

STATISTICS PUBLISHED ON ESCAPES FROM GDR

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[Text] Berlin--Since the Berlin wall was built on 13 August 1961, 33,973 people have fled from the GDR, risking physical injury or death. This figure was released to journalists today in Berlin by the "August 13th working group." These refugees consist of what are called "barrier breakers," who surmounted the GDR's border fortifications, and refugees who reached the West via the transit routes hidden in vehicles. The total number of refugees, including those who left the GDR via Eastern bloc countries or did not return from trips abroad, was said by the working group to be 155,147.

It was pointed out that the annual number of refugees has never sunk below 5,000 during any year since 13 August 1961 despite the continual extension of the border obstacles. In the first 6 months of 1974, 442 people fled to the West, risking physical injury or death. During the same period last year this figure was 718. In the first half of this year 1,658 people were also registered as refugees who had left the GDR via Eastern bloc countries or did not return from officially approved visits. In addition, since the wall was built 2,668 members of the GDR armed organizations surmounted the border obstacles. Of these, 530 came over to West Berlin. According to the working group which says that it observes and publishes the effects of the wall being built, so far this year 14 soldiers have fled to the Federal Republic, but none came over the border obstacles around West Berlin.