

Germany: Over 600 attacks on refugees in first half of 2019

Asylum-seekers and refugees continue to be a target of attack in Germany — and they are almost always victims of far-right violence. Offenses range from verbal slurs to arson and dangerous bodily harm.



German police registered a total of 609 attacks on asylum-seekers and refugees during the first half of 2019, according to the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*. The newspaper cited an answer given by the German federal government in response to a question by the parliamentary group of the Left party.

The crimes ranged from verbal insult and harassment to arson and dangerous bodily harm.

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According to the report, there were 60 attacks on refugee shelters and 42 attacks on aid organizations or volunteers. 102 people were injured, including seven children. Authorities have designated all of them as “politically motivated right-wing crimes.”

The report stated that one in four attacks took place in the state of Brandenburg, which surrounds the country's capital Berlin. Police recorded 160 offenses targeting refugees or asylum-seekers in the state.

There were 62 assaults in Baden-Wuerttemberg, 58 in Lower Saxony and 56 in Saxony.

Ulla Jelpke, the spokeswoman for domestic affairs for the Left party in the Bundestag, was quoted by the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung* as saying that refugees and asylum-seekers are exposed to threats every day in Germany. "The state has a duty to protect these people."

Right-wing attacks up

The report comes after German authorities registered 8,605 right-wing extremist offenses in the first half of 2019, according to the figures released by the Interior Ministry.

While the overall number of right-wing extremist crimes dropped by 0.3% in 2018, the number of violent crimes committed by known right-wing extremists rose by 3.2% (from 1,054 to 1,088), according to the report.

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Asylum and migration are topics that have dominated the German public and political agenda over the past several years since the country opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing conflict and persecution.

sri/rt (afp, epd, kna)

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