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**STATEMENT OF HANAN CHERBIKA**

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**Preamble**

1. I make this statement from my own personal knowledge and from matters that I have been told about by others; where the information does not come from my own personal knowledge I make this clear below.
2. I make this statement because I was a resident of [REDACTED] Grenfell Walk at the time of the fire and I witnessed the early stages of the fire spreading and the emergency response. I saw things I will never forget. [REDACTED] Grenfell Walk is a maisonette. The front door is on the second floor balcony of the Walk. My kitchen is directly above the front door and has a long window which overlooks the Tower. I have a roof terrace at the rear of the flat from where I can see the top of the Tower looking back over my property.
3. I knew a large number of the Grenfell Tower residents, including some who sadly passed away, in particular Faouzia el Wahabi and her husband, I knew him as "Uncle", and their sons Yasin and Mehdi and daughter Nur Huda. I had known them for about 12 years. I also know 'Uncle's' sisters from living in the area. I knew Biruk Haftom and his mum who also died. Biruk was in the same class as my daughter [REDACTED] in years 4 to 7. I had known them for about five years. I knew the Hashim family for about six years, too. Hashim Kedir, Nura Jemal and their three children Yahya, Firdaws, and Yaqub Hashim all passed away in the fire. [REDACTED] went to Arabic school with Firdaws Hashim and her siblings and was in the same class as Firdaws in year 7. [REDACTED] knew other young people that died.

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4. I also helped to evacuate the residents of Grenfell Walk. My husband Hicham Cherbika and my brother Elias Aitequakrim were both involved in the voluntary emergency response and another brother, Hamza, was also there part of the time. My husband and I are core participants of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

#### **Personal background**

5. I was born on [REDACTED]. I was [REDACTED] years old at the time of the fire. I am married to Hicham and am a full-time parent to three children: [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] years old, [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] years old and [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] months. I am pregnant, the baby is due in May. I have five brothers who all live in the local area, including Elias who is [REDACTED] years old, and Hamza who is [REDACTED] years old, who were there on the night.
6. I am the Vice-Chair of the Grenfell Walk Residents Association which formed in response to the fire at Grenfell Tower.
7. Lancaster West estate was such a mixed estate: there was a big population of Eritreans, Moroccans, a lot of Spanish, Colombians, Philipinos – everything. I talked to everybody. I never felt threatened or scared, I could walk there alone at night time. It wasn't your typical estate. Our family life was very centred around the estate – the kids would play in the parks, play "knock down ginger" and have water fights, and go to Arabic school. They would go out and play and I wouldn't have to worry about them. You knew someone else would always be looking out for them. There were football pitches where the school is now, so the boys all used to play football there. During Ramadan we all used to socialise outside before we broke our fast. Fouazia was always there. That's what I'll miss the most – we won't have that community any more.
8. I am currently living at the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] I am shortly to move to another property which is nice but it cannot replace the home and community that was destroyed by the fire.

#### **Grenfell Walk**

9. My husband and I moved to [REDACTED] Grenfell Walk 12 years ago, when [REDACTED] was a baby. I remember having her [REDACTED] birthday in the flat. I have lived in the area since 1993, when

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I was [redacted] years old. We lived in Nottingwood House until I was 15 years old. My best friend Farah lived on Hurstway Walk so I was always on the Lancaster West estate. When I was 15 we moved [redacted] about 10 minutes' walk from Grenfell Tower. My parents still live there now. I moved to Cambridge Gardens, then to Grenfell Walk. Since 1993 the only time I didn't live in the area was for 3 months when I was living in a hotel in Kings Cross; but even then I was always in the area during the day, I only went to the hotel to sleep.

10. Our flat at [redacted] Grenfell Walk was set out over two floors, with the bedrooms and the bathrooms on the ground floor, and a separate kitchen and living room upstairs. The living room windows looked out over a park where the children play. The kitchen windows looked out over Grenfell Tower and the new school.

### 13 June 2017

11. The day before the fire was just another day. Hicham went to work, the kids went to school. [redacted]

[redacted] Hicham went out on the evening of 13 June 2017 at approximately 10.30pm. My youngest two children, [redacted] and [redacted] were asleep in their room. [redacted] was awake, reading or doing homework. I prepared food for our family meal to start the day (*suhr*) and potted about upstairs, waiting for Hicham to come back [redacted].

### 14 June 2017

#### *First awareness*

12. At around 00:50 Hicham came home and came upstairs into the living room. I know it was around this time as he comes back at the same time every day. He told me that there was something going on outside. I had not noticed anything because the living room is at the back of the flat. There were firefighters and fire engines outside Grenfell Tower. He said, [redacted], that he was going to see what was happening. I didn't think much of it at the time. [redacted] came upstairs and asked what was happening. Hicham explained and she asked to go with him. I told her not to. We thought it was just a fire in a bin or something. She put her slippers on and she and her father went outside.

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13. I went into the kitchen and looked out of the window. The window was partly open as it did not close properly. I could see that something was going on. I could see a fire engine at the base of the tower – I think only one - and heard the engine running. It was at the far end of the Tower on the other side of the entrance as I looked. I could only see the top of it. I don't recall if there were flashing lights and there were no sirens. I could hear people talking – in raised voices but not shouting. I could see people moving around, and some firefighters. I looked at the Tower but I couldn't see any fire or smoke.
14. I went into the living room and my husband phoned me. He told me that there was a fire in one of the flats. I told him to make sure that [REDACTED] stayed with him. Then I got a phone call from [REDACTED] and she said "There's a fire in the flat". I told her "Stay with Daddy, don't move from Daddy."
15. I went on Snapchat on my phone and saw [REDACTED] had taken a video of the fire. It was not outside the building at that time. I could see orange fire inside the building. The camera panned around to Hicham talking to the man next to him and [REDACTED] voice could be heard over the video saying: "I can't believe this guy's flat is on fire and he's outside taking pictures of it". I turned off Snapchat and went to the kitchen window again. I still couldn't see anything. I walked back into the living room and [REDACTED] called again: "Mum! The fire's massive – Mum!" I asked her, "Is it inside the flat?" She said "Yeah it is." Then she said goodbye and hung up. I could tell from the Snapchat video that the fire was round the corner to the right hand side of the Tower as I looked at it.
16. I went back on Snapchat and [REDACTED] had posted another video. I was shocked – the fire was now outside the building. This was in the space of 5 minutes since Hicham and [REDACTED] had left to see what was going on. I called [REDACTED] and told her to come back inside the house. I stayed in the kitchen and started getting the food on the table ready for *suhr*.
17. [REDACTED] called again and said "The fire's getting massive." I could hear the panic in her voice. Then she screamed "DAD!" – I could hear it down the phone and through the window from outside. I said "Where's Dad?" She told me she's with him. I told her to come inside, and to leave her dad if he won't come with her. I was looking through the kitchen window and I could see the top of the entrance to Grenfell Tower, and I could

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see the tops of people's heads as they were coming out of the building. There was a lot more commotion going on in the area outside the Tower, a lot more noise. I saw someone in a dressing gown or a light coloured blanket.

18. I phoned my friend Faouzia El Wahabi who lived in the Tower. I can see from my phone billing that I called her at 01:10. She wasn't answering. I phoned maybe 3 or 4 times, and then tried her daughter Nur Huda El Wahabi, who was 15 years old and my daughter's best friend. She didn't answer at first, but she answered I think the second time I tried to call. When she answered the phone I could tell that I had woken her up. I told her "*There's a fire in the building.*" I tried to do this calmly so as not to scare her. She said "*Oh, ok*" and from the way she said it I could tell that she had been deeply asleep when I called her and she was still drowsy. So I repeated "*No, there's a fire in the building and you need to get out.*" She said "*No it's okay, it's downstairs.*" I don't know how she knew that. I told her to go and wake her mother up and let her make the decision whether to stay or leave. She said "*OK, OK I'll go to her*" and put the phone down.
19. I was still in the kitchen. I went downstairs to the front door. I saw my daughter outside the Tower on the phone – she told me afterwards that she had been on the phone to Nur Huda. I could see her on the green outside the Tower because I had worked out from Snapchat about where she was. She walked up the stairs onto the walkway of Grenfell Walk towards our flat. I shouted down to her "*Is Dad okay?*" She said "*No – things are falling from the building.*" I told her to come upstairs quickly. I phoned Faouzia again but there was still no answer. I think I also phoned Hicham at this time. I still could not see the fire from my home because it was on the other side, but it was around this time that I could see reflections of the fire on other parts of the estate like the academy and the sports centre.
20. I phoned my brother Elias. He told me that he was outside but that he was okay. I don't know where outside the Tower he was exactly. I thought OK he's fine, I don't have to worry about him. I phoned him because I knew he had friends in the Tower and thought he might be in there.
21. I came back inside the flat and checked on the baby, who was still asleep. I heard shouting outside and went to the front door. By now [REDACTED] was on our landing. I could hear a

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woman on the green where [REDACTED] had been, screaming or shouting in a language that I couldn't understand. I thought it might be Eritrean: if it was Moroccan I would be able to understand. She was hysterical and letting out these horrible screams. I could hear the desperation in her voice. [REDACTED] said that she was shouting about her son. I went into panic mode. My instinct was that the whole estate was going to go up.

*Leaving the flat*

22. I told [REDACTED] to wake her brother up and to tell him to get dressed. I told her that I would take them to Nanny [my mother]'s house. I knew from Snapchat and the reaction of people that the situation was very serious and the fire was spreading. I needed to get the children away. She lives [REDACTED] about 10 minutes walk up the road. I was thinking about all the different relatives who were there: my brother, my husband and my children. I went and got the baby into a jacket and got the pram out. He was still sleeping. I went upstairs and grabbed some nappies and a bottle. My husband called me. I asked him "Is Elias with you?" He said yes. My husband is quite a calm man but now there was panic in his voice. He said that the fire was going to get massive, it was going to get really big. He told me to call and tell people. I was in the kitchen at that time. I looked at the window and I could see the reflection of the orange flames in the glass. Underneath the Tower is a new school and I could see the glass of its windows lighting up orange with the reflection of the flames. I pulled back the net curtains on my kitchen window to see better. I felt completely panicked.
23. I threw the milk into the bag and went downstairs to my children. [REDACTED] was explaining what was happening to her brother. I put the plastic rain cover down over the baby's pram to protect him from smoke. We left the flat. [REDACTED] asked me to get the photo of his late grandfather for him and his PlayStation. I told him that I would get them for him later. I told [REDACTED] to take [REDACTED] and the baby downstairs. Once we were outside the flat I could see the extent of it. As we walked along the landing I could see more of the Tower. I could see flames shooting out of the tower about three quarters of the way up. I had never seen such a big flame, it was scary. Our whole estate was lit up orange. The school was lit up orange. There were about 20 people stood outside the Tower, near the entrance, and no-one was on the Walk at that time. I saw two girls on Hurstway Walk, [REDACTED] and

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██████████, who were friends of ██████████. They were draped in a blanket or a dressing gown. They said that they had seen ██████████ Snapchat videos and went to have a look.

24. I started shouting “*Get out of the building!*” at Grenfell Tower. I am no good at distances but I think it is about 40m away. There was no-one at the windows. Then I saw my neighbour Sharon at her window two floors above me, in the Tower. She said “*What’s happening love?*” I told her “*Your building is on fire, and you need to get out.*” She went away. I could see others coming to the windows. 10-20 seconds later Sharon returned to her window. She said “*They won’t let me out.*” I asked her, “*What do you mean?*” She said “*they won’t let us out.*” I assumed she meant firefighters: I had not seen any police by this time. I said “*Just get out. Head out of there, get out. Get the hell out.*” My instinct was that they should just get out of Grenfell Tower. At that time quite a few residents of the Tower started coming to their windows.
25. I can’t describe the smoke because it was dark outside. The estate was only lit by the fire. I can’t remember what colour it was, I can only remember seeing smoke. I could hear a lot of shouting now and I could see people coming out of the blocks. I got the kids inside and called my husband, I told him to come back because I wanted to take the children to my Mum’s. He said no, he was trying to help. I told him to come back and he said “*I’m doing something, I’m doing something.*” After I asked him again he said “*Alright, I’ll come*” and hung up. I found out later that he had been involved in the rescue effort from the Tower.
26. I called my brother Elias and he told me he was downstairs. I could hear lots of shouting. I didn’t know if he was with my husband. I told him to come and stay in the flat, and that I was going to take the children to Mum’s. He said “*Leave me here – I’m helping*”. I said “*alright, but be careful.*” He’s 11 years younger than me and I feel protective of him – like his mother. I phoned my brother Hamza and he was near mum’s house. I was phoning to make sure that he was not near Grenfell Tower. I explained that there had been a massive fire. He said “*Oh shit – I can see it from here*” – and hung up. I knew that he would have got on his moped and come over to get a better look.

#### ***Evacuating Grenfell Walk***

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27. I told the children to wait on the corner on the other end of Grenfell Walk, at the ramp to Station Walk. They could see the fire from where they were. I went along the balcony where my flat was. I started with the elderly neighbour at [REDACTED], Margaret. I banged on her door and woke her up. I told her to wake up Elizabeth at number [REDACTED]. I woke up the [REDACTED] family at [REDACTED], and the girl with 5 children, Marlita, at [REDACTED]. They all woke up and came out onto the landing. During this time, I kept an eye on my children. I could see that they were speaking but I wasn't paying it much attention. I now know that my children were talking to the children of the families in the Tower through the windows. [REDACTED] in particular knew a lot of children in the area.
28. I went down to the Walk. People started to come out of the bottom Walks, mostly the Muslim residents. I saw the Colombian or Portuguese family from Hurstway Walk come out of their flat – I remember seeing them. The guy comes out of the flat to smoke a lot so maybe he had seen the fire.
29. I went downstairs to the first floor of Grenfell Walk to knock on Moses' door at number [REDACTED]. I can't remember if I knocked on his door and spoke to him or if I saw his door was open, but all of the people on the lower level were out of their flats. The Australian man who lives at [REDACTED] works nights so when he didn't answer I assumed he must be working. When I was outside number [REDACTED] I saw my husband. I told him that I was going to take the children to Mum's house and we went to get the kids from Station Walk. He spoke to the neighbours we walked past on the way and I had to tell him to hurry up. We saw both of my brothers and I told them not to go to the Tower and to stay on Grenfell Walk. I first saw them talking to the kids, this was the first time I had seen Hamza that night. I told them I was going to Mum's but that I would come back. I don't know why I decided to come back.
30. Now I could see actual fire as I went along the Walk towards the children. I could see flames shooting out of the cladding on the far side round from the left hand side as I looked at the Tower. The fire was on the left-hand side of the building as I was looking at it, from [REDACTED] Snapchat I knew the fire had started on the other side but had now spread right round the other side of the tower. I had never seen fire like it. The flames were mostly orange but there was a lot of blue. It was high up on the building and it was

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like it was windy although it wasn't: what I mean is the fire kept shooting out and coming back in.

31. I could see people hysterically screaming and shouting and banging on the windows from inside the Tower, on the side now facing me, mainly on the far side round from where I could see the fire. I could see perhaps 20-30 people on different levels. People in the middle of the Tower were screaming as well. I could hear the screaming and I could hear and see someone inside one of the flats banging on a drum. I could see the person and the action but not the drum. It was like a drum used in Morocco to remind people during Ramadan that there was only a short period left before daybreak. I could also see lights being flicked on and off which looked like people trying to get attention.
32. There were lots of people coming up the ramp from Station Walk onto Grenfell Walk. There were lots of members of the public coming to see what was going on. I had told the kids to wait over by Station Walk because I didn't know if the fire would spread to Grenfell Walk.
33. I started shouting "*Grenfell Tower – get out! Get out! There's a fire!*" I remembered personal safety advice that if you want someone's attention or you need help the word you shout is "FIRE" so I had that in my mind at the time. By this time I had made my way along the Walk toward the children. In response to my shouting I saw people coming to the windows, quite a few but I am not sure how many. I saw they were distressed and shouting but I could not hear what. They were towards the corner where I could see the flame shooting out. They were lower than the fire. I could see others but they did not appear so urgent. My concern was that the people on the side who couldn't see the fire were told about it.
34. Hicham and I joined up with the kids and we walked down the ramp to Station Walk. I saw a firefighter walking under the Walk towards the Tower. I shouted down to him: "*Do you think that the fire will spread onto our estate?*" He turned to me and said, "*You'll have to wait.*" It struck me that not even the firefighter knew whether it was safe to remain and it was even clearer to me that we should take the children away.

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35. We got to the car which was parked outside the station. We put the kids in and drove up to mum's and pulled up outside. We took the kids inside and told mum what was happening, I had already been speaking to her by phone. She said she couldn't believe it. We drove straight back and managed to park in the same spot – we could only have been gone 5 minutes. I don't know why we went back, it just seemed right at the time. We had a clear view of the Tower on the drive back: I could see fire on the side of the building where it had come round from where I saw it shooting out. It was now moving down the floors. We were driving with the windows down and we could hear people and see people at the windows waving hysterically with both hands. Their hands were moving fast and I saw they were desperate for help. There was lots and lots of smoke. It was dark smoke, grey, I don't recall the smell. I recall there being smoke high above the Tower, too.

#### *Alarms*

36. I don't remember hearing fire sirens at all. All the noise in the early stages was coming from the neighbours. I could hear smoke alarms going off inside the flats but I only remember this when I got back from dropping the kids at my mum's. I was paranoid about the smoke getting into our flat so I closed all of the windows and the doors in our flat, when I went back to get the things [REDACTED] had asked me to get, apart from our kitchen window which won't close properly. Our smoke alarm didn't go off. I also have a carbon monoxide alarm and that didn't go off either. My smoke alarm did work as I had previously set it off with cooking. It had been there since new kitchens were fitted about six years before the fire. It was wired in, not battery. At the same time there was one put in the hallway downstairs.

#### *How the fire spread*

37. When we returned from my mum's there was a lot of grey smoke coming from the top of the building. One thing that stuck out to me were the blue lines of fire travelling diagonally across the building: I am not sure which direction up or down, I just remember they were diagonal lines. There were lots of blue lines of fire on the outside of the building. There was one flat in the middle of the building that was bright blue. I now know this is the west side of the Tower. Someone mentioned it to me when we were outside Latimer Road station – that's what drew my attention to it. They said, "That's the

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gas". There were loads of people around us – it had become really busy in the area, even in the 5 minutes that we were gone.

38. I thought, "*I need to get that picture and the PlayStation for my son*". It seems so silly now – I didn't know if the police were up in Grenfell Walk or what the situation was there but I wasn't really thinking straight. As I walked back towards Grenfell Walk I was phoning people from the estate and telling them to get out of their flats. I remember I phoned my friend Farah and from my phone records I know this was at 02:20. I also called others around that time. The Muslim residents were already awake because it was Ramadan. Some looked out of their window and said that they could see the fire from their flats.
39. Grenfell Walk was just packed. Everyone was screaming hysterically. I left Hicham on the Walk when I went up to the flat. I saw Elias was still on the Walk. I saw that he was shouting at the Tower. I told him to go to our mother's house where he would be safe, but he wouldn't. I left my husband and my brother together. I went to the flat and looked out at the Tower from the landing. A lot of things were falling off the Tower. Some looked like big pieces of ash. You could hear a metallic clang when some of the pieces hit the floor. Other pieces were floating down but they were still on fire. The park was full of this debris from the Tower.
40. I went back into the flat and picked up the photograph, the bag containing our passports, my son's uniform and his PlayStation. When I got outside I saw my neighbour Margaret. I think she was in shock. I told her that she could come to my mum's house. She was with Elizabeth, I told her that she would be welcome too. I then saw a disabled lady trying to climb out of a window in Grenfell Tower that was level to Grenfell Walk. There is no door on this side of the flat but the window is on what used to be a walkway between the Walk and the Tower. I could tell that she had a physical disability by the way she was holding herself. She was moving slowly and was supported by a man who I presumed was her partner. Between us was a big black gate that was stopping them from climbing onto the walk. The gate was over 7 feet high and is always locked: this used to be an access point from the Walk to the Tower but it is now blocked off. I saw her partner going towards the gate. I realised that they were struggling and there was no-one there to

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help them. The area was full but no-one was paying attention to them. I leaned over my balcony and saw my brother Elias – I pointed over and said “Elias – go and help them.” I saw him go over and knew that they were being assisted so I went back to my flat. I now know this woman to be Leanne Jackson Le-Blanc. I knew her from before the fire, from growing up in the area, but I didn’t recognise her as the woman trying to get over the gate until I saw her at the hotel later and pieced it together.

41. I went back to my flat and was looking for things to take. I can’t remember if I saw my husband from the balcony or I called him but I spoke to him. I put the bag out on the landing and locked the door. I was talking to our Spanish neighbours when I heard, “Don’t do it – don’t jump”. I looked up at the Tower but I didn’t see anybody. I assumed that it was round the other side where my view was blocked. I had been distracted by this and having lost sight of Hicham, I shouted down to Elias, “Where’s Hicham?” because I wanted help with the bag. In fact, Hicham then came around the corner, we spoke to my neighbour, Margaret, and we then both went downstairs. On the Walk we were talking to some neighbours and I again lost sight of my husband. He is one of those people who will help wherever he can. Hamza had joined me on the Walk and I had the car keys in my pocket so I went towards the car to put our stuff in it. As I was going down the ramp I saw my friend Samira El Amrani. I had phoned her before, around the time I arrived back from my mum’s. She was going under the ramp to the park where the firefighter had gone earlier, towards the Tower.
42. I then saw [REDACTED] friend [REDACTED] on her own, at the bottom of the ramp near the station. It’s only her and her mum in their family. She is [REDACTED] years old. She told me that her best friend Mierna was in the Tower, who she had known since nursery. She was very distressed and kept repeating this. I was worried she might try to go into the Tower so I said: “Just wait with me”, not to go anywhere by herself. I then saw her mum. I was trying to reassure her by telling her that the firefighters were doing their job. In [REDACTED] I said to her mother Nadia – “Don’t let your daughter go.” I was thinking of my own daughter and my worries that if her friend was inside she might try and get into the building to find her.

### Firefighters

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43. I told [REDACTED] that the firefighters were doing their job to reassure her. Actually, I saw lots of them walking around Station Walk, just strolling around. At the time I felt angry with them. When I left [REDACTED] with her mother I saw a firefighter. I felt so frustrated, I shouted at him *"What are you walking around for? Go inside – do your job"*. The young boys around me started shouting at him. I felt bad, that I had caused a scene.

**Once outside**

44. When I was with [REDACTED], Hamza was carrying my bag. I asked his friend Hasan to put the bag into his car because I didn't want to leave [REDACTED] at that time. When her mum came I then went to see where Hicham was. As I was coming back onto the Walk I saw Samira again, she must have come back onto the Walk further down. She was very distressed. I asked her if she was okay, and she said *"No. I just saw someone throw their baby out of the window."* I saw how scared she was. She is normally bubbly but she went very quiet, she appeared to be in shock. I asked her where her husband and her children were. She told me they were at home. I told her to go home and get them and take them to her mother's: I knew she lived on [REDACTED] about a 10 minute walk away. I saw my brother Elias again and he said *"Do you know what I've just seen?"* He told me he had been with Samira and it was clear that he had seen the same thing. He said: *"Someone has just thrown a baby out of a window, Samira was there"*. I asked if the baby was alright, and he told me it was. He didn't give me any more detail. I told him again that he should go to our mum's but he was being stubborn.
45. Hamza joined me again. He was [REDACTED] years old at the time. I said *"Come on, let me take you to Mum's."* He said he had his moped, but he agreed to go with me in the car. We walked together to Latimer Road station. My mum was calling, saying that the kids were worried, that they were watching the news. She said we didn't need to be there. We got to our parents' house and Dad asked where Elias was. I said that he was with Hicham, and that he was alright: I was just trying to reassure my dad. He said that we should all stay at their house – that we didn't need to be there. I reassured the kids, particularly [REDACTED] but I felt that I needed to go back to support our neighbours. Hamza and I went back to the estate. I was still trying to phone Faouzia and Nur Huda and was really concerned about them.

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### Medical assistance

46. I went back to Latimer Road station. By now it must have been about 3 am. They had started to cordon off Station Walk. I saw paramedics carrying a 4-year-old girl in their arms. She was alive, and shouting for her mum. They sat her up against a tree. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] She was dressed in white or a light colour. I now know this to be Rosemary's daughter, who lives in the Tower. She was very distressed. There was a man with her, knelt down next to her and he was holding her. There were lots of paramedics around by now, and lots of casualties. People – members of the public as well as paramedics – were physically carrying people to Station Walk, to where the Latimer Road station bus stop is. It was taped off so you couldn't go down there. I didn't really look – although there were lots of casualties I only really focussed on that one little girl. It suddenly felt much more real, seeing the casualties coming out. The whole of the road by Latimer Road station was filled with ambulances.
47. I started panicking – where is my brother and my husband? They were not answering their phones at this stage. [REDACTED] called me, she was hysterical, asking me to come home. She said that on the news they were saying that the Tower was going to collapse. At this stage I was still at Latimer Road, I told Hamza what [REDACTED] had said. He tried to reassure me. I left him with his friends and went back up to Grenfell Walk.
48. I saw my husband with a man called Eamon, who was my brother Mohammed's friend from school. I spoke to Eamon and saw how he was, he wasn't injured but was clearly shocked. I knew he had come out of the Tower because he lived there. I asked where Elias was, and Hicham said that he was OK, and pointed to him. I could see him from a distance and I could see that he was safe. Hicham said, "My goodness – look over there". I couldn't see where he pointed to and I'm grateful that I didn't, because he said, "That woman's just jumped out of a window." The colour drained from Hicham's face. He can look at blood and things like that, but that was too much. Eamon is a normally a "macho man" but looking at him I could tell he was affected also. Elias came over to us. I asked if he was alright, and he said "No, I'm not alright. I should have covered my ears." I said, "What are you talking about?" He answered: "I turned my face away, but I heard the smash."

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Hanan Cherbika

Signed:



Dated:

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49. I had intended telling them what [REDACTED] had said about the Tower but I was so shocked at what had just happened that I didn't say anything as it slipped my mind. I just couldn't think straight. Elias is my younger brother but he's like my son. I just walked away with him and said "*Please come down to Latimer Road station, people might need your help there too.*" We walked back to the station. There were dogs barking hysterically. You could hear the fear in their bark. There was one that looked like a husky – the owner was quite old and he was struggling with the lead to contain the dog. There were children running away from the dog because they were scared. One little child, who I recognised, ran towards me – I picked him up, comforted him, and gave him back to his mum. We got back to near the station where Hamza was.
50. I turned back to Grenfell Walk because I had left Hicham there but it had now been cordoned off. I called Hicham – he wasn't answering again. A stupid teenager came up to Hamza on his bike and started singing "*London's burning, London's burning*". After everything I had seen and heard I just lost it and started shouting – he instantly regretted it, and backed down. Hamza said to him "*Think about what you're saying.*" I left them to it, because I could see some sort of commotion happening at Grenfell Walk. I ran towards it and ducked under the police cordon. I could hear police officers shouting at me but I ignored them. Hamza shouted at me "*Come back*" – but I ignored him too. There was a group of 20 year olds screaming and shouting but I don't know what this was about. I grabbed Hicham and said to him "*Just come now*". Eamon said that he would be alright with him, so I left him and went back down to Latimer Road Station.
51. Across the road from Buggy (the corner shop) I saw [REDACTED] again. She said "Auntie" to me [REDACTED]. She was shaking uncontrollably. She said: "*Mierna's on the phone, Auntie, what should I do?*", in English. [REDACTED] was with her mother, who said she didn't know what to do. The police were shouting something, but it wasn't clear what they said. I found out later that it was "*If anyone is in contact with people inside the Tower, call 999*". I grabbed [REDACTED] and took her to a police officer. She was saying to her friend on the phone, "*I love you*". The police officers weren't listening to us. It was getting very hectic in the street. I saw riot police coming towards us, dressed in black. They were wearing helmets with the visors down and holding long shields, and coming towards us in a long line. I could hear [REDACTED] saying "*I love you, don't worry we'll get you out. I love you. I love you.*" I

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Hanan Cherbika

Signed:



Dated:

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couldn't help thinking, at the time, that those were probably the last words that her friend would hear. There was an officer at the front screaming and shouting at us, "Get back! Get out of the fucking way!" I didn't get why they were being so aggressive. That same dog was barking and going mad on his lead. I just think that it was disgusting that the officer was shouting and swearing at us, and at a time [REDACTED] was on the phone with a distressed child. I pushed [REDACTED] out of the way of the police. I could see [REDACTED] mum running towards us – she had clearly seen the riot police coming towards us. [REDACTED] kept saying to me, "What can I do? What can I do?" I told her that there were firefighters in the building, that they would get help, not to worry. I didn't know any of this – I was just trying to comfort her. Her mother took her in her arms and we both tried to comfort her and reassure her, saying that they were in safe hands, and they would be alright. I turned around and saw the riot police go into Grenfell Walk. My thoughts turned to my husband. The little girl was still on the floor. It was like a war zone. Between all these times I was still calling Faouzia – I don't know how many times I called her. We had got [REDACTED] calm by now. I said to Nadia – I'm going to go and see what's happening at Grenfell Walk. If you need me, [REDACTED] has my number.

#### **The community centre**

52. I went back towards the Walk but this time I could not get past the cordon. However, just then I saw Hicham coming back towards me. I shouted, "STAY WITH ME NOW!" I could see Hamza and Elias still near the station so I knew they were fine. Hicham told me [REDACTED] that they had been kicked off the Walk by the police. We went to go and sit in the car for a little while. I got some water out of the boot. We sat in the car for 10-15 minutes and then Hicham said "Come on Hanan, let's go and see if we can help round the back." I started phoning Faouzia and Nur Huda again. There was still no answer. Nur Huda's phone was now going directly to voicemail where before it was ringing. Faouzia's phone was still ringing. From phone records I think it was about 03:15 at this point. I said to Hicham: "Let's go out and look for them". I knew the local centres and mosques were opening for casualties, because I heard people saying this. I said "Let's start at the Harrow Club" as I thought it was the closest to us. We had to walk back to Latimer Road station. I saw Sharon, and she gave me a massive hug and said "Thank you, thank you. If it wasn't for you..." Her friends who were with her thanked me too.

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Hanan Cherbika

Signed:



Dated:

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53. I turned back around, and I wish I had never seen what I saw. I looked up at the building and I could see a lady in silhouette at the window, maybe a third of the way up on the West side of the Tower, and two little children next to her. They were waving their hands. I couldn't even describe what colour they were, they appeared completely black in silhouette. The smoke was inside their house, so they were disappearing and coming back into view as the smoke covered their faces. I could still see them waving frantically. The mum disappeared from the window – I guess she passed out. I could hear the children banging on the windows. Then the whole room went orange. I looked away, and the people around me said "*They've gone.*" That image will stay with me. I'm 90% sure that the family was Firdaws, Hashim and their mum. When my daughter later explained where Firdaws and Yahya Hashim were when she was speaking to them, it lines up with where I saw this family.
54. I saw Ibtesam, the mother of two of [REDACTED] friends, across the road from the shops. I asked her if she was okay. [REDACTED] She said "*I can't believe this is happening.*" She was in complete shock. She wasn't crying. We just started hugging each other.
55. There was a line of ambulances from one bus stop to the other. The road was completely packed. I caught a glimpse of Faouzia's niece, Yousra El Wahabi, across the road from Bugsy's, with one of her cousins. I didn't want to draw attention to the fact that she was a relative of someone who lived in the Tower so I gestured to her: "*Anything?*" She shook her head and put her head down. Hicham was talking to Yousef, a man who he had helped to escape from the fire. I said to Hicham they still haven't found Faouzia, let's go. We walked to the Harrow Club. One of the youth workers was there. I told him the names of everyone in Faouzia's family. I said "*Have you heard anything from them?*" He put their names on the British Red Cross list. I said I thought they were on the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> floor. I gave them Yousra El Wahabi's number to contact if they heard anything.
56. We went to the St Clements & St James' Church. As we walked there we kept seeing people we knew, and we talked to them. It was still dark which makes me think that it was about 4am. We went into the Church and the events of the night must have shown on my face because the Vicar or the Priest (he was wearing a dog collar) offered to make

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Hanan Cherbika

Signed:



Dated:

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me a hot drink and offered me a blanket. I told him that I was looking for my friend. He checked the list and Faouzia's family name was already on it. All of the religions came out to support the community. I remember seeing my dad's friend with a trolley full of water bottles. This was on the same road as the church. We stopped to talk to him. We then saw lots of commotion by the Tower. I said that I didn't want to go over there, and told my husband to go down, but he didn't want to leave me again. We went round the back of our house, to the park in between Hurstway Walk and Testerton Walk. There were loads of people on the bridge of the walkways. I said to Hicham, let's see if anyone's heard anything. People were shouting "*Hanan! Hanan! Have you heard anything about Faouzia?*" I said no, I can't find her. Everyone was looking for her. Her family were very well known in the area.

57. It was light by now, maybe 5 am. Chunks of cladding were still falling off the Tower. At this point I recall seeing a massive piece of metal falling from the Tower, high up. There was a really loud bang when it hit the ground. We stood in the park looking up at the Tower. I looked behind me and saw my friend Hanan Miezou with her daughter [REDACTED]. Her husband's uncle lives in the Tower with Paul Menacer. I said to her "*Are you alright? Are you okay? Oh god, I didn't phone you! Did Paul get out?*" She said that he did. I asked if his uncle had got out, and she said he did too. I asked [REDACTED] how she was and just then Hanan said "*Oh my god can you see that? Look! Look!*" She said "*Look at the man in the window, he's still alive!*" I have seen photos of the man at this time on media sites. There was a police officer stood near us, he got onto his radio and said that we had spotted someone. He was speaking with a fire officer and the next thing we saw was a fire hose directed above the flat, stopping the flames from reaching him. I later watched an oriental man on ITV breakfast news talking about his dad who got out of the Tower very late, who was partially blind and partially deaf. I think it must have been him. He was the last person I saw in the building. Fortunately, he got out.

### Media

58. When I was talking with Hanan and [REDACTED], Elias joined us and was stood next to Hicham. I'm not sure exactly when he joined us but he did. I said to them both: "*Let's go to the Westway centre and the Latimer Christian Centre.*" Hicham said that he was feeling

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Hanan Cherbika

Signed:



Dated:

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weak, and he needed to sit down. I think the adrenaline must have been wearing off. [REDACTED] and my mum were still phoning, asking why we were still there and saying that there was nothing that we could do. We went back to the car. We saw Samira, and she was telling us about the media who had come down. Another lady also called Samira, her daughter [REDACTED] and a woman called Nabeela gathered round our car. I was showing them my daughter's videos of the fire on Snapchat showing the start of the fire. An old white man wearing glasses, and a wax jacket came over and said, "Can you give me that footage? I'll pay you for it." He was obviously from the media as he gave me a card. I said to him, "My friend is missing. Do you think I'm interested in money?!" I threw the card away.

59. The building was covered in the darkest grey, really thick smoke by this point. The top of the building was covered in it. That was the last time I looked at the Tower. It was still on fire, mainly inside by this stage, but because it was light, my attention was now on the smoke.
60. It got to about 8am and I realised I needed to take [REDACTED] to school. I actually did take him to school. I said to Hicham: "Come with me back to mum's house. You're tired, and there's nothing more we can do here." We got back to my mum's house and I got a text message from an early morning TV show, possibly This Morning, asking for an interview with Hicham because he had saved a man's life. I said to Hicham: "They think you're a hero." He broke down then, saying that he wasn't a hero; that he could have saved more. He said, "I tried to go in, but they wouldn't let me." I think that's when it really started to hit him.

### **Recordings**

61. My daughter [REDACTED] made a number of video recordings on Snapchat that would have been automatically deleted after 24 hours. The only video that remains that [REDACTED] recorded is the video she sent to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
62. My husband took a number of photographs and video recordings during the course of the night. He has exhibited these recordings to his own statement.

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Hanan Cherbika

Signed:



Dated:

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63. I can confirm that I did not make any video recordings or take any photographs myself.  
I attach my phone billing for the night as exhibit HC/1.

**Statement of Truth**

I confirm that the content of this witness statement is true.

I confirm that 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: 

Date: 4/4/18

Hanan Cherbika

Signed: 

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Dated: 4/4/18

**From:** hanan cherbika  
**To:** [Isla Woodcock](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: call log  
**Date:** Monday, March 19, 2018 10:49:17 AM

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My call log for 14:06/2017  
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Baderoen, Yoonus (ISD - South Africa)"

**Date:** 19 March 2018 at 10:41:08 GMT

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** call log

14 Jun 17 01:07:05 020	[REDACTED]	78 Off Peak 00:00:41 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:10:10 074	[REDACTED]	08 Off Peak 00:00:01 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:10:45 075	[REDACTED]	77 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:13:30 075	[REDACTED]	77 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:16:58 075	[REDACTED]	77 Off Peak 00:00:01 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:17:38 075	[REDACTED]	67 Off Peak 00:00:36 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:19:09 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:21 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:19:44 020	[REDACTED]	78 Off Peak 00:01:05 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:21:43 074	[REDACTED]	08 Off Peak 00:00:55 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:22:54 075	[REDACTED]	67 Off Peak 00:01:21 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:25:47 077	[REDACTED]	72 O2 to O2 00:00:18 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:26:23 020	[REDACTED]	78 Off Peak 00:00:38 0.000
14 Jun 17 01:34:53 020	[REDACTED]	78 Off Peak 00:00:37 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:06:54 074	[REDACTED]	08 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:09:11 077	[REDACTED]	72 O2 to O2 00:00:20 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:10:06 075	[REDACTED]	93 Off Peak 00:00:04 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:14:09 075	[REDACTED]	93 Off Peak 00:00:38 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:20:13 079	[REDACTED]	02 Off Peak 00:00:26 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:33:31 075	[REDACTED]	93 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:34:30 075	[REDACTED]	10 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:34:54 079	[REDACTED]	30 Off Peak 00:03:15 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:42:47 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:03 0.000
14 Jun 17 02:56:38 079	[REDACTED]	39 Off Peak 00:03:11 0.000
14 Jun 17 03:13:26 074	[REDACTED]	08 Off Peak 00:00:01 0.000
14 Jun 17 03:13:41 075	[REDACTED]	77 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 03:14:00 075	[REDACTED]	77 Off Peak 00:00:02 0.000

14 Jun 17 03:14:34 074	[REDACTED]	08 Off Peak 00:00:04 0.000
14 Jun 17 03:15:33 079	[REDACTED]	17 Off Peak 00:00:43 0.000
14 Jun 17 03:37:31 079	[REDACTED]	17 Off Peak 00:00:19 0.000
14 Jun 17 03:55:00 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:49 0.000
14 Jun 17 05:21:18 075	[REDACTED]	67 Off Peak 00:00:03 0.000
14 Jun 17 06:08:56 075	[REDACTED]	67 Off Peak 00:00:34 0.000
14 Jun 17 06:29:17 077	[REDACTED]	72 O2 to O2 00:00:35 0.000
14 Jun 17 06:30:08 079	[REDACTED]	97 Off Peak 00:00:25 0.000
14 Jun 17 06:50:44 077	[REDACTED]	72 O2 to O2 00:00:30 0.000
14 Jun 17 07:29:38 020	[REDACTED]	78 Peak 00:07:48 0.000
14 Jun 17 07:51:15 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:13:06 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:01:08 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:29:54 078	[REDACTED]	73 Peak 00:01:58 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:32:29 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:03 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:32:40 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:03:52 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:54:24 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:07 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:54:39 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:34 0.000
14 Jun 17 08:55:34 075	[REDACTED]	76 Peak 00:05:56 0.000
14 Jun 17 09:20:28 079	[REDACTED]	55 Peak 00:04:25 0.000
14 Jun 17 09:25:26 079	[REDACTED]	55 Peak 00:03:13 0.000
14 Jun 17 09:29:36 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:02:09 0.000
14 Jun 17 13:12:25 075	[REDACTED]	67 Peak 00:00:37 0.000
14 Jun 17 13:17:51 020	[REDACTED]	29 Peak 00:00:40 0.000
14 Jun 17 14:15:07 074	[REDACTED]	86 Peak 00:00:05 0.000
14 Jun 17 14:25:46 020	[REDACTED]	00 Peak 00:00:59 0.000
14 Jun 17 14:27:47 020	[REDACTED]	00 Peak 00:05:49 0.000
14 Jun 17 14:50:10 075	[REDACTED]	93 Peak 00:00:02 0.000
14 Jun 17 15:20:58 075	[REDACTED]	93 Peak 00:06:35 0.000
14 Jun 17 16:25:09 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:04:14 0.000
14 Jun 17 16:34:28 079	[REDACTED]	17 Peak 00:00:39 0.000
14 Jun 17 16:43:37 079	[REDACTED]	17 Peak 00:00:13 0.000
14 Jun 17 16:44:06 078	[REDACTED]	49 Peak 00:03:52 0.000
14 Jun 17 17:31:26 074	[REDACTED]	86 Peak 00:00:04 0.000
14 Jun 17 17:35:02 074	[REDACTED]	22 Peak 00:05:54 0.000
14 Jun 17 17:41:25 078	[REDACTED]	49 Peak 00:01:24 0.000
14 Jun 17 18:04:23 074	[REDACTED]	22 Peak 00:00:40 0.000
14 Jun 17 18:05:47 075	[REDACTED]	67 Peak 00:00:19 0.000
14 Jun 17 18:06:17 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:02:15 0.000
14 Jun 17 18:15:10 078	[REDACTED]	49 Peak 00:01:16 0.000
14 Jun 17 20:34:09 079	[REDACTED]	68 O2 to O2 00:00:50 0.000

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