

**Witness Statement of: Tiago Alves**

**No. of statement: 1**

**Exhibits: 4**

**Date of statement: 16 May 2018**

## **GRENFELL TOWER PUBLIC INQUIRY**

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### **WITNESS STATEMENT OF TIAGO ALVES**

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I, TIAGO ALVES, will say as follows:

1. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1997. I used to in flat 105 Grenfell Tower. I am a Core Participant in the Inquiry and I make this statement about the events on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017. I do wish to make a further statement to address issues falling within Phase 2 of the Inquiry.

#### Background

2. At the time of the fire I was mentally fit and healthy. I was studying for an undergraduate degree [REDACTED] full-time at [REDACTED] and a Masters. My plan was to then do a PHD [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
3. That said, the fire has had a dramatic impact on my health and ability to continue as before. The shock of the horrific events on 14<sup>th</sup> June and dislocation thereafter has been terrible. I am still living in a hotel. I had to take some time out from my studies and was only able to manage a return on a part time basis. The ongoing impact to my life and health has been huge.

### Household

4. I lived in Flat 105 on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of Grenfell Tower for most of my life. I was nine months old when my parents moved into the Tower and I grew up in the Tower. When I was nine years old we moved to another property for around five years but we moved back to Grenfell Tower when I was 14 years old and I lived there ever since. My dad is a leaseholder of the flat having exercised the right to buy.
5. I lived in the flat with my dad Miguel (age 50), my mum Fatima (age 48) and my sister [REDACTED] (age 16). When we moved in, it was a two bedroom flat. My father obtained permission to change the layout and we converted the flat so that it has three bedrooms. If you looked out of the windows on one side you could see Bramley Road and on the other side you could see Kensington Academy.
6. I have drawn on a floor plan at TA/1 the rooms in our flat and who lived on floor 13.

### Refurbishments

7. Some residents had their front doors replaced by the Council. The new doors were plastic. Some neighbours had issues with these plastic doors for instance the chain which connects to the hinge and the door frame would break and fall off so they were essentially no longer effective fire doors. Our door was of the original solid wood with a triangular hinge that was self closing. When comparing the two, ours had no real issues although they would not always keep smells from moving around the flats on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor. It meant that when someone was frying food we could sometimes smell that in the communal hallway.
8. There were two lifts to each floor opening to a communal landing that would reach the six flats. There were dry risers in the communal hallways as well as a stairway and rubbish chute.

9. The new ceiling in the communal areas was made of wood. The ceiling before the refurbishment had anti-fire paint and anti-fire tiles. I don't know whether the new ceiling made of wood aided in the spread of fire into the communal areas.
10. I understand that this statement is just about what happened on the night of the fire on 14 June. There are plenty of things I would like to say about the history and background with the TMO and the RBKC Council, and fire safety within the Tower, but I understand that I will be able to speak about this later.

#### 13 June

11. On the day of the fire my mum's cousin and her daughter had come from South Africa to visit my family. My mum's cousin's daughter was planning to study in London and wanted to meet her relatives and my mum's cousin was keen that she see us so that she would be able to settle in once she began studying in London. They were staying in a hotel nearby to our home around Notting Hill. On the 13 June my mum's cousin suggested that we all go out for dinner. It was very unusual for us to go out in an evening on a school night but we agreed to go because my mum's cousin and her daughter were only here for a short time and they wanted to treat my family.
12. We went to Village Fayre in Kensington Village which is a Portuguese restaurant where we often eat. After dinner, my sister was nagging my parents about the need to go home and sleep. This was because she had a GCSE exam in Chemistry the next day. I also wanted to go and see my girlfriend as she needed my help. My father left with me and my mother took my sister, her cousin and cousin's daughter back to our home. I think my father and I left the restaurant around 10.30pm. My dad dropped me at Pret a Manger in Queensway but I didn't end up meeting my girlfriend as she was unable to make it.

#### 14 June

13. I caught the bus or a Santander bike back to our home and got back at around 11pm to 11.30pm. On getting back my mum's cousin and her daughter were at our flat as my parents had invited them back for coffee. Being Portuguese, it is typical to spend

another two or three hours talking and drinking coffee after a meal and it was good to see my mum's cousin and her daughter. Being at home allowed my sister to get to bed ready for her exam the next day. On getting back I sat with them and chatted for a while. I remember we were talking about mortgages in London and whether my mum's cousin should buy a property. Around 12.15am my mum's cousin said it was getting late and that she should probably leave to go back to their hotel. My parents offered to drive them to the hotel. Although my mum's cousin refused, my parents insisted and we said our goodbyes and they left around 12.30am.

14. I had been shopping for holiday clothes earlier that day as I was supposed to be flying to Switzerland on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June, so I wanted to unwind and so went to my bedroom and started watching Netflix on my computer. I also did some preparation for a meeting that I had for University the next day.
15. My bedroom window was open as it was really hot that night. As I watched Netflix, I noticed a light burning smell but because my mum usually keeps a candle burning in front of a statue of Our Lady, I assumed it was smoke coming from the candle. But as I thought about this I remembered that she never usually leaves the house without blowing out the candle and so I went into the living room and blew out a candle. The smell wasn't that bad and to this day I am not sure whether it was the smell from the Tower fire or not.
16. I went back to my room and carried on watching Netflix. In my police statement, I refer to this burning smell a few minutes after 1am but I would like to correct that at this point as I now recall it being just before 1am. I remember it was before 1am because I was looking at the time on my computer and noticed it was getting late and that I should try and sleep.
17. A couple of minutes later, I heard the front door bang open rather loudly. This was unusual especially when it's my dad as he yells at us if anyone bangs the door that hard. No one in the house would ever bang the door like that because we know it annoys my dad. The noise was a surprise and so I paused Netflix on my computer and

walked out of my bedroom to find out what was going on. I could see my dad by the door and I could tell that he was out of breath.

18. I asked my dad what was going on. He told me to 'get dressed as you need to go downstairs because there's a fire in the building'. I was concerned and had an adrenaline rush so immediately asked 'how serious is the fire?' My dad responded saying 'I'm not sure. I could only see light smoke on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor'. After saying this my dad then turned on the corridor light in the flat.
19. My sister woke up and complained that she had an exam in the morning and was trying to sleep. My dad told my sister there was a fire and that she needed to get dressed. I could sense panic in his voice but he was still pretty calm. He was stern with us when he told us to get dressed and go downstairs which is quite unusual for my dad as he is a warm man. I didn't really know what was going on at this point apart from dad telling us that there was a fire in the building and that we had to leave.
20. I changed out of my pyjamas and put on my trousers which had my phone and wallet in the pockets already. I also instinctively picked up my keys to the flat. I put on my shoes, jacket and left our flat. My dad stayed in the flat. My sister brought out her chemistry GCSE books and revision notes. As we were in the hallway about to make our way downstairs my dad said 'you go downstairs and take care of your sister. I am just going to wake up the other neighbours on our floor. Your mum is waiting for you downstairs'.
21. In the hallway on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor I couldn't see any fire or smoke. No one else was in the hallway either and there were no fire alarms going off. It was now about 1am. We have had fire alarm tests before and the sound of the fire alarms was so loud that you cannot ignore it but that night there was no alarm. There is no way you wouldn't be able to hear the alarm as it always left my ears ringing for 20 minutes after the alarm had gone off.

22. It had been drilled into my head that you should never use the lift when there is a fire. I had never had any formal fire training before but it is just common knowledge and usually there are fire exit signs which show people going down stairs.
23. I had never personally encountered the fire services visiting the Tower apart from when they installed a fire alarm in our flat. I was also familiar with the 'stay put' policy that a fire can be contained in one flat. There was a fire drill plaque in the Tower. The plaque was next to the lifts, and it said that if there was a fire in your flat you should leave the flat and call the fire brigade and when the firefighters arrive they will make an assessment and they can order an immediate evacuation of the building. If the fire was not in your flat then there is a 'stay put' policy unless otherwise stated by the firefighters. I believe it said that if the fire is not in your apartment, then close the doors and stay inside.
24. My sister and I headed towards the stairs. The fire exit door to the stairs was shut. It is a heavy door and closes itself. This door is normally always shut. So I opened the door and started to run down the stairs. I was at the front and my sister was running behind me. The lights were on as we were running down the staircase.
25. When I got to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor I could see light grey smoke. It was like someone had blown out a cigarette but on a much larger scale. The smoke didn't block my vision and was quite light but I could smell it. The smoke wasn't like a normal fire smell but smelt like burning petrol or burning plastic. It was a unique smell that I hadn't smelt before and so it is difficult to describe. The smoke was not that thick and I wasn't coughing from the smoke. I had known of fires in the Tower in the past but these were self contained; this was the first time I had directly smelt smoke in the Tower from a fire.
26. As we were running down the staircase, all the fire doors were closed until we got to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. When we got to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, I could see more smoke than I had on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor but it was still light grey and didn't block my vision. I could see a fire fighter propping the fire exit door open. I saw other fire fighters behind him. They were

clearly bringing in the water hoses which I assume was to plug into the dry risers. I am not sure whether the fire fighter was propping the door open to let other firefighters in or whether it was propped open to bring in the water hoses. The layout of the building changes when you get to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor where the refurbishment took place. There was one flight of stairs all the way down the Tower until it reached the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

27. As I carried on running down the stairs, I saw four or five firefighters where the stairs ended on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. They were having a chat amongst themselves and although I couldn't hear what they were saying it looked like they were about to go upstairs. They didn't look panicked and they seemed calm. The stairs are very narrow and I didn't speak to them as my focus was just to get out of the Tower with my sister safely.

28. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, it was then necessary to come out and move across the hall to join stairs slightly away from the other which went down the to ground level. These stairs were originally outside of the building but since the refurbishment, had been incorporated within the building.

29. As soon as my sister and I got to the lobby area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor I could see my mum; she was stood there with another woman. In my police statement, I refer to seeing my mum on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor but I can now remember seeing her on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. I immediately hugged my mum and she looked relieved to see me. I had seen this woman before but I didn't know her name. She had a very large, brown, leather suitcase next to her. It might have been a wheeled suitcase but I don't remember. Mum was talking to her. I overheard her tell my mum that she lived on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. She seemed agitated. My mother explained to us that she had tried to contact us via the intercom to tell us to stay in the flat but I had not heard our intercom buzz so she might have done so after we left the flat.

30. In my police statement, I mentioned that the woman refused my help when I offered to help with her suitcase downstairs. I'm not sure if I helped the woman with her

suitcase downstairs or whether it was someone else but she came down with the large bag. We all headed downstairs to the ground floor and walked towards the main entrance lobby. There were more firefighters standing by the main entrance lobby. They looked relaxed and calm. At the main entrance lobby on the ground floor, a firefighter had propped open the door. There is also a glass panel door on the right of the main entrance door which was also propped open but I am not sure who had propped this door open. There were no other residents around the main entrance lobby. I think it only took me and my sister a minute or so to run down the stairs.

31. There is a picture of me from my police statement in the communal area on the ground floor and it says this was taken at 1.04am, showing me leaving the Tower.

#### Outside the Tower

32. I walked out of the main entrance, turned left and went and stood on the grass area. I was with my mum and sister. I have marked where I was standing in Exhibit TA/2. There were a few other people stood there but not that many - perhaps around 20 to 30 people. I am not sure if they were people from the Tower or people from the area. The woman with the large suitcase had left at some point. When I looked up at the Tower there was no fire apparent on the building. I couldn't see any flames at this point. We were very close to the Tower on the east side. In between the Tower and the grass there is a narrow path. We stood on the grass area, fairly close to the Tower.
33. As I was stood there, my mum started speaking to a man who looked very distressed. I overheard him telling my mum that the fire had started in his flat, that he called 999, woke up everyone on his floor, shut his flat door and left. He seemed very worried and distressed as he was walking around the grass area. He couldn't stay still.
34. At one point, my mum left me and my sister to go to the car that was parked in the garage under Grenfell Walk. She went to get warm blankets for some children who were outside the Tower and looked very cold. These children had evacuated the Tower and were also waiting outside like us.



35. I could see a Red Toyota Corolla parked right outside the main entrance of the Tower which blocked the way for the fire engines to get past. This car wasn't supposed to park there as it was parked on a double yellow line. My dad had often complained about this as he had said it was a fire hazard to have cars parked there. My dad came out of the Tower about five minutes after us. He noticed the car and saw the fire engine and said 'I am going to complain about this and write an email tomorrow to the Council! The cars block the fire engine!' There were other cars parked there including a grey VW Polo and black taxi. A few months before, my dad had raised issues about these cars and, that due to the refurbishment, it was now hard to get access near to the Tower. The Council would sometimes send a traffic warden down but not very often and not often enough to stop people from parking there.

36. I saw other neighbours from my floor come out of the Tower shortly after my dad came out. I saw the neighbours from Flat 103 who were Dorinda Costa Suarez and Pepe Costa. I saw Adriana and her family come out of the Tower who lived in Flat 106. I also saw Mohamed and his two daughters come out who lived in Flat 102.

#### Fire rolling under the cladding

37. I was standing on the grass area and could see smoke coming out of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor flat. There was a fire inside which I could see behind the window. Then the frame fell out and suddenly I could see smoke and the fire burst out. It was flat 16 which is on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. The window frame looked like it was melting and bubbling but didn't look like it was on fire. I could tell it was cheap grade plastic. As I watched the window fall out of the flat, fire was coming out of the open window. I was in complete disbelief.

38. I stood just looking up at flat 16. The window frame had fallen out so it had created a gap between where the frame used to be and the outside cladding material. What I could clearly see was the fire "rolling under" the cladding. The fire would come out of the flat and kind of roll under or slightly disappear under the grey cladding. As it did this the cladding caught fire. I could see that fire was escaping into the cavity between the insulation and what I thought was aluminium cladding. When this caught alight

there was a faint flash of light which, sparked and then once alight, sparks started falling.

39. The fire reminded me of a chemistry lesson at school where you would watch magnesium burn. When magnesium first has initial contact with a fire, the fire doesn't burn the magnesium but there is a small flash of bright lights as it ignites and then the magnesium burns. As I looked at the Tower, I was reminded of this and it seemed that the grey cladding was burning in the same way. Fire was spreading up the Tower and debris was coming down and causing sparks to fly down from the Tower. I could hear crackling noises.
40. At this point there were two firefighters with hoses spraying the water. But it was odd because they were spraying water below the 4<sup>th</sup> floor window and not actually through the window where the fire was or even above it. One of the fire fighters was holding the hose and the other was aiming it. The fire was still coming out of the flat and they were just aiming the hose and water below the fire. I was rather confused by this but thought that the firefighters must know what they were doing. I was not sure of the time then but my father filmed this and he has this video on his phone.
41. My father and I noticed a yellow hazardous waste bin on the ground below the flat. Fire was now dripping and falling down from the flat and we were wondering why the large yellow bin with hazardous waste had not been moved. My father and I were arguing about this and whether or not to tell the firefighters. My dad was shouting at me telling me that the bins should be moved.
42. I can't remember the exact words but I heard someone shouting 'has anyone got in contact with the architect? What material were they using?' I'm not sure who said this but I specifically remember hearing this.
43. From where I was standing, I was looking at the East side of the Tower. The side of the building that the fire started from is divided into three columns. It kept within its

section just right of the column (column one). The fire quickly started to go up and up and soon went all the way to the top of the Tower within 15 to 20 minutes.

44. I couldn't believe how fast the fire spread. I was really panicking and it was very clear that the firefighters had lost control of the fire. They could not reach the top with their hoses and it had spread the whole way up the first column. It was clear that the water from the hoses couldn't reach anywhere above the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> floor.
45. I could see the firefighters preparing and they were hosing down the area where it was about to spread too on the other two columns on the East side of the Tower. I couldn't see properly, but I don't think the fire fighters were on the Northern Side of the Tower. It seemed to take a while for the fire to get around these divider columns but then once it did, the fire started to creep up to the left and started spreading up the second column very quickly. The fire had reached the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor by the time I left this area. I have exhibited an image of how the fire spread at TA/3
46. The closest fire engine to the Tower was the one underneath Grenfell Walk. There is a children's playground on the East side of the Tower with trees around too. It looked like the trees would catch fire as sparks were raining down onto the trees and ground below the tower. They probably could have fitted another fire engine truck, coming down through Station Walk, if the trees weren't there. The fire engine couldn't get to the front because of where the Toyota was parked. Later I could see lots of fire engines lined up on Grenfell road by Barandon Walk. There is no way a fire engine could get to the Northern Side of the Tower. There is no access for fire engines to get through on the Bramley Road side close enough to the tower. There is a wall and no access just after the car wash which is next to Latimer Road Station.
47. The fire spread so quickly. I was utterly shocked and stood there just not knowing what to do. We were asked to move back by the police officers so I moved back further in the grass area. It came to a point where the fire was clearly up the entire first column of the Eastern side of the Tower. Every 5 minutes or so I would go and

check up on my sister who sat far back on the grass revising for her exam. I have marked where I was now standing and where my sister was sat in my Exhibit TA/4.

48. I was horrified to see the fire and how much it had spread and how quickly. It was soon clear that the fire was far too big for the fire brigade to control. It was just too high and out of reach. I thought that the only way the fire could be controlled was if they used a helicopter to pour lots of water onto the top of the Tower. In Portugal, there are often forest fires where they would use helicopters to pour water onto the fires. I thought that the firefighters might have realised that they had now lost control of the fire and would now purely focus on trying to get everyone out. I could see people opening their windows on the lower floors (above the 4<sup>th</sup> floor) to find out what was going on and then walking away from the window. I couldn't hear anyone screaming at this point.

49. I told my mum and dad that it would be best if my sister went to our friends' home in [REDACTED]. As soon as we decided that my sister and I were going to leave, I could suddenly see things starting to fall off the Tower. I was completely shocked and my sister just started crying, screaming and hyperventilating. Others around me were screaming too. I grabbed her hand as she and I were freaking out. I dragged her away from the Tower and was in shock. In my police statement, I said that I left the grass area with my sister around 1.30am but I can't remember if this is accurate as I had completely lost track of time and that was only an estimate. We walked all the way around Kensington Academy down Silchester Road just to try and get away.

50. I looked up and could just see a glow in the night sky. I could feel the tremendous heat from the Tower. I could feel this even when I couldn't see the Tower. My sister and I walked down Silchester Road around to [REDACTED] as my parents' friends were expecting us. They are good friends of my family, called Lucia and her husband Filipe and their two sons aged 15 years and eight years old. When we got into their house, you could still clearly see the North and West side of the Tower from the flat. When I first got to the flat the fire hadn't reached these sides of the Tower but I could see an afterglow from the East side of the Tower. If you looked outside the

sitting room window, the Tower was slap bang in the middle of the view. I went out to the balcony area and was just watching the Tower. It was a horrific sight.

51. My sister was initially trying to sleep but would text me every couple of minutes asking if the fire had reached our apartment yet. Later, she came and sat on the sofa in the living room. From there she could see the Tower right in front of her, through the window. I kept checking up on her. She was lying down with her revision book and had her headphones on. The music was blazing from her headphones. I think she was just trying to block out what was happening, but it was so hard as the sight was so dreadful. I looked at her for a while and saw her trying to revise but she just kept looking up and down at Tower. It was awful. We were unable to settle.
52. When I was stood on the balcony with Lucia and Filipe, one of Lucia's child, [REDACTED] who is eight years old came to the corridor next to the balcony but I didn't want him to see what was going on or to hear too much. So I grabbed him, took him into his bedroom and tucked him into bed. I lay in bed with him for around 15 minutes. As I was lying there with him I started pinching myself to make sure that I wasn't asleep as I felt like it was all just a nightmare. It wasn't. I went back outside to a scene of absolute chaos. I was in complete disbelief and shock. [REDACTED] kept coming out around two or three times and I just kept grabbing him and putting him back into bed. It was terrible hearing the screams and cries from the Tower. They ran through you and even now I cannot sleep well and tense up when I remember these cries. They were cries for help.
53. I was worried that my girlfriend would wake up, hear the news and be really worried about me and my family. The battery on my phone had died. I had texted my girlfriend when I was running down the stairs to let her know that the building was on fire but I hadn't had time to tell her that I was out safely. So, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I used my friends computer to log into my Facebook and messaged my friends asking them to let my girlfriend know what I was safe. She found out pretty quickly that I was safe.

54. Within an hour of being in [REDACTED] I could see the fire continuing to spread and spread. The horror of what was happening was right in front of me. From where we were, I could see the North and West side of the Tower. I started counting the floors to see when the fire would reach our apartment. I could clearly see my flat – I could see the flowers in our kitchen window. We were still close to the Tower. In the past we had joked that we could use a zip wire to get across from our flat to [REDACTED] and now I had to watch as my home went up in flames. At some point, my mum had arrived. In my police statement, I stated that my parents arrived together 45 minutes after me but having reflected on the night I remember that they arrived separately but I can't remember the time. One of our neighbours Joao Dias who lived in Flat 104 of Grenfell Tower also joined us [REDACTED] at some point.

55. Filipe then left to go and meet up with my dad. Sitting there I could not help but think of the people trapped inside. The screams were terrifying and so shocking. I could hear the screams when I was standing on the balcony but also when I was inside the [REDACTED] flat. I was more and more terrified for those I knew in the Tower. I started to really worry about the Gomes family who we knew very well who lived on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor - Marcio Gomes plays football every week with my dad. His wife, Andrea was pregnant at the time and they had two young daughters. I would look at the Tower with utter fear.

56. Ever since the 9/11 Twin Towers attack, I was traumatised by the thought of seeing people jump out of a Tower and felt sick at the thought that this would happen. As a young child I remember the image of two people who held hands as they jumped out of the Tower. This thought as a child haunted me and looking at Grenfell Tower I feared seeing the same. It made me feel nauseous with fear. I tried to avoid staring at the Tower for too long but could not settle or escape.

57. At one point, the debris was falling so close [REDACTED] that Lucia became very concerned and went to the roof to make sure it was not catching fire.

58. I always associated fire with summer and campfires in Portugal. I never would have imagined seeing a fire and hearing people screaming for help. I could hear loud crackling noises of the burning fire. I could just hear people screaming things like 'Tell the fire brigade we are here!' 'Help us! Help us!' I heard one lady specifically shouting 'There is a disabled person in the flat! Help us!' I could see people in the Tower waving white cloths or white sheets out of the windows. They were also waving their phone torches. Their voices were chilling and have stayed with me. The sounds of people screaming for help haunt me. I remember thinking this was probably the last time anyone would hear them. In my police statement, I said that I could see approximately 12 families but I believe it was approximately 12 people that I saw screaming out of their windows.

59. At some point, my dad and I were on the phone to each other when he was still stood by the Tower. I remember my dad telling me that the police officers had told him that it was going to be impossible to save everyone. There was this realisation that people were going to die. Every time I spoke to my dad he sounded more and more concerned. My dad and Filipe came back [REDACTED] later on.

60. When my dad arrived [REDACTED], I could hear my dad on the phone to Marcio Gomes. In my police statement I said that this conversation was around 2.30am but this was just an estimate and I can't remember the time. There was a real sense of panic in my dad's voice. I didn't want to hear the conversation as I was so scared about their safety. I remember hearing parts of the conversation where my dad was shouting and swearing at Marcio in Portuguese to get out of the Tower. This was chilling in itself. My dad told me that Andreia Gomes was having a panic attack and that the smoke was too thick outside their flat to leave. I was devastated. I remember my parents having a conversation because my dad didn't want to call Marcio again out of fear so my mum got in contact with the Portuguese priest. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

61. My mum was having a panic attack on the balcony because she was so upset about the Gomes family. She couldn't breathe properly and was just saying 'oh God why.' I hugged her tightly and took her [REDACTED] inside the flat and told her to pray as I thought this might calm her down. I was praying with my mum for the Gomes family and my mum did five rosaries which is a common Catholic prayer.
62. Later that evening, my dad went into the room where my mum and I were praying and my dad looked distraught. He was crying his eyes out saying that the Gomes family were not going to get out of the Tower safely. I think my mum was trying to reassure my dad and herself by saying she had a feeling they were going to be ok.
63. My timings are jumbled. I think it was early morning when the fire reached our flat. I don't know why but I tried to determine whether anything in our flat was going to survive by working out the temperature of the fire. From my studies in physics, I knew that you could figure out the estimated temperature from the colour of the fire. The colour of the flame was a bright white and yellow, with tinges of red. As a rough estimate, I would say it was between 1,200 to 1,800 degrees based on the colour of the flames. That is very high and that was just the flame, not the actual temperature within. My mind was all over the place and with my background I was trying to understand and make sense of the horror in front of me. I knew that if everything is burning around you it is going to heat up everything inside. I knew that nothing from our flat was going to come out and that everything was gone. More than this I feared for those inside.
64. I really started to panic about those people in the Tower who were not going to survive. My mind raced to whether the fire was hot enough to cremate a body. These were horrible thoughts. I even remember googling to find out what temperature is needed to cremate bodies. I was concerned about not being able to identify their bodies.
65. I stayed [REDACTED] until around 8am. My sister lay in bed for about 20 minutes but none of us could sleep. She got out of bed and said 'It's almost time'. I



looked at her confused and said 'what time?' She responded saying 'My GCSE exam is at 9am.' I was so surprised and I explained to her that she didn't need to take the exam and could ask for extenuating circumstances. She just responded to say that perhaps the school didn't know about the fire. At this point, I didn't realise that it was on every single English TV channel and had reached the global news. So my sister left and met up with her friends. My mum was more concerned that the school were going to send her home because she didn't have her school uniform on. We were so shocked and confused by things. My dad started squabbling with my mum about this so my dad called up the school and told them that [REDACTED] was on her way to the exam. [REDACTED] went and sat her chemistry GCSE exam and then came back [REDACTED]. She got an A.

### Impact

66. Between 8am to 10am, I remember the Tower was still on fire. I got in contact with my girlfriend and agreed to meet her in Queensway. I didn't have an oyster card so couldn't take any public transport and walked all the way there instead. I didn't even tell my parents I was leaving and didn't have my phone on me. I don't remember a single moment about this journey – I was just all over the place. I remember that I was wearing my black leather jacket and I could feel the heat from the sun on my jacket but still felt shivers down my spine. As soon as I got to the coffee shop, Pret a Manger, I just broke down crying. I couldn't feel my legs. I cried and cried and everyone in the coffee shop was just looking at me but I could not stop. My girlfriend sat me down and we just started talking about what happened. I was in complete disbelief and she just tried to take care of me. I don't remember the journey back but I arrived back at [REDACTED] around noon. We had a bite to eat.

67. There is much I want to say about the impact of the fire, the building and the aftermath but I understand this is to be dealt with in Phase 2. 10 months later I am still living in a hotel and have not been able to settle.

68. The fire and events since have had a terrible impact on me and my family; we are trying to put our lives back together but are still suffering from the trauma of what we

witnessed and what has happened to us all. I will not detail this here but will in the statement I will give for Phase 2 of the Inquiry.

69. Since the fire, I have been having counselling. I often break down. I will not go into how I feel in detail here but what has happened to me affects my life in so many ways. My whole family has been knocked by this horrible event. I never imagined something so bad would happen to us.

70. My studies have suffered terribly. This year was supposed to be my third year at University. However, due to the fire I have not been able to complete my studies. I have had to split my third year, now studying part time and I will now complete the other half of my modules next year. I am signed on to do a 4 year course with a integrated Masters and was going to apply for a PHD but I don't even know if I want to do it anymore or if I can do it anymore. The fire has had a horrific impact on my life. I cannot seem to settle and move on.

#### **Statement of truth**

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

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

Signed: *Tiago Alves*

Dated: *16/05/2018*