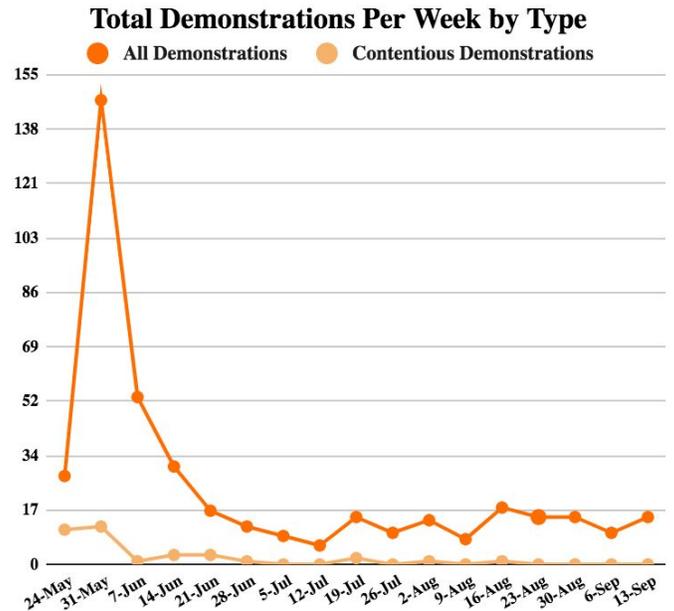
On May 30 in Cleveland, demonstrators threw food, rocks, and bottles at police, set fire to 10 police cars, and broke into a business; [99 people were arrested](#). [Twenty people were hospitalized](#).

In June, [two Pennsylvania men were arrested by the FBI](#) in connection to these events and charged with bringing a weapon and fire-starting materials to demonstrations, demonstrating some clear out of state participation.

In Cincinnati, police arrested more than 100 people in violation of the curfew on May 3; and on June 1 [arrested a journalist](#) and [assaulted another](#).

In mid-June in Clermont County, at least three [BLM demonstrations were met with hundreds of counter-protesters](#), self-described as “motorcycle

gangs.” Armed with rifles and baseball bats, they intimidated and attacked BLM protesters. No serious injuries were reported in these events - but at least one BLM protester was punched, ten altercations were reported, and at least five people were arrested.



From July to late September, there were 160 demonstrations, 60 of which were related to the BLM movement. **Since July, Ohio has seen relatively few contentious demonstrations, with only 4 contentious demonstrations occurring between July and late September, in Columbus, Akron, Dayton, and Canton.**

In August, Ohio recorded 9 peaceful demonstrations for and against schools reopening and in-person instruction resuming amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ohio has also recorded many “Back the Blue” or pro-police demonstrations. Four were recorded in July, four in August, and five in September, mostly in less populated areas of the state.

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