# OPUS2 

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Day 303

July 12, 2022

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(10.00 am)
            (Proceedings delayed)
(10.30 am)
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to
    today's hearing. Today we're going to hear more
    presentations in relation to those who died in the fire.
            Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman. Good morning to you. Good
    morning, members of the panel. We're grateful for the
    short delay in the start to the proceedings this
    morning.
            May I invite, please, Mr Danny Friedman QC to come
    back to the podium to make the presentation on behalf of
    the Choucair family, that is Sirria Choucair from
    flat 191, Bassem Choukair from flat 193, Nadia Choucair,
    Mierna Choucair, Fatima Choucair and Zainab Choucair,
    all also from flat 193.
            May I also repeat the trigger warning that I have
    given in most of the other presentations, which is to
    say that many of those here today and watching on the
    live stream may find what they are about to hear
    distressing and, if they do, they are free to leave the
    room or to look away from the live stream appropriately.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
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    MR MILLETT: Mr Friedman. 1
    Presentation relating to SIRRIA CHOUCAIR, NADIA CHOUCAIR, 2
        BASSEM CHOUKAIR, MIERNA CHOUCAIR, FATIMA CHOUCAIR AND
            ZAINAB CHOUCAIR by MR FRIEDMAN
    MR FRIEDMAN: When you have lost six family members spanning 54
three generations, as the Choucair family have, the pain 6
is unfathomable. It is impossible to conceive.
May I open with the family's words:
"Memories, memories, memories. This is all we have.
Cherishable memories. Lovable memories. Laughable
memories. Enjoyable memories. We could go on and on.
They will always be in our heart and soul. They will
never be forgotten."
Nadia Choucair, Bassem Choukair and their three
daughters, Mierna, Fatima and Zainab, lived in flat 193
on what became floor 22 after the refurbishment.
Nadia's mother, Sirria Choucair, moved into flat 191 on
the floor in 2013. All six members of this family died
in the fire.
They are survived and deeply mourned by Sirria's
three surviving children, Nabil, Sawsan and Hisam;
Bassem's sister, Malak; Bassem's parents, Badr and Taan;
Sirria 's mother, Hayat; and Sirria's younger brother,
Jamil. However, the loss is also suffered by a large
extended family, including many young nieces, nephews
and cousins, all of whom were deeply connected with the lives of those who died.

Can I start with the formal details relating to each individual.

Sirria Choucair was born on 25 October 1956. She was 60 years old at the time of her death. Her place of birth was Nahle village in the Baalbek district of Lebanon. Sirria worked all her life in the catering industry at the Royal Marsden Hospital. She was the sole tenant at flat 191, Grenfell Tower. Her daughter Sawsan lived with her.

Nadia Choucair was Sirria's daughter and the wife of Bassem Choukair. She was born in London on 14 January 1983. She was 34 years old when she died. She was a nursery school teacher assistant at the local Avondale Park Primary School on Sirdar Road. Many children in the local area knew Nadia, just as they knew her children, who I now turn to.

Mierna Choucair -- I apologise, before I turn to her children, may I deal with Bassem Choukair.

Bassem Choukair was born on 1 December 1976. He was 40 years old when he died. He too came from Nahle village in Lebanon. Bassem worked as a supermarket section co-ordinator at Marks \& Spencer on Earl's Court Road. He and his family lived at flat 193

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Grenfell Tower.
May I then turn to the children.
Mierna Choucair was born on 22 November 2003. She was 13 years old. She was a secondary school pupil at Kensington Aldridge Academy.

Fatima Choucair was born on 1 March 2006. She was 11 years old. She was a primary school pupil at Avondale Park Primary, where her mother worked.

Zainab Choucair was the third of the three daughters. Born on 17 May 2014, she was three years old. She had started at the nursery school at Avondale Park.

Sir, you will recall commemorations on 22 May 2018 and on 30 May 2018 presented by Sirria's surviving children, during which a letter written by Bassem's parents was also read out. Those commemorations contained powerful video presentations.

You heard from all quarters about what an extraordinary, close-knit, joyful and loving family Nadia and Bassem had. On floor 22, the family were always knocking on each other's doors and in each other's homes.

You also heard of the family's close ties to their community: in the tower, in Avondale School where Nadia worked, Zainab had just started and the other girls had
attended. Mierna was at the academy and Fatima was
about to start there in September. Sirria had worked at the Royal Marsden Hospital under the supervision of Pily Burton from flat 165, who you heard Sirria was devoted to. When Hisam and Nabil drove around so many hospitals on 14 June, they would find understanding and sympathy in the Royal Marsden, which Hisam recognised, because Pily and his mum spoke so highly of it.

Turning to each of the deceased.
Sirria Choucair, as you heard, was born in 1956 in Lebanon and helped bring up her young siblings. In the early 1970s, Sirria married Ghassan Choucair, and they emigrated to the UK. He sadly passed away in 2002.
They made a home in South Kensington, in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, where they raised their four children.

No one, you were told, worked harder than Sirria to care for and support their family. She was a loving, caring mother, who prioritised preparing her children for life 's challenges, working hard to give them the opportunities she did not have, including the best possible education. Sirria was remembered as a proud, resilient and devout woman, who was patient and gentle and always thought of others before herself. She instilled in her children the importance of respect for 5
oneself and others. Her delicious Lebanese cooking
would give even a top chef a good run for his money.
Sirria took great pleasure in all her children and grandchildren, and loved to spoil them rotten with gifts, treats and fun days out as a family.

Nadia Choucair was remembered by her older siblings as their cute and adorable baby sister, who they all squabbled over bathing, feeding and cuddling. One of her nicknames was "Munchkin". Nadia had a heart of gold, with the work ethic and resilience of her father and mother. Her cheeky smile brightened up the people around her.

Nadia's passion was to work in childcare. She started at the very beginning by going to college, and then working at Avondale Nursery, where she was much valued by parents, colleagues and children alike.

Nadia also spoke her mind. She was a fighter. She would always stand up for her rights and always knew the difference between right and wrong, and so it was that she expressed her opposition to features of the refurbishment works that have been the subject of enquiry in Module 3.

Since the fire happened, the family has been amazed how many strangers have come up to say that they were connected to Nadia and how much they loved her. She
touched many lives. There is now a memorial to her at the school. She was sociable and had a lot of close friends.

Bassem Choukair came from the Nahle village in the Baalbek district of Lebanon. Bassem and Nadia met and married in Lebanon. Their love for each other was so profound that family and friends called them Romeo and Juliet. Together, they raised three beautiful children: Mierna, Fatima and Zainab, who all tragically perished in the fire.

Bassem was an incredibly hard-working and conscientious person. He would do anything to put food on the table of his family. He worked his way up in Marks \& Spencer from sales assistant to section co-ordinator. He was professional and rigorous at work, to the extent that staff were in awe of and respected him. But at home, he was very different, showing his gentle and caring side.

Bassem would wake up as early as 4.00 am and would always cycle to work because it saved money and kept him healthy. He tried to persuade Sawsan Choucair, his sister -in-law, to cycle with him as they worked together, but Sawsan would prefer to take the bus. Despite his discipline at work, Bassem still made the job fun, with a joke up his sleeve and his desire to

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make people happy and smile.
Panel, you get a certain measure of this man in that during the early stages of the fire at 01.55, he texted colleagues at work to let them know he would not be there the following day, but wanted to support them early to make back-up arrangements. He told them, "Sorry, guys, for letting you down". Even when Sawsan called Bassem on the night, his first thought was to reassure her that everything was all right, even though he was trapped in a burning building.

Turning now to the children.
You heard during commemorations how close Mierna, Fatima and Zainab were to one another and to Hisam and Nabil's children, and how they loved their aunties, uncles and grandmother.

Mierna Choucair was Nadia and Bassem's eldest daughter. She was a student at Kensington Aldridge Academy, where she had many friends. She was bright and confident and loved learning. She wanted to study law and be a lawyer. Like her mum, she loved swimming. At the time, aged 13 , she was like a sunflower opening, excelling in all areas of her life. She was a talented artist. She also brought a smile to people's faces. She was a naturally resilient person who was also protective over her younger sisters. You will hear
about her courage and intelligence during the fire.
She, like her sister Fatima, loved clothes and would
often go shopping with Sawsan. Sawsan would sometimes come home to find Mierna and a friend had been trying on all her clothes and shoes. She had an excellent sense of humour, and that came through clearly from the entertaining video sketches shown at the commemoration hearing, which so poignantly captured also the everyday life in her home at Grenfell.

Fatima Choucair was the middle child of the family. At 11 years old, she was completing year 6 at Avondale Park Primary School and about to go to secondary school. Fatima's passion was to be a gymnast. She was a loving, caring and gentle girl with her future ahead of her to do what she dreamed. She loved music and was very popular, with a lot of friends. You heard from her teacher that Fatima was held in high esteem at the school as a delightful, charming little girl. Like her elder sister, Fatima was a bright and conscientious student and, like her parents, deeply respectful of others. She was also extremely active and loved sport; she played in the school football team with three of her best friends.

Finally, Zainab Choucair, also known as Zoo Zoo, aged just 3 at the time of the fire. Her birth

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completed the family. Relatives and friends alike instantly fell in love with her. They describe her as adorable, the spark of the family, a showstopper who would steal the limelight no matter the occasion. Zainab had the same type of cheeky smile as her mother. It would light up the room. You heard of Zainab's sense of humour. She would sneak in and interrupt her cousins' games and conversations. She loved to recite her favourite nursery rhymes with a great deal of flair. Sirria Choucair would care for Zainab during the day so that Nadia could work. This was a bond that Zainab could enjoy in her all too young life.

May I deal with further background matters relevant to the night of the fire.

First, the tenancy swap that brought Sirria and Sawsan to live at Grenfell.

Sirria Choucair came to move to flat 191 by virtue of a three-way mutual tenancy exchange. Sirria moved from her original three-bedroom flat elsewhere in the borough. Sirria and Sawsan moved to flat 191 Grenfell Tower; Helen Gebremeskel moved to flat 186; and the prior tenant of flat 186 moved to Sirria's previous home. Sirria and Sawsan moved from their much larger flat to be in the one-bedroom flat 191 because they wanted to be closer to Bassem and Nadia, and in the
context of Sirria's significant physical health conditions and care needs. The whole family assisted Sirria in different ways to allow her to lead a normal life.

Sir, at the commemoration, you heard how Sirria's health deteriorated after her husband's death. She developed severe arthritis, including osteoarthritis of the knees, and also suffered from chronic pain, including back pain which would radiate to her legs, high blood pressure, vertigo and low vitamin D levels, for which she received medical treatment. Her ill - health brought her work in catering to an end, and eventually meant she had to walk with a stick. Her mobility problems were such that, once she moved to flat 191 on floor 22, she was unable to leave the home when the Grenfell lifts were out of order. On this point, may I add that the anthropology evidence in respect of Sirria Choucair found evidence of osteophyte formation indicative of degenerative disease.

Sirria 's physical health problems were known to her previous landlord, Family Mosaic and Peabody Direct, at the time of the exchange. Indeed, by virtue of her use of a walking stick, her mobility problems were clear to all those she interacted with. The significance of Sirria's mobility issue for fire safety was not

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considered within the tenancy exchange application process or during the period of her tenancy at Grenfell. As at the date of the fire, and as you know with all other residents with relevant disabilities, there were no arrangements in place to assist Sirria to evacuate the building via the single staircase in the event of a need to do so, nor were there any pre-existing communications or arrangements with the LFB to secure her assisted evacuation or rescue.

It bears noting that, in addition to Sirria 's vulnerability, Nadia, Fatima and Zainab are all understood to have suffered from asthma, reference to which was made during Nadia's 999 call at 2.37 am, which I will come to shortly.

May I turn to the time of the fire.
Nabil Choucair visited Bassem and Nadia on the night of 12 June and stayed with them until the following morning. The children of Hisam and Kona Choucair stayed overnight with their grandmother, Sirria, and were taken to school by their uncle Nabil on the morning of 13 June. CCTV images show the last sightings of the family returning to their home on 13 June in the afternoon.

Dealing with them in turn.
Bassem Choukair can be seen with his bike in the
lift lobby of Grenfell Tower waiting to go up into the building at 15.02 .

Mierna Choucair was in the lift lobby of Grenfell Tower waiting to go up at 15.34. She was coming home from school.

Sirria Choucair, with Fatima and Zainab, can be seen in the lift lobby of the tower at 15.38 . The grandmother had picked up the younger children from school.

Nadia Choucair arrived back from work and was in the lift lobby of the tower waiting to go up at 16.13.

After that time, Hisam Choucair picked his children up from his mother's flat and he briefly saw Sirria, Nadia, Bassem and their three children a final time before returning home.

The Phase 1 analysis of the footage of the external fire spread on the flat 6 column of the tower confirms that the fire reached floor 22 before 01.26 .

Some of these matters were introduced last week, but I am now going to give more detail in relation to this floor.

Naomi Li from flat 195 began to smell smoke in her flat as early as 01.15 to 01.17 and called her husband, Lee Chapman, who was in Malaysia, at 01.20 to tell him about the smoke. She then called the LFB control room
for the first time at 01.21 to tell them that she could smell smoke. She was told that the fire was on floor 4 and that they should stay in their premises.

Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, Naomi's cousin, then saw Mariem and Eslah Elgwahry on their landing, who told them that there was a fire in their kitchen in flat 196. Naomi Li and Lydia Liao would shortly after shelter in Nadia and Bassem's home.

Mariem Elgwahry, as you know, made a call to the control room at 01.30, once inside flat 205 on floor 23. She told the operator that her kitchen was on fire in flat 196 and that there was smoke in flat 205, where she had now taken shelter.

According to Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, it was difficult to evacuate from floor 22 at the time due to the number of people coming up the stairs. I addressed you in detail on the various factors behind this upwards migration in the presentation for Debbie Lamprell on 6 July 2022.

Can we look at the additional events on this particular floor.

Before 01.30, the daughter of Hurstway Walk resident Nadia Elbouti called Mierna Choucair, her best friend, to tell her there was a fire. Mierna's immediate response was that she needed to go next door to help her
grandmother, who she mentioned relied on a walking stick. At around this time, Nadia Choucair invited Naomi and Lydia into flat 193, where they saw the children and the "nanny" from flat 191. That would have been Sirria.

Between 01.30 and 01.50, control room operators took calls from occupants on floor 22 informing them that the fire had adversely affected the floor. At 01.30.08, Anthony Disson from flat 194 called the control room to say that it was terrible on his floor and that he could not see his hand in front of him. He was assured, "We're on our way", to which Anthony Disson replied, "I'll tell all the rest".

At 01.30.38, Naomi Li again called the control room. She indicated that she was in her neighbour's home and informed CRO Gotts that, "There's all smoke now". She said that her neighbour had told her that the fire was in the kitchen on floor 22 . The control room did not establish which flat the caller was now in, how many people were with her or the fact that the fire was in the kitchen of flat 196.

At 01.34.50, Hashim Kedir from flat 192 called the control room to tell them that they were in that flat and said that they "couldn't get down the stairs, because the stairs is full of smoke".

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Nadia Choucair made her first call to the emergency services at 1.40.46. She got through to BT pre-exchange and responded that there was a fire at Grenfell Tower and gave her location: the 22nd floor, her flat number: flat 193, and requested the attendance of the Fire Brigade.

This was a point in time when the emergency call system was overloading. The Phase 1 report established that volume 2, paragraph 12.69, that between 01.40 and 01.50, the LFB control room received 21 emergency calls from residents trapped in the building and from members of the public. Nadia was therefore placed in a holding queue waiting to be connected to a control room, a queue which she remained in for over seven minutes. She was informed by BT that the London fire services were aware of the fire and was told to hold the line while she was connected to the fire services. Children's voices and Arabic, possibly Sirria Choucair speaking, can be heard in the background during the call.

Nadia was finally diverted to Essex Fire and Rescue Service at 01.48. Immediately upon connection, Nadia said, "Please help us". The implication was that she was not alone, but she was not asked about that.
Neither was she asked about the profile of the people in the flat. Nadia repeated that she was in flat 193 on
the 22nd floor, that it was getting very smoky inside
the house and said, "It's getting a lot on the
22nd floor". By "it", she must have meant the fire. Having waited a considerable period to be put through, Nadia was informed, "We'll go back through London for you". For reasons I will return to, this did not happen.

Anthony Disson was put through to the LFB control room at 01.50 to tell them that smoke was coming into flat 194 and that he could not see anything. He was told, "We're gonna come up. We've got firefighters coming to the 22nd floor already".

In none of these calls, panel, between 01.30 to 01.50 were the occupants of floor 22 advised to evacuate, and in none of the calls were details taken to establish the profile of residents to establish whether evacuation was possible.

At 01.48, immediately after the call to the Essex control room, or perhaps during it, Nadia Choucair sent a text message to her friend Helen Gebremeskel which confirmed her understanding to "stay in".

Following that 01.48 call from Nadia, Essex control room made efforts to try and contact the LFB directly and via Group Manager Dilley, the national information liaison officer, or NILO, as the role was known. They
could not get through on a direct line until 02.18 .
When CRO Marshall spoke to CRO Adams in the LFB at 02.18.15, she said that the flat number of the caller on the 22nd floor had not been provided. As the Phase 1 report found at volume 2, paragraph 14.269, that was in fact incorrect, as Nadia had supplied the flat number during the 01.48 call.

At 02.26, the NILO gained contact with the Metropolitan Police and asked if someone could pass the message on to the LFB that Essex had received a call from residents in flat 193 on floor 22.

The Phase 1 report found, at volume 2, paragraph 14.270, that:
"It is unclear whether the messages relayed to the control room by Essex FRS were passed on to the incident ground, and if so how. There is no record that the messages were passed on at that time, although it is possible that SM Oliff did so."

The Inquiry does, however, have clear evidence that service requests were made and passed to the fire ground following the earlier calls from other residents on floor 22. They were as follows:

A control room request referred to "Persons on 22nd floor smoke coming into flat". It was created at 01.32.29, was in process on the log at 01.35 .36 , but

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, of course. We understand.

## MR FRIEDMAN: That's an appropriate moment.

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Of course. Is ten minutes going to
be long enough? We would normally have a longer break
in the morning.
MR FRIEDMAN: May I ask for 15 ?
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.
MR FRIEDMAN: Thank you very much.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll rise for 15 minutes, then.
11.15, thank you.
(11.02 am)

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\begin{aligned}
& \text { (A short break) } \\
& \text { (11.17 am) } \\
& \text { SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Friedman. } \\
& \text { MR FRIEDMAN: Thank you for the break, panel. } \\
& \text { I am also going to speak a little slower so that the } \\
& \text { interpreters can keep up with me. } \\
& \text { SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right. } \\
& \text { MR FRIEDMAN: Before we adjourned, I'd summarised the } \\
& \text { service requests from control rooms to the fire ground } \\
& \text { relating to floor } 22 \text { that were made between } 01.41 \\
& \text { through to 02.09. No deployments were specifically made } \\
& \text { to the floor for the purposes of rescue until after } \\
& \text { 03.03, at which time Watch Manager De Silvo deployed } \\
& \text { Firefighters Codd and Joseph. }
\end{aligned}
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By way of a trigger warning, in a moment I'm going to ask for an image of a list of flats to be brought up. This is a handwritten list on the wall of floor 3. It was created while the bridgehead was still there. It will show flat numbers and references to how many persons were understood to be there. It does not contain any other images of fire and the like, but if anyone does not want to see it, may they please look away now.

On that basis may I call up $\{$ MET00015819/1\}. I'm going to address you about the numbers towards the top.

## Two points.

First, this single deployment reflected on the wall of floor 3 is "22 195", and then it says to its left - hand side "Codd \& Jonny". That is the only dedicated deployment to the floor, and it was, as we said before the break, outdated, as Naomi Li relayed to the control room at 01.30 .38 that they had moved to "the neighbour's house now". This reference is derived from the Sadler list, which was by then nearly one and a half hours old.

Can we just keep it up and I' II make our second point, which is that unlike other flats or floors that you can see there, there is no circle or tick around "22 195". The absence of a circle may indicate there

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was no further information about the floor or flat that was passed to the bridgehead before it moved down to the ground floor at approximately 03.15.

Take the image down, please.
I'm going to return to the Codd/Joseph deployment, but for now, please bear in mind that neither firefighter tragically reached the 22nd floor. This was a missed opportunity for those on that floor. Firefighter Codd would, however, meet Naomi Li and Lydia Liao coming down from the floor. There were no further deployments to floor 22 after this time.

It bears adding, and as you have heard, at 01.56, the Paddington crew were deployed to the top floor for the purposes of firefighting, not search and rescue. At some point between floors 20 and 21, they discovered Fadumo Ahmed and brought her down. Firefighter Roberts, who travelled the furthest up the building than any other firefighter that night, as far as we understand the evidence, reached floor 22, where he says he "opened the door to the floor, stuck [his] head in, shouted out but received no response from anybody so [he] went back down". There is no evidence that his presence registered with any of the multiple remaining occupants on floor 22.

Professor Purser's evidence has highlighted the
tragic potential for residents to escape via the stairs, including the top floor, throughout the night. However, for a resident with significant mobility issues, such as Sirria Choucair, unassisted evacuation was not a realistic option. Walking down 22 floors, even with a family member's assistance, would have been very difficult for Sirria even in normal times. Moreover, once the conditions in the staircase deteriorated, there was no realistic prospect of walking down within a timescale that would have averted collapse due to exposure to smoke, to acid and to asphyxiant gases.

It is a fact that residents with such mobility impairments and family or friends who were not prepared to leave them were trapped. On this, we draw attention to the status of the Grenfell lifts, which Phase 1 established at volume 4, paragraph 34.11, were not firefighting lifts and, even in the early stages of the fire, could not be brought under control by the LFB in order that they could be used for the purposes of search and rescue. The Inquiry will in due course determine submissions made in other modules about the cause of that situation.

Members of the panel, I'm now going to turn to deal with the further calls, the family's attempt to escape and the Kedir family entering flat 193 from flat 192.

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To get our bearings, can we please have the MPS floor plan of the 22nd floor. We've seen this similar diagram before. May I give a trigger warning about it: again, it's a floor plan that will show names of those who died but no other images.

Can I ask for \{MET00012529/24\}.
Looking at that plan, can I just deal with what's gone on across the floor:

The Elgwahrys have moved upstairs to the 23rd floor from flat 196. You see the 6 flat.

Naomi Li and Lydia Liao have moved from flat 195 to flat 193, to the home of Nadia and Bassem.

The Kedir family, with their three children, were still at this time in flat 192.

Tony Disson remained in flat 194.
Sirria Choucair had moved from flat 191 into flat 193 to be with the rest of her family, possibly brought there by her granddaughter Mierna.

We can take down the diagram.
As you will hear in later presentations, multiple calls were made from floor 22 in the second hour of the fire. Please bear in mind those calls when you consider the situation of the Choucair family.

For present purposes, may I focus particularly on the calls from flat 193. We know that from 02.36, the

Choucair family recommenced making emergency calls. At 02.36.39, Nadia Choucair connected to BT exchange. She said that, "We need to know what's going on". Although not reflected on the transcript, a voice can be heard on the recording saying that, "There's a fire next door".

Upon being transferred to the LFB control room at 02.37, Nadia Choucair told them that they were in flat 193, on the 22nd floor, and that there were eight people in the room. She explained that there was a build-up of smoke in their flat coming from a fire next door, although she had blocked the doors and shut the windows as advised. She repeated throughout the call, with increasing anxiety, that there was too much smoke in the room.

The transcript records Nadia saying that she had very bad asthma, though listening to the recording it may be that she said that a child had very bad asthma, which could have been a reference to Fatima or Zainab Choucair.

In this call, Nadia asked, "Can the helicopter take us, please". Rescue by helicopters was something that would be raised by various occupants of the flat in subsequent calls. CRO Adams made no response to that request. She told her, "We're trying to get to you as soon as possible" and "We are coming to you. We will 25
get to you, OK?" In the background, a male voice, believed to be Bassem Choukair, could also be heard to ask if there was a helicopter. Nadia was told to "ring back if it starts catching fire in your house". The call was ended by the LFB. On the tape, the caller remained on the line and was heard to say, "If you send us the helicopter we can get out of the window".

As the Phase 1 report found at volume 4, paragraph 29.94 and 99 , the stay-put advice had been revoked in the control room at around 02.35, although there would have been a period of time during which this was relayed to individual CROs. The Choucair family were not given that advice to get out at this time.

At 02.42.11, a male caller, understood from the audio during Nadia's 02.37 call to be Bassem Choukair, called 999 again. Upon connecting with BT exchange, Bassem can be heard on the recording to say:
"We are burning in the house, Fire Brigade, quickly, please ... we are dying, guys ... we can't sit in the house from the smoke."

Bassem was then put through to CRO Adams at 02.43.55. He told her that the fire was about to come into flat 193, where there were seven or eight people. He asked, "If you send helicopter from the other side you can get out other side", but was informed, "We don't
have any helicopters, I'm sorry". The operator then told the family for the first time that they needed to get themselves out now. Bassem replied, "We can't get out of the building, there is smoke everywhere". The operator said that Bassem had to leave, but ended by saying, "You make the decision whether you think you need to leave or not". The Phase 1 report found at volume 4, paragraph 29.99, that this was not the clear and uncompromising advice that SOM Smith had instructed operators to give.

According to Naomi Li, the Choucair family tried to leave the flat at this juncture. Nadia Choucair was desperate for the two neighbours not to be left behind and grabbed Naomi's cardigan, tearing it. However, Naomi would not leave without speaking to the fire service first, having previously been told to stay put.

Naomi Li then called the control room at 02.51.09. She said, "We want to know if we need to, if we need to run downstairs or where to go". Despite the stay-put advice having been revoked in the control room and at the fire ground, she was told that there was smoke everywhere in the building and to:
"... make your way out or stay where you are, I can't see, you need to decide that for yourself ... your best bet is to try to get out of there."

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During the course of the call, there was knocking on the door. In her Inquiry statement, Naomi confirms that this was the Choucair family returning back. The timing of the Choucair family returning to flat 193 can also be placed by reference to a subsequent call that started with BT exchange at 02.55 .39 in which Nadia Choucair can be heard to shout, "Help! Help! We're alive in Grenfell Tower".

Upon being put through to CRO Duddy, Nadia handed the phone to Lydia Liao, who asked, "Can you send a helicopter ... because the fire is everywhere". She added, "The fire is just next to us, in the room next to us". The operator advised them several times with an emphatic voice to leave, ending by saying this was their only chance of surviving.

Can I turn to additional contact with family and friends.

Mierna Choucair sent her best friend a WhatsApp message at 02.40 saying that they needed to try to escape. It was in reply to a screenshot sent by the friend showing the tower on fire from the outside.

Nadia Choucair left her brother Nabil Choucair a voice message in English at 02.41:
"Hello Nabil, there is a fire in our building. We are sitting in our flat. Okay. Bye."

Between 02.40 and just after 03.00, Sawsan Choucair
was in touch with her sister, culminating in her
standing with a firefighter at the scene and telling Nadia to "get out, get to the stairs".

As recorded in the Phase 1 report, at volume 3, paragraph 16.12, a photograph taken of the whiteboard in Command Unit 7 at the incident ground, timestamped at 03.00, reflected the state of knowledge based on fire survival guidance calls at that time.

I would like the picture of this whiteboard to be shown to the panel so that you can recall how the information was set up. But before that, a trigger warning, please. It is an image of a whiteboard that will again show flats and numbers, but no other images. Its reference is \{MET00015924\}.

I'm looking at the top of the whiteboard, where you can see flat 192 and then " 2 ", referring, we think, from the evidence, to adults, and then " 5 " referring to children, with a " $P$ ", suggesting priority. Now, that would reflect the Kedir family, but in fact there were two adults and three children.

Flat 193, it says "2" for adults, " 3 " for children, with a " P ", priority. That is also not correct; there were five adults.

Flat 194, one adult, with a " P " for priority.

## That's Mr Disson.

Flat 195, six adults. That is also not correct.
The information as of 3.00 am was out of date. It did not reflect what Naomi Li relayed in the call at 01.30.38, when she said, "We are in the neighbour's house now", or what was said in the calls made from flat 193 at 02.37 by Nadia Choucair and 02.42 by Bassem Choukair, in which the presence of eight people was relayed, ie their family and Naomi and Lydia.

We can take down the image. Thank you.
When I told you before about the Codd and Joseph deployment, I showed you the wall on floor 3. That was where the bridgehead was just before it moved before 03.15 , and the only information written on the 3rd floor, you will recall, was "22 195", with no other references to priority status or the occupants or any other mention of flat 192,193 or 194 , as identified in the whiteboard timestamped at 3 o'clock that we just saw.

Can we then turn to the list of FSG information that was written on to the wall of the ground floor of the tower once the bridgehead moved down there. This was written by Watch Manager Williams.

My final trigger warning: this will be writing in relation to flat numbers and persons. The reference is
\{MET00015815\}.
I'm going to ask to zoom in on the bottom end of the middle column of handwriting. You will see a reference to "193", flat 193, and "22", floor 22. So "193 22" and it says "10P". If it's difficult to see, it's four up from the bottom in the middle column, "193 22 10P".

Now, that entry must have been written after 3 o'clock and, indeed, likely after 3.21, as it cannot be seen on the earlier photographs, and I'm going to link it to what happened with Naomi Li and Lydia Liao. But while you're still looking at it, the fact that there is no "BA", ie breathing apparatus, written next to it indicates that no crews were sent to the flat after that time. Other parts of that wall do bear the "BA" reference.

We can take it down, thank you.
I'm not going to ask for it to be shown, but you, sir, and the panel will recall there was also a green wall at the bottom of the stairs at Grenfell Tower that was also used to write down information, and there is no reference to flat 193 or anything to do with persons there on that wall. The reference, just for the record, is $\{$ MET00015817\}.

Finally, a personal notebook entry was made by Watch Manager Furnell that read "193, 22nd floor, 11 people",

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which he suspected came from the command unit at some point before 03.47 .

The Phase 1 report concluded at volume 3,
paragraph 16.51 , that it was likely that the
Hashim-Kedir family relocated from flat 192 to flat 193 shortly before 3 o'clock and that they were certainly there by 03.07.

At 02.59.29, police helicopter footage captures a person at the southwest corner living room of flat 193 waving their hand, and the information was communicated to the police operators as "people on the balcony south west corner, 2nd floor from the top". Footage, which I' II come back to, over the next few minutes shows two people leaning out of the window and smoke coming out of the flat. The reference for that video is \{MET00021516\} and the police log is $\{$ MET00023294/19\}.

Bassem Choukair called BT exchange at 03.01.47. He said, "Please, we are dying, guys, we're dying". At the same time, footage from the NPAS helicopter shows someone at the window of flat 193 who is believed by members of the family to have been Bassem. He gesticulates as if to attract the attention of the helicopter crew, but there was no hope of rescue.

Bassem was put through to the LFB at 03.02.06. He asked CRO Howson to send a helicopter. The operator
replied, "We can't rescue you with a helicopter", and that they would have to leave. As she put it:
"Make your way [to the stairwell] ... It's going to be dark ... you can make your way along the wall, open the door very slowly, see what's going out, and make your way to the stairwell, and walk down the stairs out of the building ... But make sure you're all covered. Get yourself wet blankets, towels ... You need to leave the building."

Bassem Choukair called BT exchange again at 03.04.34 telling them that they were dying and asking for a helicopter. He was put through to CRO Duddy who told him to cover himself and the rest of the family up with wet towels and go to the staircase and that was their only option. He told Bassem:
"I know there's smoke and I know it's going to be hard, but this is your only chance, your only chance."

Naomi Li called the LFB at 03.07.13. She told them that there were 12 people now in the flat -- in fact, there were 13 people, including her -- and that the smoke was really bad now. She was told to cover with wet blankets and make their way down.

Prior to the call, Naomi had spoken to Lee Chapman. As with the Italian families yesterday, this is another example of Lee, the husband, watching the fire on
television and talking to Naomi on the phone about the fire while he's in Malaysia and she is in Grenfell
Tower. The couple discussed how Naomi and Lydia would try to leave and make it down for their last chance.

Can I deal with the timing of Naomi and Lydia's evacuation from the flat.

As we know, at 03.03, Firefighter Codd tallied out from entry control. He and Firefighter Joseph were briefed to go to flat 195 on floor 22. The crew was not briefed with the details of the occupants of that flat. In his Phase 1 evidence, Mr Codd told the Inquiry that he had no radio communications once he started going up the tower.

On the way up, he met a group of what he perceived to be three children. The group must have included Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, who were adults. On meeting the crew, Naomi Li recalls telling the firefighter that she had left more than ten people in flat 193 on floor 22. Although Firefighter Codd neither recalled this nor sought to ascertain where the evacuees had come from, the information appears to have been written on the ground floor wall I showed you before, the middle column: flat 193, floor 22, 10P.

The evacuating residents exited the building at 03.21. Naomi called Lee Chapman when he was on the
phone with the Metropolitan Police from Kuala Lumpur trying to explain his wife's predicament. The transcript records Lee suddenly speaking to Naomi and realising she was out but the others were not. During the course of the call, Lee told the police that ten people tried to get out behind them and she can't see them.

PC Jacobs of the Metropolitan Police Service was wearing a body-worn camera on the night. It recorded at 03.21.14 Naomi Li calling out to firefighters in Command Unit 8 that there was a woman with three children in flat 193. A police message regarding a female with three children was then recorded at 03.21.32. PC Jacobs passed the information on at 03.23.26.

So Naomi and Lydia had been saved, but that one crew had been diverted, and that was a tragic lost opportunity for what by that time would have been both the Choucair family and the Kedir family in that flat.

The final calls from flat 193 began at a point in time when Naomi Li and Lydia Liao must have exited. At 03.08.13, a caller believed to be Hashim Kedir was put through to BT exchange, where he called for a helicopter. When he was passed through to CRO Gotts, he asked, "Can we escape from the helicopter", which he

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said he could see. She did not tell him that that could not happen. She told him they were sending "big ladders".

During the call, someone believed to be Nura Jemal, or possibly Bassem Choukair, could be heard to scream "Please, please, we're burning! The fire is getting inside!" CRO Gotts told the caller again that they were sending ladders. The caller said, "If you send helicopter, we can escape". The operator said, "All right, well I' Il pass that over to let them know where you are".

At 03.14, Nadia Choucair was put through to BT exchange. The call lasted for 1 minute 30 seconds. Nadia's opening sentence is, "My daughter's unconscious, she's dying". Given Zainab's young age, it is likely that Nadia was referring to her.

Nadia was told that the LFB has advised everybody to get out of the building, to which she responded, "I can't breathe ... We can't ... my baby's unconscious". She pleaded repeatedly for a helicopter.

The BT operator told her to try to get out as quickly as they could. In response to the advice given, Nadia is heard saying, "We need to go on the staircase, guys, we need to go on the staircase".

On being transferred to the control room at
03.15.31, the call cuts off, but before it does, someone else is in the flat and can be heard to shout:
"Can we go on the staircase? Right, guys, we need to go on the staircase. You need to go on the staircase. Are you listening, everyone? Is everyone listening? Right, we need to wet ourselves and go on the staircase ..."

At 03.21, Nadia Choucair was called by the Metropolitan Police operator as a result of the previous call being cut off. The operator had been told the caller 's name was Nadia. Upon her answering, he told her, "Nadia, you need to escape by all means necessary". She told the operator that there was so much smoke, but he replied, "You're going to have to escape by all means necessary", in response to which someone says, "Right, we're going to have to go out, guys, we're going to have to go out, the police said".

Panel, the 03.14 and 03.21 calls, taken together, cumulatively indicate a further attempt to escape, but it did not succeed.

Chairman, as you and the panel will also be aware of, the helicopter at this time was capturing images of the tower and relaying the location of people trapped. However, the heli-tele download link was not working and so this was not transmitted to the command unit or the

## control room.

The family have identified images from flat 193. As I mentioned earlier, at 3.01, someone is seen waving something at the window. The family believe that this is Bassem or Nadia. At 3.15.30, a lady, possibly Nadia, is seen waving again. At 3.17.36, the message is relayed:
"We have people trapped in the building west side, south west corner on floors $17,20,21$, on the end flats of the west side on the floor. I have spoken to LFB."

At 03.21.18, MPS helicopter confirms, "Woman with three children from 193". At 03.22.45, two people are seen by the window, possibly Bassem and Nadia. At 03.23.32, recordings are heard on NPAS relating to flat 193.

At 03.24.02, a final 999 call began with Hashim Kedir using Nadia's phone to speak to CRO Duddy. You will hear more detail about this call in the presentation this afternoon. The call lasted just under 15 minutes. It begins with Hashim Kedir telling the operator that they are trapped in 193. He told the operator that they had tried to get out but there was too much smoke, that they could not even see 1 metre, to which the operator made clear, "This is your only chance".

Hashim again asked whether they could send a helicopter, to which the reply was, "There's no other way ... You have to try". There appears to be some last effort, including calling the names of the children, but the caller repeatedly says, "We are dying". There are some last personal words heard on the recording, which you will hear about this afternoon. The call ended at approximately 03.39.

Helen Gebremeskel called Nadia Choucair several times during the course of the fire. On the last occasion, while Ms Gebremeskel was still in the tower but just before they went out, in fact exiting at 03.37.30, she urged Bassem Choukair that the family should try to escape.

At about 03.30, Mierna Choucair spoke to her friend, Nadia Elbouti's daughter, for the last time to say that the flat was really hot and full of smoke and she did not think they could get out.

The Phase 1 report at volume 4, paragraph 30.85 , records that some of those who made 999 calls from within the tower were given the impression that rescue by helicopter might be possible or at least were not told in clear terms that it was not possible. It is apparent from Nadia's 999 calls as well as calls from others who died in flat 193 that they thought that

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rescue by helicopter was a possibility. As you have heard in other presentations, so did, for instance, Mariem Elgwahry, who asked for a helicopter or chopper to get them out in a call at 02.25.38 to CRO Howson, and was told "There is, there is one there, OK, all right, the fire brigade are on their way now, they're making their way".

It can be added that, as the Phase 1 report recorded, Hesham Rahman's friend, Anna Krivsoun, asked if a helicopter could be used at 2.36.12. Paulos Tekle, as you will hear this week, requested a helicopter at 02.42.14.

The presence of helicopters is of great significance to the members of the Choucair family. Like other occupants of the tower, Nadia and Bassem were left with a false hope that a helicopter rescue was possible.

May I say one last thing about the 999 calls.
We have gone through today a sequence of call transcripts based on preserved tapes of calls that is the largest body of evidence of its kind from the night of the fire and has understandably been the source of great challenge to this family to listen to and to assist the Inquiry in identifying callers and understanding accents or speech which might not be identified by original transcribers. However painful to
listen to, these calls have enabled the Inquiry to comprehend a great deal, and the accuracy of the evidence is something the family are duly concerned about.

To ensure that the evidence is properly understood and preserved, the solicitors for the Choucair family have written to you about the transcripts of the 999 calls made from flat 193. Suffice it for me to say, on the family's behalf, that they invite the Inquiry to pay close attention to the audio recordings presented to the Inquiry when making their fact-finding and not to rely solely on the existing transcripts.

The archeology investigation established that the six family members died in the southwest corner of the living room of flat 193 in close proximity to one another. Also very nearby were the Hashim-Kedir family. Based on the positions of the family's loved ones, it appears that the adults had formed a protective shield around the children and, in a very powerful sense, they died together as they lived: caring for one another.

Professor Purser initially estimated in section 6 of his Phase 2 report that the adults would have lost consciousness some time around 04.11 to 04.13 and died a few minutes later. He explains that young children, such as Zainab, would likely have become unconscious
earlier, closer to around 03.53, and died soon after.
That's page 54 of section 6 at paragraph 253 of Professor Purser's report \{DAPR0000006/54\}. With the older children, who were aged 11 and 13 , the same point could apply, but, as he said in his evidence to the Inquiry, that point is less certain. The reference is \{Day296/109:9-12\}.

Professor Purser correlates time of death to the spread of the external fire across the south face of the building, which reached the living room area of flat 193 after 03.37, and which would have caused a rapid deterioration in conditions, similar to that reported in flat 203 above, which experienced a similar pattern of fire spread.

Professor Purser's initial estimated times of unconsciousness and death were based on the assumption that the family's uptake of toxic gases was similar to that of Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, who, as you heard, exited flat 193, and Abufras, who fell from flat 203, the flat above, at 03.50. However, in his oral evidence to the Inquiry, Professor Purser clarified the point of difference for the Choucair family being that there was an eight-minute period of exposure during the escape attempt between 02.44 and 02.52 , which could also explain the evidence that Zainab was already unconscious
by the time of the 999 call at 03.14. That is $\{$ Day297/57:11\} to \{Day297/58:20\}.

The 999 recordings suggest that, in desperation, the family tried to escape again between 03.14 and 03.21 .
Finally, the Kedir family can be heard to be near to unconsciousness during the final call that ended at 03.31. This all likely shifts the estimated times of unconsciousness and death of the family back to a slightly earlier period.

In any event, Professor Purser's evidence provides the evidential foundation to properly give the medical cause of death for all members of the family as the more specific and informative formulation of "Inhalation of fumes" rather than the more generic formulation of "Consistent with the effects of fire" currently found in all of the final post-mortem reports for this family. They were completed without the benefit of Professor Purser's detailed Phase 2 work, or the various other lines of evidence, including the calls. To that we add the archaeological evidence that shows that the two families lost consciousness in close proximity to one another, in positioning at odds with the fire having been inside the living room at the time.

Professor Purser concluded that, due to the predicted rapid increase in smoke and asphyxiant gases

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in flat 193, it is likely that the occupants would have become comatose and then died from inhalation of toxic gases before they were exposed to significant heat, a conclusion further reinforced by the additional factors shifting the likely time of death back explored with and accepted by Professor Purser in his oral evidence. I give the reference: \{Day297/57:11\}.

Members of the panel, can I end by observing something that becomes obvious from the presentation of the known facts. This is a family that did everything they could to seek assistance, to try to escape when advised to do so, and to look after one another in that flat right up until the very end.

The memorial at Avondale Park School is for all of these family members who died.

Since that terrible night, Hisam, Sawsan, Malak, Jamil and Nabil have impacted on everyone who has met them. They have contributed to the insight and the rigour of this Inquiry, and they have done it in the memory of the three generations of their family who died. It is a privilege for their legal teams to present what we have told you today on their behalf and on behalf of the rest of the family members who have participated in the Inquiry.

It was Sirria Choucair's wish to be buried next to

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her husband in the family's home village in Lebanon.
The six members of the Choucair family are there now buried.

Just some parting words from the surviving siblings .
Sawsan:
"The way to respect beautiful people who died is to ensure justice."

Hisam:
"They were not just ordinary people, but also
extraordinary people. They were our family and they
should still be here."
Malak:
"They were a lovely, caring family and outgoing people. They will be remembered in my heart forever and never forgotten."

And Nabil:
"Beyond lovely -- the best family. [And, again] They will always be in our heart and soul. They will never be forgotten."

Panel, together, these bereaved people tell you:
"Our loved ones now look down at us to get the justice they deserve in every way. Our loved ones now look down at you, the Chair and panel members, for justice. Grenfell must never ever happen again so that no one will ever suffer the way we are suffering now."

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## Thank you, sir.

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Friedman.
There will be another presentation later today, but
that will not take place until 2 o'clock. So we shall
rise now and resume, please, at 2 o'clock.
Thank you very much.
(12.02 pm)
(The short adjournment)
( 2.00 pm )
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, members of the panel.
I now invite Mr Danny Friedman QC to come back to
the podium, please, to make the presentation on behalf
of the family from flat 192, who sheltered in flat 193.
The members of the family are Hashim Kedir, Nura Jemal,
Yahya Hashim, Firdaws Hashim and Yaqub Hashim.
Before I continue, shall I also give the trigger
warning in the normal way?
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Please.
MR MILLETT: Those here today or those watching on the live
stream may find what Mr Friedman is going to tell us or
show us disturbing or distressing, and they may wish to
leave now or look away from the live stream as the case
may be.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you, yes.

Presentation relating to HASHIM KEDIR, NURA JEMAL,
YAHYA HASHIM, FIRDAWS HASHIM and YAQUB HASHIM by MR FRIEDMAN
MR FRIEDMAN: Nura Jemal, Hashim Kedir and their children,
Yahya, Firdaws and Yaqub, lived in flat 192 on what became the 22nd floor after the refurbishment. The family moved to Grenfell Tower in 2009. All five of the family died in flat 193 together with the Choucair family members.

Can I begin by dealing with each person's date of birth and details, and I will do so in order of age.

Hashim Kedir was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 7 March 1973, and was 44 years old at the time of his death. He was a black cab taxi driver. His wife, Nura Jemal was born in Silte in Ethiopia on 1 August 1981. She was 35 years old.

The couple had three children born in London. Yahya Hashim was born on 5 August 2003. He was 13 years old and a pupil of Kensington Aldridge Academy. His sister, Firdaws Hashim was born on 13 January 2005. She was 12 years old. She also attended Kensington Aldridge Academy. Their brother, Yaqub Hashim was born on 18 May 2011. He was six years old. He went to Avondale Park Primary School.

On 25 May 2018, commemorations were given by and on

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behalf of Hashim Kedir's siblings. They are Assema,
Shemsu, Redwan, Fatuma, Bedriya, Mehammed, Merema and
Jemal, as well as Assema's daughters, Hanan and
Eliza Seid, and Redwan's sons, Ramadan and Habib.
Commemorations were also given by and on behalf of Nura Jemal's sisters and brothers. They are Bedriya, Nurya, Sadik, Fedlu, Mohamud, Jemal and Senia. A moving video presentation was played.

Sir, you heard that Nura Jemal was born in a small village in rural Silte in Ethiopia. At the age of just 14, she moved to the city of Addis Ababa to work to support her family. From there she moved to Saudi Arabia and later to the United Kingdom, where she met and married Hashim.

She remained dedicated to her extended family in Ethiopia, and a source of indispensable moral, emotional and financial support. Nura Jemal was described to you as intelligent, positive-minded and devout, a wonderful mother. She was also a very social person who would befriend anyone, no matter their background or beliefs.

Hashim Kedir was also born in Ethiopia. The smartest boy in the school growing up, he repeatedly topped his class and went on to study electrical engineering before coming to the United Kingdom. But Hashim was also a humble person. He was remembered for
being soft-hearted, generous and with the widest smile a person could have. He loved football and was a big Arsenal fan, something he enjoyed sharing with his children, especially his eldest, Yahya.

There were no limits to what he would do for his family. He prioritised providing for them over his dream of further studies, taking a variety of jobs over the years. He had obtained his London black cab taxi licence shortly before the fire, which was going to be a new chapter for him and the family. Hashim also maintained close and dear relationships with his family members in Norway, the USA and Ethiopia.

Yahya Hashim was the eldest child. He was a student in year 9. He was described to you as a very kind, polite, loving, generous and thankful boy. He inherited his mum's love and respect for their religion, Islam, and, unusually for a child his age, dreamed of becoming an ustaz, an Islamic teacher. He also wanted to make sure everyone around him was okay. He loved laughing and making others laugh by a silly song or funny grimace, and would succeed in having people in stitches. He was full of character.

Firdaws Hashim was in year 7 at the Kensington Aldridge Academy, where she excelled in her studies, as well as a range of extracurricular activity. She was
described to you as a beautiful, intelligent, eloquent and confident person. A voracious reader, she would get through six books from the library over a weekend. She was also a gifted public speaker and, as you heard, was awarded a prize by Bill Gates for the best floor speech in the final of a country-wide public speaking competition. After the fire, the journalist Jon Snow, one of the other judges, poignantly recalled how she had stood out above everybody else. If that wasn't enough, she also had a beautiful singing voice. But, as you heard, Firdaws was also humble, kind and grateful for what she and her community had.

Sir, you saw a glimpse of Firdaws' talent for yourself in a video which captured her singing at her school, a beautiful song by Emily Sande called "Read all about it". Its lyrics encourage people to speak their truth. The first line is, "You've got the words to change a nation". In the film, as they sing along and wildly cheer, Firdaws' friends and schoolmates are evidently captured by the charisma of this young girl who, like her brother Yahya, had unusual leadership qualities.

Last but not least, Yaqub Hashim, the youngest, was by all accounts a ball of pure energy. Always on the move, he loved to dance. You heard how his spirit was
contagious. It was impossible to spend a minute with him without laughing. He was loved alike by teachers and peers at Avondale Park Primary School. His teacher recalled how he would burst through the door of the classroom in the morning and shout "I'm here".

Panel, the commemorations make it so very clear that the three children of Nura and Hashim left their mark.

We have taken some time to recall what was said about these people, not just out of respect to them, but also to relay the strength of their characters and to provide some context for how they would have experienced the events of the fire.

The family were captured on the CCTV of the lift lobby for the last time during the afternoon and night of 13 June. Firdaws Hashim came home at 15.50.
Nura Jemal came with Yaqub Hashim at 18.25.
Yahya Hashim arrived home at 20.36. Finally, Hashim Kedir returned at 23.21.

From an emergency call from floor 4, just before 1.00 am , the fire at Grenfell Tower rapidly reached floor 22 before 01.26.

Even before that time, various residents on floor 22 quickly became aware of the fire. Naomi Li in flat 195 began to smell smoke in her flat as early as 1.15 and made calls to both her husband and the LFB about it.

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Naomi and her cousin, Lydia Liao, then saw the Elgwahrys on their landing, who told them there was a fire in their kitchen in flat 196. Shortly after, Naomi and Lydia began sheltering in flat 193, where the Hashim Kedir and Nura Jemal family would later join them, having been invited into the home by Nadia Choucair.

I have addressed you this morning on calls between 1.30 and 1.40 to control room operators from various occupants on floor 22 informing them that the fire had adversely affected that high floor. You will hear more detail tomorrow about these calls, particularly from Anthony Disson.

For present purposes, at 01.30 .08 , Mr Disson from flat 194 explained to the control room that the conditions were bad on the floor and was assured, "We're on our way", to which he replied, "I' II tell all the rest".

Naomi Li called the control room and made a similar call at 01.30 .38 to say that conditions on their floor had worsened; "There's all smoke now", she said, and that her neighbour had told her that the fire was in the kitchen on floor 22.

In that sequence of calls, at 01.34.50, Hashim Kedir connected to the control room for the first time from
his home. He told CRO Duddy that he and his family were in flat 192, that they couldn't get down the stairs because the stairs are full of smoke, and that smoke was now coming into the flat from the corridor.

Pausing there, this might be another example of the events on floor 16, including the rescuing of
Edward Daffarn and the inability to rescue
Joseph Daniels, causing smoke to fill the stairway for that temporary but decisive period.

While on the phone, Hashim Kedir was told by the operator that people were coming to them, but was asked nothing about how many were in their group or about the profile of the occupants.

At 01.43, Genet Shawo in flat 153 on the 18th floor, with her husband, Paulos Tekle, and two children, called her friend Nura Jemal. Hashim picked up the phone. Hashim told Genet that they were sitting with the children, waiting for the fire services to come and rescue them.

As I noted this morning, in none of these calls were the occupants of floor 22 advised to evacuate, and in none of the calls were details taken to establish whether that was possible.

Service requests were made and passed to the fire ground following the earlier calls from floor 22 . In 53

## outline:

A control request referred to "Persons on 22nd floor, smoke coming into flat". It was completed on the log at 01.41.35.

There was a radio message to various LFB pumps between 01.35 and 01.36 that stated, "We've got persons on the 22 nd floor with smoke coming into their flat".

The Sadler list of handwritten flats with numbers drawn up between approximately 01.40 and 1.50 refer to flat 195 but no other flats on floor 22.

And at 2.09, the control room called through to Command Unit 8 to indicate, "We've got a caller in flat 192 on the 22nd floor unable to leave". This call appears to link to the call between Hashim Kedir and CRO Duddy at 01.34.

Panel, we know that after this, no deployments were specifically made to the floor for the purposes of rescue until after 3.03, at which time Watch Manager De Silvo deployed Firefighters Codd and Joseph. They, as you know, did not get to the floor.

Neither did any other crew during the whole night of the fire, save for Firefighter Roberts of the Paddington crew who, tasked for firefighting and not rescue purposes, tallied out from the bridgehead at 01.56. He got to the lobby door of floor 22 where he says he
"opened the door to the floor, stuck [his] head in, shouted out but received no response from anybody so [he] went back down". There is no evidence that his presence registered with any of the multiple remaining occupants on floor 22 at the time.

Can I deal with the calls from floor 22 before 02.40, and particularly those from flat 192.

For context, please bear in mind that multiple calls were made from floor 22 in the second hour of the fire.
For these purposes, I will focus on the calls from 192, the Hashim and Nura family, but we would also ask you to consider that there were calls from Anthony Disson, the Choucair family and Naomi Li and Lydia Liao.

Hashim Kedir called the control room from flat 192 at 02.03.47. When asked, he said, "There was too much smoke in the corridor" and "We can't get out". Although he was assured that the firefighters would be told "you're there", he was not asked about numbers or occupancy profile, which would have confirmed the presence of three children. The trapped status of the caller was confirmed in a call to Command Unit 8 at 02.09.25 in which it was relayed that, "We've got a caller in flat 192 on the 22nd floor unable to leave".

Firdaws Hashim was put through to BT at 2.09.46.
She can be heard to scream that, "There is a fire in our

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house", and that there were three kids. The call was then put through to the LFB at 02.10.31, during which Hashim Kedir came on to the line and told CRO Howson that he was in flat 192 and that, "There's a fire in the kitchen". He repeated this on several occasions and could be heard telling others to get down.

There is a 23 -second delay while the operator said she would speak with the crews at the scene. When the operator again came on the line, Hashim repeated "The fire is inside the kitchen", and that, "Everybody is coughing now", to which he was told they were advising people to stay in their flats, "But if you've got a fire in your flat, it's your decision; you may have to try to get out". The caller said he was trapped and that there were children, heard by the operator as two adults, five children, before the line went dead.

At 02.17.17, BT sent a message to the Metropolitan Police Service stating that, "We have received a number of calls from people trapped on the 22nd floor". There is no evidence as to whether this was passed to the LFB command unit.

A further call came through to LFB from Hashim Kedir at 02.18.06. He stated at the beginning of the call, as can be heard on the tape we've listened to, "We need to move to next door". At that stage, he was still in

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    flat 192.
        Sir, may I ask for a break? I'm thinking it should
    be }15\mathrm{ minutes.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think that would be a good idea.
MR FRIEDMAN: Thank you very much.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll rise until 2.35. Thank you.
(2.19 pm)
    (A short break)
(2.35 pm)
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Friedman.
MR FRIEDMAN: Sir, thank you for the time.
    A further call came through to the LFB from
    Hashim Kedir at 02.18.06. He stated at the beginning of
    the call, as can be heard on the tape we've listened to,
    "We need to move next door". At that stage, he was
    still in flat 192.
    CRO Howson, again the operator, asked him, "Who's in
    the flat with you?", to which he confirmed two adults
    and three children. During the course of the call,
    a sound of banging can be heard, as well as someone
    calling "Nadia" and thereafter "Nadia" and "Bassem".
    That must presumably be Hashim and Nura's family banging
    on the door and calling to their neighbours,
    Mr and Mrs Choucair. At the end of the call,
    Hashim Kedir was informed by the CRO that, "They're
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    making their way there now".
    A radio message from control to command unit at
    02.26.22 indicated that there were persons trapped in
    flat 192, floor 22, who "say the fire is in the flat
    next door to them". Command replied asking whether it
    was known how many people were in the flat, to which the
    message came back in the negative.
    At 02.24, Hindi, a friend of Nura Jemal, called LFB
    control to say that her friend, with her three children
and husband, were in the building and that they were
burning. The information was passed on to the police
and the control room at 02.30.51.
At 02.33.22, Hashim Kedir connected with BT
exchange. A child's screaming can be heard on the
recording. The call was put through to CRO Howson at
02.34.16, and Hashim told her that they were still in
flat 192, that they were three kids and two adults, and
that the fire was now in the living room.

For the first time, Hashim was told clearly to leave the flat. The operator's words were:
"What you need to do, you need to get wet towels, you need to put them around your mouth, you and the children, and you need to go down. All right? It's going to be dark, and that, so you need to stay together, hold hands, all right, but keep your mouths
covered, all right?"
She said she would let the crews know what's going on.

During the course of the call, a female supervisor in the control room can be heard to prompt this evacuation advice.

Firdaws Hashim made another call at 02.35 .03 and passed the phone on to her mother, Nura Jemal, when they got through to the MPS operator. During the call, while crying, Nura told them that she was in flat 192 with her husband and three children. She asked about rescue by helicopter. At this stage, she said the fire was in the sitting room and coming through to the bedroom. She begged, "Please save us, my kids, please". The police operator duly called CRO Russell at 02.41 .46 to let them know of the two adults and three children in flat 192 and that there was a fire in the living room.

Hashim Kedir subsequently called the LFB control room again at 02.45.22 to indicate that they had tried to get out, but could not, and that they were dying. CRO Fox implored them to get out of the property now, and she can be heard to urge to advise the same by a supervisor. On the tape, you can hear the family go out and then come back in, with the caller then saying, "I tried to get out but I am afraid to".

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The family were still in flat 192 at 02.53 .17 when CRO Jones took a call from Hashim. The caller told the operator, "We are in 192 Grenfell Tower". CRO Jones advised them to try to leave.

You heard this morning of the numerous calls that the occupants of flat 193 recommenced making from around 02.35. I will not repeat the Choucair calls now, but please recall them in the period as all coming from floor 22 at a similar time.

Likewise, as I showed you this morning, various references to people in need of rescue were written on the board of the Command Unit 7 by 03.00 am, and then on the ground floor wall at the entrance to the tower by some time after 03.15.

We know of the one crew who was sent to floor 22 at 03.09, and that they found Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, who had escaped from flat 193, on their way down from the floor. You will see that the escape was after the Hashim and Nura family had entered the flat and joined them and the Choucair family. The women came out of the tower at 03.21.

Both Naomi Li and her husband, Lee Chapman, told firefighters at the scene and the police over the phone that ten people were left in flat 193. Ten persons, or "10P", was the detail written on the ground floor wall

## in Grenfell Tower. In fact, we know that there were 11

## people: the grandma, the husband and wife and the three

 Choucair children, and now Hashim Kedir, Nura Jemal, Yahya, Firdaws and Yaqub.The Phase 1 report concluded at volume 3, paragraph 16.51, that it was likely that the Hashim and Nura family relocated from flat 192 to flat 193 before 3.00 am , and that they were certainly there by 03.07 . From this moment, the narrative of the Choucair family, which you heard about this morning, and that of the Hashim and Nura family come together.

At 02.59.29, police helicopter footage captured a person at the southwest corner living room of flat 193 waving their hand, and the information was communicated to the police operators as, "People on the balcony, south west corner, 2nd floor from the top". Footage in the next few minutes, as I have summarised, shows two peopel lesing out of the windew and smote coming out of the flat.

Bassem Choukair called BT exchange at 03.01.47. He said, "Please, we are dying, guys, we're dying". He was put through to the LFB at 03.02.06. He asked CRO Howson to send a helicopter. She said, "We can't rescue you with a helicopter", and that they would have to leave. Her words:
"Make your way [to the stairwell] ... It's going to be dark ... make your way along the wall, open the door very slowly, see what's going out, and make your way to the stairwell, and walk down the stairs out of the building ... But make sure you're all covered. Get yourself wet blankets, towels ... You need to leave the building."

Bassem Choukair called BT exchange again at 03.04.34, telling them they were dying and asking for a helicopter. He was put through to CRO Duddy, who told them to cover themselves with wet towels and get to the staircase as that was the only option. He told Bassem:
"I know there's smoke and I know it's going to be hard, but this is your only chance, your only chance."

Naomi Li, at this stage still in flat 193, called the LFB at 03.07.13. She told them there were 12 people now in the flat -- that would be an error, because there were $13--$ and that the smoke was really bad now. She was told to cover with wet blankets and make their way down. Prior to the call, Naomi had spoken to Lee Chapman, her husband in Malaysia. They discussed her and Lydia trying to leave in what might be their last chance. You heard this morning that they did do so after this call. Before they were to leave, Naomi was with Nura Jemal by the window, where Nura asked her to

## pray with her.

The final calls from flat 193 began at a point in time when Naomi Li and Lydia Liao must have exited. At 03.08.13, a caller believed to be Hashim Kedir was put through to BT exchange. When he was passed through to CRO Gotts, he asked, "Can we escape from the helicopter", which he said he could see. She did not tell him that this could not happen. She told him that they were sending "big ladders".

During the call, someone, believed to be Nura Jemal or possibly Bassem Choukair, could be heard to scream, "We're burning! The fire is inside!" CRO Gotts told the caller again that they were sending ladders. The caller said, "If you send a helicopter, we can escape". The operator replied, "All right, well I' II pass that over to let them know where you are".

At 03.14, Nadia Choucair was put through to BT exchange and implored them that, "We need a helicopter". She told them that her baby, presumably Zainab, was now unconscious. The BT operator told her to try to get out as quickly as they could.

On being transferred to the control room at 03.15.51, the call cut off, but someone else in the flat can be heard to shout:
"You need to go on the staircase, are you listening

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everyone? Is everyone listening? Right, we need to wet ourselves and go on the staircase."

This likely indicated a further attempt to escape.
At 3.21, Nadia Choucair was called by the MPS operator as a result of the previous call being cut off. The operator had been told the caller's name was Nadia. Upon her answering, he told her, "Nadia, you need to escape by all means necessary". She told the operator that there was so much smoke, but he replied again,
"You're going to have to escape by all means necessary".
At 03.24.02, a final call began with Hashim Kedir using Nadia Choucair's phone to speak to CRO Duddy. It lasted just under 15 minutes. Hashim told the operator that they had tried to get out but there was too much smoke, to which the operator made clear, "This is your only chance". Hashim asked again whether they could send a helicopter, to which the reply was, "No, there's no other way ... You have to try".

From listening to the tape, there appears to be some last effort, including discussion of the possibility of trying with the other family, but the caller repeatedly says, "We are dying". Some of the last words heard on the recording, but not reflected in the transcript, are as follows:
"Operator: You need -- you need to get to that

## staircase .

"Hashim Kedir: Well, we can't, we can't even move to the other room. Yahya, I love you. Firdaws, I love you. Nura, I love you. Yaqub, I love you, okay? We will die together. We will die together."

The tape indicates there was a Muslim declaration of faith.

The control operator terminated the call at approximately 03.39. Hashim was passed back through to the BT operator, who asked him if he had finished his call with the fire service. On the recording, Hashim can be heard to muster a response of, "Fire, fire ".

Forensic archeology investigations recovered the remains of all of the Hashim/Nura family in close proximity in the southwest corner of the living room of flat 193. Also very nearby were their neighbours and final givers of refuge, the Choucair family. As I drew attention to this morning, the archaeological diagrams and photographs show the adults closed the children in something of a protective circle. It is unnecessary to bring these up, but they are powerful, because they undeniably indicate the family died close together and tightly bound to protect one another, as reflected in the final telephone call.

Professor Purser links the final rapid period of

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deterioration in the conditions in flat 193 to the spread of the external fire across the area where the living room was situated after around 3.37.

Professor Purser initially estimated in section 6 of his Phase 2 report that the adults in flat 193 would have lost consciousness some time around 4.11 to 4.13 and died a few minutes later. He explained generally that the young children would likely have become unconscious earlier, closer to around 03.53, and died soon after. This would include Yaqub, aged 6.

It now follows from Professor Purser's oral evidence that Yahya and Firdaws, aged 13 and 12, would likely have lost consciousness and died slightly earlier than their parents. The reference is \{Day296/109:9-12\}.

In fact, as with the Choucair family, there was an additional exposure to smoke which shifts back the Hashim/Nura family's likely time of unconsciousness and death to slightly earlier than Professor Purser's initial estimates. As was explored with him in his oral evidence, the family experienced a period of approximately 15 minutes of exposure to toxic fire fumes in flat 192 prior to relocating to flat 193. This was the source of a significant addition to the family's total exposure of fumes, and that is dealt with at \{Day297/59-63\}.

Professor Purser concluded that the Hashim/Nura family would have become unconscious, then died from the effects of inhalation of toxic fire fumes, before the interior of the flat came to be on fire. Based on this evidence, the medical cause of death for all members of the family can properly be given as the more specific and informative formulation of "Inhalation of fire fumes", or some similar wording, rather than the generic formulation of "Consistent with the effects of fire" currently found in four of the five final post-mortem reports for the family, completed without the benefit of Professor Purser's specialist evidence. The final post-mortem report for Firdaws Hashim already contains the more specific medical cause of death. That of itself illustrates how these matters can be framed differently by different pathologists even at the preliminary stage. However, the formulation we now suggest is based on all available evidence at the end of a fact-finding process and not at the preliminary stage, as required by the formality of filling in the post-mortem reports prior to the in-depth investigations that have now taken place.

Can I end by sharing that, during our time working on the Inquiry, so many people in the tower and local area have spoken so very fondly of this family. Both

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the parents and their children really did light up many
lives. A light has gone out for all these family members and friends who have lost them.

People can and must connect to this Inquiry in different ways, but it is worth mentioning that Sadik and Bedriya, the brother and sister of Nura Jemal, and Shemsu, the brother of Hashim Kedir, have come from Ethiopia and attended this Inquiry on the vast number of its several hundred hearing days.

All of the family from around the world found the months of long wait for identification and burial, and the condition of the remains of their loved ones reduced to ashes, despite the religious prohibition on cremation, intensely traumatising. To this day, they find it impossible to properly grieve, and this will remain so until the long and complex Inquiry, and all the other legal processes that wait upon its conclusion, reach a just resolution.

We know that the panel know this, but it is worth taking the opportunity to reflect on this family's experience and what it is like for them from their perspective five years on, to only now be at the end of the beginning.

Can I end at this stage with words from
Bedriya Jamal Kelbeto:
"Until the end of my life, from the bottom of my
heart, I will never forget Hashim, Nura and the
children. We will never stop praying for you."

## Thank you, sir.

May I ask for a 30-minute break, please?
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Friedman.
Yes, of course.
We'll rise now and we'll sit again at 3.25 .
Thank you very much.
( 2.56 pm )

## (A short break)

( 3.31 pm )
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, thank you, members of the panel.

I will now invite Allison Munroe Queen's Counsel, please, to come to the podium to make the presentation on behalf of the family of Gary Maunders, who died in flat 203 on floor 23.

Again, before I ask Ms Munroe to start, I should give a trigger warning: the material and things said in this presentation may be distressing to those listening to it, whether in the room or on the live stream.
Therefore, those who may feel distressed should either leave now or perhaps a little later, or look away from

## the live stream.

Ms Munroe, thank you.
Presentation relating to GARY MAUNDERS by MS MUNROE
MS MUNROE: Thank you. Good afternoon, sir. Good afternoon, Ms Istephan, Mr Akbor.

I would like to mention that we have with us today
a number of members of Gary's family. We have, starting
from the far end, Kenita, Channel, Gary's nieces, and
Ana, his former partner and mother to two of his
children. There are also family members who are watching remotely.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
MS MUNROE: In the course of this presentation this
afternoon, we will not be hearing when Gary Maunders
took up a tenancy at Grenfell Tower. We will not be hearing about which floor he lived on or which flat he lived in. We will not be hearing any of that because Gary Maunders was not a resident of Grenfell Tower.

Gary was a west London boy born and bred. He had friends who he would visit and socialise with, who were residents of Grenfell Tower. On that night,
14 June 2017, that is exactly what Gary had been doing: visiting a friend, Debbie Lamprell, at Grenfell Tower. It was a visit from which Gary would never return.

Gary was born on 4 January 1960 in London and lived
in North Kensington all his life. He was the eldest of four children. He was the only boy, and he and his mother, Joan, shared a special bond. Gary was a much-loved son, brother, father, uncle, grandfather, granduncle and friend.

He was 57 years of age when he died, and he was survived by his mother, Joan; sisters, Lorraine, Tammie and Ann; and children, Scott, Amy, Aaron and his younger sister, who were just 14 and 9 respectfully at the time of the fire ; his grandchildren; his nieces, Kenita and Channel Spence; nephews, grandnephews and grandnieces.

Gary had many loves. One of his most passionate was the beautiful game: football. He was a talented player himself in his youth and, being a native of west London, there was only one team he could possibly
follow: Manchester United. He supported them through the highs of the late 1960s, the not so glory years of the 1970s and 1980s, and back to the heights of the treble, Premier League and Champions League success in the 1990s and 2000.

Gary became a painter and decorator, and he had a thirst for learning. He was outgoing and quick-witted.

At the commemoration hearings, the family spoke eloquently about the person that Gary was. For Gary,

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family was everything. Together with Ana, Gary had his two youngest children. Ana recalled at those hearings how their early years as a couple were filled with happiness and laughter. Gary was a devoted and loving father to his children and, indeed, he considered his children to be the greatest achievement of his life. He was physically and verbally very affectionate to them, and they knew how much he loved them as a result. Gary was the life and soul of everything he did and everywhere he went. He had a great sense of humour.

In her remembrance of Gary, his sister Tammie said, addressing her brother directly, "I hope you're with Dad, still nagging his ear off as you always did".

Tammie paid special tribute to the bond that Gary and his mother had. She said that their mum always supported him and had his back. They spoke every day.

In a video played at the commemoration hearing, his mother said that he would make sure that everyone around him was always laughing, and she felt you could never be sad, not when he was around.

Tammie herself loved the relationship that Gary had with her own children and his fun-loving nature.

He loved music and especially the legendary soul singer Marvin Gaye.

His nieces, Kenita and Channel, gave us a very, very
vivid pen portrait at that commemoration hearing. They told us that Gary was a man with values and a huge character. They spoke of how involved he had been in their lives when they were growing up, and the bonds that he formed not only with them, but the next generation of the family. Kenita remembers the close relationship that Gary had with her children.

His nieces also remembered how they were sometimes on the receiving end of his jokes, and shared memories of how the entire family would spend Christmas together, and the tradition of sitting around the kitchen table playing cards.

Gary took great pride in his appearance, never a crease out of place. He was a sharp dresser and used to joke, "I've still got it, ain't I?"

His home was equally immaculate, and he took great care to make sure everything was neat and tidy. That was the man that Gary Maunders was.

He lived not at Grenfell Tower, as I said; he lived at 75 Lancaster Road, North Kensington, and on that fateful night he had been, together with his friend, Debbie Lamprell, in her flat, flat 161 on the 19th floor when the fire broke out.

Sir, you and the panel will recall from the presentation of the evidence in relation to Debbie by

Mr Friedman Queen's Counsel last week that she had returned home from work at Holland Park Opera that evening on 13 June and was seen in the lift lobby about 22.57. She had texted her mum just after 11.00 confirming that she was home safely.

Gary is not seen on the CCTV footage in the lift lobby area that evening, which would suggest that he had perhaps spent the day at the Grenfell Tower.

The events of the night itself.
The 19th floor.
Sir, you will also recall that Fadumo Ahmed, who was living in flat 164, had left her flat after receiving a call at 1.20 from her cousin telling her that the outside of Grenfell Tower was on fire.

Sir, it may be useful just to remind ourselves at this point of that floor plan from the 19th floor $\{$ MET00012529/21\}. Thank you. We can see the flat marked " 1 ", which is the flat wherein Debbie Lamprell and Gary Maunders had been spending that evening at the time the fire broke out.

You can see, sir, that flat 164 was on the west side of the tower. Fadumo said that she saw Debbie and Gary when she came out of her flat. Debbie was standing opposite the two lifts near the cupboard doors and said that people were going upstairs. Fadumo describes the

## conditions in the lobbies as follows:

"It was full of thick, dark, grey smoke. It was dark and steamy and making it hard to see very far."

She also said the smoke smelt like gas and chemicals, which burnt her eyes.

Fadumo recalls opening the door and going into the stairway, which had less smoke than the lobby at that point. She also recalls that they walked slowly up the stairs and they did not see anyone else between the 19th and the 23rd floor.

Again, sir, we've heard extensive evidence about the upward migration of a number of people to the
23rd floor. We know that Gary travelled with
Debbie Lamprell from flat 161 up the stairs to the 23rd floor. They were among a group of people that took refuge in Moses Bernard's flat.

Debbie and Gary were initially standing in the corridor before taking refuge in flat 201. In her account, again, Fadumo stated they were standing in the corner of the flat, crowded around the entrance door and the hallway. She said they felt trapped between the fire in the living room that had broken out through the window and the thick smoke coming in from the lobby.

At some point, Debbie and Gary were separated.
According to Debbie Lamprell's timeline, she made

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a 999 call at 01.34.44, lasting around about a minute.
That was connected to the BT exchange. Debbie reported being in someone else's flat, and it would appear that the fire had broken into the flat by that stage as the caller is heard saying, "Look if the fire is burning", and there's a command to, "Get the dog, get the dog", presumably that being Marley, Moses' dog, away from the fire .

The call is somehow then disconnected and reconnected at 01.39.22, this time lasting for a minute and a half. It is during this call that Debbie and Gary become separated from each other. The call does not appear to have been connected properly because the operator doesn't spoke and, instead, it is an automated recording throughout. Debbie comes on to the call and one can hear her saying and calling repeatedly, "Gary, Gary".

The call then disconnects again and reconnects a few seconds later. This time it lasts for 2 minutes and 45 seconds. Again, it is the automated recording that we hear. Debbie continues to call for Gary and is heard saying, "I'm telling you, no one's coming up".

Whilst we do not know for certain how and why Debbie and Gary became separated, we do know from the timings of that BT exchange call that they were separated some

## time around 01.39

At that time, we also know that the conditions in flat 201 - - Moses Bernard's flat - - had been rapidly deteriorating. The occupants were affected by the impact of smoke and the ever-encroaching fire. It would appear that the fire had broken into the flat at that stage via the window.

Given the reported smoke conditions and fire, as well as Debbie repeatedly calling for Gary, visibility in the flat must have been exceptionally poor at this stage and significantly worsening.

When, at 01.41, Debbie makes a further call, this time connected to the control room, she was in the bedroom, and reported that she was unable to see because the smoke was so thick.

Conditions in the lobby at this time.
Gary and the other occupants were also being affected by thick, black smoke from the lobby. The Inquiry was reminded last week during the presentation of Rania Ibrahim of her Facebook live stream, which started around 01.38 and ran for 6 minutes and 33 seconds. It showed the conditions inside her flat and the lobby at around 1 minute 14 into the stream. It is worth noting and highlighting a few extracts from that stream, which may offer some insight into Gary's

## movements.

The stream opened with Rania saying \{IWS00001240\}, "Oh, God". We then hear another woman saying, "Don't open the door, don't open the door, you're letting smoke in". In Arabic, Rania says, "There is a fire in the building". Rania then says, "I'm scared, maybe someone's outside". Another female voice is heard saying, "They're in another flat". Rania replies, "Are you sure?" The female replies, "They've gone to the other flat that was open". We then hear loud banging and Rania opens her door again, shouting, "Hello, come here. Hello? Hello?"

Pausing there, if I may, I'd like to remind us all of the Phase 1 report, volume 2, paragraph 11.32. At that paragraph, there is an image, figure 11.9. It is a capture from Rania's Facebook live stream at around this time, 01.39. It's when she goes from her flat into the lobby.

The report says this in relation to that image:
"At this point the camera is facing towards the lobby. A light in the ceiling of the lobby is on and the darkness in that area appears to be caused by smoke."

That image is striking in its starkness: an almost entirely black screen, only illuminated by the blurred
outline, top and centre, of the lobby ceiling light, looking like some strange apparition caught on camera in the darkness. This is what the residents on the 23rd floor were confronted with in their lobby at 01.39. One can only imagine their confusion, their fear and their desperation.

Returning, then, to Rania's live stream. Having said those words, "Hello, come here. Hello? Hello?", we then hear Gary's voice. He says -- and this is at 0.56 of the live stream - - "I'm here, I'm here". Rania replies, "Come, come, quick, quick". There's a response that is unclear from Gary, and then we hear banging and Rania saying, "Hello, here, here, here". Gary then responds, "Thank you".

There's some discussion then between Rania and a male voice -- not Gary's -- about closing the door, but Rania is concerned that there may be more people outside and says again, "Come here". At that point we can hear Marco Gottardi. He says, "No, we're here, we are inside my apartment".

It's clear that Rania is doing her best to try and find out if anyone else is out there in the darkness, to offer them refuge in her flat. Gary answers that call for refuge and, with the banging noise, he follows the sound and he ends up in flat 203.

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There is then on the live stream loud banging heard in the background, along with the sound of the vents. Farhad Neda in his evidence had said that he had phoned the TMO around about 1.10 because the vents were so loud, and he told us that they were positioned between flats 202 and 203 on one side of the building and flats 205 and 206 on the other.

Given the timing of 01.39, it is likely that the banging heard was Fadumo Ahmed, because we know from her evidence that she was banging on the metal door to the roof that was padlocked. She said she'd heard the helicopter and was banging the metal door because it was padlocked, and she'd hoped that somebody could hear her. She described the smoke getting thicker and thicker in the stairwell until she could not see the stairs under her feet.

One can make only informed guesses and inferences as to exactly what Gary did after saying those words to Rania on the live stream. It may have been the case that, amidst the noise of the vents, Fadumo banging on the metal door in an effort to attract attention, that Gary left flat 201 to investigate whether there had been a rescue. Being a non-resident, he would not be familiar with the layout of the 23rd floor and may have gotten lost trying to navigate his way through the
smoke-filled lobby. Then, hearing Rania's call for
refuge, he took that up.
Inside flat 203.
Again, from Rania's recording, we know that it
continues after Gary goes into the flat itself, but he's
not heard on the recordings after that and he is not
seen on any of the footage. During Rania's
presentation, we heard of the deteriorating conditions within flat 203.

Gary himself made no calls to the emergency services that night.

It is important perhaps to consider the following key aspects of that timeline.

At 2.05, Isra Ibrahim reported in a 999 call that smoke was entering the flat, so they had closed the doors and moved to the living room and the kitchen area. They had kept the windows open so that they could breathe, and the smoke was not entering through the windows at that time.

At 02.40, there was increased smoke exposure to the south face of the tower, spreading across flat 203.

At 02.42, Isra Ibrahim's 999 call, she reports that the smoke had now entered flat 203 from the lobby and from outside. They were now forced to close the windows because of the burning in the flat next door, 202.

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It is perhaps useful at this point, sir, to remind ourselves of Professor Purser's evidence and his analysis of the uptake of asphyxiant gases.

Gary Maunders entered flat 203 around about 1.39/1.40 am and, based on Professor Purser's evidence, he then became effectively trapped in flat 203 by the smoke-filled lobby.

During the two-hour period up to 3.11, there was some slow smoke infiltration into the flat from the lobby, but Gary and the other occupants were able to avoid significant exposure by sheltering in less affected rooms and opening windows, until the smoke started to blow past outside and the windows were closed.

Once the exterior fire spread outside the bedrooms from around 03.11 to 03.20 , there was increased smoke and toxic gas penetration into the flat. By sheltering in other areas, such as the living room, the occupants were able to limit their uptake to some extent, but by approximately 17 to 26 minutes later, around the time the exterior fire spread was now outside the living room, the occupants had started to accumulate a substantial, but at that point sub-incapacitating, dose of asphyxiant gases. That would have continued until around 03.50.

From approximately 03.37, as the exterior fire started to spread past and penetrate the living room on the south and then the west sides of the flat, and as the smoke and gas conditions in the room deteriorated, that deterioration would have been rapid.

Professor Purser considered that, had Gary and the other occupants of flat 203 attempted to evacuate at that time, 3.50, it is likely they would have collapsed after descending several floors. He bases this upon the COHb measurement of Abufras Ibrahim, which was about 20\% COHb at $3.50-$ - that's a significant but sub-incapacitating concentration -- and his estimate of the high concentration of CO in the lobby and moderate concentration of CO in the stairs at this time.

So what are we to make of that? As Professor Purser says, by 3.50 , it is unlikely that Gary and the other occupants of flat 203 would have been able successfully to self-evacuate.

Gary's remains were recovered from flat 203. The location of his remains suggest he died in the bathroom. The anthropological findings also indicated some signs of osteoporosis and age-related conditions. It is unclear from this evidence whether or not and to what extent this would have impacted on Gary's ability to self-evacuate down several flights of stairs from the

## 23rd floor.

Professor Purser considers that he would have been sheltering when he died. He also considered, by sheltering in the enclosed areas of the flat furthest away from the rooms with exterior windows exposed to the fire, Gary would still have been exposed to the penetration of toxic smoke, but he would have been less exposed to heat, and it is most likely that he died before the fire consumed the flat.

In terms of time of death, Professor Purser estimates that the approximate bracket for the time within which it is likely that Gary would have died is between 4.20 and 4.40. Dr Fegan Earl, the pathologist, agrees that the approach of an approximate time or window of time when recording deaths would be appropriate.

As I said at the outset, Gary Maunders was not a resident of Grenfell Tower. He didn't live there; he was visiting. His family, therefore, had no reason immediately that night to be concerned for his safety. Why would they be? They were unaware that he was even there until they came across information and footage circulating on social media. That was a particularly cruel way to make that discovery.

On 14 June, Kenita Spence reported her uncle missing
to the Metropolitan Police Casualty Bureau and,
thereafter, she and Channel had the experience, similar to so many others that we've heard of in the previous module, of trying to find out accurate information about their uncle, Gary, and the difficulties they encountered in doing so.

Gary's identification was confirmed via dental records on 29 June.

In terms of the medical cause of death, the initial medical cause was confirmed by Dr Benjamin Swift on 27 March 2018 as "Consistent with the effects of fire".

> Now, Dr Fegan Earl, in considering the appropriateness of recording the medical cause of death as asphyxia from asphyxiant gases or inhalation of such gases in the light of Professor Purser's analysis, concluded that, given the limited pathological material available to him, he could not do so, and that the appropriate medical cause of death to be recorded was "Consistent with the effects of fire".

To conclude Gary's story, it is a particularly cruel twist of fate for his family that, in doing something as innocuous as visiting a friend, Gary Maunders lost his life in quite terrifying circumstances. His family never got a chance to say goodbye. They never got the chance to tell him just one more time how much he meant
to them, how much they cared about him, how much they loved him. But Gary knew all that, and his family must console themselves with that knowledge.

His nieces have written a few more words to express, even now, five years after this terrible fire, how they still feel:
"You were loved by many, nan's blue-eyed boy, literally. When you left, everyone's world fell apart. Nan passed of a broken heart. I hope you're all together now in heaven, happy and at peace, catching up for all the lost years. Our love will never die. You will always remain with us until the day we meet again. Lots of love and kisses. We miss you, Gal. One of our angels on earth, now an angel and a guardian angel to us all. You were the most selfless and kindest of souls, a true gentleman. I have so many beautiful memories that I'Il forever treasure. You had and still have the ability to make me laugh, even in my darkest moments. I'm so proud to call you my uncle, my hero. You continue to live on. I' II never stop fighting for justice for you."

I mentioned at the start that Gary loved music and he was a particular fan of Marvin Gaye. I hope Gary would approve of me ending this presentation on his behalf with three lines from a song by Marvin Gaye.

```
    It's called "Here, my dear" and he recorded it back in
    1977:
    "May love ever protect you.
    "May peace come into your life.
    "Always think of me the way I was."
    Thank you, sir.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
    Thank you very much, Ms Munroe.
    That brings to a conclusion the proceedings for
    today, but we shall be sitting again at 10 o'clock
    tomorrow morning, when we shall hear more presentations
    on behalf of those who died.
            Thank you very much. 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.
(4.03 pm)
    (The hearing adjourned until Wednesday, 13 July }202
                at 10.00 am)
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