

In Brief: Minnesota

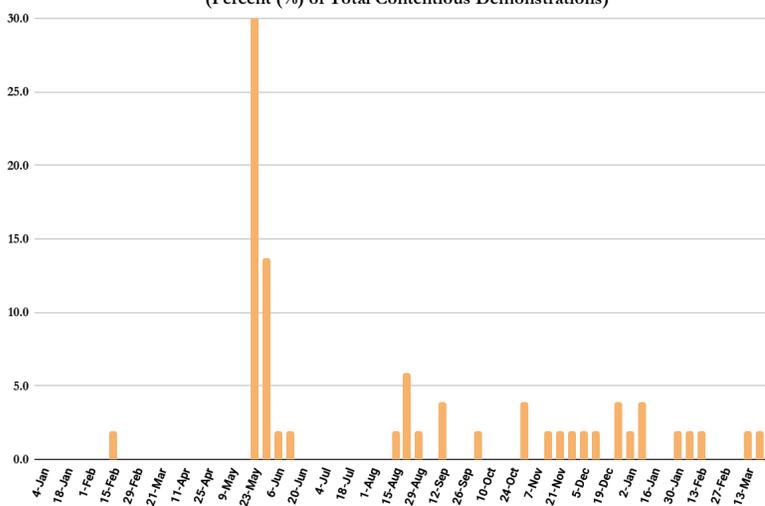
According to the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#), Minnesota has recorded at least 437 demonstrations since January 1, 2020 — ranking 21st in the United States (and 30th in terms of events per capita). Minneapolis/St. Paul¹ and Duluth have seen the bulk of activity, with their respective counties accounting for just under 75% of all demonstrations.

Of the 437 demonstrations, 42% (184) were related to the Black Lives Matter movement, 17% (75) of all demonstrations were COVID-19 related, 3% (13) were associated with the “Stop the Steal” movement, and 2% (8) were related to the “Back the Blue” or “Blue Lives Matter” movement.

88% of all demonstrations (or 386) were recorded as peaceful. 51 events were recorded in the broad category of 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.

Of the 51 events recorded as contentious, 23 (45%) occurred in the 10 days following the killing of George Floyd (May 26 - June 4), with additional small spikes the weeks following the shooting of Jacob Blake on August 23 and the November 3 elections.

Distribution of Contentious Demonstrations Over Time in Minnesota (Percent (%) of Total Contentious Demonstrations)

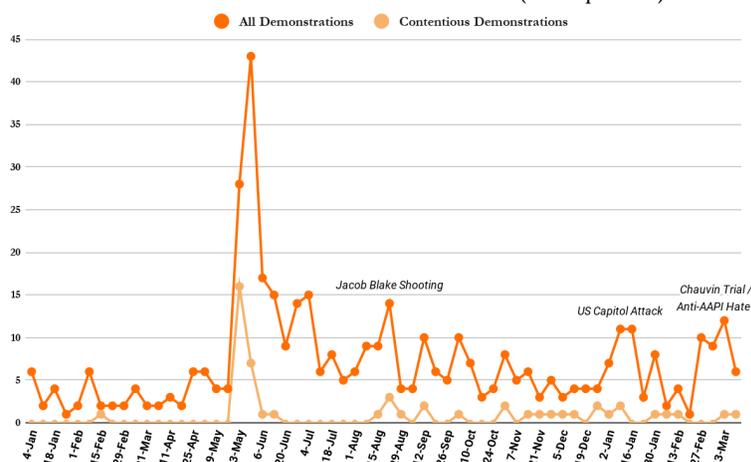


¹ Minneapolis and St. Paul is generally considered to be a seven-county region consisting of: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties.

11 (22%) of all recorded contentious events were demonstrations [against the construction of the Line 3 oil pipeline](#) — of the 33 demonstrations against Line 3, 11 recorded police intervention.

91% of all demonstrations from June 4, 2020 onwards have been recorded as peaceful.

Total & Contentious Demonstrations in Minnesota (counts per week)



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.

82% of all contentious events in Minnesota (42 events) were met with some form of police intervention, and over 20% of those saw the use of tear gas, pepper spray or other munitions by the police as a crowd control measure. Just under 15% of all contentious demonstrations were either met by counter-protesters (5 events) or unlawful paramilitary actors (5 events).

Other political violence & risk factors

23 demonstrations (5% of all demonstrations) saw the presence of counter-protesters — 78% of which remained peaceful. 65% of all counter protests occurred in the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

Minnesota saw at least 24 police-involved deaths in 13 counties since March 2019.² Police shootings have not only been salient flashpoints for large-scale protests but may also undermine community trust in and cooperation with

² Includes all events from 14 March 2019 to 14 March 2021 from the [Mapping Police Violence \(MPV\) data](#).

police, further impeding the ability for the state and community to respond to contentious events.

Minnesota has recorded at least 24 anti-semitic events, 109 occurrences of white supremacist propaganda, and 1 [terrorist plot](#) over the past year³, 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). Preliminary analysis suggests these incidents can be associated with future conflict.

Actors of Concern

In 2020, the Southern Poverty Law Center [mapped 11 hate organizations in Minnesota](#) (5 statewide) across roughly 3 ideologies: white nationalist,⁴ general hate, and radical traditional catholicism.

Other unlawful paramilitary and white nationalist groups present at protests over the past several months include: Aryan Cowboys, [Three Percenters](#), Oathkeepers, [Proud Boys](#), [Boogaloo Bois](#), and [armed “community patrols.”](#)

Select Counties with State & National Comparison [January 1, 2020 - March 26, 2021]

County	Militia Recorded at Demo or Other Event	Total Demonstrations	% Contentious (Protesters, State, or External)	% With State Intervention	% Met with Counter-Protesters
Aitkin	No	4	50%	50%	-
Anoka	Yes	9	22%	22%	11%
Carlton	No	11	18%	18%	-
Cass	No	3	67%	67%	-
Dakota	No	7	29%	14%	-
Hennepin	Yes	130	15%	13%	2%
Hubbard	No	9	33%	33%	-
Ramsey	Yes	129	9%	4%	8%
St. Louis	No	39	5%	5%	10%
Stearns	No	10	10%	10%	-
Washington	No	8	38%	38%	25%
Minnesota	-	437	12%	10%	5%
National	-	25,537	7%	6%	5%

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

Incidents and trends of note

On January 6, 2021 coinciding with the attack on the US Capitol, upwards of [500 Trump supporters](#), including

³ Includes events from 31 Jan 2020 to 31 Jan 2021 from [ADL HEAT Map](#)

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

armed III%ers, Boogaloo Boys, and local lawmakers, demonstrated outside of the Capitol in St. Paul and the residence of [Governor Tim Walz](#). Though the event itself remained relatively uneventful, Governor Tim Walz, speaking on a virtual legislative panel, [stated that the State Patrol evacuated his son from the governor’s mansion](#) to a safe location in response to the violent rhetoric at the rally. Minnesota recorded 13 Stop the Steal demonstrations, of which 6 recorded the presence of armed or unlawful paramilitary actors.

On September 12, 2020 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. Over a dozen people counter-protested and several reports note the presence of an unidentified armed group “watching” the demonstration from cars with nationalistic iconography.

On June 15, 2020 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, 2020 a police officer killed George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, after being handcuffed and pinned to the ground. The killing of George Floyd [sparked national and international protests](#) against police brutality and systemic racism. 45% of all contentious protests in Minnesota occurred in the 10 days following the killing of George Floyd. Of the 23 contentious events that occurred in this 10-day period, all but 2 occurred in the seven-county Twin Cities region. 1 occurred in St. Louis County (Duluth) and 1 in Blue Earth County (Mankato). 45 peaceful protests occurred over this same time period. 17 (38%) occurred in 1 of the 7 Minneapolis-St. Paul counties. 5 occurred in St. Louis County. The remaining 23 were spread across 20 small, micropolitan, and rural counties.

On May 27, 2020 a man was filmed smashing windows of a local Minneapolis business. The search warrant affidavit 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 Hells Angels and an associate of the Aryan Cowboys.

The [start of the trial for Derek Chauvin](#) has seen renewed [mobilization around the Black Lives Matter movement](#); all recorded demonstrations have remained peaceful.