OPUS₂

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Day 265

April 13, 2022

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1	Wednesday, 13 April 2022
2	(10.00 am)
3	SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to
4	today's hearing. Today we're going to continue hearing
5	evidence from those who were directly affected by the
6	fire, and the arrangements made following it.
7	Yes, Mr Millett.
8	MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, good morning. Good morning,
9	members of the panel.
10	Before I call our next witness, I just wanted to say
11	something about yesterday's thematic summary.
12	During the course of reading it, an inadvertent
13	error was made in relation to Ahmed Elgwahry. It was
14	said that he lost his mother, Mariem Elgwahry and his
15	sister, Eslah Elgwahry. In fact, it was the other way
16	round; he lost his sister, Mariem Elgwahry, and his
17	mother, Eslah Elgwahry, and we apologise unreservedly
18	for that mistake. I hope that is now corrected for the
19	record.
20	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
21	MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, can I now call, please,
22	Mr Hisam Choucair.
23	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
24	MR HISAM CHOUCAIR (sworn)
25	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Do sit down

1	and make yourself comfortable.
2	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
3	(Pause)
4	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right?
5	THE WITNESS: Yes.
6	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.
7	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
8	MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, thank you.
9	Mr Choucair, good morning.
10	A. Good morning.
11	Q. Can I start by thanking you very much for coming to the
12	Inquiry and helping us with our investigations, we are
13	extremely grateful to you.
14	If, during the course of my examination, you would
15	like me to repeat a question or put the question in
16	a different way, I can do that.
17	We will take the normal mid-morning break at about
18	11.15/11.20 or so, depending on how we get on, but if
19	you need a break before that or in the session after
20	that, then let us know and we can take a break.
21	Can I also ask you, please, to keep your voice up so
22	that the person who sits to your right can get down
23	everything you're saying on the transcript clearly .
24	Also, don't nod or shake your head; you have to say
25	"yes" or "no", as the case may be, so that it appears on

2

1	the transcript.
2	Now, you have made a number of statements to
3	the Inquiry. I'm just going to show them to you.
4	The first is {IWS00001197}. Can we please have that
5	on the screen.
6	I should just say, Mr Choucair, that everything I'm
7	going to show you will appear on the screen in front of
8	you.
9	Now, that's the first page of your statement and you
10	can see that it's dated 28 November 2018.
11	The second which we'll have up is at {IWS00001851}.
12	That's the third statement. That's dated
13	26 February 2020.
14	Now, there is a second statement dated 19 December
15	2018, but this one, I think, supersedes it; is that
16	correct?
17	A. That's correct.
18	$Q.\;\;Yes.\;\;I\;\;know\;that\;you\;made\;a\;fourth\;statement\;recently,$
19	and that hasn't been disclosed yet to core participants
20	because it doesn't cover Module 4 matters, but other
21	matters, but it will be disclosed in due course, so we
22	will be looking at that perhaps another time.
23	Can I take you to your signature page, please, on
24	your first statement, page 14 {IWS00001197/14}. You can
25	see at the very bottom of the page a signature with

3

1		a date, 28 November 2018. Can you see that?
2	Α.	Yes, I can.
3	Q.	Is that your signature?
4	Α.	Yes, it is.
5	Q.	If we go to your third statement, page 31
6		{IWS00001851/31}, please, you can see a signature there
7		under the statement of truth. Is that your signature?
8	Α.	Yes, it is.
9	Q.	Have you read both of these statements recently?
10	Α.	Yes, I have.
11	Q.	Can you confirm for the Inquiry that the contents are
12		true?
13	Α.	Yes.
14	Q.	Thank you.
15	Α.	To the best of my knowledge.
16	Q.	Yes.
17		Now, I'd like to ask you some questions first, if
18		I can, about your background, or background to your
19		evidence.
20		I think it's right, isn't it $$ and tell me if this
21		is wrong $$ you had a strong connection to
22		Grenfell Tower because a number of your family members
23		lived there?
24	^	That's sourcest

- A. That's correct.
- 25~ Q. Just go along with me here, just correct me if 1'm wrong

1		about this, but your sister, Nadia, and her husband,					
2		Bassem, moved into flat 193 in March 2006; is that					
3		right?					
4	Α.	I don't know the exact specific dates, but Nadia was the					
5		first person to move into Grenfell Tower prior to my					
6		mum. But I don't know the exact specific dates. It					
7		does sound correct.					
8	Q.	And your sister and Bassem had three children, who were					
9		your nieces, Mierna, Fatima and Zainab.					
10	Α.	That's correct.					
11	Q.	The date we have is March 2013 for when your mother,					
12		Sirria, moved into flat 191.					
13	Α.	That's correct.					
14	Q.	She lived there, I think, with your other sister,					
15		Sawsan.					
16	Α.	That's correct.					
17	Q.	Yes. And please correct me if I get any of the					
18		pronunciations wrong, but it's "Sawsan", isn't it?					
19	Α.	"Sawsan", that's correct.					
20	Q.	I think it's right that you would visit your family					
21		regularly in the tower.					
22	Α.	That's correct.					
23	Q.	Yes.					
24		Now, I would like to turn to the events of					
25		June 2017, 14 June, after you arrived at the scene, and					
		5					
1		I'm going to use your first witness statement to try to					
2		keep as closely as possible to the chronological order					
3		in which events happened as the night progressed.					
4		Now, you tell us in your statement at					
5		paragraph 45 $$ so let's have that up on the screen to					
6		help the witness, please, first witness statement,					
7		paragraph 45, page 11 $\{IWS00001197/11\}$ $$ that you heard					
8		your phone ringing at about 2.48 am. Did you note the					
9		time?					
10	Α.	Erm					
11	Q.	It's very precise.					
12	Α.	I think it was actually about $$ roughly about 2.45.					
13	Q.	Right.					
14	Α.	Around that time.					
15	Q.	Right. And you say:					
16		"I remember thinking 'Who would ring me at this					
17		time?' I am actually surprised that I woke up at all as					
18		I am quite a heavy sleeper. On answering my phone my					
19		brother, Nabil, said to me 'Hisam, put on the TV.					
20		Grenfell Tower is on fire . I'm heading down there					
21		now.'"					
22		So was that the first time you heard about the fire?					

- 22 So was that the first time you heard about the fire?
- 23 A. That's correct.
- 24 Q. And then you and I think your wife and your children 25 made your way down to the tower.
 - 6

1 A. That's correct. 2 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{Yes.}\;\;\mathsf{I}$ think you also say in the next paragraph that 3 from the moment that you left your flat, you tried to 4 call your sister, Nadia, and your mother, Sirria, and 5 Bassem a number of times. A. That's correct. 6 7 Q. And that it rang and rang and you couldn't get 8 a response; is that right? 9 A. That's correct. 10 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ Then you go on to say that you arrived -- this is page 12 {IWS00001197/12}, if we go to paragraph 47, 11 about halfway down that paragraph -- at the scene at 12 13 3 am. That's right, is it? Yes, that's correct. I recall this because I looked at 14 Α. 15 my phone and that's how I was able to pinpoint that 16 time 17 Q. How would you describe the scene when you arrived? 18 A. In order to describe the scene, I would have to describe 19 it from leaving from my home. 20 I could hear a helicopter in the sky. I couldn't 21 see it . I was living in St Charles Square at that time, 22 and I couldn't see it in the sky. 23 There was hardly no one on the streets. It was 24 a hot, humid day, 25 I ran down Ladbroke Grove and the sound of the 7 1 helicopter was getting louder and louder, but I could still not see it on -- it seemed like -- as if the sound 2 3 of the helicopter was coming from one particular place, 4 but wasn't where I was running down on the streets. It 5 wasn't visible

6 I could hear sirens of ambulances and police cars 7 and fire engines, but they weren't to be seen on the 8 main road, but you could hear them from a distance. As 9 I became -- as I came closer to the tower, the sound got 10 louder and louder. 11 When I got to Bramley Road, it was quite chaotic. 12 It was really loud. There were a lot of ambulances 13 parked up, but with no one in them. The doors were all 14 shut. There was a lot of people in the streets. People 15 were shocked, traumatised, crying. It was chaos. 16 There was police there and, if I'm correct, there 17 was a cordon that they had taped off, and it was just 18 chaos, basically. 19 Q. Do you remember whether there were any officials there,

- 2.0 other than emergency services, directing people to where
- 21 they should go or how they should go about getting 22 information?
- 23 No, there were no officials , nobody from the TMO, nobody Α. 2.4 from the government, no one from the council. There was 25
 - nobody there. It was just the community residents and

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- 1 bereaved and survivors.
- 2 $\,$ Q. If you are shown, please, page 13 {IWS00001197/13}, in
- 3 these two paragraphs, 52 and 53, you describe how you
- 4 asked for permission from two police officers to be let
- 6 centres but were not allowed. Is that right?
- A. That's correct. When I got to the cordon, the police
 were really loud, telling us to get back, like as if we
 were there to rist They were shouting with
- 9 were there to riot. They were shouting with 10 an aggressive—toned voice and they clearly were
- an aggressive-toned voice, and they clearly were not
 allowing anyone through.
- 12 I had my children with me. My children were scared
 13 from the sounds that was going on, caused them to cry,
 14 because obviously I had seen the tower on fire, and the
 15 children were with me and they saw that as well, so they
- were exposed to that trauma.
 I didn't see anyone of high-ranking authority from
 a police officer on that first cordon, and I requested
- 19to the police officer , due to knowing the urgency of20having to get through, to speak to the person in charge,21whether that may be the sergeant or the inspector, and22one of the police officers had to leave his point and go
- 23 to another police officer . I don't know if he went to
- a sergeant who then went to the inspector, who I know isNick Thatcher.

9

1 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ Did any of the officers you spoke to provide you with 2 any information to people in your position, who weren't 3 in the tower but were looking for loved ones who might 4 be in the tower, and give you any help on that score? 5 A. No, no police officers on the cordon, despite myself explaining to them that we had family members on the 6 7 22nd floor, who were obviously disabled and had medical 8 health issues and mobility issues, none of them helped 9 us to say, for example, "I will pass this message on". 10 which is the reason why I demanded to speak to the 11 person in charge of the scene. Because I had an advance 12 picture of the tower by looking at the TV, so I saw the 13 tower from all angles, and I clearly saw that the London 14 Fire Brigade didn't have the tower under control in 15 terms of -- I could see that they had lost control over 16 the tower, which is why there was a -- it was a matter 17 of urgency for me to go through that cordon. 18 Eventually the police officer let me through the 19 cordon, if I'm correct, and I was still on Bramley Road, 2.0 and I think that's where I met Nick Thatcher. 21 I explained to him again that we have family members in 2.2 the 22nd floor, the likelihood they would be in flat 23 number 193. I told him who would be in the flat. 24 I gave him their names, the contact numbers, their dates 25 of birth, and explained to them that my mum and my

10

1 sister specifically and her daughter had disabilities 2 and illnesses , which would prevent them -- or they would 3 struggle to get out of the tower, and I explained to him 4 that we were aware that rescue centres were opening up 5 and we needed to get through the cordons in order to 6 search those rescue centres, and where the cordons were 7 made it really difficult for us to get through in order 8 to search for their cordons -- in order to search for 9 our loved ones. 10 Q. Just help me, then, on this. So who told you or where 11 did you get the information from that rescue centres 12 were opening up? Where did you get that from? 13 I don't know where I heard that from. I think it was 14 just from the people on the streets. 15 Q. Right. 16 A. You know, because there were so many people there, and 17 we were all sort of in the same position. So I think 18 people were liaising with one another, and it just came 19 from word of mouth that there were rescue centres, or 2.0 possibilities of places that needed to be searched, that 21 we heard of through the community or residents, and the 22 police cordon was strangling us in and making it 23 difficult for us to search for those rescue centres, and 24 they were shutting off other streets as the day went by, 25 and the area just felt choked.

11

1 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ So far as you could tell in that chaos, was there 2 a system in place, or the beginnings at least of 3 a system in place, at the cordon whereby the police 4 could let you through to get to the rescue centres which 5 were within the cordon? 6 A. Sorry, can you repeat your question? 7 Q. Yes. Was there a system in place for deciding who 8 should be let through the cordon to get to the rescue 9 centres within the cordon? 10 A. No, there was no system in place, otherwise the officer , 11 despite me explaining to him that we were family members 12 and our family lived in the tower, they would have let 13 us through otherwise, if there was a system. 14 Q. Now, in paragraph 55 {IWS00001197/14} you say, after you 15 had gone through the cordon: 16 "... I remember searching a pub restaurant called 17 The Garden Bar & Grill on Bramley Road because I was 18 told that survivors and casualties were in there." 19 Just to be clear for those listening , the Garden Bar 2.0 and Grill on Bramley Road, was that within the cordon? 21 A. The Garden Bar and Grill -- I remember there being 2.2 a cordon on Bramley Road where the Co-op is, just where 23 the station was, there was a tape -- it was taped to the 2.4 lamppost. And then there was, I think, another cordon 25 within about 10 or 15 metres after that, so just after

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1		the confluence there are then confirm them. Containing
1		the walkways there was another cordon there. So there
2		was a big gap between the first cordon and the second
3 4	0	cordon, if I recall.
4 5	Q.	Right. Do you remember who told you that survivors and
6		casualties were at the Garden Bar and Grill?
7	Δ	It would have been by word of mouth from either the
8	А.	community or the bereaved or survivors. I don't
9		remember who, but that's where I would have got that
10		information.
11	Q.	You say there was an ambulance crew in there. If you
12		look at paragraph 55, you can see you say:
13		"There was an ambulance crew in there and they were
14		treating about four people for smoke inhalation."
15	A.	That's correct. The only $$ the way I got to this
16		Garden Bar and Grill was, I think, when I had had the
17		conversation with Nick Thatcher, after him saying that
18		he would pass the information of our loved ones to the
19		relevant people, there was a light on inside the Garden
20		Bar and Grill bar, and I could see that people were in
21		there.
22	Q.	Right.
23	Α.	I didn't know that this was a rescue centre, but
24		I thought it would be strange for a bar to be open at
25		this sort of time, and I tried to look from the windows,
		13
1		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like
2		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you
2 3		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So
2 3 4		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So I then just went inside, nothing was stopping me, and
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So I then just went inside, nothing was stopping me, and there was about three people there. One of them was Nicholas Burton, who I recall, and he was seated on a wheelchair — not a wheelchair, sorry, one of these chairs that the ambulance crew use when they're helping someone who can't stand up. And he had a blanket wrapped round him, and he had an oxygen mask, and his face was — it had like — it was like — there was like soot on his face. It was like smoke. It was all like black. But I recognised him because of his curly hair. And I don't recall who the other two people were, but they were clearly traumatised, they were wrapped in like a blanket and shaking, and they also had an oxygen mask over their nose and mouth, and there were a couple of ambulance crew members inside that Garden Bar and Grill, and I had to look these people in the face. I didn't know them by name, but that was quite
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So I then just went inside, nothing was stopping me, and there was about three people there. One of them was Nicholas Burton, who I recall, and he was seated on a wheelchair — not a wheelchair, sorry, one of these chairs that the ambulance crew use when they're helping someone who can't stand up. And he had a blanket wrapped round him, and he had an oxygen mask, and his face was — it had like — it was like — there was like soot on his face. It was like smoke. It was all like black. But I recognised him because of his curly hair. And I don't recall who the other two people were, but they were clearly traumatised, they were wrapped in like a blanket and shaking, and they also had an oxygen mask over their nose and mouth, and there were a couple of ambulance crew members inside that Garden Bar and Grill, and I had to look these people in the face. I didn't know them by name, but that was quite traumatising for me. But I had to do it, and I had to
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So I then just went inside, nothing was stopping me, and there was about three people there. One of them was Nicholas Burton, who I recall, and he was seated on a wheelchair — not a wheelchair, sorry, one of these chairs that the ambulance crew use when they're helping someone who can't stand up. And he had a blanket wrapped round him, and he had an oxygen mask, and his face was — it had like — it was like — there was like soot on his face. It was like smoke. It was all like black. But I recognised him because of his curly hair. And I don't recall who the other two people were, but they were clearly traumatised, they were wrapped in like a blanket and shaking, and they also had an oxygen mask over their nose and mouth, and there were a couple of ambulance crew members inside that Garden Bar and Grill, and I had to look these people in the face. I didn't know them by name, but that was quite traumatising for me. But I had to do it, and I had to see whether they were my family or not. And
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23		from the outside, but the windows were sort of like covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So I then just went inside, nothing was stopping me, and there was about three people there. One of them was Nicholas Burton, who I recall, and he was seated on a wheelchair —— not a wheelchair, sorry, one of these chairs that the ambulance crew use when they're helping someone who can't stand up. And he had a blanket wrapped round him, and he had an oxygen mask, and his face was —— it had like —— it was like —— there was like soot on his face. It was like smoke. It was all like black. But I recognised him because of his curly hair. And I don't recall who the other two people were, but they were clearly traumatised, they were wrapped in like a blanket and shaking, and they also had an oxygen mask over their nose and mouth, and there were a couple of ambulance crew members inside that Garden Bar and Grill, and I had to look these people in the face. I didn't know them by name, but that was quite traumatising for me. But I had to do it, and I had to see whether they were my family or not. And unfortunately, our family were not there.

1	anybody from the 22nd floor by our family's surname or
2	from the 22nd floor come out of the building, of which
3	they said to me no. I believe it was at this point that
4	I received the list of the rescue centres.
5	As I came out of the Garden Bar and Grill, because
6	I was past the cordon, I saw a passing by police
7	officer , and I asked him if someone was to report their
8	family members missing, where would they go, and he
9	directed me to Whitchurch Road, where I saw a number of
10	fire engines parked up on that road. There were three
11	command units to the right—hand side of the road, and
12	I went into the second one, and it was like one of these
13	like Portakabins. There was a Fire Brigade officer
14	there at the desk, right in front of me. He wasn't in
15	uniform, he just had like a $T-shirt$ on, and to the right
16	of him there was another Fire Brigade officer who was
17	busy taking calls in the corner. I explained to him who
18	I was, and I told him that our family are in flat 193.
19	I gave him a list of all our family's names. I told him
20	of their disabilities , I gave him contact numbers, their
21	dates of birth, and he jotted it down on, I think,
22	a yellow piece of paper or a sticky note, and he said
23	that he would pass this information on. $\ \mbox{I}$ was there for
24	about five to ten minutes.
25	As I was just about to leave, another ranking

1		officer who was in civil uniform came through, as I was
2		speaking to the London Fire Brigade official , and he
3		said to me $$ or he said to the gentleman at the desk,
4		"I'm here to book in, where do you want me?" And the
5		Fire Brigade officer at the desk said, "Can you go and
6		see the watch manager". When he made these comments,
7		I turned my head towards him, because it just caught my
8		attention, what he was saying, and I noticed that he was
9		in civil uniform and he had, I think, two studs and
10		a flower on his epaulette. He was quite tall, he had
11		grey hair, medium build. I looked at him and then
12		I walked straight out, and that's when I went back to
13		Bramley Road, I believe.
14	Q.	Did you get any information in the command unit about
15		where you could go to get any further information about
16		your family?
17	Α.	No.
18	Q.	Now, you mentioned a moment ago the list that you'd got
19		from the Garden Bar and Grill.
20		Can we go, please, to page 18 of your third witness
21		statement $\{IWS00001851/18\}$, and you can see
22		paragraph 102, you say:
23		"Someone at the Garden Bar and Grill handed me an A4
24		piece of paper on which there were the names of six
25		venues, typed in a list . Once I had established that

- 1 none of the people at the Garden Bar and Grill were my
- 2 family members, I went to search the other rescue
- 3 centres. My recollection of the list I was given at
- that stage was the following \dots " 4
- Then they're set out at the bottom of page 18 and 5 6 over to page 19. You've got:
 - "(1) The [Latimer] Christian Centre;
 - "(2) The Rugby Portobello Club;
- 8 9 "(3) The Westway Sports Centre;
- 10 "(4) A Salvation Army building."
- And then over the page $\{IWS00001851/19\}$: 11
- 12 "(5) St Helen's Church (the Methodist church);
- 13 "(6) Acton Mosque."
- 14 Now, do you remember who gave you that list? Was it 15 someone from the ambulance crew or someone from the
- 16 Garden Bar and Grill?
- 17 A. I think it was the ambulance crew member. It was given to me on a white A4 paper in that direct order. 18
- 19 Q. Right.
- 20 A. And there were only six, and the rest of the page was 21 blank.
- 2.2 Q. Right. And that would have been about what time? Given 23 that you had arrived at the tower at about 3 am, this
- 24 would've been how long afterwards, roughly, can you
- 25 remember? I know it's difficult .

17

1	A.	Erm
2		(Pause)
3		I would say —— I can't pinpoint a specific time;
4		however, I can condense it down. It would have been any
5		time between the hours of $$ between 3.00 and 6.30.
6		The reason why I know this is because I arrived at
7		Paddington hospital at 7.30.
8	Q.	Yes.
9	Α.	So it would have been between those hours.
10	Q.	Paddington hospital, so St Mary's?
11	Α.	That's correct.
12	Q.	Yes, and we'll come to that.
13		Was the A4 typed list pre-prepared? Did they give
14		you one of a pre-prepared list, a copy?
15	Α.	I didn't see if they had like a whole bunch, it was just
16		given to me by hand, and naturally I accepted it.
17	Q.	Right.
18		Now, from your list that you have put in your
19		statement, which we've looked at together, the list of
20		venues didn't include addresses; is that right?
21	Α.	That's correct, yes.
22	Q.	Right. Were you familiar with these places?
23	Α.	No. The only one that I was familiar with is the
24		Salvation Army, and the reason why I was familiar with
25		that is because I used to live in Colville Square, and

18

1		this rescue centre was on the Portobello Road, of which
2		I used to go through quite often. It was just around
3		the corner from my flat. So that was the only one that
4		I was familiar with.
5	Q.	You say in paragraph 103, just below that, in the second
6		line :
7		"I recall stopping people on the street and asking
8		them if they knew where these rescue centres were."
9		You go on to say by that stage you had about 2%
10		battery left, which you'd saved to call Nabil and your
11		sister for updates. Is that right?
12	Α.	Yes.
13	Q.	At that point $$ and I know it's difficult to pinpoint
14		the time in the night $\mbox{ did}$ you see anybody from RBKC
15		or the TMO or any other official from any organisation,
16		official organisation, on the streets, directing people
17		where to go to find information about their loved ones?
18	Α.	When I went into the Salvation Army?
19	Q.	Yes.
20	Α.	No. When I went into the Salvation Army rescue centre,
21		there was nobody inside there. I recall tables were set
22		up and they had these like flasks with like tea and
23		coffee and biscuits put there, which I clearly wasn't
24		interested in, due to fasting, and my main focus was to
25		find our family. There was nobody in that building at

19

- 1 all. 2
- Q. Was there anybody on the street from --3 A. No.
- Q. -- the TMO or RBKC? 4
- A. No, there was nobody wearing high-vis, there was nobody 5
- 6 from the council, there was no police there, no council
- 7 officials , no one from government, no one that stood out
- 8 to say, "I'm an official" on behalf of an authority to
- 9 help us in any way, shape or form. There were no --
- 10 I didn't see any forms there, no information, it was
- 11 just tables set up with food on them and coffee and tea.
- 12 $\mathsf{Q}.~\mathsf{I}$ think you tell us in the next paragraph, 104, that 13 your sister, Sawsan, and your wife, Kona, had searched 14 the church. Was that the Methodist church?
- 15 A. When I got to the cordon, obviously because I had my 16 children with me, it was difficult to search the
- 17 remaining centres, because some were on the side that
- 18 I was on and some were on the side that my sister was
- 19 on. My sister, when she got to the scene, she came from
- 20 Shepherd's Bush, so she came from the back side of
- 21 Bramley Road, and --
- 22 Q. So that's the south, the south side?
- The side -- as if you're coming from White -- from 23 Α.
- 24 Shepherd's Bush, through Holland Park Avenue, she would
- 25 have come in through that way.

1	So when I got past the cordon, I left my children,	1 A.	Because obviously I wouldn't have known where this place
2	if I recall, with a friend of ours, a very close friend	2	was until I had got the list from the ambulance crew
3	of ours, who's also called Sawsan, and that's how I was	3	member from the Garden Bar and Grill. That's how I am
4	able to search these rescue centres.	4	able to pinpoint that time.
5	And having checked on my phone the addresses of	5 Q.	Yes. You say you were able to charge your phone there
6	these places, Kona, my wife, she went $$ I think she	6	for a couple of minutes.
7	went with, actually, Sawsan, actually, or Sawsan took	7 A.	That's correct. I couldn't believe my luck. I had
8	her, Kona, to meet my sister, and then came back to take	8	actually charged my phone the night before, but it seems
9	my children, to look after my children, if I'm correct.	9	like the wire didn't connect with the phone, so when
10	Q. Okay.	10	I $$ by the time I got the phone call, my phone was
11	A. And they searched, I think $$ they searched, if I'm	11	making that funny noise, like as if it was dying of
12	correct, St Clement's Church and the Methodist church.	12	battery. However, I still took my charger with me and
13	I recall them bumping into Helen, because this was said	13	my phone, and when I went inside the Latimer Christian
14	to me at that time, who was in an ambulance on	14	Centre, it was empty. There was nobody upstairs. There
15	Bramley Road further down, and Helen was quite shook up	15	was only, again, one person, who was setting up tables.
16	and traumatised, because she had lost [redacted], and	16	I think he was putting like food, like bottles of water
17	I think they asked Helen if they had seen our family,	17	and food on the table, but there was nobody in there.
18	and they moved on with a friend of theirs to search the	18	And I think on the ground floor or the first floor, I'm
19	rescue centres on the other side and churches, of which	19	not too sure, ${\sf I}$ saw a socket, and ${\sf I}$ saw it as an ideal
20	we were not able to search, the Methodist church,	20	opportunity to charge my phone for a couple of minutes,
21	St Clement's Centre, and I don't know what else they	21	because I knew it was important. I had to charge my
22	did.	22	phone to be able to make phone calls to liaise with my
23	But I did receive a call or I $$ when I did try to	23	brother and my sister.
24	call my sister, I found out that my wife had collapsed	24 Q.	Was anyone on the door at the $$
25	in, I believe, the St Clement's Church. I was quite	25 A.	No.
	21		23
1	concerned about that.	1 Q.	—— Christian centre? No?
2	I recall my sister speaking with a London Fire	2 A.	No, there was nobody.
2	Drived officer colving them if eached, from the	2 0	When we it from which executestics we it that the

3 Q. Who was it, from which organisation was it, that the

- 4 person or people laying out the food and drink on the 5 first floor?
- 6 A. I only saw one person. It was a man. I don't know if 7 he was a community member or whether he worked there,
- 8 I didn't really ask him. I went upstairs, I saw him
- 9 laying out the table. He was obviously busy and
- 10 I didn't bother him.
- 11 Q. Right.
- 12 A. For me, the moment I realised it was a rescue centre,
- 13 and if anyone would be in there, they would be upstairs,
- I went upstairs and the hall was empty, and 14
- 15 I immediately, after charging my phone, left the
- 16 building.
- 17 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ So you didn't speak to the man who was laying out the
- 18 food and drink and ask him where you might get further 19 information?
- 2.0 A. No, but there was no information -- it was like
- 21 a deserted area, an empty space. There was no
- 22 information laid out on the tables, and there was no one
- 23 there besides that man. So I just -- after charging my
- 24 phone, I just left the building.
- 25 Q. Were you surprised, having been told by the LAS through

24

3 Brigade officer, asking them if anybody from the 4 22nd floor had come out, or had they survived, and they 5 were in tears. 6 I was quite concerned that my partner had collapsed, 7 but I knew she was in good hands with the paramedics and 8 my sister. 9 Q. Now, I think you tell us that the first centre you 10 visited yourself was the Latimer Christian Centre. You 11 tell us that in your statement at paragraph 105(a), if 12 we can just scroll down page 19 $\{IWS00001851/19\}$ to see

- 13 that 14 Do you remember roughly -- and I know, as I say,
- it's difficult -- what time you got to the Latimer 15
- 16 Christian Centre?
- 17 A. I can't pinpoint a specific time, but I can give like
- 18 a range.
- 19 Q. Yes
- 20 A. And that would have been after I had come back through
- 21 the cordon, so after the Garden Bar and Grill. So it
- 2.2 would have been any time between 3.00 and from -- from
- 23 the moment I got there, to roughly about 7.00, between
- 24 those hours.
- 25 Q. Right.

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- 1 this A4 piece of paper that this was a rescue centre,
- 2 not to see anybody there from the council or the TMO or
- 3 any other official organisation?
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5~ Q. You then, I think, went to the Westway Sports Centre,
- $\boldsymbol{6}$ and you cover that in paragraph (b) on page 20 of your
- 7 statement {IWS00001851/20}, if we can scroll to that,
- and you cover that in some detail in that subparagraphthere.
- 10 I'm sorry to ask you all these timing questions, and
- 11 you may just give me the range again, which is fine, but
- 12 do you remember what time you arrived at the
- 13 Westway Centre?
- A. The Westway Sports Centre was the second rescue centre to be searched, immediately after the Latimer Christian
- 16 Centre, due to it being very close.
- 17 Q. Yes.

25

- 18 A. And it would have been moments after. I can only give
 19 you a time between the hours of 3.00 and 7.30. I can't
 20 pinpoint a specific time.
- Q. Did you have any -- well, let me ask you this way: when
 you got to the Westway Centre, what did you find?
- A. When I got to the Westway Centre, I ran down there, and
- 24 I went straight to the reception area. I explained to
 - them who I was, and I was looking for my family, and

25

- $1 \qquad \ \ I \ \mbox{was a family member, and they directed me to the gym,}$
- 2 which was, I believe, outside, the entrance to the gym
- $3 \qquad \mbox{was outside, so it was sort of around the corner from}$
- the entrance of the main entrance to the gym. I ran
 down there. It was quite -- very quiet, to be honest
 with you.
- When I got to the gym, I saw family members, not
 from our family, other family -- sorry, survivors.
- 9 There wasn't that many, there was only, like, a couple 10 of families, but they were spaced out from each other. 11 I think I recall seeing the Jafari family there, and it 12 seemed like as if the space was sectioned into areas, it
- 13was split off into people's medical needs. So you had14like a triage area, you had like a -- you know, it
- 15 seemed like as if it was split up or coded in that 16 sort of way. They had a blanket on top of them. And
- 17 because they were so spaced out and the gym was quite
- 18 big, it was massive inside, it was like as if I was
- 19 playing dodgeball, if you know what I mean, where I'd 20 run to one and then run to another and then go to
- 2.0 another, because they were that spaced out.
- another, because they were that spaced out.
 However, when I did get to see who they were.
- 22 However, when I did get to see who they were, even 23 though I don't know them by name, except the Jafari
- family, I didn't want to get too close, because I wanted
- 25 to respect their privacy as well, and I saw a couple of

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- 1 ambulance crew with them, and once I had clarified that 2 the people inside were not our family members 3 I immediately left the building, because time was of 4 an essence. 5 When I left the building, I recall I just burst into tears, because I felt ... I felt like our hopes of 6 7 finding our family were being reduced more and more. 8 Q. Okay, just take a moment. 9 Do you remember asking any of the ambulance crew or 10 anybody else there for information about how you could 11 get information? 12 A. No. I didn't ask the ambulance crew. I didn't want to 13 disturb them from what they were doing, and I also 14 wanted to respect the families that were there. 15 Q. Do you remember whether, apart from the ambulance crew 16 there, there was anybody in charge of what was going on 17 at the Westway Centre, people on the door, people 18 filtering who could come in? 19 A. There was nobody at the reception of the main area 20 except the member of staff -- couple of members of 21 staff. There was no one from the council there, there 22 was no government officials there, there was no police 23 there at that time, there was no one manning the
- 24 \qquad entrance to the gym from the outside, there was nobody.
- 25 Q. Right. When you say staff, you mean Westway staff?

27

- 1 A. Yes. There was no Westway staff manning the entrance to 2 the gym from the outside, which was, I think, a back 3 sort of entrance, and the only staff that were there 4 were behind the counter at the reception area, in the 5 main reception area to the gym. 6 Q. Were they Westway staff? 7 A. That's correct, yes. But there was no one from 8 government, council, police, there was no one by that 9 nature there. 10 Q. Now, after visiting the Westway centre, you tell us at 11 the end of (b) that you then met back up with Nabil: 12 " ... as he had parked his car on Crowthorne Road and 13 we proceeded together to the Rugby Portobello Club." 14 Was that a long journey? 15 A. It wasn't a long journey from the tower, but the traffic 16 to get there, bearing in mind that we used the back 17 streets, it made it long. 18 Q. Right. Did you drive? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Right. 21 Α. To the Rugby Portobello Road Club, ves. 2.2 When you got there, did you have any difficulties Q.
- 23 entering?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Right.

- 1~ A. There was one person in the reception area, and he was
- $2 \qquad \mbox{ in an office , and he didn't even approach me to the }$
- $3 \qquad \mbox{window, but there was a sign-in form, and in order to}$
- 4 comply with their policy, I signed my name in, and
- 5 obviously told him who I was, "Are there any survivors

6 from Grenfell Tower here?", and he said to me if there

- 7 would be, they would be in the gym.
- 8 I immediately went downstairs in the gym, and the9 gym was empty. So I immediately left the building after
- 10 signing out.
- 11 Q. Now, when you signed in, did you sign in on a normal 12 Rugby Club --
- 13 A. Yes.

25

- 14 Q. -- form or was it a special form for the --
- 15~ A. No. It seemed like a normal signing in form that was
- 16
 just left in front of the window area of where you would

 17
 liaise with someone as if you were walking in, and
- 18 I signed in to comply with their policy and left.
- 19 Q. And, again, it sounds like, from what you're telling
- 20 us -- but correct me if I'm wrong -- that there was
- 21 nobody at the Rugby Portobello Trust from RBKC or the
- 22 TMO or any other official organisation?
- 23 A. 100% sure there was nobody from them.
- 24 Q. Was there anybody there offering any information or
 - support to people in your position, searching for loved

29

- 1 ones from the tower?
- 2 A. Not at the time that I had visited, no.
- 3 Q. Was there later?
- 4 A. I didn't -- I don't think I went back to the
 5 Rugby Portobello Road Club, and the reason why I didn't
- 6 go back was because I believed that I had checked the
- 7 place and I didn't see no one there, so my intention was
- 8 to move on, and that's the reason why I didn't go back.
- 9 Q. Now, this is, I think, the third centre that you had
- visited, leaving aside the two churches that your wifeand sister had searched.
- 12 If you can, how were you feeling at this point?
- 13 A. Having searched these rescue centres?
- 14 (Pause)
- 15 It wasn't looking good.
- 16 Q. I think after the Rugby Club you went to the
- Salvation Army on foot, and you cover that on the nextpage, page 21 {IWS00001851/21}, at the top of your
- 10 page, page 21 {IVV500001051/21}, at the top of 19 screen under letter (d) there and you say:
- screen under letter (d) there, and you say:
 "I eventually found the Salvation Army building ...
- 20
 at 205 Portobello Road ..."
- 22 You say "I eventually found [it]"; did you have to 23 look for it or did it just take you a long time to get
- look for it or did it just take you a long time to getthere?
- 25~ A. It's not that -- I had an idea of where it was, but it

30

- 1 was dark and the lights weren't very good, the lighting
- 2 in the streets , and due to being traumatised and
- 3 shocked, although I knew where it was, I didn't --
- 4 I couldn't pinpoint where it was, but I knew -- I had
- 5 an idea it was on Portobello Road. Where exactly on
- 6 Portobello Road I didn't know. So I had to ask
- $7 \qquad \ \ \, {\rm commuters, \ despite \ me \ knowing \ the \ address. \ I \ guess \ you$
- 8 could say I was overwhelmed at that point.
- 9 Q. It's helpful to know that it was still dark. That's
- 10 your recollection , is it?
- 11 A. It was dark.
- 12 $\,$ Q. So this is the fourth centre that you had looked for,
- 13 but it was still dark?
- 14 A. It was in the early hours, yes.
- 15 Q. That's helpful.

25

- 16 Now, you say in that paragraph that you found it
- 17 \qquad empty and that you rang Nabil to tell him. You say it
- $18 \hspace{1.5cm}$ was empty, but was there anybody there manning it,
- 19 providing information, directing operations?
- 20 A. Again, when I went into this building, there was
- 21 somebody there, but not an official from the council,
- 22 nobody from government, nobody from the TMO, no police,
- 23 it was just a staff member there setting up tables and,
- 24 $\hfill I$ recall , like I said , there was coffee on the table ,
 - you know, these flasks, for people to use if they

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1 needed, and biscuits, et cetera. 2 Q. And --3 A. There was no information laid out on the table for 4 someone to access, and the hall was empty. 5 Q. Right. Right. 6 A. So I left the Salvation Army on Portobello Road, and 7 I think I then met my brother back on Ladbroke Grove, 8 somewhere underneath the bridge, if I'm correct, and 9 that's when we proceeded to the next rescue centre. 10 Q. Right. 11 I think the next thing that happened was that Nabil 12 contacted a friend of yours who lived in the Acton area 13 to find out which mosque was the Acton Mosque on the 14 list you had been given at the Garden Bar and Grill; is 15 that right? 16 A. Yeah, I remember speaking to my brother in the car, and 17 I said to him, you know, "Can you believe this, they've 18 put 'Acton mosque' as a rescue centre, how many mosques 19 are in the Acton area?" Little did I know that the 2.0 mosque itself was called Acton Mosque, which I had no 21 idea. But that was my first impression. And due to it 2.2 being quite far out, a very good friend of ours, who is 23 a friend to my brother and myself, who I also went to 2.4 school with, lived in that area and was familiar with 25 this mosque, and he searched the mosque, and he got back

- 1 to us at -- within I think about an hour or two from him
- $2 \qquad \qquad$ being informed to tell us that there was nobody in the
- 3 mosque, like our loved ones were not there. So we were
- 4 able to rule out that rescue centre --
- 5 Q. Yes.
- 6 A. -- without having to visit it.
- Q. Now, by that point, I think, every centre on the list
 that you had been given had been checked by you or your
 friends and family, and your loved ones had not been
- 10 found.
- 11 A. That's correct.
- 12 $\,$ Q. If you look at paragraph 108, you say:
- 13 "What made it worse as the daylight arrived is that
- 14 we learned of other places that were opening up as 15 rescue centres and it became almost impossible and
- 16 uncontrollable to monitor anything. I also found out
- 17 that private hospitals were opening up their spaces
- 18 which did not help to narrow our search. I know that it
- 19 was done with a good intention, but there was a lack of 20 centralisation and control and it was very difficult to
- 21 find people."
- 22 Now, one gets the sense from that paragraph, but is
- 23 this right, that the responsibility was on your
- 24 shoulders, your personal shoulders and that of your 25 brother and sister, to find your family?
 - brother and sister, to find your family?

- A. That's correct. It didn't help when we were hearing 1 2 that other rescue centres and private hospitals were 3 opening up. It made our -- it made life more difficult 4 for us, it caused stress on us, and it didn't feel like 5 as if we were in control of our situation. 6 Q. Did you have an expectation at the time -- leaving aside 7 events that have happened since then, but at that moment, did you have a thought about who should be 8 9 running things, who should be in control, monitoring 10 what was going on? 11 A. Yes 12 Q. Who was that? 13 A. I would expect someone from government or the council to 14 have some sort of system in place, some sort of ... put 15 order, if you know what I mean. There should have 16 been -- I was expecting some sort of order in place in 17 order to assist us, to take that burden from us, to ease 18 the process of us looking for our loved ones. 19 And the reason why I'm expectant of this is because 2.0 ${\sf I}$ 've worked for Transport for London for many years, and 21 we've dealt with many major incidents. fatalities . and 2.2 this is something that is naturally -- there's a process 23 in place, should an event like this -- not like this 24 happen, but we've liaised with emergency services, with
- 25 the police, with the Home Office, with the ambulance,

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- 1 with the NHS. This isn't nothing new to me. 2 So I was expectant of something like a process, 3 a system in place to be there, but it wasn't, and I was 4 ashamed, but I didn't have time to take that up further 5 at that time of moment. Q. Now, after you had visited various rest centres, I think 6 7 you then started a process of visiting a number of 8 hospitals; is that right? 9 A. That's correct. 10 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{Yes.}\;\;\mathsf{I}$ think you and Nabil made a list of all the 11 hospitals you could think of in the Kensington and 12 Chelsea area and in central London, and I think you 13 numbered about 20 different A&E departments on your 14 list ; is that right? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. Now, I think the first hospital you visited was in 17 Paddington, the St Mary's Hospital, and you tell us in 18 this statement, if we go over the page, please, to paragraph 111 {IWS00001851/22}, at about 7.30 am; is 19 20 that correct? 21 A. That's correct. 2.2 Q. Yes. Now, do you remember, when you arrived at 23 St Mary's, was there anybody there from the council or 24 from perhaps the TMO, from government, or indeed the 25 emergency services, to provide you with information? 35 1 A. So when we got to the A&E in Paddington, which I believe 2 was on South Wharf Road, if I'm correct, my main
 - 3 intention was to go through the new building, but 4 I think the A&E was closed due to refurbishment, and 5 I think there was a security guard at the reception 6 area, and I went to the first floor, if I'm correct, the 7 A&E was on the first floor, and when I got to the first 8 floor, the doors were locked. It was like as if there 9 was no access to the public from where the lift area 10 was 11 So I think I asked a member of staff, if I'm 12 correct, and they said to me -- they directed me to the Paterson Ward or Wing, and that's when I left the main 13 14 entrance to A&E through the main hospital, because 15 usually when we went to A&E in Paddington, we would go 16 up like a ramp, like a curved sort of ramp area in order 17 to get to the main -- but obviously, due to the hospital 18 being refurbished, when I knew that was closed, I went 19 into the main hospital, and then I went to the first 2.0 floor, and when I spoke to a member of staff, that's 21 when they told me that, no. I had to go to the 2.2 Paterson Ward, that's where people from Grenfell were 23 coming in. 24 So I immediately left the A&E hospital, came out of 25 the hospital. My brother was parked up in the car, and

1		I informed him that the A&E department was closed and	
2		they're taking people in the Paterson Wing, which was	
3		further down the road, and he said, "Yes, okay", and he	
4		was busy making phone calls, and I immediately went into	
5		the Paterson Wing hospital.	
6	Q.	Was it there that you were asked by a nurse to fill in	
7		a form with your name, address, contact number and the	
8		details of your family?	
9	Α.	Yes. So I came into the Paterson Wing, couldn't see	
10		no one in the seating area, I think I must have been one	1
11		of the first ones, and there was a male nurse seated	1
12		behind the desk, and I explained to him who I was and	1
13		whether anyone from our family had come into this	1
14		hospital, or any survivors, and they made me fill in	1
15		a form. It asked for who I was, contact number, it	1
16		asked for details about the person who we were enquiring	1
17		about. I had to provide their names, the address,	1
18		contact numbers, and dates of birth, which I struggled	1
19		a bit with, with my nieces, and I had to go back to the	1
20		car, rush back to the car, my children were with my	2
21		brother in the car, and I had to tell them, "We need	2
22		this information in order to give to the hospital".	2
23		I think my brother contacted his wife, and eventually we	2
24		gave them that information at the reception area.	2
25		Once I gave them that information, I was told to	2
		-	
		37	
1		take a seat and wait. There was, again, nobody from	
2		the council, nobody from government, there were no	
3		police there, and the reception area was deserted.	
4		I was the only one there.	
5		Moments later, I think about 10 to 15 minutes later,	
6		a family member $$ other family members came through,	
7		and they were clearly traumatised and shaken, and when	
8		they were liaising with the nurse in the reception, they	
9		were struggling, and other family members had to speak	
10		on their behalf because they were quite shaken up and	1
11		traumatised.	1
12	Q.	You say you were waiting; what were you waiting for?	1
13	Α.	Further information.	1
14	Q.	From the hospital?	1
15	A.	That's correct. It was —— I think I was —— after about	1
16		40 to 45 minutes, I don't know, I became frustrated and	1

·····	-	
on their behalf because they were quite shaken up and	10	ther
traumatised.	11	wait
You say you were waiting; what were you waiting for?	12	that
Further information.	13	
From the hospital?	14	kno
That's correct. It was $$ I think I was $$ after about	15	com
40 to 45 minutes, I don't know, I became frustrated and	16	out
I demanded answers. I went back to the reception area,	17	rega
after having comforted and liaised with other family	18	star
members. I felt this wasn't acceptable.	19	dow
So we received information that people from	20	area
Grenfell Tower had been brought into the hospital, but	21	who
they didn't know $$ the hospital were not able to	22	the
identify them. So some were unconscious or in a coma or	23	area
I don't know. And I said to them, "Why don't you search	24	1' 11
their pockets?", you know. People would come out of	25	wha

1		that tower, the first thing they're going to do is
2		probably take ID or passports or driving licences,
3		they're not going to come out empty $$ some will come
4		out empty, but it was an instinct of me to inform them:
5		search their pockets. And it was like talking to
6		a brick wall. They didn't really want to take into
7		consideration what I was trying to say to them.
8		And I even said to them, "I can give you the number
9		of the TMO, they will be able to tell you who is in the
10		building", because I was a Tenant Management $$ my
11		landlord was the TMO as well, when I was living in
12		St Charles Square, and they were based $$ the Hub was
13		based on the Kensal Road. So there was a number for
14		them to ring, which I offered to them, which I'm sure as
15		well when you ring that number, you could speak to
16		someone even in late hours, because $$ I knew this
17		because you could even report an emergency, which I have
18		done, a repair, in early hours of the morning. So
19		I offered this to the male nurse. They just weren't
20		really interested .
21	Q.	Did you get the sense that they understood that the
22		longer they didn't give you information, the longer you
23		would have to sit there and therefore that would hold up
24		your search of other hospitals?
25	Α.	They clearly weren't interested in $$ no matter how long
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we had to sit there, they just treated us like as if we
were normal people walking into an A&E department,
waiting to find out information for our loved ones.
There was a lack of urgency.
One thing they did help me with is they provided me
with a charger, which I was able to charge my phone and
use their facility in the waiting area, and I remember
kicking up a fuss in the A&E department and I demanded
to speak to the accident and emergency doctor, because
there was a lack of information and update, having
waited the time that we had waited, and I didn't find
that acceptable under the circumstances.
An accident and emergency doctor, a female, I don't
know her name, who I praise, as other families were
coming through, took it upon herself to go back in and
out of the A&E department and to obtain information
regarding people that they had identified and they
started to $$ the $$ this doctor, she started to take
down a description of the people who were in the waiting
area, anxiously waiting and shaken and traumatised, of
who their loved ones were, and she would go back into
the A&E department and then come back to the reception
area and say, "No, we don't have this person", or, "No,
I'll look for this person if you can give me an idea of
what your loved ones look like", so she was doing her

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- 1 very best. Because I think the A&E was on the first 2 floor, like I said, due to it being closed, so she 3 clearly had a distance to travel, it wasn't like next 4 door beyond the doors of the reception area, due to 5 where the Paterson Wing was, and she was doing her best to liaise with families that had joined myself whilst 6 7 waiting in that area. Now, I don't know if this was -- whilst I was in the 8 9 waiting area, the news -- the TV was on, and I think it 10 was GMTV, and they were talking about Grenfell, and it 11 was at this point that the police Casualty Bureau number 12 came up, and it was on a bar on the bottom of the 13 screen, a long number, I don't know how many digits, and we -- it was clearly said on TV that this would be the 14 15 number to ring if people wanted information about their 16 loved ones, and I believed it opened at 8.30. So 17 because I was there during that period. it was an ideal
- 18 opportunity for me, also taking into consideration
- 19 I intentionally charged my phone in order to make that 20 call .

I rang it at 8.30 on the dot, and it just rang and
rang and rang. I then tried again, and I got a message,
an automated message, which said, "There are no callers
available to take your call". And I just felt : how can
the police advertise a number on TV related to our loved

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- $1 \qquad$ ones for us to ring, and come the time of when it should
- 2 be open for someone to take the call, there was nobody 3 to take the call? And to get that response, that there
- 3 to take the call? And to get that response, that there 4 were no call handlers available to take your call, was
- 5 shocking. It was like: this is the last thing I need.
- 6 So then I just rang it again, and it was still
- 7 constantly ringing and nobody answered. I didn't have
- 8 time for this. So I stored the number in my phone and
- 9 I left the Paterson Wing or Ward, having, I believe,
- 10 achieved what needed to be achieved there, and went back 11 to the car.
- 12 Q. At that point, had you had information from the hospital
 13 that your loved ones were not there, your family wasn't
 14 there?
- 15 A. No.
- 16 Q. So you --
- 17 A. I didn't -- because they were still finding it difficult
- 18 to identify people that they had brought in, I didn't
- 19 get the full -- I left knowing that there were people in
- 20 there that weren't -- they weren't able to identify, but
- 21 I felt like as if I was wasting my time remaining there,
- bearing in mind that there were other hospitals to
- 23 check. And despite me -- myself liaising with them and
- telling them what to do, they weren't really interested,
- 25 I felt like as if I was wasting my time, and time was of

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- 1 an essence, and I felt that there were other hospitals
- 2 \qquad to check, and I just needed to keep moving, if you know
- 3 what I mean.
- 4 MR MILLETT: We will come perhaps to the next hospital after 5 the break.
- 6 I think it's time for the morning break,
- 7 Mr Chairman.
- 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.
- 9 MR MILLETT: Mr Choucair, are you content to take a break
- 10 now?
- 11 THE WITNESS: Yes, please.
- 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think we could all benefit from
- 13 a short break at this point, so we will stop for the
- 14 moment. We will resume, please, at 11.40, and I'm going
- 15 to ask you, as I've asked all the other witnesses,
- 16 please don't talk about your evidence to anyone while
- 17 you're out of the room.
- 18 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much.
- 20 Would you go with the usher, please.
- 21 THE WITNESS: Sure.
- 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you.
- 23 (Pause)
- 24 Thank you very much. 11.40, please. Thank you.
 - (11.24 am)

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- (A short break)
- 2 (11.45 am)

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- 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Choucair. Well, I'm
- $4 \qquad \qquad$ sorry we kept you waiting rather longer than I said we
- 5 would, but we are now ready to go on. You are ready to
 - go on, I hope?
- 7 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.
- 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
- 9 Yes, Mr Millett.
- 10 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
- 11 Mr Choucair, after St Mary's, I think you then went
- 12 to the A&E department at Hammersmith Hospital; is that
- 13 right?
- 14~ A. Yes. Before I answer this point or question, could
- 15 I please touch on the last point before the break?
- 16 Q. Yes.
- 17~ A. The reason why I left the Paterson Wing was because
- 18 apparently I was told that the people that were there at
- 19 the time of the moment, they had identified them, who
- 20 they were. That's the reason why I left.
- 21 Q. Yes.

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- 22 A. It wasn't -- I didn't leave with half information, if
- 23 you know what I mean.
 - Q. Thank you.
 - So then I think you went, as you say in your

1		statement, to Hammersmith Hospital.		
2	Α.	Yes, we went to Hammersmith Hospital. I believe it was		
3		on Du Cane Road, if I'm correct. I went into the $$ as		
4		it was in the path back to our house. I believe it was		
5		at that point that my children were dropped off at my		
6		home address, and my partner met with my brother's wife		
7		and her children, who also joined our family, and myself		
8		and my brother proceeded to Hammersmith Hospital on		
9		Du Cane Road, the Accident & Emergency Department.		
10	Q.	You say, if we go, please, to your third statement at		
11		page 23 {IWS00001851/23}, paragraph 121, at the foot of		
12		the page there, that you went to the Hammersmith		
13		Hospital and gave your name, and third line:		
14		"They said they would not tell me if anyone was		
15		there. I asked if they had any patients who had come in		
16		from the Grenfell Tower fire. They said 'No, sorry'.		
17		It was pretty quick to check this hospital because they		
18		do not have a proper A&E department, it is more like a		
19		minor injuries A&E, and they knew that they didn't have		
20		anyone from Grenfell. I therefore crossed this hospital		
21		off our list ."		
22		I think you then went to Charing Cross Hospital		
23		after that, as you say in the next paragraph.		
24	Α.	That's correct.		
25	Q.	There, as you say, you were told that they couldn't tell		
		45		
1		you whether anybody from Grenfell Tower was there due to		
2		data protection laws; is that right?		
З	Δ	That's correct		

3	Α.	That's correct.	
4	Q.	What did you think about that?	
5		(Pause)	
6	Α.	I think silence tells you the answer. I was very angry.	
7		I even re–worded $$ I felt like as if I had to play with	
8		my words of speech in order to get the answer it	
9		demanded.	
10	Q.	Yes. You say you were sorry.	
11	Α.	And I had to rephrase the question. So I tried it from	
12		all angles. But I couldn't believe, despite the urgency	
13		of the situation, that ${\sf I}$ would get a response like that.	
14		I felt like as if I was being obstructed, and empathy,	
15		humanity, lack of consideration, wasn't taken into, and	
16		${\sf I}$ was shocked, but ${\sf I}$ also responded to that shock by	
17		having to try and re—word my phrase to get the answer	
18		I required in order to move along to the next hospital.	
19	Q.	${\sf I}$ think in the end you got an answer, and that was that	
20		your family wasn't there?	
21	Α.	Yes, despite being there for quite a while, you could	
22		say I got an answer by the scruff of the neck, as they	
23		say.	
24	Q.	At this point, apart from the Casualty Bureau line, had	

24 25 you become aware of any official services or support

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	that you could access as somebody looking for their
	loved ones?
Α.	No. The only information that was made aware to me was
	the Casualty Bureau number, and that was just to find
	out information about our loved ones. And I attempted,
	like I said, to ring that number. I did ring that
	number, numerous times. 8.30 on the dot.
	I intentionally waited for that specific time, whilst my
	phone was charging, and like I said, it rang and rang
	first time. I attempted to ring it again, and that's
	when I got the automated response to say there were no
	call handlers on the line to take the call . I tried
	again, and it just rang and rang, and that's when I gave
	up hope at that point in contacting that number.
Q.	Did you ring it again during the course of the rest of
	14 June?
Α.	Yes, I did.
Q.	You did, and what happened then?
Α.	I got through. I got through to them, I believe it was
	at the point when we had reached Cromwell Road Hospital,
	and I was in the car, and just as I was getting out of
	my brother's car did I get through to them. I was
	giving them the information of our loved ones, their
	names, their addresses, their dates of birth, contact
	numbers, any unusual marks on them to identify them.
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	This also prevented me from actually going into the
	hospital at that point, because I was on the phone for
	about $20/25$ minutes, and they gave me serial numbers,
	reference numbers, for each loved one, which I noted
	Q. A. Q.

5 down on the piece of paper that ${\sf I}$ had with me, and ${\sf I}$ had

- 6 all the information to give to them. At no point did
- 7 they say to me, "Someone will be in contact with you,
- 8 this is what will happen next". It was more sort of me
- 9 answering their questions, and that was it.
- 10 Q. Did they tell you what they would do with the
- 11 information you'd given them?
- 12 A. No. No.
- 13 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{Or}$ what you should do with the reference numbers that
- they'd given you? 14
- 15 A. No. I did get some sort of idea, this is from my common
- 16 sense, that having heard the questions that they were
- 17 asking me and reflecting on them, I came to the sense
- 18 of -- it felt like as if $% \left({{{\mathbf{r}}_{\mathbf{r}}}_{\mathbf{r}}} \right)$ is a data input system and
- 19 not really a system that was there to provide
- 20 information about our loved ones. It was more sort of
- a system that we were feeding into. That's what I \ldots 21
- 22 that's the ... what's the word? I got that sense from
- 23 the questions that I was being asked, and it was more --
- the questions were very direct. There was a lack of 24
- 25 information -- there was no information about what would

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1		happen next. So I immediately knew that I was feeding
2		into some sort of system to gather information about our
3		loved ones.
4	Q.	Did that at least give you some kind of assurance that
5		at least somebody in authority knew who you were and
6		that you were connected with your family in the tower?
7	Α.	No, and the reason why I say no is because I had already
8		informed the inspector who was in charge of the scene,
9		at the scene, regarding our loved ones. I gave him the
10		relevant information and, furthermore, he passed this
11		information to the London Fire Brigade. And to add to
12		that, the $\mbox{ I}$ knew I went to the correct place of where
13		the Fire Brigade $$ the command unit was that was taking
14		in the rescue $$ the 999 calls to the Fire Brigade.
15		I believed that that was sufficient enough. It didn't
16		give me extra reassurance, if you know what I mean,
17		providing it to the bureau, the police bureau. However,
18		it was more a tick-box for me, to say that I have
19		complied with the latest information that is out, so it
20		was just a tick-box for me.
21		For me, the most important point out of all of this
22		was to give this information to Nick Thatcher,
23		commanding officer, and to the London Fire Brigade at
0.4		

24 the scene, rather than the police bureau. 25

Q. Yes, I see.

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1	You say that you then visited the Chelsea and
2	Westminster, and in your statement at paragraphs 123 to
3	126 {IWS00001851/24} you explain in detail what happened
4	there. They made you wait, sent you down to the
5	cafeteria to speak to somebody and you were asked to
6	fill in a form by a staff member. I think in total you
7	waited alongside other families in the cafeteria there
8	for 40 minutes.
9	What were you waiting for?
10	A. This was a frustrating experience for me, when I went to
11	Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. I had the same
12	challenges with regards to data protection, that the
13	staff were not able to provide me with a direct answer
14	as to whether our loved ones were in the hospital. They
15	used the same excuses or they used the same response to
16	Charing Cross.
17	Having kicked up a fuss, having received these
18	responses, eventually, having pushed them, or should
19	I say challenging them around this, was I directed to
20	the basement, which very rarely I've gone to, and I was
21	told to go to a cafeteria . I came out of the lift ,
22	there were no signs, I had to ask members of staff. It
23	was very well hidden. It wasn't like in front of the
24	lifts .

Eventually, when I got in there, I recall seeing

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1	Kim Taylor—Smith from the council and
2	Elizabeth Campbell, and there was a person, or should
3	I say a nurse, but I don't know if they were in uniform,
4	at a desk. It was a small cafeteria area. And they
5	asked me $$ I explained who I was and I explained to
6	them that I'm looking for our family. They asked me for
7	the same information and they made me fill in the same
8	form $$ well, a similar form, should I say, to the
9	Paterson Wing in Paddington, and I believe this
10	information was then put onto a laptop, because I could
11	see the nurse typing away, and I was just told to wait.
12	Wait for what, I don't know. I certainly wasn't told
13	what to wait for.
14	Due to being in the basement area, there was no
15	reception on my phone, so I wasn't able to liaise with
16	my brother.
17	Then other family members from survivors or bereaved
18	started coming into this cafeteria, and like you said,
19	${\sf I}$ was there for about 40 minutes with no update from any
20	medical staff member. There was nobody there from $$
21	well, besides Elizabeth Campbell and Kim Taylor-Smith
22	from the council, there was no one there from the TMO,
23	there was no government official there that ${\sf I}$ was aware

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of, and I wasn't having it. I became frustrated and

I demanded answers, and I felt that the wait was

1	unacceptable, and what we were being put through,
2	everybody that was there, was unacceptable. We were
3	taken $$ it was like as if we were taken from trauma to
4	trauma. It was like repeated trauma, and it was like
5	punishment, and it was like as if your $$ the inside of
6	your gut was being ripped up, and, you know, it was that
7	sort of feeling. The lack of communication, the lack of
8	updates, the challenges.
9	So eventually I demanded to speak to the sister in
10	charge of the Accident & Emergency Department, and
11	I didn't realise , but the chief executive of the NHS, of
12	Chelsea and Westminster, was standing right beside me
13	when I demanded that information. At no point did he
14	make an attempt to try and ease this process of us
15	obtaining that information.
16	The sister, or a member of staff, then $$ or they
17	called in the sister of that department, and she then,
18	having heard what I had to say, et cetera, and I put my
19	challenge to her, after kicking up a fuss, saying that
20	this is unacceptable, and, you know, one minute this,
21	next minute that, she then said,"Let me see what I can
22	do". Whether that was because she was standing in front
23	of the chief executive of that hospital, I don't know,
24	but she certainly did act straightaway after hearing
25	what I had to say. Obviously I didn't realise that the

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April 13, 2022

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	chief executive was standing very close by to me and	-
	heard everything that was going on.	-
	She then disappeared for about five minutes,	-
	ten minutes, and came back immediately and said, "We do	4
	not have anybody with the surnames you have provided".	5
0	Now, you mention in your statement and you mentioned it	
Q.		(
	again just now that you saw Elizabeth Campbell and	
	Kim Taylor-Smith from RBKC in the cafeteria. Did you	8
	get any sense of what they were doing there, or why they	-
_	were there?	10
Α.	I didn't even know who they were at that time.	11
Q.	Oh, I see.	12
Α.	So they were talking with each other. They didn't have	13
	anyone beside them, it was just her and him, and that's	14
	all I know. I don't know what their objective was at	15
	that time because I didn't know who they were, but	16
	I recall them there, having met them afterwards,	17
	I recall their description, and I'm 100% adamant that	18
	they were there.	19
Q.	Right.	20
	Now, other than them, was there anybody there from	21
	RBKC or TMO in an active role, actually doing something?	22
Α.	No.	23
Q.	Right.	24
	Now, you I think then went, as you say at	25
	53	

1 paragraph 127 {IWS00001197/25}, to the Royal Marsden 2 Hospital on the Fulham Road, which is not very far down 3 the road, is it, from the Chelsea and Westminster? 4 A. That's correct. I believe it's Fulham Road, yes. 5 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ Yes. You said that they were very co-operative and helpful. What did they do? 6 7 A. Yes, they were, and it doesn't surprise me that they 8 were helpful. This was the hospital where my mum and 9 Pilv worked at, so I had some sort of insight. 10 You know, my mum always spoke highly of Pily and this 11 hospital, so it wasn't a surprise to me. 12 So, basically, I went to a department of everybody 13 that had been admitted into the hospital, having 14 explained who I was and I was looking for our loved 15 ones, and I was directed to go to another department. 16 I don't know what the name of that department was, but 17 they brought back with me a print-out, a computer 18 print-out of every single person that had been admitted 19 into hospital, regardless of whether it was Accident & 2.0 Emergency, and of the people that were there on that 21 day. I had to read through every single name. 2.2 I don't -- I can't remember if it was in chronological 23 order, but that gave me the answers that I was looking 24 for. It took a while, but I looked at each page, 25 I think it had the names and the surnames, if I'm

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- 1 correct, and our loved ones were not on there. So that 2 gave me the answer I needed in order to leave that 3 hospital. There was no further reason for me to remain. 4 They were also co-operative, despite other hospitals 5 who were obstructive and prevented us from accessing information. 6 7 Q. Did you wonder why they hadn't given you what you've 8 described as the data protection response to your 9 request for the information? 0 A. No, but I was prepared for it. 1 Q. Yes. 2 A. Yeah. I was prepared for it. 3 Q. I think you then went to the Royal Brompton Hospital, but that, being a specialist heart hospital, was 4 5 unlikely, and you discovered there was no one there 6 either 7 A. That's correct. This hospital was, I think, on -- is it 8 Svdnev Street? 9 Q. Yes. 0 A. It's just sort of around the corner, really, from it, 1 near the King's Road. Because they specialise ---2 they're a heart hospital or they're well known for being 3 a heart hospital, and they specialise with people with 4 cardiac arrest, and they were able to tell me that at 5 the reception area, if I'm correct, they did not have 55 1 anybody by our family's surname there. 2 Q. Right.
 - 3 I think you then decided with Nabil to go to the
 - 4 Cromwell Hospital; is that right?
 - 5 A. That's correct, yes.
 - 6 Q. Right. And also discovered that your family wasn't 7 there?
 - 8 $\,$ A. That's correct, but prior to that, it was at this point
 - $9 \qquad \ \ \,$ that I got through to the police bureau number. I saw
- $10\,$ it as an ideal opportunity to contact the police bureau
- 11 number because it was a bit of a travel from Fulham Road
- 12 all the way back to Cromwell Road, so I saw it as
- an ideal opportunity to ring back the police bureau
 number, and I did get through. I was in the process of
- 14 number, and I did get through. I was in the process of 15 speaking to them whilst we were in the car, and that
- 16 conversation continued until we got to the hospital.
- 17 I then had to wait another ten minutes or so outside the
- 18 hospital, because I didn't want to speak inside,
- 19 sensitive information. I found a quiet space outside 20 the hospital.
- 21 I then walked into the Cromwell Hospital. I knew it
- 22 was a private hospital, and they were quite
- 23 co-operative. They gave me the information there and
- 24 then that I needed. Don't get me wrong, I did want them
- 25 to tell me that our loved ones were there, but they gave

- 1 me a straight answer.
- 2 Q. And, again, no data protection --
- 3 A. No.
- 4 Q. -- defence?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. Just to be clear, because I think your statement says
- 7 something slightly different, you called the police
- Casualty Bureau before going into the Cromwell Hospital,
 not after leaving it?
- 10 A. It was as I was -- as we were returning back from the
- $11 \qquad$ hospital ,at some point on that journey from the
- 12 hospital on Sydney Street back to the Cromwell Hospital
- 13 that I was attempting to ring.
- 14 Q. I see.
- 17 got to Cromwell Road Hospital, that I got through. But
- $18 \qquad \ \ \,$ the conversation carried on to the moment we got to the
- 19 hospital and I had to remain outside it , and I found
- 20 a quiet space
- 21 Q. Right.
- 22 $\,$ A. It carried on, because they asked for a lot of
- 23 information. There were six that we had to provide, and
- 24 $\hfill I$ had to give addresses, date of birth, description,
- $25\,$ you know, and that took quite a while, for each family

- 1 member. Then we were given reference numbers for each 2 one 3 Q. I see. 4 Then I think, is this right, after the visit to the 5 Cromwell Hospital, you went back to the Paterson Wing at 6 St Mary's; yes? 7 A. That's correct. 8 Q. Yes. What made you go back to St Mary's? 9 A. The reason why we went back to St Mary's was because. 10 from the moment we left them, at the time we had left 11 them, at the time of morning that we had left them, it 12 would be clear that more survivors would be coming to 13 the hospital or rescued, and that was a main hospital 14 within the borough. The Paddington and Chelsea and 15 Westminster were the main, really, hospitals within the 16 borough whenever someone has come from an incident or 17 a serious incident. Those were the two main hospitals. 18 Q. And as you say at paragraph 130, if we can just scroll 19 a little further down page 25 of the statement on your 2.0 screen {IWS00001851/25}, Mr Choucair, you say there, at 21 the beginning of that paragraph:
- 22 "I had to sign in, and provide my name and contact
- 23 details . I was then directed to a police officer who
- 24 asked me the same questions I had been asked by the
- 25 Casualty Bureau and so I had to go through all the same

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1 information again. I was distressed by having to repeat 2 everything and this was a long process. I think one of 3 the police officers then gave me a phone number to call, 4 where I was asked to provide the same information yet 5 again and this phone call took about 40 minutes. It was not made clear to me at the time whether all of this 6 7 information would be going to the same place." 8 Now, just counting it, is this right: you had 9 already provided your details to St Mary's on the first 10 visit, and now you're asked to provide them a second 11 time, and then a third time when you rang the 12 Casualty Bureau, and it was in fact a fourth time 13 because you had already given that information to the 14 Casualty Bureau. Have I counted the number of times 15 correctly? 16 A. So the first time I got through -- well, if you're 17 talking about giving information about our loved ones. 18 the first time would have been to the commander, 19 Nick Thatcher, or the inspector. Nick Thatcher, and then 2.0 from then to the Paterson Wing in Paddington, then the 21 third time Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, then the 22 fourth time to the police again, which --23 Q. The Casualty Bureau? 24 Sorry, yes, the fourth time, the Casualty Bureau. Then Α 25 the fifth time to the police again, because when I went

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1 back to the Paterson Wing, I was told that $--\mbox{ I}$ was told to go to I think it was the gallery or the conference 2 3 room, and that was in the Mint Wing, which was out of 4 the hospital. So I had to come out of the 5 Paterson Wing, then go to the Mint Wing in the old 6 hospital, and there was a gallery room. It was -- or 7 a conference room, I think it was called the gallery, 8 and I was told to go there. And when I went there, 9 I had to sign in who I was. I saw other people there 10 and I had to wait my turn, and there were two officers, 11 two detectives in plain clothes, and they had notebooks, 12 and they were taking down our information. They asked 13 me the same questions of what the police bureau had 14 asked me, and I did tell them that I had provided this 15 information, if I'm correct. However, I still 16 co-operated with them, because they were in plain 17 clothes, they were detectives, I felt, you know, the 18 need to. And I think, if I'm correct, before seeing 19 them -- because there was a queue to see them, ${\sf I}$ was 2.0 waiting my turn, if I'm correct, and then they -- after 21 having provided the information about our loved ones to 2.2 the detectives, we then left, or we were told to leave, 23 because they needed that room, and that's when I left, 2.4 if I'm correct 25 Q. Right.

-		I'm just looking at my statement.	1		member of staff and left the building immediately and
2	Q.	Yes.	2		went to the car. There was no time to waste as we still
5		(Pause)	3		had more hospitals to search."
	Α.	Yes. So this detective provided me, again, with	4	Α.	Yes. So I went back into the A&E building in the new
		a number, which I had no idea that it was $$ I don't	5		building, which I believe was called the Queen Elizabeth
)		know whether it was the police Casualty Bureau number,	6		Building, at St Mary's, and I went to the first floor.
		I didn't take it upon myself to check, in honesty, but	7		I went to the A&E department. I don't know how I got
3		I took it as if it was like another number I had to feed	8		through, whether someone let me in or I knocked on the
)		this information about our loved ones into, and that's	9		window, I'm not too sure. I went to the reception area
)		the reason why I rang it and gave them the information.	10		and they showed me the book. It was like an A3 size
-		They then again gave me serial numbers for each family	11		book, and it had all the log-in entries of everybody
		member. At no point did they say, "You have already	12		that had attended St Mary's Accident & Emergency on that
5		contacted us", or, "We have this information",	13		day. It showed the dates, the time, the names, and
	_	et cetera.	14		I think it had a signature, I'm not too sure. I looked
)		Right.	15		in that book, and our family members were not listed in
)	Α.	It took a lot out of me, because we were $$ I was	16		that book. Therefore, I immediate $$ I thanked them and
		fasting, and it was mentally exhausting.	17		I left the building and, as I left the building, if I'm
3	Q.	Having provided that information on a number of	18		correct, there were two police officers standing $$ or
)		occasions which you've now recounted to us, both to the	19		they may have been there when I went in, but I had
)		police and to the Casualty Bureau at least once and at	20		a conversation with them as I was leaving or as I was
-		the hospitals, did you actually receive any information?	21		entering, I'm not too sure, and out of curiosity I took
	Α.	I didn't receive no phone call from any hospital or the	22		it upon myself to ask them: do they have any information
5		police Casualty Bureau. In my recollection, if I go	23		about our family, whether they were here, whether they
		through it again, how many times I had to give this	24		know anything, and I could tell that they were officers
)		information, so I'll start off with the information was	25		not from the borough due to their epaulettes and the
		61			63
-		provided to Nick Thatcher, that's one; it was then	1		letters on their shoulders. Having worked with the
2		provided to the Paterson Wing, A&E reception, that's	2		police , I you get familiar with the letter
5		twice; it was then provided to the police	3		abbreviations of what police station they were from.
-		Casualty Bureau number, that's three times; it was then	4		And they said to me that they didn't even know why they
5		provided to the detectives who were in the gallery room	5		were there.
,		in the Mint Wing, that's four times; and then having	6	Q.	Right.
7		contacted the number that they had given me, so	7	Α.	And they don't know what they're supposed to do. So
3		altogether it's five times.	8		I was a bit shocked to put two police officers on the
)	Q.	Yes. Then you went back to the A&E reception, I think,	9		main hospital that was $$ that took in the majority of
)		where a member of staff showed you a list of names of	10		survivors, for them not to know what they were doing,
-		everyone who had gone for treatment, and I think you	11		but nothing surprised me.
2		discovered that your family's name wasn't on that list;	12	Q.	I think after that you then went to University College
5		yes? That's what you say in paragraphs 132 and 133	13		Hospital. Roughly what time of the morning now was
-		{IWS00001851/26}.	14		that, if it was still morning?
5	Α.	I can only see ——	15	Α.	Oh, no, it was definitely morning.
5	Q.	Yes, if we turn the page to 26, I think you can see	16		(Pause)
7		there that in paragraph 132 you tell us that you went	17		So $$ well, I'm just trying to \dots so if I obviously
3		back to the main entrance of the Queen Elizabeth	18		contacted the police Casualty Bureau number at 8.30 in
)		Building, and in paragraph 133 you went back to the	19		the morning, and then if you look at the amount of
)		reception, and then you say:	20		hospitals I've had to check, this would have been quite
-		"I spoke to a staff member who showed me a list of	21		late in the morning. I cannot pinpoint a specific time.
2		the names of everyone who had gone to A&E for treatment.	22		I would say probably maybe between 11.00 and 1.00.
5		I checked but could not find our family's names there.	23	Q.	Then you tell us that you continued your search at
		They said they had verified people's names, but I am not	24		University College Hospital, St Thomas' Hospital and
5		sure how they would have done this. I thanked the	25		King's College Hospital down in Denmark Hill, and your

- - sure how they would have done this. I thanked the

- 1 family was at none of those hospitals. Then eventually,
- 2 as you say in paragraph 137 {IWS00001851/26}, you went
- 3 home between 4 and 5 o'clock on the afternoon of
- 4 14 June.
- 5 So just adding it up, is it right that you visited
- $6 \qquad \mbox{ some 11 hospitals, including going back to St Mary's }$
- $7 \qquad \ \ \, twice, \ \ \, and \ \ \, contacted \ two numbers, the police numbers you$
- $8 \qquad \mbox{were given, and gave your number face-to-face to the}$
- 9 police on at least two occasions, but had received no 10 information or updates about your family by the time you
- 10 mormation or updates about your family by the time y 11 went home?
- 12 A. I haven't counted exactly how many hospitals I visited,
- 13 but I'll take your word for what you're saying, if it is
- 14 11. We definitely didn't get no update from the
- $15\,$ hospitals , despite leaving our names and numbers. We
- 16 didn't get no update from the police. Nobody from the
- 17 TMO or the council called us, despite having our 18 numbers.
- 19 I remember when I went into St Thomas' Hospital,
- 20 I think this was in County Hall, if I'm correct,
- 21 I actually -- I know I shouldn't have done this, but
- 22 I sneaked into their intensive care unit, because when
- 23 I came across the intensive care unit, I felt like as if
- 24 we had missed going to the intensive care units in the
- 25 other hospitals as well, so I saw it as an ideal

1 opportunity, and I searched the whole ward. And I feel 2 a bit bad, but -- because I had to open curtains on ... 3 it was wrong, but it was -- I felt -- I don't know how 4 to explain it. It was the wrong thing to do, but it was 5 also the right thing to do, through pressure, and $l^\prime m$ sorry for that. I invaded people's privacy through 6 7 desperation. And I don't know if I was followed by 8 security, I don't know, but I felt like as if ... all 9 I can say is I'm sorry to whoever's privacy I did 10 invade, but it was through desperation. 11 Q. You also say in paragraph 137 $\{IWS00001851/26\}$ that you 12 when you went home, you ended up breaking your fast. 13 A. I actually broke my fast before the time that I was 14 supposed to break it, because I just couldn't take it 15 anymore. There was the taste like myself. my brother. 16 my children, that we were exposed to, a plastic sort of 17 taste in our mouth, and it was a horrible taste. The 18 amount of talking that I had to do, my eyes were watery, 19 I was coughing constantly, and I just wasn't able to 20 continue my fast. My throat was really dry. And I felt 21 really guilty, but I couldn't take it no more. Myself 2.2 and my brother broke our fast prior to the time. 23 I think we stopped at a Tesco and we bought a sandwich 24 and a drink of water, prior -- it was somewhere near --25 I can -- I think it was just after -- between the

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1 University College Hospital and the hospital on 2 Denmark Hill, the King's College Hospital, somewhere 3 between that. 4 Q. Would I be right in thinking that because of the 5 circumstances in which you woke up and immediately left your home to go to the tower at about 2.45 to 3 am, you 6 7 hadn't taken the fast either, you hadn't had anything to 8 eat or drink before the sun had come up? 9 A. That's correct. From 2-something, 2.45, you could say, 10 which I was up, obviously, to the time we got back 11 home -- until the time I broke it, before the actual 12 time, ves. I was still fasting. 13 Q. And just to give people who may not understand the 14 impact or seriousness of breaking your fast before the 15 time, to you, was that an important matter? 16 A. It is. However, God is merciful and forgiving. 17 Q. Let's turn, then, to the days after 14 June. 18 In paragraph 139 of your statement on page 27 19 {IWS00001851/27} you say there: 2.0 "It is difficult to be clear about the order of 21 events in the days which followed. I think that the 22 onus was mainly on me and Nabil in terms of searching 23 and calling the hospitals. I remember how Nabil and 24 I would go down to the Grenfell Tower very early in the 25 morning. People of all faiths and backgrounds were

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1		there, unloading food, water, clothes and accessories
2		into centres and giving them out on the streets."
3		You go on to say:
4		"I particularly remember this at the [Latimer]
5		Christian Centre. You could tell people were coming
6		from all over to help. I did not see anyone from the
7		local authority. The community put the government and
8		the local authority to shame. People were still
9		gathered in numbers, traumatised, crying and hugging
10		each other. I could feel the community's pain. The
11		pain ${\sf I}$ was experiencing was like the inside of me was
12		being ripped up with a knife and I felt choked."
13		Is that, that description there, something which you
14		would apply to all the days which followed?
15	Α.	Yes.
16	Q.	For the next few days after 14 June?
17	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
18		Speaking of shame, it reminded me of a $$ of the
19		information that I relayed back to $$ when I was in
20		Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, in terms of the
21		information that I said to the sister . I said to them
22		that, "St Mary's Hospital put your hospital to shame".
23		Sorry to touch on that point, but it just reflected the
24		information or the point that was made here.

In the events of when we went back to the scene,

25

25

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1	I recall it being chaotic in the streets. There were
2	people from all over London bringing in supplies and
3	loading them up on the pavement, water, food, and they
4	were then taken into $$ clothes, shoes. They were taken
5	into the rescue centres, especially the Latimer
6	Christian Centre, and the people from the community were
7	helping them. It wouldn't surprise me if some bereaved
8	family members or survivors were also in that. I don't
8 9	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
-	know, but it wouldn't surprise me if they did help.
10	There was nobody there from the local authority that
11	I saw, nobody visible from the TMO, from the council.
12	There was police on the scene. It was something amazing
13	that I had never seen before, and it put the local
14	authority to shame, because it showed that the community
15	were such a tight knit that they didn't rely or need the
16	help of the council. They were perfectly capable of
17	getting by with what was going on at the time of moment,
18	and people were just getting on with it through their
19	generous donations. Obviously I wasn't aware that
20	people were obviously also scattered and some people
21	knew where certain stuff was, et cetera.
22	But with regards to the feeling , that feeling
23	remained with me, and until today still remains with me,
24	of how these crooks can $$ are still hiding until today
25	and blaming each other of the events of what occurred on
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1 that day.

2	Q.	You tell us in your statement at paragraph 140
3		$\{IWS00001851/27\}$ that you chose photographs of your
4		family and put them on sticks and appealed on live
5		television .
6		Did you receive any calls in response about your
7		family, after having put up the images?
8	Α.	No. We got pictures of our loved ones through
9		a WhatsApp. Unfortunately, most of the pictures of our
10		family were in Lebanon. We had like loads of albums of
11		our family all together, of which I obviously don't have
12		access to. And I don't know how, but someone sent us
13		a picture of my mum, my sister, and her children. We
14		wanted to try to get my sister and her children all
15		together in one picture, and we managed to do that.
16		And on that morning $$ I wasn't working at the time,
17		I was on benefits, and I \dots we managed to find
18		somebody, a printing shop, to print these pictures and
19		get them laminated, and I had to haggle with the person,
20		which I don't regret, but it was quite difficult for me
21		to do, you know, to be put through that. It was
22		quite $$ it lowered my dignity, but it was necessary to
23		haggle with someone on a main high street that owns
24		a business, and we put these on some sticks, and we
25		laminated the rest, and the idea was to hang up these

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1 pictures in core areas like, for example, close to the 2 scene, rescue centres, bus stops, and to also do live 3 television conferences, and we needed something that 4 would reflect our family that would catch the eye, if 5 you know what I mean, like for example the word 6 "Missing" in red, or, you know, it was like in bold or 7 something that would catch the eye, because we knew 8 every eye in the situation we were in was precious, due 9 to the lack of information. And we printed telephone 10 numbers, myself and my brother put his telephone number 11 on the bottom, just in case if one didn't get through, 12 we would use my number as well. I didn't receive no 13 phone calls, unfortunately. 14 However, during the space of -- whilst doing this, 15 one thing which also killed the hopes of our family survive $\,--\,$ you know, killed the hopes of them being 16 17 alive , which I didn't really say to my brother, but 18 I saw two T-shirts of the London Fire Brigade, and they 19 were hanged up on the railings next to where the 20 Underground station was, and they had a badge on them, 21 or had $\ensuremath{^{\prime\prime}\text{LFB}}\xspace$ on them, and there was messages on them, 2.2 and I think there were two shirts, one was navy blue and 23 one was white, I think, with red on it, the title "LFB",

make it to the 22nd floor", or -- et cetera, "Rest in 71

and there was a message on it saying "Sorry we didn't

1		peace", I don't know. And there was also in the
2		alleyway, I think it is just after the Latimer Christian
3		Centre, there's an alleyway, a wall, where people took
4		comfort in writing on the walls, and somebody, I don't
5		know who, put a white T-shirt of our family all on one
6		shirt and hanged it up on the railing, and there was
7		a Liverpool scarf on it which said, "You'll never walk
8		alone", and it was like "Rest in peace", and there were
9		messages, and people took comfort in that wall. It was
10		such a particular space that people were writing on the
11		wall and showing their expressions and emotions, and
12		took comfort in that. They even covered it and they put
13		candles on the floor , and they were praying there like
14		to their loved ones.
15		I don't know if my brother did see that, but I was
16		exposed to that during the search of our loved ones,
17		whilst putting up the posters, you know, and it was
18		something you couldn't miss, if you know what I mean.
19		And this is what I mean when I say we were taken from
20		trauma to trauma, repetitive trauma. But the adrenalin
21		of wanting to find our loved ones was the main focus.
22	Q.	During that first week after 14 June, did you have any
23		contact from the council or from the TMO at all about
24		your loved ones?
25	Α.	I didn't get no call from the council. I believe on

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- 1 day 4 or day 5, 1'm not too sure, we did get a call from 2 the police, and that's when we were introduced to our 3 family liaison officers , who was Heather Rigden and 4 Ashley, two female officers, and I believe we were told to meet them in Notting Hill Gate police station. And 5 when we got there, we were put in a custody interview 6 7 room, such a small, tight space. Myself, my brother and 8 my sister, Sawsan, were there, and it was 9 claustrophobic, if you know what I mean. There was like 10 about five of us in one sort of space, which was only 11 like maybe 2 by 3 metres, or 2 metres by 2 metres, 12 that's how small the space was. It was very 13 claustrophobic and uncomfortable, and we were all 14 sort of squashed next to each other, and I think they 15 asked us questions, and I think they wanted our DNA or 16 something, or they had identified my mum at that time, 17 I'm not too sure, or they required DNA from us. 18 Q. During the course of that meeting, did you get any 19 information about what had happened to any particular 20 members of your family in the building or all of them? 21 A. No, not at that stage. Not at that stage. I think it 2.2 was just that they wanted DNA, and they introduced 23 themselves, who they were, if I'm correct. That was our 24 very first meeting, if I'm correct. 25 Q. Did you get any information at that meeting about what 73 1 was going on, about where your loved ones might be? 2 A. Not at that time, no. 3 Q. When did you eventually find out that your loved ones 4 and your family had perished in the fire? A. I can't pinpoint an exact time. I think it was, was 5 6 it ... I don't know if it was a couple of weeks later or 7 a couple of months later, we were -- received 8 information. I think my mum was the first person, if 9 I'm correct, to be identified through DNA. 10 Q. Right. 11 A. Myself and my brother done -- our first interview, if 12 I 'm correct, was with a radio station or -- it was 13 a foreign newspaper. I don't know why, but they just happened to be the first one. Then myself and my 14 15 brother went live on Sky News, and there was many people 16 there, and the police were there in the background, and 17 we were -- they wanted to interview us. We saw it as 18 an opportunity to obtain information through our loved 19 ones. We knew that Sky News was quite popular and that 20 a lot of people would watch Sky News, and we used them, 21 and I'm sure they used us for what they wanted to 2.2 achieve. 23 There was talk about where to do this interview.
- 24 They wanted to do it in a particular place. We said to
- 25 them, "No, it gets done in the middle of the tower, in

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front of the tower", and it was under one condition:
that it would go live there and then, it wouldn't be
$\ensuremath{pre-edited}$. And then we done our interview, we told the
public that if anyone has seen our family members, with
the sticks in our hand and pictures of our loved ones,
to please contact the police Casualty Bureau number.
Other press started mobbing us, because when they
saw like a centrepiece, it was like as if they wanted
a piece of the action or they wanted to know what was
going on, and the police that were standing behind us,
there was about like 10 or 12 police officers and they
were all spaced out, and after doing this interview,
a massive crowd came, I think from the town hall, and $$
hundreds of people, and the police were standing there.
I think they were there to prevent [dis]order, or
prevent public [dis]order, and they were sort of $$ it's
like as if they didn't want to be there, like as if they
knew that they were $$ they were standing with us, if
you know what I mean, but at the same time it was like
they didn't want to be there, or they knew something
that we didn't know. And this whole crowd came to the
scene after myself and my brother done our interview,
and people were angry, naturally, the residents, the
community, whoever else as well, we were all angry,
and $$ but we were also $$ we held $$ we remained $$

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1	what's the word? $$ respectful at the same time, if you
2	know what I mean. They didn't go past beyond like the
3	police, despite the amount of people that had gathered.
4	Everyone remained respectful, and stopped at that point.
5	Yeah, and again, we continued after that to go to
6	the rescue centres. I then went back to the Westway, if
7	I'm correct. I think we're into the next day. We came
8	back to the scene again. Whilst we were at home, every
9	sort of hour, myself and my brother would ring the
10	Accident & Emergency casualty numbers to see if our
11	loved ones had been identified. This would be done
12	every hour, but there was no update.
13	When we went back $$ when I went back into the
14	Westway, the Westway $$ for some reason, I don't know
15	why, but I brought my passport with me, and there were
16	three sort of tables outside the Westway, if I'm
17	correct , and there was somebody $$ there was $$ the
18	British Red Cross were on one table, or the last table,
19	if I'm correct, and there were another two tables. One
20	table I had to sign in, another table I think put like
21	a wristband on me, and it was one of those $$ I don't
22	think it was rubber, I think it was like a paper,
23	sort of tight one that remained on your wrist, I can't
24	remember what colour they were $$ what colour it was,
25	and another table showed us or told us where to go,

1	et cetera.
2	I walked into the centre, and it was chaotic in
3	there. It was like as if $$ it was like the
4	Houses of Parliament, when everyone's all scattered and,
5	you know, when they're having their debates, and the
6	sound was that loud. I wouldn't really call it a rescue
7	centre, because it was chaos in there, and I really do
8	feel sorry for the survivors that were made to remain
9	there whilst all this was going on, because their
10	privacy was sort of deprived. They had wooden boards
11	with, I don't know, sort of material, roughly about
12	5-foot high, to separate where the survivors were, and
13	the other section had like tables. There were people
14	there from the Home Office, there were people there from
15	the Passport Office, there were $$ the Citizens Advice

16 Bureau were there and on the other side there was also

17 a table with food on it, and even on that side, there

18 was no privacy, if you know what I mean. The survivors

- 19 were exposed to everybody that walked in there, and it 20 was chaotic, and ...
- 21 I don't know why I brought my passport with me, but 22 I wrote down the addresses of our loved ones and that's
- 23 how I managed to get in.
- 24 Q. Which day was that? How many days after the fire was 25 that experience?

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- 1 A. I think it was in the -- during the first week --
- 2 Q. Right.
- 3 A. -- if I'm correct.
- 4 Q. Were you aware of any psychosocial or counselling
- support offered to you or to Nabil or your sister, 5 6 Sawsan, during that first week?
- 7 A. No. I wasn't made aware of any counselling or social 8 support available to me.
- 9 Q. Right.
- 10 A. I am aware that there were -- people were having housing
- 11 issues, and the North Kensington Law Centre were dealing 12 with a lot of people's cases due to the struggles that
- 13 they faced within the council, and they weren't happy
- 14 with where they were at that time. I had no reason to
- 15 go to the -- at that point, but later on I did -- law
- 16 centre. I was just looking for our loved ones,
- 17 basically.

18 Q. Well, Mr Choucair, I've come pretty much to the end of

- 19 my questions. I just have one more for you, and that is
- 2.0 whether, after looking through all the evidence in your
- 21 statements and taking you back this morning through the
- 2.2 experiences of that time, for which we're really
- 23 grateful, is there anything you would like to add?
- 24 A. Where do you begin? There would be many things I would 25 like to add, or hope for this Inquiry to take into
 - 78

1	consideration.
2	Atrocity is one of them, of the reasons why what
3	happened happened. To maybe look into the issue of
4	racism that, through evidence, has $$ the lack of
5	urgency, because of people's ethnic background and
6	culture, which I don't believe this Inquiry has touched
7	to a certain extent on, that they should.
8	I don't think I could sum up what everyone had to go
9	through on that day, but it was the most painful
10	experience in my life, that until today won't go, no
11	matter how much counselling or support I receive, myself
12	or my family, and
13	I'm sorry, but I'm overwhelmed by your question,
14	that I can't really respond in the manner that I feel
15	I should.
16	MR MILLETT: That's all right. That's all right.
17	Well, I'm going to ask the Chairman now to take the
18	usual break. I note that it's 1 o'clock.
19	Mr Chairman, perhaps we should take the break for
20	the lunch break and perhaps either come back at
21	2 o'clock and finish off or take the break now and take
22	a later lunch.
23	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I assume that Mr Choucair would like
24	to complete his evidence this side of lunch. Is that
25	not right?

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- THE WITNESS: I'm guided by you, sir. 1
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, you have spent a long time in 2
- 3 the witness box, and what would normally happen at this
- 4 stage is we have a short break -- I mean ten minutes or
- 5 so -- in order to give people who are following the
- 6 proceedings from elsewhere a chance to suggest questions 7
- that perhaps we ought to put to you, and then we would 8 then, if there are any questions, ask you those
- 9 questions, and then you'd be free to go.
- 10 So if we take that short break now, we would be
- 11 coming back at 1.10, and at that point we would finish
- 12 your evidence.
- 13 THE WITNESS: Sure.
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And I think that would probably be 14
- 15 in your interests as much as anyone's, wouldn't it?
- 16 THE WITNESS: Well, I'm guided by you.
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. 17
- 18 Well, I think that would be the right thing to do,
- 19 Mr Millett.
- 2.0 MR MILLETT: Yes, I think so.
- 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So we will have a short break now.
- 2.2 We'll come back at 1.10, and we'll then see if there are
- 23 any further questions that we ought to ask you.
- 24 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. 25

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2

1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

-	The Withless. Thank you.
2	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you go with the usher, then,
3	please.
4	(Pause)
5	Mr Millett, I think ten minutes ought to be enough
6	for this purpose.
7	MR MILLETT: Yes.
8	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: If for some reason it isn't, you can
9	ask the usher to come and tell us why.
10	MR MILLETT: It certainly should. Thank you.
11	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. 1.10, please.
12	(1.02 pm)
13	(A short break)
14	(1.10 pm)
15	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Choucair. Well, we'll
16	see if there are any more questions for you.
17	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
18	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
19	MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman.
20	Mr Choucair, there are no further questions that
21	I have or anybody else has for you, so it only remains
22	for me to thank you very much indeed for your evidence.
23	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
24	There is something I wish to say in regards to your
25	last point, if you don't mind.

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- 1 MR MILLETT: Of course.
- 2 THE WITNESS: First of all, I'd like to thank the Inquiry
- $3 \qquad \ \ \, \mbox{for giving me the opportunity to, at my pace, answer}$
- 4 your questions and to elaborate on what happened on the
- 5 night and the aftermath. So thank you, sir, and
- 6 thank you, panel.
- 7 The other thing I wish to say is that I hope that 8 through your recommendations, sir, you will make sure 9 that this doesn't happen again, and I hope that your 10 recommendations will be fulfilled, and you will do
- 11
 something in your power to make sure that they are

 12
 fulfilled .
- 13The second thing I wish to say is: London has14problems. London requires, in my opinion, a resilience
- 15 centre, somewhere where, in the event of a tragedy or
- $16 \qquad \mbox{disaster}$, one wouldn't have to go to numerous places;
- 17 \qquad an all -in-one building, if you wish, where all these
- 18 resources and help could be given.
- 19 And combustible materials, well, need I say more
- 20 about that? In my opinion, that's obvious what needs to
- be done there: the removal of combustible materials andthe end to combustible materials.
- 23 And lessons need to be learnt, whether they may be
- 24 from recruitment, training. I mean, if you look at the
- 25 7/7 bombs, which I was there on the scene, having worked

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3 despite the tragedy that happened, than what happened at 4 Grenfell, which was in one place. 5 So I hope that lessons will be learnt, and you will make sure, through your recommendations, and through 6 7 listening to the bereaved, survivors and whoever else, that this doesn't happen ever again. 8 9 And thank you for your time. 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Choucair. Thank you. 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Choucair, before you leave, 13 I would like to thank you very much, not just on my own 14 15 behalf, but on behalf of the panel as a whole, for your 16 coming to give evidence. You have been very courageous, 17 if I may say so, in describing what must have been 18 a very distressing and painful time for you, and, 19 indeed, I think we can all appreciate how distressing 2.0 and painful it has been for you to talk about it today. 21 But we are really grateful to you for coming along to do

for Transport for London, that happened in numerous

places, and we were more in control of that situation,

- 22 that, and we have learned a lot from your evidence, so
- 23 thank you very much indeed.
- 24 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir. Thank you, panel.
- 25 $\,$ SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like to go with the usher $\,$

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- 1 now, then, please. 2 (The witness withdrew) 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, Mr Millett, thank you very 4 much. We will break at that point. 5 I think, although I know all those who are here and 6 who support our work would normally expect to get a full 7 hour for lunch, we are running slightly behind ourselves 8 today, aren't we? 9 MR MILLETT: We are. SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And I think we could afford to 10 11 shorten the lunch break a little bit and come back at 12 2 05 $\mathsf{MR}\ \mathsf{MILLETT}:\ \mathsf{Very}\ \mathsf{good}.\ \mathsf{Thank}\ \mathsf{you}\ \mathsf{very}\ \mathsf{much}.$ 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So, with apologies to everyone who 14 15 is affected by that, I'll say we'll resume, please, 16 today at 2.05. MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. 17 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much. 19 (1.16 pm) 2.0 (The short adjournment) 21 (2.05 pm) 2.2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Keating. 23 MR KEATING: Good afternoon, sir. Could we call 24 Mr Al-Karad, please.
- 25

1	MR MAHMOUD AL-KARAD (called)
2	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good afternoon, Mr Al-Karad. Now,
3	I think you know we've arranged for Mr Interpreter to be
4	here to assist you, should you find that necessary.
5	THE WITNESS: Yes.
6	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: On the other hand, if you feel
7	comfortable with questions being put to you in English,
8	and if you feel comfortable with answering in English,
9	then I'm quite happy for you to do that. If you need
10	help from the interpreter, perhaps you would just
11	indicate, and then we'll do things in the ordinary way,
12	in which case the interpreter will then interpret the
13	question and your answer. All right?
14	THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you very much.
15	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
16	(Interpreter affirmed)
17	(Witness sworn)
18	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
19	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
20	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now, please sit down, both of you.
21	Mr Interpreter, I hope we can work this all right in
22	the way that I indicated.
23	THE INTERPRETER: Sure, yes.
24	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think we will wait for Mr AI-Karad
25	to indicate whether he wants your assistance, and if he

1	de se aleman a Allada alebras de alebras anticonstructuras
-	does, then we will do things in the ordinary way.
2	THE WITNESS: Okay.
3	SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: All right?
4	THE WITNESS: Yeah, that's fine, thank you.
5	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Can I just say, the only thing
6	I would like you to avoid, if possible, is having
7	a private conversation, otherwise none of us know what
8	you're talking about. All right?
9	THE WITNESS: Okay.
10	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
11	Yes, Mr Keating.
12	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
13	MR KEATING: Good afternoon, Mr Al-Karad.
14	A. Good afternoon.
15	Q. Thank you so much for attending today to give evidence
16	and assist the Inquiry with its investigations.
17	Just a few words by introduction.
18	You have heard everything a few moments ago
19	regarding the interpreter, who is there to assist you.
20	At any stage, if you do need that assistance, do let us
21	know. But I understand at this stage you're content to
22	proceed in English; is that correct?
23	A. That's correct.
24	Q. A few other things, please, just in relation to those.
25	If you could keep your voice up as well the best you
20	

	able to hear and record what you say.
Α.	Okay.
Q.	It also helps not to nod or shake your head, as
	understandable as it may be, but to say "yes" or "no" to
	some of the questions, please.
Α.	Okay, thank you.
Q.	If you feel you need a break at any stage, do let us
	know and I'm sure we can accommodate that.
Α.	Okay, thank you.
Q.	I just want to deal first of all with your statements.
	You have made two statements to the Inquiry. The
	first was dated 26 June 2018, and the second was dated
	18 February 2020. I'm just going to ask you to be
	turned to those documents for a moment.
	If we could look at {IWS00000821}, please. That's
	your first statement, we see, on 26 June 2018.
	If we could go to page 12, please. Mr Al–Karad,
	could you just confirm that that's your signature,
	please?

can, so that the transcriber, who sits to your right, is

- A. Yes, I can confirm that's my signature.
- 2.2 Q. Thank you.
 - ${\sf I}$ 'm going to ask you to be shown your second
- statement, please, which is {IWS00001541}. We can see
- that's your second statement, dated 18 February 2020.

- If we could turn to page 25, please, in relation to that, again the same question: could you confirm that's your signature, please? A. I can confirm that. ${\sf Q}. \;$ Have you had the opportunity to read both of those witness statements recently? A. I've read them two weeks ago. Q. Okay. A. Yeah. Q. Well, if need be, I can refresh your memory as we go through it in relation to the statements. A. Okay.
- $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ The final question in relation to those statements is:
- can you confirm that the contents of those statements
- are true to the best of your knowledge?
- A. Yes, I can confirm that.
- Q. I want to briefly deal with some important background to
- assist everybody who is listening to understand your
- connection to Grenfell Tower. Okay?
- A. Okay.

- $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{At}\;\mathsf{the}\;\mathsf{time}\;\mathsf{of}\;\mathsf{the}\;\mathsf{fire}\;\mathsf{,}\;\mathsf{you}\;\mathsf{were}\;\mathsf{living}\;\mathsf{at}\;\mathsf{flat}\;\;112\;\mathsf{in}\;$
- Grenfell Tower on the 14th floor, isn't that correct?
- A. That's correct.
- Q. You had lived there since 2016.
 - A. Yes, that's correct.

- 1 Q. Is it right that you lived with your childhood friends
- 2 from Syria, Omar and Mohammad Alhajali?
- 3 A. That's correct.
- 4 Q. So you lived together as a trio in that flat?
- 5 A. Yes.
- Q. Is it also right that you went in Syria to the same 6
- 7 primary school together?
- A. So this is not the same primary school. We played $--\ensuremath{\,{\rm we}}$ 8
- 9 know each other from primary school and I mentioned that
- 10 last few weeks we went -- we know each other from
- 11 primary school, but we went in, what do you call it,
- before high street(sic), year 10, we went together same 12
- 13 school. But I know them like since primary school, and
- 14 like especially Omar, he used to play handball with me 15
- and we went to university as well.
- Q. Yes. Close connections between you, Omar and Mohammad. 16 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. You mention that you went to the same university as
- 19 Omar.
- 20 A. Yes

2

- 21 Q. That's where you completed three years of a four-year
- 2.2 degree in nursing in Syria; is that correct?
- 23 A. That's correct, yes.
- 24 Q. Because of the deteriorating situation in Syria, you had
 - to cut short your studies and leave Syria for safety

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- 1 reasons: is that correct?
- A. Yeah. It was a safe city, there wasn't fighting there, 3 but it start to have, like, some problems, and it was 4 risky for us because we were from a city where we are 5 opponent of our president. 6 Q. Yes. 7 A. So it's like they don't like us. So it start to be like 8 little bit problematic. 9 Q. Yes. 10 A. Yes. Sorry. 11 Q. Not at all. And that's how you found yourself to come 12 to the UK? 13 A. Yeah Q. You have previously given a commemoration to the Inquiry 14 15 in relation to Mohammad. 16 A. Yeah. 17 Q. And you have described the impact of the loss of his 18 life in the fire. 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. And how he was like a brother to you, isn't that 21 correct? 2.2 A. Yes, that's correct. 23 Q. And we all remember the moving things you said on his 24 behalf at those commemorations. 25 A. Yeah. 90

- 1 Q. I want to turn now, please, to 14 June.
- 2 A. Okay.
- 3 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{Briefly}$, $\mathsf{I'm}$ just going to set the scene and then ask
- 4 you some questions, really, from a little bit later down the chronology. 5
- Is it right that at about 1.10 in the morning of 6
- 7 14 June, you had been working in Edgware Road and had 8 just finished work?
- 9 A. Yes. I wasn't -- I didn't finish work, but I was going
- 10 to finish , so it was like about 10-past something.
- 11 Q. Yes. At that time is when you learned of the fire which
- 12 was taking place.
- 13 A. Yeah
- Q. When you received that information, you rushed back 14
- 15 towards the tower; isn't that correct?
- 16 A That's correct
- 17 Q. And you mention in your statement how you were on the
- 18 phone speaking to Mohammad at the time, as you were
- 19 travelling back.
- 20 A. Yes, that's correct.
- 21 Q. And Mohammad and Omar, of course, were inside the tower,
- 22 in your home.
- 23 A. Yes, they were inside.
- 24 Q. And you arrived back at about 1.45 that morning.
- 25 A. Yeah, I went back quarter -- I went back. It was 1.55

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- when I took the first picture, I can remember that.
- 2 Q. Yes

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- 3 A. And it was, like, packed of people outside, and, yeah,
- 4 there were a lot of people there.
- 5 Q. Lot of people outside.
- 6 A. Yeah.
- 7 ${\sf Q}. \ \mbox{You have mentioned in your first statement the series of}$
 - calls you made with Mohammad.
- 9 A. Yes
- 10 Q. Perhaps I could deal with it this way: the last time you
- 11 spoke to Mohammad, who was inside the tower, was about
- 12 3.19, is what you've said in your statement.
- 13 A. Sorry, what's 3 --
- $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ It was at 3.20 in the morning was the last time you 14
- 15 spoke to Mohammad.
- 16 A. I think so, yeah.
- Q. Yes. You set those calls out in some detail in your 17
- 18 statement and, again, you spoke in moving terms about
- 19 your last call to Mohammad, which we've heard already
- 2.0 about.
- 21 A. Yes.

2.4

- 2.2 Q. Ten minutes after that last call you had with Mohammad,
- 23 you learned, when you were outside the tower, that Omar
 - was also outside; is that right?
- 25 A. That's correct. So just I've got a question.

1	Q.	Yes.	1		fast ,
2	Α.	So is it brief what happened or shall we, is it	2		you k
3	SIF	R MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you like the interpreter to	3		So it
4		assist you?	4		the w
5		(Pause for interpretation)	5	Q.	Yes.
6	Α.	(Interpreted): Is this an open question you would like	6		you h
7		me to elaborate on, or you just want me to say "yes" or	7	Α.	Yes.
8		"no"?	8	Q.	Moha
9	Q.	I was dealing with it in a short way, but is there	9		stater
10		anything else you wanted to add in relation to that part	10		tower
11		of the evidence, Mr Al-Karad?	11		more
12	Α.	Okay, just I would like to take you back, if that's	12	Α.	That'
13		possible, you know.	13		tower
14	Q.	Of course.	14		about
15	Α.	So in the morning I wake up to go to work. I used to	15		the o
16		work long shifts, and I used to $$ you know, we have two	16		like ,
17		single beds in the same room where Mohammad was, and we	17		was f
18		said goodbye to each other and I went to my job.	18		asking
19		And, you know, when I learned there's a fire in the	19		"Whe
20		shop $$ so before that I wanted to leave home at	20		with I
21		8 o'clock evening, because I was tired and almost my	21		at all
22		shift should supposed to finish, but my friend, he told	22	Q.	Yes.
23		me, "You need to support me and you need to, you know,	23	Α.	And h
24		give me a hand at work", so I stayed longer, and then we	24		he's
25		learned there is a fire in Grenfell Tower, and was $$	25		S
		93			

1		you know, we rushed like directly to go. And, you know,
2		was like $$ it was like, you know, a nightmare to go and
3		to see, you know, the fire from A40, to see $$ you know,
4		it's picking up, the fire, very quickly.
5		So I went there and I spoke to him about $$
6		you know, he were asking me about getting help and he
7		was, like, very scared and shouting and begging me to
8		get help. So I get there, and $$ so I get there at
9		about 1.45, and it was like packed of people, and they
10		were like all of them shouting, and we were trying to go
11		inside the building to help my friend, and the police
12		didn't allow us to go inside, because, you know, it was
13		not safe to do so.
14	Q.	Yes.
15	Α.	Yeah, just, you know, I wanted to let you know that,
16		you know, it was like a tough night, because I wasn't
17		sleeping for long, and, you know, the night of the fire
18		started after 12 o'clock, so I had to stay long all the
19		day. Yes.
20	Q.	When you say stay long all day, we need to bear that in
21		mind because you obviously hadn't probably eaten, you
22		hadn't slept, and then throughout 14 June, which we'll
23		move on to $$
24	Δ	Veah I was facting in that day and it was Pamadan it

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	fast,like,few days, your body start to be like,
	you know, tired, you feel tired, and I do long shift.
	So it was like $$ you know, it was nightmare to stand
	the whole night until the morning.
Q.	Yes. In relation to that, I was just on the point where
	you had realised that Omar had come out of the tower.
Α.	Yes.
Q.	Mohammad had not, and you have mentioned that in your
	statement, and you remained at the scene outside the
	tower until about 9 o'clock that morning, hoping for
	more news in relation to Mohammad; is that correct?
Α.	That's correct. I was running from side to side of the
	tower to see if there's, you know, any news or anything
	about, you know, if they are out or not. So I went to
	the other side when I heard from my friend. He said
	like , Omar, he's out. He was like $$ you know, his face
	was full of smoke, and he was crying, and, you know, was
	asking about Mohammad and where he is, and I asked him,
	"Where Mohammad, did you see him?", because I had a call
	with Mohammad, and he said to me, "I couldn't see Omar
	at all".
Q.	Yes.
Α.	And he $$ I just told him, "Just try to shout, maybe
	he's like somewhere, and it's dark inside".
	So after that, he went $$ he start to call Mohammad,
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	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	and he was shouting like, "You can leave, you can try to
	A. Q. A.

2		leave the building, it's like $$ it's not that
3		difficult, it's little bit hard, but you can make it".
4		He was like shouting all the time. He was like,
5		you know, very angry. He wanted him to leave like
6		directly .
7	Q.	Yes. We know that Omar, after you saw him, was taken to
8		King's College Hospital, isn't that correct?
9	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
10	Q.	Whilst you were waiting outside the tower for
11		information in relation to Mohammad, was there any
12		assistance being provided, any information being
13		provided by anybody in authority to you?
14	Α.	To be honest, no, because, you know, the thing is, we
15		used to speak with the police, and, you know, when ${\sf I}$ was
16		calling Mohammad, so he was telling me we are in that
17		flat or what they were doing, and, you know, the only
18		thing that I asked the police about $$ you know, they
19		were hosing flat 113, so I was telling them, like, to
20		keep hosing water because he was there, and that's it.
21		But no assistance, no nothing. Just they were like,
22		you know, police keeping $$ pushing people to go further
23		and further back.
24	Q.	Yes.
25		So after those hours you spent outside the tower,

- 1 and communicating initially with Mohammad and then not
- 2 having communication with Mohammad, did it come to
- 3 a stage that you decided to search the local hospitals
- 4 for Mohammad?
- 5 A. That's correct.
- Q. We know that you visited five hospitals looking for 6
- 7 Mohammad, including the Westminster and Chelsea
- 8 Hospital, Hammersmith Hospital, and another in
- 9 Charing Cross, but unfortunately it doesn't appear that
- 10 he was admitted as a patient; is that correct?
- 11 A. So after we -- you know, I finished speaking with
- 12 Mohammad, last call, so it was like 5 o'clock in the 13
- morning and sunrise started, and I was, like, asking
- around. So I asked the ambulance, you know, like 14 15
- ambulance staff, about, "Where do you keep people, like 16
- they are injured or they are out of the tower?" So they 17 were telling me about five hospitals that you could go
- 18 and see if their name's there or ...
- 19 Q. Sure
- 20 A. So we kept -- we stayed there until 9 o'clock in the
- 21 morning, so we decided to go -- so I decided to go with
- 22 his cousin, Aasem, and his fiancée, Amal, to see those
- 23 hospitals, the five names of the hospitals. So we went
- 24 around and they were not helping with any information.
- 25 They said, "We don't know that name".

- Q. Okay. 1 2 How did you feel going from those hospitals, from 3 one to the other, and not getting any information 4 regarding Mohammad? A. It was disappointing, you know, like -- I was, like, 5 very disappointed, because, you know, I don't have to 6 7 go, like leave the building, and I don't know Mohammad, 8 what happened, what's going on with him, and I had to go 9 between hospitals, and it's -- vou know, we could have 10 like a number to call, not to go around. And I haven't 11 slept at that time like for 40 hours, and I was going 12 there, and after we finished searching for Mohammad, 13 I remember Aasem, he was like driving, and at traffic light he just slept and he couldn't, you know, stay 14 15 awake. So we -- I told him, you know, "Just take 16 a quick nap and we need to leave, and it's not safe to 17 drive like that", and he just slept there for 18 five /ten minutes, and I tried to wake him up quickly. 19 And I almost slept, you know, I don't know if I slept or 20 not, I was like unconscious, because I was almost, 21 you know, collapsing, because not sleeping, not eating. 2.2 Q. So a traumatic event, you're exhausted, you were trying 23 to get information from the hospitals, and is it right 24 then that you went to the Rugby Portobello Club on the
 - 98

morning of 14 June?

- 1 A. That's correct.
- 2 Q. And why did you go there?
- 3 A. I heard some people, they were saying they have names or
 - list of names for people who left the building, so
- I went there. And I can't remember -- I went somewhere 5
- else. I cannot remember the name of the centre. It was 6
- 7 around Latimer Road, somewhere around there. I'm not
- 8 sure what it's called, I forget.
- 9 Q. Well, let me deal with the Rugby Portobello Club first
- 10 of all

4

- 11 A. Yes
- 12 Q. When you said you heard information, was that from
- 13 an official individual or was it from just somebody in 14 the street who was trying to assist?
- 15 A. Just I was asking people about, you know, survivors and,
- you know, they were saying, "You have to go to 16
- 17 Portobello to check their names".
- 18 Q. Okav
- When you were at the Rugby Portobello Club, do you 19
- 20 recall seeing anybody from the local council or the TMO 21 there?
- 22 A. I haven't seen anyone, just they were -- I believe they
- 23 were working there as volunteers.
- 24 Q. Okav. 25
 - A. Yeah

99

- 1 Q. Did you find the Rugby Portobello Club helpful when you 2 attended?
- 3 A. So on the first day, no. First week. But after that,
- 4 they provide some help, and -- but, you know, it's just
- 5 I checked there if Mohammad's name was on the list or
- 6 not. That's all what I get from there.
- 7 Q. What was the information you received when you asked?
- 8 A. Just they -- I believed they had like a list, and if
- 9 they know any information, and they couldn't provide
- 10 anything about Mohammad in that time.
- 11 Q. Okay
 - Were you aware of any other sources of information,
 - a central source of information, such as a friends and

- MR KEATING: Yes, do, please. Would you like me to say it
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, I suggest counsel repeats the

- MR KEATING: I was going to say, were you aware of any other
- such as a friends and family assistance centre? 25
 - (Pause for interpretation)

100

- 12 13 14 family assistance centre? 15 A. I would like to ... 16 17 again? 18 19 question and then you can translate. THE INTERPRETER: Okay, sir. I got it, but yes, by all 2.0 21 means. 2.2 23 source of information. a central source of information. 2.4

1	Α.	No, I had not any information about any centre like
2		that.
3	Q.	Did you know where to go? This may be obvious. Did you
4		know where to go to look for information?
5	Α.	To be honest, no, but I was going with Aasem, as I told
6		you. So he slept $$ let me continue with that, if
7		I may.
8		So we went, after he wake up, from, you know, where
9		we parked $$
10	Q.	Yes.
11	Α.	and we went back to his flat, so it was about
12		evening, about 7 o'clock or 6 o'clock evening. So
13		I cannot remember, it was like almost two days without
14		sleeping, so I fell asleep, and I remember, like, I was,
15		you know, sleeping, not sleeping, I'm not sure, I was
16		like dreaming, I was like $$ I had nightmares. So
17		I heard something about, you know, they found Mohammad,
18		and just I heard, like, they are talking about $$ he's
19		on Facebook, he's got pictures.
20		So I just woke up and I was shocked about $$ you
21		know, when I saw his pictures. There was a guy and he's
22		wearing not appropriate clothing and he was, like,
23		playing around his $$ by the end. I was really shocked.
24		I was really shocked. Like, where is everyone, like,
25		where they keep him?
		101
		101
1		So I know there is a building next to us, and so
2		I told my friends, "They keep him that building, shall

1		So I know there is a building next to us, and so
2		I told my friends, "They keep him that building, shall
3		we go and find out, you know, what's going to happen or
4		why they keep him like that".
5	Q.	Yes.
6	Α.	So we went back to the building, around the building.
7	Q.	So just pause there for a moment.
8		So what you're describing to us is the circumstances
9		in which you found out that Mohammad had died in the
10		fire ?
11	Α.	Yes.
12	Q.	And when you were woken up, Omar and those else who were
13		with you had found out on social media because there was
14		a picture posted on Facebook?
15	Α.	Yeah, it was shocking $$
16	Q.	Yes.
17	Α.	to see that, honestly.
18	Q.	And you recognised the building where the picture was
19		probably taken?
20	Α.	Yeah, before the fire , I know a friend, he used to live
21		there, for short of time when I moved to London, so
22		I went once with him. So I saw the building, how they
23		designed the floor, so they have different colours, so
24		I know it's in that building.

25 Q. Yes.

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1		At paragraph 53 of your second statement
2		{IWS00001541/11}, you say this:
3		"I had no communication from RBKC, the TMO or any
4		official body to inform me whether Mohammed had died or
5		to help me find his body."
6		Is that correct?
7	Α.	No, there was no information about Mohammad.
8	Q.	I'm going to move on, if you're content, to 15 June. Is
9		that okay?
10	Α.	That's okay.
11	Q.	So we know that on that night you were at Mohammad and
12		Omar's cousin's flat .
13	Α.	Yes.
14	Q.	And the following day, on 15 June, you went to visit
15		Omar, who of course was still at King's College
16		Hospital; is that right?
17	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
18	Q.	The position is $$ is that correct? $$ that two police
19		officers who were there with Omar at the hospital, who
20		was then discharged from the hospital, then drove both
21		of you to the Westway Sports Centre?
22	Α.	So after I slept like a few hours, if you may let me
23		continue that
24	Q.	Of course.
25	Α.	missing period. So I went back to next to the tower,
		103

1		so I went to that building to see Mohammad's $$ maybe
2		like ask about Mohammad, and there were $$ there was
3		a police officer . He told me, like, "You are not
4		allowed to go in, because it's unsafe or it's not
5		authorised to go in". I said to him $$ I explained to
6		him, like, "I saw my friend, what do you mean it's not
7		authorised, just tell me, he is my friend, you have to
8		give me information about if he is here, where is he,
9		where are you taking him". It was like $$ there was no
10		information at all, like they were keeping secret
11		everything, and like, you know $$ it's like, you know,
12		he said, "I cannot provide any information".
13		We went out and we were speaking with other people.
14		Some people, they were crying. Some people, they were,
15		you know, shouting, you know, swearing. And, like, why
16		we don't get any information from anywhere? There was
17		nobody there, like, to explain what's going on. It was,
18		like , completely, you know, chaos. It's like you don't
19		know what's going on. So it was like
20		So after that, I went back to Omar $$ to Aasem's
21		flat , and I wake up in the morning, I think, and
22		I received a call from police officers , and I cannot
23		remember if I spoke to Omar in the morning or not, but
24		they said to me, "You have to come to that hospital".
25	Q.	Yes.

- 1 A. So I went to the hospital and I met Omar. He was in 2 a bad situation. He was crying. He hugged me and
- a bad situation. He was crying. He hugged me a
 I didn't know what to say. I was like -- really.
- I didn't know what to say. I was like -- really,
- 4 I didn't know what to say. It was very hard. It's
- like -- you know, I've never been in this situation
 before. It's like somebody, his brother and our --
- you know, it's like my brother, and he died. What to
- 8 say? It's --- it hurts me --- you know, like it hurts me
- 9 more because, you know, I don't know what to say to my
- 10 friend, and it's his brother, and it's like suddenly he
- 11 passed away. It was really hard, you know.
- 12 And then after that, they took us to -- by their
- 13 \qquad car, and they give us a lift to Westway Centre, and they
- 14 said -- they took us to two tables, they were in front,
- and they said, "They can provide you help".Q. The police officers took you to the two tables?
- A. Yeah. I can remember that, yeah. They left us there and they said, "They can help you, so they can,
- and they said, They can help you
 you know, support you after that".
- 20 Q. Sure.
- 20 Q. Sure. 21 A. Yeah.
- ∠⊥ A. Yean
- Q. Pausing there for a moment, and really continuing from
 what you were just saying, you've mentioned in your
 statement that you were pretty much --- you had nothing
- 25 else, you had nothing except what you were wearing that

- 1 morning when you went to the Westway; is that right? 2 A. Yes.
- Q. You mentioned two people at a table; was this inside theWestway or outside the Westway?
- 5 A. It was outside the Westway.
- 6 Q. Did you speak to those people?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. And what happened when you spoke to them?
- 9 A. So, firstly , I spoke to them about -- they said --
- 10 I believe they said they are RBKC or Red Cross, I cannot
- 11 remember 100%, but I think they were from RBKC, for
- 12 sure, and I asked them where to go, where we're supposed
- 13 to go, and they said, "You can go to see -- check the,
- you know, Westway Centre from inside, if you need
 anything, or" -- after that, I said to them, "Okay, but
- 16 where shall I sleep? Shall I stay in the street or
- 17 where shall I sleep?" So they said, "We'll give you
- 18 a call, give me your information, we will give you
- 19 a call, so we provide you a hotel". I said, "Okay,
- 20 that's fine". So I went inside to check the
- 21 Westway Centre after that.
- 22 Q. Yes. Perhaps you could help us by just describing the
- 23 Westway Sports Centre when you went inside on 15 June?
- 24 A. So Westway Centre was, you know, big place, was like
- 25 \qquad mattresses on the tennis court, and I saw one person who

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- $1 \qquad % 1 = 1 = 1 = 1 = 1 = 1 = 1$ was sleeping there, and a lot of mattresses, sheets and
- 2 stuff like that, and there was, like, one corner there's
 - a lot of clothes.
- 4 Q. Yes.

3

- 5 $\,$ A. And, to be honest, I had no clothes, nothing to --
- 6 you know, with me. So I said: okay, I was like,
- 7 you know, 40 hours or more, or I cannot remember,
- 8 I cannot count them, without changing my clothes, I need
- 9 to change my clothes. So I was digging between,
- 10 you know, to find something. I was like not that great
- 11 to do that, so I just left them. And was food, like, on
- 12 the side, and was like $--\mbox{ I}$ don't know, I call it chaos
- 13 place, because, you know, I didn't feel well, even Omar,
- 14 he didn't feel well, he say to me, "We need to go out".
- 15 I said to Omar, "Let's go out, it's not nice to stay
- 16 here", because honestly it was not -- nothing was like
- 17 as good as -- I know it's, like, people giving
- $18 \hspace{1.5cm}$ donations, but it wasn't organised, nobody can help you
- 19 to deal with the -- you know, like what you need.
- 20 Q. So you said it was --
- 21 A. And I -- you know, like when I saw the mattresses,
- 22 I thought we are going to end up like sleeping there or
- 23 something.
- 24 Q. Of course.

25

1

You said it wasn't organised and people weren't

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- there to help you.
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. Was there any support available when you were in the 4 Westway on the 15th?
- 5 A. I cannot remember that there was any support there, but 6 I saw that -- outside I asked them about the hotel, and
- 7 we waited there a few hours to get a call from a lady.
- 8 She said to us to go to the hotel in Earls Court. And
- 9 I asked about if I could bring my family here to.
- 10 you know, I think maybe Home Office or Red Cross, I'm
- 11 not sure, so they said it's just -- you know, "Because
- you haven't lost anyone, you cannot bring your family".
- 13 I said, "I lost, you know, my close friend, he's like my
- brother, what do you mean I haven't lost anyone".
- Q. You mention that in your statement, that you believe it
 was the Red Cross you spoke to, because your family was
- in Holland and you were hoping to get some support forthem to come over because of the bereavement.
- 19 A. Because I lost all my documentations --
- 20 Q. Yes

25

- 21 A. -- from the UK, from Syria, so I don't have anything to
- 22 prove that I'm Syrian or I have, like , residency here.
- 23 I was worried about that as well.
- 24 Q. If it wasn't obvious already, your evidence is that you

lost everything.

1 A. Yeah, I lost all my documentation, everyt	thing.
--	--------

- 2 Q. You mentioned that you received a call back from RBKC in
- 3 relation to --
- 4 A Yes

5

6

- Q. -- the accommodation which was booked for you. About two hours later you received a call back, and that was
- 7 the Holiday Inn Express at Earls Court.
- 8 A. Yes, that's --
- 9 $\mathsf{Q}.\$ In relation to that, were you given any information as 10 to how long that room was going to be booked for you in
- 11 that hotel? A. No. They said, "You have to go there and stay there", 12
- 13 that's it. But, you know, they even didn't provide any
- 14 transportation to there. So they said, "Make your way 15 there and go to the hotel".
- $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ And how did you get to the hotel? 16
- A. We are lucky -- you know, we are lucky, there was a lady 17 18 from Syria, I think, she gave us a ride, me and Omar. So she was, like, going round offering some help. She 19 20 had a car. She dropped us off there and we went there. 21 Q. Okav. 2.2
- Moving on to when you arrived at the hotel, was 23 there anybody there to meet you or support you when you
- 24 arrived?
- 25 A. No, nobody there.

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- 1 Q. In terms of your room, how would you describe your room 2 when you were at that hotel? 3 A. So the room was really small, it was like two single 4 beds, and you have like 30 centimetres in between and on 5 the sides as well Q. And in terms of other areas -- forgive me. 6 7 A. Sorry, and there was like a bathroom and little bit of 8 space like this table in front of the beds. That's all. Q. So you have described quite a compact room. 9 10 A. Yeah. 11 Q. Were there other areas of the hotel that perhaps you 12 could have gone to for --13 A. So I tried to go to the -- is it lobby? Q. Lobby, that's correct. 14 15 A. Lobby, yeah. So I went there, and was like a lot of 16 people. It was like a holiday, it was in June, so a lot 17 of people, they were drinking and laughing, and I was 18 not feeling well to stay there, to be honest, and so 19 I just, you know, went back to my room. 20 Q. Lunderstand. 21 In relation to the location, we heard it was in 22 Earls Court 23 A. Yes 24 Q. Did that cause you any difficulties , the fact that it 25 was in Earls Court?

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- 1 A. It was new area for me, I was far away from everywhere, 2 and I need to use transport to go around or to go back 3 to the area to grab some more information from people, 4 not from anyone else. Because I was not -- you know, 5 the first one week, like, I had just some information from people, so I was like lost, I was trying to go and 6 7 come back to that area. 8 Q. Yes. 9 A. So no information provided about Mohammad or anything 10 else. 11 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{I}$ wonder if we could perhaps assist you and bring up 12 paragraph 62 of your second statement {IWS00001541/12}, 13 please 14 A. I believe -- oh, it just started working. 15 Q. Perhaps I'll read this out. At paragraph 62, you refer 16 to the Holiday Inn, and you say: 17 "I did not know the area and I was far away from 18 everything I knew. I felt isolated from my friends and
- 19 community. Before the fire my main support in the UK
- 20 came from Omar and Mohammed. I had other friends in the
- 21 UK from the Syrian community, but these were not friends
- 22 that I knew well. Now Mohammed had died and I was not
- 23 staying close to Omar. It was hard to spend time by
- 24 myself. Although other people from the Tower were
 - staying at the Holiday Inn, I did not know anyone else

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1		from the Tower very well."
2		Did that sort of describe how you were feeling at
3		that time and that sense of isolation ?
4	Α.	So the next day, after Omar left the hospital, Omar
5		moved to Aasem's flat, his cousin.
6	Q.	Yes.
7	Α.	So $$ and I stayed by myself in the hotel, because his
8		aunt came from Scotland. So I was staying there. And
9		I remember, like, I was there for the whole time, and
10		when his family came, they moved to $$ what do they call
11		it? —— in Holland Park, Hilton Hotel.
12	Q.	Yes.
13	Α.	So I was staying there for three weeks there by myself,
14		and I asked to move to that hotel, and they said, "You
15		are not allowed to $$ it's not possible to move there".
16		The key worker said that.
17	Q.	Could I just stay with the Holiday Inn for a moment and
18		just ask a few questions regarding some of the
19		provisions, such as food.
20	Α.	Yes.
21	Q.	Were you made aware of any arrangements to pay for your
22		travel or other expenses during your stay at the hotel?
23	Α.	I was using my money and $$ for transportation and food.
24		So I wasn't aware of there's money or anything at all at
25		the beginning.

2

- 1 Q. When did you become aware?
- 2 A. I'm not sure, but I think maybe after one week or
- 3 ten days. So I heard from people from -- when Omar
- 4 moved to Hilton, I remember, like, a lady, she was
- 5 talking about there's money for -- you know, like for
- $\ensuremath{\mathsf{6}}$ food there, because you have to buy food from outside,
- $7 \qquad$ and so I was aware of that after, and I did not use them
- 8 because I wasn't staying in the hotel the whole time.
- 9 Q. Is it right that you had difficulty finding food where 10 you were which met your Halal dietary requirements?
- A. Yeah, that's correct. I found one restaurant, wasn't
 that great and I did not like the food, and my appetite
 was not that good. so ...
- Q. Of course. And initially you had to do your laundry at
 your friend's house because you weren't aware you could
 have done it at the hotel: is that right?
- A. That's correct. So I know my friend Amar, he offered me
 to -- you know, like, he does my laundry, so I take --
- 19 I took them to his flat, so I washed them there.
- 20 Q. Whilst you were at the hotel in those initial days in
- that first couple of weeks, did anybody official come tosee you to give you any information or support?
- 23 $\,$ A. I remember Red Cross, they came to me and they asked me
- 24 $\hfill a$ few questions, how you feel and things like that, they
 - grabbed information and they went back, yeah.

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- 1 Q. Can you recall when that was?
- A. I cannot remember, to be honest. So they came to my
 room and I might remember like a lady and a man.
- 4 Q. Sure.
- 5 A. Yeah

25

- 6 Q. Anybody from the council, RBKC?
- A. No, but I remember, like, somebody from housing from
 Westminster, he came, called John. He was very serious
- 9 man. He was like, you know, "You have to" -- when he
- 10 offered us a flat, me and Omar, near the tower, it was
- 11 like old flat and it wasn't nice, he said, "You have to
- 12 accept moving there and, you know, because it's hard
- 13 like to find a flat", and he was, like, very serious.
- 14 He wasn't, like, you know, flexible at all.
- 15 Q. When you say serious --
- 16 A. Strict.
- 17 Q. Strict?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19~ Q. Did you feel under pressure? Is that what you're
- 20 saying?
- 21 A. Yes, that's correct.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 ${\sf I}$ 'm going to move on to a different topic, if that's
- 24 okay, which is we know you were in the hotel, but
- 25 $\,$ a number of times you went back to the Westway, isn't $\,$

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- that correct? A. Yes.
- 3 Q. And you described the Westway on 15 June; how was it on 4 those subsequent days you attended the Westway?
- those subsequent days you attended the Westway? A. I think I was, you know, going there, but there's no
- A. I think I was, you know, going there, but there's no
 meaning to go there, to be honest. I was just going to
- 7 grab some information, ask about, you know, what's going
- 8 to happen to us, or, you know, just speaking with the
- 9 other people to know if there's something or any update.
- 10 So -- and I was trying to go and ask for, you know, my
- 11 family to get a visa or, you know, get a renewal of my
- 12 driving licence and things like that, or my -- our post.
- 13 Q. Yes 14 If we could bring up -- we have the statement in 15 front of us -- perhaps paragraph 76 {IWS00001541/15}, 16 please. Thank you so much. So you mention this: 17 "Although I was reliant on the Westway in the weeks 18 following the fire, I did not find the people there very 19 helpful. No one at the Westway ever explained to me 2.0 about what assistance, financial or otherwise, was 21 available for survivors of the fire. I had to find out everything on my own. RBKC should have made this 22 23 information easily available. As it was, I had to 24 travel to the Westway whenever I needed something and 25 check what was available. I would have to go there even

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1 for basic supplies such as bread and cereal, as I was 2 not aware of the hotel food allowance. I found it 3 difficult to have to travel there so often, as it was 4 not near my hotel. It was always very chaotic and full 5 of people." 6 A. Yes. It was, you know, full of people, was chaotic 7 place, and they have offered, you know, food, but 8 I don't eat -- I don't normally eat those, you know, 9 cans and stuff like that. It's not my type of, you 10 know ... I eat different things, and, you know, if you 11 take them, where shall you go with them? Because I was 12 spending all days, like, at Omar's and then go sleep 13 there, so I don't want to hold anything with me. And, 14 you know, one day I remember, like, I spoke with NHS 15 people like about, you know, if they could help us, me 16 and Omar, and they said, "Just, you know, leave your 17 information", and we left our information and nobody 18 called us back. So we said there's -- you know, it's 19 waste of time to go there, to be honest. 2.0 We can deal with that now, if you like. So that was one Q. 21 of my headings, which is psychological support. You 2.2 have anticipated a question I was going to ask you, 23 which was in relation to one of those occasions where 2.4 you spoke to someone at the Westway from the NHS seeking 25 support, and you asked for them to help, and they said

1		Abarran and an Ularan bank and an an address and damar
1 2		they would call you back, and your evidence was you received no call back.
3	Δ	No call back.
4		Can you recall approximately when that was? Was that in
5	ч.	the first week or two or $$
6	A.	
7		First week.
8	•	I remember like they had $$ you know, it's like a place
9		they covered with can I use the interpreter, sorry?
10		(Pause for interpretation)
11		So they had, like, plastic sheets covering the
12		place, like NHS, and we spoke with one there, and
13		I think we spoke with the manager there as well. He
14		said to us, "We're going to call you back". I provided
15		my phone number, and Omar, he provided his phone number.
16		They haven't called back.
17	Q.	Can I ask, when was the first time, if at all , you
18		received counselling through the NHS?
19	Α.	I don't remember 100% when was it, but definitely, like,
20		maybe in first two weeks I had time to talk, and I said
21		to them I need Arabic speaker, because I don't
22		understand, and I never been in problem like that, and
23		that guy, he was explaining to me on the board and
24		putting some drawings, and he was explaining things
25		about the brain and things like that. It was, you know:
		117
1		what he is talling shout? I're setting many or what?
1 2		what he is talking about? I'm getting crazy or what? It 's not you know, he was giving me a lecture.
3		I said, "Look, I don't want to continue with that, it's
4		not the right time to go on lectures".
5	0	Would this be a fair summary: that the initial support
6	ч.	you had in relation to psychological support was poor?
7	А	Yeah. Definitely poor.
8		Did that improve in the coming weeks and months?
9		So after that I went to after I cannot remember how
10		many months, I went to somewhere in the Curve $$
11	Q.	Yes, the Curve, yes.
12	Α.	Centre. Yeah. So I told them I was Arabic speaker,
13		so it was arranged by maybe Mary, she's secretary of
14		Nick Hurd, called Mary or something, so she told me,
15		"Somebody will speak your own language and" $$ you know,
16		Arabic speaker.
17	Q.	Yes.
18	Α.	So I went, like , few sessions . It was helpful, but
19		I could not speak in Arabic, and she was saying, "Okay,
20		speak in Arabic", and I wasn't sure she was
21		understanding me in Arabic, because I was getting
22		sometimes different information or following up question
		was, like, not linked to what I was saying.

- 23 was, like, not linked to what I was saying.
- 24 $\,$ Q. Different, perhaps, regional variations in Arabic?
- 25~ A. Yeah, it's like dialect is completely different to,

1		I think, Moroccan or $$ some words they are similar, but
2		other words, it's hard. And she was born here. It's
3		more harder, really.
4	Q.	I just want to return back, if I may, to the Westway
5		Sports Centre. You described how it was and the
6		difficulties you had there.
7		Did the services which you experienced in those
8		first few days improve over the course of time?
9	Α.	To be honest, I had no trust with that, to go $\ I$ asked
10		them a few times about my family visa, and nobody,
11		you know, told me they could help, so they said it 's
12		just for next of kin. And another thing, we had, like,
13		$\pounds 500$ of money from RBKC, but they haven't provide any
14		time we could get more money.
15	Q.	Sure.
16	Α.	And that's all . And maybe I replaced my driving licence
17		through that time, but I was $$ you know, it was hard,
18		like , to go there and $I'm$ not getting any information or
19		any support.
20	Q.	I understand.
21	Α.	So I'm 100% sure I went there for at least first
22		two weeks and wasn't that very helpful.
23	Q.	Okay.
24		Could I just move on to one of the topics you
25		mentioned, which is sort of financial support.
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1	A.	Yeah.
2	Q.	And perhaps we could look at paragraph 89 of your second
3		statement {IWS00001541/17}. It's really in relation to
4		your financial circumstances:
5		"After the fire I could not work. I was in need of
6		financial assistance but I did not know where to go for
7		this. Initially it was very difficult for me, as I did
8		not have enough money to live on. No one from RBKC of

- 9 Central Government ever contacted me in the immediate
- 10 aftermath of the fire to let me know that financial
- 11 support was available. No outreach workers came to the
- 12 hotel to offer me financial help or information about 13 financial help. All the help I received in the weeks
- 14 after the fire was through attending the relief centres,
- 15 which I heard about through word of mouth."
- 16 Is that correct?
- 17 A. That's correct.
- 18 $\,$ Q. What effect did this lack of information regarding
- 19 financial assistance have on you at that time?
- 20~ A. So I was not knowing what's going to happen in the
- 21 future and I was totally confused and, you know, I had
- 22 like ... it's hard -- just one second, sorry.
 - (Pause)
- 24 Can I go back for the previous paragraph?
 - Q. Yes, please do.

23

25

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1	Δ	I read something and	1		"I remember I spoke to the Red Cross on one
2		Yes. Is this paragraph 89 you want to have a look at or	2		occasion, as they said they had money from donations to
3	۹.	paragraph 90?	3		give out. I asked them about this, and they said I was
4	Δ	89.	4		not entitled to any money as I was not bereaved.
5		Yes.	5		I became very stressed about this. I had no money at
6	۹.	(Pause)	6		the time as I had stopped work since the fire because
7	А	And the one after, please.	7		I was finding it hard to cope, and I was completely
8		(Pause)	8		ignorant as to what to do about money. I had lost
9		So definitely I have a key worker, and she came to	9		everything and couldn't work. This added to the stress
10		my she came to the hotel, but she did not offer any	10		I was under after seeing the fire , the death of my
11		financial support, and I could remember just she had	11		friend and now living on my own in an unfamiliar part of
12		helped me to complete my travel document, because	12		London."
13		I wanted to visit my family because they haven't offered	13		We know from the earlier part of your statement this
14		any visa for them.	14		is an occasion when you were in the Westway, and you
15	Q.	Yes.	15		say:
16	•	And in that time I asked her about moving to Omar's	16		"Then a lady came and introduced herself as being
17		hotel, and she did not help with that.	17		from an Islamic Care Organisation. She spoke Arabic.
18	Q.	No.	18		She asked me what was the problem and brought me over to
19		Perhaps paragraph 90 {IWS00001541/18} sets out the	19		her desk. She told me they had money from donations as
20		impact it had on you, the financial difficulties . You	20		well. I think she offered me a donation of £500."
21		say:	21		Is that correct?
22		"The difficulties I had in accessing financial	22	A.	That's correct, and, you know, that's one of the things
23		support really added to the stress that I was under at	23		that I remember, like, I was you know, I start to cry
24		this time I needed money to live on, but it was not	24		in that moment, and I was very angry. So it was, like,
25		easy to get help. I had to push to get support with	25		not supported at all. It was like, where to go if
		101			100
		121			123
1		things."	1		I don't have like papers? Nobody contacted us from,
2	Α.	So if I ask about something, like, in general, the first	2		you know, RBKC or $$ so they provided £500, but how long
3		few months, it was like you need to fight for it . You	3		you can, you know, use them for? It's not $$ you have
4		have to ask once, twice, maybe 20 times even. You have	4		to travel, you have to eat, you have to $$ you know, at
5		to, you know, be like $$ you know, ask them with,	5		least I want to wear clothes. I have to buy clothes,
6		like $$ I don't know, you have to push a lot to get what	6		you know. It's not enough.
7		you ask, and it was, like, very hard, you know, they	7		It's like $$ you know, they were saying, "You are
8		added stress.	8		not $$ you haven't lost anyone so it's $$ we cannot
9		You know, I say the tragedy was equal with the	9		provide you". I said to them, "It's not fair, you know,
10		stress they caused us, to be honest. It was like equal.	10		at least like you could help people with that at the
11		It was maybe more. They caused a lot of stress and	11		beginning, you don't have to give them a lot of money,
12		I was like living by myself and, you know, I was like	12		just support them or offer vouchers or anything", like
13		I don't know where to go, you know $$	13		they could support us.
14	Q.	Yes.	14	Q.	In relation to money you directly received from RBKC,
15	Α.	in that time.	15		you did receive some money initially; is that correct?
16	Q.	You mentioned you were isolated in the hotel and the	16	Α.	Yes, that's correct.
17		difficulties you were having.	17	Q.	I think you have touched upon it already in your
18		If we could go back to paragraph 75 in that	18		evidence that you received £500.
19		statement {IWS00000821/15}, please.	19	Α.	Yes.
20		Is that okay, Mr Al—Karad?	20	Q.	That was probably in the first week or two; is that
21	Α.	Yes, that's okay.	21		right?
22	Q.	Excellent.	22	Α.	The first week, yeah.
23		I'm going to read this in its entirety, if that's	23	Q.	Then you went back the following week to the Westway
24					
		okay, because it deals with one specific matter and then	24		Centre, you set out in your statement, and you asked
25		okay, because it deals with one specific matter and then the general impact:	24 25		Centre, you set out in your statement, and you asked for $$ that you'd run out of money and you needed

- 1 another £500.
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. That's what you received.
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. Were they the only two cash payments you received from
- 6 RBKC in those first few weeks?
- 7 A. I think so, yeah. But if I cannot remember --
- $8 \qquad \ \ I \ remember something, but I'm not sure. It was you$
- 9 registered for that, was like the Department of Work and 10 Pensions
- LU Pensior
- 11 Q. Yes.
- 12~ A. But I'm not sure how did we apply for that.
- 13 Q. I' II touch upon that now in a moment, which I hope will14 assist you.
- 15 Firstly , we know that you received payments, as you
- 16 say in your statement, from the Al Manaar Mosque and
- 17 St Clement's Church, and you believe those cash payments
- 18 were in the first ten days too, and you say in your
- 19 statement at paragraph 93 {IWS00001541/18}, two weeks
- $2\,0\,$ after the fire , you were given a leaflet at the Westway
- 21 from the Department for Work and Pensions that told you
- 22 that you could collect a payment of £5,000, which was to
- 23 be split between you and Omar. Does that help your
- 24 recollection?
- 25 A. Yes, that's correct.

- Q. And I think you mentioned then in your statement that
 you were directed to the Post Office, and that's where
 you had to submit an application.
- 4 A. Okay, yes. That's correct.
- 5 Q. Does that sound right?
- 6 A. Yeah, it was around that area.
- Q. We're coming close to the end now. I'm just going to
 deal with another topic heading, which is key workers,
 which you've touched upon a few times
- 9 which you've touched upon a few times.
- 10 A. Okay.
- 11 Q. I just want to sort of address that and deal with some 12 residual points.
- 13 You mention in your statements that you were not
- 14 given a key worker until around one week to ten days
- 15 after the fire ; does that sound correct?
- 16 A. In my knowledge, yes, I think so.
- 17 Q. If we could perhaps bring up paragraph 100, please
- {IWS00001541/20}. You say this:
 "Aside from accommodation, I was mostly stressed out
- 20 about key workers. I had several key workers, maybe
- $21 \qquad \mbox{ four or five}\,. \mbox{ They kept leaving, especially at the }$
- 22 $\hfill beginning, which meant I had to explain myself each time$
- 23 I met a new one. It was frustrating to have to keep
- 24 repeating myself when I wanted help with something.
- 25 \qquad I also had to keep putting pressure on my key workers

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- 1 before they would help with things, which was 2 stressful .' 3 Is that correct? 4 A. That's correct, and I can remember I had the first 5 key worker for ten days, and then the other key worker maybe for a few weeks, and then moved, and I had another 6 7 one for three months, and then another and another. So 8 I had in total maybe seven or eight up to now. 9 Q. Yes. 10 A. And the hardest thing to explain to everyone at the 11 beginning, I need to bring my family here, and, 12 vou know. I was struggling to do that, and when I ask 13 about something, about helping with the flat, choosing the flat , anything like that, so they were just $--\ {\rm you}$ 14 15 need to keep pushing and pushing, and I was very tired 16 to do that, and, you know, sometimes I say -- I don't 17 push at all. I don't ask. 18 Q. So to get any support or assistance, your evidence is 19 that you had to keep pushing for it? 20 A. Yes, and sometimes I said, "I don't want any help". 21 I say, "Okay, if they don't want to help, that's okay". 2.2 Q. If you didn't push for support, what would happen? 23 A. I don't receive anything, because, you know, one day 24 they said, "If you don't ask, you won't receive", one of 25 my key workers. 127 1 Q. Okay. That's what your key worker said to you?
 - 2 A. Yeah
 - 3 Q. If you don't ask, you won't receive?
 - 4 A. Yeah
 - 5 Q. Can I move on to communication as a penultimate topic.
 - 6 You've mentioned a few times about the lack of 7 information
 - 8 A. Yes
 - 9 Q. And perhaps we could look at paragraph 110
 - 10 {IWS00001541/22}, please. This really deals with how 11 you got information:
 - 12 "The most effective way I obtained information was
 - 13 through other residents and the local community. No one
 - 14 from RBKC or any other official position gave me clear
 - 15 % 15 advice on what help was available. At first I had to
 - 16 find everything out myself."
 - 17 And you describe there how you got information once
 - 18 you got your permanent accommodation; is that right?
 - 19 A. Yes, that's correct.
 - $2\,0\,$ $\,$ Q. At paragraph 108, if we could go back, please, this $\,$ is
 - $21 \qquad$ what you express, which perhaps flows from what you said
 - a few moments ago, about what the key worker said toyou:
 - 24 "It seemed to me that RBKC did not want to pay money
 - 25 out. Their approached seemed to be that if residents

- $1 \qquad \mbox{did}$ not know about financial assistance, they would not
- 2 have to pay for them. Whenever I spoke to someone from
- 3 RBKC, they would only give me what I had requested and
- 4 nothing else. They would not suggest other things I may
- 5 need or be entitled to. It made me nervous to find out
- 6 things from other residents that I had not [sic]
- 7 informed about directly by RBKC, and question what else8 I had not been told."
 - Is that correct?
- 10 A. That's correct, and at the beginning I was very shy to 11 ask about support or help, and, you know, I was like 12 feeling uncomfortable to ask somebody, and then they 13 don't help. If I ask, they don't help. So you have to 14 push and push and push until you get what you are 15 asking. And sometimes lack of communication. Like, 16 for example, I had that key worker. You know, she was 17 appointed, and after three weeks. I said, "Who's my 18 key worker?", you know, because one left and they don't 19 tell me she's left, and tell you, you know, they have 20 number key workers help, so you have -- I had to call 21 them and they said, "Okay, you had this person, it's
- 22 $\hfill a new key worker", and then you don't receive any call$
- 23 $\,$ or any introduction email from them. So I'm supposed to
- 24 \qquad call them, not they're supposed to call me, maybe
- 25 introduce myself.

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1	Q.	So you said, "If I don't ask, they don't help, if I ask,
2		they don't help, it's only if I push"?
3	Α.	Yeah.
4	Q.	Okay.
5		Just dealing really with the final topic in relation
6		to your views as to the overall response in the
7		aftermath.
8		At paragraph 98 {IWS00000821/20}, if we could have
9		a look at that, please, you say this:
10		"I do not think RBKC were helpful in the aftermath
11		of the fire . I was already traumatised after what I had
12		seen on the night of the fire . I was upset, spending
13		a lot of time by myself, and was always crying. I could
14		not believe what had happened, and could not believe
15		I had lost such a close friend . The way I was treated
16		by officials from RBKC often made things worse for me.
17		When I asked them for help, I often felt ignored or was
18		told something disappointing that I later found out to
19		be wrong. This increased my stress and the tension
20		I was living under."
21		Is that correct, Mr Al—Karad?
22	Α.	That's correct. So I had pressure in the flat, I had,
23		you know, lack of communication, and I was spending at
24		least five months by myself. You know, I remember,
25		like , I was spending all the time by myself. It was

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1 really hard to, you know, like to remember everything, 2 and, you know, I was not believing what happened. 3 I was, you know, felling it's a dream or something. It 4 was like terrible thing. 5 Q. Is there anything else you would like to say about the impact of how you were treated in the aftermath of the 6 7 fire? 8 A. So I used to live in a two-bedroom flat and, you know, 9 that's put more pressure on me. So we did that bidding 10 system for -- to get your flat, permanent flat, and 11 I bid on three. So they showed me the smallest one, 12 I told them I want to bring my family here to stay with 13 me, and I used to live in two bedroom, and it's like for 14 like, as you put the rules, you know, it's 15 like-for-like, and I would ask for two-bedroom flat 16 because it's for long-term flat, it's not like for just 17 today. I told them I want somebody to stay with me and 18 support me. So I would, you know, bring my fiancée and 19 get married, have kids in the future, and they were, 20 "No, you're not entitled". I told them, "Okay, I know 21 Omar, he lost somebody and he's got more priority, but 2.2 why you offered him two-bedroom flat?" They said 23 because he lost somebody. I said, "Okay, but I lost 24 somebody else, you know, like I lost somebody, and 25 I need support, I'm a human like him, I have feelings,

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1	you know, you have to treat me like similar, it's not
2	like normal life, you are treating, you know, like if
3	you have points and you bid on flats and you take $$
4	because it's long term, you know. It's not normal, it's
5	not $$ it doesn't happen every day, you know, that
6	fire".
7	So it was, like, very hard, and I spent about
8	one year just trying to push for that, and it caused me
9	a lot of stress and, you know, I was, like, not
10	sleeping, I was, like, overthinking all the time, and
11	they were not helping. They said no, and they were not
12	trying to help me.
13	MR KEATING: Mr Al-Karad, thank you. They're all the
14	questions I wish to ask you.
15	Mr Chairman, perhaps we should pause for a short
16	period of time to see if there are any further questions
17	to come.
18	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, I think we need to do that.
19	Mr Al–Karad, you may not know this, but when counsel
20	gets to the end of his questions, we have a short break
21	so that people who are following the proceedings from
22	other places can suggest further questions that perhaps
23	we ought to ask you.
24	THE WITNESS: Okay.
25	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think we'll break for a short

1	time. We'll combine it with the afternoon break, which
2	we take in any event, all right, and we'll resume,
3	please, at 3.30, and at 3.30 we'll tell you whether
4	there are any more questions that we need to ask you.
5	Is that all right?
6	THE WITNESS: That's okay, yeah.
7	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good. All right. Well, would you
8	go with the usher, then, please.
9	THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.
10	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. We will see
11	you in a moment, thank you.
12	(Pause)
13	I think that should give plenty of time for any
14	questions.
15	MR KEATING: Thank you.
16	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And then we will be ready to resume
17	at 3.30.
18	MR KEATING: Thank you.
19	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
20	(3.13 pm)
21	(A short break)
22	(3.30 pm)
23	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Al-Karad, we'll see
24	whether there are any more questions for you.
25	THE WITNESS: Okay.

1	SIR MARTIN	MOORE-BICK:	Yes.	

2	MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, thank you for the time.	I here's
3	no further questions, thank you.	
4	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, there you are.	
-		12 1

- MR KEATING: That concludes the evidence for Mr Al-Karad. 5
- 6 So thank you very much for attending today.
- THE WITNESS: Thank you very much. 7
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, no more questions, so it just 8
- 9 remains for me to thank you very much indeed for coming
- 10 here to give your evidence, to explain what you
- 11 experienced during those awful moments following the
- 12 fire . I hope it hasn't been too disagreeable for you to
- 13 describe those events, it can't have been pleasant,
- 14 I think we all understand that, but we really are very
- 15 grateful to you for coming in and telling us what you
- 16 know. So thank you very much indeed.
- 17 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.
- 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: And now you're free to go.
- 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.
- SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I also should say thank you very 20 21 much to Mr Interpreter.
- THE INTERPRETER: My pleasure, sir. 22
- 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We didn't need you as much as we
- 24 thought we might, because Mr Al-Karad's English is
- 25 actually very good, but thank you for being here.

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1	THE INTERPRETER: My pleasure, sir.
2	(The witness withdrew)
3	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Now, Mr Keating, I'm told we need to
4	have a short break $$ I emphasise the word "short" $$ so
5	that things can be rearranged slightly before we call
6	the next witness.
7	MR KEATING: That's correct, sir, thank you.
8	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So we'll rise, and perhaps you would
9	ask the usher to come and fetch us as soon as you're
10	ready.
11	MR KEATING: Yes.
12	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
13	(3.35 pm)
14	(A short break)
15	(3.40 pm)
16	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Keating.
17	MR KEATING: Thank you, Mr Chairman. The next witness is
18	Mohammed Rasoul, please.
19	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good, thank you very much.
20	MR MOHAMMED RASOUL (sworn)
21	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, please sit
22	down, make yourself comfortable.
23	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
24	(Pause)
25	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Keating, when you're ready.

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- Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY 1 MR KEATING: Thank you. 2 3 Good afternoon, Mr Rasoul. Thank you so much for 4 attending today and thank you for your patience this 5 afternoon. I'm sorry we've kept you waiting a little 6 bit . A. Thank you. 7 8 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ And we are very grateful for your attendance today to 9 assist the Inquiry with its investigations. 10 A. I'm glad to be here. Thank you. 11 Q. Just a few words by way of introduction, which we say to 12 all witnesses, actually, just as you get used to your surroundings, is if I could invite you to keep your 13 14 voice up, as you're doing --15 A. Sure. 16 Q. -- so that the transcriber can hear what you say and 17 record it in evidence. It also helps not to nod or 18 shake your head --19 A. Okay. 20 $\mathsf{Q}.~--$ but rather we would invite you to either say "yes" or 21 "no" where appropriate. 22 A. All right. 23
 - $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ And if any of the questions I ask are unclear, don't
- 24 feel inhibited at all; just ask me to rephrase it and 25 I'm happy to do so.

1	Α.	Okay, thank you.
2	Q.	If at any stage you feel uncomfortable or you need
3		a break, again, just let us know and I'm sure we can
4		accommodate that.
5		Is that all right?
6	Α.	Yes.
7	Q.	Excellent.
8		Just a few formal matters dealing with your
9		statements first of all .
10	Α.	Sure.
11	Q.	What I'm going to do is outline that you made two
12		statements to the Inquiry. The first is dated
13		6 June 2018 and the second is dated 27 February 2020.
14	Α.	Yes.
15	Q.	What we're going to do is quickly look at those
16		documents in turn.
17		So if we could open up the first statement, which is
18		{IWS00000670}, please. Thank you so much. We can see
19		your first statement there.
20		If we could go to page 12, please, in a moment you
21		will see your signature, and I'm going to ask you to

- 2.2 confirm that is your signature at page 12.
- 23 Whilst that's being checked, can you confirm that
- 24 you have had an opportunity to read your statements
- 25 before giving evidence today?

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1	Α.	Yes.
2		(Pause)
3	Q.	There we are, very grateful. So we see the first
4		statement is dated 6 June 2018, and we see your
5		signature there. Is that correct?
6	Α.	That's correct, yes, that's my signature.
7	Q.	If we could turn to your second statement, which is
8		{IWS00001768}, very quickly, thank you very much.
9		If we could turn to page 34, please, again we see,
10		for your second statement, is that your signature?
11	Α.	Yes.
12	Q.	Excellent.
13		Can you confirm in relation to both those statements
14		that the contents are true to the best of your knowledge
15		and belief?
16	Α.	Yes. There might be some just spelling errors in some
17		things, but just, you know, petty things, so
18	Q.	I think spelling errors are probably all right.
19	Α.	Yeah, and the order of some things, yeah, but pretty
20		much, yes.
21	Q.	But you're content that the contents itself are accurate
22		and true to the best of your knowledge?
23	Α.	Yeah.
24	Q.	Thank you.
25		I'm just going to turn to background, please.

I'm just going to turn to background, please.

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- 1 Important background, Mr Rasoul, is that you were
- 2 resident at flat 25 of Grenfell Tower --
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 $\mathsf{Q}.~--$ at the time of the fire, and you lived there with
- 5 your elderly father and your wife and two young
- 6 children, who were aged six and two at that time; is
- 7 that correct?
- 8 A. Yes
- $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ You had lived in Grenfell Tower for the whole of your 9 life .
- 10
- 11 A. Yes, that's correct, since I was born, with my mother
- 12 and father, and my mother passed away before the fire in
- 13 2014
- 14 Q. Yes
- 15 A. Yeah
- Q. So real close connections to your home --16
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. -- from when you were born.
- 19 A. Yes.

25

- 20 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ And, as a result, you have longstanding friendships with
- 21 a number of families within Grenfell Tower.
- 2.2 A. That's correct, yes.
- 23 Q. And you have set those out with some care in your
- 24 statement, which we've read.
 - A. Yes.

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- 1 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ In the early hours of 14 June, you were asleep in your
- home when the fire started, or you were in your home 2 3 when the fire started; is that correct?
- 4 A. Yeah, I was at home. I was lying down, trying to sleep,
- 5 but I was kind of -- I was awake, but trying to sleep. 6 But, yeah, lying down.
- 7 Q. If you're content, I'm going to deal with the part where you evacuated, you self-evacuated from the flats, 8
- 9 briefly .
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. And hopefully you're content with that.
- 12 A. Please do.
- 13 Q. We know from your first statement you gave to
- 14 the Inquiry, where you refer to CCTV evidence --
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. -- that you left the tower at 01.35.
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ And you mention in that statement you were subsequently
- 19 directed by firemen to wait by Kensington Leisure
- 20 Centre; is that correct?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. At that time when you self-evacuated, you were with your
- 23 father.
- 24 A. Yeah.
- $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ Who had a number of health issues; is that correct? 25

- 1 A. Yes.
 - Q. And you were with your wife and your two young children.
- 3 A. My wife and two kids, they left prior to me and my
- 4 father
- 5 Q. Yes
- A. They went first. I had to get up and get my father 6
- 7 ready, put his coat on. You know, he had dementia and
- 8 he didn't $\,--\,$ and he was disabled, he couldn't $\,--\,$ when we
- 9 would go outside of our home, he needed a wheelchair to
- 10 move. Anything further than, like, 10/15 metres, he
- 11 couldn't do, and he was exhausted by the time we got
- 12 out.
- 13 Q. How old was he at the time?
- 14 A. He was 86.
- 15 Q. 86
- A Yeah 16
- 17 Q. I'm sorry that he's recently passed away; is that 18 correct?
- 19 A. Yeah, he passed away in January this year at the age of 20 90.
- 21 Q. I'm very sorry about your loss in relation to that.
- 2.2 A. Yeah.

25

- 23 Q. So we were at the stage where you, with your dad, came
- 24 out of the tower, and perhaps you may wish or you may
 - not wish -- do you want to describe the scene, how it

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- 1 was --2 A. Yeah, sure. 3 Q. -- when you were outside the tower? 4 A. When we got out -- I mean, it took us around 10 to 5 15 minutes. I had to support him. I was walking 6 backwards down the staircase, he was leaning on my 7 shoulders, you know, and he -- after a few staircases, 8 he was just $\,--\,$ he was really tired and his weight was 9 getting more and more on me, and I had to support him 10 more and more 11 When we got out, there were firefighters at the 12 bottom of the building, and they kind of directed us to 13 go just away from the tower towards Grenfell Road, and 14 yeah, just seeing the scene, it was -- looking back now, 15 from what I can recall, it was just very surreal, 16 you know. We always -- we'd had fires in the tower 17 before, and we'd never had an evacuation, and just for 18 this to be happening, it was just like it wasn't real at 19 the time. But I was focused on just getting my father 20 somewhere to sit down, and we sat him next to 21 Grenfell Road, and he -- the low kind of brick wall next 2.2 to the green grass area. Subsequently to that, we moved 23 closer towards the Kensington Leisure Centre. 24 Q. Was there any official guidance, other than the 25 Fire Brigade officers you mentioned --
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- 1 A. No.
- 2 Q. -- about where you should go or --
- 3 A. We didn't have an emergency evacuation or meeting point.
- 4 If we did, I didn't know about it. It wasn't on any of
- 5 the signage in the tower.
- Q. Yes. 6
- 7 A. Yeah
- Q. You mention in your statement that it was probably 8
- 9 around 6 o'clock -- so you were outside the tower for
- 10 some time ---
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 -- and around 6 o'clock you had dropped your father off Q.
- 13 at your wife's friend's home.
- 14 A. Yes
- 15 Q. And then you started looking for those that were missing 16 with your friends.
- A. Yes. I mean, before that, in the lead-up to that 17
- 18 6 o'clock, if I may add --
- 19 Q. Of course.
- 20 A. -- there was a lot of -- just a lot of panic, people
- 21 didn't know what was going on, and the police cordon was
- 2.2 getting pushed further and further back, to the point
- 23 that where I'd dropped my family off -- I dropped my
- 24 wife and kids to a friend's down the road, when I came 25
 - back, my father wasn't -- you know, he was behind the

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1		police cordon.
2		I stayed calm and patient and just said, "Look" $$
3		told the policeman or woman I was dealing with, "My
4		father's been left there", and to be honest, during that
5		time, the local residents just showed some amazing
6		solidarity . They came out and brought kind of
7		containers of water, water bottles. They brought my
8		father a chair to sit on. And even I left him with some
9		of the local neighbours from Treadgold House, I believe,
10		just to drop off my wife and kids, and they said, "Yeah,
11		don't worry, we'll look after him", and then, yeah,
12		until finally friends came down, and we were just there
13		the whole time, I mean, until then, just watching our
14		home go up in flames.
15	Q.	An important topic which you mention in your statement
16		is trying to get information about those who were
17		missing, and perhaps we could bring up your second
18		statement, please, at paragraph 91 {IWS00001768/19}.
19	Α.	Sure.
20	Q.	So you say this:
21		"There was no one official to tell us what we should
22		be doing or where we should go. I knew that we had to
23		find information about those who were missing, but ${\sf I}$ did
24		not know where to start. Someone from the community
25		directed us to the Rugby Portobello Club."

1	That's where you headed, and you think that must
2	have been around 6.30 am.

- have been around 6.30 am.
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. How would you describe the Rugby Portobello Club when 5 you arrived?
- A. It was -- there were -- I mean, if I recall correctly, 6
- 7 there were people outside, lots of people inside, it was
- 8 very chaotic. People at that time I think were starting
- 9 to drop off donations. It just -- it didn't seem like
- 10 a place I wanted to be. It didn't seem like I would be
- 11 at ease there. I mean, subsequently to that, it later
- 12 became like a -- as many other places in the community
- 13 became, emerged into hubs that were kind of real sources
- 14 of security and help for us. But at that time, there
- 15 was no one, no one from RBKC there, no one from the TMO,
- 16 and we were just kind of left on our own, yeah, just
- 17 trying to figure things out for ourselves.
- 18 Q. So that time when you say you were left on your own --
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. $\,--$ trying to figure things out yourself, you mention, 21 again at paragraph 91, that you:
- 22 " ... saw some of our neighbours there [at the Rugby
- 23 Portobello Club] but we did not stay there too long.
- 24 Before we left ... someone ... told me that an emergency
- 25 centre was being set-up at the Latimer Christian

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- Centre ... " 1 Which is relatively close by, and you headed there; 2 3 is that correct? 4 A. Yeah. I went there. I think I was with my friend 5 Francis, and I think Mr Sabir at the time, if I recall correctly. We went there. There was one lady, 6 7 I believe from the TMO, and they'd had a board with like 8 a chart with a list of flat numbers and the names. My 9 friend Francis, he happened to notice that flat 153 10 still had our -- like my kind of lifelong friends, the 11 Duffy brothers, who grew up there, their mother, 12 Virginia Duffy, who passed away a year prior to that, 13 was still registered as living there, and you can 14 imagine the kind of devastation we felt. Like we're 15 here, seeking a source of security and solace with the 16 authorities, someone to guide us and kind of give us 17 information and help us through what we're going 18 through, and they couldn't even get something right as 19 knowing who lived in the flats, and especially as that 20 flat , you know, there was a young five-year-old, Isaac, 21 who passed away from that, very same address. 22 Q. So you recognised that there was that outdated 23 information which you have just explained to us. Were 24 you able to get any information or advice from the TMO 25
 - person you mentioned at the whiteboard or anybody else?
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2 before the fire, and the events on the day, there was 3 already kind of a gross mistrust in the community with 4 regards to RBKC and the TMO, and just that event in 5 itself , going there and seeing that the names weren't correct, it just, you know -- it put everything -- it 6 7 made everything ... I don't know, I don't know to word it . Just made their attitude of -- and culture of 8 9 neglect that we'd been experiencing with them in dealing 10 with council and the TMO, it just brought it all up to 11 the surface and just showed: wow, they're not even --12 they don't even care to have our names properly as who's 13 living in those addresses, and after that we just lost 14 hope in seeking help from them again, kind of thing. 15 It's just like we're on our own, we need to do this 16 ourselves 17 Q. You mention in your statement that after the Latimer 18 Christian Centre, you went to the Harrow Club. 19 A. Yeah 20 Q. And did you find any information when you went to the 21 Harrow Club? 2.2 A. So at the Latimer Christian Centre, at the Harrow Club, 23 I left the names of people who were like family to me. 24 Ahmed Elgwahry's mother, Eslah Elgwahry, and his sister,

A. No, I think at that point -- leading up to that, I mean,

25 Mariem Elgwahry; my wife's best friend and my friend's

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1		wife, Rania Ibrahim, and her two beautiful daughters,
2		Fethia and Hania. We left their names there, having $$
3		hoping, you know, that they were still alive and that
4		they'd managed to get out. But, you know, we had no
5		feedback from anyone when we were at those places.
6		So I was just $$ my family, at least, in that sense
7		at the time, I did what I could as a father, as
8		a husband, as a son, with my immediate family, but
9		I wanted to help my friends, who are like my family.
10		You know, Hassan, Rania's husband, he wasn't in the
11		country at the time, and I felt it my duty to try and
12		help his family and see where they are and make sure
13		they're safe, and see Ahmed's mother, who was like
14		a mother to me, and his sister, who was like a sister to
15		me, see that they were safe, where they are, and just
16		try and do my bit as much as I could.
17	Q.	Did you feel like you had a responsibility to try to
18		help and get information?
19	Α.	Yeah, I felt so, definitely, because they were like
20		family to me, I know they would do the same thing. And
21		throughout the whole ordeal, you know, I look back now
22		and I can't \dots I got out with my father and my wife and
23		kids, and two $$ on either side, two of the closest
24		people to me, one lost his mother and his sister, and
25		the other lost his wife and children, and that's

1		something that I couldn't $$ how do I console them?
2	Q.	Yes.
3	Α.	How do I be a source of comfort for them? And it's
4		something that I $$ looking back, you know, that I am
5		grateful for, for myself, that I'm blessed and fortunate
6		in ways that other people haven't been. I've got out
7		with my family. But I don't know $$ like, I didn't know
8		what to say to them at the time, and like 1'm $$ if
9		I may add ——
10	Q.	Of course.
11	Α.	the next day $$ you know, Hassan was out of the
12		country. He'd been looking after his brother for
13		six months who $$ you know, he had his $$ his brother
14		had his legs amputated in Egypt because of extreme
15		diabetes, and he was looking after him. He hadn't seen
16		his kids, his wife and kids, for a long time. He
17		arrived the next morning, and the first place ${\sf I}$ happened
18		to make contact with him was the Al Manaar Mosque, and
19		I just remember, like, I was there trying to make sense
20		of things, trying to find some peace in the mosque, and
21		the moment I saw him and he came over to me, and $$
22		you know, I tried to do what I can to help his family on
23		the night. We were trying to make phone calls to his
24		wife. My wife managed to call her and tell her to get
25		out. And as soon as I saw him, you know, I got up,
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1		embraced him. I was trying to keep it together. And
2		he $$ you know, I'm the one who broke out crying. And
3		he told me, he just $$ his words were, "Alhamdulillah,
4		Alhamdulillah", you know, "All thanks and praise be to
5		God, whatever we go through". And I think just that
6		kind of reflection of our Islamic tradition, where
7		whatever you go through in life, you deal with it, you
8		have your struggles, you apply the means outwardly, but
9		inwardly there should be that $$ we should strive for
10		that inner peace, where we accept kind of, you know,
11		God's divine decree in things that happen. And for me,
12		I was just $$ I was blown away just about how he reacted
13		and how he kept it together. That was inspirational.
14	Q.	You mentioned your sense of duty and responsibility to
15		help those within your community $$
16	Α.	Yeah.
17	Q.	and those difficulties trying to get information.
18		You mentioned going to the rest centres.
19		You have set out in your statement about going to
20		a number of hospitals and not having any luck or any
21		real information; is that fair?
22	Α.	No, yeah, that is correct. We first went to
23		St Mary's Hospital. We would go to the A&Es. By this
24		time I'd met up with Ahmed Elgwahry, and at that time
25		he'd already $$ as it says in my statement, he'd told me

1		that, you know, he'd heard his mother and sister lose
2		consciousness, and the phone $$ he was still on the
3		phone for like an hour and 13 minutes afterwards,
4		listening to the glass breaking, listening to the
5		fire spreading, until the phone completely cut out.
6		I didn't know what he was going through, but I was
7		trying $$ or I couldn't relate to what he was going
8		through, but I was trying to be there for him.
9		So we went to the hospitals together, St Mary's
10		first , leaving the names, and then we went to Chelsea
11		and Westminster Hospital, where we ended up staying for
12		a few hours. There were other survivors there. And as
13		time went on, the numbers were increasing. People were
14		in a deep state of trauma, and not knowing how to deal
15		with it, and the way people kind of managed to maintain
16		their composure with everything they were going through
17		and everything they had been through, and still trying
18		to look for their loved ones, and yet we were getting no
19		information. We just got the response, "Oh, a taskforce
20		is being gathered together and we're trying our best".
21	Q.	You mention in relation to that last point, Mr Rasoul,
22		that you were told at that hospital that there was no
23		point going to other hospitals because they were going
24		to tell you the same thing.
25	Α.	Yeah.

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	~	
1	Q.	And you waited around there for some time, a couple of
2		hours
3	Α.	Yeah.
4	Q.	and then decided that perhaps there was no more use
5		in doing so, and in due course you went back towards the
6		Rugby Portobello Club; is that correct?
7	Α.	Yeah, that's correct. I think when they said that,
8		you know, they're going to tell you the same thing
9		wherever you go, any other hospitals, you can imagine
10		that would have been quite a blow to all of us. So we
11		went back towards the area $$ back into the area, back
12		into the immediate vicinity of the tower, specifically
13		the Rugby Club, with kind of $$ I want to say broken
14		hearts, but obviously people's hearts were already
15		broken, but even more weight on our hearts, knowing that
16		we couldn't $$ you know, we weren't helped or we
17		couldn't find out any more about our loved ones and so
18		on. By that time we went back to the Rugby Portobello
19		Club, I think a significant amount of donations had at
20		that time been gathered. They'd put tables out with
21		food donations, clothes, and there was a lot of people
22		around. They had in the basement of the Rugby
23		Portobello Club, you know, blankets and I think
24		mattresses even laid out for people, and to be honest,
25		what we didn't find in the response of the authorities

- 1 we found in the response of the public -- of the British
- 2 public and, in particular, the local community.
- 3 I mean, there's two sides to this coin of the 4 Grenfell tragedy is kind of how the authorities let
- Grenfell tragedy, is kind of how the authorities let us
- 5 down, and the positive side is the beauty that came out 6 of it, of how it brought our community together, and
- 7 I think without the faith communities, without the
- 8 volunteers, you know, it just -- it would have been
- 9 horrific for all of us, and they really just played
- 10 a kind of integral role in cushioning us, in supporting
- 11 us through our trauma, our grieving, in helping us
- 12 practically get the right information we needed, because
- 13 there was no one from the authorities on the ground at
- $14 \qquad \ \ \, {\rm the \ Rugby \ Club}$ at that time to tell us, "Do this, you
- 15 need to leave your numbers here, or do that", and we
- 16 just -- it was mainly volunteers and the help of the 17 public.
- Q. Could I ask you a little bit about one aspect at the
 Rugby Portobello Club.
- 20 A. Yeah.
- 21 Q. It's in relation to your need to get some emergency
- 22 accommodation, because you had no home to return to.
- 23 A. Yeah.
- 24 Q. Did you make some efforts to try to get accommodation on 25 14 June?

- 1 A. From what I can recollect, it was just very surreal. 2 The fact that we were homeless, or been made homeless, 3 I'll be honest, it didn't even sink in at the time, even 4 maybe up until we spent 19 months in hotels, and I think 5 up until $\,--\,$ only when we moved out of the hotel did we realise that we were kind of essentially homeless. 6 7 We lived in the immediate aftermath -- I know we're 8 focusing on the seven days, but we lived in that 9 immediate aftermath, for the whole of that 19 months. 10 me, my wife, my disabled father with dementia, and my 11 two kids, my baby daughter who had sickle blood disease 12 as well, and my main focus was just trying to find, 13 you know, neighbours, find our neighbours and family. 14 Q. Yes 15 A. The whole thing about finding accommodation came later 16 through my contact with Shahin. He told me they were 17 taking a list down at the Rugby Portobello Club. This 18 was much later during the day. I think I left my name 19 and then someone called me later that evening. 2.0 But, again, no, like, physical presence on behalf of 21 the TMO or the council. No one there, you know, saving, 2.2 "Can we help you? Let's take your details down". 23 I didn't see any of that. No human side to them present 24 there
- 25~ Q. You make that clear in your statement, that it was much

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- 1 later in the day that you spoke to a volunteer at the
- 2 Rugby Portobello Club regarding accommodation, and you
- 3 received a call that evening from the council confirming
- 4 that they had booked a room for you and your family --
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. -- at this stage at the Premier Inn hotel in Hammersmith 7 for one night.
- 7 for o 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. You mentioned, and we've discussed, your father's health
- 10 issues --
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. -- which included the use of a wheelchair and the need
- 13 for a wheelchair.
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. When you spoke to the person on the line from RBKC
- 16 regarding your needs --
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. -- did you mention that your dad had a physical
- 19 impairment that meant that he required a wheelchair?
- 20 A. From what I recall, yes, I did mention that he was
- 21 disabled. I didn't really -- I don't think -- I'm not
- 22 sure if I went into the details and mentioned his
- 23 dementia. Probably. I believe I did. But they said
- 24 just -- you know, "We'll just have you there for the
- 25 $% 10^{-1}$ night and then we'll make better arrangements the next

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- 1 day". And it was me, my wife and kids, two kids, on 2 a double bed, five-year-old son and 3 a year-and-a-half-old baby girl, myself and my wife on 4 that double bed -- not like a king size double, a small 5 double bed -- and my father was on a single bed, a small 6 single bed, like the one you extend out, not like 7 a proper one. Yeah. 8 $\mathsf{Q}.$ In relation to actually getting there that evening on 9 14 June, your family, was there any arrangements made or 10 offered to you about being transported to the hotel? 11 Α. No, none in the evening. We were dropped off to the 12 hotel by a friend. 13 Q. When you had the conversation on the phone to somebody 14 from RBKC, was there any other assistance offered or 15 information given to you about financial support or any 16 other support that could be available? 17 A. No, no, to the best of my recollection. 18 Q. We know that the next morning, as you have helpfully set 19 it out in your statement, you received a call again from 20 somebody at RBKC telling you that they had arranged 21 transport this time to take you and your family to the 2.2 Earls Court Premier Inn.
- 23 A. Yeah.

access.

- 24 $\,$ $\,$ Q. And you were told that there was a room with disability
- 25

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ And you mention in your statement that at this hotel 3 there were two rooms allocated; one was on the 2nd floor, and the second room was on the 4th floor. 4 A. Okay, a slight correction there. 5 6 Q. Assist me. 7 A. Yeah, no, the one that was on the 2nd floor was actually 8 the ground floor. 9 Q. Okay. 10 A. Which was -- well, my wife and kids stayed there, and my 11 father's so-called disabled room was on the 2nd or 12 3rd floor, with elevator access. 13 I mean, it didn't really have any kind of disability 14 facilities , it was just a slightly bigger room. It 15 didn't have, like, a walk-in shower. And, you know, my father, he had -- along with his vascular dementia, he 16 17 had angina, he had -- he was incontinent, he had to 18 wear, like -- both types of incontinence, so he had to 19 wear, like, adult nappies, incontinence pads. So we 20 didn't have a proper way or proper place to change him 21 and wash him properly. We changed and washed him, 2.2 of course, but usually, you know, a proper disabled
- 23 facility would have, like, a walk-in shower with a chair
- 24 for him to sit down and wash him and change him and that 25 and so on, but we didn't have that.

1	And the fact that $$ and I understand the
2	exceptional circumstances, but what exacerbates the
3	trauma and the grief of everything we went through is,
4	you know, we want to be together as much as possible,
5	and to put part of my family in one room and the other
6	part meant my father $$ and I had to stay with him,
7	because since he $$ he was so familiar with his
8	surroundings in the flat in Grenfell Tower. Since the
9	fire $$ and I know he didn't recall it because of his
10	dementia, which I could see that as a blessing for
11	him $$ he was extremely disorientated. He didn't know
12	where he was most of the time, and he would continuously
13	attempt to get out. And while we were in that
14	Premier Inn in Cromwell Road, the Earls Court one, you
15	know, he managed to get out one time. While I was
16	sleeping right next to him, me and my son, my son woke
17	me up, and he said, "Daddy", or, "Baba, grandad's gone
18	out, where is he?" Looked all over the hotel, couldn't
19	find him, and someone managed to spot him crossing the
20	dual carriageway in front of the hotel with his walking
21	stick . And this was a situation we had to live with for
22	19 months. Someone had to constantly be with him.
23	He's my father and it's my duty to serve him and
24	look after him, but it was exhausting, to the point
25	I had to $$ I couldn't go back to work. I had to get my

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- sister from Egypt to come and help look after him, help 1 2 us look after him, because he needed round-the-clock 3 attention.
- 4 Q. You have set out with care the real difficult
- circumstances you and your family were experiencing, and 5
- 6 you mentioned the placement of the rooms meant that the
- 7 effect was your family was split up for several months.
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. I want to just deal with a few discrete specific areas,
- 10 if I may.
- 11 A. Sure.
- 12 Q. Food provision.

13		Were you aware that food was available to you when
14		you were in the Premier Inn at Earls Court hotel?
15	Α.	In the beginning, no. In the beginning, no. It was
16		several weeks before we found out that we could have
17		breakfast there, and then much later, like maybe
18		two months or more, before other meals were made
19		available to us, if I recollect correctly. But we were
20		living most of the time on takeaway, meal deals from
21		Tesco's, and obviously I had two young kids and my
22		father, and it wasn't, you know, a healthy environment
23		for me to look after them.
24	0	In a second of the second second second second based for a d

- Q. In terms of your religious needs, was there Halal food 24 25
 - which was available at the hotel?

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1	Α.	No, no, no. No. And it was an ordeal to constantly
2		take my father down to the kind of dining area, the
3		breakfast hall, to take him $$ make him walk down and
4		tire him out, have his breakfast, make him walk up
5		again, no wheelchair. You know, it was tiring for him.
6		And we had to do this every day when we had access to
7		the breakfast, and the other meals later on, yeah, much
8		later .
9	Q.	You mention in your statement {IWS00001768/22} that it
10		was really difficult living in the hotel:
11		"We had no cooking or laundry facilities. We had to
12		put our laundry in black bags and suitcases and then
13		take them in a cab to the laundrette and then back to
14		the hotel."
15	Α.	Yeah, when you mention that, that whole ordeal, the only
16		way I could word it is we felt $$ you know, and I think
17		I've put this in my statement, we felt like refugees in
18		our own country. We felt that it was hard work.
19		You know, my wife was doing the laundry, God bless her,
20		while I was going to work, and to a degree it was
21		humiliating, demeaning as well. We were a vulnerable
22		group of people who were trying to deal with our trauma,
23		trying to grieve, but the whole dynamics of the
24		situation didn't allow any of that. We were living in
25		limbo for 19 months, as long as $$ as well as the other

- 1 survivors and bereaved, living in limbo, living in
- 2 a stunted stage of our lives . We couldn't -- we weren't
- 3 given the room or the capacity to heal, and that was --
- 4 you know, that was like -- that was ... that was just
- 5 widening our wounds even more.
- And what added insult to injury as well is that the 6
- 7 people who were major contributors to the problem in
- RBKC and the TMO before the fire were still in charge 8
- 9 after the fire, and in charge of us, essentially. And
- 10 from our, you know, meetings with them subsequent to
- 11 that, much later, you know, they still hadn't learned 12 their lessons.
- 13 Sorry, there's another point I wanted to add. The
- 14 laundry
- 15 Q. I may be covering them in the next few questions.
- 16 A. Okay, yes, go ahead, sorry.
- 17 Q. And hopefully I will.
- 18 A Sure
- 19 Q. But if it comes back to you, do let me know.
- 20 A. Sure
- 21 Q. Because the next heading is really basic provisions and 22 financial assistance.
- 23 A. Sure

- 24 Q. A couple of headings which hopefully will assist you and
 - capture those areas you want to tell the panel about.

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- 1 A. Okay.
- 2 Q. You describe going to the Westway Sports Centre in the 3 coming days, and I just wanted to check whether you 4 attended the Westway Centre within the first week
- 5 following the fire , can you recall?
- A. Not that I recall . I think it was much later. Yeah, 6 7 a few weeks later, maybe.
- 8 Q. What drew your attention to go to the Westway? How did 9 you know that was a place to go to?
- 10 A. So most of the information I had that I would receive, 11 like many of the other survivors, was just through word 12 of mouth, mainly from between ourselves and from
- 13 volunteers. I think -- I mean. I have to put this into
- context. The first -- after the first day and so, and 14
- 15 seeing that we've got no hope in getting assistance from
- 16 our local authorities or central government at the time,
- we started to group together. I was going around, 17
- 18 taking people's numbers and their flat numbers from my,
- 19 you know, family of neighbours, and we arranged to meet
- 2.0 up and to co-ordinate ourselves, and we formed
- 21 a WhatsApp group, and via that, we were passing kind of
- 2.2 relevant information to each other. Later on, you know,
- 23 people told me that the different kind of organisations,
- 24 government kind of organisations, had representatives in 25
- the -- set up in the Westway to kind of help us if

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- 1 people had lost their passports, forms of ID, needed 2 financial assistance and so on. 3 But in the beginning, there was so much confusion 4 and chaos. You know, the area was flooded with kind of journalists and different types of officials , lawyers 5 and stuff, and we just didn't know really who to trust. 6 7 Q. Yes. 8 A. Yeah 9 Q. I want to touch upon financial assistance? 10 A. Sure, yeah. 11 Q. You mention in your statement at paragraph 136 12 {IWS00001768/27}: 13 "In the first couple of weeks after the fire, as 14 I had my wallet, we lived on our own savings and cash 15 that had been given to us by friends and family." 16 A Yes 17 Q. Then you go on to say: 18 "It was much later that we found out about financial 19 assistance from the government." 20 A. Yes 21 Q. That's at paragraph 137, I think I was reading, the last 22 part. 23 Can you recall when you became aware of financial 24 assistance which was available to you? 25 A. I think a few months -- well, maybe eight weeks later,
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 - if I'm not mistaken, if I recollect properly, but much, much later. And it was always the case, when I found
 - 3 out something, that the service was available to us --
 - 4 you know, it was never put out there with whoever we
 - were dealing with from RBKC or the TMO. It was always 5
 - 6 a case where we had to chase it up. And again,
 - 7 you know, looking at such a -- the survivors at the
 - 8 time, looking at such a vulnerable group of people, they
 - 9 were constantly kind of just running through hoops.
 - 10 jumping over hurdles which they shouldn't have been made
- 11 to do that. You know, people should have been reaching
- 12 out to us and saying, you know, "This service is
- 13 available, this is available, can we help you with this,
- can we help", and it's just -- it was always a case when 14
- 15 we were dealing with RBKC, they were just never
- 16 proactive, never proactive, never thinking or putting
- 17 themselves in our shoes. It was just tick-box
- 18 exercises , and always reactive in --
- 19 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ So in those first few weeks you were dependent on your
- 20 own savings and cash --21 A. Yeah.
- 2.2 Q. -- and the generosity of friends --
- 23 A. Yes

1

2

- 24 -- and other volunteer organisations; is that correct? Q.
- 25
 - A. Yes, yes, the amazing -- and I really have to -- amazing

- 1 generosity of the volunteers and the British public, 2 which I think, you know, this country should be proud 3 of. The public's response in that tragedy was something ${\sf I}\,{\rm '}\,{\sf II}\,$ never forget for the rest of my life . To me, that 4 5 represented what, you know, humanity should strive for, that with our differences -- because we had people from 6 7 all over coming to help us, all different ethnicities, 8 all different religious backgrounds, all socioeconomic 9 classes, they came. You know, they brought us donations 10 of money, of food, of clothes, they brought toys for $\ensuremath{\mathsf{my}}$ 11 children, and the phrase which I've said before, like, 12 you know, we shed tears over people we lost on that 13 night, and we also shed tears, me and my wife, over just 14 being overwhelmed by people's generosity and their good 15 charity towards us. Yeah, that's something I'll never 16 forget. And it wasn't -- there were no barriers. There 17 were no barriers, you know, of race or anything like 18 that. Everyone was proud of their identity. of their 19 diversity, but yet it wasn't a barrier. And I think that's something -- in that moment, you had something 2.0 21 that we could all strive for in this society. We should 22 be proud of. 23 On the flipside of that, the authorities were
- 24 nowhere to be seen, and they were the exact opposite.
 - People who we -- you know, who were meant to be in

- 1 charge of our affairs and serving us were nowhere to be
- seen. And I think it showed the true colours of -- as
 any tragic situation or any kind of disaster, it brings
- 4 out the real colours of people, what they're really
- 5 like. The old proverb, a friend in need is a friend
- 6 indeed, and I think for me it just showed what the
- 7 public were like to us and how they supported us, and
- 8 just that we didn't really mean anything -- on the
- 9 flipside , we didn't really mean anything to the
- 10authorities , who were meant to be in charge of our11affairs , which wasn't a charge from our previous
- 12 interaction with them.
- 13 Q. I want to ask you about one scheme which was designed to
- 14give you and those affected some support, which is the15key workers.
- 16 A. Yeah.

25

- 17~ Q. And perhaps assist you with some of the background which
- 18 you have helpfully set out in your statements.
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. Is it correct that you were not appointed a key worker 21 until a few weeks after the fire?
- 22 A. Yes. We didn't see anyone until -- like a face,
- a formal someone representing the council or the TMO,
- 24 for weeks after, for a few weeks after, it was just over
- 25 the phone, you know, which was, like, a very inhumane

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- 1 way to deal with people that had been through what
- 2 they'd just been through.
- 3 Q. So the initial key worker contact was over the phone, 4 not face --
- 5 A. No, this was someone -- the initial contact was just
- 6 someone to get details of our -- our details. And it
- 7 was a recurring thing that constantly down the line we
- 8 had to keep giving information again and again, and,
- 9 you know, we were just wondering: why is there not
- $10\,$ \$ a more efficient way of communication within your $% 10\,$
- 11 $\,$ organisation, the TMO and -- or RBKC, where you can
- $12 \qquad \mbox{ preserve the data more efficiently , rather than us have }$
- 13 to kind of keep reliving what we'd been through and
- $14 \qquad \mbox{giving the same information, where we'd come from, what}$
- 15 we're experiencing, and so on and so on. And it's
- $16 \qquad \mbox{just } --\mbox{ yeah, it just exacerbated the wounds that were}$
- 17 already there and opened them up more.
- 18 $\,$ Q. You mention in your statement you had six different
- key workers in the space of a month, including one justfor a weekend.
- 20 for 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. In terms of the impact, you have already helpfully set
- 23 that out.
- 24 A. Yeah.
- 25 Q. But perhaps we could go back up to paragraph 120

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1 {IWS00001768/24}. You say this: 2 "We quickly realised that as soon as we became 3 comfortable with a Key Worker from whom we sensed any 4 sympathy, and worked to develop a relationship with 5 them, the Council would take them away. This was so 6 disruptive in our already unsettled lives ." 7 A. Yeah. I mention later on that one of the best 8 key workers we had was a lady called Hannah, and 9 I think, looking back in retrospect, you know. I was 10 trying -- a person in my position trying to be -11 you know, leading the family, a man, be a strong 12 husband, be a good father, be a good son, and all of us 13 dealing with our trauma and dealing with our grief, at 14 times, you know, in the hotel environment, we didn't 15 have any escape or outlet to kind of vent any of our 16 emotions or experiences out, and that -- it wasn't 17 a healthy environment for us. 18 The key workers were meant to be kind of a bridge, 19 obviously, between us and the council, and in some ways, 20 in some moments in the beginning, we saw them as kind 21 of, you know, an extended rope, a hand of help for us. 2.2 so we kind of put our hope in them to a degree. But 23 each time when they would change them, it was just like 24 a slap in the face. 25 $\mathsf{Q}.\;$ You mentioned Hannah was useful as a key worker and

2		positive .	1		came to check us in that immediate week, or maybe for
		Yes.	2		a while after that as well. No one came to assess my
3	Q.	Generally, when you were asking one of your key workers	3		father. No one came to assess my daughter. She was
4		for help, what sort of response would you get?	4		only a baby at the time, a year and a half old, but she
5	Α.	So with her she was $$ I mean, just her specifically,	5		had sickle blood disease. No one had came, you know, to
6		she was very empathetic. It seemed that she knew how to	6		check on the children and what they'd been through, or
7		deal with us a bit better. Again, because of her	7		us. It came much, much later. But no one came for the
8		background, she'd dealt with other survivors, who taught	8		physical medical checks at all, which for me was just $$
9		her how to deal appropriately with people dealing with	9		again, it's just kind of leaving us on our own two feet.
10		trauma and shock and grief and so on and loss of loved	10		I chased up the pharmacy and got his medication. He
11		ones. But generally the other ones we dealt with,	11		got a replacement wheelchair months later, which meant
12		you know, someone coming to meet us, they'd been drafted	12		that he just kind of basically had to stay in his room,
13		in from another borough or another council over the	13		with supervision $$ with our supervision $$ under our
14		weekend, would come in and tell us, "Okay, we're here,	14		supervision.
15		we're just with you for the day and tomorrow, you know,	15	Q.	Turn to paragraph 168, please, of your second statement
16		someone else is going to be with you".	16		{IWS00001768/32}.
17		Again, just all we wanted throughout the whole	17	Α.	Sure.
18		ordeal was just to be treated by people, and it just	18	Q.	And you say this:
19		seemed like when you were changing these sources, what	19		"The specific needs of my family were not met in the
20		were meant to be representing kind of representations of	20		aftermath of the fire . With two young children and an
21		help from the local authority, and you just keep	21		elderly father with disabilities , my wife and I should
22		changing them and not listening to our needs and not	22		have received more support from RBKC. My children and
23		listening to our concerns, and we're saying, you know,	23		my father's needs should have been assessed more
24		"Just keep us with one key worker, it's more humane,	24		thoroughly and support that worked for our family should
25		they can relate to us more", but each time we had to	25		have been put in place. Our lives had been turned
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1		change them, we had to go through $$ relive the night,	1		upside down. We were grieving and emotionally
2		the trauma and explain our needs and explain our	2		stretched. The least that RBKC could have done was make
3		situation, and it was just like, you know, "You're	3		sure that we did not have to worry about the
4		hurting us again and again and again, why are you doing	4		practicalities of our living situation following the
5		this to us?"	5		fire ."
6	Q.	If you're finished in relation to that, I'm going to	6		Is that correct?
7		move on to another discrete area $$	7	Α.	Yes. If I may add $$
8	Α.	Sure.	8	Q.	Of course.
9	Q.	—— which touches upon your father, who we've mentioned	9	Α.	Elaborate.
10		a few times now, and you shared the particular	10		Just, I mean, with everything that we were dealing
11		challenges and difficulties he had, and you faced in the	11		with, we still had to fight for the accommodation which
12		aftermath.	12		we eventually got. We still had to enquire and apply
13	Α.	Yeah.	13		and go via all the kind of normal avenues that someone
14	Q.	You say at paragraph 142 of your second statement	14		who hasn't been through that would have to go to find
15		{IWS00001768/28} that:	15		out what our rights were, what was being offered to us,
16		"We had escaped a burning building and no one	16		how this is going to play out in the future, what's
17		offered us even a basic check-up."	17		going to happen with our accommodation. And, again, it
18		So really from that initial stage you felt	18		was just $$ all of this was $$ it was a very cruel,
19		unsupported in relation to the needs of your father; is	19		drawn-out, insensitive process, where it just seemed we
20		that correct?	20		were like guinea pigs of a trial and error system, that
21	Α.	No. Yes.	21		RBKC and central government were learning from us and
22		Is it right in the coming week or two and thereafter you	22		learning from our experiences how to deal with this
~ ~		received little support, or any support, from the TMO or	23		group $$ how to deal with a traumatised group of people
23					
		RBKC in relation to your father's needs?	24		in such a situation.
23	A.	No. No one came out. No kind of medical specialist	24		But it was just it was I mean, for me,

1 I shouldn't have had to have kind of been urging and 2 fighting and struggling to arrange accommodation, to 3 fight for a home for my family, with everything that 4 we'd been through. And that was pretty much everyone 5 else. All the survivors were in the same boat. All my neighbours, my family of neighbours, were in the same 6 7 boat. And it was just -- it was ... there was no one 8 there, like, making the process easier. Yes, you had 9 key workers, but it was just -- we asked so many times 10 for the government to take over, you know, to put in 11 an emergency taskforce, because RBKC are doing such 12 an awful job and they're not listening to our needs and 13 they're not treating us like human beings, they're not 14 treating us like people, so many times, and it was just 15 turned down. It was just turned down. 16 I know I'm repeating some of the points and 17 reiterating them, but ... 18 Q. Not at all. 19 In fact, I was moving really to one of the final 20 questions, because we've dealt with a number of areas, 21 and you have expressed your views and opinion as to how 22 you were treated, your family was treated, and the 23 adequacy of that response. 24 A Yeah 25 Q. I just wanted to give you the opportunity if there was

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1 anything else you wanted to say in relation to how you 2 were treated in those days in the immediate aftermath of 3 the fire . 4 A. I mean, everything I've said, I've put this out in the 5 statement, I'm saying this knowing that those were 6 exceptional circumstances, they weren't normal, and it 7 was new ground for the authorities, for the local 8 government. But I just would have expected, you know, 9 firmer hands on the reins in the situation. better 10 leadership from the local council, from the government 11 at the time, you know, and by the time people were 12 coming to see us, you know, the Prime Minister came 13 down, other people came down, the Queen came down, which 14 was -- I thought that was beautiful, she did more than 15 what RBKC did and others -- but by that that time, we 16 had already been -- the survivors had already been 17 dispersed all over the area. And, again, it just felt 18 like too little too late when people were coming and 19 doing this, and it was ... you know, they were meeting 20 the firefighters , they were meeting the -- but where 21 were we in the picture? We weren't in the picture, and 2.2 it just felt like we were just outcasts. 23 You know, we weren't in the area. We had to go 24 back, when we were in our hotels, into the area to get 25 any news to find out about things, you know, about

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1 services, about help, and again, it was just the local 2 community, the -- you had forming hubs from the local 3 faith communities, the mosques, churches, the youth 4 centres, and they became kind of just a breath of fresh 5 air for us, just really places where we could go and get practical advice, practical help, from people we 6 7 trusted, because a lot of the time when we were dealing 8 with representatives of the authorities, there was just 9 such a deep distrust there -- and there still is, 10 rightfully so -- from my experience with dealing with 11 RBKC and the TMO before, during and after the fire. 12 And, yeah, this is where the British public kind of 13 stepped up, and they filled in those gaps in an amazing 14 way 15 But it shouldn't have been the case. This should 16 have been the responsibility of the people who are in 17 charge of us, the people -- you know, the politicians, 18 the councillors, who are in charge of the local 19 authority, who -- this is their role. They're meant to 20 be the leaders, looking after us and kind of attending 21 to our needs, but they were nowhere to be seen during 22 the whole -- like the majority of that, the immediate 23 aftermath and afterwards. And repetitively, throughout 24 our 19-month stay in the hotels, we were in meetings 25 with them, and they had to be reminded by others --175

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1 other survivors, bereaved -- that -- you know, people we're having meetings with and councillors and so on. 2 3 people from the -- representing the local government, 4 and they're on their mobile phone, not even giving us 5 the due attention that we deserve. And that's been our 6 experience of them. 7 And it should be the case that people who are in 8 charge of us, you know, they should be the people who 9 have the most -- the greatest moral integrity, but it's 10 the other way around. We've met many of them, and it 11 seems that they are the people who are the most detached 12 from what the people, you know, the public are going 13 through and what we were going through. And to be 14 honest, the way I see it , Grenfell was just -- it was 15 just a bubbling to the surface of a whole plethora of 16 problems we've got in our society, and that was just the 17 kind of manifestation of it. It was just 18 a manifestation of the deep-rooted problems we have in 19 our society between the Government and the public, that 20 we have incompetent individuals that are running the 21 show, who don't care about their constituents, they 2.2 can't relate to them, they can't -- you know, and 23 I think this gap needs to be bridged in the future, 2.4 where people who are in government, who are in local 25 government, they need to know the problems of the people

	that are their constituents for there to be any kind of	1	many other people. So we're very grateful to you for
1 2	that are their constituents for there to be any kind of beneficial change in the future. If that gap is not	1 2	many other people. So we're very grateful to you for coming to give your evidence, and now you're free to go.
3	bridged, then it's just going to be the same thing.	3	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
4	MR KEATING: Mr Rasoul, thank you so much ——	4	SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: Thank you very much.
4 5	-	4 5	
6	THE WITNESS: Thank you.	6	THE WITNESS: Thank you for listening. Thank you.
	MR KEATING: —— for your evidence today.		(The witness withdrew)
7	THE WITNESS: Thank you.	7	MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, can I thank you for sitting late.
8	MR KEATING: They're all the questions I wish to ask you at	8	Thank you, and sorry we have strayed into your
9	this stage, but our normal process is to invite a brief	9	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, thanks are really due not just
10	pause perhaps for five minutes, Mr Chairman, if we	10	to us, but more to the others who keep the show on the
11	can $$ just to see if there are any further questions	11	road, so to speak, the stenographer and the ushers and
12	from those who are watching remotely or within the room.	12	all the other people who support our work, so we thank
13	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Right, thank you very much.	13	them very much as well.
14	Well, Mr Rasoul, you may know this, but at this	14	So that's it for today. Tomorrow we have more
15	point we have to have a short break so that people who	15	witnesses.
16	are following, partly from this room and partly from	16	MR KEATING: That's correct, yes.
17	elsewhere, can suggest further questions.	17	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: We shall therefore resume at
18	THE WITNESS: All right.	18	10 o'clock tomorrow morning, please.
19	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I think I'm going to say	19	MR KEATING: Thank you.
20	five minutes, but if you need more, you can ask the	20	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: 10 o'clock tomorrow. Thank you.
21	usher to come and tell us and we'll accommodate you.	21	(4.45 pm)
22	MR KEATING: Yes, we will do that.	22	(The hearing adjourned until 10 am
23	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: We'll break for five minutes. We'll	23	on Thursday, 14 April 2022)
24	come back at 4.40, and then we'll see if there are any	24	
25	more questions at that point. All right?	25	
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	1//		1/7
1	THE WITNESS: Okay, thank you.	1	INDEX
2	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go	2	MR HISAM CHOUCAIR (sworn)1
3	with the usher, then, please.	3	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE2
4	(Pause)		INQUIRY
5	Thank you, Mr Keating, 4.40, unless you need more	4	
6	time.		MR MAHMOUD AL—KARAD (called)84
7	MR KEATING: Yes. Thank you.	5	
	-		
8	(4.36 pm)		Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY 86
8 9	(4.36 pm) (A short break)	6	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY86
9	(A short break)	6	
9 10	(A short break) (4.40 pm)		Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY86 MR MOHAMMED RASOUL (sworn)135
9 10 11	(A short break) (4.40 pm) SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: All right, Mr Rasoul. Well, we'll	7	MR MOHAMMED RASOUL (sworn)135
9 10 11 12	(A short break) (4.40 pm) SIR MARTIN MOORE–BICK: All right, Mr Rasoul. Well, we'll see if there are any more questions.	7 8	
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