

In Brief: Georgia

According to the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset](#) (ACLED), Georgia has recorded at least 642 demonstrations since January 1, 2020 - ranking 14th in the United States (and 45th in terms of demonstrations per capita). Fulton County (predominantly Atlanta) saw more demonstrations than any other county in Georgia, with 205 demonstrations, or 31.9% of the total. Other counties with significant numbers of demonstrations include Clarke County, Chatham County, DeKalb County, Cobb County, and Gwinnett County. All together, these top 6 counties saw 388 demonstrations, accounting for 60.4% of the state's total.

40.2% of demonstrations (258) were related to the Black Lives Matter movement. 14.8% of demonstrations (95) were related to COVID-19, and 25 (3.9%) were related to the Back the Blue, or Blue Lives Matter, movement.

Of the 642 demonstrations, 5.1% (or 33 events) were contentious. Contention includes any peaceful demonstration met by state (police, other law enforcement) or non-state (active counter-protesters, citizens) intervention, as well as any demonstrations with violence by or associated with demonstrators. Though significantly less in number, these events may be potential flashpoints for further contention.

Political violence and other risk factors

4% of all demonstrations were met with state intervention, and 4.5% were met by counter protesters. 33.3% of contentious events involved the use of tear gas, pepper spray, or rubber bullets by police to disperse or control crowds.

Georgia has seen at least 84 police-involved killings in 51 counties since March 2019.¹ 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 at least 28 anti-Semitic events and 60 occurrences of white supremacist propaganda over the past year.² The majority of these events occurred in the greater Atlanta area, Athens, Savannah, and Augusta.

¹ Includes all events from March 31, 2019, to March 31, 2021 from the [Mapping Police Violence data](#)

² Includes all events from 1 January, 2020, to January 21, 2021 from the [ADL HEAT Map](#)

Select Counties with State & National Comparison

[January 1, 2020 - April 9, 2021]

County	Militia Recorded at Demo or Other Event	Total Demonstrations	% Contentious (Protesters, State, or External)	% With State Intervention	% Met with Counter-Protesters
Fulton	Yes	205	9%	7%	6%
Athens-Clarke	No	50	4%	2%	8%
Chatham	Yes	39	5%	3%	3%
DeKalb	Yes	35	3%	-	3%
Cobb	Yes	34	-	-	-
Gwinnett	Yes	25	8%	8%	-
Muscogee	No	13	8%	8%	-
Hall	No	10	20%	20%	-
Georgia	-	642	5%	4%	5%
National	-	26,199	7%	6%	5%

Total demonstrations include all peaceful and contentious protests. Demonstrations with state intervention are police force intervention. Source: [ACLED \(2020-2021\)](#)

Actors of concern

The Southern Poverty Law Center mapped at least [29 hate groups in Georgia](#) in 2020, across a wide range of ideologies: white nationalist,³ Black separatist, Neo-Confederate, anti-LGBTQ, Christian Identity, and general hate.

From January 2020 to April 2021, 19 Georgia counties have seen unlawful paramilitary activity. In Georgia, Atlanta and its metro area have seen the vast majority of the state's militia appearances at demonstrations, with 23 of the 31 such demonstrations. Militias seen at Georgia demonstrations include the Proud Boys, Boogaloo Boys, III% Security Force and other III% splinter groups, Oath Keepers, Groyppers, and the NFAC: Not Fucking Around Coalition.

Incidents and trends of concern

Of Georgia's 642 demonstrations, 30% (196) occurred within the month following the police killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis. A few of these demonstrations were followed by violence, such as the May 29, 2020 [riots damaging the CNN Center](#). Tensions were further inflamed by the [police killing of Rayshard Brooks](#) in Atlanta on June 12, 2020, and a protest over his death resulted in the [destruction of the Wendy's](#) fast-food restaurant next to the parking lot where he was killed.

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

BDI: Sharing data analysis to help communities build resilience.

During these contentious protests of late May and June 2020, police used tear gas and other less-than-lethal munitions on at least five occasions: four times in [Atlanta](#), and once in [Athens](#).

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.

Eyes turned to Georgia after the November 2020 election: Republican politicians and Stop the Steal demonstrators scrutinized Joe Biden's [extremely narrow win](#) in the state, and activists from across the political spectrum mobilized to support their respective candidates in Georgia's twin Senate runoff elections, held on January 5, 2021.

From the election on November 3, 2020, to Inauguration Day on January 20, 2021, Georgia saw at least 86 demonstrations. 62% (53) occurred in Atlanta, with a special focus on the Georgia State Capitol, which saw 19 demonstrations (22% of the total). These Capitol demonstrations were overwhelmingly related to the Stop the Steal movement (17 demonstrations, 89%). Stop the Steal demonstrations, in turn, attracted unlawful paramilitary groups, who were present at 11 demonstrations (58%) at the capitol.

On Saturday November 14, 2020, a "Stop the Steal" rally in [Atlanta, GA drew a few hundred Trump supporters, including III%er Security Force unlawful paramilitary forces](#). Every day from Wednesday, November 18, through Saturday, November 21, far-right media personalities and militia leaders (including [Alex Jones](#) of Infowars, white nationalist [Nick Fuentes](#), Proud Boys leader [Enrique Tarrio](#), and member of the Georgia III% Security Force) led Stop the Steal Protests in front of the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta.

On Saturday, December 12, 2020 a Stop the Steal protest [attended by armed members of the Georgia III% Security Force](#) was met with [anti-fascist counter-protesters](#), some of whom were also [armed](#). Georgia State Patrol [removed the armed groups](#) from in front of the Capitol. After the demonstration, Chris Hill of the III% Security Force and some of his supporters [assaulted four anti-fascist counter-protesters](#) in a parking garage.

On January 6, 2021, a [small](#) Stop the Steal demonstration took place outside of the State Capitol building. Many attendees were [armed, wore military fatigues and carried III% flags](#). Other protesters wore the [characteristic Hawaiian shirts of the Boogaloo Bois](#). White supremacist leader [Chester Doles gave a speech](#) to the rally-goers, [Chris Hill of the Georgia III% Security Force was also present](#). Raffenberger and other staff [were escorted out of the State Capitol](#) as Trump supporters continued to gather outside the building.

On February 20, 2021 at least a dozen armed Boogaloo Boys, along with 2 demonstrators claiming to be anti-fascists, [protested outside of an ICE facility in Atlanta](#) as part of the "Open the Cages" rally. The demonstration mostly focused on [reports of forced sterilizations](#) at an ICE facility in Irwin County.

On March 25, 2021, Governor Kemp signed a [controversial election bill](#) that would restrict voting in upcoming elections. In the leadup to its passage, at least 17 demonstrations protested the bill, including an incident where state troopers [arrested State Representative Park Cannon](#), a Black woman, for leading protests against the bill inside the State Capitol building.

On March 16, 2021, 8 people, of whom 6 were Asian American women, were killed in a [mass shooting](#) targeting massage parlors in Acworth and Atlanta. The shooting sparked a national movement protesting increased violence and harassment targeted against Asian Americans, and [hundreds of demonstrators](#) mobilized in Atlanta on March 20 [for that cause](#).

Total & Contentious Demonstrations in Georgia (counts per week)

