



# 'A 3 PER CENT CHANCE OF SURVIVAL'

**BRIAN TOOMEY, THE JOCKEY WHO CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD SPORTS WEEKEND**



# NATURE THERAPY

**WOODS, WATER, MOUNTAINS... THE BENEFITS OF BEING OUTDOORS** MAGAZINE

# THE IRISH TIMES

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## Squeeze on electricity supply to last into 2030s

Older power plants burning fossil fuels could be in use for longer than planned

Supply squeeze partly due to developers cancelling planned projects, says Eirgrid

**BARRY O'HALLORAN**  
and **JACK HORGAN-JONES**

Rising demand will squeeze Irish electricity supplies into the next decade, potentially forcing the State to fall back on older fossil-burning power plants to keep the lights on, a new report indicates.

National grid operator Eirgrid predicts that all-Ireland electricity demand will rise 43 per cent over the 10 years to 2032, while suppliers have backed out on pledges to build new generators. The State company warns that the outlook remains challenging "with capacity deficits identified during the 10 years to 2032".

Eirgrid says it expects electricity supply and demand to be particularly tight over the next five winters. Its report notes that steps taken to avoid shortages include keeping older power plants open beyond their scheduled closing date.

Late last year industry watchdog the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities agreed that the ESB-owned Moneypoint plant on the Shannon Estuary could operate as a "generator of last resort" past its scheduled closing date next year. The regulator stipulated that the plant should switch from burning coal to heavy fuel oil and continue operating up to March 2029.

**Pluggaps**  
The State has also recruited temporary gas-fired power plants in Dublin, Offaly and Kerry to help pluggaps in electricity supplies. One plant on Dublin's North Wall began producing electricity in the autumn, while others are due to begin generating power this year.

Eirgrid's General Capacity Statement, a snapshot of likely electricity demand and supply, partly blames the failure of developers to build promised new power plants for the

shortage. Since the previous such statement, published in the autumn of 2022, developers have axed plans to build generators that would have provided 455 megawatts (MW) of electricity, the equivalent of a large gas-fired power plant. This is in addition to the 630MW which was terminated before the company published the 2022 statement. "This means that most new predictable capacity that was expected to come online over the coming years has now withdrawn," says the report.

**Relies**  
Many of the axed generators would have run on natural gas, which provides half of the country's electricity and on which the system relies when weather prevents wind and solar plants from generating power.

Eirgrid's report notes that since 2018 just 30MW of new natural gas-fuelled power generators have been added to the Irish electricity network.

State-owned ESB and Norwegian-owned multinational Statkraft are among the suppliers who dropped plans to build generators that were scheduled to begin running between 2022 and 2032, the report notes.

Eirgrid says shortfalls will increase up to 2025 and begin easing as new suppliers recruited through auctions begin to produce electricity. However, demand will continue increasing, partly driven by a switch to using electricity for heating and transport required by the Government's Climate Action Plan.

Eamon Ryan, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, maintained that Eirgrid's statement showed an improvement from last year. He said this was due to lower demand forecasts and action taken by Government and State agencies to manage the situation.

Mr Ryan said that renewable capacity continued increasing in 2023. "New temporary emergency generation capacity has been delivered in North Wall, Dublin, and more back-up capacity will come on stream over the coming months."



**NAOMIO LEARY**  
Europe Correspondent

An investigation by the Irish Times has shed new light on the operations of controversial Luxembourg landlord Marc Godart in the Irish rental market, documenting a sprawling system of beds-for-rent targeting vulnerable new arrivals to the country.

Company documents revealed thanks to a whistleblower who worked within the rental empire show a network of 208 beds are offered for rent across 19 properties in central Dublin.

Some properties are stacked with triple-layer bunk beds to sleep six adults per room, often sharing one toilet, and in one case a single central Dublin property is fitted out with beds to host 33 tenants in one house.

A former tenant has told of being evicted because he complained about live CCTV cameras that surveilled the inside of his home, with Godart employees removing his bed and bedroom door in a bid to force him to leave.

Footage obtained by The Irish Times shows that the cameras inside properties record both video and audio, allowing

Godart employees to watch and listen to tenants as they chat in their kitchens through a mobile phone app.

This is despite the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) having already found that CCTV inside such properties is a violation of tenants' privacy, in a decision that ordered Mr Godart to pay €7,500 in compensation that the tenants involved say they have never received.

Godart, who began buying up Irish property after the economic crash, has yet to respond to detailed questions posed by the Irish Times.

**Salvador Chavez Morales was a tenant of landlord Marc Godart but was evicted after complaining about security cameras in the property.**

PHOTOGRAPH: ENDA O'DOWD

He holds positions as director or secretary of more than 50 companies, some involved in letting, others which own property, and some which appear to be dormant.

➔ **Godart tenant evicted after he objected to CCTV surveillance: page 6**

## Opposition parties undecided over 'yes' campaign for upcoming referendums

**CORMAC McQUINN**  
Political Correspondent

Ireland's main Opposition parties will not yet offer a commitment to campaign for a 'Yes' vote in forthcoming referendums on care and family.

At least three of the parties will attempt to change the wording of questions to be put to the people in March when the legislation on the referendums returns to the Dáil next week.

Sinn Féin is to hold a meeting next week to determine its approach to its referendum campaign.

Labour, People Before Profit

and the Social Democrats all want the forms of care that would be recognised in the Constitution expanded beyond the Government's proposal centred on care within families.

Under the Coalition's plans, a Yes vote would see language on women's "duties in the home" deleted. It is also proposing to insert language that would see recognition of care "by members of a family to one another" and that the State "shall strive to support such provision".

Amendments by Labour, the Social Democrats and People Before Profit propose that care "outside the home" or "within

the wider community" also be recognised in the Constitution.

Labour leader Ivana Bacik said her party was waiting to see how the Government responded to its suggested amendments. She said: "We're very concerned that the Government wording, particularly on the care referendum, is so narrowly defined and so weak that we won't be able to... support it."

A Social Democrats spokesman said removing "anachronistic language" on "women in the home" was "long overdue".

However, the party has concerns that the care proposal "is not as ambitious as it should be".

It will decide its level of engagement in the referendum campaigns in the coming weeks.

People Before Profit's amendment to the care referendum wording proposes an obligation on the State to "provide the necessary resources to support care within and outside the home and family".

In the other referendum, also due to be held on March 8th, the Government is separately proposing new wording on families in the Constitution to change the text to define the family as "whether founded on marriage or on other durable relationships".

## WEEKEND



**Young Scientist**  
**This year's winners**



NEWS

**Simone Gannon**  
**New beauty columnist**



MAGAZINE



**Home News**

**Health: St Vincent's University Hospital has apologised in the High Court to the family of a 76-year-old woman who died after losing 17 litres of blood during a complex surgery: page 4**

**Weather**

Dry at first but rain will move southwards in the afternoon and evening but it may hold dry in Munster for much of the day. Highest temperatures of 4-8 degrees, coldest in the south, in a light and variable breeze.

**World News**

**Middle East: The Yemen-based Houthis movement has said it will continue to target ships heading towards Israel after an attack yesterday killed five of its members: page 12**

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**Harvey Norman**

THE

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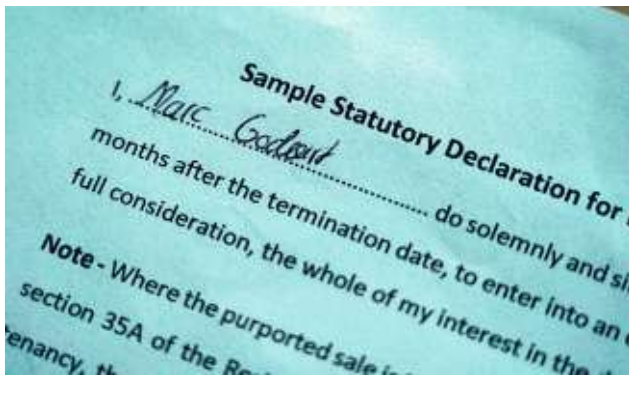
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# Godart tenant evicted after he objected to CCTV surveillance



**Naomi O'Leary**

Brussels Correspondent

Bed and door were removed after Salvador Chávez Morales complained about a camera trained on the occupants of Dublin rental

Computer engineer Salvador Chávez Morales arrived in Dublin with dreams of getting ahead in the global tech hub. He was attracted, like many Latin Americans, by visas allowing applicants to study English while working part time.

Six weeks later, he was running short of food and faced the prospect of being turned out on the street. A letting agency

had retained €1,146 of the savings he had painstakingly built up over years of work in his native Mexico and had issued him with an eviction notice. The reason? He had objected to a CCTV camera that recorded live footage in his kitchen. To push through the eviction and force him to leave the property, the agency then removed his bed and bedroom door.

Salvador had become entangled in the property business of controversial Luxembourg landlord Marc Godart, who employs Spanish-speaking staff to post ads for beds on Spanish-language chat groups and social media pages, shepherding Ireland's new arrivals towards the website roombookingsxl.com amid a dire shortage of affordable housing in the capital.

A new investigation by The Irish Times, drawing on the accounts of a whistleblower who worked for Godart and some of his former tenants, sheds new light on practices within his operation and his treatment of migrants who have recently arrived in Ireland. The Luxembourg businessman did not respond to queries about the issues that have arisen in this investigation.

An internal Godart company booking system seen by The Irish Times shows 208 bed places are rented out across 19 flats and houses in Dublin city centre. Among

them are 33 beds in a property on Cork Street, and six apartments each, with between six and 19 beds in Reuben House, where residents were controversially evicted in 2022 to make way for short-stay lets. Some rooms are shared by six people, stacked in three-tier bunk beds.

"Latin Americans, most of them. Bolivians, Mexicans, Panamanians," a former employee of Godart said of the tenants from whom, until recently, he used to collect rent. "Kitchen porters, waitresses, kitchen assistants... cleaners. They're studying English and they also have jobs."

#### New arrivals are target market

The former employee said the target market of the company is new people arriving to Ireland who don't know the law around tenancies, who don't have too much information about housing issues or who don't know who Marc Godart is.

Salvador's place was on Capel Street in Dublin city centre. It was one of four flats rented out by Godart's company in the same building. His room had just enough space for a single bed. It was partitioned with temporary walls out of the kitchen of a flat where seven people shared the other two rooms.

"This is my shoebox," he joked in a video

presenting the room to friends back home in late June. "Welcome to Dublin."

He started his English course and began getting to know his flatmates, pleased with the flat's central location. But as the date neared to pay the rent for August, he heard a concerning rumour. Flatmates told him the letting agency had threatened to evict them all because someone, tired of repeated thefts outside, had brought their bicycle into the flat. This broke a house rule.

"Hello, some of my flatmates said you're going to cancel our contracts, is it right?" he asked a company representative over WhatsApp on July 25th, a screenshot shows.

The company representative denied it and nudged him to pay the upcoming rent.

"Hi Salvador, I don't seem to have such information as your contracts will not be terminated. How would you like to pay please, card or cash?" said the representative. He handed over the rent for August that day: €656.10, according to a payment record. Four days later on July 29th, Salvador's plans to hand out CVs were interrupted by a WhatsApp message. He had been sent a pdf document entitled "termination notice". It gave him seven days to leave the flat, giving no reason.

"We are not required to give any form of notice at the end of the licence period," the notice read. Irish law provides for 28 days notice for tenancies under six months.

If Salvador wanted to get back his deposit of €490, he had to be out by August 5th, the notice instructed him.

None of his flatmates received eviction notices. Salvador was singled out because he had complained about a CCTV camera that recorded live footage within the flat, according to the former Godart employee who dealt with the issue.

"The eviction was made during his first month because he didn't agree with the cameras," the employee said.

A camera was installed just above the door to Salvador's bedroom and was focused on the kitchen, footage shows.

The use of CCTV within the properties he is renting was among several issues Godart was asked to comment on in an email from The Irish Times earlier this week to which he did not respond.

The Capel Street flat is one of several Godart properties that have cameras installed inside them that record live audio and video footage of the tenants.

Godart employees can view the live footage at will through a mobile phone app, according to the former employee.

"They can see live action of the cameras... also they can hear what are they saying... they use the cameras to know what

is happening," said the former employee.

According to a ruling by the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), which mediates disputes between tenants and landlords: "The provision of security cameras in a rented dwelling, particularly internal cameras, is an invasion of personal privacy and a breach of the right to peaceful occupation."

This ruling was made in 2022 in a case taken by a group of tenants, also from Mexico, who had rented a property from Godart near Mountjoy Square. Mexican brothers Uriel and Gabriel Chavira lived in the property and Uriel was one of the tenants who brought the RTB case. Gabriel wasn't a named complainant in the case, but witnessed the events. He moved out of the property.

Godart told the court he had issued Uriel and his fellow complainants an eviction notice 18 days into their tenancy "because of ongoing issues and complaints about the CCTV", according to a report of proceedings. He defended the cameras, portraying them as an expensive perk installed "to protect the peaceful enjoyment of the dwelling".

The RTB ordered Godart to pay the tenants €7,500 in damages for maintaining CCTV cameras in the house against their consent, for issuing invalid eviction notices, and using his own key to enter the house.

The tenants remain in the property, which turned out – as in several cases documented by The Irish Times – to be sublet by Godart without the knowledge of the owner. Nearly two years since the ruling, the tenants say they have yet to receive the damages from Godart ordered by the RTB.

After receiving his eviction notice, Salvador heard through the grapevine of this strikingly similar case involving fellow Mexicans, who had won a case against the landlord at a body he now learned of called the RTB.

#### Airbnb logo used without permission

Until then, Salvador had not actually been aware that his landlord was Marc Godart. Employees that operate the roombookingsxl.com website, collect rent and deal with tenants are paid by Itzig Sarl, the Luxembourg company owned by Godart and his parents that is registered to his suburban childhood home. They work alongside Godart in a central Dublin office.

The roombookingsxl.com website gives away none of this, its physical address listed as merely "Dublin 1, Ireland". Booking confirmations from the website bearing the company name "Home Away" use the logo of Airbnb, without any permission or

■ Clockwise from above: Salvador Chávez Morales; the kitchen in a property rented out by Marc Godart on Cork Street; a form signed by Godart; the view of the Capel Street kitchen from a CCTV camera; and Chávez Morales's bedroom after the bed was taken out.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ENDA O'DOWD

involvement of the San Francisco rental company, The Irish Times has confirmed.

The eviction notice issued to Salvador was signed with an anonymous scribble "on behalf of Administration Panel", without bearing any person or company's name. To rent his room, Salvador was required to sign a contract but was refused a copy – a common practice, according to the former employee.

The Irish Times has seen a contract that was issued to another tenant, granting a four-month tenancy in Beaver Street in Dublin 1 from last November. It states that the contract is being made between the tenant and "AIRBNB", which actually has no involvement.

A section of the contract about CCTV cameras in the property appears to be copied and pasted from a document by the European Parliament, altered to read "Irish Parliament". The contract cites EU industry regulations for CCTV systems that do not relate to privacy law to insist on the legality of cameras within the flat.

It seemingly seeks to override Irish law, stating that the tenant "is not to be entitled... to any statutory protection under the Housing Acts", and that tenants can be required to leave with seven days' notice or, "in case of breach of any condition or house rules... with immediate effect".

Hearing about the case involving fellow Mexicans had given Salvador a clue as to who his landlord really was. To confirm this, he took photographs of missed delivery cards left at the Capel Street address by An Post, addressed to René Godart, as director of Capel Grand Inn Limited, and Green Label Property Investments.

Googling these names brought him to previous reports by The Irish Times about Godart and his rentals business. He learned that René was Marc's father, and that Green Label Property Investments is the Luxembourg family's main vehicle for managing their assets in Ireland, and had paid Marc €298,410 in director's remuneration in 2022.

He now had the knowledge necessary to lodge a dispute of his eviction notice with the RTB.

In theory, lodging this dispute should have prevented any eviction from going ahead until the case was resolved. Nevertheless, on August 5th, Godart employees arrived at the Capel Street flat and told Salvador to leave, brushing off his objections that he had the right to stay and had lodged a dispute with the RTB.

Workmen entered his bedroom and dismantled the bed he slept on, phone footage shows. They then removed the door to his bedroom, leaving it open to the kitchen. The pin codes to the doors to the flat were changed. Salvador had paid €1,146 to the agency in rent for the month of August and as a deposit. "It was my savings, you know. Many years of savings," he recalls.

With money dwindling and nowhere else to go, he resolved to try to stay in the flat for the days he had paid for. He slept on the floor of the doorless room and left the flat as little as possible, occasionally missing his English course and running low on food, constantly anxious he would return to find his possessions thrown out.

Finally, he found a new place where a sympathetic landlord would allow him time to save up to pay a new deposit. He left Capel Street at the end of August, and soon found work as a waiter.

When the hearing at the RTB came around, Salvador represented himself. He used the opportunity to ask the judge why the previous tenants who had clashed with Godart over CCTV had never been paid their damages. "I was surprised how this person can still be doing this, and no one does anything. The law is not working," Salvador says.

Without enforcement, he feels there is nothing to stop the same thing happening repeatedly to new arrivals who may not know the language or the law. "It's not fair, and what's more incredible is that no one does anything against him," he says.

■ Video Watch Enda O'Dowd's video report on how Godart filmed his tenants



"I was surprised how this person can still be doing this, and no one does anything. The law is not working"

## WHO IS MARC GODART?

COLM KEENA

The landlord and property investor Marc Godart invested in commercial and residential property in Ireland during the economic crash, using funding from family companies in his native Luxembourg.

He first came to public prominence early last year when it emerged he had evicted about 45 tenants from apartments in Reuben House, Dublin 8, telling them he intended to sell the apartments, only for the tenants to discover that the apartments were available for short-term rent on property letting website Airbnb.

At the time, Dublin City Council took enforcement proceedings against Godart's company, Green Label Property Investments Ltd, for the unauthorised holiday letting of the apartments.

Godart and his companies have been mentioned in relation to 12 disputes before the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) over the unlawful termination of tenancies and other matters, with findings being made in the tenants' favour.

In one case, Lizet Pena-Herrera, a tenant of a property on Cork Street, Dublin 8, was awarded €15,433 after she successfully took a case to the RTB for illegal eviction.

Ms Pena-Herrera then went to the District Court to secure an enforcement order against Green Label in an effort to secure the payment of



■ Marc Godart: invested in Irish property during the economic crash

the RTB award.

As well as letting property owned by his Green Label group, Mr Godart is also involved in the letting of other people's property which he then sublets to both commercial and residential tenants.

He is the director and/or secretary of more than 50 Irish companies, some of which own property, some of which are involved in letting, and others which appear to be dormant. The property-owning companies do not have mortgages registered against their holdings, but instead are funded by a Godart family company in Luxembourg called Hesper SA.

It had assets of €4.29 million at the end of 2021, according to its most

recently filed accounts. A website called Roombookingsxl.com is used to let some of these properties.

Land Registry filings, RTB determinations and reporting by The Irish Times show that Godart and his companies have been associated with the ownership and/or renting of property at: Reuben House, Dublin 8, Beaver Street/Railway Street, D1, Capel Street, Dublin Emmet Street, North Circular Road, D7, Derrynane Square, D7, Windsor Avenue, D3, Cork Street, D8, Sarsfield Road, D10, Woodfield Avenue, D10, Westmoreland Street, D2, Daleview Road, Ballybrack, Co Dublin, apartments on Main Street, Borrisokane, Co Tipperary and Main Street, Cashel, Co Tipperary, Chapel Hill, Innishannon, Co Cork, and a small housing development at Mangan, Gorey, Co Wexford.

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