

The Citizen

[Print story](#)

[Close window](#)

Street committees are blamed for Xenophobia

HLENGIWE MNGUNI

JOHANNESBURG - Research to be released next month finds that the lack of legitimate elected leadership was behind much of May's xenophobic attacks.

"In most places where violence occurred, we found that the leadership there was made up of street committees," said Dr Loren Landau of the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (Cormsa).

"Where no one in the community has seen the councillor, you find different people appointing themselves as leaders. And this leadership is not recognised," he said.

He said these "illegitimate" leaders used hate against foreigners and property taken to gain favour.

He said political divisions led to some councillors not talking to those affiliated with other parties – leaving room for self-appointment.

The resurgence of street committees is worrying, as they are not constitutionally focused, he said.

"Violence occurred in front of media cameras but almost no one was prosecuted," said Cormsa.

hlengiwe@citizen.co.za

Printed from www.citizen.co.za on 1/19/2009 at 15:20:41