

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 Elgwhary. It was
 14 said that he lost his mother, Mariem Elgwhary and his
 15 sister, Eslah Elgwhary. In fact, it was the other way
 16 round; he lost his sister, Mariem Elgwhary, and his
 17 mother, Eslah Elgwhary, 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

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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

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1 a date, 28 November 2018. Can you see that?
 2 A. Yes, I can.
 3 Q. Is that your signature?
 4 A. 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 A. Yes, it is.
 9 Q. Have you read both of these statements recently?
 10 A. Yes, I have.
 11 Q. Can you confirm for the Inquiry that the contents are
 12 true?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Thank you.
 15 A. 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 A. That's correct.
 25 Q. Just go along with me here, just correct me if I'm wrong

4

1 about this, but your sister, Nadia, and her husband,
 2 Bassem, moved into flat 193 in March 2006; is that
 3 right?
 4 A. 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 A. That's correct.
 11 Q. The date we have is March 2013 for when your mother,
 12 Sirria, moved into flat 191.
 13 A. That's correct.
 14 Q. She lived there, I think, with your other sister,
 15 Sawsan.
 16 A. 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 A. "Sawsan", that's correct.
 20 Q. I think it's right that you would visit your family
 21 regularly in the tower.
 22 A. 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 A. Erm ...
 11 Q. It's very precise.
 12 A. I think it was actually about — roughly about 2.45.
 13 Q. Right.
 14 A. 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?
 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 Q. Yes. 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.
 6 A. That's correct.
 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 Q. Then you go on to say that you arrived — this is
 11 page 12 {IWS00001197/12}, if we go to paragraph 47,
 12 about halfway down that paragraph — at the scene at
 13 3 am. That's right, is it?
 14 A. Yes, that's correct. I recall this because I looked at
 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
 2 still not see it on — it seemed like — as if the sound
 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,
 20 other than emergency services, directing people to where
 21 they should go or how they should go about getting
 22 information?
 23 A. No, there were no officials, nobody from the TMO, nobody
 24 from the government, no one from the council. There was
 25 nobody there. It was just the community residents and

8

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
 5 through the cordon so that you could search rescue
 6 centres but were not allowed. Is that right?
 7 A. That's correct. When I got to the cordon, the police
 8 were really loud, telling us to get back, like as if we
 9 were there to riot. They were shouting with
 10 an aggressive-toned voice, and they clearly were not
 11 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
 16 were exposed to that trauma.
 17 I didn't see anyone of high-ranking authority from
 18 a police officer on that first cordon, and I requested
 19 to the police officer, due to knowing the urgency of
 20 having to get through, to speak to the person in charge,
 21 whether that may be the sergeant or the inspector, and
 22 one of the police officers had to leave his point and go
 23 to another police officer. I don't know if he went to
 24 a sergeant who then went to the inspector, who I know is
 25 Nick Thatcher.

1 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
 6 explaining to them that we had family members on the
 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,
 20 and I think that's where I met Nick Thatcher.
 21 I explained to him again that we have family members in
 22 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

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 A. 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
 20 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.

1 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
 20 and Grill on Bramley Road, was that within the cordon?
 21 A. The Garden Bar and Grill -- I remember there being
 22 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
 24 lamppost. And then there was, I think, another cordon
 25 within about 10 or 15 metres after that, so just after

1 the walkways there was another cordon there. So there
 2 was a big gap between the first cordon and the second
 3 cordon, if I recall .
 4 Q. Right.
 5 Do you remember who told you that survivors and
 6 casualties were at the Garden Bar and Grill?
 7 A. It would have been by word of mouth from either the
 8 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 A. 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,

1 from the outside, but the windows were sort of like
 2 covered, in terms of they had that look like as if you
 3 couldn't see through them, if you know what I mean. So
 4 I then just went inside, nothing was stopping me, and
 5 there was about three people there.
 6 One of them was Nicholas Burton, who I recall, and
 7 he was seated on a wheelchair -- not a wheelchair,
 8 sorry, one of these chairs that the ambulance crew use
 9 when they're helping someone who can't stand up. And he
 10 had a blanket wrapped round him, and he had an oxygen
 11 mask, and his face was -- it had like -- it was like --
 12 there was like soot on his face. It was like smoke. It
 13 was all like black. But I recognised him because of his
 14 curly hair. And I don't recall who the other two people
 15 were, but they were clearly traumatised, they were
 16 wrapped in like a blanket and shaking, and they also had
 17 an oxygen mask over their nose and mouth, and there were
 18 a couple of ambulance crew members inside that Garden
 19 Bar and Grill, and I had to look these people in the
 20 face. I didn't know them by name, but that was quite
 21 traumatising for me. But I had to do it, and I had to
 22 see whether they were my family or not. And
 23 unfortunately, our family were not there.
 24 I remember, as I was just about to leave, I asked
 25 the ambulance crew whether they had taken anybody or had

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. 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 A. 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
 4 that stage was the following ... ”
 5 Then they're set out at the bottom of page 18 and
 6 over to page 19. You've got:
 7 "(1) The [Latimer] Christian Centre;
 8 "(2) The Rugby Portobello Club;
 9 "(3) The Westway Sports Centre;
 10 "(4) A Salvation Army building."
 11 And then over the page {IWS00001851/19};
 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
 18 to me on a white A4 paper in that direct order.
 19 Q. Right.
 20 A. And there were only six, and the rest of the page was
 21 blank.
 22 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 .

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 A. So it would have been between those hours.
 10 Q. Paddington hospital, so St Mary's?
 11 A. 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 A. 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 A. That's correct, yes.
 22 Q. Right. Were you familiar with these places?
 23 A. 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

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 A. Yes.
 13 Q. At that point -- and I know it's difficult to pinpoint
 14 the time in the night -- 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 A. When I went into the Salvation Army?
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. 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

1 all.
 2 Q. Was there anybody on the street from --
 3 A. No.
 4 Q. -- the TMO or RBKC?
 5 A. No, there was nobody wearing high-vis, there was nobody
 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 Q. 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?
 23 A. The side -- as if you're coming from White -- from
 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,
 2 if I recall, with a friend of ours, a very close friend
 3 of ours, who's also called Sawsan, and that's how I was
 4 able to search these rescue centres.
 5 And having checked on my phone the addresses of
 6 these places, Kona, my wife, she went -- I think she
 7 went with, actually, Sawsan, actually, or Sawsan took
 8 her, Kona, to meet my sister, and then came back to take
 9 my children, to look after my children, if I'm correct.
 10 Q. Okay.
 11 A. And they searched, I think -- they searched, if I'm
 12 correct, St Clement's Church and the Methodist church.
 13 I recall them bumping into Helen, because this was said
 14 to me at that time, who was in an ambulance on
 15 Bramley Road further down, and Helen was quite shook up
 16 and traumatised, because she had lost [redacted], and
 17 I think they asked Helen if they had seen our family,
 18 and they moved on with a friend of theirs to search the
 19 rescue centres on the other side and churches, of which
 20 we were not able to search, the Methodist church,
 21 St Clement's Centre, and I don't know what else they
 22 did.
 23 But I did receive a call or I -- when I did try to
 24 call my sister, I found out that my wife had collapsed
 25 in, I believe, the St Clement's Church. I was quite

1 concerned about that.
 2 I recall my sister speaking with a London Fire
 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,
 15 it's difficult -- what time you got to the Latimer
 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
 22 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.

1 A. Because obviously I wouldn't have known where this place
 2 was until I had got the list from the ambulance crew
 3 member from the Garden Bar and Grill. That's how I am
 4 able to pinpoint that time.
 5 Q. Yes. You say you were able to charge your phone there
 6 for a couple of minutes.
 7 A. That's correct. I couldn't believe my luck. I had
 8 actually charged my phone the night before, but it seems
 9 like the wire didn't connect with the phone, so when
 10 I -- by the time I got the phone call, my phone was
 11 making that funny noise, like as if it was dying of
 12 battery. However, I still took my charger with me and
 13 my phone, and when I went inside the Latimer Christian
 14 Centre, it was empty. There was nobody upstairs. There
 15 was only, again, one person, who was setting up tables.
 16 I think he was putting like food, like bottles of water
 17 and food on the table, but there was nobody in there.
 18 And I think on the ground floor or the first floor, I'm
 19 not too sure, I saw a socket, and I saw it as an ideal
 20 opportunity to charge my phone for a couple of minutes,
 21 because I knew it was important. I had to charge my
 22 phone to be able to make phone calls to liaise with my
 23 brother and my sister.
 24 Q. Was anyone on the door at the --
 25 A. No.

1 Q. -- Christian centre? No?
 2 A. No, there was nobody.
 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,
 14 I went upstairs and the hall was empty, and
 15 I immediately, after charging my phone, left the
 16 building.
 17 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?
 20 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

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,
 6 and you cover that in paragraph (b) on page 20 of your
 7 statement {IWS00001851/20}, if we can scroll to that,
 8 and you cover that in some detail in that subparagraph
 9 there.
 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?
 14 A. The Westway Sports Centre was the second rescue centre
 15 to be searched, immediately after the Latimer Christian
 16 Centre, due to it being very close.
 17 Q. Yes.
 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.
 21 Q. Did you have any — well, let me ask you this way: when
 22 you got to the Westway Centre, what did you find?
 23 A. When I got to the Westway Centre, I ran down there, and
 24 I went straight to the reception area. I explained to
 25 them who I was, and I was looking for my family, and

25

1 I was a family member, and they directed me to the gym,
 2 which was, I believe, outside, the entrance to the gym
 3 was outside, so it was sort of around the corner from
 4 the entrance of the main entrance to the gym. I ran
 5 down there. It was quite — very quiet, to be honest
 6 with you.
 7 When I got to the gym, I saw family members, not
 8 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
 13 was split off into people's medical needs. So you had
 14 like 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
 21 another, because they were that spaced out.
 22 However, when I did get to see who they were, even
 23 though I don't know them by name, except the Jafari
 24 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

26

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
 6 tears, because I felt ... I felt like our hopes of
 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 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 A. To the Rugby Portobello Road Club, yes.
 22 Q. When you got there, did you have any difficulties
 23 entering?
 24 A. No.
 25 Q. Right.

28

1 A. There was one person in the reception area, and he was
2 in an office, and he didn't even approach me to the
3 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 the
9 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.
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
25 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
10 visited, leaving aside the two churches that your wife
11 and 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
17 Salvation Army on foot, and you cover that on the next
18 page, page 21 {IWS00001851/21}, at the top of your
19 screen under letter (d) there, and you say:
20 "I eventually found the Salvation Army building ...
21 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
24 there?
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 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.
16 Now, you say in that paragraph that you found it
17 empty and that you rang Nabil to tell him. You say it
18 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 I recall, like I said, there was coffee on the table,
25 you know, these flasks, for people to use if they

31

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
20 mosque itself was called Acton Mosque, which I had no
21 idea. But that was my first impression. And due to it
22 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
24 school with, lived in that area and was familiar with
25 this mosque, and he searched the mosque, and he got back

32

1 to us at — within I think about an hour or two from him
 2 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.

7 Q. Now, by that point, I think, every centre on the list
 8 that you had been given had been checked by you or your
 9 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?

33

1 A. That's correct. It didn't help when we were hearing
 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
 8 moment, did you have a thought about who should be
 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
 20 I've worked for Transport for London for many years, and
 21 we've dealt with many major incidents, fatalities, and
 22 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,

34

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.

6 Q. Now, after you had visited various rest centres, I think
 7 you then started a process of visiting a number of
 8 hospitals; is that right?

9 A. That's correct.

10 Q. Yes. 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
 19 paragraph 111 {IWS00001851/22}, at about 7.30 am; is
 20 that correct?

21 A. That's correct.

22 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
 13 Paterson Ward or Wing, and that's when I left the main
 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
 20 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
 22 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

36

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 A. 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
 11 of the first ones, and there was a male nurse seated
 12 behind the desk, and I explained to him who I was and
 13 whether anyone from our family had come into this
 14 hospital, or any survivors, and they made me fill in
 15 a form. It asked for who I was, contact number, it
 16 asked for details about the person who we were enquiring
 17 about. I had to provide their names, the address,
 18 contact numbers, and dates of birth, which I struggled
 19 a bit with, with my nieces, and I had to go back to the
 20 car, rush back to the car, my children were with my
 21 brother in the car, and I had to tell them, "We need
 22 this information in order to give to the hospital".
 23 I think my brother contacted his wife, and eventually we
 24 gave them that information at the reception area.
 25 Once I gave them that information, I was told to

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

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 A. They clearly weren't interested in — no matter how long

1 we had to sit there, they just treated us like as if we
 2 were normal people walking into an A&E department,
 3 waiting to find out information for our loved ones.
 4 There was a lack of urgency.
 5 One thing they did help me with is they provided me
 6 with a charger, which I was able to charge my phone and
 7 use their facility in the waiting area, and I remember
 8 kicking up a fuss in the A&E department and I demanded
 9 to speak to the accident and emergency doctor, because
 10 there was a lack of information and update, having
 11 waited the time that we had waited, and I didn't find
 12 that acceptable under the circumstances.
 13 An accident and emergency doctor, a female, I don't
 14 know her name, who I praise, as other families were
 15 coming through, took it upon herself to go back in and
 16 out of the A&E department and to obtain information
 17 regarding people that they had identified and they
 18 started to — the — this doctor, she started to take
 19 down a description of the people who were in the waiting
 20 area, anxiously waiting and shaken and traumatised, of
 21 who their loved ones were, and she would go back into
 22 the A&E department and then come back to the reception
 23 area and say, "No, we don't have this person", or, "No,
 24 I'll look for this person if you can give me an idea of
 25 what your loved ones look like", so she was doing her

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
 6 to liaise with families that had joined myself whilst
 7 waiting in that area.
 8 Now, I don't know if this was -- whilst I was in the
 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
 14 we -- it was clearly said on TV that this would be the
 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.
 21 I rang it at 8.30 on the dot, and it just rang and
 22 rang and rang. I then tried again, and I got a message,
 23 an automated message, which said, "There are no callers
 24 available to take your call". And I just felt: how can
 25 the police advertise a number on TV related to our loved

41

1 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
 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,
 22 bearing in mind that there were other hospitals to
 23 check. And despite me -- myself liaising with them and
 24 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

42

1 an essence, and I felt that there were other hospitals
 2 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.
 25 (11.24 am)

43

1 (A short break)
 2 (11.45 am)
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: All right, Mr Choucair. Well, I'm
 4 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
 6 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.
 22 A. It wasn't -- I didn't leave with half information, if
 23 you know what I mean.
 24 Q. Thank you.
 25 So then I think you went, as you say in your

44

1 statement, to Hammersmith Hospital.
 2 A. 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 A. That's correct.
 25 Q. There, as you say, you were told that they couldn't tell

1 you whether anybody from Grenfell Tower was there due to
 2 data protection laws; is that right?
 3 A. That's correct.
 4 Q. What did you think about that?
 5 (Pause)
 6 A. 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 A. 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 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 I was shocked, but 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. I think in the end you got an answer, and that was that
 20 your family wasn't there?
 21 A. 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
 25 you become aware of any official services or support

1 that you could access as somebody looking for their
 2 loved ones?
 3 A. No. The only information that was made aware to me was
 4 the Casualty Bureau number, and that was just to find
 5 out information about our loved ones. And I attempted,
 6 like I said, to ring that number. I did ring that
 7 number, numerous times. 8.30 on the dot.
 8 I intentionally waited for that specific time, whilst my
 9 phone was charging, and like I said, it rang and rang
 10 first time. I attempted to ring it again, and that's
 11 when I got the automated response to say there were no
 12 call handlers on the line to take the call. I tried
 13 again, and it just rang and rang, and that's when I gave
 14 up hope at that point in contacting that number.
 15 Q. Did you ring it again during the course of the rest of
 16 14 June?
 17 A. Yes, I did.
 18 Q. You did, and what happened then?
 19 A. I got through. I got through to them, I believe it was
 20 at the point when we had reached Cromwell Road Hospital,
 21 and I was in the car, and just as I was getting out of
 22 my brother's car did I get through to them. I was
 23 giving them the information of our loved ones, their
 24 names, their addresses, their dates of birth, contact
 25 numbers, any unusual marks on them to identify them.

1 This also prevented me from actually going into the
 2 hospital at that point, because I was on the phone for
 3 about 20/25 minutes, and they gave me serial numbers,
 4 reference numbers, for each loved one, which I noted
 5 down on the piece of paper that I had with me, and 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 Q. Or what you should do with the reference numbers that
 14 they'd given you?
 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 it was 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
 21 a system that we were feeding into. That's what I ...
 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 —
 24 the questions were very direct. There was a lack of
 25 information — there was no information about what would

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 A. 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 -- 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
 24 the scene, rather than the police bureau.
 25 Q. Yes, I see.

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.
 25 Eventually, when I got in there, I recall seeing

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 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 I was aware
 24 of, and I wasn't having it. I became frustrated and
 25 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

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

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 Q. Yes. You said that they were very co-operative and
 6 helpful. What did they do?
 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 Pily 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 &
 20 Emergency, and of the people that were there on that
 21 day. I had to read through every single name.
 22 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

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
 6 information.
 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?
 10 A. No, but I was prepared for it.
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 A. Yeah. I was prepared for it.
 13 Q. I think you then went to the Royal Brompton Hospital,
 14 but that, being a specialist heart hospital, was
 15 unlikely, and you discovered there was no one there
 16 either.
 17 A. That's correct. This hospital was, I think, on -- is it
 18 Sydney Street?
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. It's just sort of around the corner, really, from it,
 21 near the King's Road. Because they specialise --
 22 they're a heart hospital or they're well known for being
 23 a heart hospital, and they specialise with people with
 24 cardiac arrest, and they were able to tell me that at
 25 the reception area, if I'm correct, they did not have

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 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
 13 an ideal opportunity to ring back the police bureau
 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
 8 Casualty Bureau before going into the Cromwell Hospital,
 9 not after leaving it?
 10 A. It was as I was — as we were returning back from the
 11 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.
 15 A. And I think I got through, if I'm correct, and it was at
 16 that point when I was at — just before it, before we
 17 got to Cromwell Road Hospital, that I got through. But
 18 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 I had to give addresses, date of birth, description,
 25 you know, and that took quite a while, for each family

57

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
 20 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

58

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
 6 not made clear to me at the time whether all of this
 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
 20 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 A. Sorry, yes, the fourth time, the Casualty Bureau. Then
 25 the fifth time to the police again, because when I went

59

1 back to the Paterson Wing, I was told that — I was told
 2 to go to I think it was the gallery or the conference
 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, I was
 20 waiting my turn, if I'm correct, and then they — after
 21 having provided the information about our loved ones to
 22 the detectives, we then left, or we were told to leave,
 23 because they needed that room, and that's when I left,
 24 if I'm correct.
 25 Q. Right.

60

1 A. I'm just looking at my statement.
 2 Q. Yes.
 3 (Pause)
 4 A. Yes. So this detective provided me, again, with
 5 a number, which I had no idea that it was -- I don't
 6 know whether it was the police Casualty Bureau number,
 7 I didn't take it upon myself to check, in honesty, but
 8 I took it as if it was like another number I had to feed
 9 this information about our loved ones into, and that's
 10 the reason why I rang it and gave them the information.
 11 They then again gave me serial numbers for each family
 12 member. At no point did they say, "You have already
 13 contacted us", or, "We have this information",
 14 et cetera.
 15 Q. Right.
 16 A. It took a lot out of me, because we were -- I was
 17 fasting, and it was mentally exhausting.
 18 Q. Having provided that information on a number of
 19 occasions which you've now recounted to us, both to the
 20 police and to the Casualty Bureau at least once and at
 21 the hospitals, did you actually receive any information?
 22 A. I didn't receive no phone call from any hospital or the
 23 police Casualty Bureau. In my recollection, if I go
 24 through it again, how many times I had to give this
 25 information, so I'll start off with the information was

1 provided to Nick Thatcher, that's one; it was then
 2 provided to the Paterson Wing, A&E reception, that's
 3 twice; it was then provided to the police
 4 Casualty Bureau number, that's three times; it was then
 5 provided to the detectives who were in the gallery room
 6 in the Mint Wing, that's four times; and then having
 7 contacted the number that they had given me, so
 8 altogether it's five times.
 9 Q. Yes. Then you went back to the A&E reception, I think,
 10 where a member of staff showed you a list of names of
 11 everyone who had gone for treatment, and I think you
 12 discovered that your family's name wasn't on that list;
 13 yes? That's what you say in paragraphs 132 and 133
 14 {IWS00001851/26}.
 15 A. I can only see --
 16 Q. Yes, if we turn the page to 26, I think you can see
 17 there that in paragraph 132 you tell us that you went
 18 back to the main entrance of the Queen Elizabeth
 19 Building, and in paragraph 133 you went back to the
 20 reception, and then you say:
 21 "I spoke to a staff member who showed me a list of
 22 the names of everyone who had gone to A&E for treatment.
 23 I checked but could not find our family's names there.
 24 They said they had verified people's names, but I am not
 25 sure how they would have done this. I thanked the

1 member of staff and left the building immediately and
 2 went to the car. There was no time to waste as we still
 3 had more hospitals to search."
 4 A. Yes. So I went back into the A&E building in the new
 5 building, which I believe was called the Queen Elizabeth
 6 Building, at St Mary's, and I went to the first floor.
 7 I went to the A&E department. I don't know how I got
 8 through, whether someone let me in or I knocked on the
 9 window, I'm not too sure. I went to the reception area
 10 and they showed me the book. It was like an A3 size
 11 book, and it had all the log-in entries of everybody
 12 that had attended St Mary's Accident & Emergency on that
 13 day. It showed the dates, the time, the names, and
 14 I think it had a signature, I'm not too sure. I looked
 15 in that book, and our family members were not listed in
 16 that book. Therefore, I immediate -- I thanked them and
 17 I left the building and, as I left the building, if I'm
 18 correct, there were two police officers standing -- or
 19 they may have been there when I went in, but I had
 20 a conversation with them as I was leaving or as I was
 21 entering, I'm not too sure, and out of curiosity I took
 22 it upon myself to ask them: do they have any information
 23 about our family, whether they were here, whether they
 24 know anything, and I could tell that they were officers
 25 not from the borough due to their epaulettes and the

1 letters on their shoulders. Having worked with the
 2 police, I -- you get familiar with the letter
 3 abbreviations of what police station they were from.
 4 And they said to me that they didn't even know why they
 5 were there.
 6 Q. Right.
 7 A. And they don't know what they're supposed to do. So
 8 I was a bit shocked to put two police officers on the
 9 main hospital that was -- that took in the majority of
 10 survivors, for them not to know what they were doing,
 11 but nothing surprised me.
 12 Q. I think after that you then went to University College
 13 Hospital. Roughly what time of the morning now was
 14 that, if it was still morning?
 15 A. Oh, no, it was definitely morning.
 16 (Pause)
 17 So -- well, I'm just trying to ... so if I obviously
 18 contacted the police Casualty Bureau number at 8.30 in
 19 the morning, and then if you look at the amount of
 20 hospitals I've had to check, this would have been quite
 21 late in the morning. I cannot pinpoint a specific time.
 22 I would say probably maybe between 11.00 and 1.00.
 23 Q. Then you tell us that you continued your search at
 24 University College Hospital, St Thomas' Hospital and
 25 King's College Hospital down in Denmark Hill, and your

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 some 11 hospitals, including going back to St Mary's
7 twice, and contacted two numbers, the police numbers you
8 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
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 I'm
6 sorry for that. I invaded people's privacy through
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
22 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

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
6 your home to go to the tower at about 2.45 to 3 am, you
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, yes, 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:

20 "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

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 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 A. Yes.

16 Q. For the next few days after 14 June?

17 A. 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.

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

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
 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

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 A. 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 ... 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

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
 16 survive -- you know, killed the hopes of them being
 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 "LFB" on them, and there was messages on them,
 22 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",
 24 and there was a message on it saying "Sorry we didn't
 25 make it to the 22nd floor", or -- et cetera, "Rest in

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 A. I didn't get no call from the council. I believe on

1 day 4 or day 5, I'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
 5 to meet them in Notting Hill Gate police station. And
 6 when we got there, we were put in a custody interview
 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
 22 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

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?

5 A. I can't pinpoint an exact time. I think it was, was
 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
 14 happened to be the first one. Then myself and my
 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
 22 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

1 front of the tower", and it was under one condition:
 2 that it would go live there and then, it wouldn't be
 3 pre-edited. And then we done our interview, we told the
 4 public that if anyone has seen our family members, with
 5 the sticks in our hand and pictures of our loved ones,
 6 to please contact the police Casualty Bureau number.

7 Other press started mobbing us, because when they
 8 saw like a centrepiece, it was like as if they wanted
 9 a piece of the action or they wanted to know what was
 10 going on, and the police that were standing behind us,
 11 there was about like 10 or 12 police officers and they
 12 were all spaced out, and after doing this interview,
 13 a massive crowd came, I think from the town hall, and --
 14 hundreds of people, and the police were standing there.
 15 I think they were there to prevent [dis]order, or
 16 prevent public [dis]order, and they were sort of -- it's
 17 like as if they didn't want to be there, like as if they
 18 knew that they were -- they were standing with us, if
 19 you know what I mean, but at the same time it was like
 20 they didn't want to be there, or they knew something
 21 that we didn't know. And this whole crowd came to the
 22 scene after myself and my brother done our interview,
 23 and people were angry, naturally, the residents, the
 24 community, whoever else as well, we were all angry,
 25 and -- but we were also -- we held -- we remained --

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?

77

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
 5 support offered to you or to Nabil or your sister,
 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
 20 whether, after looking through all the evidence in your
 21 statements and taking you back this morning through the
 22 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?

79

1 THE WITNESS: I'm guided by you, sir.
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, you have spent a long time in
 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.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And I think that would probably be
 15 in your interests as much as anyone's, wouldn't it?
 16 THE WITNESS: Well, I'm guided by you.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right.
 18 Well, I think that would be the right thing to do,
 19 Mr Millett.
 20 MR MILLETT: Yes, I think so.
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: So we will have a short break now.
 22 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.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.

80

1 THE WITNESS: 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.

81

1 MR MILLETT: Of course.
 2 THE WITNESS: First of all, I'd like to thank the Inquiry
 3 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.
 13 The second thing I wish to say is: London has
 14 problems. London requires, in my opinion, a resilience
 15 centre, somewhere where, in the event of a tragedy or
 16 disaster, one wouldn't have to go to numerous places;
 17 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
 21 be done there: the removal of combustible materials and
 22 the 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

82

1 for Transport for London, that happened in numerous
 2 places, and we were more in control of that situation,
 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
 6 make sure, through your recommendations, and through
 7 listening to the bereaved, survivors and whoever else,
 8 that this doesn't happen ever again.
 9 And thank you for your time.
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.
 11 MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Choucair. Thank you.
 12 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Mr Choucair, before you leave,
 14 I would like to thank you very much, not just on my own
 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
 20 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
 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

83

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.
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And I think we could afford to
 11 shorten the lunch break a little bit and come back at
 12 2.05.
 13 MR MILLETT: Very good. Thank you very much.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: So, with apologies to everyone who
 15 is affected by that, I'll say we'll resume, please,
 16 today at 2.05.
 17 MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right? Thank you very much.
 19 (1.16 pm)
 20 (The short adjournment)
 21 (2.05 pm)
 22 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Keating.
 23 MR KEATING: Good afternoon, sir. Could we call
 24 Mr Al-Karad, please.
 25

84

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 Al-Karad
 25 to indicate whether he wants your assistance, and if he

1 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

1 can, so that the transcriber, who sits to your right, is
 2 able to hear and record what you say.
 3 A. Okay.
 4 Q. It also helps not to nod or shake your head, as
 5 understandable as it may be, but to say "yes" or "no" to
 6 some of the questions, please.
 7 A. Okay, thank you.
 8 Q. If you feel you need a break at any stage, do let us
 9 know and I'm sure we can accommodate that.
 10 A. Okay, thank you.
 11 Q. I just want to deal first of all with your statements.
 12 You have made two statements to the Inquiry. The
 13 first was dated 26 June 2018, and the second was dated
 14 18 February 2020. I'm just going to ask you to be
 15 turned to those documents for a moment.
 16 If we could look at {IWS00000821}, please. That's
 17 your first statement, we see, on 26 June 2018.
 18 If we could go to page 12, please. Mr Al-Karad,
 19 could you just confirm that that's your signature,
 20 please?
 21 A. Yes, I can confirm that's my signature.
 22 Q. Thank you.
 23 I'm going to ask you to be shown your second
 24 statement, please, which is {IWS00001541}. We can see
 25 that's your second statement, dated 18 February 2020.

1 If we could turn to page 25, please, in relation to
 2 that, again the same question: could you confirm that's
 3 your signature, please?
 4 A. I can confirm that.
 5 Q. Have you had the opportunity to read both of those
 6 witness statements recently?
 7 A. I've read them two weeks ago.
 8 Q. Okay.
 9 A. Yeah.
 10 Q. Well, if need be, I can refresh your memory as we go
 11 through it in relation to the statements.
 12 A. Okay.
 13 Q. The final question in relation to those statements is:
 14 can you confirm that the contents of those statements
 15 are true to the best of your knowledge?
 16 A. Yes, I can confirm that.
 17 Q. I want to briefly deal with some important background to
 18 assist everybody who is listening to understand your
 19 connection to Grenfell Tower. Okay?
 20 A. Okay.
 21 Q. At the time of the fire, you were living at flat 112 in
 22 Grenfell Tower on the 14th floor, isn't that correct?
 23 A. That's correct.
 24 Q. You had lived there since 2016.
 25 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.
6 Q. Is it also right that you went in Syria to the same
7 primary school together?
8 A. So this is not the same primary school. We played -- we
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,
12 before high street (sic), year 10, we went together same
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.
16 Q. Yes. Close connections between you, Omar and Mohammad.
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. You mention that you went to the same university as
19 Omar.
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. That's where you completed three years of a four-year
22 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
25 to cut short your studies and leave Syria for safety

89

1 reasons; is that correct?
2 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.
14 Q. You have previously given a commemoration to the Inquiry
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?
22 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 Q. Briefly, I'm just going to set the scene and then ask
4 you some questions, really, from a little bit later down
5 the chronology.
6 Is it right that at about 1.10 in the morning of
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.
14 Q. When you received that information, you rushed back
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

91

1 when I took the first picture, I can remember that.
2 Q. Yes.
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 Q. You have mentioned in your first statement the series of
8 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 --
14 Q. It was at 3.20 in the morning was the last time you
15 spoke to Mohammad.
16 A. I think so, yeah.
17 Q. Yes. You set those calls out in some detail in your
18 statement and, again, you spoke in moving terms about
19 your last call to Mohammad, which we've heard already
20 about.
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. Ten minutes after that last call you had with Mohammad,
23 you learned, when you were outside the tower, that Omar
24 was also outside; is that right?
25 A. That's correct. So just I've got a question.

92

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

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 A. 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 A. Yeah, I was fasting in that day and it was Ramadan -- it
 25 was, like, already Ramadan and, you know, like after you

94

1 fast, like, few days, your body start to be like,
 2 you know, tired, you feel tired, and I do long shift.
 3 So it was like -- you know, it was nightmare to stand
 4 the whole night until the morning.
 5 Q. Yes. In relation to that, I was just on the point where
 6 you had realised that Omar had come out of the tower.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Mohammad had not, and you have mentioned that in your
 9 statement, and you remained at the scene outside the
 10 tower until about 9 o'clock that morning, hoping for
 11 more news in relation to Mohammad; is that correct?
 12 A. That's correct. I was running from side to side of the
 13 tower to see if there's, you know, any news or anything
 14 about, you know, if they are out or not. So I went to
 15 the other side when I heard from my friend. He said
 16 like, Omar, he's out. He was like -- you know, his face
 17 was full of smoke, and he was crying, and, you know, was
 18 asking about Mohammad and where he is, and I asked him,
 19 "Where Mohammad, did you see him?", because I had a call
 20 with Mohammad, and he said to me, "I couldn't see Omar
 21 at all".
 22 Q. Yes.
 23 A. And he -- I just told him, "Just try to shout, maybe
 24 he's like somewhere, and it's dark inside".
 25 So after that, he went -- he start to call Mohammad,

95

1 and he was shouting like, "You can leave, you can try to
 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 A. 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 A. To be honest, no, because, you know, the thing is, we
 15 used to speak with the police, and, you know, when 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,

96

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.
 6 Q. We know that you visited five hospitals looking for
 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
 14 around. So I asked the ambulance, you know, like
 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".

97

1 Q. Okay.
 2 How did you feel going from those hospitals, from
 3 one to the other, and not getting any information
 4 regarding Mohammad?
 5 A. It was disappointing, you know, like — I was, like,
 6 very disappointed, because, you know, I don't have to
 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 — you 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
 14 light he just slept and he couldn't, you know, stay
 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.
 22 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
 25 morning of 14 June?

98

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
 4 list of names for people who left the building, so
 5 I went there. And I can't remember — I went somewhere
 6 else. I cannot remember the name of the centre. It was
 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.
 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,
 16 you know, they were saying, "You have to go to
 17 Portobello to check their names".
 18 Q. Okay.
 19 When you were at the Rugby Portobello Club, do you
 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. Okay.
 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.
 12 Were you aware of any other sources of information,
 13 a central source of information, such as a friends and
 14 family assistance centre?
 15 A. I would like to ...
 16 MR KEATING: Yes, do, please. Would you like me to say it
 17 again?
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, I suggest counsel repeats the
 19 question and then you can translate.
 20 THE INTERPRETER: Okay, sir. I got it, but yes, by all
 21 means.
 22 MR KEATING: I was going to say, were you aware of any other
 23 source of information, a central source of information,
 24 such as a friends and family assistance centre?
 25 (Pause for interpretation)

100

1 A. 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 A. 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 A. -- 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

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 A. 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 A. 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 A. Yeah, it was shocking --
16 Q. Yes.
17 A. -- to see that, honestly.
18 Q. And you recognised the building where the picture was
19 probably taken?
20 A. 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.

102

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 A. 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 A. That's okay.
11 Q. So we know that on that night you were at Mohammad and
12 Omar's cousin's flat.
13 A. 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 A. 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 A. So after I slept like a few hours, if you may let me
23 continue that --
24 Q. Of course.
25 A. -- 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.

104

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
 3 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
 5 like -- you know, I've never been in this situation
 6 before. It's like somebody, his brother and our --
 7 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 car, and they give us a lift to Westway Centre, and they
 14 said -- they took us to two tables, they were in front,
 15 and they said, "They can provide you help".
 16 Q. The police officers took you to the two tables?
 17 A. Yeah. I can remember that, yeah. They left us there
 18 and they said, "They can help you, so they can,
 19 you know, support you after that".
 20 Q. Sure.
 21 A. Yeah.
 22 Q. Pausing there for a moment, and really continuing from
 23 what you were just saying, you've mentioned in your
 24 statement that you were pretty much -- you had nothing
 25 else, you had nothing except what you were wearing that

105

1 morning when you went to the Westway; is that right?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. You mentioned two people at a table; was this inside the
 4 Westway 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,
 14 you know, Westway Centre from inside, if you need
 15 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 mattresses on the tennis court, and I saw one person who

106

1 was sleeping there, and a lot of mattresses, sheets and
 2 stuff like that, and there was, like, one corner there's
 3 a lot of clothes.
 4 Q. Yes.
 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 -- 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 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 You said it wasn't organised and people weren't

107

1 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
 12 you haven't lost anyone, you cannot bring your family".
 13 I said, "I lost, you know, my close friend, he's like my
 14 brother, what do you mean I haven't lost anyone".
 15 Q. You mention that in your statement, that you believe it
 16 was the Red Cross you spoke to, because your family was
 17 in Holland and you were hoping to get some support for
 18 them to come over because of the bereavement.
 19 A. Because I lost all my documentations --
 20 Q. Yes.
 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
 25 lost everything.

108

1 A. Yeah, I lost all my documentation, everything.
 2 Q. You mentioned that you received a call back from RBKC in
 3 relation to --
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. -- the accommodation which was booked for you. About
 6 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 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?
 12 A. No. They said, "You have to go there and stay there",
 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".
 16 Q. And how did you get to the hotel?
 17 A. We are lucky -- you know, we are lucky, there was a lady
 18 from Syria, I think, she gave us a ride, me and Omar.
 19 So she was, like, going round offering some help. She
 20 had a car. She dropped us off there and we went there.
 21 Q. Okay.
 22 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.

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.
 6 Q. And in terms of other areas -- forgive me.
 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.
 9 Q. So you have described quite a compact room.
 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?
 14 Q. Lobby, that's correct.
 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. I understand.
 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?

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
 6 from people, so I was like lost, I was trying to go and
 7 come back to that area.
 8 Q. Yes.
 9 A. So no information provided about Mohammad or anything
 10 else.
 11 Q. 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
 25 staying at the Holiday Inn, I did not know anyone else

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 A. So the next day, after Omar left the hospital, Omar
 5 moved to Aasem's flat, his cousin.
 6 Q. Yes.
 7 A. 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 A. 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 A. 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 A. 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.

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
 6 food there, because you have to buy food from outside,
 7 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?
 11 A. Yeah, that's correct. I found one restaurant, wasn't
 12 that great and I did not like the food, and my appetite
 13 was not that good, so ...
 14 Q. Of course. And initially you had to do your laundry at
 15 your friend's house because you weren't aware you could
 16 have done it at the hotel; is that right?
 17 A. That's correct. So I know my friend Amar, he offered me
 18 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
 21 that first couple of weeks, did anybody official come to
 22 see you to give you any information or support?
 23 A. I remember Red Cross, they came to me and they asked me
 24 a few questions, how you feel and things like that, they
 25 grabbed information and they went back, yeah.

1 Q. Can you recall when that was?
 2 A. I cannot remember, to be honest. So they came to my
 3 room and I might remember like a lady and a man.
 4 Q. Sure.
 5 A. Yeah.
 6 Q. Anybody from the council, RBKC?
 7 A. No, but I remember, like, somebody from housing from
 8 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 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

1 that correct?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And you described the Westway on 15 June; how was it on
 4 those subsequent days you attended the Westway?
 5 A. I think I was, you know, going there, but there's no
 6 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
 20 about what assistance, financial or otherwise, was
 21 available for survivors of the fire. I had to find out
 22 everything on my own. RBKC should have made this
 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

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.
 20 Q. We can deal with that now, if you like. So that was one
 21 of my headings, which is psychological support. You
 22 have anticipated a question I was going to ask you,
 23 which was in relation to one of those occasions where
 24 you spoke to someone at the Westway from the NHS seeking
 25 support, and you asked for them to help, and they said

1 they would call you back, and your evidence was you
 2 received no call back.
 3 A. No call back.
 4 Q. Can you recall approximately when that was? Was that in
 5 the first week or two or —
 6 A. First week, definitely.
 7 Q. First week.
 8 A. 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 A. 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 talking about? I'm getting crazy or what?
 2 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 Q. Would this be a fair summary: that the initial support
 6 you had in relation to psychological support was poor?
 7 A. Yeah. Definitely poor.
 8 Q. Did that improve in the coming weeks and months?
 9 A. 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 A. — 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 A. 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
 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,

118

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 A. 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 £500 of money from RBKC, but they haven't provide any
 14 time we could get more money.
 15 Q. Sure.
 16 A. 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 A. 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.

119

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.
 23 (Pause)
 24 Can I go back for the previous paragraph?
 25 Q. Yes, please do.

120

1 A. I read something and ...
 2 Q. Yes. Is this paragraph 89 you want to have a look at or
 3 paragraph 90?
 4 A. 89.
 5 Q. Yes.
 6 (Pause)
 7 A. And the one after, please.
 8 (Pause)
 9 So definitely I have a key worker, and she came to
 10 my -- she came to the hotel, but she did not offer any
 11 financial support, and I could remember just she had
 12 helped me to complete my travel document, because
 13 I wanted to visit my family because they haven't offered
 14 any visa for them.
 15 Q. Yes.
 16 A. And in that time I asked her about moving to Omar's
 17 hotel, and she did not help with that.
 18 Q. No.
 19 Perhaps paragraph 90 {IWS00001541/18} sets out the
 20 impact it had on you, the financial difficulties . You
 21 say:
 22 "The difficulties I had in accessing financial
 23 support really added to the stress that I was under at
 24 this time ... I needed money to live on, but it was not
 25 easy to get help. I had to push to get support with

121

1 things."
 2 A. So if I ask about something, like, in general, the first
 3 few months, it was like you need to fight for it. You
 4 have to ask once, twice, maybe 20 times even. You have
 5 to, you know, be like -- you know, ask them with,
 6 like -- I don't know, you have to push a lot to get what
 7 you ask, and it was, like, very hard, you know, they
 8 added stress.
 9 You know, I say the tragedy was equal with the
 10 stress they caused us, to be honest. It was like equal.
 11 It was maybe more. They caused a lot of stress and
 12 I was like living by myself and, you know, I was like
 13 I don't know where to go, you know --
 14 Q. Yes.
 15 A. -- in that time.
 16 Q. You mentioned you were isolated in the hotel and the
 17 difficulties you were having.
 18 If we could go back to paragraph 75 in that
 19 statement {IWS00000821/15}, please.
 20 Is that okay, Mr Al-Karad?
 21 A. Yes, that's okay.
 22 Q. Excellent.
 23 I'm going to read this in its entirety, if that's
 24 okay, because it deals with one specific matter and then
 25 the general impact:

122

1 "I remember I spoke to the Red Cross on one
 2 occasion, as they said they had money from donations to
 3 give out. I asked them about this, and they said I was
 4 not entitled to any money as I was not bereaved.
 5 I became very stressed about this. I had no money at
 6 the time as I had stopped work since the fire because
 7 I was finding it hard to cope, and I was completely
 8 ignorant as to what to do about money. I had lost
 9 everything and couldn't work. This added to the stress
 10 I was under after seeing the fire, the death of my
 11 friend and now living on my own in an unfamiliar part of
 12 London."
 13 We know from the earlier part of your statement this
 14 is an occasion when you were in the Westway, and you
 15 say:
 16 "Then a lady came and introduced herself as being
 17 from an Islamic Care Organisation. She spoke Arabic.
 18 She asked me what was the problem and brought me over to
 19 her desk. She told me they had money from donations as
 20 well. I think she offered me a donation of £500."
 21 Is that correct?
 22 A. That's correct, and, you know, that's one of the things
 23 that I remember, like, I was -- you know, I start to cry
 24 in that moment, and I was very angry. So it was, like,
 25 not supported at all. It was like, where to go if

123

1 I don't have like papers? Nobody contacted us from,
 2 you know, RBKC or -- so they provided £500, but how long
 3 you can, you know, use them for? It's not -- you have
 4 to travel, you have to eat, you have to -- you know, at
 5 least I want to wear clothes. I have to buy clothes,
 6 you know. It's not enough.
 7 It's like -- you know, they were saying, "You are
 8 not -- you haven't lost anyone so it's -- we cannot
 9 provide you". I said to them, "It's not fair, you know,
 10 at least like you could help people with that at the
 11 beginning, you don't have to give them a lot of money,
 12 just support them or offer vouchers or anything", like
 13 they could support us.
 14 Q. In relation to money you directly received from RBKC,
 15 you did receive some money initially; is that correct?
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.
 17 Q. I think you have touched upon it already in your
 18 evidence that you received £500.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. That was probably in the first week or two; is that
 21 right?
 22 A. The first week, yeah.
 23 Q. Then you went back the following week to the Westway
 24 Centre, you set out in your statement, and you asked
 25 for -- that you'd run out of money and you needed

124

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 I remember something, but I'm not sure. It was you
 9 registered for that, was like the Department of Work and
 10 Pensions.
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 A. But I'm not sure how did we apply for that.
 13 Q. I'll touch upon that now in a moment, which I hope will
 14 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
 20 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.

125

1 Q. And I think you mentioned then in your statement that
 2 you were directed to the Post Office, and that's where
 3 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.
 7 Q. We're coming close to the end now. I'm just going to
 8 deal with another topic heading, which is key workers,
 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
 18 {IWS00001541/20}. You say this:
 19 "Aside from accommodation, I was mostly stressed out
 20 about key workers. I had several key workers, maybe
 21 four or five. They kept leaving, especially at the
 22 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 I also had to keep putting pressure on my key workers

126

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
 6 maybe for a few weeks, and then moved, and I had another
 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 you know, I was struggling to do that, and when I ask
 13 about something, about helping with the flat, choosing
 14 the flat, anything like that, so they were just -- you
 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".
 22 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 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.
 20 Q. At paragraph 108, if we could go back, please, this is
 21 what you express, which perhaps flows from what you said
 22 a few moments ago, about what the key worker said to
 23 you:
 24 "It seemed to me that RBKC did not want to pay money
 25 out. Their approached seemed to be that if residents

128

1 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 else
 8 I had not been told."

9 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 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 call them, not they're supposed to call me, maybe
 25 introduce myself.

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 A. 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 A. 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

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
 6 impact of how you were treated in the aftermath of the
 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
 22 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,

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.

133

1 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.
 2 MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, thank you for the time. There's
 3 no further questions, thank you.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, there you are.
 5 MR KEATING: That concludes the evidence for Mr Al—Karad.
 6 So thank you very much for attending today.
 7 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.
 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, no more questions, so it just
 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.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I also should say thank you very
 21 much to Mr Interpreter.
 22 THE INTERPRETER: My pleasure, sir.
 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.

134

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.

135

1 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
 2 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 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.
 7 A. Thank you.
 8 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
 13 surroundings, is if I could invite you to keep your
 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 Q. — but rather we would invite you to either say "yes" or
 21 "no" where appropriate.
 22 A. All right.
 23 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.

136

1 A. 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 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Excellent.
 8 Just a few formal matters dealing with your
 9 statements first of all.
 10 A. 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 A. 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
 22 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?

137

1 A. 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 A. 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 A. 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 A. 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 A. 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 A. Yeah.
 24 Q. Thank you.
 25 I'm just going to turn to background, please.

138

1 Important background, Mr Rasoul, is that you were
 2 resident at flat 25 of Grenfell Tower ---
 3 A. Yes.
 4 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.
 9 Q. You had lived in Grenfell Tower for the whole of your
 10 life.
 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.
 16 Q. So real close connections to your home ---
 17 A. Yeah.
 18 Q. --- from when you were born.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. And, as a result, you have longstanding friendships with
 21 a number of families within Grenfell Tower.
 22 A. That's correct, yes.
 23 Q. And you have set those out with some care in your
 24 statement, which we've read.
 25 A. Yes.

139

1 Q. In the early hours of 14 June, you were asleep in your
 2 home when the fire started, or you were in your home
 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
 8 you evacuated, you self-evacuated from the flats,
 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 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.
 25 Q. Who had a number of health issues; is that correct?

140

1 A. Yes.
 2 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.
 6 A. They went first. I had to get up and get my father
 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.
 16 A. Yeah.
 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.
 22 A. Yeah.
 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
 25 not wish -- do you want to describe the scene, how it

141

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
 22 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 --

142

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.
 6 Q. Yes.
 7 A. Yeah.
 8 Q. You mention in your statement that it was probably
 9 around 6 o'clock -- so you were outside the tower for
 10 some time --
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. -- and around 6 o'clock you had dropped your father off
 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.
 17 A. Yes. I mean, before that, in the lead-up to that
 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
 22 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

143

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 A. 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 I did
 24 not know where to start. Someone from the community
 25 directed us to the Rugby Portobello Club."

144

1 That's where you headed, and you think that must
 2 have been around 6.30 am.
 3 A. Yeah.
 4 Q. How would you describe the Rugby Portobello Club when
 5 you arrived?
 6 A. It was --- there were --- I mean, if I recall correctly,
 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

1 Centre ..."
 2 Which is relatively close by, and you headed there;
 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
 6 correctly. We went there. There was one lady,
 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?

1 A. No, I think at that point --- leading up to that, I mean,
 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
 6 correct, it just, you know --- it put everything --- it
 7 made everything ... I don't know, I don't know to word
 8 it. Just made their attitude of --- and culture of
 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?
 22 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 Elgwhary's mother, Eslah Elgwhary, and his sister,
 25 Mariem Elgwhary; my wife's best friend and my friend's

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 A. 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 ... 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 A. 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 I'm -- if
 9 I may add --
 10 Q. Of course.
 11 A. -- 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 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,

149

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 A. 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 A. 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

150

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 A. Yeah.

151

1 Q. And you waited around there for some time, a couple of
 2 hours --
 3 A. 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 A. 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

152

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 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 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.
 18 Q. Could I ask you a little bit about one aspect at the
 19 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
 6 realise that we were kind of essentially homeless.
 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.
 20 But, again, no, like, physical presence on behalf of
 21 the TMO or the council. No one there, you know, saying,
 22 "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

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.
 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 night and then we'll make better arrangements the next

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 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 A. 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
 22 Earls Court Premier Inn.
 23 A. Yeah.
 24 Q. And you were told that there was a room with disability
 25 access.

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And you mention in your statement that at this hotel
 3 there were two rooms allocated; one was on the
 4 2nd floor, and the second room was on the 4th floor.
 5 A. Okay, a slight correction there.
 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
 16 father, he had -- along with his vascular dementia, he
 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,
 22 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.

157

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

158

1 sister from Egypt to come and help look after him, help
 2 us look after him, because he needed round-the-clock
 3 attention.
 4 Q. You have set out with care the real difficult
 5 circumstances you and your family were experiencing, and
 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 A. 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 Q. In terms of your religious needs, was there Halal food
 25 which was available at the hotel?

159

1 A. 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 A. 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

160

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.
 6 And what added insult to injury as well is that the
 7 people who were major contributors to the problem in
 8 RBKC and the TMO before the fire were still in charge
 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
 25 capture those areas you want to tell the panel about.

161

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?
 6 A. Not that I recall . I think it was much later. Yeah,
 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
 14 context. The first -- after the first day and so, and
 15 seeing that we've got no hope in getting assistance from
 16 our local authorities or central government at the time,
 17 we started to group together. I was going around,
 18 taking people's numbers and their flat numbers from my,
 19 you know, family of neighbours, and we arranged to meet
 20 up and to co-ordinate ourselves, and we formed
 21 a WhatsApp group, and via that, we were passing kind of
 22 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

162

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
 5 journalists and different types of officials , lawyers
 6 and stuff, and we just didn't know really who to trust.
 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,

163

1 if I'm not mistaken, if I recollect properly, but much,
 2 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
 5 were dealing with from RBKC or the TMO. It was always
 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,
 14 can we help", and it's just -- it was always a case when
 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 Q. So in those first few weeks you were dependent on your
 20 own savings and cash --
 21 A. Yeah.
 22 Q. -- and the generosity of friends --
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. -- and other volunteer organisations; is that correct?
 25 A. Yes, yes, the amazing -- and I really have to -- amazing

164

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
 4 I'll never forget for the rest of my life. To me, that
 5 represented what, you know, humanity should strive for,
 6 that with our differences -- because we had people from
 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 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
 20 that's something -- in that moment, you had something
 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.
 25 People who we -- you know, who were meant to be in

1 charge of our affairs and serving us were nowhere to be
 2 seen. And I think it showed the true colours of -- as
 3 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
 10 authorities, who were meant to be in charge of our
 11 affairs, which wasn't a change from our previous
 12 interaction with them.
 13 Q. I want to ask you about one scheme which was designed to
 14 give you and those affected some support, which is the
 15 key workers.
 16 A. Yeah.
 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,
 23 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

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
 11 organisation, the TMO and -- or RBKC, where you can
 12 preserve the data more efficiently, rather than us have
 13 to kind of keep reliving what we'd been through and
 14 giving the same information, where we'd come from, what
 15 we're experiencing, and so on and so on. And it's
 16 just -- 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
 19 key workers in the space of a month, including one just
 20 for a weekend.
 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

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,
 22 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 Q. You mentioned Hannah was useful as a key worker and

1 positive .
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Generally, when you were asking one of your key workers
 4 for help, what sort of response would you get?
 5 A. So with her she was — I mean, just her specifically,
 6 she was very empathetic. It seemed that she knew how to
 7 deal with us a bit better. Again, because of her
 8 background, she'd dealt with other survivors, who taught
 9 her how to deal appropriately with people dealing with
 10 trauma and shock and grief and so on and loss of loved
 11 ones. But generally the other ones we dealt with,
 12 you know, someone coming to meet us, they'd been drafted
 13 in from another borough or another council over the
 14 weekend, would come in and tell us, "Okay, we're here,
 15 we're just with you for the day and tomorrow, you know,
 16 someone else is going to be with you".
 17 Again, just all we wanted throughout the whole
 18 ordeal was just to be treated by people, and it just
 19 seemed like when you were changing these sources, what
 20 were meant to be representing kind of representations of
 21 help from the local authority, and you just keep
 22 changing them and not listening to our needs and not
 23 listening to our concerns, and we're saying, you know,
 24 "Just keep us with one key worker, it's more humane,
 25 they can relate to us more", but each time we had to

169

1 change them, we had to go through — relive the night,
 2 the trauma and explain our needs and explain our
 3 situation, and it was just like, you know, "You're
 4 hurting us again and again and again, why are you doing
 5 this to us?"
 6 Q. If you're finished in relation to that, I'm going to
 7 move on to another discrete area —
 8 A. Sure.
 9 Q. — which touches upon your father, who we've mentioned
 10 a few times now, and you shared the particular
 11 challenges and difficulties he had, and you faced in the
 12 aftermath.
 13 A. Yeah.
 14 Q. You say at paragraph 142 of your second statement
 15 {IWS00001768/28} that:
 16 "We had escaped a burning building and no one
 17 offered us even a basic check-up."
 18 So really from that initial stage you felt
 19 unsupported in relation to the needs of your father; is
 20 that correct?
 21 A. No. Yes.
 22 Q. Is it right in the coming week or two and thereafter you
 23 received little support, or any support, from the TMO or
 24 RBKC in relation to your father's needs?
 25 A. No. No one came out. No kind of medical specialist

170

1 came to check us in that immediate week, or maybe for
 2 a while after that as well. No one came to assess my
 3 father. No one came to assess my daughter. She was
 4 only a baby at the time, a year and a half old, but she
 5 had sickle blood disease. No one had come, you know, to
 6 check on the children and what they'd been through, or
 7 us. It came much, much later. But no one came for the
 8 physical medical checks at all, which for me was just —
 9 again, it's just kind of leaving us on our own two feet.
 10 I chased up the pharmacy and got his medication. He
 11 got a replacement wheelchair months later, which meant
 12 that he just kind of basically had to stay in his room,
 13 with supervision — with our supervision — under our
 14 supervision.
 15 Q. Turn to paragraph 168, please, of your second statement
 16 {IWS00001768/32}.
 17 A. Sure.
 18 Q. And you say this:
 19 "The specific needs of my family were not met in the
 20 aftermath of the fire. With two young children and an
 21 elderly father with disabilities, my wife and I should
 22 have received more support from RBKC. My children and
 23 my father's needs should have been assessed more
 24 thoroughly and support that worked for our family should
 25 have been put in place. Our lives had been turned

171

1 upside down. We were grieving and emotionally
 2 stretched. The least that RBKC could have done was make
 3 sure that we did not have to worry about the
 4 practicalities of our living situation following the
 5 fire."
 6 Is that correct?
 7 A. Yes. If I may add —
 8 Q. Of course.
 9 A. Elaborate.
 10 Just, I mean, with everything that we were dealing
 11 with, we still had to fight for the accommodation which
 12 we eventually got. We still had to enquire and apply
 13 and go via all the kind of normal avenues that someone
 14 who hasn't been through that would have to go to find
 15 out what our rights were, what was being offered to us,
 16 how this is going to play out in the future, what's
 17 going to happen with our accommodation. And, again, it
 18 was just — all of this was — it was a very cruel,
 19 drawn-out, insensitive process, where it just seemed we
 20 were like guinea pigs of a trial and error system, that
 21 RBKC and central government were learning from us and
 22 learning from our experiences how to deal with this
 23 group — how to deal with a traumatised group of people
 24 in such a situation.
 25 But it was just — it was — I mean, for me,

172

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
 6 neighbours, my family of neighbours, were in the same
 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

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
 22 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

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
 6 practical advice, practical help, from people we
 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 --

1 other survivors, bereaved -- that -- you know, people
 2 we're having meetings with and councillors and so on,
 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
 22 can't relate to them, they can't -- you know, and
 23 I think this gap needs to be bridged in the future,
 24 where people who are in government, who are in local
 25 government, they need to know the problems of the people

1 that are their constituents for there to be any kind of
 2 beneficial change in the future. If that gap is not
 3 bridged, then it's just going to be the same thing.
 4 MR KEATING: Mr Rasoul, thank you so much --
 5 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 6 MR KEATING: -- for your evidence today.
 7 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 8 MR KEATING: They're all the questions I wish to ask you at
 9 this stage, but our normal process is to invite a brief
 10 pause -- perhaps for five minutes, Mr Chairman, if we
 11 can -- just to see if there are any further questions
 12 from those who are watching remotely or within the room.
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Yes. Right, thank you very much.
 14 Well, Mr Rasoul, you may know this, but at this
 15 point we have to have a short break so that people who
 16 are following, partly from this room and partly from
 17 elsewhere, can suggest further questions.
 18 THE WITNESS: All right.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: I think I'm going to say
 20 five minutes, but if you need more, you can ask the
 21 usher to come and tell us and we'll accommodate you.
 22 MR KEATING: Yes, we will do that.
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: We'll break for five minutes. We'll
 24 come back at 4.40, and then we'll see if there are any
 25 more questions at that point. All right?

177

1 THE WITNESS: Okay, thank you.
 2 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go
 3 with the usher, then, please.
 4 (Pause)
 5 Thank you, Mr Keating, 4.40, unless you need more
 6 time.
 7 MR KEATING: Yes. Thank you.
 8 (4.36 pm)
 9 (A short break)
 10 (4.40 pm)
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: All right, Mr Rasoul. Well, we'll
 12 see if there are any more questions.
 13 Mr Keating?
 14 MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, thank you so much for the time.
 15 There's no further questions, and that concludes the
 16 evidence in relation to this witness.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Thank you very much indeed.
 18 Well, no more questions, Mr Rasoul, but it's right
 19 that I should thank you very much on behalf of the panel
 20 for coming to describe your experiences, if I may say
 21 so, most eloquently.
 22 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: I think we were all very affected by
 24 what you told us, and it's shone quite a powerful light
 25 on your experiences and, no doubt, the experiences of

178

1 many other people. So we're very grateful to you for
 2 coming to give your evidence, and now you're free to go.
 3 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Thank you very much.
 5 THE WITNESS: Thank you for listening. Thank you.
 6 (The witness withdrew)
 7 MR KEATING: Mr Chairman, can I thank you for sitting late.
 8 Thank you, and sorry we have strayed into your --
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Well, thanks are really due not just
 10 to us, but more to the others who keep the show on the
 11 road, so to speak, the stenographer and the ushers and
 12 all the other people who support our work, so we thank
 13 them very much as well.
 14 So that's it for today. Tomorrow we have more
 15 witnesses.
 16 MR KEATING: That's correct, yes.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: We shall therefore resume at
 18 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, please.
 19 MR KEATING: Thank you.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: 10 o'clock tomorrow. Thank you.
 21 (4.45 pm)
 22 (The hearing adjourned until 10 am
 23 on Thursday, 14 April 2022)
 24
 25

179

1 INDEX

2 MR HISAM CHOUCAIR (sworn)1

3 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE2

4 INQUIRY

5 MR MAHMOUD AL--KARAD (called) 84

6 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY86

7 MR MOHAMMED RASOUL (sworn)135

8 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY135

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

180

181

A								
a3 (1) 63:10	126:15 129:17 130:11	152:19	arrange (1) 173:2	163:23	behind (5) 28:4 37:12 75:10	bramley (8) 8:11 10:19		
a4 (4) 16:23 17:18 18:13 25:1	142:7 144:11 147:13,17 149:12,15 158:24 159:1,2,23 161:9 162:14 163:13 166:21,24,24 171:2 175:11,20	amputated (1) 149:14 angina (1) 157:17 angles (2) 10:13 46:12 angry (5) 46:6 75:23,24 96:5 123:24	arranged (4) 85:3 118:13 156:20 162:19 arrangements (4) 1:6 112:21 145:25 156:9 arrest (1) 55:24 arrived (13) 5:25 7:10,17 17:23 18:6 25:12 33:13 35:22 91:24 109:22,24 145:5 149:17 ashamed (1) 35:4 ashley (1) 73:4 ask (3) 30:10 34:6 126:19 ask (49) 2:21 4:17 24:8,18 25:10,21 27:12 31:6 43:15 50:22 63:22 79:17 80:8,23 81:9 87:14,23 91:3 104:2 112:18 115:7,10 116:22 117:17 122:2,4,5,7 127:12,17,24 128:3 129:11,12,13 130:1,1 131:15 132:14,23 133:4 135:9 136:23,24 137:21 153:18 166:13 177:8,20 asked (39) 9:4 14:24 15:7 21:17 36:11 37:6,15,16 43:15 45:15 48:23 50:6 51:5,6 57:22 58:24,24 59:4,10 60:12,14 73:15 95:18 96:18 97:14 100:7 106:12 108:6,9 112:14 113:23 116:25 119:9 121:16 123:3,18 124:24 130:17 173:9 asking (10) 19:7 22:3 27:9 48:17 94:6 95:18 97:13 99:15 129:15 169:3 asleep (2) 101:14 140:1 aspect (1) 153:18 assess (2) 171:2,3 assessed (1) 171:23 assist (13) 34:17 85:4 86:16,19 88:18 93:4 99:14 111:11 125:14 136:9 157:6 161:24 166:17 assistance (18) 85:25 86:20 96:12,21 100:14,24 115:20 120:6,19 127:18 129:1 156:14 161:22 162:15 163:2,9,19,24 assume (1) 79:23 assurance (1) 49:4 atrocity (1) 79:2 attempt (2) 52:14 158:13 attempted (2) 47:5,10 attempting (1) 57:13 attendance (1) 136:8 attended (4) 63:12 100:2 115:4 162:4 attending (5) 86:15 120:14 134:6 136:4 175:20 attention (4) 16:8 159:3 162:8 176:5 attitude (1) 147:8 aunt (1) 112:8 authorised (2) 104:5,7 authorities (9) 146:16 152:25 153:4,13 162:16 165:23 166:10 174:7 175:8 authority (10) 9:17 20:8 49:5 68:7,8 69:10,14 96:13 169:21 175:19 automated (2) 41:23 47:11 available (17) 41:24 42:4 78:8 108:3 115:21,23,25 120:11 128:15 156:16 159:13,19,25 163:24 164:3,13,13 avenue (1) 20:24 avenues (1) 172:13 avoid (1) 86:6 awake (2) 98:15 140:5 aware (18) 11:4 46:25 47:3 51:23 69:19 78:4,7,10 100:12,22 112:21,24 113:1,7,15 116:2 159:13	away (12) 51:11 105:11 111:1,17 139:12 141:17,19 142:13 146:12,21 150:12 155:25 156:9 awful (2) 134:11 173:12	B	b (2) 25:6 28:11 baba (1) 158:17 baby (3) 154:11 156:3 171:4 back (94) 9:8 16:12 20:20 21:8 22:20 28:2,11,16 30:4,6,8 32:7,25 37:19,20 38:17 40:15,21,22 42:10 45:4 53:4 54:17 56:12,13 57:10,12 58:5,8,9 60:1 62:9,18,19 63:4 65:6 67:10 68:19,25 76:6,8,13,13 78:21 79:20 80:11,22 84:11 91:14,19,24,25,25 93:12 96:23 101:11 102:6 103:25 104:20 109:2,6 110:19 111:2,7 113:25 114:25 116:18 117:1,2,3,14,16 119:4 120:24 122:18 124:23 128:20 142:14 143:22,25 148:21 149:4 152:5,11,11,11,11,18 158:25 160:13 161:19 167:25 168:9 174:24 177:24 background (9) 4:18,18 74:16 79:5 88:17 138:25 139:1 166:17 169:8 backwards (1) 142:6 bad (2) 66:2 105:2 badge (1) 71:20 bags (1) 160:12 bag (18) 12:17,19,21 13:16,20,20,24 14:19 15:5 16:19,23 17:1,16 22:21 23:3 32:14 41:12 barrier (1) 165:19 barriers (2) 165:16,17 based (2) 39:12,13 basement (3) 50:20 51:14 152:22 basic (3) 116:1 161:21 170:17 basically (4) 8:18 54:12 78:17 171:12 basin (3) 5:2,8 7:5 bathroom (1) 110:7 battery (2) 19:10 23:12 bear (1) 94:20 bearing (2) 28:16 42:22 beautiful (2) 148:1 174:14 beauty (1) 153:5 became (10) 8:9 33:15 38:16 51:24 123:5 145:12,13 163:23 168:2 175:4 become (2) 46:25 113:1 bed (5) 156:2,4,5,6 bedroom (1) 131:13 beds (3) 93:17 110:4,8 before (33) 1:10 2:19 23:8 44:14,15 57:8,16,16 60:18 66:13 67:8,11,14 69:13 83:13 89:12 93:20 102:20 105:6 111:19 127:1 135:5 137:25 139:12 142:17 143:17 145:24 147:2 159:16,18 161:8 165:11 175:11 begging (1) 94:7 begin (1) 78:24 beginning (10) 58:21 112:25 124:11 126:22 127:11 129:10 159:15,15 163:3 168:20 beginnings (1) 12:2 behalf (7) 20:8 38:10 83:15,15 90:24 154:20 178:19	believe (28) 15:3 16:13 21:25 23:7 26:2 32:17 36:1 42:9 45:2,4 46:12 47:19 51:9 54:4 63:5 72:25 73:4 79:6 99:22 106:10 108:15 111:14 125:17 130:14,14 144:9 146:7 155:23 believed (4) 30:6 41:16 49:15 100:8 believing (1) 131:2 below (1) 19:5 beneficial (1) 177:2 benefit (1) 43:12 benefits (1) 70:17 bereaved (8) 9:1 13:8 51:17 69:7 83:7 123:4 161:1 176:1 bereavement (1) 108:18 beside (2) 52:12 53:14 besides (2) 24:23 51:21 best (11) 4:15 41:1,5 86:25 88:15 138:14,22 147:25 151:20 156:17 168:7 better (3) 155:25 169:7 174:9 between (19) 13:2 18:5,5,9 22:22,23 25:19 64:22 65:3 66:25 67:3 89:16 98:9 107:9 110:4 125:23 162:12 168:19 176:19 beyond (2) 41:4 76:2 bid (2) 131:11 132:3 bidding (1) 131:9 big (3) 13:2 26:18 106:24 bigger (1) 157:14 birth (5) 10:25 15:21 37:18 47:24 57:24 biscuits (2) 19:23 32:1 bit (13) 37:19 56:11 64:8 66:2 84:11 90:8 91:4 96:3 110:7 136:6 148:16 153:18 169:7 black (2) 14:13 160:12 blaming (1) 69:25 blank (1) 17:21 blanket (3) 14:10,16 26:16 blankets (1) 152:23 bless (1) 160:19 blessed (1) 149:5 blessing (1) 158:10 blood (2) 154:11 171:5 blow (1) 152:10 blown (1) 150:12 blue (1) 71:22 board (2) 117:23 146:7 boards (1) 77:10 boat (2) 173:5,7 body (3) 95:1 103:4,5 bold (1) 71:6 bombs (1) 82:25 book (5) 16:4 63:10,11,15,16 booked (3) 109:5,10 155:4 born (3) 119:2 139:11,18 borough (4) 58:14,16 63:25 169:13 both (7) 4:9 61:19 85:20 88:5 103:20 138:13 157:18 bother (1) 24:10 bottles (2) 23:16 144:7 bottom (5) 3:25 17:5 41:12 71:11 142:12 bought (1) 66:23 box (1) 80:3 brain (1) 117:25	breast (1) 116:1 break (31) 2:17,19,20 43:5,6,9,13 44:1,15 66:14 79:18,19,20,21 80:4,10,21 81:13 84:4,11 87:8 132:20,25 133:1,21 135:4,14 137:3 177:15,23 178:9 breakfast (4) 159:17 160:3,4,7 breaking (3) 66:12 67:14 151:4 breath (1) 175:4 brick (2) 39:6 142:21 bridge (2) 32:8 168:18 bridged (2) 176:23 177:3 brief (2) 93:2 177:9 briefly (3) 88:17 91:3 140:9 brigade (10) 10:14 15:13,16 16:2,5 22:3 49:11,13,14,23 71:18 142:25 bring (9) 108:9,12 111:11 115:14 126:17 127:11 131:12,18 144:17 brings (1) 69:2 bringing (1) 166:3 british (4) 76:18 153:1 165:1 175:12 broke (4) 66:13,22 67:11 150:2 broken (2) 152:13,15 brompton (1) 55:13 brother (28) 6:19 23:23 32:7,16,23 33:25 36:25 37:21,23 45:8 51:16 66:15,22 71:10,17 72:15 73:7 74:11,15 75:22 76:9 90:20 105:6,7,10 108:14 149:12 176:19 brothers (3) 45:6 47:22 146:11 brought (12) 38:21 42:18 54:17 76:15 77:21 123:18 144:6,7 147:10 153:6 165:9,10 bubbling (1) 176:15 build (1) 16:11 building (35) 15:2 17:10 19:25 24:16,24 27:3,5 29:9 30:20 31:20 36:3 39:10 62:19 63:1,4,5,6,17,17 73:20 82:17 94:11 96:2 98:7 99:4 102:1,2,6,6,18,22,24 104:1 142:12 170:16 bumping (1) 21:13 bunch (1) 18:15 burden (1) 34:17 bureau (23) 41:11 46:24 47:4 49:17,17,24 56:9,10,13 57:8 58:25 59:12,14,23,24 60:13 61:6,20,23 62:4 64:18 75:6 77:16 burning (1) 170:16 burst (1) 27:5 burton (1) 14:6 bus (1) 71:2 bush (2) 20:20,24 business (1) 70:24 busy (3) 15:17 24:9 37:4 buy (2) 113:6 124:5
						C		
						cab (1) 160:13 cafeteria (6) 50:5,7,21 51:4,18 53:8 call (49) 1:10,21 7:4 19:10 21:23,24 23:10 41:20,24 42:2,3,4,4 47:12,12 59:3,5 61:22 72:25 73:1 77:6 84:23 89:11 92:19,22 95:19,25 97:12 98:10 104:22 106:18,19 107:12		

6 (7) 17:13 101:12 137:13
138:4 143:9 12:18
62 (2) 111:12,15
630 (2) 18:5 145:2

7

7 (1) 101:12
700 (1) 22:23
730 (3) 18:7 25:19 35:19
75 (1) 122:18
76 (1) 115:15
77 (1) 82:25

8

8 (1) 93:21
830 (4) 41:16,21 47:7 64:18
84 (1) 180:4
86 (3) 141:14,15 180:5
89 (3) 120:2 121:2,4

9

9 (2) 95:10 97:20
90 (3) 121:3,19 141:20
91 (2) 144:18 145:21
93 (1) 125:19
98 (1) 130:8
999 (1) 49:14