

# *Germans Slam Racism in Nationwide Protests*

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Berlin, June 20 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of people have staged demonstrations in a number of cities in Germany to express opposition to racism in the country, in the wake of a record influx of refugees from conflict-hit countries into the European state.

The protests began on Saturday in the western city of Bochum and continued in Berlin, Munich and Leipzig on Sunday. The demonstrations were organized by Amnesty International, refugee support group Pro Asyl, DGB trade union federation, and a number of Muslim and Christian groups. Some 33,000 people had reportedly attended the "hand in hand against racism" demonstrations, which were also held in 16 smaller cities.

Racist attacks have surged in Germany and figures show that xenophobic and anti-Islamic groups have also been strengthening over the past few months after Germany registered about 1.1 million refugees, mostly Muslims, between January and December 2015.

Last year, some 1,000 far-right offenses against refugees, mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, were recorded in Germany.

Europe is facing an unprecedented influx of refugees, most of whom are fleeing conflict zones in Africa and the Middle East, particularly Syria.

Many blame major European powers for the unprecedented exodus, saying their policies have led to a surge in terrorism and war in the violence-hit regions, forcing more people out of their homes.

Over 194,600 refugees have reached Europe by sea so far this year, while 1,470 people died or went missing in their perilous journey to the continent, according to the latest figures by the International Organization of Migration (IOM).

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