


Witness Statement of: **Mr Antonio Roncolato**
No. of statement: **4**
Exhibits:
Date of statement: **02.03.2020**

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

FOURTH WITNESS STATEMENT OF ANTONIO RONCOLATO

This statement is a factual statement prepared for Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry dealing with Modules 3 and 4. It does not and is not intended to set out my experiences on the night of the fire or the impact that these events and the aftermath have had on my family and me.

Signed

I, **ANTONIO RONCOLATO**, will say as follows:

1. I am a survivor of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017. At the time, I was living at Flat 72 with my son and former sister in law, Gloria Wilson. I am making this statement for the purposes of Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. I made three witness statements in Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. My first statement was dated 3 July 2018 (URN: **IWS/894**) with exhibits **AR/1-AR/13** (URN: **IWS/892**), my second statement was signed on 10 July 2018 (URN: **IWS/922**) with exhibits **AR/13-AR/14** (**IWS/923-924**) and my third statement was signed on 27 September 2018 (URN: **IWS/1109**). I also gave three witness statements to the Metropolitan Police dated *15 July 2017*, *9 November 2017* and *29 August 2018*.
3. My Phase 2 statement addresses the issues within module 3 (fire safety within the Tower and communication with residents) and module 4 (aftermath) from the Inquiry's Phase 2 schedule. I deal with issues relating to Module 3 in paragraphs 4-69 and Module 4 in paragraphs 70-145. This statement should be read in conjunction with my Phase 1 statements, which also touch on module 3 and 4 issues.

Module 3

Living at Grenfell Tower

4. Paragraph 4-7 of my first Phase 1 statement describes where I am from and how long I had been living at Grenfell Tower and with whom.
5. I had a secure tenancy agreement. This was with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) and not the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) as previously stated at paragraph 8 of my first Phase 1 statement.

The Flat

6. I describe the internal layout of my flat and the views at paragraphs 9-10 of my first Phase 1 statement.

Front Door

7. As described at paragraph 12 of my first Phase 1 statement, a new front door was fitted in my flat around 5-6 years before the fire. To clarify, this was before the last refurbishment at Grenfell Tower, which I describe in more detail below.
8. The new door was initially very heavy and difficult to open. I complained to the TMO about this. They sent someone to fix it, who removed the self-closing mechanism. The new door would then stay open, unless you physically closed it. However, there is no record of this repair being undertaken in my housing records, but I remember this very clearly. Once the self-closing mechanism was removed, the door felt a lot lighter. I had no further issues with the front door after this time.
9. On the night of the fire, the thick black smoke in the communal area did not come through any gaps in my front door. I described the smoke at paragraphs 64, 66, 71 and 78 of my first Phase 1 statement.

10. When the firefighters came to rescue me from my flat around 6am, I do not believe they closed my front door. This is because when I visited the Tower after the fire, the fire and smoke damage to Christopher's bedroom was far less than the rest of the flat. I know his door was closed on the night of the fire.

Windows

11. I believe the new windows were installed around August 2015 during the last refurbishment. I deal with the new windows at paragraphs 14 and 36 of my first Phase 1 statement. I experienced a draught underneath the kitchen and living room windows. The living room window is labelled number 2 in green on the flat floor plan exhibited as **AR/1** to my first Phase 1 statement (URN: **IWS/892_2**).
12. To elaborate on this, the draught was due to gaps between the edge of the window frame and the wall. I remember mentioning this problem to a man, who came to inspect the windows after the refurbishment was completed. I am not sure whether this person was from the TMO, Rydon or another organisation. I expected them to return and fix this issue, but they never did.
13. In the end, I used plastic filler to close the gap in the kitchen window myself. However, I never got round to doing the same with the living room window. It was this window on the night of the fire that I first noticed smoke pouring into my flat. This is described at paragraph 69 of my first Phase 1 statement. I also took a photograph of this, which I exhibited as **AR/8 (IWS/892_17)**.
14. My bedroom window handle was wonky and there was also a problem with the window hinge in Christopher's bedroom, which mean it was difficult to open and close. In January 2017, the window came away from the frame. It was reported to the TMO and it took a few months for it to be fixed. There were no further issues with the window after this time.
15. There was an issue with noise from the kitchen extractor fan, which was part of the new kitchen window. I called Lynda Prentice from Rydon to report this. She sent an engineer round to my flat, who fixed it. I had no further issues with the extractor fan after this.

Smoke Detectors and Air Vents

16. I cover the smoke detectors and air vents in my flat at paragraph 14-15 of my first Phase 1 statement.

Electrical Surges

17. As stated at paragraph 16 of my first Phase 1 statement, I did not personally experience electrical surges in my flat in May 2013. However, I did sign a petition (URN: **RBK2270_1**) that was sent to RBKC and the TMO dealing with these power surges and the delays with improvement works at Grenfell Tower.

The Communal Area

18. I deal with the communal area at paragraphs 17-27 of my first Phase 1 statement. I specifically describe the layout of the communal landing on the tenth floor at paragraph 17 of this statement.

Lighting

19. I describe the lighting in the communal landing at paragraph 18 and on the stair at paragraph 20 of my first Phase 1 statement. I was not aware of any emergency lighting in the Tower

Lifts

20. Paragraph 19 of my first Phase 1 statement deals with lifts. I also wish to add that if one or both lifts were out of service, I used to report any issues to the concierge on the ground floor of the Tower, but this was removed around 2014.

21. I remember seeing workers from Rydon and other contractors frequently using the lifts to go up and down the Tower during the refurbishment. They also used the lifts to transport heavy machinery and equipment. Rydon was only meant to use one of the two lifts, so the other lift for free for residents.

22. Before the refurbishment started, residents were told that work would only take place between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday, but I would see workers using the lifts outside of these times.

23. This impacted on residents, who would have to wait longer for the lifts. I did not think this was fair on mothers with young children, the elderly or disabled, who could not use the stairs. They had no choice but to wait until a lift became available and was no longer being used by the workers. The constant use of the lifts by the workers led to them breaking down more often during the refurbishment.

Main Stairs

24. I describe the main stairs at paragraph 20 my first Phase 1 statement. There were floor numbers in the stairwell, but they were very small. The stairs was the only way in and out of the Tower and ran through the middle of the building. I would normally use the lifts, so I did not use the stairs that often.

Fire Door

25. There was a fire door on each landing leading to the main stairs. This would automatically close behind you, but I cannot remember if it had any smoke seals.

26. I describe an incident at paragraph 21 of my first Phase 1 statement. I believe this happened around 2013-2014. It was before the fourth floor became the seventh floor during the refurbishment. I was trying to visit Alba Lucia Rodriguez at Flat 45, but the fourth floor fire door would not open. I immediately reported this issue to Victoria, who was based at the concierge on the ground floor of the Tower. I recall no other issues with the fire doors.

27. Paragraph 23 and 50 of my first Phase 1 statement already covers that there were no smoke/ fire alarms or fire extinguishers in the communal area. I now wish that I had been more vocal about this at the time. These simple measures would have saved lives on 14 June 2017.

28. There was a dry riser and air vents on the landing of the tenth floor. These air vents had been there since I moved to the Tower in 1990. I did not really know what they were for, but they would sometimes make a noise. I would normally notice this noise whilst waiting for the lift.

Concierge & Complaints

29. I deal with the concierge at paragraph 25-26 of my first Phase 1 statement. In around July 2014, the concierge was removed from the Tower as part of the refurbishment. I was not in favour of this from a security perspective. I know that other residents wanted the concierge to be reinstated.

30. As I have already stated at paragraph 26 of my first Phase 1 statement, if I had any issues with my flat or the building, I would normally report them to Karim or later on to Victoria. They were both based in the reception area with the concierge. Victoria was normally very responsive. If any issues arose out of hours, I would call the TMO emergency number instead.

31. Later after the concierge was removed, Victoria was based in the TMO office underneath Grenfell Walk. It was not as convenient to report any issues here, so I would normally call the TMO instead. I would generally not put any complaints or concerns in writing; I would report them in person or on the telephone.

32. Throughout the years, there were a number of leaks in Flat 72. In 2014, there was water coming from the flat above. A few years before this, there was another leak in my flat due to a broken pipe connected to the boiler. Christopher also accidentally flooded our flat in 2016, when he left the bath taps on when the water supply was off. This led to the bath overflowing and flooding the flat. At times, there were issues with no running water in the flat.

33. My experience was that the TMO would response quickly in an emergency situation such as a flood or broken pipes, but they would normally be slower to respond in all other situations. Even when they attended during an emergency, they would resolve

the immediate issue, but it would then take time for the underlining problem to be fully resolved.

34. I was not aware of a formal complaints policy for the TMO.

Fire Safety

35. I was only aware of one previous fire at Grenfell Tower in 2010. I believe it occurred in one of the flats below mine, but I cannot remember on which floor. The lifts were not in use. I remember seeing some firefighters as I was walking down the stairs in the communal area on my way out of the building. I do not remember any further details.

36. I deal with fire safety at paragraphs 48-50 of my first Phase 1 statement. I do not remember being given any fire safety information during the 27 years I lived at Grenfell Tower.

37. I have no knowledge of any fire safety checks or inspections being carried out at the Tower.

38. As I have already touched upon at paragraph 49 of my first Phase 1 statement, I remember a sign stating you should not use the lifts in the event of a fire. This was located by the lifts of the ground floor. I do not remember when this sign was put up.

39. I was not aware that there was a formal '*stay put*' policy at Grenfell Tower. No one from RBKC, the TMO or the Fire Bridge ever explained what this was or what I should do in the event of a fire. However, having lived at the Tower for so long, I knew that the main stairs was the only way out of the building. If the smoke had not been so bad in the communal area outside my flat on 14 June 2017, I would have left the Tower immediately.

40. I did not personally make any complaints to RBKC or the TMO about fire safety concerns, but the residents' compact did raise fire safety issues with the TMO during

the refurbishment. I believe this was in relation to one of the fire exits being removed onto the Walkways and the route to the ground floor being changed to accommodate the new flats. I return to the residents' compact in more detail below.

41. Before 14 June 2017, I had not given much thought to fire safety, as I did not really consider that a fire like this could happen. I am now far more fire safety conscious.

The Refurbishment

42. Paragraphs 31-47 of my first Phase 1 statement deals with the refurbishment. At one time there were rumours that RBKC was going to pull down Grenfell Tower, but later decided to refurbishment it instead.

43. This was part of a wider project of regeneration in the area and led to a new school being built called the Academy and improvement works to the swimming pool, which became the Kensington Leisure Centre. Residents did not want the school built next to Grenfell Tower. This was due to the loss of green space, but also due to serious concerns about access, as it became increasingly built up around the Tower with reduced access for emergency services to reach the Tower. Personally, I thought the proposed plans were unsafe and ill thought through.

44. Despite residents' concerns, these were ignored by RBKC. Against residents' wishes, the Academy was built on the car park and football pitches by Grenfell Tower. I describe this at paragraph 33 of my first Phase 1 statement.

45. The refurbishment work at Grenfell Tower included new windows, which I have already described above. There was also a new heating and boiler system and cladding placed on the exterior of the Tower.

46. Residents were kept updated about the refurbishment through newsletters from both the TMO and Rydon.

47. There was a show home on the fourteenth floor, which I describe in more details at paragraph 35 of my first Phase 1 statement. I remember commenting to Peter

Maddison at the TMO that the new windows appeared smaller in the show home. He just said that was how it was going to be when the new windows were fitted.

48. On 14 October 2014, Rydon came to survey my flat prior to the work starting. I indicated a preference for the new pipes in the flat to be boxed in, which they subsequently were. The work to my flat was completed within the year.

Changes to Exterior of Grenfell Tower

49. I cover what I knew about the changes to the exterior of the Tower at paragraphs 37-39 of my first Phase 1 statement. Originally I said that there was no consultation with residents about this work. To clarify, I meant that I was not aware of any consultation with residents about this work. I do not remember receiving any questionnaire to complete. I did not attend any consultation meetings with the TMO or Rydon about the refurbishment.
50. As already stated at paragraph 38 of my first Phase 1 statement, I thought the purpose of the cladding was to make the Tower more energy efficient, so it would be warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. This was also confirmed to me by one of the TMO officials, who were with Peter Maddison, when I visited the show flat.

New Boilers

51. Paragraph 41-44 of my first Phase 1 statements deals with the new boilers being installed at Grenfell Tower. The show home originally had the new boiler in the same location as the old boiler in the cupboard next to the kitchen. I have marked this up as 'J' on the flat floor plan exhibited as **AR/1** to my first Phase 1 statement (**IWS/892_2**).
52. However, I then received a newsletter informing me that the boiler was now going to be installed in the hallway of my flat by the front door. There was no consultation or explanation regarding the change of plan, which I believe was a cost cutting exercise.
53. I did not want the boiler to be installed in the hallway because it would have caused an obstruction and made it difficult to bring large items (such as furniture) into the flat. Furthermore, it looked unattractive at you immediately walked into the flat.

54. I also had health and safety concerns with the electricity meter directly underneath the boiler. I worried that if something went wrong that the only access out of the flat would be blocked. I wanted the boiler to stay in the same place as it had always been.
55. There was real pressure put on residents to agree to the boiler's new proposed location, which I discuss in more details below. I refused and eventually the new boiler was installed in the same location as the old boiler. The new boiler was installed in my flat around August 2015. The connecting pipe work was boxed in along the ceiling and painted over if it ran along the skirting boards.

Residents' Meetings and Compact

56. I touched upon the residents' compact at paragraph 41-44 of my first Phase 1 statement, but I wish to provide further details. This was formed in response to residents' concerns about the refurbishment and the fact that we were not being listened to.
57. I received a flyer through my front door inviting me to a residents' meeting to discuss issues with the refurbishment. I think this was around April 2015. I then became a regular at these residents meetings, which took place in a meeting room in the finger blocks next to the Tower.
58. We discussed our concerns about the proposed location of the new boiler in the hallway, our health and safety concerns during the refurbishment including the removal of one of the fire exits onto the Walkways and the exposed pipes in the flats that were linked with the new heating system, issues with Rydon constantly using both lifts outside the agreed hours of 8am to 5pm and the mess left in the communal areas whilst work was being completed.
59. Ed Daffern and David Collins chaired the meetings, who will both be able to give far more detail about the residents' meetings and the compact. They also took minutes and followed up residents' concerns with various people including RBKC, the TMO and Rydon. They also liaised with our local MP and councillor on behalf of residents.

60. The TMO and Rydon were invited to some of the residents' meetings. My impression was that the TMO was very resistant to coming. When they did come, the meetings with were often tense and residents would walk out in sheer frustration. I remember Steve Powers walking out of these meetings; he subsequently died in the fire. I certainly remember Peter Maddison from the TMO attending, but there were others from the TMO, but I cannot remember who they were. Rydon also came to some of these meetings, but I cannot remember whom.
61. The TMO was initially unwilling to listen to residents' concerns. As a result, Ed Daffern, David Collins, William Thompson, Hanan Wahabi, Miguel Alves, Mariem Elgwahry and myself with others agreed to form a compact. The purpose of the compact was to encourage residents to voice their concerns to RBKC, the TMO and Rydon over the refurbishment. We also involved our local MP and councillor with this.
62. As part of the compact, we agreed that we would not allow access to our flats for the new boiler work to be completed in the hallway. We knocked on residents' doors to try to galvanise support for the compact and encourage them not to agree to the works. On one occasion, Councillor Judith Blakeman joined me as I knocked on residents' doors one Sunday.
63. It was also an opportunity to see what other issues residents wished to raise whilst we completed a residents' satisfaction survey. It was apparent that many residents were not happy with the proposed location for the new boiler in the hallway, but either did not have the energy to fight the TMO or did not believe they had a choice on the boiler's location.
64. Residents felt harassed and those that had the works completed were not happy. Many residents were actively discouraged from having the work done and were told it would be extremely disruptive. This was not true. My new boiler was installed in the cupboard by the kitchen within a couple of days with minimal disruption.

65. This is why I refer at paragraph 44 of my first Phase 1 statement to residents being bullied into having the new boiler installed in the hallway rather than in the cupboard by the kitchen. I also think people who did not speak good English would have struggled to engage with the TMO/ Rydon to oppose the proposed plans for the boiler's new location.

Communication with Residents during the Refurbishment

66. As detailed at paragraph 46 of my first Phase 1 statement, there were two women from Rydon, who would liaise with residents regarding the works being carried out and who kept us updated. They were called Christina Stephanou and Lynda Prentice. I would see them both around the Tower during the refurbishment, but my main contact was with Lynda. I had her mobile number, so I would call or text her to arrange appointments for work to be completed at the flat or if there were any snagging issues. For example, when the extractor fan was making a noise that I have already described above. Lynda was always friendly and polite to me, but I always stood my ground with her.

Gas Leak

67. In October 2016 there was a gas leak, which led to the gas supply being cut off to all number 2 flats, including my flat. This meant that I was not able to use the cooker. I was provided with a hot plate and later a portable oven, but this was far from ideal.

68. It took six months before the gas was reinstalled in March 2017. New gas pipes ran through the main staircase of the Tower. Pipes would run off this through the communal landing on the floor and into each of the six flats. I believe the pipes in the landing were being boxed in around the time of the fire, but the main gas pipe in the main stairs remained exposed. The gas meter in my flat was also moved from the storage cupboard next to the kitchen to a cupboard in the hallway marked 'G' on the flat's floor plan exhibited as AR/1 to my first Phase 1 statement (IWS/892_2).

69. I was aware of one resident called Shah, who raised health and safety concerns about the exposed pipes in the communal area before the fire.

Module 4 - Aftermath

70. I have described in detail what I saw on the night of the fire on 14 June 2017 at paragraphs 55-97 of my first Phase 1 statement dated 3 July 2018. I took a number of photographs during the course of the night, which are exhibited to my first and second Phase 1 statements. My third Phase 1 statement tries to assist the Inquiry in relation to the timings of these photographs. Unfortunately, I do not know the exact times these photographs were taken after my phone was damaged after the fire. I do not wish to go into detail about the horrors that I experienced that night, but it has changed my life forever.
71. Paragraphs 98-102 of my first Phase 1 statement briefly describes what happened to me after I escaped the Tower and paragraph 103-107 of my first Phase 1 statement deals with the impact of the fire upon me, my son and the community.
72. I have no doubt that if Christopher had not broken through the police cordon, to speak to a fire marshal after I told him the fire was about to reach my flat, that firefighters would have not been dispatched.
73. It was clear that communication between the command unit and those firefighters on the ground at Grenfell Tower was a mess. Despite previous 999 calls made by me, Christopher and my family it had not led to any firefighters coming to rescue me before this time.
74. Firefighters finally arrived at my flat around 6am; it was such a relief to see them. I finally left my flat with a few essentials in a rucksack and was guided down the stairs by firefighters. I could not see a thing as I had a towel over my head. I have already described the conditions in my flat, the stairs and upon leaving in the Tower in my first Phase 1 statement, which were terrifying.
75. As stated at paragraph 96 of my first Phase 1 statement, I was taken by ambulance to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. I was kept in for observations before being discharged later that day. Nick Burton was opposite me at the hospital and in a

serious condition. He was bent over and could not stop coughing. I could tell he was in pain.

76. A friend picked me up from hospital and took me to my former sister in law, Alba Lucia Rodriguez, whom I was still close with. As already stated above, Alba Lucia previously lived at Flat 45 in Grenfell Tower, but had moved out before the fire. My son Christopher was there with his mother and aunties. It was such a relief to be reunited with Christopher after everything we had been through together on 14 June 2017. Christopher was still visibly shaken, stressed and upset, but relieved to see me.

77. It was only when I watched the news for the first time on the afternoon of 14 June 2017 that I realised the full extent of the fire. The news showed images of the Tower burning and it started to sink in that people would have died. It was really shocking.

78. Whilst staying overnight at Alba Lucia's flat, I experienced a really severe headache, the worst I have ever had, and started vomiting and sweating profusely. My throat hurt, my breath felt smoky and black would come out of my nose when I blew it. I therefore returned to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital again on 15 June 2017. The doctor told me my symptoms were due to smoke intoxication. I was given some tablets and discharged later that day.

79. These physical symptoms disappeared over the next two days, although I am concerned about the long term health implication after breathing in smoke and toxins released by the fire whilst trapped in my flat. I know there was asbestos in Grenfell Tower.

80. On 15 June 2017, the Italian Consulate contacted me by telephone, but I still had not heard from RBKC, who had my mobile number.

Emergency Accommodation

81. I spent two nights at Alba Lucia's home after the fire. Alba Lucia slept in the living room after she kindly gave up her bedroom for me to recover after the fire.

82. On Friday 16 June 2017, Christopher and I were placed in the Holiday Inn on Cromwell Road in Kensington. I do not remember how RBKC contacted me, but I assume it must have been by phone. There was no offer of any assistance (such as a taxi) to get us to the hotel.
83. Christopher and I shared a room in the hotel with twin beds and a fridge. I do not recall what floor our room was on. I remember checking for the fire exit, sprinklers and the fire extinguishers; I have never done this before. There was a lot of former Grenfell residents staying at the Holiday Inn.
84. When we checked in, hotel staff told us that all our meals were included. There was a section of the restaurant with a buffet reserved for Grenfell residents. It was the same food every day, so I only ate there once or twice. I preferred to have lunch and dinner at work.
85. There was a room in the Holiday Inn where lots of donations were being stored such as toiletries, clothes and food for those affected by the disaster. I believe members of the general public made these donations to the different relief centres, which I discuss in more detail below. Volunteers then arranged for these donations to be sent to different hotels to support residents, who had lost everything in the fire. I am very grateful for the public's generosity at such a difficult and unsettling time.
86. I cannot recall if laundry services were available at the Holiday Inn, but Christopher and I would have done our laundry at Alba Lucia's place.
87. Most days, there were letters put under the door of our hotel room about support and counselling services available from the NHS. Psychologists or counsellors were also available in the hotel lobby at certain times of day. These letters continued when we moved hotels, but not as frequently. I do not remember receiving any text messages or phone calls about counselling.
88. We stayed at the Holiday Inn for around a week. I knew we had to check out on the Friday at noon, but only because I had asked at reception. On the Friday morning, I received a note under the door about checking out. At this time, no one from RBKC

had been in contact to tell me if alternative accommodation was being arranged for us. RBKC called me just before Christopher and I had to check out of the room.

89. RBKC told me they were sorting out a new hotel for us to stay and it was located in Westminster. I told them I did not want to go there. My work and my family were all in Kensington. My car parking permit was also only valid in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. I work at a hotel and have to drive to work as I start very early in the morning, so living in Westminster would have caused difficulties for me.
90. RBKC told me that this was all that they had available. They then called back and said they had booked a different hotel, but this was still in Westminster. I decided to call the Copthorne Tara Hotel in Kensington myself. I wished to see if they had any rooms available. I knew other residents from the Tower were staying there, but I was told that they were fully booked.
91. Fortunately, one of the directors at the company I work for, had already said that Christopher and I could stay in one of their hotels in the local area. This was after he found out about the fire.
92. I made a call to work and my employer arranged for us to stay at the Copthorne Tara, which was a massive relief. They also liaised with RBKC for us.
93. Christopher and I checked into the hotel around 5pm. We had our own rooms located close to one another. I moved rooms once after I had been staying at the hotel for four months. I was at the hotel for around seven and a half months before moving into temporary accommodation.
94. I will always be very grateful to my employer for what they have done for Christopher and me. The staff was always helpful and extremely supportive. Staff told us that all meals at the hotel restaurant were included and we could use the laundry facilities, although we both still went to Alba Lucia's to do our washing and to have proper home cooked food, which we missed.

95. I had a fridge in my room, but I never really used this. I also bought a microwave for Christopher to use whilst we were staying at the Tara.

96. Christopher and I continued to eat our meals at the hotel until we learned from our key worker that we could have a food allowance instead. This was better as you had more choice, but I missed home cooking. There were no facilities at the hotel to cook. I think this impacted on our health and we both put on weight.

97. It found it a struggle to live in a hotel room for seven and a half months. I was not able to start my recovery and rebuild my life again until I was in my permanent home.

Relief Centres

Rugby Portobello Club

98. Christopher and I went to the Portobello Rugby Club for the first time on Friday 16 June 2017. I cannot remember how I found out about it, but I think it must have been through other residents staying in the hotel.

99. When we arrived in the area, the Tower was still smouldering. It was really upsetting to see what had become of our home. It also brought back the memories of the night of the fire. I could not believe that I got out alive, but then felt guilty that others had not. There were missing poster signs all around the neighbourhood, which was just awful. It started to dawn on me how many people were missing.

100. Outside the Rugby Club, there were lots of journalists, but I did not wish to engage. There was so much going on in my head. I was trying to process everything that had happened over the last couple of days. It was overwhelming and it did not feel real. It was my worst nightmare.

101. There was a guy at the door, who said it was for residents only. When I explained who we were, he let us in.

102. When Christopher and I walked inside, we entered a big room and the atmosphere felt chaotic. It was full of loads of people, including volunteers and many residents that I recognised. The volunteers were all very nice and accommodating.
103. I remember there was a list of names, flats and floor numbers on the wall. Residents could write down their names to show we were safe. There were still a lot of gaps on the list, which was really hard hitting.
104. It was a relief to see so many familiar faces, but it was also shocking to hear about other people's experiences from the night and how some had almost died because they followed the stay put advice at the Tower. Ed Daffern looked visibly shaken and was still in shock. Hanan Wahabi was there, whom I knew from the compact, five members of her family were missing.
105. There was food and drink available and donations including clothes, food and toiletries. One of the volunteers kindly gave me some essentials including a pair of shoes and trousers, which I was grateful for. I had no clothes after leaving the flat with just the clothes on my back. I did not notice anyone from RBKC at the Rugby Club.
106. I remember that Shahin Sadafi started to take on a bit of a leadership role amongst the residents. He set up the WhatsApp group to keep us all informed about what was going on. This was because we were not getting this information through official channels or different people were being given contradictory information.
107. After this, I continued to visit the Rugby Club on a regular basis, maybe once every two or three days. It was a place for residents to meet and be together. It was also my only real source of information apart from other residents at the hotel.
108. Every time I went to the Rugby Portobello Club, I would see pictures of those who had died. There would be flowers on the railings around the church, the tube station and the school. It was heart breaking.

Westway Centre

109. I cannot remember how I found out about the Westway or when I first visited, but it would have been within the first few days of the fire. The Red Cross was stationed outside and you had to wear a wristband to gain entrance. I know some residents were not comfortable with this, but I understood they had to have a system in place to ensure that support went to the people who needed it most.
110. The Westway was bigger than the Rugby Club and there were lots of different organisations that had desks to help support residents. This included RBKC, the NHS, Royal Mail and the DVLA. I did not need as much support as other residents as I had grabbed our passports and my wallet whilst waiting to be rescued. I therefore had my bankcards and driving licence. There were other residents that came out of the Tower with absolutely nothing.
111. There were loads of donations being distributed at the Westway. This included financial donations, which I return to below, and other things such as clothes, toiletries and food. There was also counselling support available, but I never used this.
112. My key worker was based at the Westway, so I would attend regularly to see her. My mail was also delivered there before it was redirected to the Curve.
113. I believe that volunteers ran the Westway. I would go maybe once every two to three days. RBKC had one desk there but I never saw anyone that I recognised from the Council or the TMO.

Other Relief Centres

114. I started going to the Curve after the Westway closed and all services were transferred here. I would go there twice a week to pick up my post and to get updates. I would also go to see other residents there.
115. I went to the Citizens Advice Bureau on Ladbroke Grove. I attended two public meetings at the Notting Hill Methodist Church with the new leader of the Council

Elizabeth Campbell and another with Michael Lockwood (CEO of Harrow Council). There were other meetings that I attended, but I have not gone into details about this in my Phase 2 statement.

Basic Provisions and Financial Assistance

116. Within the first week of the fire, I received a £500 one off emergency payment from RBKC at the Rugby Club. I used this to buy some clothes for Christopher and essentials that we had lost in the fire. We also received some additional financial support at the Westway shortly after the fire.

117. I had access to my own money as I had my bankcards, but the emergency financial assistance was gratefully received. It helped us to start to replace everything that we had lost in the fire.

Public Communication

118. My main source of information about support and services available was through word of mouth from other residents. Either I would chat to them in the hotel, at the Rugby Club or the Westway. I also received updates through the residents' WhatsApp group, which was set up by Shahin.

119. I was surprised that RBKC was not in contact with me sooner as they would have had my mobile number. RBKC appeared slow to respond to the fire, although this improved when I was assigned a key worker. I do not remember receiving any updates on social media or through a telephone helpline.

Key Workers

120. Within a week of the fire, I had been assigned a key worker called Nicola Hughes. I met Nicola for the first time at the Holiday Inn and she was on top of all of the issues and kept me updated throughout. She also helped sort out the food allowance, so Christopher and I did not have to eat in the hotel restaurant everyday.

121. Later another key worker helped when I moved from temporary to permanent accommodation.
122. On the whole, I had a positive experience with the different key workers assigned to me. However, many residents told me that they were not happy with their allocated key workers, who were not in regular contact and were unhelpful in terms of liaising with RBKC.

Support and Information from RBKC and Central Government

123. I was struck by the invisibility of RBKC during the relief effort after the fire. It was volunteers and the community that pulled together to help us. I do not know what I would have done without help from my family, friends and employer immediately after the fire. Christopher and I were very lucky to have these support networks available, but others did not.
124. RBKC did not appear to have any plans in place; they were extremely slow to respond. Apart from being placed in a hotel, the main help I received was from my key worker, which was assigned days after the fire.
125. There was a real lacuna of information and updates from RBKC. They appeared out of their depth and overwhelmed.
126. Central Government's response was also poor. Prime Theresa May made a public promise that she would rehouse all of the survivors within three weeks. I thought at the time that she should not be promising something that she could not deliver. It was completely unrealistic.
127. Residents and bereaved were also upset when the Prime Minister came to Grenfell Tower, but only spoke to firefighters and had not come to support and listen to those that had been most deeply and personally affected by the fire. This was extremely insensitive and hurtful.

Grenfell United (GU)

128. There was no leadership or co-ordination from either RBKC or Central Government, which led to the bereaved and residents establishing Grenfell United (GU). GU was about supporting one another and ensuring that we all had the same information and were kept up to date. I found the GU newsletters really helpful. It was also about us having a united voice and ensuring that we were listened to.

Housing

129. Within a month of the fire, I was assigned a dedicated housing officer from RBKC, who I met at the Tara Hotel.
130. Initially, I was reluctant to move into temporary accommodation as I thought I would soon be moving into my permanent home. I did not want the upheaval of having to move twice. I was also scared that after I moved into temporary accommodation that I would be forgotten, when the media spotlight faded on RBKC.
131. However, when it became clear that I was unlikely to be housed permanently in the foreseeable future, I moved into temporary accommodation around February 2018. I moved into my permanent home in February 2019.

Impact

132. I returned to work on Saturday 17 June 2017 and have tried to move forward with my life, but it has not been easy. I went to funerals for Jessica Urbano Ramirez and later Pili Burton.
133. I do not wish to provide further details about the impact upon Christopher or me in my Phase 2 statement. I have not engaged with counselling, but the horrifying events from 14 June 2017 will always stay with me.
134. The fire has turned Christopher and my lives upside down many times over. There has not been a single day since the fire where I have not had to deal with something connected to it. I am only now starting to get my life back on track.

135. The Grenfell Tower fire has devastated families who have lost loved ones, residents and the entire community. People have not been able to move forward as they try to come to terms with what has happened and that 72 people have died too soon.

136. It is difficult to put into words the pain, upset and distress that the fire has had upon Christopher and me. I feel guilty that Christopher had to watch the Tower burn whilst I was still inside and that others did not make it out alive. It makes you realise how precious life, family and friends are.

137. I have some photographs that were recovered from my flat in the Tower, which are in my cupboard in my new home. Every time I open the cupboard door the smell of smoke hits me and takes me back to 14 June 2017.

Lessons for the Future

138. It is clear that lessons still need to be learnt after the Grenfell Tower Fire.

139. This year will be the third anniversary, yet there are still buildings with the same dangerous cladding as Grenfell Tower. I do not understand why this has not been removed. There appears to be no political will to change this and this cannot be allowed to continue. It is important that people are safe in their own homes. Human life must be put before profit.

140. Local Authorities and Government are public bodies and have a duty to serve their communities and act in their best interests. It is imperative that they listen when important concerns are raised and people are not ignored. Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. I was part of the residents' compact, which raised valid safety concerns, yet we were seen as troublemakers. This culture has to change.

141. Residents also need to be given clear instructions on what to do in the event of a fire. At work, we have regular fire drills to ensure that everyone knows what to do should a real fire happen.

142. RBKC and other Local Authorities should be able to access up to date information to enable firefighters to evacuate the most vulnerable, including children, the elderly and those with disabilities. It also means that people can be contacted immediately after an incident to ensure they are safe.

143. I pray there is never another Grenfell, but there should be better advance planning to ensure that people's most basic needs can be provided for in a time of crisis. RBKC should have been on the front lines after the fire, but they were nowhere to be seen.

144. I do not understand how Grenfell Tower did not have fire extinguishers or fire alarms. If there was a communal alarm, I would have woken up earlier and been able to escape instead of being trapped in my flat. These simple measures would have saved lives on 14 June 2017.

145. I hope that the Inquiry leads to real change and those that give evidence at the Inquiry do tell the truth and stop passing the buck. Someone needs to take responsibility for what happened that night. A disaster of this magnitude can never be allowed to happen again. No one should have to go through the pain that the bereaved and survivors have at Grenfell Tower.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this statement are true.

I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.

SIGNED:

Antonio Roncolato

DATE: 2 March 2020