

# *Attacks on Refugee Shelters Rising in Germany*

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Berlin, October 17 (RHC)-- The German interior minister says his department has registered 493 attacks on refugee shelters so far this year, three times more than the assaults recorded in 2014. Thomas de Maiziere released the figure in an interview with the Funke media group, Germany's third largest newspaper and magazine publisher. De Maiziere said that the "massive rise in xenophobic attacks against asylum seekers," ranging from arson to racist graffiti, is a "disgrace for Germany."

Last year, 162 attacks on asylum seeker homes were recorded, compared to 58 and 24 in 2013 and 2012, respectively.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the German minister also said that two-thirds of the offenders had no previous criminal record, while the rest were already known to the police for far-right extremist crimes or for other reasons. He further called for tough action against the culprits behind the anti-refugee violence, saying, those responsible "must be made to understand that they are committing unacceptable offences: assault, attempted murder, arson."

Earlier, Germany's Interior Ministry said it had registered about 577,000 asylum seekers between January and September.

Germany, Europe's top destination for refugees, is expecting to receive between 800,000 and one million asylum seekers this year. Officials in the Western European country are divided over how to deal with

refugees, most of whom are fleeing conflict-hit zones in Africa and the Middle East.

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