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TEAM NEEDED TO ADDRESS XENOPHOBIA

Government should set up an interdepartmental task team to address xenophobia in South Africa, The Consortium for Refugees and Migrant workers (CORMSA) said on Tuesday.

In a statement, CORMSA said: "Despite repeated calls over the past 18 months from civil society, there is no co-ordinated strategy on the part of government to address mob violence targeting non-nationals."

The human rights group said there was a need for a "comprehensive national strategy" to combat and address xenophobic violence.

The strategy should identify the source of conflict involving the foreigners and not rush to deport the illegal immigrants.

It should also put in place mechanisms to reintegrate into their communities those people displaced by xenophobic attacks.

CORMSA said there was a need to include foreigners in community policing forums so that conflicts could be addressed at the local level before they escalated.

The recent attacks on foreigners in Alexandra amounted to hate crimes, and should not be treated as isolated incidents but as a national crisis, CORMSA said.