On the afternoon of August 9, Missouri teenager Michael Brown was shot to death during an altercation with a police officer. A private autopsy indicated that Brown was shot at least six times, but was inconclusive about which eyewitness accounts matched the evidence most closely. The killing of a black man by a white officer under unclear circumstances created intense backlash in the community. On the day following the incident, the escalation of a candlelight vigil led to violence, vandalism, and the looting of over 12 businesses in the area, where over 30 people were arrested with two police officers suffering injuries. The subsequent days saw similar protests, with many civil rights activists and the family of Michael Brown calling for peaceful assembly and justice for the deceased.

On August 13, the Justice Department opened a federal civil rights investigation of the Ferguson shooting. The FBI also opened a parallel investigation. On August 15, the Ferguson police department named the officer who shot Brown as Darren Wilson amid a controversy that pitted the safety of the police officer against the transparency of the department. The simultaneous disclosure that Brown and a friend were involved in a convenience store robbery just before the shooting complicated the issue for some, despite the fact that Wilson did not know of the incident at the time.

A city-wide curfew was put in place to curb the violence, followed by the National Guard on August 18 when the curfew proved ineffective. President Obama assigned Attorney General Eric Holder to monitoring the unrest in Ferguson, and stated that we must address "the gulf" that exists between minorities and law enforcement, but must do so with respect for all sides. After a few nights of peaceful protests, the National Guard began to withdraw from Ferguson on August 21. Protests continued, particularly following the disclosure that charity funds for Wilson had surpassed those for Brown’s family.

As of printing, the circumstances of the shooting and the practices of the Ferguson Police Department are still under investigation.

WHAT YOU MAY HAVE MISSED
Over the summer, the conflict centered in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine continued to spark regional and international tensions. Troops of the Ukrainian government and its new president, former chocolatier Petro Poroshenko have pushed Russia-backed rebel troops from the self-declared Donetsk People’s Republic back toward their strongholds in Donetsk and Luhansk.

A large body of Russian troops have begun to mass near the border between Russia and Ukraine. The most recent estimates from the Pentagon suggest that upward of 10,000 troops are stationed at the border, along with more artillery, air defense units and rocket units than previous troop buildups.

Meanwhile, members of the international community have continued to express concern and take action against Russian provocations in the area. Following the first rounds of economic sanctions levied by the European Union and United States in spring, both powers launched new rounds in late summer. These sanctions, targeted mostly at the financial and industrial sectors of the Russian economy, are designed to pressure President Putin to deescalate the situation, lest his country suffer economic ruin.

SOURCE: BBC AND THE WALLSTREET JOURNAL

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