

Foreigners back on high alert

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Zimbabwean killer sparks residents' fury

A REPEAT of last year's xenophobic attacks is looming, warns the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa.

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This after residents in Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg, were said to be "mobilising" against their foreigner neighbours because a Zimbabwean criminal, who was shot dead by police last week, had terrorised them for a number of years.

Spokesman for the group Duncan Breen said he had heard rumours about possible violent attacks and that police should take them seriously.

"We need to be overly cautious about the threats being made because we cannot afford another episode," said Breen. In May last year xenophobic attacks left 62 people dead.

"Police need to go and explore who is making the threats and everyone must heed the warning. We need to pre-empt the possible violence and not wait until something happens to act," said Breen.

Police spokeswoman Captain Tessa Jansen said police had heard rumours of possible attacks on foreigners in Diepsloot and were monitoring the situation carefully.

"We take the rumours of any activity that might result in foreigners being attacked very seriously," said Jansen.

But South African residents who spoke to The Times yesterday blamed the crime in the area on foreign residents.

They say the murders committed by the slain Zimbabwean gang leader Mpiliso Ndlovu, 35, also known as "Sgonondo", had angered the community.


"Sgonondo", who was gunned down in a shoot-out with police last week, is believed to have killed nine people in Diepsloot since 2004.

In the past month, he killed two crime intelligence officers, a priest and two members of a family.

He was killed last Friday following a fierce gun battle with police in Etwatwa near Daveyton, east of Johannesburg.

“Sgonondo’ believed to have killed nine people since 2004”

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A community leader, who asked not to be named, said: "The community is relieved about the death of Sgonondo, but at the same time they are still in pain."

Another angry resident said: "Foreigners were behind murders and robberies in the area."

A Zimbabwean woman living in the area said she and her family were on alert after hearing rumours about possible violence against foreigners.

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