

Claimant:  
Name of Witness : Samira Hemmid  
Statement No : 1  
Exhibits :  
Date : 8 May 2018

**IN THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF SAMIRA HEMMID**

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I, Samira Hemmid currently of [REDACTED] WILL SAY AS  
FOLLOWS:-

1. I make this statement in connection with Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. This statement recounts my experience of the night of the fire.

*Background information*

3. My date of birth is 2 August 1977. My first language is Arabic. I have limited spoken English.

I have five children: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

All of my children speak English as their first language.

4. Before the fire, my daughter and my children, other than [REDACTED] did not have any health problems. [REDACTED]
5. Prior to the fire I lived with my children at 503 Hurstway Walk. We had lived there for 8 years. It was a wonderful community. The children would play outside with the other children from the neighbourhood and we knew many people. Some we knew well and others just to say hello to.

*Events of 13 and 14 June 2017*

6. On the night of 13 June 2017 I was preparing food at about midnight. It was Ramadan and so we had been fasting but we would eat before sunrise. My kitchen had a balcony and the balcony doors were open. I could hear someone screaming. I was not concerned by this because there was often a lot of noise in the neighbourhood. I went out onto the balcony. I

could see smoke coming from the Tower. There was smoke outside the balcony. My upstairs neighbour shouted to me that the Tower was on fire. I got dressed and went out to have a look. I could see a big fire from the Tower. I could see all of my neighbours from our block and the two nearby blocks were going outside and standing outside our block, where they had a good view of the Tower and the fire. People told me that we should also leave our flat and that I should take my children outside. [REDACTED] friends came out and told her that we should leave our flat.

7. I went back to the flat to get my children. They didn't get dressed they just came in their pyjamas. We were being told to hurry and just come out of our home. We all went outside. This was at about 12.30. We did not know where to go or what to do. We have a lot of friends who lived in the Tower. I was trying to call them on my mobile. I tried to call my friend Fouzia Wahabi. I was worried about her. My daughter, [REDACTED], was trying to call Nurhuda, who she was friends with, but Nurhuda was not answering her phone. [REDACTED] friends were also trying to call other friends in the fire. [REDACTED] and her friends were crying as they spoke with one girl who was telling them that the fire was catching up with her. They remained on the phone with this girl until her phone went dead. [REDACTED] was very upset.
8. The fire was getting worse. We could see and hear people screaming from the windows and waving their hands and the lights on their phones. We could see a woman holding her baby and saying "please save my baby". She threw her baby and someone caught it. We could see people trying to jump and obviously wanting to escape from the building. We could see people tying bedsheets together and lowering them from the windows. We were shouting at people not to do this because the sheets they made were not long enough to allow them to reach the ground. We could hear people shouting "please help us". We wanted to help people but there was nothing that we could do. There were police officers controlling the crowds and stopping people who wanted to get through to help people in the Tower. At around 1am I remember seeing a group of Moroccan men who had come out of the mosque pushing past the police to try and save people.
9. I remember seeing about seven fire engines which were stuck or struggling to get through the Whitchurch Road. The fire engines were just sitting there. Everyone was telling them not to come this way. I went with my daughter to tell them that they could not go that way and that the road was already blocked with fire engines and was too narrow. But the fire officers just ignored us.
10. I also remember seeing the fire hose and realising that there was no way it would be long enough to reach the flames on the building. By about 4am it looked as though the whole

building was on fire. The cladding was falling from the Tower. It was falling on our grass and on our balcony. When the cladding was falling it was still burning.

11. We were standing with other Moroccan families. There was a close knit community between Moroccan families we would all get together every Friday and we all knew each other well. On the night of the fire we were talking to each other trying to work out who was in the Tower and who wasn't. My kids were distraught but they did not want to leave because they had friends who lived in the Tower and they were worried about them. We could not believe that so little was being done to help people escape. We thought that they should have sent helicopters with water to put out the fire. We thought that something should have been placed outside the Tower for people to jump on to or that something, like a crane, should have gone to the windows where people were standing to help them escape. We could see people in their flats, at their windows and we could then see the fire entering the rooms where the people had been standing and the people just disappeared. I could see one man who was leaning out and asking for help – he was shouting that he was not dead. This was some time early in the morning.
12. We did not know what was going to happen. We stayed outside with other families because there was nowhere else to go and no one told us what to do. We kept calling our friends who lived in the Tower, but by the early morning they did not answer their phones.
13. By the morning we wanted to go home, but the police did not let us return home. I was worried because I did not have my daughter's medication for her [REDACTED] and she needed to eat some breakfast. I asked a police officer but he told me I could not go in. I explained that I needed to get her medication. He asked me why I had not taken the medication. I told him that I didn't know what was going to happen. I kept asking and asking him. I told him again and again that she needed to take her medication. Eventually at perhaps around 10 am or 10.30 am the policeman took me to my flat to get the medication.
14. After I had got the medication, we went to the church, St Clement and St James, to sleep. We stayed there for two nights. The following night we stayed with a friend and we remained there for two weeks before we realised that other people had been placed in a hotel and that we could also have hotel accommodation if we wanted it. We had not been aware of this because we had not been back to the area. We experienced many difficulties in the hotel accommodation and continue to experience difficulties in our current accommodation. My children and I have suffered greatly as a result of the fire and its aftermath. We have suffered physical and mental health problems and we remain traumatised. We have lost our friends, our community and our home. We feel lonely and we don't know how to rebuild our lives.

15. The statements I make are from my own knowledge or belief unless otherwise stated. If not from my own knowledge I will identify the source.

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

SIGNED ..... 

**MS SAMIRA HEMMID**

DATED ..... 21 / 5 / 2018 .....

Claimant:

Name of Witness : Samira Hemmid

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Exhibits :

Date :