

## In Brief: Oregon

According to the [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#), Oregon has recorded 876 demonstrations from January 1, 2020 to April 16, 2021 — ranking 7th in the United States for overall demonstrations and 3rd in terms of events per capita. 79% of all demonstrations (or 696 events) were recorded as peaceful.

Multnomah (Portland), Lane (Eugene), and Marion (Salem) counties have seen the bulk of activity, accounting for 65% of all demonstrations in the state. While the majority of demonstrations have occurred in a handful of counties, over 83% of all counties in the state (30 of 36) have recorded at least 1 demonstration since January 1, 2020.

Of the 876 demonstrations, 49% (432) were related to the Black Lives Matter movement. 14% (125) of all demonstrations were COVID-19 related, 1% (11) were associated with the Stop the Steal movement, and 4% (37) were related to Back the Blue or Blue Lives Matter.

21% of all demonstrations in Oregon (180 of 976) recorded some form of contention, the highest rate of any state. 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.

Portland has seen almost daily protests since the killing of George Floyd, with the city accounting for 40% of Oregon's total demonstrations (352). The city has also seen the bulk of Oregon's contentious demonstrations: Of the 180 recorded contentious demonstrations, just under 85% (or 152 events) have occurred in Portland.

82% of all contentious demonstrations (147 of 180) were met by some form of state intervention. Of those, 77% (113 of 147) saw the use of tear gas, pepper spray, or rubber munitions by the police as a crowd control measure. At least 28 of the 180 recorded contentious demonstrations (16%) recorded the presence of armed actors.

### Political violence & risk factors

9% of all demonstrations (or 77 events) saw the presence of counter-protesters. Just under 30% (22) of all counter-protests recorded some form of contention, and just under half of all counter-protests (36) recorded the presence of paramilitary or armed actors.

Oregon saw at least 37 police-involved deaths in 17 counties since March 2019.<sup>1</sup> 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.

The state recorded 14 anti-semitic events, 87 occurrences of white supremacist propaganda, and 1 "[extremist murder](#)" over the past year, with the majority of these events occurring in Multnomah, Washington, Marion, and Jackson counties.<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

[January 1, 2020 - April 16, 2021]

County	Militia Recorded at Demo or Other Event	Total Demonstrations	% Contentious (Protesters, State, or External)	% With State Intervention	% Met with Counter-Protesters
Benton	No	22	5%	-	9%
Clackamas	Yes	35	-	-	11%
Clatsop	Yes	15	-	-	47%
Coos	Yes	16	-	-	6%
Crook	Yes	11	9%	9%	36%
Deschutes	No	44	2%	-	5%
Lane	Yes	123	10%	7%	11%
Marion	Yes	81	15%	9%	17%
Multnomah	Yes	361	42%	36%	5%
Umatilla	No	13	-	-	23%
Washington	No	27	4%	4%	-
Oregon	-	876	21%	17%	9%
National	-	26,612	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

At least 11 counties have seen unlawful paramilitary activity from January 1, 2020 to April 2021. Prominent unlawful paramilitary or militia-related organizations active in the state include: [Proud Boys](#), [Boogaloo Boys, III%ers](#), [Patriot Prayer](#), [People's Rights](#), Sons of Liberty, as well as multiple "unidentified armed communal militias".

The Southern Poverty Law Center has [mapped 11 hate organizations in Oregon](#) across roughly four ideologies:

<sup>1</sup> Includes all events from 14 March 2019 to 14 March 2021 from the [Mapping Police Violence \(MPV\) data](#).

<sup>2</sup> Includes events from 31 Jan 2020 to 31 Jan 2021 from [ADL HEAT Map](#).

white nationalist,<sup>3</sup> general hate, anti-immigrant, and anti-LGBTQ. 5 of the 11 organizations are statewide, while the remaining 6 are spread between Portland, Salem, and Ashland.

## Incidents & Trends of Note

Of the state's 876 total demonstrations, 54% (470) were racial justice demonstrations, driven in large part by national mobilization in response to the killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the shooting of Jacob Blake.

Contentious demonstrations in Oregon, and Portland specifically, have been driven in part by what many have called a [disproportionate police and federal response](#). 8% of all protests (72 of 876) in Oregon recorded the use of tear gas, rubber bullets, or other "less-lethal" munitions by the police against protesters — over 80% (52 of 72) of which occurred at racial justice demonstrations.

On March 12, 2021 over 100 protesters gathered in Portland in support of the BLM movement and against police brutality. Shortly after the march began, police officers began "[kettling](#)" protesters. At least 100 people were [temporarily detained](#), including multiple journalists. Those released from the perimeter were reportedly [photographed](#) and made to [display their personal information on a piece of duct tape](#). A coalition of Portland groups have [called on US Attorney General Merrick Garland](#) to investigate the city police bureau following the mass arrest.

On April 16, a [police officer shot and killed Robert Delgado](#) in Portland. Delgado, a 46-year-old white man, was [holding a replica gun](#). Following the shooting, over [200 people gathered in Lents Park](#) against police brutality. Police in riot gear intervened, using [pepper spray](#) and [flash bangs](#) to disperse demonstrators, who reportedly responded by throwing canisters and other objects at the police.

Oregon also recorded at least 7 car ramming incidents against BLM protesters or counter-protesters, with 1 incident [carried out by a police officer on a motorcycle](#).

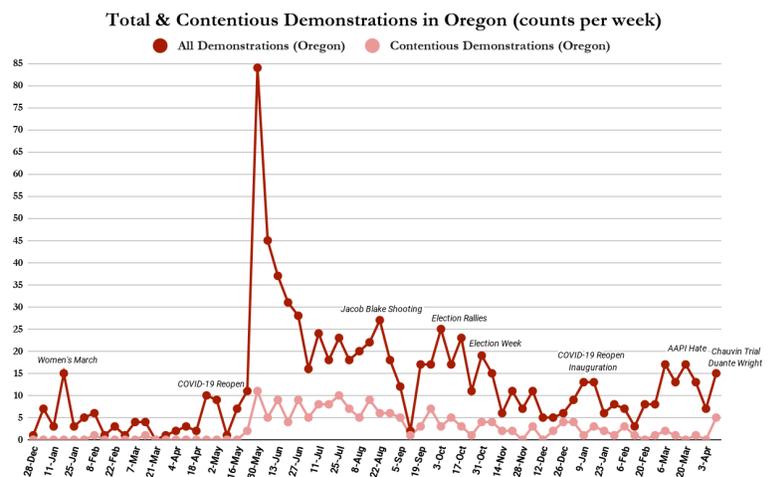
Contention across the state has also been driven in part, by high levels of unlawful paramilitary and armed actors. Oregon recorded 75 demonstrations with unlawful paramilitary or armed actors, of which at least 28 (37%) recorded some form of contention. 39 of the 75 demonstrations with armed or paramilitary actors also recorded racial justice demonstrators or counter-protesters, of which just under half (18) recorded some form of contention.

<sup>3</sup> Includes neo-Nazi, neo-Volkisch, racist skinhead, Ku Klux Klan, and hate music organizations

Paramilitary and armed activity was also high around Stop the Steal, Back the Blue, and COVID-19 protests. Of the 11 recorded Stop the Steal demonstrations, 7 (64%) recorded the presence of paramilitary or armed actors.

Upwards of 250 people, including members of the Proud Boys, marched outside the Capitol building in Salem on January 6, 2021 to protest the election results. Protesters [tarred, feathered, and burned an effigy](#) of Governor Kate Brown. Police declared an [unlawful assembly](#) after [protesters clashed with counter-protesters](#), using [smoke grenades, paintball guns, and batons](#).

Oregon also recorded widespread paramilitary activity during the September wildfires in response to rumors, repeated by a Multnomah County [deputy](#), that Antifa was starting the fires, prompting [armed men and communal militias to set up military style checkpoints](#) across the state. These rumors were later dispelled by the FBI.



The state also saw paramilitary and armed mobilization around voting sites. On November 1, "Patriotic Trump/Make Oregon Red" protesters rallied outside of a ballot drop box in Springfield. Several reports were made to the Election Protection hotline claiming [voters were approached or intimidated by armed rally participants](#).

COVID-19 restrictions have also mobilized paramilitary groups. Of the 125 pandemic-related demonstrations in Oregon, 58% (72) were against restrictions, of which at least 10 recorded armed or paramilitary actors.

More than 100 "anti-shutdown" demonstrators, many armed, [vandalized and attempted to forcefully enter the State Capitol](#) on December 21, 2020. Protesters [assaulted a journalist](#) and [sprayed "chemical irritant"](#) at police officers. Protesters from [Patriot Prayer](#) and the Proud Boys, organized multiple demonstrations, some [resulting in violence](#). [A Patriot Prayer member was shot and killed](#) during a counter-protest in Portland on August 29, 2020.