

Premise Report

# U.S. Protests and the Impact on U.S. Perception Globally



## Executive Summary

Throughout the world, the United States is often viewed through the lens and understanding of prosperity and the American Dream, which projects an aura of overall well being for all. On May 25th, 2020 that idea was challenged and then broadcast throughout the entire world as George Floyd was killed at the hands of Minneapolis Police sparking nationwide protests both against police and in support of racial and social justice. In cities across the United States, including in Washington, D.C., a heavy police response sparked additional demonstrations spurred by the Black Lives Matter movement. In many parts of the country, National Guard troops were mobilized by government authorities to restore “law and order.” These demonstrations, marches and civic actions were broadcast throughout the entire world and soon these protests in support of racial justice spread outside the U.S., to the furthest reaches of the world.

Not only were there protests in the United States, but the murder of George Floyd ignited tens of thousands of people around the world to speak out against racial injustices and policies. To better understand the impact of these recent events outside of the United States, Premise gathered sentiment from six countries, Brazil, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines and Taiwan, each with their own unique relationship with the United States. Premise surveyed 525 contributors in each country from June 8, 2020-June 16, 2020 and focused on U.S. perception overseas and how recent events impacted overall sentiment. Premise’s study ranged from awareness of the protests, George Floyd’s death, support for demonstrations, as well as the U.S. government’s response to those demonstrations and impact to overall perception of the U.S. overseas.

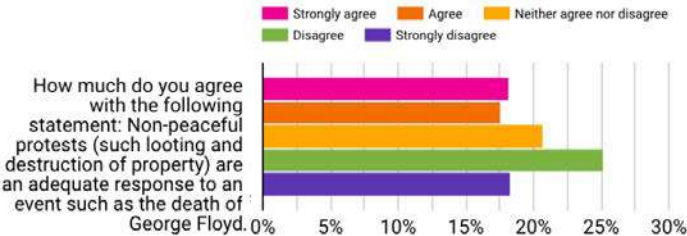
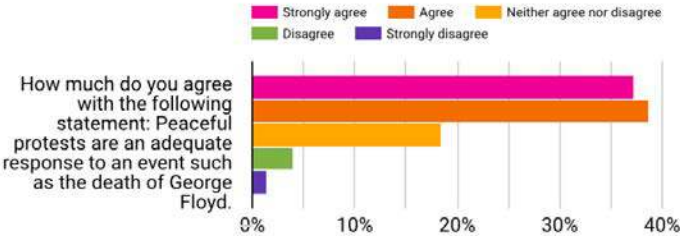
# Key Judgements

Overall, 60% of contributors indicated they first learned about the death of George Floyd via social media. The gruesome video of George Floyd’s killing on May 25 circulated through social media and became viral, sparking outrage and mass protests in the United States and around the world. Social media continues to be the preferred medium for gathering information, even in less developed parts of the world, where internet connectivity and literacy rates can be much lower than in more connected parts of the world.

## Support for Peaceful vs. Non-Peaceful Protests

Overall over three fourths of our overall contributors supported the peaceful protests in response to George Floyd’s killing, while 44% disagreed with non-peaceful demonstrations.

Across our networks, Ethiopians and Kenyans maintained the highest levels of support for peaceful protests, while just over half of Mexican contributors disagreed with non-peaceful



## Negative Impact on Perception

Overall, 45% of contributors indicated the recent events in the U.S. negatively affected their personal perception of the U.S. In regard to events in the U.S. related to the death of George Floyd, 45% of contributors indicated that his death negatively impacted their communities’ perception of the United States. Though 26% of contributors responded that there has not been any significant change within their communities perception of the United States.

# Brazil



*Superhero mural in Rio de Janeiro*



*Marilyn Monroe mural in Sao Paulo*

The United States and Brazil are the two largest economies and democracies in the Western Hemisphere. Economic cooperation, as well as collaboration on international and regional issues have long been the foundation of bilateral relations between the two nations. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, has been widely accused by his opponents of [corruption, racism, misogyny and homophobia](#). Bolsonaro has also forged a close relationship with President Trump, and has largely mirrored his response to the [coronavirus pandemic](#). Brazil has had its own struggles with police brutality, in 2019 alone, police killings reached a record high in Rio de Janeiro resulting in the [death of 1,810 individuals](#). On May 18, 2020 the [death of 14 year old João Pedro Matos Pinto](#), was shot in the back by police who mistakenly raided his home while pursuing a suspect.

Premise's survey in Brazil found that 89% of respondents were aware of the protests occurring across the United States and 92% were aware of the death of George Floyd. In the aftermath of the deaths of George Floyd and João Pedro Matos Pinto, Brazilians have taken to the streets to both [protest police brutality](#) and affirm the Black Lives Matter movement. 71% of contributors either support or strongly support the protests in the United States, whereas 28% agree or strongly agree that non-peaceful protests are an adequate response to the death of George Floyd. Despite a pattern of police violence, 64% of Brazilian contributors believe that their local police exhibit professional or very professional behavior.

# Mexico

Sharing a border, Mexico is by far the closest country geographically to the United States with bilateral relations having an impact on millions of people. Due to their close proximity, America has had a huge impact on the culture including in areas like media/entertainment and even language. It is also important to note the impact of Mexican culture on the U.S. as well.

U.S.-Mexico relations have been tense in the last few years with President Trump going as far as to threaten to place crippling tariffs on Mexican exports, but in the wake of COVID-19, the two Presidents have found friendship with Trump calling President Obrador a “[very good friend](#),” and Obrador recently visited Washington, D.C. in early July. Nearly 40% of Mexican contributors indicated the U.S. government’s response to the protests negatively impacted their community’s perception of the U.S. Almost 67% of our respondents reported having first heard about

the death of George Floyd through social media. In recent years, social media has been a critical tool for exposing injustices, as well as providing a platform for activists.

Mexico has long been known for the [widespread abuse](#) by military, police and prosecutors. Extrajudicial killings, disappearances and torture continue across the country. Respondents in Mexico to Premise’s survey overwhelmingly (71% either support or strongly support) support the demonstrations that have occurred across the United States in response to the death of George Floyd. The death of George Floyd has sparked renewed anger across Mexico about [Giovanni López](#), who was beaten to death by police in Jalisco state for allegedly not wearing a face mask, leading to [protests](#) in Guadalajara. 57% of our respondents reported awareness to racial justice or police violence related protests in Mexico in the last few weeks.

# Ethiopia

Ethiopia and the U.S. maintain a unique relationship that was expanded during the War on Terror. Due to Ethiopia's close proximity to Somalia and their military interventions within the country they became a focal point of U.S. military aid dedicated to fighting terrorist groups within the region. Along with military aid, Ethiopia continues to be the one of the largest recipients of U.S. developmental aid on the continent as well as a large recipient of financial assistance from [diaspora](#), the second largest African immigrant group, living within the U.S. Over 93% of Premise's contributors had heard about the protest across the United States, with 73% hearing about them for the first time on social media.

Since the fall of the Derg and secession of Eritrea in 1991, Ethiopia has faced bouts of political unrest and in some cases insurrection between the various ethnic groups living in the country. In 2016, widespread protest emerged across the country with Oromo and Amhara populations protesting against the perceived outsized influence of the Tigray population on national politics. These protests resulted in a military crackdown in different areas around the country and continue to fuel tensions to this day. In recent weeks protests erupted across the country following the death of [Hachalu Hundessa](#), a prominent Oromo singer. Despite these crackdowns Premise's data shows as of early July 2020, a majority of Ethiopians, 73% view the army as professional and 60% say that they believe the army respects basic rights of all citizens. Premise's latest surveys show that within Ethiopia, 64% of contributors have heard about the potential mobilization of the U.S. military to maintain law and order. Of those that had an opinion for or against mobilization, 44% supported this move while 35% opposed.

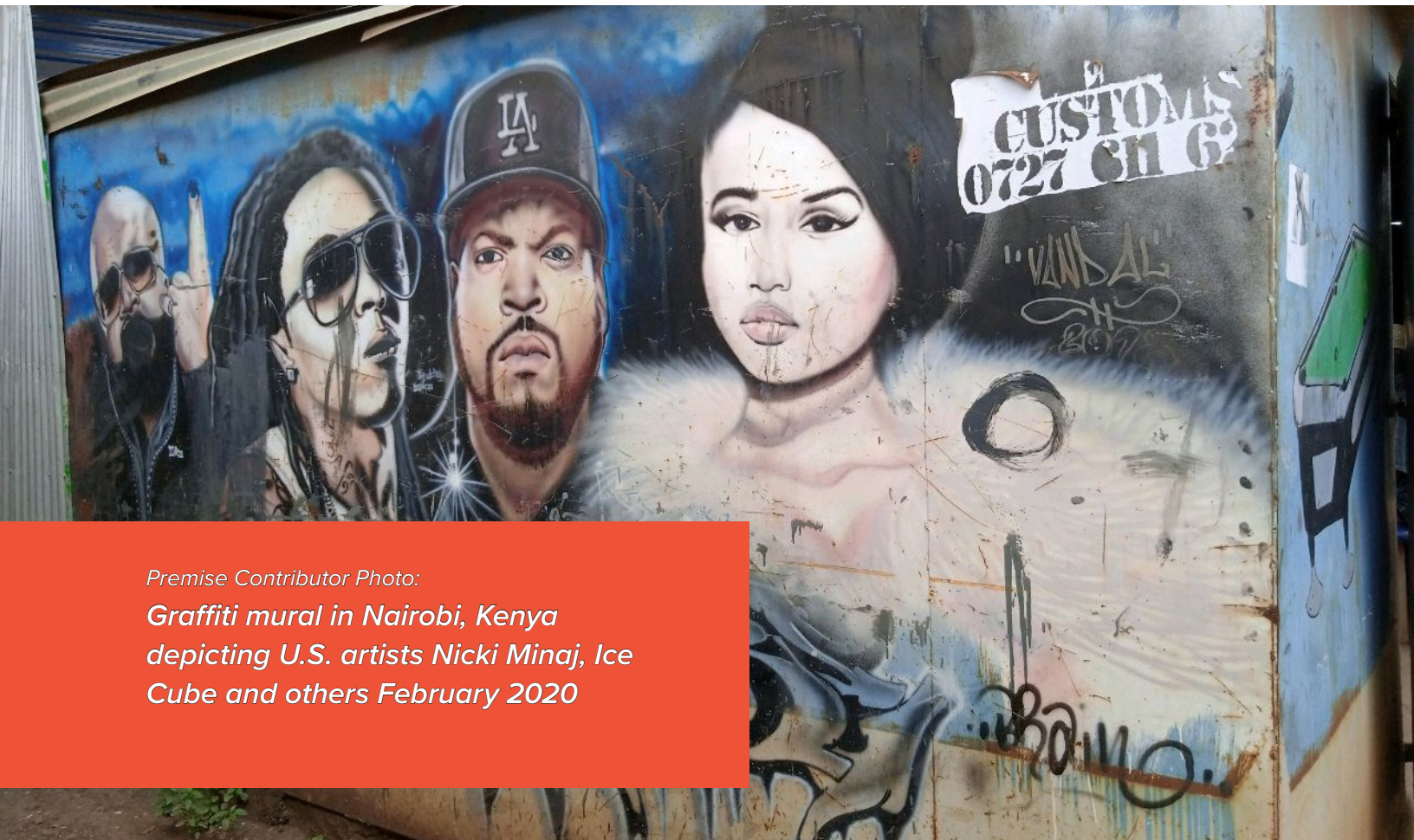


## Kenya

A relatively young nation, Kenya has a history that includes colonialism, minority rule and police brutality. In recent months, tensions between Kenyan police and citizens have been reignited by the violent enforcement of dusk-to-dawn curfews throughout the country in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The [BBC reported](#) that two civilians were killed and five injured when police opened fire to disperse protests in the city of Kisumu.

[Pew](#) has surveyed people in 25 countries annually since 2002 to quantify and track global opinion of the United States. Over this period, Kenya has consistently responded with the highest approval percentage from the African continent. Many Kenyans speak English (the official language

alongside Swahili) and consume American media and entertainment. The Majority of Kenyans are aware of the killing of George Floyd while in police custody and protests in the U.S. There is widespread support for demonstrations in the U.S. by Kenyans, and consensus that peaceful protests are a more-acceptable response than non-peaceful protests. When asked if they support or oppose U.S. military mobilization to maintain law and order inside the U.S., there was a mix of support and opposition from respondents. In areas of Kenya that have recently experienced police brutality, responses shift slightly. In Kisumu, more respondents support than oppose non-peaceful protests as an acceptable response. Respondents in Kisumu also showed strong opposition to U.S. military domestic mobilization compared to the rest of the country.



*Premise Contributor Photo:  
Graffiti mural in Nairobi, Kenya  
depicting U.S. artists Nicki Minaj, Ice  
Cube and others February 2020*

# The Philippines

The Philippines is considered one of the United States' longest and most important non-NATO allies and the two countries have historically maintained both strong military and cultural ties. Basketball, for example, has remained a beloved sport in the country following its introduction to the country in the late 1800's during the American colonial period. The strong relationship between the United States and the Philippines is also evident through a [mutual defense treaty](#) originally established between the two countries in 1951. Since assuming office in June 2016, President Duterte positioned himself as favoring strengthened relationships with Russia and China, which culminated in an announcement on February 11, 2020 that the Philippines would be [suspending the Visiting Forces Agreement \(VFA\)](#) with the United States. Duterte and the Filipino government [reversed this decision](#) on June 2, 2020 but questions still remain about the longevity of the U.S.'s presence in the archipelago.

The recent widespread emergence of racial justice protests in the United States have echoed similar sentiments in the Philippines, where President Duterte's drug war has led to the killing of [over](#)

[6,000 individuals](#). Recent weeks have seen a rise in [social media posts](#) comparing the death of George Floyd to the death of a Filipino student named Kian Delos Santos, who was killed by police in August 2017 in Manila, leading to widespread protests and a temporary suspension of Duterte's anti-drug campaign.

Premise's recent survey found that 34% of contributors were aware of racial justice or police violence related protests occurring in the Philippines in recent weeks. A much greater amount, 75% of Premise contributors, were aware of protests in the U.S. in response to George Floyd's death and 80% of respondents had heard about George Floyd's death. 58% of respondents either supported or strongly supported the protests. Regarding the U.S. government's response to the protests, opinions were split on what impact the U.S. government's response had on their community's view of the U.S. with 32% stating it had a positive or very positive effect, 34% stating it had a negative or very negative effect, and 30% stating it had no effect.



# Taiwan

In 1979, the joint [U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqué](#) established the recognition of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, but also allowed for cultural, commercial and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan beginning a deep defense and trade cooperation relationship that continues to this day. According to Premise's survey, over a third of contributors stated the U.S. Government's response negatively affected their perception of the U.S. and 42% opposed the mobilization of the U.S. Military to maintain law and order.

Taiwan has its own very recent history with the military being used to police its citizens. Martial law was only repealed in Taiwan in 1987, so many Taiwanese still remember what it is like to have troops in the streets. Recent events in Hong Kong, have also reopened the debate within Taiwan. As part of Premise's ongoing look at sentiment across the entire world, we are able to see changes over time associated with trust in local institutions and rule of law. In June 2020, 56% of Taiwanese contributors believed their local police acted in a professional manner, while 51% of Taiwanese contributors believed their National Military acted in a professional manner. Nearly 40% of contributors indicated the recent events in the U.S. did not have an effect on their view of the U.S., however the same number opposed the mobilization of the U.S. Military while only 20% were in support.



*Premise Contributor Photo:  
Michael Jordan street mural Kaohsiung,  
Taiwan March 2020*

## Conclusion

It can often be challenging to get an accurate sense of the current climate around the world, especially in hard to reach areas or when you do not have resources on the ground. Thankfully, local citizens are able to provide hyperlocal baseline signals, giving unprecedented insight into the organic and changing experience of community life. While these baseline signals are valuable in and of themselves as early warning indicators of community stress, they also provide a foundation upon which further queries and exploration of stability can be launched.

Premise is unique in that it allows for both the ability to execute surveys and gather information from all over the world, while giving millions around the world the opportunity to let their voices be heard to

invigorate social justice causes and improve their community. Our intent is both to give a voice to our contributors, who otherwise would not be heard and also to illuminate and educate readers on how the world perceives recent events within the United States.

The Premise network is available 24/7, 365 days a year to answer even the most delicate questions. With the click of a button, Premise can gather thousands of responses from all over the world in hours to answer the most timely, relevant and pressing questions of the day.

**Find out how Premise can help you get the information you need.**

Email us at [info@premise.com](mailto:info@premise.com)

Premise helps its customers unlock a world of ground-level data. By combining the power of a global network of on-the-ground Contributors with industry-leading data science and machine learning, Premise empowers decision makers with the high-quality, trustworthy data they need. Premise is headquartered in San Francisco, CA, with offices in Washington, D.C., and Seattle, WA. For more information, visit [www.premise.com](http://www.premise.com) or follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

© 2020 Premise Data Corporation. All Rights Reserved.



**PREMISE™**

[info@premise.com](mailto:info@premise.com)  
[www.premise.com](http://www.premise.com)

