

<p>1 Tuesday, 9 October 2018</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone.</p> <p>4 I apologise for the quality of my voice, there's not</p> <p>5 much of it left at the moment, but I shall go on</p> <p>6 whispering as best I can into the microphone.</p> <p>7 Welcome to today's hearing. We are going to hear</p> <p>8 further evidence from those who were present in the</p> <p>9 tower at the time of the fire.</p> <p>10 Yes.</p> <p>11 MR RAWAT: Good morning, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>12 Could I, with your permission, call our first</p> <p>13 witness of the day, Meron Mekonnen.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>15 MERON MEKONNEN (sworn)</p> <p>16 Questions by MR RAWAT</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much indeed. Sit</p> <p>18 down and make yourself comfortable.</p> <p>19 Yes, Mr Rawat.</p> <p>20 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Are you comfortable?</p> <p>22 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>23 MR RAWAT: Good morning.</p> <p>24 A. Morning.</p> <p>25 Q. Could you give the inquiry your full name, please?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 Ms Mekonnen, this is the first page of the statement</p> <p>2 that you've provided for this inquiry. I think you've</p> <p>3 got it there on the monitor in front of you, but also,</p> <p>4 if you need it, you should find a bundle just in front</p> <p>5 of you on the table and it will be at tab 1.</p> <p>6 Could we go to page 20 of the statement, please.</p> <p>7 We can see from page 20 that the statement is dated</p> <p>8 23 May 2018, and it's signed.</p> <p>9 Could you confirm that that's your signature?</p> <p>10 A. Yes, it is.</p> <p>11 Q. Have you had a chance to read your statement recently?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, I have.</p> <p>13 Q. Can you confirm that the contents of the statement are</p> <p>14 true?</p> <p>15 A. Yes, they are.</p> <p>16 Q. What we now need to do is to put the exhibits to the</p> <p>17 statement into the record. If I just explain that these</p> <p>18 are photographs and a video taken on the night and</p> <p>19 outside the tower.</p> <p>20 For this purpose, we don't actually need to put any</p> <p>21 of them up. I just want to read it into the record.</p> <p>22 They are collectively your exhibit MM/1, and the</p> <p>23 references are: IWS00000449, IWS00000451, IWS00000452</p> <p>24 and IWS00000453.</p> <p>25 Before I go on, what I would also just like to make</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 A. Meron Mekonnen.</p> <p>2 Q. Ms Mekonnen, the first thing I want to do is to thank</p> <p>3 you for coming to give evidence today. We're already</p> <p>4 very grateful for the witness statement that you've</p> <p>5 given us, but also for your willingness to come and</p> <p>6 continue to help the inquiry in this way.</p> <p>7 Everyone here does understand how difficult it will</p> <p>8 be to have to go back and relive the events of the</p> <p>9 night. It is important, as you give your evidence, to</p> <p>10 take your time, don't feel under any pressure, and if</p> <p>11 you need a break at any time, please say so and we'll</p> <p>12 stop.</p> <p>13 Hopefully, I'll try to keep my questions short and</p> <p>14 straightforward, but if I do ask you something that</p> <p>15 sounds confusing or that you can't understand, just let</p> <p>16 me know and I'll put it in a different way.</p> <p>17 A. Okay.</p> <p>18 Q. I think you're already aware that the focus of the</p> <p>19 questions today is going to be about the night of the</p> <p>20 fire, and that's what I'm going to ask you about.</p> <p>21 That's what the inquiry has been calling Phase 1.</p> <p>22 A. Okay.</p> <p>23 Q. What I want to do first, though, is go through some</p> <p>24 formalities. The first thing we have to do is just look</p> <p>25 at your witness statement, please. It's IWS00000912.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 clear for the benefit of everyone here is that, as we go</p> <p>2 through, we may need to look at some photographs that</p> <p>3 were taken of the tower, including after the fire.</p> <p>4 I mention that now because we appreciate that</p> <p>5 photographs of that sort can be distressing to some</p> <p>6 people, and so I hope everyone is aware of that</p> <p>7 possibility.</p> <p>8 Can I start with some background, please.</p> <p>9 If we go back to the first page of your statement,</p> <p>10 and can we expand paragraphs 3 and 4, please.</p> <p>11 In June 2017, your home was flat 163 on the 19th</p> <p>12 floor of Grenfell Tower; is that right?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>14 Q. How long had you been living in that flat?</p> <p>15 A. Since 2012.</p> <p>16 Q. By June 2017, your family was you, your partner and your</p> <p>17 two children.</p> <p>18 A. That's correct.</p> <p>19 Q. Is it right that you have two daughters?</p> <p>20 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>21 Q. One of them at the time was aged 6 --</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. -- and one was aged 4.</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Did you have a tenancy for the flat?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 A. Tenancy? 2 Q. Yes. 3 A. Yes, I was a tenant. 4 Q. Who was that tenancy with? 5 A. TMO Kensington and Chelsea. 6 Q. Thank you. 7 We're going to jump around a little bit in your 8 statement, but I just want to take you to paragraphs 75 9 and 76, which are on page 12 of the statement. 10 I won't read the paragraphs out, but just to give 11 you some context, Ms Mekonnen, what you're talking about 12 here is your knowledge of the stay-put policy in the 13 tower and also fire safety notices. 14 A. Yes. 15 Q. I want to show you a photograph now, which is 16 a photograph that's taken after the fire occurred. So 17 I'm just going to give a specific warning for anyone in 18 the room if they want to leave at this point. 19 But I think, Mr Chairman, observing the room, no one 20 has taken that opportunity. 21 So can we have, please, BLA00002416. 22 If I could explain to you, Ms Mekonnen, this 23 is a photograph of a notice that was sited between the 24 lifts on floor 3, so it's a different floor from the one 25 that you lived on, but in your statement you say:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 instead he pointed to the light on the alarm in the 2 hallway and told me and my partner that the light 3 confirmed that the alarm was connected to the main 4 system. He did not check the smoke alarm in the 5 kitchen. The fire fighter also informed me during this 6 visit that there was a stay put policy in the Tower. 7 The fire fighter explained to me that this meant that we 8 should remain in our flat, in the event of a fire in the 9 Tower, unless the fire was in our flat. They also 10 advised me not to use the lifts during a fire." 11 So if we take that in stages, was this firefighter 12 the only firefighter you saw on that day? 13 A. He was the one who came into the flat, but there was 14 also another firefighter out in the lobby. I think 15 there was two of them, I remember. 16 Q. Did you see what the firefighter in the lobby was doing? 17 A. I'm not completely sure, no. 18 Q. Did the firefighter tell you which fire station he was 19 from? 20 A. No, I don't remember that. 21 Q. Did he give you a name or anything at all or ...? 22 A. Probably, but I don't remember. 23 Q. Did he tell you why he was visiting? 24 A. To check the smoke alarms. 25 Q. Did he say where he was going to be checking the smoke</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 "76. I had also read a notice next to the lift 2 which was in English only and it stated that there was a 3 stay put policy in the Tower and explained the 4 policy ..." 5 Is this the notice that you remember seeing? 6 A. Yes. 7 Q. Do you remember seeing a notice like this between the 8 lifts on your floor? 9 A. On my floor, yes. 10 Q. We know from other witnesses and other evidence that 11 most people when they came into the tower on a normal 12 day would get into the lift on the ground floor. Do you 13 remember seeing a notice by the lifts on the ground 14 floor? 15 A. I don't remember. 16 Q. If we go back, please, to your statement, again to 17 page 12, and can we have paragraph 78. 18 If we just look at that statement, please, 19 Ms Mekonnen, what you say is: 20 "78. On the Saturday before the fire, a fire 21 fighter came to my flat and checked the smoke alarm in 22 the hallway of our flat. We had just come home with the 23 girls and both Yohannes and I were in and out of our 24 bedrooms sorting the girls out whilst the fire fighter 25 was in the hallway. He did not test the smoke alarms,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 alarms? 2 A. I don't remember that. But he just walked into the 3 flat. As soon as he got into the hallway, in the 4 corridor, he noticed the smoke alarm and then just 5 looked up and pointed and said, "Yes, it's connected to 6 the mains". That's all I remember. 7 Q. So was it just a spontaneous visit, he just turned up 8 outside your door? 9 A. Yes, I believe, because we didn't have any notice before 10 that to say they were coming or anything. There was 11 a knock on the door and we just let them in. 12 Q. You say he told you about the light in relation to the 13 hallway smoke alarm. Did he say anything about the 14 kitchen smoke alarm? 15 A. No. 16 Q. Just so that we can be clear, in your flat, were those 17 the two smoke alarms that you had? 18 A. Yes, yes. 19 Q. There was one in the kitchen, one in the hallway? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. Now, if we take it that by that Saturday -- 22 A. Yes. 23 Q. -- you were aware of the notice that was by the lifts. 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. You also had had advice, hadn't you, in the past from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 the TMO about there being a stay-put policy; is that</p> <p>2 right?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. You then had the information from the firefighter.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. We'll come to the action you took on the night of the</p> <p>7 fire in a moment, but did any of this have any influence</p> <p>8 on what you did on the night of the fire?</p> <p>9 A. I mean, even though I knew that the advice is to stay</p> <p>10 put -- I just want to point out as well, like, from the</p> <p>11 TMO, I wasn't informed formally, it was always me</p> <p>12 asking, because I was never completely happy with the</p> <p>13 stay-put policy. So that's why I kept -- even the</p> <p>14 firefighter that came on Saturday, I asked him, "What do</p> <p>15 you think we should do in case of a fire, living on the</p> <p>16 19th floor?" The same with the TMO, always asking, and</p> <p>17 they gave me the same answer. But I was never happy</p> <p>18 with the answer. It always made me feel uncomfortable</p> <p>19 to stay in my flat on the 19th floor knowing that</p> <p>20 there's a fire in the building.</p> <p>21 So that day I didn't take the advice, so I decided</p> <p>22 to leave.</p> <p>23 Q. You say you were uncomfortable because you were on the</p> <p>24 19th floor.</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 returned home to the Tower. It was a loud standard</p> <p>2 alarm noise and there were several fire engines outside.</p> <p>3 The Fire Brigade informed us that it was a false alarm,</p> <p>4 when we had arrived back in the building. I never heard</p> <p>5 it go off again after 2013, even on the night of the</p> <p>6 fire that destroyed the building."</p> <p>7 So from that experience, you could say that in 2013</p> <p>8 there was a communal fire alarm that you could hear?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Is that right?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Was it one that you could hear throughout the building?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, we heard it from on the street. We were outside,</p> <p>14 coming home. We'd been out, coming home, that's when we</p> <p>15 heard it. We were in Grenfell Road when we heard it.</p> <p>16 We went not even near the building. It was very loud.</p> <p>17 Q. We obviously know, and you cover this in your statement,</p> <p>18 that there was a refurbishment of the tower.</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Did anyone tell you that a communal alarm system had</p> <p>21 been fitted after the refurbishment?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 Q. I just want now to ask you a few questions about your</p> <p>24 flat in June 2017.</p> <p>25 A. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 Q. What was it particularly about where you were that made</p> <p>2 you concerned?</p> <p>3 A. I guess because we only have one stairwell. Very</p> <p>4 confined. I've always noticed there's no ventilation in</p> <p>5 the stairwell. I thought about in case smoke got in</p> <p>6 there as well, because it's something that always</p> <p>7 worried me and I thought about. If we get into the</p> <p>8 stairwell and there's smoke, we won't be able to leave.</p> <p>9 I know we can't use the lift during fire. Being so high</p> <p>10 up, I know there's no way a ladder can reach that far up</p> <p>11 to rescue us.</p> <p>12 So it's always a thought I had from the day I moved</p> <p>13 in, it was my concern being up so high with young</p> <p>14 children. So those were my thoughts, I suppose.</p> <p>15 Q. Thank you very much.</p> <p>16 Can I take you back to your statement, paragraph 81,</p> <p>17 please.</p> <p>18 If I just draw your attention to the first couple of</p> <p>19 sentences in that paragraph, you say:</p> <p>20 "81. I know that the communal fire alarm did not go</p> <p>21 off on the night of the fire. I had always believed</p> <p>22 there was a communal fire alarm in the Tower, as I had</p> <p>23 heard it once in 2013 before the refurbishment works in</p> <p>24 the Tower started. We were out when the alarm in 2013</p> <p>25 had gone off and we only heard it still going when we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 Q. To do that, if I could take you down to the next page on</p> <p>2 your statement, page 14, and let's look at paragraph 82.</p> <p>3 Again, Ms Mekonnen, I won't read it out to you, but</p> <p>4 I'll just try and summarise it. But in that paragraph,</p> <p>5 you refer to concerns over your front door.</p> <p>6 Were you provided with a new front door as part of</p> <p>7 the refurbishment?</p> <p>8 A. No.</p> <p>9 Q. So this was the front door that you'd had --</p> <p>10 A. From when I moved in, yes.</p> <p>11 Q. You say in this paragraph that it:</p> <p>12 "... was missing the automatic door closing</p> <p>13 mechanism which meant it did not close shut</p> <p>14 automatically after being opened and it was very light."</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Taking you to June 2017, was the door still missing the</p> <p>17 automatic door-closing mechanism at that time?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. You say it didn't shut automatically; what would you</p> <p>20 have to do to make sure that the door was properly shut?</p> <p>21 A. If I was going out then I would have to pull it shut.</p> <p>22 Q. Was it a case of having to pull it hard to close it</p> <p>23 or --</p> <p>24 A. No, it was quite light. It wasn't hard, no.</p> <p>25 Q. Again, if we jump a little bit forward in your statement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 and go to page 16, please, paragraph 96.</p> <p>2 Again, I'm not going to read the whole paragraph</p> <p>3 out, but in this paragraph, what you're dealing with is</p> <p>4 a concern in relation to gaps around the windows.</p> <p>5 You say:</p> <p>6 "We had draughts coming in through the gaps around</p> <p>7 all of the windows after they were replaced and on</p> <p>8 really windy days, you could hear a whistling sound</p> <p>9 inside our flat."</p> <p>10 What you explain then is that Rydon, the</p> <p>11 contractors, came in and sealed the gap, but you also --</p> <p>12 that's in the next paragraph, if we look at 97, on the</p> <p>13 next page, please -- what you say is that you had to use</p> <p>14 sellotape to block and stop the draught in your bedroom</p> <p>15 and in your daughters' bedroom.</p> <p>16 Again, taking you back to June 2017, were there</p> <p>17 still gaps around the windows in your flat at that time?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Could we have, please, reference MET00012593, and go to</p> <p>20 page 12 of that.</p> <p>21 If I could just explain this diagram to you,</p> <p>22 Ms Mekonnen, it's an outline of the layout of the</p> <p>23 4th floor, as you can see, but that would match the</p> <p>24 layout of the higher floors, including the 19th floor,</p> <p>25 where you lived.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 what the problem was with the kitchen window?</p> <p>2 A. With the kitchen window, after they've completed the</p> <p>3 refurbishment -- I mean, they've done the windows, there</p> <p>4 was a lot of draught coming in, a lot of wind was coming</p> <p>5 in and there was a lot of whistling noise. I went to</p> <p>6 check around the window and at the bottom of the window</p> <p>7 ledge, there was a big, big gap. It wasn't a tiny gap,</p> <p>8 I could literally put my hands through it. And they had</p> <p>9 to come, and I complained. They came, but they just</p> <p>10 sealed it with foam, kind of expanding foam kind of</p> <p>11 material, and a sealant. And then even after that, it</p> <p>12 was never sealed properly, I could still feel draughts,</p> <p>13 a lot more draughts as well.</p> <p>14 Q. So, again, if we focus on June 2017, you've got a window</p> <p>15 that's been sealed.</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Foam has been put into the gap that you've identified,</p> <p>18 it has been sealed. Was that a window on which you had</p> <p>19 to use sellotape?</p> <p>20 A. The one I had to use sellotape was the bedrooms.</p> <p>21 Q. We'll come to the bedroom in a moment. Let's stick to</p> <p>22 the kitchen.</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Just so we understand, these are</p> <p>24 gaps underneath the windowsill, are they?</p> <p>25 A. The kitchen had gaps underneath. The bedrooms, they had</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 So if we could expand on flat 3 in the bottom</p> <p>2 left-hand corner, please. That would -- because it's a</p> <p>3 flat 3 -- approximate to or match the layout of your own</p> <p>4 flat, 163. Do you follow that?</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. What we can see is that the windows on that diagram in</p> <p>7 each of the two bedrooms have been marked with</p> <p>8 a horizontal blue line. So can you see there are two</p> <p>9 windows, one for each bedroom?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Then you have four windows on the two sides of the</p> <p>12 living room and one in the kitchen.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Just so that we can be sure, would that match the number</p> <p>15 of windows that you had in flat 163?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Can you, using that and taking yourself back</p> <p>18 to June 2017, identify which windows had gaps around</p> <p>19 them?</p> <p>20 A. Almost all of them. All of them did, but the one in the</p> <p>21 kitchen was the worst, and the ones in the bedroom were</p> <p>22 the worst.</p> <p>23 Q. Let's take that in stages then.</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. You've got the one in the kitchen. Can you describe</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 draughts coming in from the side of the windows, of the</p> <p>2 frame. The gaps weren't very big, but on a windy day,</p> <p>3 you can really feel the breeze coming in. It was really</p> <p>4 cold. That's where I put the sellotapes.</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 MR RAWAT: So going back to the kitchen, what were the</p> <p>8 draughts like in 2017 in the kitchen?</p> <p>9 A. It was still draughty, still draughty, but it wasn't as</p> <p>10 bad, you can only feel it on windy days, I suppose. But</p> <p>11 there was still draughts coming in.</p> <p>12 Q. Again, just so that we can be clear, on those windy</p> <p>13 days, where were the draughts coming in?</p> <p>14 A. On the frame of the windows. So the bottom part of the</p> <p>15 frame and on the side of the frame. All the windows,</p> <p>16 actually, had draughts coming in on the side of the</p> <p>17 frames, all the windows. But the one in the kitchen was</p> <p>18 a bit more and the bedroom was a bit stronger as well.</p> <p>19 Q. You told us a few moments ago that you had to put</p> <p>20 sellotape in the bedrooms?</p> <p>21 A. Yes, because it's difficult to sleep when there's</p> <p>22 draughts coming in sometimes. We had a very warm --</p> <p>23 actually, a warm flat generally, it's very hot, so you</p> <p>24 can really feel the breeze coming in and it's very</p> <p>25 difficult to sleep when you can feel the cold air on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

4 (Pages 13 to 16)

<p>1 your face all the time. So that's why I put the</p> <p>2 sellotapes in the bedroom.</p> <p>3 Q. Is that still what you were doing in June 2017?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, it was like that with the sellotapes, yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay.</p> <p>6 I told you we would jump around your statement, so</p> <p>7 we're going to jump back to page 11. So, Mr Documents</p> <p>8 Director, it is IWS0000912, page 11, please.</p> <p>9 If we could just look at paragraph 68.</p> <p>10 What you've said in this paragraph, Ms Mekonnen, is:</p> <p>11 "68. I started to notice problems with the</p> <p>12 electricity, particularly in the six months leading up</p> <p>13 to the fire. I was replacing the light bulbs in the</p> <p>14 flat every few weeks."</p> <p>15 That's in your flat and obviously there is</p> <p>16 a communal area on each floor, isn't there, where the</p> <p>17 lifts are?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. What were the lights like in that area? Did you ever</p> <p>20 notice any problems with those?</p> <p>21 A. Not in the communal area, no.</p> <p>22 Q. In your statement -- we won't go back to it, we can look</p> <p>23 at it if you need us to -- you mentioned that, when you</p> <p>24 first moved into the flat, there were problems with</p> <p>25 water pressure.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 "11. The lights in our hallway and my bedroom were</p> <p>2 buzzing and flickering that evening but this was</p> <p>3 something which had been going on for at least a couple</p> <p>4 of months and I did not think anything of it."</p> <p>5 On 13 June, what was the temperature like in the</p> <p>6 communal area on the 19th floor.</p> <p>7 On 13 June.</p> <p>8 Sorry, I'm going to ask that question again.</p> <p>9 Taking you back to that evening, you'd come home</p> <p>10 with your daughters, can you remember what the</p> <p>11 temperature was like in the communal area?</p> <p>12 A. It was warm, like always, in the summer days.</p> <p>13 Q. So it was no different to earlier days?</p> <p>14 A. No different, no.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you ever find the temperature in that area</p> <p>16 uncomfortable?</p> <p>17 A. Not really, no.</p> <p>18 Q. Were you aware of any system on that floor to keep the</p> <p>19 communal area cool?</p> <p>20 A. There was a vent next to our door, actually, on the</p> <p>21 wall. Sometimes you can hear it, and sometimes you</p> <p>22 don't.</p> <p>23 Q. When you did hear it, what sort of sound did it make?</p> <p>24 A. Like a fan kind of sound.</p> <p>25 Q. Did you ever hear the sound of fans from higher above</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Again, taking you to 2017, were you experiencing</p> <p>3 problems with water pressure at that time?</p> <p>4 A. Once they changed -- what happened -- once the new</p> <p>5 boiler was fitted, actually, we had a little bit more</p> <p>6 pressure.</p> <p>7 Q. So that wasn't an issue anymore for you?</p> <p>8 A. No.</p> <p>9 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>10 What I'd like to do now is just take you to 13 June.</p> <p>11 Are you happy to continue?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>14 Can we have page 2 of the statement, please,</p> <p>15 paragraphs 9 to 12.</p> <p>16 In this part of your statement, Ms Mekonnen, you've</p> <p>17 described the early part of the evening, and you say in</p> <p>18 paragraph 10:</p> <p>19 "10. It was a normal evening, as far as I was</p> <p>20 concerned."</p> <p>21 So you and your daughters got home around 5.00 or</p> <p>22 6.00 that night, you stayed home all evening, and your</p> <p>23 partner was at work that evening; is that right?</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. You say in paragraph 11:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 your floor at all?</p> <p>2 A. No.</p> <p>3 Q. Could we turn now to page 3, please, and let's look at</p> <p>4 paragraphs 14 and 15.</p> <p>5 You say:</p> <p>6 "14. The girls and I were fast asleep when</p> <p>7 I received a telephone call from my aunt, Hiwot, at</p> <p>8 approximately 1:30 am which woke me up."</p> <p>9 That's your aunt Hiwot Dagnachew; is that right?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. She lived, as you explain there, in the tower but on the</p> <p>12 5th floor in flat 26.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. You say in your statement that it was approximately</p> <p>15 01.30 am?</p> <p>16 A. I think now I know it was 01.25. 01.25.</p> <p>17 Q. Let's take that in stages.</p> <p>18 A. Okay.</p> <p>19 Q. When you made your statement, you said it was 01.30.</p> <p>20 How did you know what time it was?</p> <p>21 A. I checked my phone a few days after the fire, checked my</p> <p>22 phone log, but then I kept forgetting. But eventually</p> <p>23 I remembered it's 01.25. It should've been 01.25 on</p> <p>24 there.</p> <p>25 Q. So if we just clarify that for the record, you're saying</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 that you now think that the call came at 01.25 --</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. -- having looked at your own phone records or your</p> <p>4 phone?</p> <p>5 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>6 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>7 What you say in paragraph 14 is that your aunt told</p> <p>8 you not to panic but that there was a fire in the tower</p> <p>9 and that you should get out of the tower as quickly as</p> <p>10 possible.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Did Hiwot tell you where the fire was?</p> <p>13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. You would've been in your bedroom at that time.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Did you yourself see any signs of the fire?</p> <p>17 A. No.</p> <p>18 Q. Did you look out of the window to see if you could see</p> <p>19 anything?</p> <p>20 A. No, no.</p> <p>21 Q. Can we take it from that -- was there any smoke in your</p> <p>22 flat at all at that time?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. What you then go on to say is that you woke the girls up</p> <p>25 and left the flat straight away.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. Again, taking that in stages, when you came out onto the</p> <p>3 landing, were the lights in the landing on?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. You say that you could see light smoke.</p> <p>6 How soon after coming onto the landing did you</p> <p>7 notice smoke?</p> <p>8 A. As soon as I opened my front door I noticed there was</p> <p>9 light smoke.</p> <p>10 Q. Could you see through the smoke?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Can you help us with what colour it was?</p> <p>13 A. Very light grey, almost sort of whitish.</p> <p>14 Q. So would one way of comparing it be like cigarette</p> <p>15 smoke?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. But it was visible to you?</p> <p>18 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Was it in any particular part of the landing?</p> <p>20 A. I felt like it was all over. It was in my view, anyway.</p> <p>21 Q. Did you see where the smoke was coming from?</p> <p>22 A. No.</p> <p>23 Q. Did it have any effect on you or your daughters?</p> <p>24 A. No.</p> <p>25 Q. Before we leave that paragraph, is it right that where</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. You were in your pyjamas. You had your phone and that's</p> <p>3 all that you took with you; is that right?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. You walked out of the flat and you closed the door</p> <p>6 behind you.</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Again, just help us with this: what did you have to do</p> <p>9 to close your door?</p> <p>10 A. Actually, I ran out, I went halfway -- because when</p> <p>11 I ran out, the door was left open, it doesn't shut on</p> <p>12 its own. So I ran back again and pulled the door shut.</p> <p>13 Q. So you're clear in your mind that when you left your</p> <p>14 home, the door was shut?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. Can we look, please, at paragraph 16.</p> <p>17 If I read that:</p> <p>18 "16. I came out on to my landing with my daughters</p> <p>19 and I could see light smoke on the landing. My</p> <p>20 neighbour, Amal, was also on the landing with her</p> <p>21 relative. We both spoke at the same time and said,</p> <p>22 'There is a fire!' I told Amal that I knew about the</p> <p>23 fire and that, 'We needed to get out.' Amal ran back</p> <p>24 into her flat. She has a daughter and I presume she</p> <p>25 went back for her."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 you mention your neighbour Amal, is that Amal Ahmedin</p> <p>2 who lived in flat 166?</p> <p>3 A. That's right, yes.</p> <p>4 Q. Amal went back into her flat.</p> <p>5 A. That's the last time I see -- I remember her running</p> <p>6 back really fast, back into her flat.</p> <p>7 Q. Did she leave the flat door open?</p> <p>8 A. When she came out, her flat door was wide open, yes.</p> <p>9 Q. I'll take that in stages again.</p> <p>10 When she was out on the landing, was her flat door</p> <p>11 wide open?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. And then she went back into the flat; is that right?</p> <p>14 A. Yes, yes, she did.</p> <p>15 Q. What did her relative do?</p> <p>16 A. She was just standing there, and when I headed towards</p> <p>17 the staircase, she followed me. She was right behind</p> <p>18 me.</p> <p>19 Q. Before we look at your evidence on the stairwell, can</p> <p>20 I ask you one last question about the landing area, and</p> <p>21 it's this.</p> <p>22 You'd obviously come home earlier that night with</p> <p>23 your daughters and now you're out in the landing area</p> <p>24 and you've noticed smoke.</p> <p>25 Did you notice any difference in the temperature of</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p>

<p>1 the landing area compared to before?</p> <p>2 A. I don't remember temperature, no.</p> <p>3 Q. Let's take a look now at paragraph 17 on the same page,</p> <p>4 please.</p> <p>5 As you've just told us a few moments ago, Amal's</p> <p>6 relative had remained on the landing and then started to</p> <p>7 follow you and your children.</p> <p>8 Can you describe that relative at all? Do you</p> <p>9 remember anything about her?</p> <p>10 A. She had a hijab on, black hijab. That's all I can</p> <p>11 remember.</p> <p>12 Q. To go to the stairs, you have to go through a door; is</p> <p>13 that right?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Do you remember whether you had to open that door or --</p> <p>16 A. Yes, I remember opening that door.</p> <p>17 Q. When you stepped into the stairwell, what happened to</p> <p>18 that door?</p> <p>19 A. I'm not sure because Amal's relative was behind me, so</p> <p>20 I don't know, I can't be 100 per cent sure, but normally</p> <p>21 it does shut -- it does close automatically. But</p> <p>22 I can't be sure.</p> <p>23 Q. Was it the case that you just came through the stairwell</p> <p>24 and started walking down?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 Q. Can you remember whereabouts it was on the stairwell</p> <p>2 when you first got out?</p> <p>3 A. I noticed it straight away as I went into the stairwell</p> <p>4 and going down as well, the stairwell.</p> <p>5 Q. You've told us you came through the stairwell door into</p> <p>6 the stairwell and there was the smoke.</p> <p>7 A. Mm-hm.</p> <p>8 Q. Did it have any effect on you or your daughters?</p> <p>9 A. At that moment, no.</p> <p>10 Q. Was there any difference in temperature between the</p> <p>11 landing and the stairwell?</p> <p>12 A. I don't recall that. I don't think so.</p> <p>13 Q. As you're starting to go down the stairwell, towards the</p> <p>14 ground floor, did you hear the sound of any fans at all?</p> <p>15 A. I don't remember fans, no.</p> <p>16 Q. So you're walking down from the 19th floor with your</p> <p>17 daughters and with Amal's relative. Were you aware of</p> <p>18 anyone else walking down the stairwell at the same time?</p> <p>19 A. Yes, there was a few people in the stairwell, a few</p> <p>20 people below us and few people -- as soon as I entered</p> <p>21 the stairwell, there was already people above me I can</p> <p>22 see coming down, and there was already a few people</p> <p>23 walking down below me as well, so we sort of joined in</p> <p>24 the middle. But I don't remember who. I can't be</p> <p>25 precise on how many as well.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 Q. As you were moving down the stairwell and walking down,</p> <p>2 did you feel any sensation of air blowing on your face</p> <p>3 at all?</p> <p>4 A. I don't recall that, no.</p> <p>5 Q. Did you notice any smoke in the stairwell when you first</p> <p>6 exited from floor 19?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, there was still that light grey smoke again.</p> <p>8 Q. So there was grey smoke on the stairwell?</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Was that immediately after you went through that door?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, I noticed it straight away, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Was it any different to the smoke that you'd seen on the</p> <p>13 landing?</p> <p>14 A. Maybe this one is not -- slightly darker, maybe, more</p> <p>15 clear, grey smoke on the stairwell.</p> <p>16 Q. You said that the smoke you'd seen in the landing area</p> <p>17 was white to grey; is that right?</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. This was --</p> <p>20 A. More like grey, but you can still see through it, it's</p> <p>21 not dark at all, but like grey smoke.</p> <p>22 Q. How much of it was there compared to what you'd</p> <p>23 encountered on the landing?</p> <p>24 A. A little bit more. Little bit, not too much, but just</p> <p>25 a little bit more.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 Q. But you did have a sense of people --</p> <p>2 A. There's people.</p> <p>3 Q. -- above you and below you, all making their way down?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>5 Q. If I go back to paragraph 17. I'll continue, I'll read</p> <p>6 out the rest of it:</p> <p>7 "We had not gone far down the stairs, though I do</p> <p>8 not remember which floor we had reached, when we met a</p> <p>9 group of approximately 10 people on the stairwell (they</p> <p>10 all seemed to be other residents of the Tower). Someone</p> <p>11 below us shouted out, 'Go back, go back!'. The group,</p> <p>12 including me, my two girls, and Amal's relative, all</p> <p>13 started moving back up the stairs ie up the Tower."</p> <p>14 I appreciate that that's the time when you were</p> <p>15 making your witness statement, but thinking about it</p> <p>16 now, are you able to help at all with where you were</p> <p>17 when you met this group of 10 people on the stairwell?</p> <p>18 A. I met them -- I remember people -- as soon as I went</p> <p>19 onto the stairwell from the 19th floor, that's when</p> <p>20 I noticed those people from the beginning. We all</p> <p>21 started going down the stairwell, and then I don't know</p> <p>22 how far we went down, and we heard, "Go back, go back",</p> <p>23 a man's voice, quite loud, and then we all started</p> <p>24 running back up the stairs. It's the same 10 people</p> <p>25 I saw from the beginning, basically.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

<p>1 Q. So what it wasn't was you walking down and then coming 2 across a group of 10 people? 3 A. No, we sort of joined together as soon as I left my 4 floor. 5 Q. So if we can get the picture right, you joined the 6 movement of people all going down. 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. And you think that there were about 10 people? 9 A. Yes, just a guess, just to say there was a few people, 10 but I can't be sure. 11 Q. Then you heard a man's voice saying, "Go back, go back"? 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. Did that voice come from lower down or -- 14 A. Yes, definitely. 15 Q. Could you see who it was? 16 A. No. 17 Q. Did anyone explain why you had to go back? 18 A. No. 19 Q. You've told us when you first came into the stairwell, 20 you came across smoke. 21 A. Yes. 22 Q. As you're going down and before you hear, "Go back, go 23 back", did the conditions in the stairwell change at 24 all? 25 A. At that time, no. No.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 "18. I got to the top of the stairs on my floor." 2 Was it the case that you reached your floor again -- 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. -- and just decided to stop for a moment? 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. When you reached floor 19, can you remember if the door 7 from the stairwell back into the landing was open or 8 shut? 9 A. No, shut. 10 Q. Can you remember if there was anything coming through 11 it? 12 A. I don't remember that, no. 13 Q. You weren't, as you've explained, the only person who 14 started walking back up. 15 Can you remember what happened to the other 16 residents who were also walking back up? 17 A. I have no idea. I don't know where they went. I don't 18 know whether they went back to the flats or whether they 19 went further up. Sadly, I just can't see anybody. 20 Q. Do you have any recollection of people walking past you 21 on floor 19 and continuing up the building? 22 A. By the time I got to my floor, 19, I don't remember 23 seeing anybody else. So ... 24 Q. Can you remember what happened to Amal's relative? 25 A. I have no idea. I don't know whether she went back in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 Q. So when you heard, "Go back, go back" -- 2 A. It's the same sort of condition. 3 Q. Were you able to try and look further down the stairwell 4 to see whether there were worse conditions further down? 5 A. You can't really see further down, but no. 6 Q. So all it was was this one voice telling you all to go 7 back? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. And did everybody accept that advice? 10 A. Yes, we all ran back up. 11 Q. You've just said "We all ran back up" -- 12 A. The people I remember -- 13 Q. -- was that how it was? 14 A. Yes. 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can you remember how many flights of 16 stairs it was? 17 A. It's very difficult to remember. We didn't go far down. 18 Maybe we went down three floors or something, so we 19 could've been on the 16th floor, 15th floor, something 20 like that. It wasn't too far, but we went down a few 21 flights anyway, and then we heard "Go back, go back" and 22 then we started making our way back up again. 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 24 MR RAWAT: Let's look at paragraph 18 of your statement. 25 You begin that paragraph by saying:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 or whether she went further up, because I was slower 2 than everybody else because I was carrying my daughter 3 and holding on to my other one, so I was sort of the 4 slowest one. So by the time I reached, there was nobody 5 around me, so I've no idea where they went. 6 Q. So the last time that you saw Amal's relative was in the 7 stairwell? 8 A. Following me, behind me, yes. 9 Q. Following you, behind you, and going down? 10 A. Yes, that's the last time I saw her. 11 Q. So you're in the stairwell by floor 19 now. 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. Did you open the door into the landing at all? 14 A. No, no. 15 Q. Well, let's continue with this paragraph. 16 You say: 17 "I did not want to go back into my flat, so 18 I decided to ignore the advice that had been shouted in 19 the stairwell, to go back up, and I headed back down the 20 stairs with my daughters. There was no one on the 21 stairwell at this point. As we were walking down the 22 stairs, the smoke was becoming thicker and thicker. It 23 was dense and dark grey but I could see through it. 24 I was able to breathe without any difficulty." 25 Can you remember how many flights of stairs you</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p>

<p>1 walked down before the smoke started getting thicker and</p> <p>2 thicker?</p> <p>3 A. I don't know what floor, but it was more lower, sort</p> <p>4 of -- I've probably gone halfway down, so I would've</p> <p>5 been on the lower floors.</p> <p>6 Q. Lower than you had been when you first heard someone</p> <p>7 say, "Go back, go back"?</p> <p>8 A. Yes, I think so. I can't be sure about that, but ...</p> <p>9 Q. So this is now the second time you've come down the</p> <p>10 stairwell, isn't it?</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Was there any difference in the conditions in the</p> <p>13 stairwell on this second journey compared to the first?</p> <p>14 A. Initially it was the same. But as I said, as I went</p> <p>15 further, lower, lower floors, I noticed some of the</p> <p>16 doors were slightly open.</p> <p>17 No, the smoke first, I noticed the smoke was getting</p> <p>18 a bit darker grey. And then as I went further down,</p> <p>19 I noticed some of the doors were slightly open because</p> <p>20 there were fire hoses going through them, and I can see</p> <p>21 a dark -- really, really dark, thicker smoke coming up</p> <p>22 from above the door into the stairwell.</p> <p>23 Q. Let's take that in stages, please, because if we look at</p> <p>24 your paragraph 19, this is where you deal with coming</p> <p>25 across a female firefighter on the way down.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 that door was open or closed?</p> <p>2 A. It was slightly open.</p> <p>3 Q. Could you see anything through the door?</p> <p>4 A. I can see smoke coming out from the door.</p> <p>5 Q. Can you describe that smoke, please?</p> <p>6 A. Dark, very dark, grey smoke.</p> <p>7 Q. Do you think that was the first time that you</p> <p>8 encountered that kind of smoke?</p> <p>9 A. That wasn't the only floor I encountered the smoke, but</p> <p>10 I don't know if it's before or after I saw her.</p> <p>11 Q. Let's look now at the next page, paragraph 20.</p> <p>12 You say:</p> <p>13 "20. As I was coming down the stairs, on the lower</p> <p>14 floors but I do not recall precisely which floors,</p> <p>15 I could see that the stairwell doors leading onto the</p> <p>16 landings, which lead to the flats on each floor, were</p> <p>17 wedged open by the fire hoses passing through them which</p> <p>18 were coming from the stairwell. I saw that the doors</p> <p>19 being partially open, due to fire hoses coming from the</p> <p>20 stairs into the landings on each level, allowed the</p> <p>21 smoke to enter the stairwell and it was spreading up the</p> <p>22 stairs higher into the Tower."</p> <p>23 Did you see any stairwell door wedged open with</p> <p>24 anything other than a fire hose?</p> <p>25 A. No.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 A. Mm.</p> <p>2 Q. How did you know it was a female firefighter?</p> <p>3 A. It's so weird, I don't know. I don't know why. From</p> <p>4 day 1 I thought it was a female firefighter, but I can't</p> <p>5 be 100 per cent sure.</p> <p>6 Q. Was that the first firefighter you'd come across?</p> <p>7 A. That's the one, I remember, yeah. Yes, she was --</p> <p>8 Q. Can you remember whether she was wearing a mask on her</p> <p>9 face at all?</p> <p>10 A. No, no mask on her face, no.</p> <p>11 Q. Was she on her own?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. You say that she was dragging a fire hose up the stairs.</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. But you finished that paragraph by saying:</p> <p>16 "We were able to walk passed[sic] her without any</p> <p>17 difficulty as she was by the stairwell door on the</p> <p>18 landing."</p> <p>19 Again, thinking about it, do you have any</p> <p>20 recollection of which floor the firefighter may have</p> <p>21 been on?</p> <p>22 A. I've no idea what floor. But I think I was lower down,</p> <p>23 definitely, but I can't remember.</p> <p>24 Q. You've said she was dragging a fire hose up the stairs</p> <p>25 and she was by a stairwell door. Do you remember if</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 Q. You say you have a recollection of stairwell doors</p> <p>2 wedged open. How many doors can you remember?</p> <p>3 A. I remember at least two doors.</p> <p>4 Q. How much smoke was coming through these partially opened</p> <p>5 doors?</p> <p>6 A. Quite a lot. I mean, it was different smoke, because</p> <p>7 I noticed it was much darker again in colour, really</p> <p>8 dark grey and slightly thicker and dense, and it was</p> <p>9 coming out from the top of the door and it was sort of</p> <p>10 rising up.</p> <p>11 Q. Did the smoke that you saw -- I mean, what you've</p> <p>12 described about the stairwell smoke on that second</p> <p>13 journey is that it was darker than the smoke you first</p> <p>14 encountered.</p> <p>15 A. When I got to the lower floors. When I was still sort</p> <p>16 of making my way down, it was similar, but as I got</p> <p>17 further down, I noticed the smoke, yes, it was getting</p> <p>18 darker, and the smoke that was coming out of the</p> <p>19 stairwell was more -- I mean, from the doors into the</p> <p>20 stairwell, was more darker, thicker smoke.</p> <p>21 Q. Did that darker, thicker smoke have a taste or a smell</p> <p>22 at all?</p> <p>23 A. I don't remember a smell or taste at all of that night.</p> <p>24 Q. Did it have any physical effect on you or your</p> <p>25 daughters?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 A. At that moment, no.</p> <p>2 Q. You've described this recollection of fire hoses --</p> <p>3 A. Mm.</p> <p>4 Q. -- going through doors.</p> <p>5 A. Mm.</p> <p>6 Q. Were you aware of any other firefighters in the area?</p> <p>7 A. I don't remember any other firefighters on the</p> <p>8 stairwell, no.</p> <p>9 Q. Aside from smoke coming through the doors, did you see</p> <p>10 any other signs of fire?</p> <p>11 A. No, no.</p> <p>12 Q. On this second journey down -- which you took all the</p> <p>13 way down to the ground floor, didn't you?</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you come across any other residents making their way</p> <p>16 down at all?</p> <p>17 A. Right at the end of I think it would be the 3rd -- no,</p> <p>18 the 4th floor, leading into the sort of new-build area,</p> <p>19 the new staircase, I saw, which I know, my</p> <p>20 aunt's neighbour, number 25.</p> <p>21 Q. Is that Munira Mahmud?</p> <p>22 A. Mohammed and his elderly father.</p> <p>23 Q. Mohammed Rasoul?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, that's it, and his father, his elderly father,</p> <p>25 going down slowly. And then I went down past them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 Could we have, please, MET00012593, and page 8.</p> <p>2 Can we expand the area, the lower half of the image,</p> <p>3 please, marked "Community office" and "Entrance lobby".</p> <p>4 Ms Mekonnen, can you see the space that is labelled</p> <p>5 "Atrium"?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. We can see that to the right of that, as we look at it,</p> <p>8 there's a staircase, and there are two exits, aren't</p> <p>9 there; there's one in front on the south side and</p> <p>10 there's one on the east side? Do you have those two</p> <p>11 exits?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. So which one had you intended to leave by? Which was</p> <p>14 the fire exit?</p> <p>15 A. Coming down the steps, it would have been the one to my</p> <p>16 left. At the end of the stairs to my left.</p> <p>17 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>18 I don't have very many more questions, are you happy</p> <p>19 to continue?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We are going to have a break very</p> <p>22 soon anyway. But how much longer do you think?</p> <p>23 MR RAWAT: I think before we need to have a break, probably</p> <p>24 no more than 10 minutes.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you rather have a break now or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 That's the only two people I remember.</p> <p>2 Q. It's on the same page, but let's look now, please, at</p> <p>3 paragraphs 22 and 23.</p> <p>4 If we look now at paragraph 22, Ms Mekonnen:</p> <p>5 "22. Carefully considering things now, I believe</p> <p>6 that it only took us approximately 10 minutes to rush</p> <p>7 out of the Tower, from the 19th floor, but it felt like</p> <p>8 it took much longer. I was going down the stairs as</p> <p>9 fast as I could but I was carrying my youngest daughter</p> <p>10 in one arm and I had linked my other arm with my eldest</p> <p>11 daughter's arm. I was terrified about tripping over the</p> <p>12 fire hose as we had to walk over them several times as</p> <p>13 we were going down the stairs. The children were</p> <p>14 holding onto me tightly.</p> <p>15 "23. As I got to the ground floor of the Tower, I</p> <p>16 was about to exit Grenfell Tower with my children, via</p> <p>17 the fire exit, when I heard a fire fighter shout loudly</p> <p>18 at me to stop. He told me not to go out that way as the</p> <p>19 fire was on that side of the Tower and that debris was</p> <p>20 falling off the sides of the building. I was not aware</p> <p>21 of this at that time, and I am grateful to him for</p> <p>22 stopping me and my children from being harmed."</p> <p>23 I just want to ask you for your help to try and</p> <p>24 identify where that fire exit is so we can understand</p> <p>25 the layout of the ground floor.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 could you carry on for 10 minutes?</p> <p>2 THE WITNESS: I can carry on.</p> <p>3 MR RAWAT: Thank you.</p> <p>4 In your statement, you've given a detailed account</p> <p>5 of what happened to you once you'd left the tower, and</p> <p>6 I only need to ask you a few questions about that.</p> <p>7 Could we look, please, at IWS00000912, page 7,</p> <p>8 paragraph 40, please.</p> <p>9 Ms Mekonnen, you're talking there about going to the</p> <p>10 Rugby Portobello Trust, and I'll come back to that</p> <p>11 paragraph in a moment. But just to give you some</p> <p>12 context, you explain in your statement that you had</p> <p>13 called your partner, Yohannes, at work after 2 o'clock,</p> <p>14 and if you need it, that's in your paragraph 36.</p> <p>15 Just help us with that. How sure are you that that</p> <p>16 call to him was after 2 o'clock?</p> <p>17 A. Quite sure. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Is that from looking at your phone?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. You also say in your statement that you'd called your</p> <p>21 neighbour Genet, who lived in flat 153, a few times once</p> <p>22 you were outside the tower.</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. She eventually called you, didn't she, to say --</p> <p>25 A. We spoke, yeah, a few times back and fourth. We called</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 each other a few times.</p> <p>2 Q. In this paragraph, you say:</p> <p>3 "40. We were then told to go to the Rugby</p> <p>4 Portobello Trust by a police officer who took a note of</p> <p>5 our names and our flat number. At this point I went to</p> <p>6 pick up my daughters from Selam's house and we went to</p> <p>7 the Rugby Portobello Trust together."</p> <p>8 I just want to ask for your help in just timing this</p> <p>9 conversation with the police officer.</p> <p>10 So was it after you had made the call to your</p> <p>11 partner that you had this conversation with the police</p> <p>12 officer?</p> <p>13 A. I think the police officer -- or could have been way</p> <p>14 before -- I think the police officer took our details on</p> <p>15 our way to Clarendon Road, actually, not Portobello,</p> <p>16 Rugby Portobello, much sooner, the police officer took</p> <p>17 my details before I spoke to my partner.</p> <p>18 Q. Let's deal with it in this way.</p> <p>19 A. Mm.</p> <p>20 Q. You've come out of the tower.</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Just to help you, we know your exit time was 01.33.</p> <p>23 How soon after you had left the tower did a police</p> <p>24 officer take your details?</p> <p>25 A. Just maybe after 02.00, because -- it depends, what time</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 itself."</p> <p>2 If I may, could I ask you a few brief questions</p> <p>3 about that.</p> <p>4 Could you describe what your daughters' symptoms</p> <p>5 were like in the days after the fire?</p> <p>6 A. Just a lot of coughing all the time.</p> <p>7 Q. When you went to the GP, did the GP tell you what effect</p> <p>8 the smoke inhalation had had?</p> <p>9 A. They said it most probably irritated sort of their</p> <p>10 throat area. It's just an irritation. And they said it</p> <p>11 will clear up after a while, and it did.</p> <p>12 Q. How long did it take to clear up?</p> <p>13 A. Probably within a week, they stopped coughing.</p> <p>14 Q. Other than the visit to the GP, they had no other</p> <p>15 treatment?</p> <p>16 A. No, no.</p> <p>17 Q. Were you affected in any way?</p> <p>18 A. I don't know -- well, I was fine, I wasn't coughing or</p> <p>19 anything. I was too shocked to think -- because what</p> <p>20 happened afterwards was so tragic and a lot of lives</p> <p>21 were gone that night, I thought in comparison, I didn't</p> <p>22 worry too much about that at that moment. But I wasn't</p> <p>23 coughing or anything, yes.</p> <p>24 MR RAWAT: Thank you.</p> <p>25 Sir, if we could have a break at this point just so</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 did I take the video? Because that was not long after</p> <p>2 I took the clip of that video, the pictures.</p> <p>3 Q. We can use that as a reference. Thank you.</p> <p>4 A. Yes, so it would be maybe 5/10 minutes after that I took</p> <p>5 a picture of the building.</p> <p>6 Q. Was that the first time that you'd been asked for your</p> <p>7 details?</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Can you clarify, what details were you asked to provide?</p> <p>10 A. They just said flat number and how many of us came out.</p> <p>11 Q. Was it a police officer who took that information?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>13 Q. Can we move forward, please, to page 10 in the</p> <p>14 statement. If we could just expand paragraphs 59 and</p> <p>15 60, please.</p> <p>16 You begin these two paragraphs, Ms Mekonnen, by</p> <p>17 saying:</p> <p>18 "59. My daughters and I were lucky enough to have</p> <p>19 got out of the Tower fairly early."</p> <p>20 But then you continue:</p> <p>21 "60. However, I noticed that the girls were</p> <p>22 coughing for a few days after the fire and I arranged an</p> <p>23 appointment for them with our GP. Our GP advised that</p> <p>24 the girls were coughing as a result of smoke inhalation</p> <p>25 but it was nothing to worry about and should clear up by</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 that I can check with the other lawyers if there's any</p> <p>2 other questions that we need to ask.</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Well, we'll definitely have</p> <p>4 a break. Yes.</p> <p>5 MR RAWAT: Thank you.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We're going to have a break now --</p> <p>7 I'm sorry it's been a bit later than usual -- until</p> <p>8 11.15.</p> <p>9 I have to ask you, please, not to talk to anyone</p> <p>10 about your evidence while you're out of the room.</p> <p>11 If you go with the usher now, she'll look after you.</p> <p>12 All right? Thank you very much.</p> <p>13 All right, 11.15, please.</p> <p>14 (11.05 am)</p> <p>15 (A short break)</p> <p>16 (11.15 am)</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think Mr Rawat has a few more</p> <p>18 questions, if you can manage it.</p> <p>19 THE WITNESS: Okay.</p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Rawat.</p> <p>21 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>22 Ms Mekonnen, can I start off by taking you back to</p> <p>23 an answer you gave to one of my earlier questions, and</p> <p>24 that is where you said that one of your concerns about</p> <p>25 the stairwell was that there was no ventilation in the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 stairwell.</p> <p>2 Can you tell us, how did you know that there was no</p> <p>3 ventilation in the stairwell?</p> <p>4 A. Because when I had to use the stairwell in the past,</p> <p>5 when we didn't have lifts and things like that, I always</p> <p>6 felt it was slightly warmer. I've never felt any sort</p> <p>7 of breeze, any sort of air movement.</p> <p>8 Q. And --</p> <p>9 A. Plus visually I didn't see any sort of -- there's no</p> <p>10 window, there's no -- I've never seen a vent in there,</p> <p>11 I've never noticed anything like that.</p> <p>12 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>13 Let's go back to your statement, then, and go to</p> <p>14 paragraph 83 which is on page 14, please.</p> <p>15 One of the other things you mention about the</p> <p>16 staircase and your concerns was that when the lights</p> <p>17 went out, there were no windows.</p> <p>18 Had that happened to you before, that the lights had</p> <p>19 gone out in the stairwell when you were using it?</p> <p>20 A. Yes. It was completely dark.</p> <p>21 Q. How soon before June 2017 did that happen?</p> <p>22 A. Months before. I don't know, maybe a year before.</p> <p>23 During the refurbishment, once, yes.</p> <p>24 Q. But on the night itself, when you were making -- you've</p> <p>25 told us you took two journeys down the stairs, what was</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 A. I couldn't tell who it was, but I assumed at that</p> <p>2 time -- it changed everything once we heard "Go back".</p> <p>3 We were just on our way down. We weren't panicked, but</p> <p>4 on our way down. When we heard, "Go back", I assumed</p> <p>5 something terrible, something worse was happening below</p> <p>6 us. I assumed maybe it is another resident who has</p> <p>7 probably seen flames in the stairwell. Who could say</p> <p>8 "Go back" in terms of a fire -- you know, when there's</p> <p>9 a fire, who could possibly say, "Go back" unless it's</p> <p>10 something worse? It changed everything. That's what</p> <p>11 I remember.</p> <p>12 Q. What you've told us is that you joined a group of people</p> <p>13 making their way down.</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Someone shouted, "Go back, go back".</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. Everybody turned and went.</p> <p>18 A. Yes, a lot more panic. Everybody was rushing up more</p> <p>19 faster this time. Even I was more panicked and</p> <p>20 terrified at that time.</p> <p>21 Q. So just, again, so that we can get a sense of what was</p> <p>22 happening.</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. On that first journey down, were you moving fast?</p> <p>25 A. Fairly. Not too fast, we weren't running or anything,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 the lighting like in the stairwell?</p> <p>2 A. No, it was normal, it was lit.</p> <p>3 Q. It was lit?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>6 Just so that we can be clear, when you were making</p> <p>7 your way down the stairwell, on the second occasion in</p> <p>8 particular, did you hear any sound that sounded like</p> <p>9 a fan at all?</p> <p>10 A. No, it was very quiet, I think. Nothing.</p> <p>11 Q. Did you feel the movement of air at all?</p> <p>12 A. No.</p> <p>13 Q. Can I take you back to paragraph 17, please, of the</p> <p>14 statement, page 3.</p> <p>15 This is taking you back, Ms Mekonnen, to your</p> <p>16 account of someone shouting "Go back, go back".</p> <p>17 I think, if my memory is right, you told us it was</p> <p>18 a man's voice.</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Can you describe that person's accent?</p> <p>21 A. Sounds English. It was just a clear English accent.</p> <p>22 Q. Did you see who it was at all?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. Could you tell anything from what you heard about who</p> <p>25 that person was?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 but going down as fast as we can without rushing so</p> <p>2 much.</p> <p>3 Q. And then when you heard that voice?</p> <p>4 A. Yes, it was a bit more panic and more rushing, running</p> <p>5 up the stairs. We just didn't know what happened.</p> <p>6 Q. In the group of people that you describe being in the</p> <p>7 stairwell at the same time as you --</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. And I appreciate that your memory is once you got back</p> <p>10 up to floor 19, you couldn't see anyone after that.</p> <p>11 A. No.</p> <p>12 Q. But did you recognise anyone else from that group?</p> <p>13 A. No.</p> <p>14 Q. Do you have a memory of anyone who lived on your floor</p> <p>15 being in that group?</p> <p>16 A. No.</p> <p>17 Q. Do you have --</p> <p>18 A. I don't remember.</p> <p>19 Q. -- a memory of anyone you knew who lived in the tower in</p> <p>20 other flats being in that group?</p> <p>21 A. I don't remember who they were -- I've seen -- I don't</p> <p>22 know who they were, I don't remember.</p> <p>23 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>24 Just one last matter from me.</p> <p>25 You've obviously given a detailed witness statement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p>

<p>1 You've patiently answered all the questions that I've 2 put to you today. 3 My last question to you is this: above and beyond 4 what you've already given us, is there anything else 5 about the events of that night that you would like the 6 chairman to know? 7 A. Basically, I just want to point out that part again, 8 when we heard, "Go back". We were all -- I believe, 9 I didn't see -- I know Amal's relative was behind me. 10 I know Amal ran back in to get her daughter, that's for 11 sure, because I know -- we were going down, but that "Go 12 back" changed everything. 13 I believe if we didn't hear that, "Go back", those 14 people in the stairwell with me -- because I know for 15 sure Amal didn't make it, her relative and her daughter 16 didn't make it. I know they would be here now. I think 17 that's where it changed. I was going to go back in 18 myself. But that fear I've always had made me feel 19 like, no, I'm going to give it a go, go down every floor 20 to see what is going on until I made my way out. So 21 that's where it changed. 22 I believe Amal and her relative and daughter would 23 be here if we didn't hear that, "Go back". I don't know 24 who else didn't make it that day because of that, but it 25 changed everything.</p> <p>Page 49</p>	<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. I'll rise for 5 minutes, 2 or if you are ready sooner, ask the usher to come and 3 get me. 4 MR RAWAT: I'm grateful. Thank you. 5 (11.25 am) 6 (A short break) 7 (11.30 am) 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Rawat. 9 Now, then, are we ready? 10 MR RAWAT: We are ready, Mr Chairman. 11 May I now call, please, Hiwot Dagnachew. 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, thank you. 13 HIWOT DAGNACHEW (sworn) 14 Questions by MR RAWAT 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much indeed. Sit 16 down and make yourself comfortable. All right? Good. 17 Yes, Mr Rawat. 18 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman. 19 Can you give the inquiry your full name, please. 20 A. Hiwot Dagnachew. 21 Q. Mrs Dagnachew, can I start by first of all thanking you 22 for coming to give evidence to us today. Everyone here 23 will have seen the witness statement that you've already 24 given, but we are very grateful for your willingness to 25 continue to help the inquiry.</p> <p>Page 51</p>
<p>1 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Ms Mekonnen. 2 Can I once again thank you for coming to give 3 evidence to us. Your answers today have been enormously 4 helpful to the work of the inquiry, so thank you. 5 THE WITNESS: All right. 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'd also like to thank you. It's 7 absolutely vital for us to hear the accounts of the 8 people who were inside the building at the time of the 9 fire, because only you can describe what it was like, 10 and it must have been a terrifying and distressing 11 situation and I'm sorry we've had to ask you to relive 12 it yet again. 13 But it is very helpful to us, and we're very 14 grateful to you for coming along to give your evidence, 15 and if I may say so, in a very careful and composed way 16 as well. 17 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. If you would like to go 19 with the usher, she'll look after you. Thank you very 20 much. 21 (The witness withdrew) 22 MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, we do have one more witness to be 23 called this morning, but could I just ask for a short 24 5-minute break to make the arrangements that may be 25 necessary.</p> <p>Page 50</p>	<p>1 A. Thank you. 2 Q. Can I just explain four preliminary matters before we go 3 on. 4 The first thing is that if you need a break at any 5 time, please just say so and we'll stop. 6 The second is that everyone here will understand how 7 difficult it is to have to go back to the events of that 8 night, and so it's important that you know that you can 9 take as much time as you need. 10 Third, and I hope I can do this, but I'm going to 11 try to keep my questions as short and as straightforward 12 as I can make them, but if I do ask something that you 13 can't understand, then don't hesitate to tell me and 14 I'll try to put it in a different way. 15 A. Thank you. 16 Q. The last thing I want to mention to you, just so that 17 you're fully aware of how we're going to do things 18 today, is that before you came here, through your 19 solicitors, you confirmed that your evidence is going to 20 focus on what the inquiry calls Phase 1, which is the 21 events of the night, and that's what my questions are 22 going to be about today. So I won't ask you about the 23 wider issues that will be canvassed in Phase 2. All 24 right? 25 A. Right.</p> <p>Page 52</p>

<p>1 Q. Could we have, please, on the screen the first page of</p> <p>2 Mrs Dagnachew's statement, which is IWS00000845, please.</p> <p>3 Just to help you orientate yourself, you can see</p> <p>4 that's the first page of your statement --</p> <p>5 A. It is.</p> <p>6 Q. -- and it's the statement you've given to this inquiry.</p> <p>7 A. It is.</p> <p>8 Q. It will come up as we go through it on the screen that's</p> <p>9 there, but if you want a paper copy, you should find one</p> <p>10 in the bundle in front of you.</p> <p>11 A. It's not mine.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Do you have the wrong one there?</p> <p>13 A. Yes, Meron's.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ah, I'm sorry. That's not well</p> <p>15 organised.</p> <p>16 (Pause)</p> <p>17 Sorry about that.</p> <p>18 A. That's all right.</p> <p>19 (Handed)</p> <p>20 Thank you.</p> <p>21 MR RAWAT: Let's just check it. So if you go to tab 1,</p> <p>22 hopefully your statement will be there.</p> <p>23 A. It is.</p> <p>24 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>25 Can we go to page 30, then, of the statement, and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 that you moved into flat 26.</p> <p>2 A. That's true.</p> <p>3 Q. That's where you were living in June 2017?</p> <p>4 A. It was.</p> <p>5 Q. So if my maths is right, you had, by June 2017, had</p> <p>6 a home in Grenfell Tower for nearly 13 years, hadn't</p> <p>7 you?</p> <p>8 A. Yes, yes, I had.</p> <p>9 Q. Is it right also that you had a tenancy with RBKC?</p> <p>10 A. KCTMO, yes.</p> <p>11 Q. And then by June, therefore, 2017, you were living in</p> <p>12 flat 26 with your partner.</p> <p>13 A. Yes, I did.</p> <p>14 Q. And with your son and your daughter.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. By then, your son was 13 and your daughter 11.</p> <p>17 A. That's correct.</p> <p>18 Q. Could we just take a look now at page 3 of the statement</p> <p>19 and just bring up paragraph 9, please.</p> <p>20 You've explained in this paragraph, Ms Dagnachew:</p> <p>21 "9. Everything that was important to me and my</p> <p>22 family was close to the Tower."</p> <p>23 Both your children's schools were within 15 minutes</p> <p>24 walk from the home, your mother lived a 10-minute walk</p> <p>25 away from you in Ladbroke Grove and you were able to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 that will come up as well on the screen in front of you.</p> <p>2 We can see there that the statement's dated</p> <p>3 21 May 2018, and it's signed.</p> <p>4 Can you confirm that that's your signature?</p> <p>5 A. It is.</p> <p>6 Q. Have you had a chance to go through your statement</p> <p>7 recently?</p> <p>8 A. I have.</p> <p>9 Q. Can you confirm that the contents of the statement are</p> <p>10 true?</p> <p>11 A. It is.</p> <p>12 MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, just for the record, there are no</p> <p>13 exhibits to be put into the record.</p> <p>14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, thank you.</p> <p>15 MR RAWAT: Can I begin, please, with just a bit of</p> <p>16 background, if I may, and I'll take you back to page 4</p> <p>17 of your statement. If we look at paragraphs 14 and 17.</p> <p>18 What you've explained in these paragraphs is that</p> <p>19 you first moved into the tower in 2004.</p> <p>20 A. Yes, I did.</p> <p>21 Q. That was when your son was young and you were --</p> <p>22 A. Very young.</p> <p>23 Q. -- expecting your daughter?</p> <p>24 A. Yes, I was.</p> <p>25 Q. You moved into flat 112, and then it was six years later</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 walk to work within 20 minutes. You finish that</p> <p>2 paragraph by saying:</p> <p>3 "I felt extremely lucky to be able to work so close</p> <p>4 to home with a young family."</p> <p>5 A. Indeed.</p> <p>6 Q. Did you feel settled in flat 26?</p> <p>7 A. Absolutely, yes, it was a home I always thought I'd live</p> <p>8 forever.</p> <p>9 Q. So that's where you saw your future to be; is that</p> <p>10 right?</p> <p>11 A. Absolutely.</p> <p>12 Q. I'd like to start, if I may, just by asking you some</p> <p>13 questions about what your flat was like in 2017?</p> <p>14 A. Okay.</p> <p>15 Q. I'm sorry, we are going to jump around the statement</p> <p>16 a little bit, but let's go to page 16 of the statement,</p> <p>17 paragraph 87, please.</p> <p>18 I won't read out the whole paragraph to you, but</p> <p>19 what you're discussing there is your front door, and you</p> <p>20 tell us that the front door was replaced during the</p> <p>21 refurbishment.</p> <p>22 A. I believe it was one of the first of the refurbishments</p> <p>23 before all the big refurbishments, ie the boilers and</p> <p>24 other things took place, the window replacements.</p> <p>25 Q. So that was one of the first things that happened to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 your flat, was it?</p> <p>2 A. Yes, it was quite early on.</p> <p>3 Q. Was that the door you still had in June 2017?</p> <p>4 A. It was.</p> <p>5 Q. Can you describe that door to us, what did it look like?</p> <p>6 A. It was blue. It had a small arched window at the top.</p> <p>7 Q. Did it have a letter box in it?</p> <p>8 A. It did have a letter box.</p> <p>9 Q. Did it have a self-closing mechanism?</p> <p>10 A. It did.</p> <p>11 Q. In June 2017, how was that self-closing mechanism</p> <p>12 working?</p> <p>13 A. It was still there. It was still working.</p> <p>14 Q. So you didn't have any problems with that at all, did</p> <p>15 you?</p> <p>16 A. I didn't. I was actually offered, when I had a problem</p> <p>17 with the door, the day I got stuck in my flat, had</p> <p>18 I wanted it to be removed by the contractor that came to</p> <p>19 make it easier to open and close. But I stated, no,</p> <p>20 I wanted it to remain because if I didn't want to lock</p> <p>21 the door, it would just self-lock, and you didn't need</p> <p>22 the keys to lock the door. So I insisted in keeping it</p> <p>23 the way it was.</p> <p>24 Q. Can we go to paragraph 95, then. That's on page 18 of</p> <p>25 the statement.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 Q. So if we can expand flat 6, please, so that's in the top</p> <p>2 north-east corner.</p> <p>3 So that would be, if we went up one level, flat 26,</p> <p>4 where you lived.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. We can see that there are windows in the lounge. You've</p> <p>7 got two windows north, two windows east.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. You mentioned that there were problems with draughts in</p> <p>10 the living room window.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Can you, using that, tell us which window it was?</p> <p>13 A. Yes. It's -- okay -- the window in the lounge facing</p> <p>14 the north side, and also the first bedroom that's right</p> <p>15 next to the lounge, that window in that bedroom.</p> <p>16 Q. So we've got two windows in the lounge facing north.</p> <p>17 Was it the window closest to the bedroom?</p> <p>18 A. Closer to the bedroom.</p> <p>19 Q. So if we look at that wall of that bedroom, you had</p> <p>20 problems with the two windows on either side of that</p> <p>21 wall?</p> <p>22 A. Yes, and I would say probably the reason I noticed that</p> <p>23 window particularly in the lounge was because my sofa</p> <p>24 was closer to that window, and that's where I sat most</p> <p>25 evenings. It could've been possible that the others may</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 In this part of your statement, you describe having</p> <p>2 problems with draughts around your replacement windows.</p> <p>3 Were you having problems of that sort in June 2017?</p> <p>4 A. A slight problem, because I had raised the issue so many</p> <p>5 times with the resident liaison officer on some</p> <p>6 occasions, and also with her manager, so they can sort</p> <p>7 out the gaps I had where the draught was coming through.</p> <p>8 And I think I say in my statement, this happened over</p> <p>9 four occasions, where they had to come in and seal</p> <p>10 where, you know, we had draughts coming through the</p> <p>11 windows.</p> <p>12 Q. But just so we can be clear, if we take you to</p> <p>13 June 2017, it was still a problem?</p> <p>14 A. Slight problem.</p> <p>15 Q. Was there any particular window that was affected by</p> <p>16 this slight problem?</p> <p>17 A. I would say the sitting room window, and a bit in the</p> <p>18 kids' bedroom.</p> <p>19 Q. Perhaps if we show you a plan. Could we have</p> <p>20 MET00012593, please, and then page 12 of that.</p> <p>21 Just to explain to you, Ms Dagnachew, this is</p> <p>22 a layout, as you can see, of the 4th floor, but it</p> <p>23 applies to your floor because from the 4th floor up, the</p> <p>24 layout was the same for every flat.</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 have still had a bit of a draught coming through.</p> <p>2 Q. Was it any particular part of the window that you'd feel</p> <p>3 a draught?</p> <p>4 A. Right at the bottom, by the sill, by the edges.</p> <p>5 Q. Was that the case in relation to both windows?</p> <p>6 A. It was.</p> <p>7 Q. And that bedroom that we see, the one that's nearest to</p> <p>8 the lounge, was that your bedroom?</p> <p>9 A. No, it was the children's bedroom.</p> <p>10 Q. Were there particular times when you'd feel a draught?</p> <p>11 A. In the evenings, most evenings. Especially when it was</p> <p>12 very windy outside.</p> <p>13 Q. Could we bring that image back down so that we can see</p> <p>14 the whole of it, please, and then just expand the middle</p> <p>15 part.</p> <p>16 Ms Dagnachew, what you can see, slightly faintly,</p> <p>17 can you see there's an area marked as the "Communal</p> <p>18 hall"?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Where the lifts are and the doors to the stairs.</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Sometimes I think people call it the lobby area or the</p> <p>23 landing.</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. You're on the 5th floor.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. And you'd lived there for six years by 2017.</p> <p>3 If we go back to the days leading up to the fire, do</p> <p>4 you remember what the temperature was like in the lobby</p> <p>5 area on your floor?</p> <p>6 A. Quite normal.</p> <p>7 Q. Explain to us what you mean by "quite normal"?</p> <p>8 A. It wasn't hot, it wasn't cold, it was just -- yeah,</p> <p>9 I don't know how to explain it, but ...</p> <p>10 Q. Would you describe it as comfortable?</p> <p>11 A. Comfortable, yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Was that how it was usually?</p> <p>13 A. It was.</p> <p>14 Q. Were there ever occasions when the temperature became</p> <p>15 too hot?</p> <p>16 A. I don't remember any time.</p> <p>17 Q. Were you aware of any system in place to cool the</p> <p>18 temperature on the landing down?</p> <p>19 A. No, I wasn't aware, or maybe I've forgotten, to be</p> <p>20 honest.</p> <p>21 Q. Did you ever hear the sound of fans in the landing area?</p> <p>22 A. I don't remember.</p> <p>23 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>24 I want now, if I may, just to show you a photograph</p> <p>25 that's taken inside the tower, but it's of a notice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 anything to you?</p> <p>2 A. It's a hard question for me to answer, because where</p> <p>3 I work, I've always been told, and we always regularly</p> <p>4 have fire drills, if you see or suspect any fire, you</p> <p>5 just leave. No seconds to waste, no need to go and grab</p> <p>6 your jacket. So that's always stayed with me. So</p> <p>7 I suppose that stay-put policy would not have really</p> <p>8 stayed in -- I don't know. I don't think I would've</p> <p>9 really stayed put if I was aware of any fire anywhere,</p> <p>10 be it my flat or elsewhere.</p> <p>11 Q. Aside from the notice that you remember on the ground</p> <p>12 floor, were you aware of any information from any</p> <p>13 organisation or individual about what you should do if</p> <p>14 there was a fire?</p> <p>15 A. No.</p> <p>16 Q. So would it be fair to say that what informed your</p> <p>17 understanding in June 2017 of what to do if there was</p> <p>18 a fire in the tower was what you had learnt from work?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. I'm going to show you another photograph. Again, it's</p> <p>21 taken after the fire and it's of the interior of the</p> <p>22 building. The warning applies, but I don't think</p> <p>23 anybody's wanting to leave at this point, Mr Chairman,</p> <p>24 so let's put it up.</p> <p>25 If I could explain, it doesn't show anything</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 Before I do it, Mr Chairman, if I may, I'll give the</p> <p>2 usual warning because it is a photograph taken after the</p> <p>3 fire and that may be distressing to some of those here,</p> <p>4 so I'll briefly pause just to allow an opportunity if</p> <p>5 anyone wants to leave.</p> <p>6 I think, looking at the hearing room, everyone's all</p> <p>7 right.</p> <p>8 Can we have BLA00002416, please.</p> <p>9 If I could just again explain to you, Ms Dagnachew,</p> <p>10 the photograph shows it's a notice that was positioned</p> <p>11 by the lift doors on floor 3.</p> <p>12 My first question to you now is: do you remember</p> <p>13 seeing a notice like this between the lifts or sited by</p> <p>14 the lifts on the ground floor?</p> <p>15 A. Yes, I do.</p> <p>16 Q. What about your own floor, was there a notice like that</p> <p>17 on your floor?</p> <p>18 A. I do not recall. I don't remember, to be honest, but</p> <p>19 I certainly remember on the ground floor seeing it.</p> <p>20 Q. If we just expand the top part of it, you can see that</p> <p>21 it reads:</p> <p>22 "There is a 'stay put' policy for residents unless</p> <p>23 the fire is in or affecting your flat."</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Before 14 June 2017, did the phrase "stay put" mean</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 distressing, in particular, Ms Dagnachew, but could we</p> <p>2 have BLA00002513, please.</p> <p>3 This is a photograph, if I explain, Ms Dagnachew,</p> <p>4 taken on floor 6. Can you see that there is what might</p> <p>5 be described in the ceiling as a white detector?</p> <p>6 A. Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. A sort of round, plastic object there.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Can you recall if there was something similar to that in</p> <p>10 the ceiling of the area of the communal area on your</p> <p>11 floor?</p> <p>12 A. I remember there being one before the refurbishments.</p> <p>13 But I can't recall or remember if it was still around</p> <p>14 after the refurbishments were completed. Because</p> <p>15 I remember we had false ceilings put up right about the</p> <p>16 time the refurbishments were completed. So I really</p> <p>17 don't remember if it was still there after the</p> <p>18 refurbishments were completed.</p> <p>19 Q. What I'd like to do now is to turn to the events of the</p> <p>20 night themselves.</p> <p>21 Are you happy to continue?</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>24 Can we have IWS00000845, page 5, please.</p> <p>25 If we could just expand the bottom half of that, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

<p>1 last two paragraphs.</p> <p>2 Again, just to put things in context, Ms Dagnachew,</p> <p>3 you're beginning your statement there with your</p> <p>4 recollection of the night of 13 June. Earlier in the</p> <p>5 statement, at paragraph 21, you begin it by saying:</p> <p>6 "21. It was a normal Tuesday evening for our</p> <p>7 family. I remember it being a warm balmy evening."</p> <p>8 What you tell us in the two paragraphs that we can</p> <p>9 see up on the screen is that the children were in bed by</p> <p>10 about 9.00 pm. Your partner, Wintom, went to bed and</p> <p>11 you fell asleep on the sofa.</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. If we go to the next page, please, and look at</p> <p>14 paragraphs 26 and 28, please.</p> <p>15 I'm going to pick it up at the second sentence. You</p> <p>16 say:</p> <p>17 "I was sleeping on the sofa and was woken up when</p> <p>18 I heard what seemed to be the distant sound of an alarm.</p> <p>19 When I started to awaken I could smell smoke and I could</p> <p>20 hear the faint ringing sound which had woken me. At</p> <p>21 first, I thought that I was imagining the noise but it</p> <p>22 wouldn't stop and then I realised that I was smelling</p> <p>23 smoke."</p> <p>24 Could you describe the smell of the smoke to us?</p> <p>25 A. I really couldn't. I really don't remember the smell at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 open, I always liked it open, and there was a bit of</p> <p>2 a corridor, and then the kitchen door was right opposite</p> <p>3 it.</p> <p>4 Q. As you're making your way from your living room to the</p> <p>5 kitchen, could you see anything from the windows of the</p> <p>6 living room?</p> <p>7 A. No, I couldn't.</p> <p>8 Q. You didn't notice anything going on outside at all?</p> <p>9 A. No, not at all.</p> <p>10 Q. So there was nothing outside the windows that caused you</p> <p>11 concern?</p> <p>12 A. No, not at all, not at that time.</p> <p>13 Q. If I draw your attention to paragraph 28, what you</p> <p>14 explain is that -- sorry, I'll pick it up again at</p> <p>15 paragraph 27:</p> <p>16 "As soon as I opened the kitchen door, I could see</p> <p>17 the kitchen was full of smoke. The smoke was dark grey</p> <p>18 in colour but I could still see through it."</p> <p>19 Then you continue in 28:</p> <p>20 "28. The ringing noise which I could hear was</p> <p>21 coming from the carbon monoxide alarm which was sitting</p> <p>22 on a kitchen shelf."</p> <p>23 That was an alarm given to you some time earlier; is</p> <p>24 that right?</p> <p>25 A. It was, yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 all. I smelt smoke, but I don't remember what it smelt</p> <p>2 like.</p> <p>3 Q. Was it quite a light smell or was it very strong?</p> <p>4 A. It was -- at the time, probably rancid, but -- yeah,</p> <p>5 I mean, sitting here thinking about how it smelled back</p> <p>6 then, it's kind of hard.</p> <p>7 Q. I understand that.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Because you'd fallen asleep on the sofa, you were</p> <p>10 obviously in the living room.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Can you remember if any of the living room windows were</p> <p>13 open at the time?</p> <p>14 A. I don't think they were. I think it was just the</p> <p>15 kitchen window that was open that night.</p> <p>16 Q. Whilst you could smell smoke, could you see any smoke in</p> <p>17 the air in the living room?</p> <p>18 A. Not in the living room, no.</p> <p>19 Q. If we look at paragraph 27, what you then did was made</p> <p>20 your way to the kitchen.</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. If you just explain, we can go back to the plan if it</p> <p>23 will help you, but just the layout, how would you go</p> <p>24 from your living room to your kitchen?</p> <p>25 A. There was a door to the living room which was always</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can I just ask, when you went into</p> <p>2 the kitchen and saw all the smoke, did you get any</p> <p>3 impression of where the smoke was coming from?</p> <p>4 A. Not at all, which is why I was looking to see -- at</p> <p>5 first I thought it was my kitchen that was full of smoke</p> <p>6 and on fire, but I couldn't see anything. I looked on</p> <p>7 the cooker, I tried to look where the smoke was coming</p> <p>8 from, and I had no idea, up until the last moment where</p> <p>9 the fire came through.</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Thank you very much.</p> <p>11 Yes, Mr Rawat.</p> <p>12 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>13 Let's go, then, to paragraph 29 of the statement,</p> <p>14 please, the next paragraph down on the same page.</p> <p>15 This ties into what you've just told the chairman</p> <p>16 about what you remembered doing in the kitchen, but you</p> <p>17 mentioned that the window was on a side hinge and it had</p> <p>18 been left open.</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Just explain to us, can you explain to us how the window</p> <p>21 would open on that hinge? Does it open outwards like</p> <p>22 a door?</p> <p>23 A. No, it opens in, I think I remember.</p> <p>24 Q. So you would turn the handle --</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 Q. -- and it would pull in?</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. But it would still be like a door?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. It wasn't a tilt window?</p> <p>6 A. No, it wasn't. The small one was not, whereas the other</p> <p>7 side, the other half, you could either tilt it or open</p> <p>8 it wider.</p> <p>9 Q. But was it the small window that was open?</p> <p>10 A. The small window that was open, yeah.</p> <p>11 Q. I appreciate it's difficult, and we are asking you to go</p> <p>12 into detail, but can you tell us how open that side</p> <p>13 window was?</p> <p>14 A. It was open as far as it could go, I suppose.</p> <p>15 Q. You'd left that in to get some air into the flat; is</p> <p>16 that right?</p> <p>17 A. Yes, that's true.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I assume there was some form of stop</p> <p>19 on the window, was there?</p> <p>20 A. Oh, yes, there is, because it's got --</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You can't open it very wide.</p> <p>22 A. Yes. The window has got a frame, so it kind of stopped</p> <p>23 just before the frames.</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right. Thank you.</p> <p>25 MR RAWAT: Did you have a vent in the window?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 But if you've got a picture, maybe ...</p> <p>2 Q. Yes, I think that's the way we can do it.</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p>4 MR RAWAT: Yes, we can.</p> <p>5 Again, just to alert everyone here, it's of course</p> <p>6 a picture taken inside the tower, but after the fire.</p> <p>7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: It's not particularly distressing,</p> <p>8 is it?</p> <p>9 MR RAWAT: It is just of a kitchen window, so if we can</p> <p>10 have --</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: That's safe enough.</p> <p>12 MR RAWAT: -- BLA00000003, please, page 23 of that document.</p> <p>13 There we are. If we could expand the image, please.</p> <p>14 Was that how --</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. This I think from memory is taken from a flat on</p> <p>17 floor 13. Obviously you were on a different floor, but</p> <p>18 was that how your kitchen window looked?</p> <p>19 A. Yes, it was.</p> <p>20 Q. We can see that's the side window that you can open</p> <p>21 inwards.</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Above it, is that where the --</p> <p>24 A. The fan extractor was, yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 A. Just above the small window.</p> <p>2 Q. What about an extractor fan?</p> <p>3 A. That was I think part of it. I think there were -- yes.</p> <p>4 Q. We might try and find a picture to show you in a moment.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. But just so that we can get it as clear as we can, you</p> <p>7 have a window that has a large pane on one side, a side</p> <p>8 window that can open inwards --</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. -- and then above it --</p> <p>11 A. A small fan, sort of, yes, extractor.</p> <p>12 Q. I'll come back to that, if I may.</p> <p>13 A. Sorry, can I go back and ask, did you say a vent?</p> <p>14 Q. Yes.</p> <p>15 A. Did it have a vent? No, it just had that fan extractor.</p> <p>16 Q. Above the small side window?</p> <p>17 A. From what I can remember.</p> <p>18 Q. So above the window, we can imagine that there was</p> <p>19 an extractor?</p> <p>20 A. From what I can remember, yes. I don't remember if</p> <p>21 there was any vent, but I do not recall.</p> <p>22 Q. Were there wires leading from that extractor to</p> <p>23 anywhere?</p> <p>24 A. I think there was a small wire where you can pull at.</p> <p>25 I don't know if it was attached to it or on the side.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 If we go back, then, to your statement and your</p> <p>2 paragraph 29, IWS00000845, page 6.</p> <p>3 I just want to go through it. So you've come into</p> <p>4 your kitchen and what you then say is:</p> <p>5 "Within seconds of looking around the kitchen to try</p> <p>6 and find the source of the smoke, fire all of a sudden</p> <p>7 came through the kitchen window which was open and the</p> <p>8 blinds immediately caught fire. The window was on a</p> <p>9 side hinge and as it was a hot night we had left the</p> <p>10 window open to let some cool air and a breeze into the</p> <p>11 flat. The blinds fell to the floor almost</p> <p>12 instantaneously. The colour of the flames was dark</p> <p>13 yellow/orange. The flames were covering the whole of</p> <p>14 the kitchen window which went up to the ceiling."</p> <p>15 If we can try and just break that down a little,</p> <p>16 please.</p> <p>17 Before you saw any flames, did you have any chance</p> <p>18 to see where the smoke might be coming from?</p> <p>19 A. No, I didn't know, which was why I was still looking</p> <p>20 around to see where it was coming from. And as I was</p> <p>21 looking, I don't think I looked for -- I don't know,</p> <p>22 10/20 seconds, maybe 30 seconds, before I noticed the</p> <p>23 fire, the fire coming through, surrounding the whole of</p> <p>24 the window.</p> <p>25 Q. Did you see anything around the extractor fan at all?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 A. I don't remember. Because it was the whole of the 2 window that was instantly lit in fire. 3 Q. When you say the whole, was it just around the frame to 4 begin with or -- 5 A. It felt like it just came in, just like that, the whole 6 of the window, sorry. 7 Q. If we just look at paragraph 30, what you say is that 8 you pulled the kitchen door shut and ran along the 9 corridor to wake the children and your partner. 10 You say: 11 "I was shouting 'there's a fire, there's a fire, we 12 need to go!'" 13 How far into the kitchen did the flames get before 14 you shut the kitchen window? 15 A. The whole of the kitchen windows and I suppose up to the 16 ceiling, and like I said, the blind was already alight 17 instantly. It was just like seconds, and it just 18 dropped. This is when I literally just closed the door 19 and just ran out, and ran into the kids' bedroom, got 20 them up. 21 So I would say probably the whole of that side of 22 the window, all the way up to the ceiling. 23 Q. Can you remember if anything was happening to the glass 24 in the window? 25 A. No, I didn't stick around that long, it was just</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 Q. So two alarms, one in the kitchen -- 2 A. One in the hallway. 3 Q. -- one in the hallway. 4 A. Yes. 5 Q. Neither of them was triggered; is that right? 6 A. That's true. 7 Q. Did you at any time before leaving your flat hear either 8 the smoke alarm in the kitchen or the one in the 9 corridor go off? 10 A. I do not remember it at all, no, I did not hear it. 11 Q. You've given the comparison of roasting coffee beans. 12 A. Yes. 13 Q. How much smoke, do you remember, would be generated when 14 you're roasting coffee beans? 15 A. Not a lot for it to trigger the smoke detector. I've 16 often wondered since, after then, why the alarm didn't 17 sound in the kitchen, and I thought to myself maybe 18 while I was still sleeping on the sofa, it went off, 19 maybe I didn't hear it because I normally tend to have, 20 like, really deep sleep once I fall asleep. It's been 21 a long day, been at work, taken the kids to after-school 22 activities and so on. So I've often wondered, had I not 23 heard it while I was still sleeping? Did it go off and 24 then stop working? I've wondered that many, many times. 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 seconds. I did not see or hear anything afterwards. 2 Q. So would it be fair to summarise your evidence in this 3 way: when you came to the kitchen, you saw smoke, and 4 then very quickly there was just fire -- 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. -- all around the window? 7 A. Yeah, very quick. Seconds, seconds, and it was just in 8 flames. 9 Q. Was it all over the window rather than any particular 10 part of it? 11 A. No, it wasn't just like starting here or starting above, 12 it was just the whole of the window, instantaneously. 13 Q. Thank you very much. 14 Can we just take a look at paragraph 31 now, please. 15 In this paragraph, you say: 16 "31. The smoke alarms did not go off in the flat. 17 I had two smoke alarms in my flat, one in the corridor 18 and one in the kitchen but they were not linked up to go 19 off at the same time. I do not know if the alarms were 20 connected to the mains electricity supply or if they 21 were battery controlled. I had never tested the alarms 22 but I knew that the alarm in the kitchen was working as 23 on the Saturday before the fire I had managed to trigger 24 it when I was roasting Ethiopian coffee beans." 25 A. That's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 MR RAWAT: But if we use the example of that Saturday before 2 the fire when you were roasting coffee beans, was the 3 smoke alarm the type that you would have to switch it 4 off -- 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. -- and it would carry on until it was switched off? 7 A. Yes. 8 Q. Or did it turn off after a while? 9 A. No, I had to turn it off. There was a button right in 10 the middle, and we just take, you know, a stick or 11 whatever to stop it. 12 Q. If we look now, please, at paragraphs 32 and 33. 13 You've explained there, Ms Dagnachew, that you got 14 the children. Your son was in his pyjamas and trainer 15 shoes, your daughter was in a nightie and socks. 16 A. Yes. 17 Q. Your family left the flat, closing the door behind you. 18 I think if we look at paragraph 33, you say: 19 "We were out of the flat within a minute of me 20 seeing the fire." 21 In the time that you were still in the flat, had 22 there been any smoke elsewhere in the flat at all? 23 A. No, just the kitchen. 24 Q. So when you left, taking the kids out of their bedroom, 25 going through the hallway, there was nothing else in the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 flat; is that right?</p> <p>2 A. Just the kitchen. But the thing is, we didn't hang</p> <p>3 around a long time. It was just the time it took me to</p> <p>4 get the kids up and Wintom up. So we didn't hang around</p> <p>5 to see what was happening. I suppose that's why I don't</p> <p>6 know if there was anything else.</p> <p>7 Q. When you came out of your flat, you would've come out</p> <p>8 into that communal area, wouldn't you?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, we did.</p> <p>10 Q. Were the lights on in the area when you came out?</p> <p>11 A. They were.</p> <p>12 Q. What was the temperature of that area like at that time?</p> <p>13 A. Just as usual.</p> <p>14 Q. Could you hear any fans at all?</p> <p>15 A. No, I don't remember.</p> <p>16 Q. Could you feel any movement of air on the landing?</p> <p>17 A. Nothing at all.</p> <p>18 Q. If we go down the page a bit and just look at</p> <p>19 paragraphs 34 and 35, please.</p> <p>20 You say:</p> <p>21 "34. When we got on to the landing my daughter</p> <p>22 started walking to the lift and pressed the button to</p> <p>23 call the lift ..."</p> <p>24 A. Yes, that part is a bit of a typo. She didn't actually</p> <p>25 press the lift. She was about to walk that way, towards</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 Q. And so you would've had to open it --</p> <p>2 A. Yes.</p> <p>3 Q. -- to usher your children through; is that right?</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. When you got onto the stairwell, what happened to the</p> <p>6 door?</p> <p>7 A. It would automatically shut. I would assume it shut</p> <p>8 behind us as we walked past the door.</p> <p>9 Q. Was that your experience of that door, that it did</p> <p>10 automatically shut?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, it did.</p> <p>12 MR RAWAT: Mr Chairman, I am looking at the time, but I am</p> <p>13 wondering whether if, subject to any views of</p> <p>14 Ms Dagnachew, it might be a good time to have a break.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: How are you getting on with the</p> <p>16 questions?</p> <p>17 MR RAWAT: Well, I'm about two-thirds of the way through,</p> <p>18 I would say.</p> <p>19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: How do you feel? Would you like</p> <p>20 a break or would you like to carry on?</p> <p>21 THE WITNESS: I'm happy to carry on.</p> <p>22 MR RAWAT: Thank you very much.</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I thought you were looking quite</p> <p>24 comfortable, but better to ask, I agree.</p> <p>25 I think we can go on, Mr Rawat.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 the lift, to press it for the lift to come, but</p> <p>2 I actually grabbed her because I knew that in the event</p> <p>3 of a fire, you should not use the lift. So she didn't</p> <p>4 actually press the lift.</p> <p>5 Q. So just for the record paragraph 34 should read:</p> <p>6 "When we got on to the landing my daughter started</p> <p>7 walking to the lift to press the button to call the</p> <p>8 lift ..."</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. And you pulled her back.</p> <p>11 You say:</p> <p>12 "35. There was no sign of any fire when we got out</p> <p>13 on to the landing area outside our flat. The air was</p> <p>14 clear. There was no smoke. Nobody else on our floor</p> <p>15 was outside of their flats."</p> <p>16 You've told us about the smoke alarms in your flat.</p> <p>17 Could you hear smoke alarms elsewhere at all?</p> <p>18 A. I didn't.</p> <p>19 Q. To take the stairs, you would have to go through a door,</p> <p>20 wouldn't you?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Do you remember, when you went that way, whether the</p> <p>23 door from your floor onto the stairwell was open or</p> <p>24 shut?</p> <p>25 A. It was shut.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 MR RAWAT: Thank you.</p> <p>2 It's the same page, Ms Dagnachew, but I just want to</p> <p>3 take you now to the last two paragraphs on the page</p> <p>4 where you have an encounter with a firefighter.</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. What you've explained -- I won't read it out, I'll try</p> <p>7 and summarise it -- is you went down one floor and you</p> <p>8 encountered a clean-faced firefighter who wasn't wearing</p> <p>9 breathing apparatus.</p> <p>10 A. That's correct.</p> <p>11 Q. He was on his own in the stairwell, was he?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, he was.</p> <p>13 Q. Are you quite clear in your mind that he was on the 4th</p> <p>14 floor below?</p> <p>15 A. On the 4th floor, yes.</p> <p>16 Q. What was the firefighter doing when you came across him?</p> <p>17 A. At the time, I knew there was a hose involved, and at</p> <p>18 the time we thought he was rolling out the hose. But</p> <p>19 from the conversations we had with the firefighter, it</p> <p>20 led me to believe maybe he wasn't rolling or unrolling,</p> <p>21 I can't remember. But it did involve a fire hose, it</p> <p>22 did involve that firefighter on that floor.</p> <p>23 And ... can I just read?</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, of course.</p> <p>25 MR RAWAT: Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 80</p>

<p>1 A. Yes, we thought he was rolling out the hose, but from 2 the reaction we got from him -- and I think we assumed 3 maybe it wasn't the case at the time. 4 Q. Thank you. 5 Can you remember -- he's two flights down, isn't he? 6 A. Well, yes, one floor -- 7 Q. Yes, because there's a half landing, isn't there? 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. So you've come down two flights of steps to the 10 4th floor. 11 Can you remember if the stairwell door to the 12 4th floor was open or closed? 13 A. I don't remember. 14 Q. You've come into the stairwell, just gone down one 15 floor, and then met this firefighter. 16 What were the conditions like in the stairwell at 17 that time? 18 A. It was clear. There was no sign of any smoke or any 19 fire. I didn't see anything out of the ordinary at that 20 time. 21 Q. Aside from yourselves and the firefighter, did you see 22 anybody else? 23 A. No. 24 Q. Were you aware of any residents coming down from higher 25 floors?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 If we could pick up the last part of this in 2 paragraph 41: 3 "41. We were all standing there looking at the door 4 to the flat. My main concern was the children and I did 5 not want to stand there any longer than we needed to, so 6 we left the fire fighter on our landing as soon as we 7 had shown him our flat and ran back down the stairs." 8 So when you got back on to the 5th floor landing 9 with the firefighter -- 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. -- were the conditions any different to those when you'd 12 left? 13 A. It wasn't at all, it was exactly as we'd left it. 14 Q. So -- 15 A. Still clear, no smoke. 16 Q. And no one coming out of their flats? 17 A. No, no one. 18 Q. You've described your door as having an arched window at 19 the top. 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. I think you said it had a letter box; is that right? 22 A. Yes, it did. 23 Q. Was there any smoke coming out from around your door or 24 underneath it? 25 A. Nothing at all.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 A. No. 2 Q. And anyone below you? 3 A. No. 4 Q. Let's go to the next page, then, and look at 5 paragraphs 38 to 41, please. 6 I am just going to take you through this, if I may. 7 You say: 8 "38. I told the fire fighter that there was a fire 9 in our kitchen or that the fire had come through the 10 kitchen window, I do not remember my exact words but 11 said words to the effect of 'there's a fire in our 12 kitchen'. Wintom was standing behind me and said 13 'there's fire coming into our kitchen'. The fire 14 fighter was shocked because of his reaction and the 15 questions he asked 'what flat, what floor, what number'. 16 I told him 'flat 26 on the 5th floor'. He said 'show 17 me'. 18 "39. All four of us then went back up the stairs 19 with the fire fighter to the 5th floor and we showed him 20 our flat. 21 "40. He asked me to 'open it'. Wintom and I both 22 told him that we did not have the keys as we had left 23 the flat in a hurry. When we had run out of the flat in 24 a panic we had left behind our keys and my mobile 25 phone."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 Q. If you were looking through the arched window, would you 2 have been able to see any signs of fire in the flat? 3 A. Yes, if there was one, yes. 4 Q. But do you remember at all looking through the window 5 and seeing? 6 A. No, I don't remember. 7 Q. On this trip back to your home, could you hear the sound 8 of any smoke alarms coming from your flat? 9 A. No. 10 Q. The firefighter, you tell us, asked you to open the 11 door. Did you see him do anything else? 12 A. No, because I was so worried about the children. I had 13 already told the firefighter, he was aware, he was 14 there, and I thought, we've got the expert, you know, 15 we've got a firefighter here. Obviously he'll get the 16 equipments he needed to open the door and tackle the 17 fire, so we left him there. 18 Q. Can you remember if he was carrying a radio? 19 A. I don't remember. 20 Q. Did you hear him call out or speak to any other 21 firefighters? 22 A. Not at all. 23 Q. Did he tell you anything about what you should do? 24 A. No, he didn't. 25 Q. Whether you should stay on the landing or leave?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 A. No, he didn't.</p> <p>2 Q. If we could look at now, please, your paragraph 44 on</p> <p>3 page 8.</p> <p>4 Again, I'm going to read this out, if I may,</p> <p>5 Ms Dagnachew.</p> <p>6 You say:</p> <p>7 "44. We ran down the stairs and out of the Tower.</p> <p>8 It only took us a few minutes to exit the Tower. I was</p> <p>9 in shock and all I could think about was getting out of</p> <p>10 the flat. I did not realise until we were outside the</p> <p>11 Tower that my daughter had come out without her shoes."</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. So this second journey is a journey down the stairwell</p> <p>14 from the 5th floor, isn't it?</p> <p>15 A. Yes, it was.</p> <p>16 Q. Can you remember now what the conditions were like in</p> <p>17 the stairwell on the second journey down?</p> <p>18 A. The journey in the stairwell?</p> <p>19 Q. Yes.</p> <p>20 A. My memory is as if -- it's almost black going down the</p> <p>21 stairs. I really don't remember whether we ran, we</p> <p>22 walked, what I did, to be honest with you, in the</p> <p>23 stairwells. So I don't have much recollection of the</p> <p>24 stairwell as we were going down.</p> <p>25 Q. Was it still lit?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 So it's a hard question to answer, because I don't</p> <p>2 remember.</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right.</p> <p>4 MR RAWAT: Thank you.</p> <p>5 What I want now to do is just look at paragraph 50</p> <p>6 of your statement.</p> <p>7 If I explain, Ms Dagnachew, your statement contains</p> <p>8 an account of what you saw and heard and did once you</p> <p>9 were outside the tower. It's very detailed and so</p> <p>10 I don't need to ask you many questions about it.</p> <p>11 A. Okay.</p> <p>12 Q. But the reason I wanted to draw your attention to</p> <p>13 paragraph 50 is because the witness before you was Menon</p> <p>14 Mekonnen, who is your niece.</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. She's already given her evidence about her contact with</p> <p>17 you.</p> <p>18 If we look at paragraph 50, if I pick it up on the</p> <p>19 second sentence -- you've explained already you left</p> <p>20 without your phone, didn't you?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. You say:</p> <p>23 "A few seconds later Wintom realised that he had his</p> <p>24 phone in his pocket all along and I called Meron</p> <p>25 immediately. Wintom looked at the record of the calls</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 A. It was still lit, it was still -- yes, there were still</p> <p>2 lights.</p> <p>3 Q. Did you have a sense of any smoke in the stairwell at</p> <p>4 all?</p> <p>5 A. I did not notice anything at all.</p> <p>6 Q. Were you aware of other people being in the stairwell on</p> <p>7 that second journey down?</p> <p>8 A. I don't remember at all. I don't recall.</p> <p>9 Q. Aside from that firefighter that we've asked you about</p> <p>10 already, do you recall coming across any other</p> <p>11 firefighters on the way down?</p> <p>12 A. There may have been a couple, I think, by the entrance</p> <p>13 to the left, but again, I can't recall. I can't be very</p> <p>14 precise if there were two, three, if there was none at</p> <p>15 all, but in my head, I think there may have been two.</p> <p>16 Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. You've told us the ages of your children.</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. But obviously you had two children with you. Did you</p> <p>20 find it easy to go down the stairwell?</p> <p>21 A. Again, like I said, my recollection of going down the</p> <p>22 stairs were very -- like almost gone. I didn't even</p> <p>23 realise that I held my daughter's hand until I saw the</p> <p>24 CCTV footage I was shown by the police of us exiting,</p> <p>25 like on the last staircase.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 on his phone ... and has told me that I spoke to Meron</p> <p>2 at 1:24 am. Wintom took photographs of the side of the</p> <p>3 Tower on fire at 1:27 am and I called Meron before he</p> <p>4 took the photos."</p> <p>5 A. That's correct.</p> <p>6 Q. Then your advice to Meron was to leave the flat with the</p> <p>7 kids immediately.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. So you're clear, having spoken to your partner, that</p> <p>10 that was the time that you called Meron; is that right?</p> <p>11 A. Yes, it is.</p> <p>12 Q. You've already told us about what influences were in</p> <p>13 your mind about what to do in a fire.</p> <p>14 A. Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. That was from work, wasn't it, really?</p> <p>16 A. Yes.</p> <p>17 Q. What was it that made you tell Meron that she had to</p> <p>18 leave the flat with the kids immediately?</p> <p>19 A. When we got out and we were by the grassy area, you</p> <p>20 could clearly see the fire. At the time, I thought the</p> <p>21 fire was coming from the 3rd floor, and it looked as if</p> <p>22 it had gone up to about a floor above us, from the 3rd</p> <p>23 to about the 6th floor, and it quickly changed. It kept</p> <p>24 going up. This is when I was like: I need to call her,</p> <p>25 I need to call her. And I didn't have my phone, I left</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 my phone at home obviously. We were in a state of panic</p> <p>2 when we left, we didn't have time.</p> <p>3 And I remember asking Wintom if he had his phone.</p> <p>4 The thing is, because he was in a state of shock as</p> <p>5 well, he had his pyjamas back to front, which is why he</p> <p>6 couldn't find his phone, because he kept looking for it</p> <p>7 and he didn't even realise he had grabbed the phone. So</p> <p>8 then I thought: this is going up, I need her out.</p> <p>9 I need to call her, I need to make sure she gets out</p> <p>10 quickly.</p> <p>11 Q. You deal with this in your statement, obviously Meron</p> <p>12 did come out of the tower.</p> <p>13 A. Yes, she did.</p> <p>14 Q. You also spoke to your friend Genet who lived in</p> <p>15 flat 153, didn't you?</p> <p>16 A. Yes, I did, but because I didn't have my phone, I didn't</p> <p>17 actually speak to Genet until Meron had come out,</p> <p>18 because Wintom didn't have anybody else's contact</p> <p>19 details on his phone.</p> <p>20 Q. So you had to make efforts to try and get their contact</p> <p>21 details and then get in touch with those people; is that</p> <p>22 right?</p> <p>23 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>24 Q. With those things in mind, that you'd called Meron at</p> <p>25 01.24 and also spoken to Genet, can I ask you just to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 Ms Dagnachew, thank you very much for the way you're</p> <p>2 answering my questions today.</p> <p>3 Again, just to try and help you, I don't want to ask</p> <p>4 you about your conversations with Genet, all right? The</p> <p>5 reason I drew your attention to these paragraphs was</p> <p>6 just so we can get the sequence of time right.</p> <p>7 What I want to ask you about is the sentence where</p> <p>8 you say:</p> <p>9 "The police asked all the residents to give them</p> <p>10 their names and flat numbers ..."</p> <p>11 Do you see that?</p> <p>12 A. Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. My question is: was this the first time after leaving</p> <p>14 the tower that you were asked to give names and flat</p> <p>15 numbers?</p> <p>16 A. It was.</p> <p>17 Q. Using your call to Meron as a time marker, and the fact</p> <p>18 that Meron had come out --</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. -- can you say how long it was after you'd left the</p> <p>21 tower that you were first asked to give details like</p> <p>22 flat number and names?</p> <p>23 A. I don't remember the exact time, but it was soon after</p> <p>24 Meron had come out, and this was when we had rung Genet,</p> <p>25 and soon after that phone conversation, the police were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 look at paragraph 60 of your statement, please.</p> <p>2 In fact, if we could pick it up at paragraph 59 as</p> <p>3 well. Could we have 59 and 60 together, please.</p> <p>4 So in the preceding paragraph you're talking about</p> <p>5 trying to get in touch with Genet, and Meron had come</p> <p>6 out and passed the phone to you so that you could speak</p> <p>7 to Genet.</p> <p>8 A. Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. You then say:</p> <p>10 "60. We were then moved away from the area outside</p> <p>11 of the Tower by the police not long after Meron came</p> <p>12 out."</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Are you all right?</p> <p>14 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like to break for a bit?</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: No, I'm fine.</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, well, just take time,</p> <p>18 then, to settle yourself down.</p> <p>19 (Pause)</p> <p>20 THE WITNESS: I'm fine.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Are you all right now?</p> <p>22 THE WITNESS: Yes.</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Okay. We can stop at any time, if</p> <p>24 you want to.</p> <p>25 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 cordoning off the area. We were by the sports centre,</p> <p>2 or close to it, or slightly further away from it, and</p> <p>3 they started cordoning off that area and we were told to</p> <p>4 move to the other side.</p> <p>5 As we were moving, the police were saying, "Okay,</p> <p>6 all residents from the tower, please give your name,</p> <p>7 your flat number and how many, and walk along to</p> <p>8 Clarendon Road."</p> <p>9 So this timing -- because we don't have the call</p> <p>10 logs from Meron's phone. It would have been soon after</p> <p>11 we'd spoken to Genet for either the first or second</p> <p>12 time.</p> <p>13 Q. Thank you for that.</p> <p>14 Your recollection is very soon after Meron had come</p> <p>15 out of the tower?</p> <p>16 A. Soon after Meron had come out, probably within 5 minutes</p> <p>17 of speaking to Genet, yes.</p> <p>18 Q. Just so that we can get a clear picture of what was</p> <p>19 happening at that time, was there one police officer</p> <p>20 there collecting names and flat numbers, or ...?</p> <p>21 A. Yes, there was.</p> <p>22 Q. From more than one resident at the same time?</p> <p>23 A. We kind of sort of like took turns, in a way, because</p> <p>24 the way it was set up was like there was this cordoned</p> <p>25 kind of area and you had to walk across it, and as we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

1 were crossing, there was a policeman asking for our
2 details, and as soon as we'd given our details, we'd
3 walk past that area and there was a little passageway
4 leading into Clarendon Road, which is where we remained
5 for the majority of the night.

6 Q. Thank you very much for that.

7 One of the other things you say -- we don't need to
8 bring the paragraph up -- is you passed information
9 about Genet onto a police officer, didn't you?

10 A. I did.

11 Q. I won't bring it up, but what you say is that one of the
12 officers made a telephone call from his phone about
13 them. That's Genet and her family in flat 153, isn't
14 it?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Just so we can be clear, this officer used a mobile
17 phone rather than a radio?

18 A. I can't be very precise, but I thought he used a phone
19 at the time, or maybe he used a walkie-talkie, I'm not
20 sure, but I remember clearly saying, because I was so
21 distressed, she was still inside, she was telling me
22 that she couldn't come out. And I remember pleading
23 with the police officer, "Please, there's a family
24 trapped in this flat, she's got young children, could
25 you please send help." I remember, I think I was even

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1 (12.45 pm)

2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now, are you feeling ready to go on?

3 THE WITNESS: I am.

4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. We'll take it slowly.

5 THE WITNESS: Okay.

6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.

7 Yes, Mr Rawat.

8 MR RAWAT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

9 Ms Dagnachew, if I just explain, in the break that
10 we had -- and this is something we usually do -- I've
11 been able to consult with the other lawyers in the room
12 to ask if they have any questions they'd like me to ask
13 you. There are four short matters I want to cover with
14 you and they will be short.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. Again, as I have been, we might jump around in your
17 statement a little bit, but I hope we can follow a line.

18 The first thing is you gave us some description of
19 what happened when you came out of the tower and how the
20 police collected information.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. I think you told us they working for names and flat
23 numbers.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Is that right?

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1 like grabbing him, like this (Indicates), begging him,
2 pleading.

3 Q. Did you give the --

4 A. So I don't know if he talked on his walkie-talkie or he
5 grabbed a phone, but I clearly remember he did, and soon
6 after we heard from Genet because we had a phone
7 conversation, and she told me they managed to get out.
8 Obviously not Isaac. She couldn't find Isaac.

9 Can I take a break?

10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, of course you can. You must
11 have nearly finished anyway.

12 MR RAWAT: Yes.

13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, let's have a break. We'll
14 break for 10 minutes. All right?

15 Don't talk to anyone about your evidence, please,
16 and you can go with the usher, and you go with her,
17 please. Back at 12.45. Thank you very much.

18 Can I suggest in the interests of the witness that
19 this might be a good moment at which to take stock of
20 the supplementaries?

21 MR RAWAT: Yes, that's what we're going to do. Thank you,
22 Mr Chairman.

23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, 12.45, please.

24 (12.35 pm)

25 (A short break)

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1 Did they ask for any other details, for example
2 mobile phone numbers?

3 A. No.

4 Q. The second thing is that you told us about the carbon
5 monoxide detector that went off.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Whereas your smoke alarm didn't.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. When you were roasting coffee beans on the Saturday
10 before, the smoke alarm did go off, didn't it?

11 A. It did.

12 Q. What about the carbon monoxide detector, was that
13 affected by the coffee beans at all?

14 A. Oh, I can't remember. I don't think it did.

15 Q. Had it ever happened before when you were roasting
16 coffee beans that that detector went off?

17 A. I've had the detector go off in the past, but for what
18 reason, I don't remember.

19 Q. Thank you very much.

20 I think you've also given evidence about the advice
21 that you learnt about what to do in a fire from your
22 job.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did you have fire practice drills at work?

25 A. Regularly.

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24 (Pages 93 to 96)

<p>1 Q. In the time that you lived in the tower, was there ever 2 a drill of that sort?</p> <p>3 A. Never.</p> <p>4 Q. The last of the four matters I've been asked to cover, 5 and it's your paragraph 48, please. Could we bring that 6 up. It's IWS00000845, page 9, paragraph 48.</p> <p>7 Again, this goes back to what we were talking about 8 before we paused, which is about timing, and you've told 9 us that you can, with your partner's phone, time your 10 call to Meron.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. Just to put that into context, what you say is: 13 "48. Initially, I thought that the fire was from 14 the 3rd to the 6th floor as this is what it looked like 15 from the outside. At 1:22 am when we got out the flames 16 were about one floor level above our flat. By the time 17 I made a phone call 2 minutes later ..."</p> <p>18 That's the phone call to Meron, isn't it?</p> <p>19 A. Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. "... the flames were up as far as the 7th floor. By 21 1:25 am the flames looked like they were up to about the 22 9th floor."</p> <p>23 Can you just help us with how you come to give those 24 precise times?</p> <p>25 A. Yes. Obviously 01.25 is not going to be probably the</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 manager, the incident commander at the time.</p> <p>2 Because having told a firefighter quite early on in 3 the evening when we left our flat that there was 4 a breach of fire, other than the originating fire, or 5 flat fire, this question I've had is: how? How is it 6 that the incident commander did not know that fire was 7 raging through flats as well, not just on the outside?</p> <p>8 We heard early on in the evening, radio 9 communication, there wasn't any congestion, they were 10 still able to communicate with each other. So what did 11 that firefighter do with that vital information we gave? 12 Because I've always thought since then, people we loved, 13 people that died in that evening, had it been an early 14 evacuation decision, they would've been here. Most of 15 them would've been here today.</p> <p>16 And I want to know, did they know? How and why was 17 that not communicated? Because I've worked out from 18 what I've seen, from the outside footage, the first that 19 I probably became aware of the fire was probably about 20 between 01.14 to 01.15, and this was early, very early 21 in the night, and so many people could've been 22 evacuated.</p> <p>23 We've lost so many people because they were told to 24 stay put. We've lost lots of ...</p> <p>25 My question is: why? Why did the policy not change,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 time that it was by the 9th floor. I remember from, 2 like I said, the call logs from Wintom's phone, the time 3 that we had rang Meron was 01.24, and maybe I said by 4 01.25 because, like, it felt like within minutes, it 5 just kept going up and up. That's probably why I've put 6 that time there. Maybe 01.25, 01.26. Because, yeah, it 7 felt like -- yeah, it was just flying up so quickly.</p> <p>8 Q. So what we can be confident about is the one time that 9 you do have is that call --</p> <p>10 A. The 01.24, that phone call, yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>12 One final matter, and this does come from me. It's 13 first of all to say thank you very much for having made 14 a witness statement.</p> <p>15 It's, second, to say thank you for coming and giving 16 your evidence in the way that you have today.</p> <p>17 The last, then, is that above what you've put in the 18 witness statement and the answers you've given today, is 19 there anything else that you think it important to tell 20 the chairman about the events of that night?</p> <p>21 A. There is.</p> <p>22 It kind of evolves around the stay-put policy, 23 I suppose, and there's been one burning question that 24 has kind of lingered with me since I have heard the 25 early firefighters' evidence, and especially the station</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 when they knew really early on that fire was going into 2 other flats, not just the originating flat fire?</p> <p>3 That's my question. That's what I would like to 4 know. What and if any early decision could have or 5 should have and would have and ...</p> <p>6 Of course, yes, you can see it was just even on the 7 outside raging up, and when you see it going up and up, 8 all you wanted was people to be out. I was standing 9 there looking for people, for faces, for so many to come 10 out. I was waiting for my friends, for my neighbours to 11 come out.</p> <p>12 Why was the policy not changed early on? Why were 13 no people evacuated early on?</p> <p>14 That is what I want to put across.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, it's an important question and 16 one which we will do our very best to answer.</p> <p>17 THE WITNESS: Thank you, that's all.</p> <p>18 MR RAWAT: There's nothing further from me, but thank you 19 very much again, Ms Dagnachew.</p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I would like to thank you as well.</p> <p>21 It's really vital, as I've said to many other witnesses, 22 that we hear about what was going on inside the tower.</p> <p>23 And I have to say that your description of the fire 24 coming into your kitchen must have been a truly 25 terrifying experience, and you obviously found what</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 100</p>

<p>1 happened thereafter very distressing as well. So I'm</p> <p>2 sorry we've had to ask you to relive it, but it will</p> <p>3 help us very much in getting at the answer to your</p> <p>4 question.</p> <p>5 All right?</p> <p>6 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So thank you very much for coming to</p> <p>8 give your evidence, and you are free to go. If you</p> <p>9 would like to go with the usher, she'll look after you.</p> <p>10 All right?</p> <p>11 THE WITNESS: Thank you.</p> <p>12 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, Mr Rawat, is that a convenient</p> <p>14 point?</p> <p>15 MR RAWAT: It is a convenient time. There will be another</p> <p>16 witness this afternoon starting at 2 o'clock, and</p> <p>17 Mr Millett will be calling that witness.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. Well, we'll break now</p> <p>19 and resume at 2 o'clock, then, please.</p> <p>20 (12.55 pm)</p> <p>21 (The short adjournment)</p> <p>22 (2.00 pm)</p> <p>23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Good afternoon, Mr Chairman. I'm going to call</p> <p>25 our next witness to give evidence, Mr Maher Khoudair.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 today to give evidence. It's very important to us that</p> <p>2 you have done that and we're very grateful to you.</p> <p>3 If you need a break at any time, please just say.</p> <p>4 I know that it can be quite difficult to relive the</p> <p>5 experiences of that terrible night, and so if you need</p> <p>6 a break, we can take a problem, that's not a problem.</p> <p>7 There's no rush and we have all afternoon if we need it.</p> <p>8 Sometimes my questions can be difficult to</p> <p>9 understand and, if so, just say and I can ask the</p> <p>10 question again or in a different way.</p> <p>11 Sometimes when you're answering, I may be looking at</p> <p>12 my screen or at my notes. That doesn't mean I'm not</p> <p>13 listening to you. I am listening to you all the time</p> <p>14 and what you have to say is very important. Okay?</p> <p>15 A. (In English) Thank you.</p> <p>16 Q. All right.</p> <p>17 You've done a witness statement for the inquiry, and</p> <p>18 its reference is IWS00000182.</p> <p>19 Can you confirm to us that that is your witness</p> <p>20 statement?</p> <p>21 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. That's an English version. I think you also made</p> <p>23 a version in Arabic.</p> <p>24 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>25 Q. Which is in front of you in the file if you need it, at</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. I understand he would</p> <p>2 like the services of an interpreter?</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: He would, yes, and he has one accompanying him.</p> <p>4 MAHER KHOUDAIR (sworn)</p> <p>5 (Evidence given with the aid of an interpreter)</p> <p>6 Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY</p> <p>7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Khoudair.</p> <p>8 I hope you're comfortable there?</p> <p>9 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay, fine, yes.</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett is going to ask you some</p> <p>11 questions. If you're sure you understand his question</p> <p>12 and feel comfortable answering it in English, you can do</p> <p>13 that. But if you're not quite sure you understand it,</p> <p>14 and you may not be the only one, or if you want to</p> <p>15 express your thoughts in a way you don't find too easy</p> <p>16 in English, we'll use the interpreter. All right?</p> <p>17 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay, thank you.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>19 MR MILLETT: Good afternoon, Mr Khoudair.</p> <p>20 Can I start by asking you, please, to give your full</p> <p>21 name to the chairman?</p> <p>22 A. (In English) Maher Khoudair.</p> <p>23 Q. Can I begin by saying a very big thank you to you for</p> <p>24 providing the inquiry with your witness statement, your</p> <p>25 written witness statement, and also for coming here</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 tab 2 of the little file, if you need it.</p> <p>2 A. (In English) Okay.</p> <p>3 Q. But I'm going to ask you questions on your English</p> <p>4 statement, and if you need the interpreter to help you</p> <p>5 interpret your English statement, then we can do that.</p> <p>6 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can you just pause.</p> <p>7 Are you going to be more comfortable reading the</p> <p>8 Arabic text or the English text?</p> <p>9 A. (In English) I'm fine with English, no problem.</p> <p>10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes?</p> <p>11 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.</p> <p>13 All right, Mr Millett.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: All right. Thank you, Mr Chairman.</p> <p>15 Can I ask you, please, to turn to the last page of</p> <p>16 your statement, which is page 9.</p> <p>17 (Pause)</p> <p>18 This is the first time this has happened. There</p> <p>19 appears to be a technical problem with the last two</p> <p>20 pages of the statement, and obviously it's critical that</p> <p>21 they go into evidence.</p> <p>22 Mr Khoudair, I'm sorry about this, we will have to</p> <p>23 sort this out.</p> <p>24 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, it's also important that those</p> <p>25 who are following the evidence --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

<p>1 MR MILLETT: Ah, there it is.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ah, we are there. All right. Thank</p> <p>3 you.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Right, it's been found.</p> <p>5 Mr Khoudair, that is the last page of your</p> <p>6 statement, page 9.</p> <p>7 We can see that it carries a date of 18 May 2018 and</p> <p>8 a signature.</p> <p>9 Can you confirm that that is your signature?</p> <p>10 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>12 Have you had a chance to read this statement</p> <p>13 recently?</p> <p>14 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>15 Q. Can you confirm that its contents are true?</p> <p>16 A. (In English) Yes, true.</p> <p>17 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>18 A. (In English) Yes, it is.</p> <p>19 Q. We are going to be looking at a number of CCTV</p> <p>20 pictures -- not very many -- and some other photographs</p> <p>21 taken after the fire. They don't have any pictures of</p> <p>22 the building on fire, but I always have to give</p> <p>23 a warning just in case people find those photographs</p> <p>24 distressing. But we'll come to them.</p> <p>25 Can I start with some questions about your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 question.</p> <p>2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You think he won't necessarily</p> <p>3 understand the question if it's not translated?</p> <p>4 MR WEATHERBY: I think, as you can see, his level of English</p> <p>5 is very good indeed, but I think this is so important</p> <p>6 that it should be translated.</p> <p>7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right.</p> <p>8 Well, Mr Millett, it will avoid any uncertainty,</p> <p>9 won't it?</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: Right.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Madam Interpreter, we are going to</p> <p>12 use you for all the questions and answers, so can we do</p> <p>13 it in the traditional way, in that case.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: In June 2017, who was living in flat 64 with</p> <p>15 you?</p> <p>16 A. (In English) Me, my wife and three kids --</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, I'm sorry, if we are going to</p> <p>18 use the interpreter, we had better do it properly.</p> <p>19 A. (In English) Okay.</p> <p>20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now you give your answer in Arabic.</p> <p>21 A. (In English) My wife and my three kids.</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think, Mr Weatherby, you are going</p> <p>23 to have to be pragmatic about this.</p> <p>24 MR MILLETT: Mr Khoudair, don't worry, we understand each</p> <p>25 other very well.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 background.</p> <p>2 A. (In English) Okay.</p> <p>3 Q. You I think say in your statement that your family home</p> <p>4 at the time of the fire was flat 64 on the 9th floor of</p> <p>5 Grenfell Tower.</p> <p>6 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>7 Q. In June 2017, can you tell us who was living there with</p> <p>8 you?</p> <p>9 A. (In English) Say again, I can't hear.</p> <p>10 Q. At the time of the fire --</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'm sorry, if you would like to have</p> <p>12 the question translated --</p> <p>13 THE WITNESS: (In English) No, I need repeating, I can't</p> <p>14 hear the questions.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Oh, would you like Mr Millett to</p> <p>16 keep his voice up?</p> <p>17 THE WITNESS: (In English) Yes, a little bit louder.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You are going to have to keep your</p> <p>19 voice up and make the questions particularly short,</p> <p>20 because if it becomes apparent that Mr Khoudair needs</p> <p>21 some help, we can then have the question translated.</p> <p>22 MR MILLETT: Yes, of course.</p> <p>23 MR WEATHERBY: May I ask that it is translated? Obviously</p> <p>24 I've had quite a lot of contact with Mr Khoudair, and</p> <p>25 I do think it's important that he fully understands the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 Okay, and what year did you move in to flat 64?</p> <p>2 A. (In English) I remember maybe 2013, that's what</p> <p>3 I remember.</p> <p>4 Q. Were you alone when you moved into flat 64?</p> <p>5 A. (In English) Yes, I'm alone.</p> <p>6 Q. Did your family join you later?</p> <p>7 A. (In English) They joined me 30 November 2016.</p> <p>8 Q. Thank you.</p> <p>9 Can I ask you to look at a plan of Grenfell Tower,</p> <p>10 which is MET00012593 at page 12.</p> <p>11 Mr Khoudair, this isn't a layout of the 9th floor,</p> <p>12 it's a standard plan which shows the layout of every</p> <p>13 floor upwards and including the 4th.</p> <p>14 Flat 64 is where on this plan?</p> <p>15 You can see flat 14 -- I can help you -- is the</p> <p>16 yellow one on the west side, the left-hand side.</p> <p>17 A. (In English) Okay.</p> <p>18 Q. Is that where flat 64 would be?</p> <p>19 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>20 Q. Was it a one-bedroom flat?</p> <p>21 A. (In English) Yes, one bedroom.</p> <p>22 Q. With three windows facing west like in this picture?</p> <p>23 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Can you tell us, where did your daughters sleep?</p> <p>25 A. (In English) In the living room.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

<p>1 Q. Who was your landlord at the time of the fire?</p> <p>2 A. (In English) TMO.</p> <p>3 Q. Were they always your landlord?</p> <p>4 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. I want to ask you some questions about how you were able</p> <p>6 to get to and from your flat after the refurbishment in</p> <p>7 2016 finished.</p> <p>8 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>9 Q. Okay?</p> <p>10 You say in your statement, on page 2, that you've</p> <p>11 used crutches since 2009.</p> <p>12 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>13 Q. After the refurbishment, if you had to leave your flat,</p> <p>14 how would you normally get down to the ground floor?</p> <p>15 A. (In English) When I start my tenancy agreement, first</p> <p>16 time when they offered me the flat, the entrance was in</p> <p>17 the lobby, the same where we are now. After then, when</p> <p>18 I moved to my flat, they closed it and they ask the</p> <p>19 people to move from the bridge. So I use all the way</p> <p>20 from the bridge to get to the building. Spent about</p> <p>21 two years and a half, and I complained to the MP,</p> <p>22 Ms Victoria, about the situation, and we have meeting</p> <p>23 with her and the people from TMO about using – walking</p> <p>24 all the time, because I fell down a lot of time because</p> <p>25 of the weather, raining, and it snow sometimes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So you wait for Mr Millett to ask</p> <p>2 the question, which you'll keep nice and short. The</p> <p>3 interpreter will then translate it into Arabic for you.</p> <p>4 You then answer in Arabic and she will translate your</p> <p>5 answer.</p> <p>6 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay.</p> <p>7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I know it's rather laborious, but</p> <p>8 I think we're less likely to get at cross-purposes. Is</p> <p>9 that all right?</p> <p>10 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay, no problem.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.</p> <p>12 Off you go, Mr Millett.</p> <p>13 MR MILLETT: After the refurbishment was finished, how would</p> <p>14 you normally get from your flat to the ground floor of</p> <p>15 the building?</p> <p>16 A. I used to use the lift.</p> <p>17 Q. My next question is: did you ever have to use the stairs</p> <p>18 to get to the ground floor after the refurbishment?</p> <p>19 A. Once I had to use the stairs to go to the first floor,</p> <p>20 because the lift was broken, then when I got there</p> <p>21 I managed to use the lift.</p> <p>22 Q. I see.</p> <p>23 Can I ask you some questions about windows. Can you</p> <p>24 please be shown page 3 of your statement. At the foot</p> <p>25 of page 3, you can see a heading "Windows". And you say</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 Sometimes I didn't leave my home because for the snow,</p> <p>2 for the rain. I asked some people to help me, to give</p> <p>3 me stuff and food to my place, I pay them, and</p> <p>4 I complained a lot about the situation.</p> <p>5 I meet with somebody from TMO and with</p> <p>6 Victoria Borwick, and they asked – I tell them about</p> <p>7 the entrance for the flat is too dangerous for me to use</p> <p>8 to go over the bridge to get my flat or go to building.</p> <p>9 They said after two weeks or three weeks we can open</p> <p>10 the entrance from the lobby, and they spent about one</p> <p>11 month and a half, they opened again.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Millett, I don't think he</p> <p>13 understood your question in the sense that you asked it,</p> <p>14 although he gave us a very full answer, and I'm</p> <p>15 concerned that we aren't going to have an adequate</p> <p>16 meeting of minds, if you see what I mean.</p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: Let me try the question one more time.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think it would be more</p> <p>19 satisfactory if we did use the interpreter.</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: Very well.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Khoudair, you do speak English</p> <p>22 well, and you obviously understand it, but it's very</p> <p>23 important for me to understand clearly what you're</p> <p>24 saying, so I am going to ask you to use the interpreter.</p> <p>25 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 in the first sentence:</p> <p>2 "I remember the windows only had a small gap after</p> <p>3 they were changed there was a gap [sic]."</p> <p>4 I think the best thing is if I show you what's on</p> <p>5 the statement, you translate the statement in English</p> <p>6 back into Arabic for Mr Khoudair and then I'll ask the</p> <p>7 question. Okay?</p> <p>8 So you say:</p> <p>9 "I remember the windows only had a small gap after</p> <p>10 they were changed there was a gap."</p> <p>11 My question is: where was the gap after the windows</p> <p>12 were changed?</p> <p>13 A. It's up on the window frame where they use a sticking</p> <p>14 material to close the window.</p> <p>15 Q. Whereabouts on the window frame?</p> <p>16 A. On the corner.</p> <p>17 Q. On the top corner or the bottom corner?</p> <p>18 A. (In English) Top.</p> <p>19 Q. How big was the gap?</p> <p>20 A. It was big at the beginning, before they changed the</p> <p>21 window, but then it became smaller but it was still</p> <p>22 there.</p> <p>23 Q. When you say they changed the window, is that during the</p> <p>24 refurbishment?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 Q. Right, okay. If you go to the top of the next page, 2 page 4 you say: 3 "There was a bigger gap now." 4 When did the gap get bigger? 5 A. Where they put the fan in the kitchen. 6 Q. Is it that time that the gap that you were talking about 7 got bigger? 8 A. I complained about it, but they came and repaired it 9 another time and closed it, and, you know, sealed it. 10 Q. I see. 11 A. And the gap was appearing again because of the wind. 12 Q. After the windows were replaced as part of the 13 refurbishment, could you feel any air coming through the 14 edges of the windows in any rooms? 15 A. I used to hear some whistling. 16 Q. Do you remember where the whistling you heard was coming 17 from? 18 A. Living room. 19 Q. Was that living room windows? Right. Which part of the 20 windows in the living room did you hear the whistling 21 coming from? 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Let the interpreter translate. 23 A. I believe it was the last window on the wall in the 24 living room. 25 Q. Okay. If we can go back to the map, the plan that we</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 A. It's like foam, foam. 2 Q. Like foam. Right. What, in a can or compression? 3 A. (In English) Yes, yes, you're right. 4 Q. Okay. 5 On page 3 of your statement, if you go back to that, 6 under "Communal area", I just want to ask you about 7 that. If you could please translate, Madam Interpreter. 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. You say in the second sentence there: 10 "There is some sort of fire alarm at the bottom." 11 What is that? 12 A. I think they had a fire alarm in the lobby, but we did 13 not hear it. 14 Q. What did you see in the lobby that made you think there 15 was a fire alarm? 16 A. I looked at the ceiling and it was there. After they 17 ended the refurbishment, I looked at the ceiling and it 18 was there. 19 Q. Do you mean the ground floor lobby or the lobby outside 20 your flat? 21 THE INTERPRETER: Ground floor, yes, the ground floor. 22 MR MILLETT: You say: 23 "I did not see any fire signs anywhere." 24 What do you mean by "fire signs" there? 25 A. Fire safety signs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 looked at a moment ago, which is MET00012593, page 12, 2 can you point out, Mr Khoudair, which window you heard 3 the whistling from after the refurbishment had been 4 finished? 5 A. Here at the corner, if you can see it's at the corner 6 where it's written flat 4, it's at the corner there. 7 Q. Right. So for the record, the witness has pointed out 8 the southernmost window in the living room? 9 A. (In English) Yes. 10 Q. Which side of that window do you remember hearing 11 whistling coming through? 12 A. The problem is I didn't know, and the window which was 13 next to it was damaged and they came to repair it. 14 Q. Who came to repair it? 15 A. I talked to the TMO and they sent a company called 16 Rydon, and the company was responsible for the 17 renovation. 18 Q. After they repaired it, did you still hear whistling 19 through the window? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. Do you remember what they did to try to repair it? 22 A. No. They put a material. Something that sticks. 23 Q. Really? 24 A. Yes. 25 Q. Can you --</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 Q. Can I show you a picture, which is BLA00002416. 2 A. I meant something for disabled people, for people with 3 disability, in case there is a fire. 4 Q. This is a photograph taken after the fire of signs 5 between the lifts on the wall at level 3 in the 6 building. 7 A. I don't know, I didn't see any of this on floor 3 8 because I used to take the lift. 9 Q. My question is: did you ever see a sign like this on 10 your floor? 11 A. Maybe there was something similar, but there was nothing 12 for disabled people. 13 Q. But just focusing on this sign, did you ever see this 14 sign in the building? 15 A. I can't remember. 16 Q. Were you aware of any plan that if there was a fire in 17 the building, residents should stay in their flats? 18 A. No. 19 Q. Did anybody ever give you any fire safety advice? 20 A. No. 21 Q. As at June 2017, what was your understanding about what 22 you should do if there was a fire somewhere else in the 23 building? 24 A. I wasn't expecting fire, so I didn't even think 25 about it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 116</p>

<p>1 Q. I'm now going to ask you about the events of the night 2 of the fire. 3 Can you go to page 4 of your statement. 4 You say in paragraph 12 that you went to bed early, 5 about 10.30 pm. So that's the start. 6 Turn over the page, and at paragraph 13 you say: 7 "13. At about 1.15am my eldest daughter Walaa 8 knocked on my bedroom door. She said, 'The fire is 9 building'. 10 A. Yes, that's correct. 11 Q. So my question is: how did you know or how do you 12 remember that it was 01.15 am? 13 A. We were sleeping. I asked my wife what time it was 14 because I heard a knock at the door and she said it's 15 01.15. 16 Q. Okay. 17 A. Because it was Ramadan, we broke our fast and we had -- 18 in the evening -- we ate at night and we sleep, so we 19 get up in the morning to eat at dawn. 20 Q. Yes. 21 A. And also to drink some water. I thought that she's 22 waking us up to get up and to eat and drink. 23 Q. I see. So you thought it was eating time already. 24 Do you know what woke her up? 25 A. She and her sisters were awake because it was Ramadan</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 you say: 2 "I opened the bedroom door and next to my right 3 side, I saw a pipe where technicians do work where the 4 stop cock is. I saw a bit of smoke." 5 A. I saw a hole. Not a pipe, I said I saw a hole. 6 Q. Can you tell us in as much detail as you can where you 7 saw the smoke at that time? 8 A. I opened the door. It was on my right. Up in the 9 ceiling, there was like a hole for the boiler or the 10 pipes. I don't know, a pipe, maybe a water pipe or 11 something like that. There was black smoke coming out. 12 Q. Coming out. Into -- 13 A. (In English) Into the lobby. 14 Q. Into the lobby of your flat? 15 A. (In English) No, to the outside. 16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'm sorry, I know you understand 17 a lot of the questions that are being put to you, and 18 I know that instinctively you want to answer in English, 19 but it won't work very well, particularly for the 20 transcribers. We'll have to do it in the ordinary way. 21 So let the question be translated for you, then give 22 your answer in Arabic and then we shall hear the 23 interpreter's translation. 24 A. (In English) Okay. 25 (Interpreted) The hole was next to the door, up in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 and they were not sleeping, they were talking to their 2 friends. They stay awake until dawn, until the morning. 3 Q. Right. 4 A. Until 2 o'clock. And then they eat and go to bed. 5 Q. Right. Okay. 6 You say that your daughter Walaa said "The fire is 7 building." 8 What did you understand she said to you? 9 A. I wasn't expecting that. I told them not to do 10 anything. I did not have time to use my clutches so 11 I really walked on my knees to the front door, and then 12 they gave me the crutches and I took them from them. 13 Q. Can I stop you and ask my question again. 14 Do you remember what your daughter said to you? 15 A. She said there is fire in the building. 16 Q. And you said, or you say in your statement: 17 "I thought she was wrong." 18 If you look in the second line there. 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Why did you think she was wrong? 21 A. I wasn't expecting a fire to happen, I wasn't expecting 22 any fire. 23 Because I was sleeping and I was startled when she 24 woke me up with the issue. 25 Q. Okay, if you go a little bit further down paragraph 13,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 the ceiling, in the lobby. 2 MR MILLETT: Okay, if I can just take a step back. 3 So you open the bedroom door. Where do you go into 4 from your bedroom? 5 A. I went to the entrance and I talked to my daughters and 6 I asked them what's happening. They said there is 7 a fire and I told them not to do anything. I opened the 8 door -- I opened the door and the smoke was coming out 9 of a hole in the ceiling. 10 Q. Taking it step by step, you opened the bedroom door. 11 Did you see smoke at that time? 12 A. No. 13 Q. Did you see any smoke in your flat at that time? 14 A. No. 15 Q. Okay. So you open the front door. Is that when you 16 first see smoke? 17 A. Yes, yes, that's correct. 18 Q. Can we look, then, at paragraph 15. 19 You say you opened the front door and you saw smoke 20 in the top part of the ceiling. 21 A. Yes, that's correct. 22 Q. Is that the first time you saw smoke? 23 A. Yes, that's correct. 24 Q. In the top part of the ceiling, if you can remember, 25 where exactly did you see the smoke?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 120</p>

<p>1 A. It wasn't at the ceiling as such, it was on the wall 2 which is perpendicular to the ceiling and there was 3 a hole in it. 4 Q. A hole in what? 5 A. It was a hole that was done for the pipes, water pipes, 6 to go through. 7 Q. Okay. Which -- 8 A. And there was a door next to it for maintenance. In 9 case they need to do any work, they open that door. 10 Q. How big was the hole? 11 A. I'm not sure. 25-centimetre diameter. I'm not sure. 12 Q. Did the hole have a pipe coming through it? 13 A. They were inside it. 14 Q. Which direction was the smoke travelling in that you saw 15 at that time? 16 A. Up, up. 17 Q. Into the lobby? 18 A. To the ceiling. 19 Q. Coming into the lobby from the hole; is that right? 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. Okay. Right. 22 In paragraph 15, you say: 23 "It was coming from a hole where the pipes outside 24 my flat, next to my front door." 25 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>Page 121</p>	<p>1 Can I show you a picture, which is BLA00002514. 2 This is a photograph taken after the fire on 3 floor 6. 4 We can see a cupboard opposite the lifts there. 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. Is that the cupboard you're talking about, that kind of 7 cupboard? 8 A. No, it wasn't this one. 9 Q. Not that one? 10 A. No. 11 Q. Can you see anything in that picture which looks like 12 the cupboard you're talking about? 13 A. It's not here, no, I cannot see it here. 14 Q. Okay. 15 You say in your statement that there are pipes which 16 go into your flat. 17 If you go back to paragraph 15, you say: 18 "I don't know what these pipes are for. These pipes 19 go into my flat." 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. "There are three holes for the pipes. The cupboard is 22 near the lifts." 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Do the pipes come out of the cupboard into your flat? 25 A. They come out of the cupboard opposite the lift.</p> <p>Page 123</p>
<p>1 Q. You say: 2 "This is where the smoke is coming from." 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. How far below the ceiling was the hole you saw the smoke 5 coming from? 6 A. It's an opening. It's not a hole, as such, it's 7 an opening. 8 Q. Right. 9 A. That was done on purpose, you know, for work. 10 Q. How far below the ceiling was the opening that you've 11 just described? 12 A. 4 to 5 centimetres. I don't believe it was that wide. 13 I can't remember exactly. 14 Q. Okay. 15 A. But not that wide. 16 Q. So is this right: the hole was close to the ceiling? 17 A. I can't remember exactly. 18 Q. What colour was the smoke, do you remember? 19 A. Black. 20 Q. How much smoke in the lobby was there that you saw when 21 you opened the front door? 22 A. There wasn't much smoke. 23 Q. I want to go back and ask you about the cupboard that 24 you refer to in your statement in the third line of 25 paragraph 15.</p> <p>Page 122</p>	<p>1 Q. Right. 2 A. I don't know, I'm not an engineer, so I don't know if it 3 was something for hot water, but I don't know. 4 Q. Was the smoke coming out of the cupboard or was it 5 coming from the pipes or around the pipes? 6 A. I didn't see anything. 7 Q. When you opened the front door at that time, were the 8 lights in the lobby on? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. How close to your front door was the smoke that you 11 could see? 12 A. When you come out of the house, it's directly opposite. 13 Q. Directly opposite? 14 A. On the right site. 15 Q. How much smoke from the ceiling down did you see? 16 A. I don't know really how much smoke there was because at 17 the time I made my decision, my children were getting 18 dressed and my wife was getting dressed and they were 19 going down the stairs. 20 Q. Could you tell how much smoke was coming in, was it 21 coming in a lot or was it just coming in a little? 22 A. It wasn't a lot of smoke, but there was smoke. It's 23 something that showed that there was fire. 24 Q. Okay. 25 Then you say:</p> <p>Page 124</p>

<p>1 "I shut the front door and told the children to go 2 back to bed." 3 A. Yes. 4 Q. What made you decide to stay in the flat? 5 A. Because I heard sirens of the Fire Brigade downstairs 6 and I thought that they have sorted the problem. And 7 then 30 minutes after, when I opened my door again, 8 I saw that the smoke was quite a lot, and automatically 9 I told them to go downstairs. 10 Q. Okay. 11 In your statement, still in paragraph 15, you say in 12 the next sentence: 13 "My youngest child ... touched the wall and said it 14 was hot." 15 A. Yes, that's correct. 16 Q. Do you know which wall she touched? 17 A. The living room wall opposite the window. 18 Q. Okay. Perhaps we can have that map back, the plan. 19 A. This is on the side where I put the beds. 20 Q. Okay. If we could have the plan of that back, please, 21 which is MET00012593. 22 Could you just tell us which wall she touched? 23 A. This one (Indicates). 24 Q. I'm so sorry? 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can you describe where he is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 higher, you go on the line -- yes, there's a line. 2 Lower, lower, please, lower. Yes, there's a line and 3 then you go along the line. 4 MR MILLETT: Go to the right along the line. 5 THE INTERPRETER: Yes, there it is, yes. 6 MR MILLETT: There. 7 THE INTERPRETER: Yes. 8 MR MILLETT: Right next to your front door? 9 A. Yes. 10 Q. Okay. Right, I see. There. 11 The witness is identifying the southernmost side of 12 the front door into flat 64. 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. 14 MR MILLETT: Okay. 15 Continuing with the question, we have the hot wall 16 which you've identified. 17 How long after coming back into the flat, when you 18 came back into the flat the first time, did your 19 daughter tell you that the wall was hot? 20 A. Straight away after I came back to the house, they were 21 all dressed to leave, and she said to me that the wall 22 was hot. 23 Q. Really? Did you touch the wall or feel the wall 24 yourself? 25 A. I had no time to do so.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p>
<p>1 pointing? 2 THE INTERPRETER: It says "hydrant". Next to "hydrant". 3 MR MILLETT: Oh, right. 4 THE INTERPRETER: Here, here (Indicates). 5 MR MILLETT: That wall there. 6 THE INTERPRETER: Yes, here. 7 MR MILLETT: So the external wall between the lobby and the 8 lounge in flat 64? 9 A. Their beds were against that wall, and it was the wall 10 against which the beds were. 11 Q. Can I just ask you, while we're still on this plan, 12 could you point out on this plan where the cupboard is, 13 where the pipes were, where you saw the smoke? 14 A. At the entrance, if you look at the entrance of the 15 flat, and here, it's on the -- there is a corner, 16 and it's around there, before you enter the flat. 17 Q. So on which side of the corridor, the south side or the 18 north side. 19 THE INTERPRETER: On the north side corridor. North. Here. 20 A. Yes, here on the north side of the corridor. 21 It's where the shower is. If you look up at the 22 shower, the wall, near the shower, and then there is 23 a corner there and there is a small line. 24 Q. Yes. 25 THE INTERPRETER: Higher, higher, higher, yes, higher,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 Q. Okay. 2 A. I had decided that they should really leave, 3 immediately. 4 Q. What had made you decide to leave immediately? 5 A. I was worried about the gas pipes that were in my 6 kitchen. 7 Q. What was the temperature in your flat like? 8 A. Normal. 9 Q. Could you smell smoke in the flat by that time? 10 A. No. 11 Q. In paragraph 16 of your statement you say, if we can 12 just go back to that: 13 "16. My daughter Rawan then saw debris falling down 14 outside. Rawan said that 'it was like balls of fire'. 15 I straight away told everyone to leave as I was worried 16 that the debris would just kill us all." 17 A. Yes, that's correct, but everything happened within one 18 minute. 19 Q. How long did you spend in the flat between opening the 20 front door for the first time and leaving the flat with 21 your family? 22 A. What do you mean, it's from the front door to my 23 bedroom? What do you mean? 24 Q. How much time did you spend in the flat after you first 25 opened the front door and leaving with your family,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p>

<p>1 between the two --</p> <p>2 A. One minute or two minutes.</p> <p>3 Q. Did you see the debris falling down yourself?</p> <p>4 A. Flashing, I saw flashing.</p> <p>5 Q. Out of the window?</p> <p>6 A. Something -- lightning.</p> <p>7 Q. Where did you see that, do you remember?</p> <p>8 A. I looked outside the window for a very short -- quickly.</p> <p>9 Q. Could you see the debris yourself?</p> <p>10 A. I saw the debris when I went downstairs from outside.</p> <p>11 Q. But not when you were in the flat?</p> <p>12 A. I was seeing like flashlight and fireballs, fireballs</p> <p>13 and like fire and lightning.</p> <p>14 Q. Right.</p> <p>15 A. Maybe they were hitting the ground in the playing area</p> <p>16 and afterwards they go up.</p> <p>17 Q. Did you get a chance to look out of your windows in the</p> <p>18 flat?</p> <p>19 A. No.</p> <p>20 Q. Okay.</p> <p>21 Can I ask you, then, to look at paragraph 17, which</p> <p>22 is underneath the heading "How the fire spread".</p> <p>23 You say there:</p> <p>24 "When I then opened the front door, there were black</p> <p>25 flumes like a black cloud descending. It was a heavy</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 129</p>	<p>1 Q. Where was it going up to?</p> <p>2 A. To the ceiling. I didn't have the opportunity to stay</p> <p>3 and look, I had to leave.</p> <p>4 Q. Certainly.</p> <p>5 So do you remember seeing where the smoke was coming</p> <p>6 from at that time?</p> <p>7 A. It's the same hole that I was talking about.</p> <p>8 Q. Was it coming out of the hole more forcefully this time?</p> <p>9 A. A little bit more.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. And you describe a plastic or wooden smell.</p> <p>11 A. It was plastic smell.</p> <p>12 Q. Did it make you cough or did it have any physical effect</p> <p>13 on you?</p> <p>14 A. I can't remember.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay.</p> <p>16 Then you say in paragraph 17 at the top of page 6:</p> <p>17 "This all happened within 5 minutes. I asked my</p> <p>18 wife to go with my kids, but she refused as she wanted</p> <p>19 to go down with me as I am on crutches and need help."</p> <p>20 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>21 Q. When you say "This all happened within 5 minutes", could</p> <p>22 you explain when the 5 minutes starts and when it stops?</p> <p>23 A. It's since I woke up and opened the door, and closed the</p> <p>24 door, and I decided that they should leave.</p> <p>25 Q. Right. Okay.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 131</p>
<p>1 black smoke and tasted like a plastic or wooden smell."</p> <p>2 A. I didn't see any smoke but there I smelt plastic smell.</p> <p>3 Q. Okay. We'll come to that in just a second.</p> <p>4 My first question is: was there more smoke when you</p> <p>5 opened the front door for the second time than the first</p> <p>6 time?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, yes.</p> <p>8 Q. How much more smoke?</p> <p>9 A. When I opened the door for the second time, the smoke</p> <p>10 was heavier.</p> <p>11 Q. Heavier?</p> <p>12 A. Heavy. That's why I made the decision and asked my</p> <p>13 family to leave. And I heard some noises downstairs as</p> <p>14 if there was a lot of mess. Maybe it was the people</p> <p>15 going down the stairs.</p> <p>16 Q. When you opened the front door for the second time, how</p> <p>17 far could you see through the smoke?</p> <p>18 A. It's the same distance, but the smoke was heavier.</p> <p>19 Q. How far down from the ceiling did the smoke come on that</p> <p>20 second occasion?</p> <p>21 A. As you can see, it was going along and going up.</p> <p>22 Q. It was going along and up?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. The smoke was?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 130</p>	<p>1 So the whole period between waking up and leaving is</p> <p>2 5 minutes?</p> <p>3 A. 5 minutes, yes.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: That's very clear.</p> <p>5 Mr Chairman, Mr Khoudair, we've been going for an</p> <p>6 hour and I wonder whether that might be an appropriate</p> <p>7 moment for a break.</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: It probably is. You have a few more</p> <p>9 questions.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: Yes, I do, I have some of my own.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right.</p> <p>12 Mr Khoudair, it would be sensible for us all to have</p> <p>13 a break at this point, so we're going to stop for</p> <p>14 10 minutes.</p> <p>15 Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence</p> <p>16 while you're out of the room.</p> <p>17 Could we say 3.15?</p> <p>18 MR MILLETT: We can say that.</p> <p>19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, we'll come back at 3.15, and</p> <p>20 there will be some more questions then. All right?</p> <p>21 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay.</p> <p>22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You go with the usher and she'll</p> <p>23 show you where to go.</p> <p>24 All right, 3.15, then, please.</p> <p>25 (3.00 pm)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 132</p>

<p>1 (A short break)</p> <p>2 (3.15 pm)</p> <p>3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now, Mr Khoudair is on his way, but,</p> <p>4 Mr Weatherby, before he arrives, I hope this is working</p> <p>5 tolerably well.</p> <p>6 MR WEATHERBY: Yes, indeed, I think it's the right way of</p> <p>7 doing it, through the interpreter.</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. He gets a bit overenthusiastic</p> <p>9 at times.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: We've also been able to rustle up a spare</p> <p>11 microphone.</p> <p>12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, we now have one each, that</p> <p>13 ought to improve things.</p> <p>14 (The witness returned)</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Are you comfortable?</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: (In English) Yes.</p> <p>17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ready to go on?</p> <p>18 THE WITNESS: (In English) Yes.</p> <p>19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: You each have a microphone now,</p> <p>20 courtesy of our technician, so we should get good sound.</p> <p>21 Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>22 MR MILLETT: Mr Khoudair, thank you very much for coming</p> <p>23 back to us.</p> <p>24 I just want to ask you a question about the density,</p> <p>25 the thickness, of the smoke you saw when you came out of</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 133</p>	<p>1 Who was the last member of your family to leave the</p> <p>2 flat, do you remember?</p> <p>3 A. My wife shut the door. They went before me, and</p> <p>4 I followed them. She checked the lift to see if I could</p> <p>5 use it.</p> <p>6 Q. I see.</p> <p>7 A. Then I looked at the lift and it was out of service.</p> <p>8 Both lifts.</p> <p>9 Q. Right. You say:</p> <p>10 "My front door did not shut automatically, my wife</p> <p>11 shut the door ..."</p> <p>12 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>13 Q. My question is: did your front door ever close</p> <p>14 automatically for all the time you lived in flat 64?</p> <p>15 A. No.</p> <p>16 (Interruption - phone ringing)</p> <p>17 Q. You say:</p> <p>18 "My front door did not shut automatically, my wife</p> <p>19 shut the door ..."</p> <p>20 My question is: did your front door ever close</p> <p>21 automatically for all the time you lived at flat 64,</p> <p>22 Grenfell Tower?</p> <p>23 A. No, no.</p> <p>24 Q. Did anybody ever tell you that it was supposed to shut</p> <p>25 automatically?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 135</p>
<p>1 your flat for the second time.</p> <p>2 You've used a smoke descriptor in your statement.</p> <p>3 Can I ask you to see that, please, it's INQ00000406,</p> <p>4 page 2.</p> <p>5 I think in your statement you said that the</p> <p>6 thickness was at level B.</p> <p>7 Can you confirm?</p> <p>8 A. Level A.</p> <p>9 Q. You think it was A, okay.</p> <p>10 You then say in paragraph 17, as we were in it</p> <p>11 before, if we could just go back to that on page 6, in</p> <p>12 the third line down --</p> <p>13 THE INTERPRETER: Sorry, we don't have anything on the</p> <p>14 screen.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Ah. For some reason Mr Khoudair's</p> <p>16 screen doesn't have his statement up.</p> <p>17 MR MILLETT: Right.</p> <p>18 (Pause)</p> <p>19 THE INTERPRETER: Thank you.</p> <p>20 MR MILLETT: So page 6 of your statement, paragraph 17,</p> <p>21 three lines down from the top, you say:</p> <p>22 "I left with the kids and my wife checked to see if</p> <p>23 the lift was working but it was out of service."</p> <p>24 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>25 Q. You all left the flat.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 134</p>	<p>1 A. No.</p> <p>2 Q. When you came out into the lobby on the 9th floor, did</p> <p>3 you see anybody else there?</p> <p>4 A. On the 9th floor, no.</p> <p>5 Q. You say your wife checked the lift to see that it was</p> <p>6 working and she said that it wasn't working. Did she</p> <p>7 tell you it wasn't working?</p> <p>8 A. She checked it because -- so I can take it with my</p> <p>9 children to go downstairs, and I checked it also.</p> <p>10 Q. You checked it as well. What happened? Did you press</p> <p>11 the button and it didn't come?</p> <p>12 A. I just looked at it and it says "out of service".</p> <p>13 Q. Where does it say "out of service"?</p> <p>14 A. Top of the lift.</p> <p>15 Q. Was there a fixed sign or was it electronic?</p> <p>16 A. Electronic sign, it says "out of service".</p> <p>17 Q. There are two lifts, aren't there?</p> <p>18 A. Both of them.</p> <p>19 Q. Both of them were out of service?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. If the lift had been working, would you have used it?</p> <p>22 A. Of course.</p> <p>23 Q. While you were in the lobby, but before you went into</p> <p>24 the staircase, do you remember hearing a noise like</p> <p>25 an engine noise or fan noise?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 136</p>

<p>1 A. I heard the fire alarm, but it was a very weak noise.</p> <p>2 Q. Did you hear like a ventilation noise or fan noise</p> <p>3 going?</p> <p>4 A. No. I heard some voices coming from downstairs, and the</p> <p>5 voices were quite deep.</p> <p>6 Q. Right.</p> <p>7 A. Fire alarm, also. But the fire alarm noise was very</p> <p>8 weak. I thought that this fire alarm noise was coming</p> <p>9 from the Fire Brigade sirens, because the fire alarm was</p> <p>10 not working in the building.</p> <p>11 Q. No. So is it --</p> <p>12 A. In my flat.</p> <p>13 Q. When you say the fire alarm was very weak, could it be</p> <p>14 that you heard a smoke alarm in someone's flat?</p> <p>15 A. Of course, but the noise was very weak.</p> <p>16 Q. Right. Okay.</p> <p>17 Still sticking with paragraph 17 of your statement,</p> <p>18 Mr Khoudair, you say, five lines down from the top:</p> <p>19 "I knew I would have to use the stairs with my</p> <p>20 crutches but luckily there was no smoke on the stairs at</p> <p>21 that time. There was a plastic burning smell all the</p> <p>22 way down the staircase. The fire door I opened on my</p> <p>23 floor and it shut behind me."</p> <p>24 I just want to ask you about the door.</p> <p>25 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 A. The stairs were very tight.</p> <p>2 Q. Tight. You mean narrow?</p> <p>3 THE INTERPRETER: Narrow.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: You say three lines down:</p> <p>5 "No one helped me. I was sitting on the stairs to</p> <p>6 rest before carrying on."</p> <p>7 How many times did you stop to rest, do you think?</p> <p>8 A. I fell down twice.</p> <p>9 Q. You fell down?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. Really?</p> <p>12 A. (In English) I remember that now, because I didn't</p> <p>13 mention that in my statement. I remember that.</p> <p>14 (Interpreted) Now I remember that. I did not</p> <p>15 mention this in my statement.</p> <p>16 Q. I'm sorry to hear that.</p> <p>17 A. I said that also on the stairs I was worried that</p> <p>18 somebody will knock me down or push me.</p> <p>19 Q. Mm.</p> <p>20 A. And I was going down the stairs on my back, sitting on</p> <p>21 my bottom, and then afterwards I managed to go down the</p> <p>22 stairs using my crutches, and when there were less</p> <p>23 people down the stairs.</p> <p>24 Q. Right.</p> <p>25 A. Then when I hear people on the stairs, I had to stop.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 139</p>
<p>1 Q. My question is: did you open the door from the lobby</p> <p>2 into the staircase, yourself?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. Did it close behind you, do you remember?</p> <p>5 A. Can't remember.</p> <p>6 Q. Okay.</p> <p>7 A. Honestly, I can't remember.</p> <p>8 Q. When you first got into the stairwell, did you notice</p> <p>9 any smoke straight away?</p> <p>10 A. No.</p> <p>11 Q. Were the lights on in the stairwell when you went in?</p> <p>12 A. Yes, of course.</p> <p>13 Q. When you went in, could you immediately smell plastic</p> <p>14 burning?</p> <p>15 A. It wasn't on the 9th floor, but as I was going</p> <p>16 downstairs, yes.</p> <p>17 Q. When you go on to paragraph 18, you say in the second</p> <p>18 line:</p> <p>19 "It took me a long time to get down maybe 15 — 20</p> <p>20 minutes and people were pushing past me."</p> <p>21 A. I believe, but I was in shock, so I can't really</p> <p>22 estimate the time, and I was letting people pass me, and</p> <p>23 putting my back onto ... opposite the rail.</p> <p>24 Q. Was there anything about the stairs that made it easier</p> <p>25 or hard for you to go down?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 Q. Yes. And --</p> <p>2 THE INTERPRETER: Coming down the stairs, yes. "When I hear</p> <p>3 people coming down the stairs, I have to stop."</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Was there enough space on the staircase for</p> <p>5 people to get past you?</p> <p>6 A. I was in this position so people can walk behind me.</p> <p>7 Q. Just for the transcript, the witness made a movement</p> <p>8 whereby he turned and faced the wall laterally and</p> <p>9 indicated that people would pass him, past his back.</p> <p>10 A. And especially some people were carrying children.</p> <p>11 There was a man carrying a child, so I let him walk</p> <p>12 behind me.</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: From the action that you just</p> <p>14 demonstrated, I understood that you were holding the</p> <p>15 handrail; is that right? With your back towards the</p> <p>16 stairs.</p> <p>17 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>18 MR MILLETT: Right, back towards the stairs, not facing the</p> <p>19 wall?</p> <p>20 A. (In English) Yes.</p> <p>21 Q. I see.</p> <p>22 On the way down, did you notice any difference in</p> <p>23 temperature in the air as you came down?</p> <p>24 A. I didn't think about that, I just wanted to get</p> <p>25 downstairs as soon as possible.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 140</p>

<p>1 Q. It may be the same answer, but let me try it anyway.</p> <p>2 As you came down, did you notice any smoke in the</p> <p>3 stairwell?</p> <p>4 A. No.</p> <p>5 Q. On your way down, did you notice whether any doors were</p> <p>6 open from lobbies into the stairwell?</p> <p>7 A. I didn't notice.</p> <p>8 Q. Did you see any firefighters coming past you on your way</p> <p>9 down?</p> <p>10 A. Can't remember.</p> <p>11 Q. Now, at paragraph 19 you --</p> <p>12 A. I don't believe anybody passed by me.</p> <p>13 Q. At the end of paragraph 18 -- let me just go back to</p> <p>14 that -- the very end, you say:</p> <p>15 "It was hot going down the stairs."</p> <p>16 This is the bottom of page 6, end of paragraph 18,</p> <p>17 the last sentence, you say --</p> <p>18 A. Between the 5th floor, maybe, I'm not sure. I can't</p> <p>19 remember exactly on which floor it was hot. I can't</p> <p>20 remember. Maybe 4th, between 5th and 4th, I can't</p> <p>21 remember.</p> <p>22 Q. My question was really whether it was you getting hot</p> <p>23 with the effort of coming down, or you noticed the air</p> <p>24 temperature getting hotter.</p> <p>25 A. I don't know, really. Maybe because I was going</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 A. I did not look to see if there is any, I just wanted to</p> <p>2 leave.</p> <p>3 Q. I see. Did you hear the sound of a fan?</p> <p>4 A. No, I can't remember.</p> <p>5 Q. Okay.</p> <p>6 Now, I'm going to show you a number of CCTV images</p> <p>7 taken from a camera on the ground floor of</p> <p>8 Grenfell Tower, and we've seen quite a lot of these</p> <p>9 before with firefighters. They're not particularly</p> <p>10 distressing, although they may bring back memories of</p> <p>11 the night for you and for others. Do you feel able to</p> <p>12 look at those?</p> <p>13 A. (In English) Okay.</p> <p>14 Q. I am going to show you three in sequence, and what</p> <p>15 I will do is give you the adjusted times. That's the</p> <p>16 best estimate we can give, with the help of our experts,</p> <p>17 for the real time on the camera.</p> <p>18 First of all, can we please have INQ00000439. That</p> <p>19 is an adjusted time of 01.36.21, taken by camera 2 at</p> <p>20 the foot of the stairs on the ground floor at</p> <p>21 Grenfell Tower.</p> <p>22 Can you identify you in that picture?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. That's you.</p> <p>25 Do you remember seeing two firefighters?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>
<p>1 downstairs, because I was tired or because I was scared,</p> <p>2 I don't know.</p> <p>3 Q. Right.</p> <p>4 In paragraph 19 of your statement, at the bottom,</p> <p>5 you say:</p> <p>6 "19. When I got down to the entrance of the Tower,</p> <p>7 I saw a firefighter in the entrance in the tower, and he</p> <p>8 said, 'Do you need any help'? but I said I was ok."</p> <p>9 A. I'm fine, because I was down there, downstairs already.</p> <p>10 The thing which should have been done is firefighters</p> <p>11 going upstairs to help me.</p> <p>12 Q. My question is: did the firefighter ask you which flat</p> <p>13 you'd come from?</p> <p>14 A. No.</p> <p>15 Q. Did you tell him?</p> <p>16 A. No, I didn't tell them, and when I see that there were</p> <p>17 firefighters downstairs in the lobby and on the stairs,</p> <p>18 I was very surprised that none of them went upstairs.</p> <p>19 Q. Turning to the top of page 7, still in paragraph 19, you</p> <p>20 say:</p> <p>21 "There was no smoke in the entrance area."</p> <p>22 A. Yes.</p> <p>23 Q. Then you say:</p> <p>24 "I didn't see any ventilation fans in the entrance</p> <p>25 area at all."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 A. I remember that I saw one.</p> <p>2 Q. Right.</p> <p>3 A. To be honest.</p> <p>4 Q. Were you having a conversation with those firefighters,</p> <p>5 do you think?</p> <p>6 A. The person who is moving his hand is showing me where to</p> <p>7 go.</p> <p>8 Q. Right. Okay.</p> <p>9 If we can look at the next one, please, which is</p> <p>10 INQ00000440.</p> <p>11 This is camera 3, taken in the lobby, looking into</p> <p>12 the lobby, with an adjusted time mark of 01.36.33.</p> <p>13 Can you identify yourself?</p> <p>14 A. Yes, of course.</p> <p>15 Q. We can see you in the picture.</p> <p>16 Everyone seems to be looking up. Do you remember</p> <p>17 what you were all looking up at?</p> <p>18 A. I don't know, I can't remember. To be honest, I can't</p> <p>19 remember.</p> <p>20 Q. In the last one, the third one, which is INQ00000441, if</p> <p>21 we can please have that, that is camera 1 with</p> <p>22 an adjusted time of 01.36.38.</p> <p>23 Can you identify yourself in that picture leaving</p> <p>24 the tower?</p> <p>25 A. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

<p>1 Q. Right. So to the best of your recollection, does that 2 give us the time at which you exited the tower, do you 3 think?</p> <p>4 A. Around that time, maybe.</p> <p>5 Q. Right.</p> <p>6 In your statement at paragraph 19, if we go back to 7 it, in the last sentence at the top of page 7, you say: 8 "I left the building at 1.45am."</p> <p>9 A. Yes, 5 minutes later, not later than that.</p> <p>10 Q. Right. So now I've shown you the pictures with the 11 adjusted times on them, do you think that those times 12 are correct and not 01.45?</p> <p>13 A. Maybe. I'm not 100 per cent sure. Maybe, to be honest.</p> <p>14 Q. Right.</p> <p>15 You then say at paragraph 20: 16 "20. Once I got out of the building he told me to 17 go to the right of the building due to the fire."</p> <p>18 A. Yes, that's correct.</p> <p>19 Q. Who told you that, can you remember?</p> <p>20 A. There was a firefighter standing outside the building. 21 He asked me to go to the right because there is some 22 fireballs coming down.</p> <p>23 Q. Where did you go next?</p> <p>24 A. I went where he indicated me to go. My wife and my 25 children were waiting for me opposite the building.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 breathing problems. It's not very serious. It's recent 2 and I don't know what's the reason behind it.</p> <p>3 MR MILLETT: Right. Okay.</p> <p>4 Mr Khoudair, I have no further questions for you.</p> <p>5 Mr Chairman, there may be one or two which, 6 reviewing my notes, I may need to ask, or we may get 7 some from others. So I am going to ask for a short 8 break.</p> <p>9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I don't think there's any 10 alternative to our rising, is there, for a moment? I'm 11 just thinking of the witness.</p> <p>12 MR MILLETT: Thinking of the witness ...</p> <p>13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: If we say 10 minutes, that gives you 14 plenty of time and it gives him time to get in and out.</p> <p>15 MR MILLETT: Absolutely.</p> <p>16 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Khoudair, Mr Millett doesn't 17 think he has any more questions at the moment, but 18 sometimes, when he has thought about it, he has.</p> <p>19 So we're going to have a 10-minute break now --</p> <p>20 THE WITNESS: (In English) Okay.</p> <p>21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: -- to let Mr Millett think about 22 that.</p> <p>23 Please don't talk to anyone about your evidence when 24 you're out of the room. All right? We'll resume at 25 3.55.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>
<p>1 Q. Opposite the building on which side, the south side?</p> <p>2 A. Main entrance.</p> <p>3 Q. Were they waiting under the covered walkway?</p> <p>4 A. It's on the pavement opposite. It was on the pavement 5 opposite the building, because there were fireballs 6 coming down, they couldn't stand just outside the 7 building.</p> <p>8 Q. You say there were fireballs coming down; did you see 9 the fireballs coming down yourself?</p> <p>10 A. Yes.</p> <p>11 Q. From which side of the building did you see them coming?</p> <p>12 A. It's on the side of the leisure centre.</p> <p>13 Q. So not above the entrance but on the east side; is that 14 right?</p> <p>15 A. Yes. It depends on -- it was because of the direction 16 of the wind. I was trying to avoid the fireballs, so 17 I went to the extreme right and then I continued.</p> <p>18 Q. Yes, I see.</p> <p>19 When you came out of the entrance, could you see 20 your wife and family in front of you?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. Did you feel the effects of smoke?</p> <p>23 A. No.</p> <p>24 Q. Okay.</p> <p>25 A. But I have -- at the moment, I'm suffering from some</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>	<p>1 Would you like to go with the usher now then, 2 please.</p> <p>3 All right, 3.55, then, please.</p> <p>4 MR MILLETT: Yes, thank you.</p> <p>5 (3.45 pm)</p> <p>6 (A short break)</p> <p>7 (3.55 pm)</p> <p>8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? I think Mr Millett has 9 a few more questions for you.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: Mr Khoudair, thank you very much for coming 11 back to us. I just have one or two.</p> <p>12 After you and your family left the tower, did 13 anybody ask you or your family which flat or floor you'd 14 come down from?</p> <p>15 A. The police asked us. They asked us which floor we came 16 from, and also they took our names, and when we went to 17 Portobello also.</p> <p>18 Q. When did the police take those details from you?</p> <p>19 A. After we -- I can't remember exactly -- but it's after 20 an hour and a half of us being downstairs.</p> <p>21 Q. How do you remember it was an hour and a half?</p> <p>22 A. They were pushing us backwards until we got to the 23 leisure centre.</p> <p>24 Q. I see.</p> <p>25 A. And then we were told that there were buses, that they</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 were going to come and pick us up to take us to a place</p> <p>2 where we can rest, but this did not happen.</p> <p>3 Q. At what point did you tell the policeman about the</p> <p>4 details of the flat and floor you'd come down from?</p> <p>5 A. There were a lot of people downstairs. They were asking</p> <p>6 who lives in which block, and they were pointing to the</p> <p>7 groups according to where we're living.</p> <p>8 Q. At what point in time was that, do you think?</p> <p>9 A. Around 2 o'clock. I can't remember really.</p> <p>10 Q. Let me try it this way: how long after you left the</p> <p>11 tower did you give the policeman your address?</p> <p>12 A. An hour or three-quarters of an hour. I can't remember</p> <p>13 exactly.</p> <p>14 Q. Okay.</p> <p>15 Mr Khoudair, I have a final question. Apart from</p> <p>16 what you've put in your written statement, and apart</p> <p>17 from what you've told us this afternoon, is there</p> <p>18 anything else that you observed on the night of the fire</p> <p>19 that you think it's important that the chairman should</p> <p>20 know?</p> <p>21 A. Yes, of course.</p> <p>22 First of all, they should not accommodate disabled</p> <p>23 people on a floor that is a high floor.</p> <p>24 And then also the stairs, the stairs should be wider</p> <p>25 to enable disabled people to go down the stairs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 I should say thank you to Madam Interpreter as well.</p> <p>2 Thank you very much, would you like to go with the</p> <p>3 usher, then, please.</p> <p>4 (The witness withdrew)</p> <p>5 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.</p> <p>6 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, that concludes the evidence for</p> <p>7 the day.</p> <p>8 We start again, subject to you, Mr Chairman,</p> <p>9 tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock with the next witness,</p> <p>10 who Mr Rawat will be taking.</p> <p>11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right.</p> <p>12 Well, thank you very much. We've used the day quite</p> <p>13 fully.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: Yes.</p> <p>15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Which is always a good thing.</p> <p>16 So we'll break now and resume at 10 o'clock tomorrow</p> <p>17 with our next witness.</p> <p>18 Very well. Thank you very much indeed</p> <p>19 (4.00 pm)</p> <p>20 (The hearing adjourned until Wednesday, 10 October 2018</p> <p>21 at 10.00 am)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>
<p>1 And then also to ensure that the firefighters are</p> <p>2 properly trained and have more experience for dealing</p> <p>3 with such incidents.</p> <p>4 Also, we heard that the information that was related</p> <p>5 to the head office from the Fire Brigade was not</p> <p>6 correctly done, and also ...</p> <p>7 And also, to be able to deal with incidents when</p> <p>8 there is fire, such fires, and to deal in the proper</p> <p>9 way.</p> <p>10 MR MILLETT: Mr Khoudair, thank you very much.</p> <p>11 It remains for me to thank you very much for your</p> <p>12 evidence this afternoon.</p> <p>13 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.</p> <p>14 MR MILLETT: We are extremely grateful to you for coming</p> <p>15 here and assisting us with our investigations, so thank</p> <p>16 you.</p> <p>17 THE WITNESS: Okay, you're welcome.</p> <p>18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'd add my thanks to those of</p> <p>19 Mr Millett. It's really important and helpful for us to</p> <p>20 hear about your experience on the night in question, and</p> <p>21 to hear about the conditions in the tower as you</p> <p>22 experienced them. So thank you very much for coming to</p> <p>23 tell us all about it.</p> <p>24 THE WITNESS: Okay. You're welcome, sir.</p> <p>25 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. Now you are free to go.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>	<p>1 I N D E X</p> <p>2 MERON MEKONNEN (sworn)1</p> <p>Questions by MR RAWAT1</p> <p>3</p> <p>HIWOT DAGNACHEW (sworn)51</p> <p>4 Questions by MR RAWAT51</p> <p>5 MAHER KHOUDAIR (sworn)102</p> <p>Questions by COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY102</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

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