



**SOMERFORD  
GROVE  
RENTERS**

**LONDON  
RENTERS  
UNION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Monaco-based billionaire threatens London tenant organisers with eviction**

On 21 July 2020, a group of tenants and members of the London Renters Union who have been demanding rent relief in their block in Stoke Newington, north London, were served with a Section 21 (or “no-fault”) eviction notice by their landlord, in what they believe to be an act of retaliation for organising.

Jordan Osserman and Marc Sutton are organisers of Somerford Grove Renters (SGR), a group representing 170 flats in Olympic House, Simpson House and St John’s Court in Stoke Newington, buildings majority-owned by billionaire property tycoon John Christodolou.

In April, SGR wrote to their estate agent, Tower Quay, asking for a rent reduction. They were [told](#) to use their unspent lunch money and holiday savings to pay full rent, inviting [criticism from London Mayor Sadiq Khan](#).

Tower Quay has since cracked down on tenants’ efforts to organise. After the April letter from SGR, they significantly increased security presence in the buildings and instructed guards to follow and film residents. The estate agent has also infiltrated the tenants’ WhatsApp group, sharing screenshots with the *Guardian* in breach of GDPR.

Tower Quay has also sent legal threats to a number of SGR organisers, claiming they could be sued for “procurement to breach contract”. Sutton and Osserman were also threatened with £20,000 in legal costs for attempting to release a video documenting tenants’ financial difficulties under lockdown.

Now, Sutton and Osserman’s household has been told to vacate their flat by 21 September.

John Christodolou, currently [96th](#) on the Sunday Times Rich List, enjoys his £1.8bn fortune from the tax haven of Monaco. As well as two five-star hotels and a \$50m superyacht, Mr

Christodolou owns the Yianis Christodoulou Foundation, a charity that recently delivered [food parcels](#) to homeless people in Liverpool and Manchester.

Jordan Osseman said:

“It seems clear that our landlord has targeted us for publicly advocating for our neighbours. That John Christodolou would support homelessness charities whilst threatening his tenants with homelessness during a global pandemic is appalling.”

Rivkah Brown, a member of the London Renters Union, which is supporting SGR, said:

“These residents' organising within the block is part of a wider struggle to fight rising rents in Hackney and allow communities to remain and renters to stay safe in their homes. The only thing they've heard subsequently is that their landlord has ordered their eviction.

The Conservatives have appealed to landlords to show compassion to renters during this time. John Christodolou is evidence of how naive their appeal is.”

**Osseman and Sutton are available for comment:**

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