# OPUS2 

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Day 299

July 5, 2022

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

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(10.00 am)
Tuesday, 5 July 2022
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to
today's hearing.
Today we're going to begin hearing presentations by
lawyers acting on behalf of the families of those who
died in the fire.
Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Good morning, Mr Chairman. Good morning,
members of the panel.
I would now invite Mr Danny Friedman QC to come to
the podium to make a presentation on behalf of the
families of Eslah Elgwahry and Mariem Elgwahry from
flat 196 on floor 22 of the tower.
May I repeat, for general purposes, the trigger
warning that the statements and the materials that will
be discussed and possibly displayed during this
presentation may be distressing to some, and those in
the room or watching may wish to consider whether to
continue to do so or not.
Thank you very much.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
Yes, Mr Friedman.
Presentation relating to ESLAH ELGWAHRY and MARIEM ELGWAHRY
by MR FRIEDMAN
1
MR FRIEDMAN: Eslah Elgwahry was born on 1 December 1952 in 1
Alexandria, Egypt. Eslah and her husband, Hanfy, moved
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into flat 196 of Grenfell Tower in 1983 as tenants of
RBKC. The flat was on floor 22, as renumbered following
the refurbishment.
Their son, Ahmed -- who, sir, you will recall
addressed you at the commemoration hearing on Tuesday,
29 May 2018 - - had been born the year before his parents
moved in. Mariem, Ahmed's sister, was born on
11 April 1990. The tower was her home for all of her
27 years of life. By the time of the fire, Eslah had
lived in Grenfell Tower for 34 years. Ahmed grew up and
lived in the tower for 20 years. By the time of the
fire, he was living with his wife and young son.
To give context to who the deceased were and also
how they responded to the events of the night, can
I recall some of the core points that you have learnt
about them through the commemoration and other hearings.
Eslah Elgwahry was a mother to Ahmed and Mariem, but
also a significant figure to many of the younger people
born and bred in Grenfell. You will recall, for
instance, how fondly Mohammed Rasoul spoke of her during
his Module 4 evidence.
Ahmed has chosen to respect a degree of privacy
around his mother, to keep her memory special to the
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| by MR FRIEDMAN | 25 |

family, but he has asked that the panel, and indeed Mr Millett, take the opportunity to look privately at a photograph of Mrs Elgwahry, which I think you have had this morning. He has also publicly recalled at the commemoration her strength in raising her children after her husband's death; that it was thanks to what she taught them that they were such a close-knit family who always put each other first. He recalled the unconditional love she showed them and the many other hearts she touched.

As for Mariem Elgwahry, Ahmed spoke of his connection to his baby sister. When their father died of cancer in 1998, he was 16 and she was only 8 . He was not just a big brother, but a father figure. Ahmed described a funny, beautiful, strong, confident, sporty, adventurous and ambitious young woman. Also a person who was caring and selfless, a wonderful aunt to his young son and inseparable from their mother. Indeed, while both of them looked after their mother in her ill -health, Mariem was her mother's primary carer, and remained so long after she could have moved out, but very much chose to stay.

Sir, you will recall Ahmed's agonising account of the long final call between him and his sister as he stood below, powerless to help her and his mother above.

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He told you that he believes Mariem, who was young and fit, could have made it out of the tower, but Mariem would never have left their mother, who could not have done so. You will also recall Ahmed's account of the calm and patience that Mariem mustered in a brave and selfless effort to protect her mother and him, putting her family first to the last.

May I say a few words about Eslah Elgwahry's physical health.

Eslah had a complex range of health challenges which resulted in difficulty walking and left her reliant on the lift to get to and from floor 22. Her mobility problems meant that she was unable to evacuate without assistance via the single stairs in the event of a need to do so. These physical matters would be confirmed after her death by anthropology findings, which identified multiple degenerative processes in major parts of her body and features consistent with severe osteoarthritis, as well as diabetes and degenerative ageing.

As early as 2015, Eslah ticked the box in the TMO tenancy information questionnaire to communicate that she had a physical disability. Eslah's completed questionnaire was shown to the panel in Module 3 during the examination of David Noble, and I give the reference
only for the record: $\{$ IWS00001778/11\}, and transcript $\{$ Day119/47:17 $\}$ to $\{$ Day119/48:13 $\}$.

As with others who provided such information, there was no plan in place for Mrs Elgwahry as to how she would evacuate in the event of a need to do so, such as a personal emergency evacuation plan, nor were there any communications or pre-existing arrangements in place with the LFB to secure her assisted evacuation or rescue.

I identify this absence of planning in respect of Eslah Elgwahry, but the same generic situation is relevant to other individual cases which I and my colleagues will address you on in the coming days.

As with others, Eslah's vulnerability and the extent of knowledge of it should be noted as a fact important in its own right, but relevant to the recommendation already made in the Phase 1 report and any further recommendations that the Inquiry may consider in due course.

As Mr Millett explained yesterday morning, during these Module 8 presentations we will focus on core facts relating to the individual deaths. Any submitted criticism of other state and corporate core participants arising out of those facts has already been the subject of submissions in the closing statements of earlier
modules or may be returned to in the final overarching closing statements which are now planned for the autumn.
What you have invited us to ensure at this stage is that the individual facts in relation to each person who died are not lost; that what happened to them can be considered in their own right, so that other findings that the Inquiry may make in due course about causation and responsibility are made with an understanding that these individual lives were what was at stake.

May I turn, then, to the evening of the fire.
Eslah Elgwahry was last seen on CCTV footage at 3.21 pm on 13 June, entering the lift lobby to go up into the building. Mariem was seen entering at 10.14 pm . She had been over at Ahmed's home, where they had enjoyed an evening together. They had FaceTimed their mother to make plans for the weekend, as they always did.

The fire from the kitchen appliance in flat 16 , which started shortly before 1.00 am on floor 4 , reached the kitchen window of the Elgwahry home at flat 196 on floor 22 at around 01.26 am .

Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, who lived in flat 195 on floor 22, made calls to the control room of the LFB at 01.21 to tell them that they could smell smoke on their floor. Then they saw Eslah and Mariem in the communal
lobby. They said -- that is Mariem and Eslah said -that there was a fire in their kitchen. This was what Mariem then reported to the control room in her 999 call made shortly after 01.30 .

This call is an important marker in the timeline of the unfolding fire. It gave notice to the LFB of what was occurring 18 floors above the flat of origin of the fire. It also tells you that Mariem and her mother had moved. On the call she can be heard to say that they are in a neighbour's flat on floor 23, having gone upstairs to the home of Flora Neda and
Mohamed Saber Neda, where they were joined by Sakina Afrasehabi and Fatemeh Afrasiabi, the sisters who had come from flat 151 on floor 18. In a further call at 01.37, Mariem described how the kitchen of flat 196 had been absolutely fine and then suddenly flames just blew in.

As the Phase 1 report recorded, before approximately 1.30 , and at a time residents could safely still evacuate via the stairs without endangering themselves, many residents tragically went upstairs to the top floor. This is an issue that BSRs might want to understand as best as the available evidence allows. Myself and colleagues will return to the known facts of this upwards migration and the findings made in the

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Phase 1 report at various stages in the next days, and in particular in the presentation for Debbie Lamprell tomorrow morning.

For now, and for the purposes of this presentation, based on the timing between Naomi Li and Lydia Liao seeing them at about 01.26 and the call to the control room at 01.30, it is clear that Eslah and Mariem had moved from flat 196 on floor 22 to flat 205 on the top floor.

Mariem told her brother and sister-in-law in phone calls shortly after, timed at 01.49 and 01.56 , that they had tried to go downstairs, but they hadn't been able to descend as the stairwell had been blocked by others going upstairs. These residents were telling them to go back up.

This is an experience corroborated by Naomi Li and Lydia Liao, who also turned back from an attempt to descend the stairs due to the number of people coming upstairs. Flora Neda also recalled asking Mariem why they had come up, and her too saying that the stairwell had been blocked with people all making their way up.

The source of the communication to go up is unclear. There is evidence from Meron Mekonnen that a male voice was heard to shout a command for residents to go back. That may have been a firefighter, although Mariem did
not mention that she was personally aware of who had shouted in that way.

The upwards migration also occurred at a time when the attempted rescue of Joseph Daniels on floor 16 by firefighters was unfolding below, which would have led to a release of smoke into the staircase and may have given rise to a perception of danger below.

Panel, you can return to some of the detail of what was happening on floor 14 and how it might have affected others in the building when you hear the presentations for Sheila and Joseph Daniels later in this module.

While the full circumstances of the upwards migration will never be known, it is a fact that none of the firefighters present in the building at the time ever unequivocally shouted for residents in the staircase to get out when they had the chance to do so.

Mariem and Eslah were therefore sheltering in the Neda family home in flat 205. To make sense of the various movements you will hear about in this and later presentations, I'm going to ask for an MPS floor plan diagram to be brought up.

Before I do, can I just add in a trigger warning. It's, as I say, a diagram and a floor plan, but it does have the names of people who died and the various flats they were in when you look at it, and if anyone wants to

## not look at it, please bear that in mind.

Can I therefore call up $\{\mathrm{MET} 00012529 / 25\}$, please.
Now, if you look at 205, you will see it's the home of Mr and Mrs Neda, and you will also see, as I've indicated, that Eslah Elgwahry, Mariem Elgwahry, Sakina Afrasehabi and Fatemeh Afrasiabi have joined them in the home.

I should add, because it's not clear, I can see, that of course Farhad Neda is "F Neda", and it should be Mr Farhad Neda. He is the son of the Nedas, and he is in the home as well.

We can take that down, please.
When Mariem spoke to the control room at 01.38 , she indicated that there were seven residents in the flat in conditions at that time free of smoke. Mariem was told that fire services were on the scene and was assured that they would be informed that there were occupants on floor 23.

The Neda family, as you will hear in a presentation this afternoon, comprised, as I've said, of Saber and Flora and the son, Farhad. You will also hear that Flora Neda, like Eslah, had a physical disability .

Also sheltering were the Iranian sisters, Sakina and Fatemeh, and you will hear when I make the presentation following this one that Sakina Afrasehabi too had
a physical disability affecting her mobility.
Mariem called 999 again at 01.54 and repeated that there were seven adults stuck in flat 205, which was now full of smoke. She explained that the fire was starting to rise to flat 205. She thought it was going to come through the window in a second. She was told by the operator that the LFB were trying to send firefighters up to them.

At this time, the control room was receiving a significant number of fire survival guidance calls from the top floors of the tower reporting the rapidly deteriorating conditions immediately affecting that part of the building.

For these purposes, I want to focus on floor 23, although next week you will hear about multiple calls that were made from floor 22 at a similar time. Aside from Mariem Elgwahry's calling from flat 205, other control room calls just to mention at this juncture took place between 1.30 and just after 1.40, and included Jessica Urbano Ramirez and Biruk Haftom, now both in flat 201, and Hesham Rahman from flat 204.
Debbie Lamprell then began a long call from flat 201 at 01.41. All these calls described deteriorating conditions on the floor.

Service requests were created to assist the

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residents on the top floor and passed to the fire ground. What we know of them is as follows:

A service request reflecting fire survival guidance calls from floor 22 with smoke coming into the flat was relayed to the fire ground by 01.35.36. No flat number is mentioned, and that can be found in the radio log.

Operations Manager Norman spoke to Watch Manager Meyrick at the fire ground at 01.35 .24 to tell him that smoke was going into the top floor.

A further service request was created at 01.40.37 that read:
"Seven people in Flat 205 on 23rd floor. Persons unable to leave property."

That information would have come from

## Mariem Elgwahry.

At 01.45 .45 a service request referred to " 11 people in bedroom of flat on 23 rd floor". That request relates to the calls that were coming from the occupants in flat 201, which we will return to tomorrow.

The first known handwritten FSG list at the fire ground, sometimes referred to in Phase 1 as the "Sadler list ", was made between around 01.40 and 01.50 , and it referred to flat 205 (the Elgwahrys, the Nedas and the Afrasiabis) and flat 204 (Hesham Rahman). That can be found at Phase 1 report volume 2, page 209 to
210.

Flats 205 and 204 would be written on the portable forward information board, or FIB, that was carried to the bridgehead before it moved from the 3rd to the 2nd floor.

At 01.57.34, a discrete radio transmission to Command Unit 8 referred to a caller in flat 205 reporting that the fire was coming right up to their flat. That would again be prompted by Mariem and probably her 01.54 call.

Messages had therefore been passed to the fire ground concerning the conditions on floor 23 across about 01.33 to 01.57 . However, no deployments were made to the floor for the purposes of rescue until after 02.08. The crew deployed at this time was diverted at floor 10 and did not reach floor 23.

At 01.56, the Paddington crew in extended duration breathing apparatus, or EDBA, were deployed to the roof of the building. This was for firefighting and not rescue purposes. On this you know that they fortuitously found and rescued Fadumo Ahmed, who had evacuated deteriorating conditions in flat 201. She was in a state of collapse somewhere between the 20th and the 21st floor. Members of this crew did not reach above floor 22.

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Other deployments were made to floor 23 at 02.24, 02.51 and 03.03 , but none reached the top floor.

Can I turn briefly to the ability to escape and the absence of lifts capable for use for evacuation purposes.

Professor Purser's evidence has highlighted the tragic potential for residents to escape via the stairs, including the top floor, throughout the night. He estimates that a person of generally good health could have escaped flat 205 and made it down the stairs without collapsing until around 02.33 .

However, for a resident with significant mobility issues such as Eslah Elgwahry, unassisted evacuation was not a realistic option. Walking down 23 floors even with her daughter's assistance would have been very difficult, if not impossible, in normal times. It is a fact that residents with mobility impairment and family who were not prepared to leave them were trapped.

On this, we draw attention to the Grenfell lifts which Phase 1 established were not firefighting lifts, and even in the early stages of the fire could not be brought under control by the LFB in order that they could be used for the purposes of assisted evacuation. The Inquiry will in due course determine submissions made in other modules about the causes of those various
important issues relating to the lifts.
In the period between 2.00 and 2.30 , the sheltering occupants in flat 205 spoke to family and friends outside, who in turn relayed their predicament to the fire ground.

At around 2 o'clock, Lucy Ho, a close friend of Mariem, called her. She tried to persuade Mariem to leave the flat, though she knew her friend would never leave her mother. Mariem told Lucy that the emergency services knew where they were and that she believed they would come for them. Lucy Ho spoke to a police officer to make sure that the LFB were indeed aware of the presence of the occupants in flat 205.

Shortly again after 2 o'clock, Farhad Neda spoke to a firefighter via the phone of a friend outside the tower. He passed on that there were disabled people in the flat. The firefighter said they were aware of them and were on their way.

At around this time, Fatemeh Afrasiabi spoke with her niece, Solmaz Sattar, who was outside the tower. Ms Sattar also told the police and fire officers at the fire ground about those in flat 205. The firefighter advised that the occupants should stay where they were and that they would be rescued.

At around 2.13, Ahmed Elgwahry called Mariem again.

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While on the phone to her, a police officer took him to a command unit, where a firefighter gave his sister advice about lying low and breathing via the drain in the bathroom. The firefighter advised her to call 999. I read the words from Ahmed's Phase 1 statement, and I give the reference for the record: \{IWS00000988/6\}, paragraph 18.
"The fire fighter looked at me and he didn't have anything to say. He was speechless. He knew that he couldn't help my mum and sister anymore. He almost turned away and started ignoring me when I asked further questions. This was extremely difficult to comprehend especially when I knew my sister was still on the phone and felt that when I arrived I was going to help in some way when the fact of the matter is I couldn't. At this point I thought about returning into the Tower again to try and save them. I then remember the policeman's look at me also aware of the way the firefighter was behaving and understood there was nothing else that could be said he looked at me and escorted me out of the vehicle and we walked to Bomore Road next to the Kensington Leisure Centre."

At 02.25, while Farhad Neda and his mother were still in the flat, Mariem dialled 999 and spoke to the control room again. This was CRO Howson. Mariem told
her that the seven occupants were now cornered in the kitchen with flames at the kitchen window and the whole flat was in blackness. They were running out of air, and her mother was near to passing out.

Mariem also asked:
"Can you get a chopper or something, could you get a helicopter or something to get us out?"

To which the control room operator responded:
"There is, there is one there, OK, all right, the fire brigade are on their way now, they're making their way [up]."

When Mariem said that the fire was in the living room, she was offered the "decision" as to whether to leave. Mariem replied that they had tried to leave but it was black and they could not breathe.

As a consequence of this call, the control room called Command Unit 8 at 02.28 .27 to indicate that fire was getting into flat 205 and it was "getting quite desperate for the occupants". At some point between 02.25 and 02.35, Farhad and Flora Neda left flat 205. In the next presentation, you will hear about the details of their desperate bid for escape, including that Mr Neda was unable to follow them.

Eslah and Mariem Elgwahry and Sakina and Fatemeh Afrasiabi remained in flat 205.

At 2.33, Mariem called Ahmed a final time, in a call
that would last for 1 hour and 53 minutes, stretching back beyond the point in time that he heard his sister and mother lose consciousness. Ahmed repeatedly tried to encourage her to leave, but Mariem told him that she could not get out, having tried to do so, and that the landing was filled with thick black smoke. Ahmed believes that, in fact, Mariem was just not prepared to leave their mother.

Members of the panel, I have already recalled Ahmed's moving account of his sister's courage and selflessness during this call. Despite her own anguish, and throughout her gradual deterioration and loss of consciousness, Mariem persisted in letting him know that she was still there.

When Mariem was no longer responsive and Ahmed assumed that he had lost both his sister and mother, he heard his mother's voice for the first and only time that night, saying in Arabic that she was struggling for breath. This was around 3.10 to 3.15 in the morning.

Approximately five to ten minutes later, he heard the sound of the fire taking over the flat. He remained on the phone long after, only ending the call at 4.27 .

The subsequent archaeological investigation established that Eslah and Mariem died in close
proximity to one another in the kitchen area of flat 205 , where they are known to have sheltered, and close by were the Afrasiabi sisters.

Professor Purser charts the spread of the fire, which from around 2.45 came across the corner column on the west side and across the living room and kitchen, and that was the point when it last affected the flat. A large internal compartment fire can be seen at approximately 3.33 , which must have been what Ahmed heard. Professor Purser is clear that by this time the occupants of flat 205 were unconscious and had likely died from smoke due to exposure of toxic gases.

Sir, the primary medical cause of death for both Eslah and Mariem is properly identified as inhalation of fire fumes or something similar, as opposed to, with respect, the less informative and general "the effects of fire" as found in the early post-mortem reports by forensic pathologists who did not yet have the benefit of Professor Purser's specialist input. We make the point by combining the pathology and toxicity evidence together with the known facts in relation to fire spread, and also what Ahmed Elgwahry heard on the call.

It is right to conclude by acknowledging Eslah and Mariem Elgwahry's family, and especially Ahmed. Just as Mariem made the critical call from the tower at 1.30 to

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make clear that this was a whole-building fire, so Ahmed, in the terrible days after the fire, helped himself and other bereaved to call out to the wider world about what had occurred during the night and the aftermath. The WhatsApp group of bereaved families that Ahmed started continues to this day.

For his lawyers, Ahmed was able to describe to us the details of the night with clarity and precision that helped us first to really comprehend an event which for those who were not there was otherwise incomprehensible. He has since provided the same invaluable accounts to the Inquiry and supported others to do the same. All this he has done so that nothing relevant is lost, and that every feature of the last part of Eslah and Mariem's life and death is made to count.

Sir, that completes that presentation.
If I may, I'm going to ask for a 30-minute break, if that is convenient.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes. Well, thank you very much indeed, Mr Friedman.

Yes, well, we'll rise now. There needs to be an opportunity for you, but more importantly for the families, to have a chance to digest that, and we shall rise until -- shall I say 11 o'clock? Would that be convenient?
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MR FRIEDMAN: Yes. Thank you.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Very good. Thank you very much.
    We shall rise until 11 o'clock. Thank you all.
(10.35 am)
    (A short break)
(11.00 am)
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, members of the panel.
    I would invite Mr Friedman, please, to come back to the
    podium and now to make the presentations on behalf of
    Sakina Afrasehabi and Fatemeh Afrasiabi from flat 151 on
    floor 18.
            Again, I would repeat the trigger warning I gave
    earlier: these statements and materials that will be
    displayed or discussed during this presentation may be
    distressing to some, and they may wish to look away or
    to absent themselves from this room while it is in
    progress.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
            Yes,Mr Friedman.
            Presentation relating to SAKINA AFRASEHABI and
                FATEMEH AFRASIABI by MR FRIEDMAN
MR FRIEDMAN: Sakina Afrasehabi and Fatemeh Afrasiabi died
    together in flat 205 on the top floor of Grenfell Tower.
        On the night of the fire, Fatemeh was visiting her
        21
    sister, who lived in flat 151 on the 18th floor.
        Can I begin with the key details in relation to each
        of the women.
        Sakina Afrasehabi was born on 4 April 1952. She was
        65 years old at the time of her death. She was the
        tenant at flat 151.
            Fatemeh Afrasiabi was born on }15\mathrm{ November 1957. She
        was 59. She lived at an address in Edmonton.
            Both sisters were born in Abadan, Iran.
            Sir, you will recall the commemorations of the
        sisters' lives on 29 and 30 May 2018 from their
        families. All family members you heard from record how
        close the sisters were and how much they enjoyed each
        other's company. You saw poignant photos of them
        together in life as part of the presentation given by
        Nazanin Aghlani and the film played to you by
        Mohammad Samimi, Fatemeh's son, who is a filmmaker.
            Sakina's children -- Sharokh, Shiva, Nazanin, Mona
        and Mohammed -- remembered their mother's sense of
        humour, her great warmth, the unconditional love she
        gave her family, and the kindness and generosity she
        shared with family, friends and neighbours alike. You
        will recall the numerous references to her delicious
        cooking, and especially to her famous fish stew. Shiva
        told us that she had lost her anchor, her protector, and tenant at flat 151.

Fatemeh Afrasiabi was born on 15 November 1957. She
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was 59. She lived at an address in Edmonton.
sisers lives on 29 and 30 May 2018 from their families. All family members you heard from record how close the sisters were and how much they enjoyed each other's company. You saw poignant photos of them together in life as part of the presentation given by azanin Aghlani and the film played to you by Sakina's children - - Sharokh, Shiva, Nazanin, Mona and Mohammed -- remembered their mother's sense of humour, her great warmth, the unconditional love she gave her family, and the kindness and generosity she shared with family, friends and neighbours alike. You cooking, and especially to her famous fish stew. Shiva told us that she had lost her anchor, her protector, and

her only true friend.
Fatemeh's family remembered her great love and dedication for her family, her joy and positivity, her artistic talent and creativity, and especially the dolls she made, which they still treasure. They also recalled Fatemeh's beautiful singing voice, and how she would sing as she sewed or did chores around the house.

On this you heard from her children: Maryam, Masoumeh, Raheleh, Zahra and Mohammad.
Shahnaz Afraseyabi, the aunt to the children, also came to the commemoration to pay tribute to the two sisters she had lost. Fatemeh's husband, Ghorban Ali Samimi, was unable to attend the commemoration hearing despite his urgent wish to do so.

Can I turn to the issue of known vulnerability.
Sakina Afrasehabi suffered from longstanding medical conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure and arthritis. She found movement extremely difficult, especially on stairs, and, at the time of the fire, walked with the aid of a tri-walker walking frame.

Prior to moving to Grenfell, between 1998 and 2016, Sakina was housed in an RBKC-owned 2nd-floor flat in Ladbroke Grove with her daughter, Nazanin, who was her recognised primary carer. The property had no lift, and Sakina had great difficulties accessing the property via

\section*{23}
the 42 stairs to the front door, and also with the five steps inside the flat itself.

From 2003, RBKC assessed that Sakina should be rehoused in a property with no more than six steps in total, or a property with a lift, on no higher than the 4th floor. RBKC subsequently assessed in 2014 that she required a step-free property.

Until 2016, Sakina and her daughter remained in the Ladbroke Grove flat. However, they had undergone a prolonged and for them stressful investigation of their entitlement to a two-bedroom flat, during which Sakina's health had deteriorated further. Sakina was also aware that, due to her history of bidding for properties under the applicable choice-based letting system, the rules meant that if she refused the 2016 offered tenancy at Grenfell, she faced being suspended from bidding for further properties for a year. It was against this background that Sakina reluctantly, and with a sense of pressure, accepted the tenancy for flat 151, a one-bedroom flat on floor 18 of Grenfell Tower.

As a matter of fact, the family were fearful about their mother moving to Grenfell Tower. As I noted in the previous presentation, as was the position in the case of all such disabled residents at Grenfell, there
was no plan in place as to how Sakina would evacuate in
the event of a need to do so, such as a personal
emergency evacuation plan, nor were there any
communications or pre-existing arrangements in place
with the LFB to secure her assisted evacuation or rescue.

\section*{Turning to the fire.}

By way of immediate background, Fatemeh came to stay with her sister from 12 June 2017 with the purpose of helping Sakina prepare for a family dinner to be held the following night. On 13 June, Sakina and Fatemeh spent time with members of their family, who joined them for a large dinner at flat 151 that evening. That included Mona and Nazanin and their children, and their other sister, Shahnaz, and their niece, Solmaz. Solmaz Sattar has given statements to the Inquiry and the police that I will come back to. The other family members left before 10.00 pm, but Fatemeh stayed the night. Nazanin, at the commemoration hearing, recounted her mother coming to the lift to say goodbye, and kissing her son goodbye a second time before they left.

The terrifyingly quick spread of fire meant that the external flames reached floor 18 before 01.26 am. The kitchen window of flat 156, where Shahid and Sayeda Ahmed lived, exploded inwardly shortly before
01.27. This can be timestamped by the time of the 999 call Mr Ahmed made. He threw down his mobile phone as he fled the flat, but the recording of the 999 call captures voices shouting "Fire" and banging on doors. Shahid and Sayeda Ahmed record "the lady with the walking frame" answering the door when they knocked. This would have been Sakina. They also saw Hamid Kani, whose presentation you will hear tomorrow. Shahid told Sakina to get out and remembers her coming out of her flat. Shahid and Sayeda Ahmed then left the building.

When Sakina and Fatemeh came out onto the staircase, it is likely that they saw others going up the stairs. Corinne Jones left her flat on floor 17 in order to exit the building at 01.30. On the stairwell, she saw a group of "maybe four people" that she described as "Muslim women, at least one wearing a hijab", standing on the mezzanine level behind her. The women were debating whether to go up or down the stairs because they did not know where the fire was. Sakina and Fatemeh did not wear a hijab, but this group of four may have included them. The fact is that while residents of higher floors such as Corinne Jones and her children safely descended the staircase at or around 01.30, Sakina and Fatemeh were among a number of people that ascended the staircase.

Can I deal with the known evidence relating to flat 205 as to why that may have happened.

The Phase 1 report at paragraph 10.284 records Farhad Neda's evidence. He estimated that at least ten people had come up the stairs, the first four of whom came into his home. These were Mariem Elgwahry and her mother, Eslah, and the sisters Sakina Afrasehabi and Fatemeh Afrasiabi. Mariem told Farhad Neda that the fire had already reached her flat. Mariem did not say who had told them to go upstairs, but Farhad did recall that one of the sisters said that they had been told that helicopters would rescue them from the roof.

Sharokh Aghlani is Sakina's eldest son. While Sharokh was en route to Grenfell Tower, having been told by family about the fire, he managed to speak to his aunt, Fatemeh, on the phone. She told her nephew that she and Sakina had been told to go up to floor 23, but did not say by whom. When Fatemeh then spoke to her niece, Solmaz, she said that residents had told them not to go down because there was a fire lower in the building. This is similar to what Mariem Elgwahry told her brother and sister - in-law in phone calls shortly after. They had started to go down, but residents coming up had told them to go back.

There is no single reason why people came up. As

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I have touched on in the previous presentation, there is some evidence from Meron Mekonnen that a male voice was heard to shout a command for residents to go back. This may have been a firefighter and, if so, the shout to go back could have been understood as a command to go up. The upwards migration also occurred at the time when the attempted rescue of Joseph Daniels on floor 16 by firefighters was unfolding, which would have led to a release of smoke into the staircase and may have given rise to a perception of danger below.

We are going to return to the topic when we present the known facts in relation to Debbie Lamprell tomorrow morning. For present purposes, we can say that, again, while the full circumstances of the upwards migration will never be known, it is a fact that none of the firefighters present in the stairwell at the time ever unequivocally shouted for residents in the staircase to get out when they had the chance to do so.

The sisters therefore sought shelter in flat 205 on floor 23, the home of the Neda family. We do not know why they ended up in that flat, but these were two families who spoke the common language of Farsi, and they would have been partly familiar faces. You just heard that they joined Eslah and Mariem Elgwahry, who came up the stairs effectively in front of them.

As to timing, Mariem made her two early 999 calls from flat 205 shortly after arriving there at 01.30 and 01.37. At 01.38, she got put through to the LFB and indicated that there were seven residents in the flat in conditions free of smoke. So that is three from the Neda family, two from the Elgwahry family, and Sakina and Fatemeh Afrasiabi. Mariem was told that fire services were on the scene and that the fire services would be told that the families were on floor 23.

When Mariem called 999 at 01.54 , she repeated that there were seven adults stuck in flat 205, which was now full of smoke. She explained that the fire was starting to rise to flat 205 , and she said it was going to come through the window in a second. She was told that they were trying to send firefighters up to them. The residents were not told to evacuate.

Members of the panel, as you know and will hear again from other presentations, at this time the control room was receiving a significant number of fire survival calls from the top floor reporting rapidly deteriorating conditions, and service requests were created to assist the residents on the top floor and passed to the fire ground. In the coming days, you will hear of similar calls and service requests from other floors.

At that time, Sakina's son, Sharokh Aghlani, and the niece, Solmaz Sattar, who had now both arrived at Grenfell Tower, continued to make calls to Sakina and Fatemeh, and also relayed the location and number of people in flat 205 to firefighters and police officers at the scene. They were told to inform the occupants to stay put and that firefighters would come to their rescue.

As you have heard, no deployments were made to the floor for the purposes of rescue until after 2.08. The crew deployed at this time was diverted at floor 10 and did not reach floor 23. Also, at 01.56, the Paddington crew were deployed to the roof for firefighting and not rescue purposes. They did not get there, but rescued one person, Fadumo Ahmed, somewhere between floors 20 and 21. As we detail next week, one firefighter, Firefighter Roberts, got to the doorway of floor 22, but no higher. Other crews were deployed after 02.08 at \(02.24,02.51\) and 03.03, but none reached the top floor.

Professor Purser's evidence has highlighted the tragic potential for residents to escape via the stairs, including the top floor, until, in the case of floor 23 , approximately 2.33 in the morning. However, for a resident with significant mobility issues such as Sakina Afrasehabi, unassisted evacuation was not
a realistic option. Once the conditions in the stairwell deteriorated, descending the 23 floors, even with her sister's assistance, within a timescale that would have averted collapse due to exposure to asphyxiant gases was impossible.

It is a fact that residents on the higher floors with mobility impairments, and family or friends who were not prepared to leave them, were trapped, and this is another one of those cases.

This in turn directs attention to the status of those Grenfell lifts. Again, this is the subject of submission on causation and responsibility, but it is a further fact that, over the preceding years and during two prior significant lift works, the Grenfell lifts had never been upgraded to the current technical standard of firefighting lifts and/or developed for use in emergency planning in such a way as to be capable of use for the purpose of evacuation of a mobility impaired person such as Sakina Afrasehabi.

In the period between 2.00 am and 2.30, the sheltering occupants in flat 205 spoke to family and friends outside who continued to relay their predicament to the authorities at the fire ground. I have mentioned the contact at 2 o'clock that Mariem Elgwahry had with her friend Lucy Ho. She told the police about them.

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Shortly after 2.00 am, Farhad Neda spoke to a firefighter via the phone of his friend at the tower. He passed on that there were disabled people in the flat. The firefighter said they were aware of them and were on their way. Around this time, Fatemeh spoke again with Solmaz Sattar. Ms Sattar also relayed their situation to police and fire officers at the fire ground. The firefighter advised that the occupants should stay where they were and that they would be rescued.

At 02.25, Mariem Elgwahry dialled 999 and spoke to the control room again. She said that the seven occupants were now cornered in the kitchen, with flames at the kitchen window and the whole flat in blackness. They were running out of air and her mother was near to passing out. She also pleaded for assistance from a helicopter.

When she said that the fire was in the living room, she was offered the "decision" as to whether to leave. She said they had tried to leave but it was black and they could not breathe. This was also the call when she asked CRO Howson on a number of occasions whether a helicopter could come.

As a consequence of this 999 call, the control room called Command Unit 8 at 02.28 .27 to indicate that the
fire was getting into flat 205 and "getting quite
desperate for the occupants"
At some point between 02.25 and 02.35 , Farhad and Flora Neda left the flat. Sharokh Aghlani continued to speak to his mother and aunt on their mobile phones. They remained in flat 205. He heard them both struggling to breathe, and there came a point where he heard his aunt Fatemeh say, "Forgive us", and sounds of what he interpreted as her going into shock. The phone subsequently went dead. 50 seconds before the line went dead, he heard an explosion.

The final call between Mariem Elgwahry and Ahmed Elgwahry assists with the timing. Ahmed heard his sister and mother lose consciousness between around 3.10 and 3.15. Approximately five to ten minutes later, he heard the sound of the fire taking over the flat.

The subsequent archaeological investigation established that the sisters died in close proximity to one another in that kitchen area of flat 205, where they were known to have sheltered when Mariem Elgwahry made her 02.25 call. Also close by were Eslah and Mariem Elgwahry.

The anthropology evidence in relation to Sakina Afrasehabi confirms what was known in life: that she had suffered from degenerative bone and arthritic

\section*{disease.}

Professor Purser charts the spread of the fire, which came around the building at 02.45 , onto the west side and across the living room and kitchen in its last area of effect. A large internal compartment fire can be seen from around 03.33, which coincides with the call that Sharokh would have made.

Professor Purser is clear that, by that time, the occupants of flat 205 were unconscious and had likely died from asphyxia due to exposure to toxic gases. The primary medical cause of death of both Sakina and Fatemeh is therefore properly identified as inhalation of fire fumes, or a similar formulation.

May I conclude by a few words about the families of Sakina and Fatemeh, who died together in flat 205.

As Shiva, Sakina's daughter, put it, the one saving grace is that her mother did not die alone, but with the sister she loved.

Sir, you remarked at the commemoration on the moving tributes paid by the families and what a privilege it was for you to hear from them. We all got to know of the passionate commitment that these people had to their mothers.

Despite their immense suffering, the family have since assisted the Inquiry with important evidence
regarding the circumstances of Sakina and Fatemeh's
death. The family have also been tireless in
campaigning for fire safety reform, in particular through their work resisting attempts to depart from your urgent Phase 1 recommendation for personal emergency evacuation plans for those that need them. Sakina is one of the people who needed such a plan.

Throughout all of this, the family have shown exceptional strength and dignity, and I would therefore like to conclude by paying tribute to them. All their efforts have been for the mothers they loved.

Sir, that completes the presentation.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Friedman.
MR FRIEDMAN: May I ask that we now take a 15 -minute break, and Mr Khan QC will follow on with a presentation after that.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, if that's convenient to Mr Khan, then I'm very happy that we should do that.

In that case, we will rise at this point and resume at 11.40. Yes? Thank you very much.
MR FRIEDMAN: Thank you.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: 11.40, then, please. (11.26 am)
(A short break)

\footnotetext{
(11.55 am)

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman. I would now invite
Mr Imran Khan QC to come to the podium, please, to make
the presentation on behalf of Mohamed Saber Neda from
flat 205 on floor 23.
Again, I should just say that the statements and the materials that will be discussed or displayed during
this presentation may be distressing to some, and they
may wish to absent themselves from the room or look away
from the live stream as they wish.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
Mr Khan, yes, please.
Presentation relating to MOHAMED AMIED 'SABER' NEDA by MR KHAN
MR KHAN: Good morning, sir. Good morning, panel members.
As we noted in the break, this is an incredibly
difficult and distressing time, and the image that was just displayed was of Mohamed Amied Neda. It was of Mohamed Neda. I hope that what I say today does justice to the memory of Mr Neda, and gives some comfort to his family, who are here today, Farhad and Shakila.

Mohamed Amied Neda was affectionately known as
Saber. Saber in Persian means patience. It is the same
in Urdu and in Arabic. And it described Mr Neda to
}
a tee; he was the epitome of patience.
He was born on 3 May 1960 in Afghanistan. He was
a loving husband to Shakila, a father to his son, Farhad. He died aged 57 on 14 June 2017.

He lived with his wife and his son in flat 205, as we know, on the 23rd floor, their tenancy of the flat commencing on 17 May 1999.

You will recall, sir, as Mr Friedman Queen's Counsel mentioned, the commemorations, and you were present, and I would invite you to remind yourself of those submissions that were made when Shakila, Farhad and Saber's brother, Aref, provided a more detailed picture of Saber than I'm able to do today, and the loving relationship they had between them. I would invite the panel members to look at that material and read it with care. I'm sure you will.

Saber met his wife, Shakila, in 1989, when they were 28 and 26 respectively. At the time, he was a high-ranking officer in the Afghan army. They married in the wonderful city of Kabul in 1991, and were husband and wife for over 27 years. Shakila says it was "a marriage full of love".

Unfortunately, Saber and his family had to flee Afghanistan in 1998 because of the risk they faced from the Taliban. He, Saber, was targeted as an army
officer, and Shakila, who was a primary school teacher, was no longer able to work, as the Taliban had closed the school where she was employed. The family, like many, sought refuge in the UK, and came to London in March 1998, where they were able to claim asylum.

Saber was a hardworking individual, and took whatever work he could find to support his family, including as a minicab driver. That experience led him to establish his own chauffeur business, where he continued to work for the last ten years of his life and which Farhad is continuing to this day.

Farhad described him as the sort of person who would "never complain about work and would never take a day off for being sick". His family affectionately remember a man who took pride in his appearance, and was always impeccably turned out. He always wore a smart suit and a range of colourful ties, even when not at work. His hard work underpinned his dedication to his family. Farhad says that he grew up in a "safe home full of love and laughter".

Turning to the events of the night in question.
We know that at 00.54, Mr Kebede made the emergency call to report a fire in the kitchen of flat 16 on the 4th floor. The spread of fire was sufficiently rapid that occupants on the higher floors were aware within
minutes of its start, and by 01.26, the fire had reached the 23rd floor.

Saber and his family had arrived home at 00.52, just moments before the outbreak of the fire. They had spent a wonderful evening with Shakila's sister and family in Heston, having gone there to break their fast, as, sir, you will recall that it was Ramadan at the time. When they arrived home, the lifts were working. All three went up to their flat in the lift. Both Farhad and Shakila recalled hearing loud noises from the extractor/ventilator fan immediately upon exiting the lift on the floor. Shakila recalls telling her husband that they should report the noise to the TMO as it was so loud and they would not be able to sleep.

Farhad in fact telephoned the TMO and was told that an engineer was on his way to fix it. He also recalls being told that the Fire Brigade were also coming. Whilst they waited, they noted that one of the lifts was now not working and had an out of order/out of service message, whereas both lifts had been working earlier when they arrived home. So Farhad called the out of hours service at 01.10 to report the noise from the extractor fan, and approximately ten minutes later his mother said she could smell something burning. Farhad described the burning as an electrical burning smell and

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Shakila described it as burning rubber. We understand that Saber was not aware of the smell as he could not smell particularly well following earlier surgery on his nose.

Upon realising that there was a fire, they went onto their landing to investigate, and saw their neighbours from flat 206, Fathia Elsanosi and her daughter, Isra Ibrahim, on the landing in a very distressed state. They also saw a lot of people from the lower floors coming up the stairs in a state of panic, and telling them that there was a fire and they had been told to go up to the top floor. These people included Mariem Elgwahry and her mother, Eslah Elgwahry, and two sisters, Sakina and Fatemeh Afrasiabi. These four people came into the Nedas' flat seeking refuge from the fire. The others went into the adjoining flats on the 23rd floor.

Farhad said that the presence of people coming up and those who said there was a fire further below, together with the fact they had been told by the LFB to go up, influenced his family's decision to go back into their flat.

We know round this time that there were multiple calls made from the occupants on the 23 rd floor to their loved ones. Mariem Elgwahry made several 999 calls from
the Nedas' flat, and Mr Friedman QC referred to some of these. I' II refer to four.

At 1.27.42, she made a call to the Fire Brigade, and she told the controller that there were seven people in the flat, flat 205. She told them she could not see fire or smoke but that she had come up from the floor below and that was fully on fire.

At 01.37.25, she made another call to the LFB, where a controller advised her that the fire units were to be notified.

At 01.54.10, she again called the LFB, on which occasion she told them the flat was now full of smoke, there were flames at the windows and there was no way out.

At 02.24.34, she made a further call to the LFB to say that they were trapped in the flat with the fire. The controller apparently told her they should cover their mouths with wet towels if they were going to leave.

The Neda family also made and received several telephone calls from family and friends outside the tower asking what they were doing to try and get out. Farhad Neda confirms in his account that he recalls Mariem Elgwahry making calls to the emergency services. He also states that neither he nor his father or mother
made calls to the emergency services; however, he did speak to friends outside the tower. On one occasion, Farhad is very clear that he spoke to a firefighter, as one of his friends outside the tower passed their phone so he could speak to one of them directly. Farhad says the firefighter 's response was -- and I now quote from what he says -- that they were making their way up -that is firefighters -- and had reached a certain level, but he did not know which, and they were on their way up. The firefighter told Farhad, "He told me we should stay in the flat, he told me to stay put".

Meanwhile, the Nedas looked out the kitchen window and, in desperation, signalled with the lights and screens on their phones to attract the attention of emergency services on the ground.

But by 02.00 hours, the conditions in flat 205 were rapidly deteriorating. The fire had entered the front bedroom, situated at the front door. Saber instructed everyone to stay away from the bedroom and for all of them to gather in the kitchen.

Thick smoke filled the flat. They soaked towels and filled water bottles. Quite horrifically, Shakila felt that she had no option but to throw herself out of the window, saying that she did not want to be burnt alive. She believes this to be around 2.00 am. She says she
was pulled back by Saber and Farhad, and it was at this point they agreed they had no option but to try and leave and make their way down.

Farhad took his mother and left the flat after placing wet towels over their faces. Saber told his wife and son that he would be right behind them as they left. Saber stayed behind to offer assistance to the Elgwahry and Afrasiabi families. This was, Chair, members of the panel, the last time that Shakila and Farhad saw their husband and father. They believed Saber was behind them with the four women, and their last sight of him alive was seeing him helping the women with the wet towels.

Farhad and Shakila made their way out down the stairs through thick, black, choking smoke, Farhad carrying and dragging his mother out, believing Saber was somewhere behind them. Shakila called out to Saber when they reached the stairwell door, but he didn't answer. She attempted to go back to him, but Farhad told her they would not make it out of the tower if they turned back.

We know that Saber spoke to his nephew, Lotfrahman Habibrahman Abdulrahman, at 02.37, when Saber asked what was going on and why nobody had come to help them. He said that unless someone came to help them within the

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next minute then he and the others in the flat would be dead, as the fire had reached inside the flat. This was the last they heard from him.

We also know that upon returning home, Saber's brother-in-law, Habibrahman Abdulrahman, found a voice message on his phone from Saber, in which he said this:
"Goodbye, I am leaving this world, goodbye. I hope you won't be in pain. Goodbye, everyone."

This was the last message he left before he died. We're told that his voice was calm and he didn't show any fear.

At this point, Chair, it 's worth noting that, amongst the very many serious health issues that Shakila had endured and was enduring by the time of the fire, in December 2009 she was formally diagnosed with a condition called myasthenia gravis. This is a rare condition that caused her to suffer with muscle weakness. The condition most commonly affected her muscles such that she got cramps in her limbs and suffered with breathing difficulties . In 2017, her mobility was seriously affected.

After the diagnosis, Shakila generally went out of the house with Saber, and when she did so she didn't need to use her walker or her wheelchair, because Saber patiently, like his name, held on to her hand and walked
slowly with her. On bad days she used a walking stick, as she couldn't walk more than 50 to 100 metres. Her condition was such that, following her diagnosis,
Shakila only used the lifts at the tower and could not use the stairs on her own. If the lifts were not working, she could not leave the house. If she arrived home to find they were not working, either Saber or Farhad helped her up the stairs to the 23 rd floor. Chair, this mammoth task, this mammoth effort, took an hour or so.

This was the Shakila that left her flat on the night of the fire, without her husband, who had until then been her support, her carer, her love. She left with her son, Farhad, and both had to undertake the task of getting out of the tower. Because of her mobility issues, Farhad had to carry his mother by clasping her around the waist with one arm and around his shoulders, so she could lean on him to carry her weight.

Farhad had told his mother that there were 12 steps on each staircase and 24 steps for each floor. She has said that she could feel something beneath her feet as they were going down the stairs. When she asked Farhad what it was, he told her not to worry, it 's just the fire hoses. The firefighters were still coming, coming up. He told his mother to be careful and he hugged her
close to him. He put his hand on her shoulder and told her that he was with her. Farhad said to his mother, "Just stay with me".

Shakila recalls that around the 18th floor she stumbled and Farhad turned on the light of his mobile telephone. He only kept it on for a few minutes because he didn't want to drain the battery. The light wasn't particularly helpful because it was pitch black smoke, but what it did show, in shocking, graphic detail, was the sight of people lying motionless on the stairs . Farhad kept the light on for a few minutes so they could see where they were placing their feet to avoid stepping on people. Shakila says, perhaps thankfully, they didn't see the faces or any identifying features of those who were on the stairs. It was very difficult to see through the thick black smoke. She did however say this to her son, as it dawned on her that they were not walking over hose pipes, they were walking over dead and dying people.

At that point, Farhad had no choice now but to carry his severely disabled mother down the stairs on his back. She could no longer walk.

Shakila says this of their walk down the stairs that night:
"I would never have had any chance at all of getting
out of the tower if it were not for the incredible strength and love of my son."

I move on, sir.
Whilst it is claimed that the Paddington crew of the LFB had been deployed to the roof to tackle the fire from that aspect, we know that no firefighter managed to reach the 23rd floor, and despite the repeated advice of the emergency services to multiple occupants on this floor that firefighters were making their way to them, no dedicated BA crew was deployed to the 23rd floor until after 02.08, and none reached the floor.

CM Evans and FF Bloxham were briefed to go to flat 205, and they tallied out at 02.24.24 and 02.24.33 respectively. But between floors 18 and 20, they claim that they came across a male and female casualty who were purportedly Shakila and Farhad Neda. Shakila vehemently disputes this, and it is stated in her Inquiry witness statement that they did not come across any firefighters until much lower down the tower, saying, "Maybe it was the 6th, 5th or 4th floor".

Detective Superintendent Paul Warnett has provided an account in which he states that at 02.40 hours approximately he was made aware that a male had been seen to fall from the mid to upper floors, landing within the children's play area to the west of the

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tower. With the assistance of a colleague and
firefighters, this individual was moved to a place of safety, where paramedics could attend to him. Detective Warnett recalled that the male they had recovered clearly had serious injuries. He was moved to the MPS tent outside the Kensington Leisure Centre where a paramedic quickly confirmed there were no signs of life . We now know, sir, that this was Saber.

Saber's life was pronounced extinct at 02.50. The post-mortem report concludes that Saber died from "multiple injuries consistent with fall from height". A sample of his blood showed that it was oily and had begun to separate. It showed a concentration of \(20 \%\) carboxyhaemoglobin. In addition, there were reported to be slight soot deposits on his face, clothes and in his nostrils. There were no burns.

In relation to the blood analysis and the events prior to his death Professor Purser, in his evidence to the Inquiry a few days ago, in fact \(--I\) think it was on 29 June \{Day296/123:12-20\} - - said this:
"Mr Neda fell from the tower with \(20 \%\) [carboxyhaemoglobin] in his blood at the time he fell. If he waited until that point and then decided to walk down, following his son and his wife, there was a good chance he would have not been able to walk all the way
down, he would have collapsed on the way down, because
he's preloaded 20. By the time he was halfway down the stair, he probably would have reached the point of collapse."

Farhad has said this about the last time he saw his father as he escaped with his mother \{IWS00000886/13\}:
"It is the last time my eyes set eyes on my best friend in the world.
"Dad was a hero ..."
He was, Farhad. He was a hero.
"Dad was a hero, to my mind. He could have come with us, at that moment. However, he did not leave those women who were distressed and needed help in our flat. He died trying to save their lives, he gave them hope and encouragement. He was calm and he did not panic. He certainly did not put himself first and just rush out with us. He was being composed and caring towards the four women who had looked to him for help. He knew full well, as did mum and I, and those ladies, that we were all in mortal danger. He knew full well that time was running out and his instinct must have been to go immediately, but being the sort of man he was he delayed for those moments whilst he helped others prepare for the thick and toxic smoke outside our flat.
"For me and my mother it took a super human and

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enormous physical effort to survive. We were just lucky that part of the way down we found a pocket of better air that allowed me to push on.
"No words can convey the sadness knowing that all five died in the fire. No words can convey the loss of my dear dad. However, I am extremely proud of him. He gave those ladies comfort and encouragement when all hope looked lost at the top of Grenfell Tower."

The last word goes to Shakila, Saber's wife, who says this:
"Our hopes and our dreams have been shattered. The chance to enjoy special moments as a close loving family has been taken away from us, and there is a heavy sense of loss within our hearts which will never go away. Saber had always been there for all of us. He never complained and he always did everything with a smile. He was my husband, and he was my best friend. I miss him so much."

Chair, it 's often said in Farsi when somebody dies, "Ruheshan shad". Rest in peace.

Thank you very much.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, thank you very much, Mr Khan.
Well, at that point we're going to rise because the next presentation is due to be made at 2 o'clock, when the families of the deceased will be able to be here to
hear it.
So we stop now and we resume at 2 o'clock, please.
Thank you very much.
(12.20 pm)

> (The short adjournment)
\((2.00 \mathrm{pm})\)

> (Proceedings delayed)
( 2.10 pm )
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
MR MILLETT: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman.
I would now invite Danny Friedman, please, to come back to the podium to present on behalf of
Rania Ibrahim, Fethia Hassan, and Hania Hassan, from flat 203 on floor 23.

Again, I would repeat the trigger warning: that statements and materials that will be discussed or displayed during this presentation may be distressing to some, and those who wish to absent themselves from this room or from watching the live stream should do so now. Thank you.
SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Friedman.
Presentation relating to RANIA IBRAHIM, FETHIA HASSAN and HANIA HASSAN by MR FRIEDMAN
MR FRIEDMAN: Rania Ibrahim was born in Aswan in Egypt on
3 March 1986. She was 31 years old when she died. She

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was married to Hassan Awadh Hassan. The couple moved
into flat 203 in Grenfell Tower in 2016. They had two daughters, Fethia Hassan, born 5 October 2012, and Hania Hassan, born 4 June 2014, both of whom died with their mother in flat 203. They were 4 and 3 years old.

On the night of the fire, Hassan Awadh Hassan was in Egypt attending to his brother, who was gravely ill. He returned to the UK on the following day, to discover that none of his family had survived.

Sir, you will recall the commemoration hearings for Rania, Fethia and Hania were on three separate days, during which family members provided statements and films. As you heard, Rania came from a large and close family of which she was one of seven siblings. They are Sayeda, Hanan, Randa, Rasha, Rania, Mohammad and Mahmoud, as well as a half-brother, Mustafa.

Rania came to London in 2009 to assist her sister, Sayeda Ibrahim, who was suffering from cancer. Rania met Hassan in 2010, and they married in 2011. In June 2015, after both of their children had been born, they obtained the tenancy to flat 203. Hassan spent several months renovating the flat before they moved in. He wanted his family to have a beautiful home.

On 22 May 2018, sir, Rasha Ibrahim shared memories with you of her sister. She described her as
a beautiful soul. No one could sit with Rania and not smile.

On 23 May 2018, Sayeda Ibrahim showed a film narrated by her daughter, Aiasha, testifying to Rania's great kindness and commitment to justice. She spoke of the support Rania provided to Sayeda and Sayeda's children -- her, Aiasha, Mustafa, Mawada and Abdulrahman -- during her illness.

On 29 May 2018, Hassan Awadh Hassan spoke of the unbearable loss of his wife and children. The Inquiry also heard from Munira Mahmud, who you know lived with her family in flat 25 on floor 5 of Grenfell Tower, who spoke to the loss of her very close friend. Munira is the wife of Mohammed Rasoul, who gave evidence in Module 4, when all of the panel heard from him.

These commemorative portraits highlighted that as a wife, mother, sister and friend, Rania Ibrahim was an exceptionally loving and generous person with a deep Muslim faith, who put herself before others, caring for those more in need than herself.

As to the children, Fethia was a confident child with a strong and vibrant personality. Hania was quieter, but showed a wisdom beyond her years. She adored her sister, and always tried to be like her. Both girls were raised by their parents to be lively and
kind. The many surviving photographs show the children to be full of joy.

May I turn to 13 June.
CCTV footage shows Hania Hassan entering the
lift lobby of Grenfell Tower at 5.27 in the company of Munira Mahmud, Rania's close friend. She was looking after Hania while Rania took Fethia swimming. As close families, they were helping each other while Hassan had to be in Egypt to care for his brother.

At 18.09, Rania and Fethia can be seen re-entering the tower. They joined with Munira in flat 25 to feed their children together. Rania then returned to her own flat with her children. Munira last saw her friend at 21.30, when she went up to flat 203 to give Rania her iftar meal to break the fast.

Analysis of the footage of external fire spread on the flat 6 column shows that the fire reached floor 23 soon after 01.26. Indeed, its spread was sufficiently rapid for its effects to be noticed by the occupants of the top floor much earlier. Farhad Neda of flat 205, as you heard this morning, called the TMO out-of-hours engineer at 1.10 and referred to an "electric burning smell".

Shortly after the call, with the smell getting stronger, the Neda family went on to the landing and saw

Fathia Ahmed Elsanousi and her daughter, Isra Ibrahim, who had exited from flat 206 in a state of panic. Isra started to run down the stairs, with her mother walking after.

As you heard and will hear about further in other presentations, soon after, at around 1.30 , residents of the lower floors came up to the top floor. With them were Fathia Ahmed and Isra Ibrahim returning back up, who then sought refuge in Rania's home.

To make sense of the various movements, I'm going to again ask to bring up the MPS floor diagram. Before I do, may I give a trigger warning. You will see plans and names, but no images of people or fire. It is \{MET00012529/25\}.

You can see at the bottom left-hand corner Rania's flat 203, where she and Hania and Fethia were. This also shows flat 206, at the top right - hand side, where the Elsanousi family would come from, we presume because their kitchen was soon compromised by fire.

If we can take that plan down, please.
At 01.38, Rania Ibrahim began to live stream events in her flat in a Facebook recording that lasted until 01.44.33. As a piece of evidence, that recording is extremely helpful in explaining conditions on the top floor and who came into the flat. The video is also

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distressing to show, and I hope everyone will understand we do not ask to show it now, especially as the Inquiry has already described the important parts of the video in its Phase 1 report, and generally been assisted by Rania's own efforts in this regard in real time.

By 01.38, Isra Ibrahim and her mother, Fathia Ahmed, had already come into the flat. Isra's brother, Abufras Ibrahim, who was visiting that night, can also be seen in the video.

Rania is captured opening the door to check whether anyone in the corridor needs help. At 55 seconds into the video, Rania opens the front door and calls out to people to come to her apartment. At 1 minute 14 seconds into the recording, Rania says she is going out of the flat. She then appears to step into the lobby, returning at 1 minute 32 seconds. She can be heard calling out while in the lobby.

A man who has since been identified as Gary Maunders by both his niece and his previous partner enters the flat, obviously in need of sanctuary from the smoke.

At around 5 minutes and 21 seconds into the video, Rania is heard to say words that, "The whole building is burning and we're on the top floor". She then queries how they could possibly get out in these circumstances.

Professor Purser's Phase 2 evidence has underscored
how occupants of the flats on the top floor were
inhibited from escaping by the dense smoke in the actual lobby of the floor that had accumulated as early as 01.29.

The available version of the video which translates Rania Ibrahim's Arabic into English subtitles shows at this point that she is making religious recitations for what continues for the large part of the remaining footage.

Members of the panel, as you have heard in other presentations today, at this time the control room was receiving a significant number of fire survival guidance calls from the top-floor flats reporting rapidly deteriorating conditions.

Can I mention three points about this.
First, there were calls between 01.30 and 01.41 , especially from Jessica Urbano Ramirez, Mariem Elgwahry, Biruk Haftom, and the beginning of a long call by Debbie Lamprell. Some of these calls will be dealt with in further detail tomorrow. Cumulatively, they called for the LFB to go to the top floor to assist, but that could not occur.

Second, we know now that the highest deployment was the Paddington crew after 01.56 for firefighting and not rescue purposes. They saved Fadumo Ahmed, but only one
of their number reached the exit door of floor 22. None reached floor 23.

Third, other crews were deployed at 2.08, and then at \(2.24,2.51\) and 3.03 , but none reached the highest floor.

Relatives of Rania Ibrahim became aware that Rania and her children were trapped in her flat due to the fire. Rania's sister, Sayeda, received a FaceTime call from Rania to say that there was a fire in the block and that she didn't think she would be able to leave.

Just before 2.00 am , Sayeda's daughter, Aiasha, called the emergency services to tell them that there was a woman with two children stuck in flat 203 on floor 23.

Rania did not speak English as a first language, and it appears that she provided her mobile phone to her neighbour, Isra Ibrahim, who spoke fluent English with a London accent. Isra Ibrahim made repeated calls to the LFB over the following 45 minutes. I'm going to deal with those calls in this presentation and return to them when we make a presentation for the Elsanousi family on the last days of these hearings.

At 02.05.25, Isra Ibrahim told CRO Howson at the control room that she was part of a group of five adults and two children in flat 203. Isra Ibrahim expressly
asked for "the status of the situation at the moment". She was assured that the fire was on the 4th floor, but it was creating a lot of smoke. She was expressly advised that it was not safe to go outside because there's a lot of smoke in the communal areas. She was told to stay calm for the children, and that firefighters would go to them as soon as possible.

Isra Ibrahim called the LFB back at 02.21.32, by which time she told CRO Gotts that the next-door flat was on fire. She pressed the operator as to whether there was actually enough firefighters to rescue them and was again told that firefighters were coming up. When she asked whether the helicopters could assist, she was told, "They are sending up a helicopter so that they can see it from the air but, erm, I' II let them know".

Isra Ibrahim spoke to the control room for a final time at 02.42.06. She told CRO Howson that smoke from the fire next door was coming in. She emphasised that they were five adults with two children under 5 . When Isra was told by the operator to call back if there were any changes, she made it plain that a further call might not be possible, effectively because they would be dead. CRO Howson again assured Isra Ibrahim that the firefighters were making their way up the building, but would not be drawn on what floor the firefighters were

\section*{on at the moment.}

As the panel will be aware, this was a point in time after the stay-put advice had been revised by those in command in the control room, which occurred at around 02.35 , albeit that there would have been a period of time when this change was being communicated to the individual operators. The chair will recall SOM Joanne Smith walking around the control room to inform each colleague of the change. The message had not yet got through to CRO Howson at the time of this call, because the occupants of flat 203 were told that, "The safest place for you at the moment is in the flat ... because you don't know what's going on outside".

A further call was made to the control room at 02.58 .42 to say that, in the previous few minutes, they had spoken to their neighbour, who was stuck in flat 203 with her two children, both under the age of 5 . The LFB operator on this call was again CRO Howson. The caller told the operator that they had tried to get into the building but had been stopped by the police.

For the first time, CRO Howson communicated that if the resident was to phone back then, "We're advising people ... now [that] they need to get out of the building". The caller queried, "But how will they get out of the building? No one's shown them the way". The
operator emphasised that they needed to attempt to get out of the building, and she also said she would let the crews know that Rania was still in the flat.

At around 3 o'clock, Rania spoke to Munira Mahmud. By this time it was dark, the flat was filled with smoke, and Rania was finding it difficult to breathe and coughing. The children could be heard in the background coughing quite a lot and asking for their father. Munira repeatedly tried to convince her friend to leave, telling her she would die if she stayed. However, Rania clearly remained under the impression that she was required to stay put and that someone was coming to rescue her based on what the control room had told her. She also referred to seeing a helicopter. This was the last time the friends spoke.

Rania also spoke to her sister, Sayeda Ibrahim, at around 3 o'clock, and to her brother, Mohammad Ibrahim, after that. There was no further contact.

When Munira Mahmud's friend, Samir, tried to call Rania's number at about 03.15, she did not answer.

As you will hear further in the Elsanousi presentation later in these hearings, it is known from CCTV footage that Abufras Ibrahim fell from the tower at 3.50 .

The remains of Rania Ibrahim and her two daughters
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were found in close proximity and, indeed, commingled in the bathroom area of flat 203. They were also in close proximity to Fathia Ahmed and Isra Ibrahim. The adult women had made a cordon round the children. The remains of Gary Maunders were discovered in the adjacent separate toilet area.

Professor Purser describes how there would have been relatively slow smoke infiltration into the flat over a long period between 1.30 until around 3.11 to 3.20 , when there would have been increased smoke and toxic gas penetration from the external fire outside the bedrooms.

Professor Purser explains how the toxicology sample from Abufras Ibrahim, which showed a sub-incapacitating \(20 \%\) carboxyhaemoglobin level at the time he fell at 3.50 , is an important factor to estimate the time of death for other occupants. Charting the likely accumulation using this point of reference, he calculates a time of death for the adults who remained in the flat, sheltering in the bathroom and toilet area, at approximately 4.20. However, due to the more rapid uptake of gases by young children, he indicates that Hania and Fethia Hassan would have lost consciousness and died before their mother by approximately 3.55 .

Professor Purser's evidence therefore establishes that the medical cause of death can be given as the more
specific and informative cause of inhalation of toxic fumes, rather than the generic conclusion of consistent with the effects of fire, as found in the current post-mortem reports.

Panel, can I conclude that if you watch the Facebook video in your own time, you will see that Rania Ibrahim was a special woman, motivated by her faith, and she conducted herself in a powerful and impressive manner at a point when she increasingly knew that she and her daughters were going to die.

It is right to conclude by paying tribute to Rania, Fethia and Hania's family and friends, including Rania's siblings, and most especially to Hassan, who lost everything that night.

This husband and father has experienced an enormous trauma, but he is also a special person, who works in the AI Manaar Mosque and is known to a lot of people in the area. If you want to understand something about him, and indeed the other parts of this community, you can recall what Mohammed Rasoul said of him during the Module 4 evidence. It's transcript \{Day265/149:11\}:
"... Hassan was out of the country. He'd been looking after his brother for six months ... his brother had his legs amputated in Egypt because of extreme diabetes, and he was looking after him. He hadn't seen

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his kids, his wife and kids, for a long time. He arrived the next morning, and the first place I happened to make contact with him was the AI Manaar Mosque, and I just remember ... I was there trying to make sense of things, trying to find some peace in the mosque, and the moment I saw him and he came over to me ... And as soon as I saw him ... I got up, embraced him. I was trying to keep it together ... I'm the one who broke out crying. And he told me, he just -- his words were, 'Alhamdulillah, Alhamdulillah' ... 'All thanks and praise be to God, whatever we go through'. And I think just that kind of reflection of our Islamic tradition, where whatever you go through in life, you deal with it, you have your struggles, you apply the means outwardly, but inwardly ... we should strive for that inner peace, where we accept ... God's divine decree in things that happen. And for me, I was just -- I was blown away just about how he reacted and how he kept it together. That was inspirational."

Panel, inwardly, Hassan and this community of family and friends strives for peace as part of their faith. But I know it is important to them for me to end the presentation by saying to you that through their faith, they also strive for justice.

That concludes the presentation.
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SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much indeed,
Mr Friedman.
Well, that concludes the last of the presentations
that we're going to hear today. So the Inquiry will
cease at that point, and we shall resume at 10 o'clock
tomorrow morning, when we shall hear presentations in
relation to others who lost their lives in the fire.
Thank you all very much. 10 o'clock tomorrow
morning, please. Thank you.
(2.35 pm)
(The hearing adjourned until 10 am
on Wednesday, 6 July 2022)

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