

Homeless Congolese man Yves Sakila killed at hands of security guards outside Dublin department store

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In shocking scenes broadcast around the world, Yves Sakila, a 35-year-old homeless Congolese man died May 15 at the hands of private security guards from the Arnott's department store in Henry Street, Dublin, Ireland.

Video footage shows at least four security guards holding Sakila down after chasing him for allegedly shoplifting a bottle of perfume. One appears to be forcing Sakila's head into the pavement. Another at one point brutally uses his knee on Sakila's neck and head. Two other guards are watching.

Sakila was held on the ground, moaning in pain, for at least five minutes until Gardaí (police) arrived and handcuffed him before realising he was "unresponsive". They then performed CPR on him pending the arrival of an ambulance. He was pronounced dead at Dublin's Mater hospital. At some point during the incident an 80-year-old passerby was knocked down and suffered a broken hip.

A number of protests were held over the death, including hundreds of people who gathered outside Ireland's parliament, Leinster House, on May 21. Demonstrators demanded a transparent investigation and carried signs calling for justice and accountability. At a protest outside the Arnotts store the following week, Congolese MetroLink worker and friend of Sakila told the *Irish Times*, "We need justice for our brother. He was a nice guy. There is much to say but I am speechless right now. I am shocked. I am shaking. Maybe he shoplifted but whatever he did... we need justice for him."

Another worker from Congo, resident in Ireland since 1998, said, "We have racism every day, everywhere we go – shops, the streets, but we keep quiet."

Angel Issemezey Anzibi, described as the only mother Sakila had ever known, told the *Examiner*, that with his

father dead and biological mother struggling, Yves and his sister came to Ireland through a family re-unification programme.

Angel described Yves as bright, smart with electronics, able to "fix televisions, beds, machines – anything." But when her marriage broke up, Yves drifted from home and was placed in foster care. Despite periods of homelessness, addiction and convictions for petty crime, Angel said Yves often came home and "was always my child".

Staff at Salvation Army's Granby Centre in Dublin, where Sakila had lived since 2024, said he was a "pleasant and quiet" resident with a "deep interest in technology."

Calls have been made for a public inquiry into the killing. Ireland's Special Rapporteur on Racism and Equality, Dr Eburn Joseph, wrote to the Minister of Justice, the Garda Commissioner, and the police ombudsman Fiosrú, demanding "demonstrably independent, impartial and thorough" investigations.

In response, the Irish authorities went into damage limitation mode. A lawyer for the Sakila family, John Gerard Cullen, said that a pathologist's report had been prepared but not made public, although the results were said to be "inconclusive." Normally these are released within 24 hours of a death. Concerns over the delay have led the family to request a second opinion. London-based senior forensic pathologist, Dr. David Rouse, has been authorised to conduct an independent post mortem.

The police ombudsman said in a statement, "A referral does not necessarily mean a garda or gardaí have been accused of wrongdoing." No arrests of any of the security personnel involved in the assault on Sakila have been made.

There is a striking similarity to the police murder of

African-American father, George Floyd in 2020, in Minneapolis. Floyd was held to the ground and restrained by the same neck compression technique used against Sakila. Tens of millions of people, of all races and nationalities, took part in protests across the US and worldwide at Floyd's death and against police violence.

As with the Floyd killing, any racial aspect of Sakila's brutal treatment is tangled up with social and class issues. Dublin's shopping precincts, in a city riven with tremendous inequalities and which hosts many of the richest US tech corporations, sees numerous shoplifting incidents every day. In 2024, following a yearlong campaign, 8,460 people were arrested across Ireland under an anti-shoplifting crackdown, Operation Táirge, while 20,052 charges or court summons were issued. The same year, the retail group Musgrave, operating SuperValu and Centra shops said it was facing 1,000 incidents per week. But none of these resulted in the execution of the alleged shoplifter.

In the last few years, Ireland has been a particular focal point of the international far-right. Former Trump aide Steve Bannon was interviewed late 2025 by *Politico* on the US National Security Strategy, which claims that Europe is being undermined by "migration policies that are transforming the continent and creating strife, censorship of free speech and suppression of political opposition, cratering birthrates, and loss of national identities and self-confidence."

Bannon made clear Ireland is one of the first targets in a campaign to "smash [Europe's] liberal hegemony." He was "spending a ton of time behind the scenes on the Irish situation to help form an Irish national party... They're going to have an Irish MAGA, and we're going to have an Irish Trump. That's all going to come together, no doubt. That country is right on the edge thanks to mass migration."

Ireland's home grown and fragmented far right have wrapped themselves in the Irish tricolour, while launching increasingly frenzied and violent social media and physical campaigns against migrants and asylum seekers. Groups range from outright neo-Nazis and far right religious groups, fringe right wing parties such as Ireland First and the Ireland Freedom Party to more mainstream outfits such as Aontú who call for a "strict and speedy immigration system", and a vast new Border Agency to enforce brutal immigration and deportation policies.

Last October, an alleged sexual assault was seized as a pretext for three nights of violent protests outside the CityWest Hotel in Saggart, outside Dublin. The protests

were celebrated and amplified by anti-migrant and fascistic organisations worldwide. The previous year saw repeated attacks on asylum seekers forced to live in tents in central Dublin.

The Irish Fianna Fail/Fine Gael ruling coalition has responded by clamping down on migration, while leading party members have added to the deluge of filth. Former Taoiseach, Fianna Fail's Bertie Ahern, was caught on tape speaking to a woman who, during a doorstep canvas, claimed "hordes of foreigners [were] coming into the country". Ahern responded that he had "no problem with the Ukrainians," but "the ones I worry about are the Africans... We can't be taking in people from the Congo and all these places. I think there's too many from those places."

The xenophobic campaign serves Ireland's ruling parties and capitalist oligarchy by blaming migrants for all aspects of the social crisis, whose real origins lie in class divisions and inequalities.

Yves Sakila died homeless and unemployed, apparently forced to scratch a living on the margins in a city where the housing crisis, a product of price gouging and profiteering by super rich developers and so-called vulture funds, means that even a modest rental apartment is far outside the range of low-income workers. Average private monthly rental for a two-bedroom apartment in Dublin is €2,700. Even in rural Donegal, the average monthly rental is €1,036.

The circumstances of Sakila's tragic death make clear that no confidence can be placed in the Irish authorities to seriously investigate the roots of his killing. Opposition to the anti-migrant agenda of the ruling class, and its multiple exponents, demands the development of an independent political movement in the working class against all aspects of the social disaster being produced by capitalism in Ireland.



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