# Kemi Badenoch criticises IOPC decision to pursue gross misconduct hearing for officer who fatally shot Chris Kaba



Kemi Badenoch, the British Conservative Party leader, has criticised the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) over its decision to proceed with gross misconduct hearings against Sergeant Martyn Blake, the Metropolitan Police officer who fatally shot Chris Kaba in Streatham, south-east London, in September 2022. The incident occurred after police officers had hemmed in the vehicle driven by Kaba, 24, who allegedly attempted to ram past the police cars.

Sergeant Blake, aged 41, was cleared of murder charges in October following a trial where a jury of ordinary Londoners found him not guilty. The jury reached this verdict despite not having seen CCTV footage, which was ruled inadmissible by the judge, showing Kaba allegedly firing a gun at someone from a rival gang shortly before the fatal encounter. Kaba was later revealed to have been a core member of a London street gang and linked to two shootings in the week prior to his death. The police initially began following the vehicle as it had been used as a getaway car in a shooting in Brixton the night before the fatal confrontation.

Despite the murder acquittal, the IOPC announced on Wednesday that Sergeant Blake will still face gross misconduct proceedings. Kemi Badenoch has publicly criticised this move, stating the IOPC "has got this wrong." Speaking on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Badenoch said, "Heroes like the police officer who shot Chris Kaba are all that stand between us and the predators, thieves and maniacs." She expressed frustration with what she terms the "over-interpretation of guidelines," which she believes is hampering policing efforts and discouraging capable individuals from joining the police force.

Badenoch further remarked, "We need to support police officers who do difficult things to protect the public, provided they act in accordance with the law, as a jury found Sgt Blake did." She described the initial murder charge as a "disgrace" and praised the jury for their "sense and decency."

The Metropolitan Police also faced significant internal unrest following the murder charge against Sergeant Blake, with dozens of armed officers staging a walkout in protest. In response, the army was placed on standby to fill potential policing gaps.

IOPC director Amanda Rowe commented on the decision to pursue gross misconduct charges, clarifying that it was based on a review of all evidence and adherence to legal standards. Rowe explained, "The legal test for deciding whether there is a case to answer is low – is there sufficient evidence upon which, on the balance of probabilities, a disciplinary panel could make a finding of misconduct. This has been met and therefore we need to follow the legal process." She also noted that the Home Office is currently reviewing legal tests related to the use of force in misconduct cases, but emphasised the IOPC must operate within the law as it presently stands.

The case has highlighted ongoing tensions surrounding police accountability and operational challenges faced by the UK’s law enforcement community. It remains under the scrutiny of both public and official bodies as the gross misconduct proceedings advance.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/statement-following-acquittal-sergeant-martyn-blake-murder-chris-kaba> - The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) issued a statement acknowledging the acquittal of Sergeant Martyn Blake in the murder trial of Chris Kaba, confirming the jury's decision and expressing sympathy for Kaba's family.
2. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/iopc-statement-response-panorama-documentary-chris-kaba-shooting> - The IOPC responded to the BBC Panorama documentary on the Chris Kaba shooting, clarifying that their decisions were based solely on available evidence and legal thresholds, and that former Regional Director Sal Naseem's views did not represent the official stance of the organization.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce8d8grkzyyo> - A former colleague of Sergeant Martyn Blake, who was part of the Met Police's MO19 specialist firearms command, stated that Blake acted in accordance with his training and that there was no evidence of wrongdoing, emphasizing the professionalism of the officer.
4. <https://scottishpolicesupers.org/2024/10/29/a-cowardice-of-leadership-that-inexplicably-led-to-a-police-firearms-officer-being-tried-for-murder-must-be-addressed-and-never-be-allowed-to-happen-again/> - Rob Hay, President of the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents, criticized the decision to prosecute Sergeant Blake, describing it as a 'politically-motivated show-trial' and highlighting the negative impact on the policing community.
5. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/has-the-police-watchdog-learnt-nothing-from-the-chris-kaba-debacle/> - An article in The Spectator discusses the controversy surrounding the IOPC's decision to prosecute Sergeant Blake, suggesting that the organization may have been influenced by external pressures and expressing concerns about its approach to police accountability.
6. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/ex-police-marksman-hits-out-flawed-iopc-martyn-blake-chris-kaba-trial> - Former police marksman Tony Long criticized the IOPC's handling of the Martyn Blake trial, describing the organization as 'flawed' and expressing sympathy for Blake, who was cleared of murdering Chris Kaba.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2048952/get-grip-kemi-badenoch-demands> - Please view link - unable to able to access data