

IN THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

PHASE 2 WITNESS STATEMENT OF ADRIANA RAMIREZ

I, Adriana Ramirez, born [REDACTED], previously of Flat 176, 20th floor, Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Road, London W11 1TQ, WILL SAY as follows:

Background

1. This witness statement should be read alongside my first Inquiry witness statement dated 5 October 2018 (Inquiry reference IWS00001116, which I will refer to as my First Inquiry Statement).
2. I have given three witness statements to the Metropolitan Police Service, which are dated 1 November 2017 (which I will refer to as my First MPS Statement), 13 March 2018 and 17 May 2018. I consent to these being disclosed to the Inquiry for use in evidence.

Fire safety systems

3. I described the lifts in paragraph 13 of my First Inquiry Statement. A lot of people got stuck in the lifts.
4. I described the flat doors in paragraphs 7-8 of my First Inquiry Statement and page 1-2 of my First MPS Statement. There used to be a problem with the lock on our front door and the lock was changed. Our front door had a bristly seal around it.
5. I described the windows in our flat on page 1 of my First MPS Statement. One of the windows was put in the wrong way and had to be repaired. After the repair, the new windows closed properly and I didn't notice any draught. The extractor fan in the kitchen window used to make a lot of noise, even when it was off, but it was repaired and was fine afterwards.
6. I described the fire safety signage in the building on page 3 of my First MPS Statement. I mentioned an old plastic fire exit sign and I would like to add that this was removed during the refurbishment.

7. I described the escape routes in the building in paragraph 15 of my First Inquiry Statement and page 3 of my First MPS Statement.
8. I described the lighting in the stairwell in paragraph 13 of my First Inquiry Statement and page 2 of my First MPS Statement. The lighting was quite weak in the stairwells and sometimes it was dark.
9. There was always a light in the communal hallway on our floor.
10. I described the vent on our floor in paragraph 12 of my First Inquiry Statement and page 3 of my First MPS Statement. The vent made a noise that was like a motor going slowly. I never found out what made it sound like that.
11. I described the smoke alarms in paragraph 6 of my First Inquiry Statement and pages 3-4 of my First MPS Statement.
12. I described the gas works in paragraph 14 of my First Inquiry Statement and pages 1 and 3 of my First MPS Statement. The ceiling of our entrance corridor became lower after the new pipes were put there and covered up. The new pipes went into the bathroom as well.

Fire safety checks/inspections

13. There were no fire safety checks or inspections in our flat. The London Fire Brigade did not visit our flat.

Fire safety advice

14. I described the lack of fire safety advice in paragraph 6 of my First Inquiry Statement and pages 3-4 of my First MPS Statement. I was not aware of a 'stay put' strategy before 14 June 2017.
15. RBKC and TMO were aware that I had two daughters living in the flat, one of whom was still a child. The tenancy agreement had all the family's details and dates of birth. This was in the RBKC-TMO Housing File obtained by my legal representatives, though there were pages missing from the tenancy agreement (**Exhibit AR/1**).

Fire safety complaints

16. I described the complaints I made about the lifts in paragraph 13 of my First Inquiry Statement. I didn't hear back after making the complaints, but the lifts would be working again.

17. I described the complaints I made about the vent on our floor in paragraph 12 of my First Inquiry Statement and page 3 of my First MPS Statement. Again I didn't hear back after making the complaints, but the problem was never fixed. After making several complaints, I gave up complaining because it was a waste of time. I also didn't hear back from the housing officer after I complained to her about the vent noise.
18. I usually made complaints to TMO by going to their office downstairs in Grenfell Tower and giving a form to the receptionist there. There was a lady who took the complaints but I can't remember her name. My husband, Ramiro Urbano, made complaints about issues in our flat as well.
19. I described the petition and group letter that I signed with the Grenfell Action Group to complain about the refurbishment and fire safety in paragraphs 14-16 of my First Inquiry Statement and page 3 of my First MPS Statement. I think the complaint explained that emergency services would have reduced access to Grenfell Tower because of the Kensington Aldridge Academy. There was only a very small space left for the road. It seemed like RBKC and TMO were only concerned about how things looked.
20. I note that my complaints about the lifts and the vent noise, and also the petition and group letter I signed with the Grenfell Action Group, are not recorded in the copy of the RBKC-TMO Housing File which was obtained by my legal representatives despite multiple requests for the relevant information.
21. I note that my RBKC-TMO Housing File includes a list of repairs for some of the complaints we made (**Exhibit AR/2**). My Subject Access Request File from Rydon includes emails discussing one of the complaints I made (**Exhibit AR/3**). I describe below whether and how these issues were addressed. I don't remember all the issues listed in the files.
 - a. Kitchen sink blocked in October 2013, March 2015, and December 2016 (**Exhibit AR/2**): The kitchen sink got blocked many times. It would get fixed temporarily but there must have been an underlying problem that didn't get fixed.
 - b. No hot water in October 2013 (**Exhibit AR/2**): I remember having no hot water and then it came back.
 - c. Blockage and backsurge from the washing machine to the sink in February 2015 (**Exhibit AR/2**): This was fixed.

- d. Front door lock not closing properly in April 2015 and reported again in June 2015 (**Exhibit AR/2**): The lock was changed.
- e. Electrician damaging a clock and an irreplaceable ornament in April 2015 (**Exhibit AR/3**): The electrician broke a clock and the cast of my daughters holding hands when they were younger. Rydon offered me £20 for the clock.
- f. Cistern overflowing into toilet in June 2015 (**Exhibit AR/2**): This was fixed.
- g. Damage by leak from flat above in April 2016, reported again in May and June 2016 and March, April, and June 2017 (**Exhibit AR/2**): The toilet and bathroom got mouldy, and the problem spread to make a water mark on the hallway ceiling as well. I think the workers had trouble getting access to the flat above. They painted the affected areas in my flat but that didn't fix the problem. I think it got fixed in the end.
- h. Leaking pipe near vent in kitchen in November 2016 and leak possibly from a heating pipe into hallway in March 2017 (**Exhibit AR/2**): There were leaks near the boiler a couple of times and it was a serious problem. I think someone came to fix it but it wasn't fixed properly.
- i. No heating in November 2016 (**Exhibit AR/2**): I am not sure how long this lasted.
- j. Leak from pipe on side of WC in January 2017 (**Exhibit AR/2**): One of the pipes got fixed.

Consultation process regarding refurbishment

- 22. We moved in to our flat in Grenfell Tower in late 2013, so we were not involved in any consultation processes before that time. I don't remember being consulted about the main contractor for the refurbishment (Rydon).
- 23. I believe there were meetings about the refurbishment but I didn't attend them. I used to work in the evenings so I couldn't attend. I was not a member of the Grenfell Compact or other residents' organisations.
- 24. I remember getting newsletters about the refurbishment but I didn't really find them useful.
- 25. I received text messages about the refurbishment occasionally. The texts would be about issues in the building and apologizing about what was happening.

Emergency shelter and accommodation

26. The days and weeks after the fire are a blur, as I was focused on trying to find Jessica. It was an extremely difficult time and I still find it hard to think back.
27. I described going to the Rugby Portobello Club in paragraph 27 of my First Inquiry Statement. I don't remember going to other relief centres.
28. I don't remember going to the Westway Centre but I believe my family members went there to bring us things that we needed.
29. I described staying with a family member in the days after the fire in paragraph 26 of my First Inquiry Statement. I described staying in a hotel and then getting permanent accommodation at paragraph 30 of my First Inquiry Statement. I would like to add that it was not RBKC that first contacted us about accommodation. My boss was trying to help us and his PA was the one who contacted RBKC and found a housing officer for us. We then got put up in a hotel by RBKC.
30. My boss's PA kept in contact with RBKC for us. We got temporary accommodation in a flat a few weeks after the fire but I only slept there maybe one night. We never properly moved in because the flat needed a lot of repair. The hob was not screwed down and there were cables loose – the engineer who visited said that they were dangerous. The toilet was broken and leaking – I had to call someone in to fix it temporarily to prevent it damaging the flat, and paid for this myself as I didn't think it could wait for RBKC to send someone. Some of the lights were hanging down and not working, all the door knobs were broken or hanging off, the oven rubber seal was missing, the meter cupboard door did not shut, the walls were badly marked though I tried to clean them, and there were no curtains in the flat.
31. While waiting for the temporary flat to be repaired, we got permanent accommodation, so we moved straight there from the hotel. The RBKC housing officer was helpful to us.

Food and drink

32. We were having the hotel's food for a while, and unfortunately it was quite bad food and the same every day. Eventually we found out that we could buy food outside the hotel and get reimbursed, so we started doing that instead. I think we found out about this when people from the Red Cross visited us in the hotel once. I don't think it was RBKC that told us directly about this.

Basic provisions and financial assistance

33. The Red Cross gave us some vouchers to buy clothes and things. There were charities that gave us financial donations. My bank also gave me a financial donation.
34. I don't remember receiving financial assistance from RBKC in the early days after the fire, but I have seen an email chain between my boss and RBKC confirming that I received financial assistance on 20 June 2017 (Inquiry reference RBK00012080). The first time that I remember RBKC offering help was when I got re-housed to the flat I live in now.

Psychological support

35. It was only several months after the fire that I heard that there was counselling available. It was around a year after the fire when I received a call offering me counselling. By then I already had a private counsellor referred through my boss, so I didn't want to start with a new counsellor.
36. I started working with a keyworker at RBKC around the end of July or August 2017. Unfortunately the keyworker seemed to know less than I did about what was available. There have been several changes of keyworker, and each person is quite different. I have had very helpful support from a keyworker, though that was a while after the fire.

Information and assistance

37. I described my experience with Family Liaison Officers at paragraph 28 of my First Inquiry Statement.
38. We had no contact with the Casualty Bureau.
39. No one knew anything about Jessica. No one helped. We printed posters with her photo and did it all ourselves.
40. My family and I went to all the hospitals in London, looking for Jessica. The hospitals were as helpful as they could be. We gave them Jessica's photo and name and they looked in the wards.

Public communication

41. We received leaflets at the hotel and that was the main way we got information.


Voluntary and community groups

- 42. There were lots of people offering help. I didn't get the names of the charities, except the Red Cross.
- 43. There was a lawyer based at the North Kensington Law Centre who helped get our passports quickly. They helped get birth certificates as well.
- 44. My boss helped a lot and gave us things that we needed.
- 45. Some companies offered donations of furniture when I got re-housed.

Coordination and leadership

- 46. I described how RBKC and TMO were absent in the days after the fire in paragraphs 26 and 29 of my First Inquiry Statement. There were lots of volunteers offering help, but I didn't notice any officials offering help. RBKC acted as if they were scared. I did not see any leadership or coordination by the central government, RBKC or TMO in the immediate aftermath.
- 47. **I understand that this statement will form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and will be published on the Inquiry's website in due course.**

I believe that the contents of this witness statement are true.

Signed:..........

Dated:.....27/02/20.....

Adriana Ramirez