



BDI Issue Brief: Unaffiliated Armed and Unidentified Militia Actors at Demonstrations, January 2020 – June 2021

Key Trends:

- ACLED recorded over 953 incidents involving armed groups, unlawful paramilitary groups, or armed individuals at demonstrations from January 1, 2020 to June 4, 2021. Just under half (416) of recorded armed actors were unidentified or unaffiliated with an organized or named paramilitary group.
- Among these unaffiliated armed actors, the overwhelming majority of counter-protest groups or individuals targeted BLM demonstrations — 94% of all recorded armed counter-protests were in opposition to BLM, defund the police, or anti-confederate monument protests.
- Excluding named militia actors, armed demonstrators mobilized for mixed, political causes including around COVID-19, Stop the Steal, and longer term 2nd Amendment related triggers, as well as Black Lives Matter and defund the police.
- 14% (57 of 416) of all unaffiliated armed demonstrations involved shots fired, with just under half (27 of 57) carried out by actors that were not originally involved with the demonstration or an explicit counter-protest.
- Disinformation and misinformation sparked a significant portion of armed mobilization — including rumors of “antifa buses” and false narratives of a stolen election, with these incidents occurring in at least 13 of 50 states.

I. Introduction

Following the high profile role of unlawful paramilitary and “organized” armed groups in the events of January 6, much public attention and research has rightly turned to examining specific named, unlawful paramilitary groups. However, the [majority of people arrested](#) in connection with the Capitol attack were [not affiliated with militia organizations](#).

These unaffiliated actors, or otherwise unidentified armed groups, continue to be a reality in the US protest environment. Moreover, the attack on January 6 was preceded by a year of multiple notable trends in these types of armed actors at protests. For example, a Georgia man recently [charged with participating in the January 6 attack on the US Capitol](#), also reportedly attended an August 2020 neo-confederate/militia rally in Stone Mountain and has said that he has traveled to several other states throughout summer 2020 to counter-demonstrate against BLM protests. Among at least 4 [people arrested on firearms charges](#) following the attack in January, Cleveland Meredith, a heavily armed man who [threatened to “\[put\] a bullet”](#) in Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s head, also reportedly [“put several BLM protesters on edge”](#) when he showed up with an assault rifle to counterprotest a BLM rally on June 5 in Hiawassee, Georgia. Similarly, Richard Barnett, the man who was infamously photographed sitting at Nancy Pelosi’s

desk on January 6, [participated in at least 1 armed “Stop the Steal” protest](#) at the Capitol in Little Rock, Arkansas.

This brief looks at 416 instances of armed actors and incidents involving guns at protests, where the armed actors were not reported to be affiliated with a named paramilitary or militia organization.

Methodology

Data for this brief draws primarily from the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project](#) (ACLED) for January 1, 2020 through June 4, 2021, supplemented by other open source reporting. We categorize and code the ACLED data in two fundamental ways.¹ First, we subset the more than 29,500 events to include only those events with recorded “unaffiliated” armed or unidentified paramilitary or militia-like actors linked to a protest or planned protest. The data subset analyzed here therefore does not include events with recorded named paramilitary actors (III%ers, Oath Keepers, Proud Boys, Boogaloo Boys, etc.), though this is another important avenue for research and analysis.² Second, we conducted an individual review of the subset of 416 events to further categorize the data, capturing: (1) the role of the armed actor(s) (either protester, counter-protester, or other individual), (2) the protest topic, and (3) common types of behavior (neighborhood patrols, brandished guns, recorded shootings, etc.).

This issue brief focuses almost exclusively on providing descriptive detail within four categories: (1) demonstrations with armed protesters, (2) demonstrations with armed counter-protests, (3) demonstrations with both armed protesters and counter-protests, and (4) demonstrations with other armed third-party actors not actively protesting or counter-protesting (e.g., armed drivers or armed passersby that ultimately engage the protest). Understanding these patterns of behavior by both lawful protesters and individuals or groups intending to intimidate, incite, or otherwise promote violence may help communities and researchers better understand and mitigate evolving threats.

Legal Context: Unlawful Paramilitaries and Gun Legislation

According to [Georgetown’s Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection \(ICAP\)](#), “groups of armed individuals that engage in paramilitary activity or law enforcement functions without being called forth by a governor or the federal government and without reporting to any government authority are acting as unauthorized private militias. They sometimes train together and respond to events using firearms and other paramilitary techniques, such as staking out tactical positions and operating in military-style formations. They often purport to have authority to engage in military and law enforcement functions such as protecting property and engaging in crowd control.” Particularly relevant for this brief, “groups of armed individuals may engage in unauthorized militia activity even if they do not consider

¹ The data and analysis presented here are based on BDI coding choices; as such, summary statistics presented by ACLED on similar groups may differ slightly. BDI’s coding of these specific events may be made available to other researchers, in line with ACLED’s terms of use.

² Events included in the unaffiliated armed and unidentified militia data presented in this brief may overlook affiliations of groups or actors if they were not otherwise reported in news articles or original sources. Additionally, militia identities and individual affiliations are fairly fluid, with some individuals holding multiple affiliations with well-known paramilitary groups and more local “unidentified” militia organizations, while paramilitary groups have at times encouraged members to not display or announce group affiliation. BDI visually confirmed insignia or other details of affiliation, via media searches, in 5 events not already coded as such in ACLED existing data.

themselves to be “members” of a paramilitary organization.” *For additional information on legal definitions of a militia, see [ICAP’s 50-state militia fact sheets](#).*

More broadly, the legal status of firearms at demonstrations is complicated. The Second Amendment to the US Constitution protects the right to bear arms. While in some [states it is legal to open carry](#) loaded firearms at demonstrations, it is not lawful in any state to operate a private militia (as outlined above) and most states [prohibit more “threatening” gun-related activity](#), like brandishing, assault with a firearm, or menacing with a firearm.

In response to the prevalence of armed demonstrations last year, however, some lawmakers have taken steps to limit open carry provisions. [Michigan](#) and [Washington](#) banned the open carry of firearms in capitol buildings, while [Oregon](#) has banned all guns for the Oregon Capitol — all 3 states saw high armed activity at state capitol buildings in the past 17 months, with both [Michigan](#) and [Oregon](#) seeing armed breaches of their state capitol buildings. Washington lawmakers further [prohibited the open carry of firearms at or around public demonstrations](#).

Other states have opted to expand gun rights. In May, Texas became the 20th state to pass legislation that [eliminates most restrictions on the ability to carry handguns](#). Missouri Governor Mike Parson signed a [bill prohibiting local law enforcement agencies from enforcing federal gun laws](#). At least 8 other states — Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia — have pushed similar measures this year, in addition to hundreds of counties that have adopted [Second Amendment sanctuary resolutions or ordinances](#).

II. Data Overview

Armed protest and counterprotest, as well as explicit firearm-related violence, occurred in several waves over the past year. In the initial months of 2020, hundreds of armed protesters showed up to state capitals across the country to protest [against COVID-19 restrictions](#) — in several states, [armed protesters forcefully entered state Capitol buildings](#) to object to pandemic-related lockdowns. In the ensuing months, armed protesters mobilized to **counter or confront racial justice demonstrations**, protest **against gun-control** measures, and **dispute the results of the 2020 election**.

In total, the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project \(ACLED\)](#) recorded over 953 incidents involving armed or paramilitary groups or individuals at demonstrations from January 1, 2020 to June 4, 2021 — excluding all official state armed forces. Over half (537) recorded the presence of self-identified or clearly affiliated paramilitary actors like the [Boogaloo Boys](#), [Oath Keepers](#), [People’s Rights](#), [Proud Boys](#), or [Three Percenters](#), with these actors mobilizing around issues similar to unaffiliated armed actors throughout the year, including racial justice (215), COVID-19 (117), and “Stop the Steal” (101).

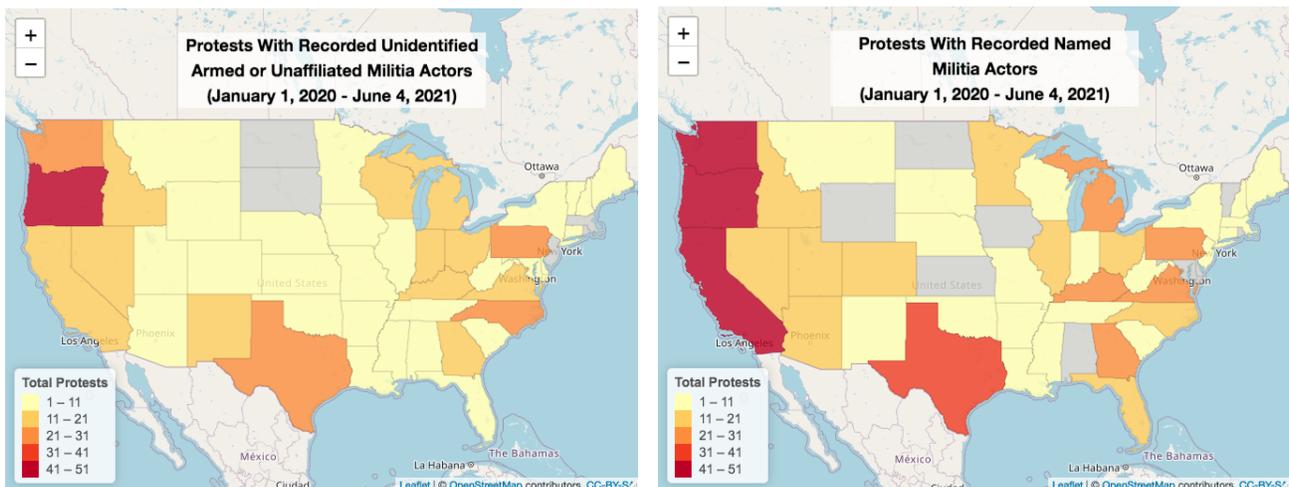
The remaining 416 events recorded armed actors or groups unaffiliated, or not otherwise identified as affiliated, with a specific paramilitary or named armed group. These events fall into 4 general categories based on the role of the armed individual or group:

1. Events with armed **demonstrators**: ACLED recorded at least 151 demonstrations where the primary protester or protest group was armed. 65% (99) addressed topics generally supported by right-wing activists, with the remaining 35% (54) more left-aligned.
2. Events with armed **counter-protesters**: At least 158 events recorded unaffiliated armed actors or unidentified militia actors as **explicit** counter-protesters to un-armed protests. *Nearly all — 94% (148) — were counterprotests in opposition to Black Lives Matter, defund the police, or anti-Confederate monument demonstrations.*
3. Events with **both armed demonstrators and armed counter-protesters**: At least 16 demonstrations in 12 states recorded events where demonstrators and counter-protesters were carrying firearms. The majority were Black Lives Matter, defund the police, or anti-Confederate monument protests.
4. Events recording intervention of non-state **armed individuals, who were not originally involved in the protest or counter-protest**: Just under one-fifth of all events (79) recorded more opportunistic interactions or threats by armed actors towards or with protesters. This includes the majority of recorded incidents where guns were brandished (42 of 61 incidents), 74% (31 of 42) of which targeted BLM protesters.

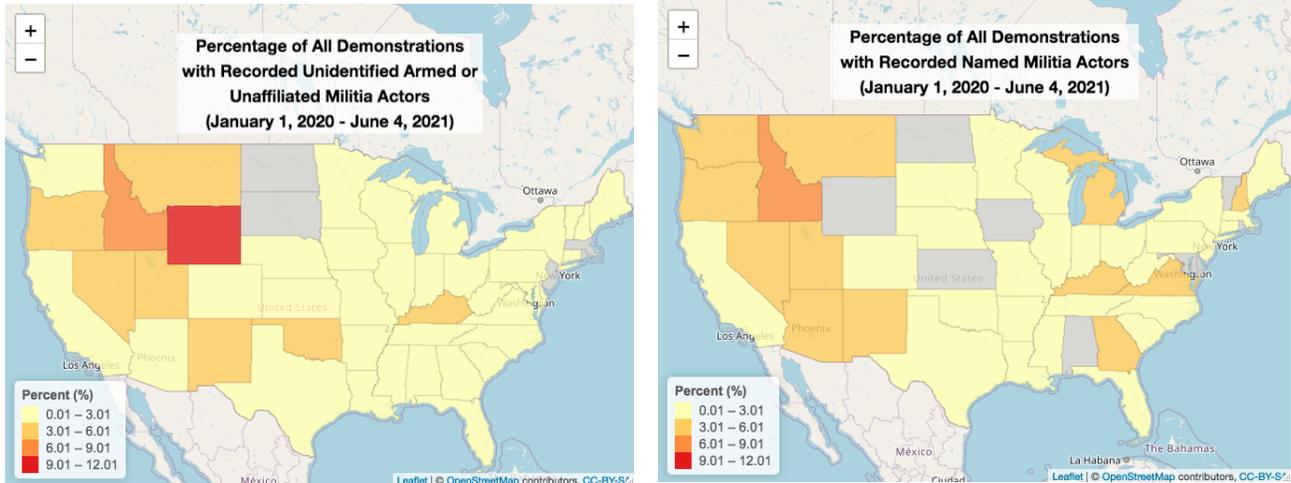
III. Key Trends And Categories of Unaffiliated Armed Actors

A. Geography of Protests

Demonstrations with armed actors are a national trend in the United States, occurring in at least 44 of 50 states over the past 17 months. While demonstrations were widespread, several states emerged as particular hotspots for armed activity: Oregon (40), Washington (27), Texas (26), Pennsylvania (25), and North Carolina (22) recorded the highest number of demonstrations involving unaffiliated armed or otherwise unidentified militia actors since January 2020. Unsurprisingly, these states also recorded high named paramilitary activity over the same time period, with Washington (49), Oregon (47), California (43), and Texas (33) topping the list (see maps below).



A different set of states stand out when looking at unaffiliated armed or unidentified militia events as a proportion of overall demonstration activity³, with Wyoming (10%), Idaho (8%), and Montana (5%) recording the highest percentages of demonstrations with unaffiliated armed or unidentified paramilitary actors. Idaho (8%), Utah (5%), Washington (5%), Kentucky (5%), and Oregon (5%) recorded the highest rate of named militia activity (see maps below).



State Capitals

20% (83 of 416) of all demonstrations with unaffiliated armed or otherwise unidentified militia actors took place in capital cities — slightly above the rate for all demonstrations (14%). In comparison, 36% (195 of 537) of all demonstrations with recorded named paramilitary actors took place at or around state Capitol buildings — both “Stop the Steal” and demonstrations against COVID-19 restrictions, in which militia took an enlarged role, focused on state capitals and capitol buildings.

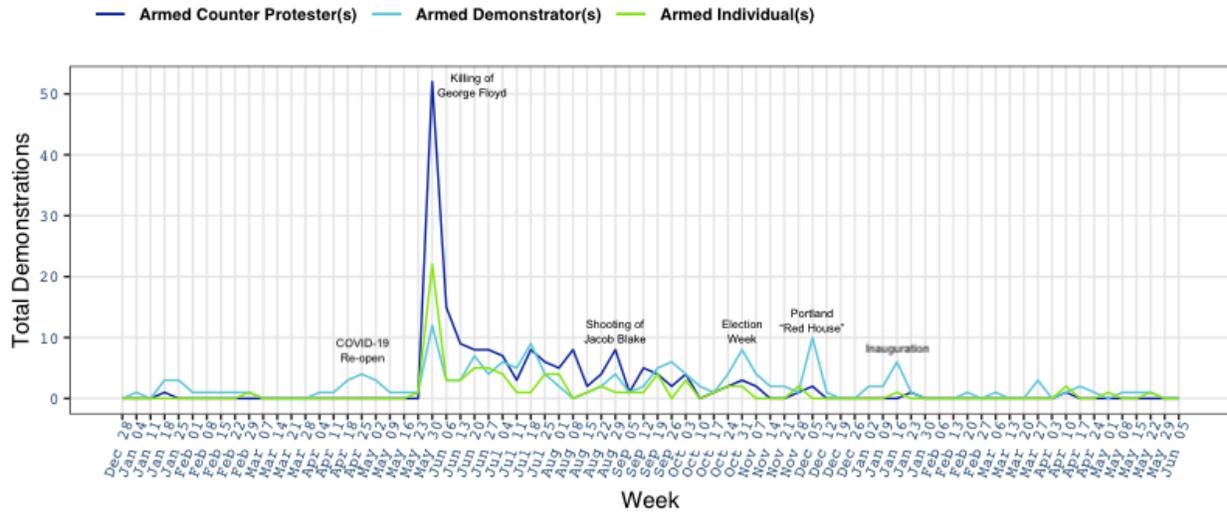
B. Categories of Actors: What Role Did Unaffiliated Armed Actors Play in Protests?

Of the 416 events, the majority recorded unaffiliated armed actors as either protesters (151) or counter-protesters (158). A small number recorded events with both armed protesters and armed counter-protesters (16), while roughly one-fifth (79) recorded non-state armed individual(s) interacting with a protest, but who were otherwise not present to demonstrate.

³ This was calculated by dividing each state's total number of demonstrations with armed and paramilitary actors by its total number of demonstrations recorded from January 2020 to June 2021.

Unaffiliated Armed and Unidentified Militia Actors at Demonstrations by Role

All Recorded Unaffiliated Armed and Unidentified Militia Activity At Protests By Actor Role (total counts per week)



Source: ACLED [January 1, 2020 - June 4, 2021]

(1) Armed Demonstrators — includes all protests or protest-related activity where the primary demonstrator(s) or protest group was armed, and not clearly affiliated with a named unlawful paramilitary group

ACLED recorded 153 protests with armed demonstrators, not including events with identified militia groups, since January 2020. Of the 153 demonstrations, 65% (99) addressed topics generally associated with right-wing political causes, including demonstrations in support of gun rights (32), against COVID-19 restrictions (26), for former President Trump or “Stop the Steal” (25), in favor of confederate monuments (7), or in support of law enforcement (6).

The remaining 35% (54) recorded left-aligned armed actors, including 41 demonstrations with armed Black Lives Matter protesters, as well as [multiple days of armed protests](#) at the [“Red House on Mississippi”](#) in Portland, Oregon against the eviction of a Black Indigenous family, 2 demonstrations [calling for St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson to resign](#) after doxxing “defund the police” protesters, and at least 3 demonstrations in favor of [Black gun rights](#).

Both right and left-leaning protesters argue police are less likely to use force against armed protesters. In contrast, law enforcement articulate additional difficulty protecting public safety because of the heightened risk of injury to officers and to others.

(2) Armed Counter-Protesters — includes all protests or protest-related activity with armed actors or unidentified militia actors that are explicitly counter-protesting an unarmed demonstration.

Since January 2020, ACLED recorded at least 158 demonstrations with unaffiliated armed or unidentified militia counter-protesters.

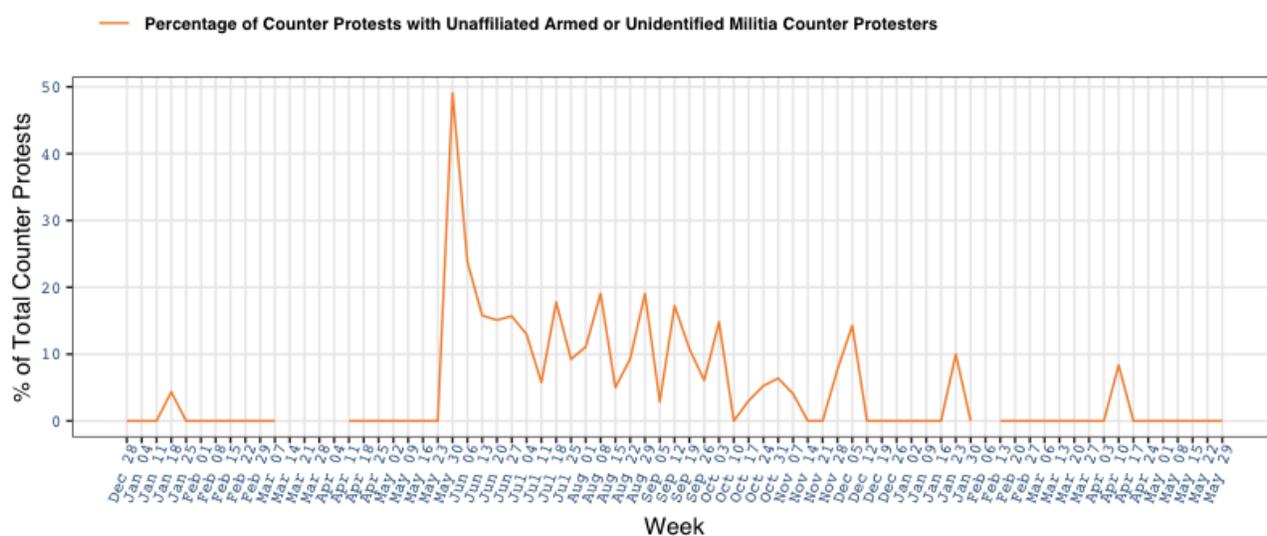
The overwhelming majority of these armed counter-protests — 94% (148 of 158) — were against Black Lives Matter, defund the police, or anti-Confederate monument demonstrations. The remaining 6% (10) were counter-protests to demonstrations addressing topics generally associated with left-leaning political causes or groups, including at least 7 counter-protests to “Antifa”, 2 counter-protests to voting drives, and 1 against the January 2020 women’s march.

Of the 158 armed counter protests, 54 events (34%) recorded armed counter-protesters articulating a purpose to observe, monitor, or shadow demonstrators (including following, filming, or [standing in close proximity](#) to protesters) or stationed near storefronts or [on rooftops](#) purporting to be there to “keep the peace,” “protect property,” or [“provide security” for businesses](#). While counter-protesters, in most cases, did not directly engage with demonstrators, their [armed presence was often explicitly planned around existing demonstrations](#) and intended as an [intimidation tactic](#).

Just under a quarter of these events (37 of 158) recorded some form of intimidating behavior beyond just the presence of firearms, including at least 11 instances of guns brandished at BLM protesters, 5 demonstrations with recorded shots fired, and at least 21 instances of verbal harassment or physical assault.

During the height of BLM demonstrations in early June 2020, following the killing of George Floyd, just under 50% of all recorded counter-protests saw the presence of unaffiliated armed or otherwise unidentified paramilitary actors. This excludes at least 41 additional events during that period that recorded the presence of named paramilitary groups or actors.

Percentage of All Counter Protests with Unaffiliated Armed or Unidentified Militia Counter Protesters (% per week)



Source: ACLED [January 1, 2020 - June 4, 2021]

Armed counter mobilization in response to rumors of “Antifa agitators”

Within this category of behavior, ACLED recorded at least 13 counter-protests where armed actors mobilized specifically in response to rumors of [”Antifa agitators.”](#) spurred by conspiratorial rhetoric around the threat of left-wing violence pushed, in part, by former President Trump and others in his administration. In the days following the killing of George Floyd, President Trump not only attempted to [blame far-left activists for violence that broke out](#), calling on Antifa to be [designated a terrorist organization](#), but also alluded to the use of state or non-state violence to quell protests, tweeting [“When the looting starts, the shooting starts.”](#)

While [internal FBI assessments](#) and [protest-related court documents](#) have concluded that Antifa was not responsible for the relatively few cases of directed violence, vandalism, and other incidents in May and June, online misinformation blaming Antifa, often perpetuated by [right-wing extremists](#) and [politicians](#), as well as occasionally [law enforcement directly](#), fueled counter mobilization throughout the summer.

For example, in the days following the killing of George Floyd, dozens of armed people with semi-automatic weapons patrolled the streets of Coeur d’Alene, a city of 50,000 in Idaho, on consecutive nights after a Facebook page billed as “North Idaho News” claimed to have [“credible information that violent rioters...have plans to come to Coeur d’Alene.”](#) Other Facebook pages claimed “antifa would be coming in from Portland or Seattle.” Similar events occurred across Idaho, as well as in [Klamath Falls, Oregon](#) and [Missoula, Montana](#), among others.

At times, armed groups appeared to act in coordination with law enforcement. For example, in Missoula, a Black Lives Matter protest on June 5 was met by a group of armed counter-protesters claiming to be present to [“keep the peace.”](#) During the demonstration, a group of armed individuals allegedly followed, by foot and in trucks, threatened, assaulted, and [“detained” a black teenage protester](#), refusing to let him go until he allowed them to [“see \[his\] face and take a picture of \[him\].”](#) When they arrived, police officers took only the teenager into custody at the time. At least [one of the armed actors was later charged](#) with misdemeanor unlawful restraint and misdemeanor operating as a private security guard without a license.

Neighborhood Patrols Countering Planned BLM Demonstrations⁴

In the past 17 months (January 2020 to June 2021) at least 32 events involved [groups of armed individuals patrolling their neighborhoods](#) or claiming to guard businesses during or in response to planned racial justice demonstrations. The majority of these armed patrols (23 or 72%) occurred within the 3 weeks following the killing of George Floyd, coinciding with the height of BLM mobilization.

Black Lives Matter protests in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania have been met by [armed residents](#) and [members of an unauthorized paramilitary group calling themselves the Carlisle Light Infantry militia](#) reportedly present to [“protect property”](#). In Milwaukee Wisconsin, an [armed group gathered to “protect homes”](#) in

⁴ The 416 recorded events with unaffiliated armed and unidentified militia actors include 32 events ACLED has coded as “strategic developments”, the majority of which are [“neighborhood patrols”](#) established during the height of the Black Lives Matter protests. As ACLED methodology does not systematically code events covered under strategic development categories, summaries of this armed behavior likely represent an undercount.

anticipation of unrest following the [decision by the District Attorney](#) in October to not file charges against the officer involved in the fatal shooting of Alvin Cole.

Neighborhood protection groups are likewise persistent in US history, especially during and since the civil rights movement. In early June, [armed neighborhood watch groups](#) formed across Minneapolis-St. Paul. One group, [Security Latinos De La Lake](#), established armed patrols to protect Latino built businesses from “white supremacists coming into Minneapolis” after “police disappeared from [the] neighborhood.” Similar [armed civilian patrols](#) were formed in [north Minneapolis](#), with residents establishing makeshift barricades and creating neighborhood WhatsApp groups to share information.

(3) Demonstrations Recording the Presence of Armed Demonstrators and Armed Counter-Protesters — *includes all protests where both demonstrators and counter-protesters were recorded carrying firearms*

ACLED recorded at least 16 demonstrations in 12 states where both demonstrators and counter-protesters were armed, the majority (10) occurring at BLM, defund the police, or anti-confederate monument protests. As an example, on July 18 armed demonstrators [gathered in Laurel, Mississippi for a voter registration rally](#). While armed counter-protesters appeared to “protect the city’s confederate monument,” there was no confrontation, with members from both camps ultimately conversing peacefully with each other. Both parties cited “miscommunication” on social media for protesting with firearms.

Of the 16 demonstrations with both armed demonstrators and armed counter-protesters, half (8) recorded some form of contention between the two parties, including verbal harassment (3), physical assault (2), brandished guns (2), and 1 recorded shooting. On December 5, a 27-year-old man participating in a pro-Trump rally in Olympia, Washington was [arrested for firing a gun at counter-protesters](#). Throughout the demonstrations, over 200 pro-Trump demonstrators and counter-protesters, both armed with bats, rocks, chemical sprays, and firearms repeatedly clashed. A week later, a [counter-protester was shot](#) at a “Stop the Steal” rally — again both parties were armed.⁵

In an [overall record year for gun sales](#) across the United States, gun ownership among Black Americans [increased by over 58%](#). This surge in individual minority gun ownership may be motivated in part by neighborhood and localized armed group responses to the recent fight for racial justice (as covered elsewhere in this brief) as well as in response to [increasing identity-based violence](#). In other cases, BLM and left-leaning protests have armed themselves in response to armed counter-protesters (see below for more) — [“We do our actions proportional to the threat, so when other people are out with rifles, we’ll be out with rifles.”](#)

(4) Armed Individuals not Originally Involved in the Protest — *includes all protest-related events that recorded non-state armed individuals who were otherwise not present to demonstrate or counter-protest interacting with a protest.*

⁵ As ACLED recorded the presence of Proud Boys at this later incident, this event is not represented in the overall statistics presented in this brief.

Just under 20% (79 of 416) of all events recorded armed actors that were otherwise not associated with any organized demonstration interacting with protesters. Once again, the overwhelming majority (60 events or 76%) involved armed individuals intimidating or threatening protesters at BLM, defund the police, or anti-Confederate monument demonstrations.

This category of unidentified armed actors accounts for the bulk of recorded shootings (27 of 57) and the majority of incidents where guns were brandished (42 of 61). The remaining 49 incidents of unaffiliated individuals involved in shootings or brandishing of weapons were by people actively participating as protesters or counter-protesters as well as 11 recorded incidents with “random shots fired” (see below).

Incidents of “brandishing,” where someone threatens by pointing a gun

Of the 416 events with unaffiliated armed or unidentified paramilitary actors, ACLED recorded at least 61 demonstrations during which guns were brandished in a threatening manner, with California (9), Oregon (5), Texas (5), Florida (4), Kentucky (4), North Carolina (4), and Washington (4) recording the highest number of incidents.

Of the 61 incidents of brandishing weapons, 44 (72%) targeted Black Lives Matter protesters. This includes higher profile incidents in St. Louis where a local couple [waved a pistol and AR-15-style rifle at Black Lives Matter protesters](#), as well as an incident in March where the husband of LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey [pointed a gun at unarmed Black Lives Matter activists](#) demonstrating outside of their home. It also includes an incident in Weatherford, Texas on July 25 when a [man was arrested for pointing a sniper rifle at protesters](#) who were demanding the removal of a Confederate statue.

In all 3 of these cases, the armed individuals are [facing charges](#). Of the 61 recorded times when guns were brandished, at least 30 resulted in arrests, though in some cases, no charges were filed. For instance, during a Black Lives Matter protest at the Florida Capitol building in Tallahassee on August 29, a man [pointed his gun at BLM protesters](#) following an altercation. While the armed man was initially arrested, he is [not facing charges](#), with the State Attorney’s Office and Tallahassee Police Department concluding he was “lawfully defending himself.”

Just under 40% (24 of 61) of all brandishing incidents occurred from vehicles or involved demonstrators pointing guns at drivers following car attacks. In Savannah, Georgia a driver [threw a smoke grenade and pointed a gun](#) at protesters blocking the street in front of City Hall. In Eugene, Oregon, a truck driver [pointed his gun at protesters in an intersection](#); a protester responded by pulling his own gun. And in Austin Texas, [28-year-old Garrett Foster was shot and killed](#) at a Black Lives Matter protest after he approached a car that was [driving into the crowd](#); the driver claimed he was acting in self defense after Foster, who was armed with an AK-47, pointed his gun at him. A grand jury is [currently considering whether charges will be brought](#) against the driver. This trend can be tied to a broader increase [in car-ramming attacks against protesters](#), the majority of which have occurred against BLM demonstrators.

Shootings, Accidental Discharges, and Recorded Gunshots

14% (57 of 416) of all armed demonstrations involved shots fired, with just under half (27 of 57) carried out by individual actors not originally involved with the demonstration or an explicit counter-protest. Washington (9), Oregon (6), Kentucky (4), and Pennsylvania (4) saw the highest counts of recorded shootings. As with the rest of the data presented throughout this brief, these numbers do not include shootings that occurred at demonstrations with recorded named militia, like the fatal shootings in Kenosha, Wisconsin during a racial justice protest — the shooter, Kyle Rittenhouse, was responding to an [online call to arms by the Kenosha Guard](#), or the [fatal shooting of Aaron “Jay” Danielson](#), a supporter of Patriot Prayer, during a protest in Portland.

At least 20 events recorded shootings resulting in at least 27 non-fatal injuries, including 2 self-inflicted injuries from accidental discharges, and 9 deaths. In Aurora, Colorado, at a protest [seeking justice for Elijah McClain](#), a protester [opened fire at a car approaching demonstrators](#) marching on Interstate 225, accidentally shooting two fellow protesters. On August 25, upwards of 50 pro-BLM activists [marching from Milwaukee to DC](#) were [confronted by armed individuals in two separate incidents](#) in Juanita, with one activist [struck in the face and side with bird shot](#) requiring medical attention. Additionally, at least 4 shooting-related injuries and 2 deaths were associated with [activity around Seattle’s CHOP zone](#).

An additional 11 incidents recorded “random shots fired.” This category is difficult to pin down or determine a motivation or target, though all but 1 occurred at racial justice protests that had devolved into rioting activity, and the majority (8 of 11) were recorded in the 7 days following the killing of George Floyd. A total of [33 shots were fired](#) during a protest on May 28 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. On the same day, [several shots were fired outside the state Capitol building in Denver](#) and [7 people were injured by gunfire in Louisville](#). There were also reports of gunfire during protests in Kentucky, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

IV. Areas for Further Research

This brief is intended to serve as a basis for additional research and further analysis. Other important areas for comparison include: examining these trends in comparison with activity by named paramilitary actors, trends within different state and city-level gun restrictions, as well as interventions or interactions by armed state actors.

Data also reveal multiple cases of community mitigation, successful de-escalation, and other ways communities have responded to protest-related gun violence. As cases of bystander or community intervention are documented less systematically in ACLED data, further analysis and qualitative research would be necessary to draw out broader trends in community response.

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