

THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF FARHAD NEDA

FLAT 205, FLOOR 23

I, **FARHAD NEDA** (my name on the Core Participant list is recorded as “Shekeb Neda” but I prefer to be known as “Farhad”), of [REDACTED] **WILL SAY** as follows:-

Introduction

1. I am a core participant in the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and a survivor of the fire on 14 June 2017. My name is recorded as “Shekeb Neda” in the list of core participants. In [REDACTED] culture, we are given two names, my other name was “Farhad” and this is what everyone has always called me. I have always preferred to be called Farhad and I am in the process of changing my name to Farhad, by deed poll.
2. I have made statements to the Metropolitan Police and I confirm that I consent to any police statements I have made being disclosed to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry.
3. Up and until 14 June 2017, I had lived at Grenfell Tower from when I was 4 or 5 years old. I lived there with my mum, Flora Neda, and my dad, Mohamed Amied Neda. My dad was known as “Saber Neda”. All his friends and family called him by the name “Saber”.
4. We lived in flat 205 on the 23rd Floor of Grenfell Tower and it had been my home for almost 20 years.

5. The 23rd floor was the top floor for accommodation/flats in the Tower. As on other floors at Grenfell Tower, the 23rd floor consisted of a mix of six one-bedroom and two-bedroom flats. Ours was a two-bedroom flat. The common space, landing/hallway/corridor, on the floor also had an exit door to the stairwell which acted as the fire escape as well as a means to get to and from the floor below. It was also served by two passenger lifts for use by residents. There was also another door which was the rubbish chute.
6. There was one floor above us which housed the lift motors and a plant room. This gave access to the roof. The access to that floor was not open to residents or visitors as the door to the 24th floor was always locked. This did mean that if anyone tried to get on to the roof on the night of the fire the individuals would not have been able to get through the entrance door to the lift plant room, without somehow breaking it down.
7. At the time of the fire, I was 24 years old, my dad was 57 years old and my mum was 55 years old. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
8. I [REDACTED] came to the United Kingdom as a young child with my mum and dad when I was about 5 years old. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
9. We had spent nearly all our family life, in Britain, living on the top floor of Grenfell Tower. In addition to the two bedrooms in our flat, we had a lounge, a kitchen, a bathroom and a large storage room. We had fantastic views across London from our flat. I have lovely memories of living in and growing up in the Tower.
10. I did not have any health problems prior to the fire. My dad had a very mild case of asthma but other than that, he was very healthy. My mum is disabled and suffers from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which affects her mobility. Dad was mum's main carer. He would take her everywhere and look after her. Mum and dad were kind and loving to each other, and with me.

11. I will never forget the 14 June 2017. The day that my dad died. The loss of my dad, who was my best friend, has torn my world apart. Mere words cannot describe the total feeling of loss which my mum and I have experienced.

The Morning of the 14 June 2017

12. I have learnt that the fire started at 12:54 am on the morning of 14 June 2017.
13. I, my mum and my dad, had arrived home in the early hours of the morning on 14 June 2017, from visiting my aunt's house. [REDACTED] and our two families had eaten together [REDACTED]
14. I thought we had got home at approximately between 12:30 am to 1:00 am in the morning. The CCTV still image from the lobby entrance area on the morning of the fire shows that we got to the entrance area at 12:52 am. My image shows me entering the Tower at 12:51 am and my mum entering 11 seconds later at 12:52 am. There is a further image of the three of us getting into the lift at 12:52 am. We got back only 2 minutes before the fire started in flat 16 on the 4th floor.

Problem with the vents and electrical burning smell

15. It was a normal evening when we entered the Tower and called a lift from the lobby area at the base. We got into a lift and went straight up to our floor.
16. As soon as the lift doors opened onto our landing on the 23rd floor, my mum and I both heard the vents/extractor fans in the landing area of our floor. They were making a lot of noise. This was not new and did not surprise us, as it was something that had occurred before.
17. The vents on floor 23 were positioned between our flat, flat 205, and our neighbouring flat, flat 206 and also between flats 202 and 203 on the other side of the landing.
18. Since the council had undertaken the refurbishment work in the Tower, the air vents in the lift area of the landing would go off regularly. They would start opening and closing loudly about once a month. When they opened we would get huge gusts of wind going through the

Tower, particularly on to our floor. On one particular occasion you could hear it from outside the Tower. It often seemed to happen on a Friday and would not be sorted out until the following Monday. When we got on to the 23rd floor they were going off loudly and it would have been impossible for us to sleep with such a noise.

19. There had been previous occasions when the fans had gone off and I had telephoned the Tenants Management Organisation (the "TMO") to complain about the noise. It would normally take the TMO a few days to come out to the 23rd floor to fix the problem.
20. My mum and I looked at one another and one of us said, "We will not be sleeping tonight", referencing the noise. We knew from previous experience how difficult it was to sleep with the howling noise created by the ventilation system.
21. I went into our flat. I got changed to get ready for bed. My mum told me to call the TMO's emergency number to let them know that the ventilator fan was going off in the landing area. There is a 24 hour emergency number to call.
22. I called the TMO emergency number at some time between 1:00 am and 1:15 am. They had an out of hours number that we could call. I spoke to a woman who answered the phone and I told her that the ventilation fan was going off and that the noise was really loud and that we would not be able to sleep. I also told her that we all had work in the morning. My dad and I would normally leave home together at 7:00 am as we both worked together. We ran a car passenger service together.
23. The lady from the TMO who was on the phone was asking me what sort of noise it was and I went back out of the flat and onto the landing and held the phone out so that she could hear the noise for herself. It was at this point that I could also smell what I would describe as an electrical burning odour in the air.
24. She heard the noise but at that point I started to again smell something electrical burning and I told her about this. I thought that it was something to do with the fans, some sort of malfunction. I then noticed that only one of the lifts was working and I reported this to her on the same call. Both of the lifts were working when we had come home and I did not think much of it when I saw that one of the lifts was now out of order. I told her that it may all be

linked and she informed me that they had already received reports about the fan and an engineer was on the way.

25. She then added at the end of the call, just in passing, “Oh and the Fire Brigade are on the way.” She did not say why they were coming. I had assumed that this may have been some standard procedure, but clearly this woman knew of a much greater problem lower down but did not bother informing me even though she knew I was on the highest residential floor.
26. She did not say “get out of your flat” or direct me to leave. We could have all got out at that stage. Clearly this conversation took place after the fire had started in the Tower, as the lady knew the Fire Brigade were en route. One of the lifts was working and my mum, who has serious mobility issues because of an illness, could have easily gone down to the ground floor in the lift. There was no smoke, only a smell of burning, in the landing.
27. I went back into the flat, got into bed and tried to go to sleep but the smell of burning was getting stronger and stronger and coming into our flat. Our front door was closed and the smell had made its way into my bedroom.
28. I got out of bed and joined my mum who was waiting for the engineer to arrive to fix the vents. We both kept looking out of our door into the lobby area and were just walking around to see what was going on. We could not sleep because of the noise of the ventilation system, so we were just walking around the flat.
29. When we next looked out onto our landing, we could see that both of the lifts were now out of order and we could also see that people were slowly coming out of their flats on to our landing. Something just started to seem not right.
30. I do not remember all the details but it got to a point where we decided to leave our flat and we wanted to make our way down the stairs. We (me, my mum and my dad) got dressed again and we left the flat, locked our front door and we even went into the staircase. At that point we saw people from downstairs coming up towards us. These people were our neighbours from lower floors.

31. They were coming up and telling us that there was a fire in the Tower and that they had been told to come up to the top floor. They told us that there was no way out through the stairs. At this point there was not much smoke on our floor and I could still see clearly.
32. I had my house keys in my pocket and I opened the flat door again and we went back into our flat.
33. Four of the women that had come up from the floors below came into our flat with us. One of the women, called "Mariem" (who I now know was called Mariem Elgwahry) told me that there was a really bad fire in the Tower and it had reached her flat. She lived on one of the floors below us and I subsequently learned that she resided on the 22nd floor. Mariem's mother, who I later learned is called Elsah Elgwahry, was with her. Also, two sisters, Sakina and Fatima Afrasahabi, came into our flat (I learned of their names later). Sakina clearly had walking difficulties.
34. When I had met the people coming up the stairs and on to our landing they had said there was a fire downstairs and they had been told to go up to the top as they would be rescued by the Fire Brigade. A lot of people had come up to our floor, I cannot be sure of the number but there were a lot. Four people had come into our flat making us 7 in total.
35. The two Iranian women stayed close to my dad. Mariem and her mum sat on the sofa in the living room. I knew Mariem from when I was going to school. She was a few years older than me. My mum and one of the Iranian ladies climbed on to a work top in the kitchen by the window to look out and see what was happening. We were using the torch lights on our mobile phones to let people outside the Tower know that we were still in the flat.
36. I was walking around the flat with my dad to see where the smoke was coming from as the flat was filling up the flat slowly. Each time we opened the door smoke poured in.
37. I started receiving phone calls from my friends who lived in the surrounding Towers and they were telling me what they could see was going on from outside of the Tower. I received calls from a school friend, Hamza, who lived two minutes away from the Tower, and from two other friends, Siyar who lived on the 3rd floor of the Tower and his sister-in-law, Mojda, who also lived on the 3rd floor of the Tower. I also received a call from my

cousin, Amin, who lived quite close to the Tower. He called me a few times and they were all just trying to relay any information which the Fire Brigade gave them from outside.

38. Siyar was speaking to the fire officers outside the Tower and he was telling me that they were advising us to put wet towels on our heads and to put wet towels by the front door to stop smoke coming in. Mojda was not outside the Tower when I spoke to her and put me in touch with Siyar. Amin said that he had spoken to a fire brigade officer outside the Tower and he had been told that we should 'stay put' in our flat. That was the information that was passed on to me. One of my friends (I cannot be sure who it was but I am sure that I was given this information) had asked how long it would take the fire fighters to get to us at the top. The information relayed on to me was that the fire brigade were making their way up to us and had reached a certain point inside the building but the fire brigade officer who was speaking to one of my friends did not know which level had been reached as the officer giving the information was on the outside.
39. I spoke with one of my school friends, Hamza Mazharay, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] he told me that he could see the Tower on fire from his window and told me it looked bad.
40. My cousin, Amin Popal lives in [REDACTED] and had come to the Tower as he knew it was on fire. He was talking to the fire officers outside the Tower telling them about us on the top floor.
41. My friends were standing near the Fire Brigade outside the Tower and I asked one of them to pass the phone to the fire fighters so I could speak to one of them. I cannot remember which friend passed a phone to a fire fighter to allow me to speak to a fire fighter directly.
42. However, I certainly spoke with a fire fighter and informed him that we were on the top floor of the Tower and asked him if they were coming to help us. The fire fighter's response was that they were making their way up. He informed me that fire fighters had reached a certain level, but he did not know which, and were on their way up. I asked him what I should do and he advised me to keep the windows closed and to only open them for air and then to close them again. He also told me to get wet towels and to cover our faces with them, to wet the carpets as much as we could and to put wet towels by the door to stop the smoke from coming in.

43. He told me we should stay in the flat. He told me to stay put. I asked him how long it would take for the fire brigade to reach us but he said he did not know. I was never told to leave the flat. I kept telling him we had two disabled people in the flat and he said that he knew there were disabled people in our flat but did not say that fire fighters were coming specifically to our flat. I do not know the identity of the fire fighter I spoke with.
44. I could not see the fire from inside our flat. However, I could see the reflection of the fire on other buildings outside and I could see little pieces of burning debris flying around in the air.
45. The fire eventually got to our flat. It started in my parents' bedroom. I did not see it myself but my dad informed me that the fire was in his bedroom. He had closed his bedroom door and told us not to go in. This was quite concerning as my parents bedroom was directly in front of our front door, which was our only exit out of the flat. We stayed in the flat for between 15 and 30 minutes after that whilst the fire was in the bedroom. I believe the bedroom window had broken and the fire had come in from outside. When we eventually left, as no one was coming to rescue us, I would think it took us about 10 to 15 minutes to get down the Tower to the exit.
46. We were very worried as the only rooms in the flat we could stay in were the living room and the kitchen. The hallway of the flat started filling up with smoke quite quickly. It was thick black smoke and I could not see through it.
47. I did not make a 999 call and I did not see my dad or mum making a 999 call. My dad may have made a 999 call. I do think Mariem did make a 999 call.
48. Time was just running out for us, and there was nothing we could do.

Leaving the flat to try and escape

49. When the fire came in to our flat there was thick black smoke. It was obvious we were in a life threatening and dangerous situation. I could not see how we were going to get out of the Tower alive. I saw my mum standing on the window sill saying she was ready to jump rather than go through the pain of being burnt alive. She said that she did not want to die

being burnt in the flames. I grabbed her and pulled her back from the window. I realised that we did not have any chance of living if we stayed in the flat and said we had to try and go out through the lobby and the smoke.

50. So in those last few minutes when I thought there was nothing else we could do, I grabbed my mum and I shouted to my dad, “we need to leave now”. There was just so much smoke. I thought if I did not grab my mum then, at that time, I would not be able to grab her again. She was vulnerable because she certainly could not walk down the stairs on her own due to her mobility problems. I had to do something. We had wet towels which we used to cover our mouths and I also soaked my sweatshirt in water and wrapped it around my head.
51. My dad also said we needed to go and he said he would be right behind us. As I was going out the door dad was talking to the ladies in the flat and handing them wet towels in readiness for their exit.
52. I grabbed my mum and walked out of our flat and on to the landing outside. It was pitch black and thick with smoke. I could not see a thing. The heat was greater in the lobby than in the flat. I did not know what time it was but I think it must have been around 2.30 am as I have seen the cctv still image taken in the lobby of me leaving the Tower at 02.42.16 hrs. I had to feel my way out on the landing to the stairwell door. I could not breathe as the air was thick and toxic. I took a deep breath and was holding my breath for as long as I could and I started walking down the stairs.
53. My mum cannot walk easily because of her illness which causes her serious mobility difficulties. For the previous 5 years her ability to walk had deteriorated significantly. She was using a walking stick to help her to get around. I knew she would die if I did not do something to rescue her.
54. I therefore got my mum to put her hands and arms around my shoulders, so that I took her body weight across my back and shoulders. I then started to carry and drag her down the stairwell in order to save our lives. I told her not to let go of me. I was sure that if she did let go and came off my back then we would lose each other, as it was completely black and dark with smoke, and there would be no way of finding one another again. We started making our way down the stairs.

55. I could not see anything in the stairwell. It was complete black and thick with choking smoke. My mum wanted to turn back and go to find my dad. I knew if we went back we would all die as it was so hard to breathe. My mum was calling out for my dad to make sure he was behind us but we could not hear his voice.
56. On our way down the stairs, we were stepping and tripping over dead bodies as people had already died in the stairwell. Further down, we were also tripping over fire hoses which had been discarded on the stairwell. All the people on the stairs were dead or laying down, about to die. We were unable to help anyone as we were seriously struggling to keep ourselves alive.
57. It was impossible, due to the thick smoke, to see what floors we were passing through.
58. The sounds from the people who were dying will never leave me. I could not do anything to help them as I had to carry mum and try and stay alive. I can still hear the sounds of people desperately struggling to breathe. It sounded like they were snoring, as they choked for their last remaining gasps of air in that incredibly hot and toxic environment.
59. We both thought that we were going to die, for sure. It is a miracle that we survived. We are the only people to have survived from those who were trapped on the 23rd floor of Grenfell Tower. We had to pass through every floor to reach safety.
60. The stairwell was quiet and the only sound I could hear was of those people who were laying on the stairwell gasping and choking for air. To me, it sounded as though they were about to die, they were obviously struggling to breathe. It was a nightmare.
61. We were making our way down the stairs as fast as we could and we got to a point where we just could not breathe anymore. As we got about halfway down the Tower, I remember walking past a floor where I had seen an open landing door. I do not know which floor this was on, but because we could not breathe where we had gotten to, on the stairwell, we went back up one staircase to try and find some air.
62. As we went onto the landing/corridor of that floor, I saw a small air pocket and I started to try and get my breath back. I do not know how long we stayed there. The air was still full of smoke, but it was not as thick. In this pocket of better air, I was able to catch my breath

again. I had put my mum down, in order to recover a bit. Having got some energy back, I grabbed my mum again and lifted her on to my back. We started making our way down again, slowly, step by step. I kept thinking of my fiancée and the thoughts of her gave me the strength to carry on even though it was so difficult to breathe. Having my mum with me kept me going. I knew if I stopped she and I would die.

63. As we were going down, I could hear the distinctive sound of venting from breathing masks. I could also hear the sound of breaths and oxygen being drawn into those masks. I could not see anything as it was still pitch black. I just held my hand out to try and feel and as soon as I felt something, I realised it was a fire fighter. I grabbed and pulled him towards me and told him that I was with my mum and that we had come down from the 23rd floor.
64. The fire fighter I grabbed was male, and he was with a female fire fighter. He told me to grab hold of his arm and the female fire fighter helped my mum. I told him my dad and four others were trapped in flat 205 on the top floor. The fire fighter took out his notebook and wrote down the flat number and the number of people who were trapped. They both helped us down the stairwell. I told my mum to hold my hand and stay close to me. The female fire fighter was helping my mum and I was scared that she would get to the point where she could not carry my mum and I was not going to leave my mum in the stairwell. I held on to her hand tightly.
65. As soon as we got to about the 4th floor, we could see light and we were able to breathe a bit better. By this stage I did not have anymore energy left in me.
66. There were more fire fighters further down the Tower, particularly on the 1st and 2nd floors. They started leading me out of the building, and one of them was carrying my mum. They took us out of the Tower and put us down on the grass area outside.
67. I think it took us approximately 10 to 15 minutes to get out of the Tower but I do not really know for sure. When we got out of the Tower I told the Fire Brigade that there were still people in our flat, at the top, as four ladies had come in to the flat and my dad was still there.
68. I think the fire fighters worked bravely and very hard. They clearly tried their best to save lives on that night. However, I think they did not really know what to do. They did not seem to have the correct equipment, for example enough oxygen to work higher up in the Tower.

When we met fire fighters in the stairwell they were not able to give us air as they probably only just had enough for themselves and needed that to get us out. I do not know what air capacity they had in the tanks. I told a fire fighter in the stairwell that I could not breathe anymore and he told me to just carry on and he kept taking me down. Also the fire fighters did not have adequate equipment to reach us on the top floor from outside the Tower.

69. I do not think the Fire Brigade had a proper plan to tackle a fire like that. We met no fire fighters on the higher levels of the Tower at the time we escaped from floor 23. My concern is mainly about the stay put policy and the advice we were given and not given. I think the whole stay put policy was wrong. If they had told everyone to get out as soon as they could I think a lot more people would have lived. At the least if they had told us that there was no fire in the staircase then more people would have tried to use the stairs. Our situation was made worse because of information from residents who came up the stairs saying there was fire in the stairwell. We therefore did not make our way down earlier. If we had been told it was smoke in the stairwell and not fire we would have taken our chances in the smoke. The two Iranian ladies who came into our flat said there was fire in the stairwell and they had probably heard that or had been told that. There was no clear information. I am a thoughtful and calm person normally but in a crisis like the fire it is very difficult to think straight. We needed clear directions and information.

The last time I saw my dad

70. Going back to when we left the flat, I had shouted to my dad in the flat, “We need to leave now.” My dad had heard my call and he said, “I’m coming.”
71. We had attempted to escape earlier. Dad had come out into the landing with us but we were met by lots of people coming up the stairs to our floor trying to get away from the fire and smoke below them. I would estimate there were more than 10 people coming up but I cannot be clear on exactly how many. I would describe it as a ‘rush of people’ coming up. We could not get down the stairs then, and they were telling us to go back. We could not go down because of the rush of people coming up and because we were being told there was fire in the stairwell below.
72. Four of our neighbours from the Tower had then sought refuge in our flat.

73. My last sighting of my dad alive was in the hallway of our flat as I was going towards the front door to try and escape on the last occasion. I remember seeing him helping the four women to put wet towels around their faces so that they could have a chance to get through the smoke with us. He was preparing them to be able to help them breathe in the smoke. As I was going out the door with mum on my back I said to my dad "Let's at least try to get out." He was trying to calm everybody by giving them hope and encouraging them to escape. The last vision I have of him was my father getting the ladies and himself ready to face into that thick, black smoke. He was helping them fix the towels around their faces.
74. Two of the women were sisters. Dad was trying to help all four. He was getting them ready to get out of the flat and face the enormous challenge of what we all knew was getting down 46 flights of stairs through smoke and with the possibility fire blocking our path. He did not give up on them. He could see that I had mum and he could not do anything else to help her.
75. As soon as I went out of the flat door I went into the pitch black darkness of the smoke. I could not see if dad and the neighbours were behind me or not. I thought dad and the four women were behind us coming out the door, or at least very shortly after mum and I went into the darkness and smoke.
76. I turned as I left and I saw him in the hallway of our flat.
77. That was the last time I saw my dad alive. It is the last time my eyes set eyes on my best friend in the world.
78. Dad was a hero, to my mind. He could have come with us, at that moment. However, he did not leave those women who were distressed and needed help in our flat. He died trying to save their lives, he gave them hope and encouragement. He was calm and he did not panic. He certainly did not put himself first and just rush out with us. He was being composed and caring towards the four women who had looked to him for help. He knew full well, as did mum and I, and those ladies, that we were all in mortal danger. He knew full well that time was running out and his instinct must have been to go immediately, but being the sort of man he was he delayed for those moments whilst he helped others prepare for the thick and toxic smoke outside our flat.

79. For me and my mother it took a super human and enormous physical effort to survive. We were just lucky that part of the way down we found a pocket of better air that allowed me to push on.
80. No words can convey the sadness knowing that all five died in the fire. No words can convey the loss of my dear dad. However, I am extremely proud of him. He gave those ladies comfort and encouragement when all hope looked lost at the top of Grenfell Tower.

Outside Grenfell Tower

81. I do not remember much about what happened outside the Tower. The paramedics came over to my mum and to me and they started to treat us. They gave us oxygen masks and blankets.
82. I spoke to the paramedics and spoke with some of my friends from the local area who were waiting outside the Tower. I also spoke with some of the other residents of the Tower. I think we were outside the Tower for maybe 3 hours, or so, after which I was taken to Chelsea & Westminster Hospital by ambulance. My mum was taken away, first to Kings College Hospital and was later transferred to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. She was in hospital until 14 August 2017. The ambulance crews took my mum off to hospital before me, as she was a priority casualty.
83. I felt all right when I was outside the Tower, as I was in fresh air. The ambulance crew, however, said that I needed to go to hospital. When I got to the hospital, I was pretty bad. I could not breathe. My airway was getting blocked and when I told the doctors that I could not breathe, they checked me over and rushed me in and put me into an induced coma as they needed to put me onto a machine to help me breathe. I was in a coma for 1 ½ days.
84. When I woke up from the coma, I did not know where my mum and dad were. But my uncle, my dad's brother, was with me. He was one of the first people I had called when we came out of the Tower, in order to tell him what had happened. My uncle and the medical team did not tell me that my dad was missing. The family just told me that my dad was in a coma and he was in hospital too. I remember it was one of the doctors who told me that my mum was in a coma, but I cannot remember when they told me this.

85. I was in intensive care for 2 days and I was then taken to a unit which was just below intensive care. I was then monitored there for a few more days. I was discharged from hospital on Sunday, 20 June 2017.
86. I had not had any contact with my parents at this point. I did not know that my dad had died at the Tower. On the Sunday, when the hospital told me that I was in a position to be discharged they did not want to discharge me as I had nowhere to go. They told me that I could go and visit my mum in hospital as she was in Kings College Hospital at the time, but that I had to come later. The doctor also informed me that my dad was missing and had not been found. After hearing that my dad was missing, I insisted on being discharged as I just wanted to go and look for him.
87. As soon as I was discharged from hospital, I went straight to King's College Hospital to see my mum. When I first saw her, I did not even recognise her. She could not talk as she had just come out of a coma. She tried to talk but we could not understand her. She had lost her voice. I recall that my family were with me during this time.
88. I did not have anything when I was discharged from hospital. All I had were the clothes I was wearing, which were a t-shirt and shorts. I do not know whose clothes they were or where they had come from. I simply had no possession in the world left. I also had a pair of flip flops which were too small but I had no choice but to wear them. This is how I left hospital and went to see my mum.
89. It got to a point where even after a few days I still did not have anything. I remember going to the Rugby Portobello Club to try and get some clothes but I could not. They did not have anything in my size and so I was still wearing the same t-shirts and shorts in which I had left the hospital a few days earlier. I tried to get things for my mum but I could not find anything for her either. I bumped into one of my neighbours from the Tower at the club and he took off his trousers and swapped them with my shorts, as he could see I was shivering with the cold. Although the weather was warm, I was cold and shivering as I was still weak and recovering.
90. I was still quite poorly at this point and very weak. I went back to the hospital and spoke to my social worker and told her I needed some socks and shoes and she told me that she was coming to see me anyway and she would bring these things with her. I also asked her for

clothes for my mum and she contacted the staff at the Westway and they told her that they had received new donations and that they would set aside clothing for her.

91. After I was discharged from hospital, I was suffering from nose bleeds. They were not normal. I had clots of blood from my nose, and it would usually happen when I was eating. I went back to the hospital's Accident and Emergency Department. They had a look into my nose and told me that the nose bleeds were caused as a result of the scarring inside my nose, likely from the hot smoke and gases in the Tower. They informed me that I had sustained burn injuries inside my nose.
92. I had to go back for a follow up appointment with an ENT consultant. They put a camera up through my nose into my mouth and they informed me that it was all healing the way it should be.
93. I was also experiencing breathing difficulties for a while after and went to see my GP regarding this. These symptoms are still on-going. For example, I cannot exercise as much as I did before the fire as I get tired and breathless very quickly. I have always kept myself physically fit. My GP referred me to the respiratory team; they connected me to a machine and did some tests. They could not see anything wrong but I still feel like I am not the same as before.
94. My GP also referred me for counselling and I am seeing a counsellor on a weekly basis.
95. The RBKC did not reach out to those of us who were in hospital and by the time that I was discharged from hospital, most of the things which would have been useful to help me had been given out already or had been taken. I only spoke with the RBKC after I was discharged from hospital. The help I received from the RBKC was good, I believe, but it was not proactive assistance. If I had not asked for help or support, it would not have been provided to me by them. It was good in the sense that the social worker assigned to help me brought me shoes and socks when I had none and could not leave my mum's bedside in hospital. The social worker was very helpful.
96. I did not have any issues with food as I was able to eat at the hotel accommodation which RBKC provided for me. I was put into the Copthorne Hotel after my discharge from hospital and was in there until 8 August 2017, after which I moved to a two bedroom flat on

Kensington High Street in readiness for the discharge of my mum from hospital. However, communication was bad between me and the council. When I was discharged from hospital I could not speak properly as I had lost my voice. My cousin, Farahnaz Nedawas helping me by making phone calls on my behalf. Someone from the council told us they had booked a room for me at the Hilton Hotel in Edgware Road, After visiting my mum, I went to the hotel. Upon arrival at the hotel the reception staff told me they could not find a reservation for me. My cousin called the council and explained the situation. After a couple of hours of waiting in the lobby the council arranged a room for me at the Copthorne Tara Hotel off Kensington High Street and we made our way there, which was a twenty minute drive. This was another headache that I did not need at the time.

My fiancée

97. My fiancée, Nasrin Sadat, was in Holland at the time of the fire. She was at university in [REDACTED]. She is about to finish her degree.
98. We were looking forward to getting married. We were going to get married in Holland as she was living there and we have lots of family living there as well. I had planned to go to Holland with my dad on 10 July 2017 to book a venue for the wedding. We had intended to get married in August 2018 We had already seen a number of venues, and I was going there with dad to see whether the venues we had seen had availability for August 2018.
99. When I was trapped on the top floor with mum and dad and our four neighbours, I did not think I would get out alive. Before I left the flat, I sent my fiancée a text message saying “goodbye”.
100. When I did get out of the Tower she was the first person I phoned. I told her what had happened. She went straight to the airport and caught the first possible plane to London. She came straight to the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital to see me. She got to the hospital by about 9:00 am on 14 June 2017, and saw me just before I went into an induced coma. Neither of us knew what had happened to my dad.
101. When I was discharged, Nasrin stayed in the hotel with me and we went to the Westway to sort things out, including identification documents. I stacked up on pots of ready made noodles to eat. Nasrin stayed to help me for a month but then had to go back to university.

She has been able to keep coming to London regularly to help and to be with me and my mother.

102.



Family support

103. When my uncle, my dad's brother, Mohamed Aref Neda, heard about the fire in the early hours of 14 June 2017 he immediately got in a car and was driven to London from Leeds by his son in law to be with us. He was unable to drive himself as he was in a state of shock. He is dad's younger brother and my dad's only brother who is also living in the UK.

104. When I was awoken from the coma my uncle was there by my bedside. Aref did not know if dad was alive or dead, and he spent days going around the hospitals, churches, the community centres trying to find out any news about his brother.

105. He was devastated when we found out that dad was dead. Aref stayed with me to help me to arrange the funeral as I had never arranged a funeral before and I had no idea what to do. My dad's funeral which took place on 30 June 2017.

106. Although Aref is a [REDACTED] he still stayed down in London to help us for a month after the fire. He then had to go back up to Leeds to his family [REDACTED]



107. He really misses my dad. They were very close throughout their lives.

108. My dad's older brother came over from America for the funeral and he was able to stay with us for a week.

109. Another younger brother of my dad came over for the funeral from the Netherlands.

110. My dad's eldest brother came from Afghanistan with my grandmother. They could not make it in time for the funeral but they came to support us.

111. My mum's sister, Afifa Sadat, also came over from Afghanistan to look after my mum when she was discharged from hospital. She has looked after my mum since then as I have been unable to do so full time, as I have had to return to work to run the family business. My mum needs close care now.
112. We had been at my aunt Zara's house during the evening of 13 June 2017. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] When she heard about the fire she came straight to the Tower. I had called Zara's husband, Habib Abdulrahman. We had been in their house the evening before the fire for a family meal after sunset, [REDACTED]
113. Their son, Lotfrahman Abdulrahman, my cousin, was working a night shift in Paddington on 13/14 June 2017. He came to the Tower when he heard about the fire. They were all outside the Tower watching it engulf our home.
114. My mum was on the phone to her sister Zara and she was saying that she would jump rather than be burnt alive. Zara was in a terrible state and fainted outside the Tower. She rang my dad in the flat and said, "Flora is thinking about jumping, don't let her do that." She was in phone contact with my dad until about 2:30 am to 2:35 am.
115. My dad left a voicemail message [REDACTED] on Habib's phone saying, "Goodbye. We are now leaving this world, goodbye. I hope I haven't disappointed you. Goodbye to all." Habib passed the voicemail message to me, some weeks after the fire. Habib had first played the message to my uncle, Aref, and it was passed to me after my dad's funeral.

Concerns about fire safety

116. Before the fire happened I had concerns about fire safety at Grenfell Tower.
117. I worried about how we would get out if there was a fire as there was only the one staircase available to us to exit the Tower and we lived on the top floor of the Tower. I was used to having several exits, for example, at school and university where there were several exits to get out of buildings.

118. I was 4 or 5 years old when we moved to the Tower and even at such a young age I was not happy about the move. To begin with as I have always been afraid of heights. I got over it quite quickly as there was no balcony area. I was fine as long as I was inside the flat and I never looked down when looking out of the window. I only ever looked straight ahead.
119. A few months before the fire, the council through the TMO and the contractors working on the refurbishment started installing gas pipes in the stairwell. This was a big issue for me as I thought the gas pipes could explode if there was a fire. The pipes were not metal pipes; instead they were plastic pipes which a fire could burn through. I do not know if they did burn on the night of the fire as I did not see what was happening because of the smoke and I have not been back inside the Tower since. I was concerned as the stairs were the only emergency escape route from the top of the building and this could be disastrous.
120. Recently, not too long before the fire, the TMO put up a sign by the lifts which advised that the lifts should not be used during a fire and also confirmed that there was a stay put policy in the Tower. I think that the sign was on every floor of the Tower.
121. Before the signs were put up there was no information that I can remember about a stay put policy.
122. We also experienced power surges in the Tower and there were occasions when the whole Tower would be left without electricity. I also have some recollection of the power problems causing a fire in one of the flats in the Tower, though that had happened before the refurbishment works. The TMO ended up paying compensation to quite a lot of people in the building because of the power surges, as they had damaged electrical equipment.

Concerns about modifications to the Tower

123. I also had concerns about the modifications to the internal and external parts of the Tower.
124. After the refurbishment works, a lot of the communal areas in the Tower were made smaller following the installation of new pipes on the ceilings. As a result, the ceilings were lowered and this happened on our landing.

125. The contractors were drilling large holes on our landing to feed the pipes through the floor. I always worried that these holes, bored through the floors and ceilings, floor-to-floor would cause problems with the structure of the Tower. I now feel that these holes going through each floor must have allowed the smoke and possibly the fire to spread much quicker between the different levels of the building internally, during the fire.
126. We lived on the top floor and above us were all of the water tanks serving the Tower. There was a metal fire door which you had to go through to access the roof. A few years ago they placed a cage by the stairs leading to the door preventing people from accessing it. I feel that the roof would have been somewhere for us to go for fresh air and a safer space but this was not possible as it was locked, even in the case of an emergency.
127. The TMO and Rydon wanted to install our new boiler by our front door during the refurbishment works. I had concerns about the boiler being by the front door, and that it was too close to our electricity meter. It made me worried. I was concerned about the fire risks of having the boiler above the meter. I was also concerned about being left with a narrow hallway as it would mean that we would not be able to take large items of furniture eg. sofas or beds in or out of the flat.
128. We along with other residents complained to the TMO and told them that we would not allow them to do this. It took a long time but eventually the TMO and Rydon conceded and installed our new boiler in the same place as the old one ie in our kitchen.
129. We had concerns about the new pipes in our flat as originally they were meant to be boxed in but they decided they would only box in some of them. We were concerned especially for those who had young children in case they accidentally touched the pipes as they were burning hot. Rydon had left exposed heating pipes which ran all the way around the flat, as opposed to putting them under the floorboards.
130. The windows had been replaced. Originally, we were told that the new windows were going to be bigger, but when they were installed they were smaller than the original windows. This left gaps around all of the edges of the windows. I did not see how they filled in the gaps but my mum told me at the time that they filled the gaps with pieces of insulation and covered it with a PVC covering.

131. Our flat was always cold after the new windows were installed, as gaps underneath the windows were allowing draughts to come through. The whole Tower was a lot colder with the new windows. I remember the wall in my bedroom which my bed backed onto was always cold to touch. I did not personally report this but I believe my mum did.
132. We had problems with our new front door as the automatic closing mechanism broke within days of the door being fitted. This was about 5 years ago. We had contacted the TMO at that time about repairing the door and they came and removed the broken mechanism. They promised us that they would return to replace it, but they never did. We did not chase them about this as the door closed and was effectively working.
133. I went to a lot of the meetings and we spoke to the TMO and Rydon as a group about our concerns with the refurbishment works. I also personally spoke with Peter Madison from the TMO and I spoke to Claire Williams from Rydon about my concerns during the meetings. The meetings used to take place in the community rooms opposite the Tower. We would have to book a room through the TMO. At the beginning we were just a group of residents and then we tried to form a Residents Association but were blocked from doing so as the council said one already existed. We had never heard of them. We were advised by the then local MP, Victoria Borwick and by Councillor Judith Blakeman to form a Compact which we did. There were about 20 of us including Eddie, Willie Thompson, Mariem and my mum. The first main concern we had was about the positioning of boilers in the flats and then came the issue of exposed pipes. We also had issues about how the workers left the landings in a mess at the end of a working day.
134. I would also like to say something about the space outside the Tower.
135. Before the refurbishment works and before the school was built, there were 3 five-a-side football pitches outside the Tower and almost all of the children in the Tower and the neighbouring blocks would play there. This is how we all got to know one another and this is how we socialised, as one big community.
136. When they took this space away there was no where for us to go. I stopped playing football and I no longer did any exercise. A lot of people moved away from the area because they were unhappy with the refurbishment works and the loss of land which had gone to the school.

Housing

137. After I was discharged from hospital, I went to see my mum at Kings College Hospital. I had not been in contact with the RBKC and they had made no attempts to contact me. I was homeless and had no where to stay that night. When I went to see my mum the staff at Kings College Hospital very kindly arranged somewhere for me stay for the night. They booked a room for me with the assistance of the Salvation Army.
138. The following morning, I contacted the RBKC to find out what I could do and what could be arranged for me. As I have said above in paragraph 95, the RBKC informed me that they had booked a room for me at the Hilton Hotel on Edgware Road. I left east London and travelled to Edgware Road with my cousin. When I got to the hotel I was told that they could not find my booking and they had me waiting in the lobby for a few hours. My cousin was helping me and called the RBKC to inform them that there was no booking. She spoke with my social worker, Elizabeth Dilks, as I had lost my voice after the fire and could not talk properly. Elizabeth then informed my cousin that my accommodation had been arranged at the Copthorne Tara Hotel in between Earls Court and High Street Kensington. I then had to wait again for them to arrange a taxi to take us to the Copthorne Tara Hotel.
139. My mum was still in hospital and I stayed at the hotel during this time. The RBKC had offered us temporary accommodation in Paddington. It was a flat but it was not somewhere I could move to, as it would make it so much more difficult for me to visit my mum in hospital in Chelsea. I did not want to accept anything until I knew that my mum was well, as she was my priority.
140. When it got to a point where my mum was going to be discharged, her treating specialists came to see the hotel room and told me that it was not suitable for her needs. The hospital arranged a meeting with all of us and staff from RBKC. The medical team from the hospital informed the RBKC that they would only discharge my mum once the council had found suitable accommodation.
141. This is why they found us an apartment on Kensington High Street. I moved into the apartment on 11 August 2017, a few days before mum was discharged.

142. It took a while for us to find our permanent home. We were shown properties in Kensington Row which we declined. We also declined [REDACTED] initially as we knew we would have problems with parking and traffic (my business is driving-related). We later decided to accept the property at [REDACTED], as we knew we would not find anything suitable elsewhere.
143. There have been small problems with our accommodation but when we report the issues to the RBKC, they come out and fix it eventually. It can take up to two weeks and sometimes longer for issues to be resolved.

Our family life living in Grenfell Tower

144. I am the only child of my parents. I always got along very well with my parents and my dad was like a friend to me.
145. We are and were a supportive family unit and we did everything together. We all helped one another. My dad was adamant that I complete my university education and never asked me for anything. He told me that he would support me throughout my university studies.
146. My dad had set up a successful chauffer business which he had built from the ground up. He had worked extremely hard building up the business and I have taken the business over since his death. I worked with my dad when I was studying as and when I could, but he always encouraged me to concentrate on my education first.
147. In the many years that we lived at Grenfell Tower, we got to know almost all our neighbours. From a young age, I remember my dad being friendly with all our neighbours and he would say hello to all of them whenever we would pass each other in the Tower. My dad would always encourage me from a young age to always say hi to the neighbours as he believed that this was a way of showing respect. It was thanks to this lesson from my dad that I became friends with many people from Grenfell Tower.
148. I enjoyed living in the Tower and we were happy in our home. Over the years I got to know quite a lot of people and I went to school with a lot of the people that lived in the Tower. We all grew up together.

149. I started to learn the skills of Taekwondo at a young age and my dad would bring me to my classes and wait for me to finish, watching me as I trained. I became good at the sport and I started competing in Taekwondo around the age of 8 at Kensington Leisure Centre. My dad encouraged me in sport and never complained about the long distances he drove to for different competition venues. He never complained as I competed all over the UK.
150. At the age of 15, I made it into the Great Britain national squad. I competed in the European Championships in Poland, representing my country. I achieved a second Dan black belt in Taekwondo and I have won in excess of 25 medals in varying colours of bronze, silver and gold. I also competed in the Viking Cup in Sweden and the World Championships held in Italy.
151. Unfortunately, all the medals and all the photographs I had taken alongside my dad, travelling around the country and to international competitions, were consumed and lost in the fire.
152. We travelled as a family on many occasions to Holland and Germany where my mum and dad have brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces.
153. I met my fiancée in Holland. In fact, one month prior to the fire my parents and I were over in Holland preparing for my wedding which was due to take place in August 2018.
154. We had celebrated my engagement to Nasrin, as a family, in December 2016 and my dad had told me how proud he was of me and of Nasrin.
155. Since my dad's death, I have missed him dearly. When I returned to work after the fire, I felt under a lot of pressure. I felt overwhelmed and I felt that I could not run his business and I could not continue with it. One night I had a dream of my dad and in that dream he came to me he told me, "Don't worry, son, I'm behind you."
156. My dad loved life and loved meeting people. He would get along with almost everyone, no matter what age, colour, sex or religion they were. He would treat everyone the way he wanted to be treated himself; with respect. For this reason, he was loved by so many. He was a man of deep integrity and fairness.

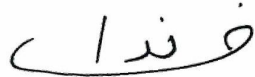
157. Within the community of Grenfell Tower, my dad was well-liked by neighbours and friends and in the eighteen years that we lived in Grenfell Tower, there was never a bad word spoken about him.
158. My dad came to the UK in 1998, [REDACTED] with me and my mum. I was only about 5 years old but I can remember that from the moment he set foot in the UK, my dad found himself a job and worked hard until the day he passed away. He was the sort of person who would never complain about work and would never take a day off work when he was sick. I always remember him saying to me that the day he stopped working was the day he will become truly sick.
159. For the last 10 to 15 years of his life my dad worked as a chauffeur. He would always wake up early in the morning and put on a smart suit to go out to work. Dad would dress smartly even on days that he did not have a client booking. He loved dressing well, which was evident from his wardrobe. It was mainly filled with suits and a large collection of ties in all colours and patterns. With his smart dress code and his unique character, my father built up a large customer portfolio for his own chauffeur business. This included many VIPs.
160. I went to Holland Park Secondary School in west London, close to the Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall. My dad took me to school most days in his car. My dad always encouraged me to do as well as I could in my studies. He never put any pressure on me, but he always took a kindly interest in all that I was learning. Dad would listen intently when I would explain to him what I was learning in school. He gave me all the support he could, to help me make a success of my schooling.
161. I graduated from Kingston University with a BSc in Mechanical Engineering in January 2017 and it was so clear from the smile on my dad's face that he was very proud of my achievements. He had always emphasised the need for education and my graduation with a degree in engineering was the icing on the cake for him.
162. At the graduation ceremony dad proceeded to buy all the official photographer's photographs of me, even though I told him that this was unnecessary. He replied by saying, "Nonsense, son, you only graduate once!" My dad made sure the photographs took pride of place at our home. Sadly, they were all destroyed in the fire.

163. My dad was the sort of person who would help anyone who needed help. He would always put others before himself, no matter who they were. If a person asked my dad for help of any kind, he would sometimes think for days of a way in which he could help that person. My dad was a calm and very kind man.
164. I am sure that others who knew my father will mention how he was always smiling and that it was always a pleasure to be around him. He has left everyone with very happy memories and dad will not only be dearly missed by us, his family, but he will also be missed by many other people because he touched their lives and had a positive impact on them.
165. Since my father's death I have missed him so very much, every day. My dad was dearly loved and he is sorely missed. He will never be forgotten and I know he will always be looking after us.
166. It has been very difficult for me and there was a long period of time after the fire where I did not feel like going out or doing anything. I was just spending days in bed thinking about things.
167. My dad was the head of our family and he was the one that held our family together. He was the breadwinner, he was running the family business, he was just doing everything and after he passed away, all of those responsibilities have fallen on me.
168. It has been a lot to take on and I feel like I am constantly under pressure. I had to take on the responsibility of arranging my dad's funeral with the help of my uncle, as my mum was still in hospital. This was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do.
169. Losing my dad, my home, and losing my friends in the Grenfell Tower fire has left me feeling very lost. I feel like I have had to step up and do things which I was not ready for as my dad would always be there and he was always supporting me.
170. It has been difficult with the family business as I have not been able to take much time off from work to deal with the loss of my father and my mum's hospitalisation. I do not think I have had the chance to grieve for him properly as I have not had time for myself.

171. I was adamant about going back to work as I did not want to risk losing the family business which my dad had worked extremely hard building over the last 10 to 15 years. The family business is the only thing I have left of my dad's, all the physical things were consumed in the fire, and it is extremely important to me to keep this going.
172. At the same time, I have not been able to put one hundred per cent into the family business, as yet, as I have been busy with appointments with doctors, social workers, looking for accommodation, meeting solicitors etc.
173. I have not been able to sleep properly after the fire and I just feel under a lot of pressure all of the time. I have no help and I am doing everything on my own.
174. In the first two months after the fire, I spent my time watching the news and searching for information on friends who were missing and had died in the Tower.
175. I have not yet dealt with the events that unfolded on 14 June 2017. Not only did I lose my dad and best friend, I also lost one of my good friends, Yasin El Wahabi who lived a few floors below me.
176. The four women who were in our flat on the night of the fire, Miriam, her mother, Sakina, and Fatima all died.
177. We were friends with the Hashim family who lived on the 22nd floor, just below us. Both parents, Hashim Kedir and Nura Jemal, and their three young children, Yaqub aged 6, Firdaws aged 12 and Yahya aged 13, died in the fire. Nura had such dreams of seeing her children grow up. She would always say to me that she wished her sons would grow up to be like me; her sons had even started Taekwondo with the same instructor that had trained me.
178. Our neighbour who lived opposite us with her two young daughters died.
179. I grew up in the Tower and grew up with all of these people around me and it is hard knowing I will never see their faces again. The scope and the extent of the loss and bereavement is beyond all words.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I confirm that I am willing that the statement forms part of the evidence before the Inquiry, and may be published on the Inquiry's website, save for redactions indicated in the text, and those applied by the Inquiry.



Signed: _____

FARHAD NEDA

Dated: 6 June 2017