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Statement of: KEBEDE, BEHAILU

Form MG11(T)

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WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: KEBEDE, BEHAILU

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: CAB DRIVER

This statement (consisting of 3 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: B KEBEDE

Date: 16/06/2017

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

THIS IS A TRANSLATION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

This statement is about the fire which broke out in Grenfell Tower shortly before 1am on Wednesday 14th June 2017.

I lived in flat 16 on the fourth floor of Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Rd in Kensington. I have lived there around twenty-three to twenty-five years. It is a two bed roomed flat – I have been shown a copy of exhibit ML/1, a hand drawn plan of the flat, and I can confirm it accurately represents the layout of the flat. I have indicated various locations on a copy of ML/1 during the course of being interviewed which were then marked up by DC NIGHTINGALE. I produce this copy as my exhibit BEK/1 and a copy of exhibit ML/2, also annotated for reference and BEK/2.

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There are six flats on every floor, with two floors of flats below me and then the ground floor reception. The flat had two smoke alarms installed one or two years ago by the council. I have marked the locations as C and D (C DAVIS) on BEK/1. They were fixed to the ceiling in the corridor and kitchen. I was present when these alarms were installed and heard the noise they were supposed to make when they were tested – it was a loud bleeping. There was also an alarm in the communal corridor in front of the lift, though I never heard this go off and don't know when it was installed.

Two women live with me, Almaz and Elsa. I don't know their surnames. They occupy the bedrooms and I sleep on a mattress in the living room. I met Almaz through a friend as she was looking for a place to stay. She moved in three or four months ago and occupies the bedroom opposite the front door as you come in. She has a key and contributes £90 a week towards costs. She keeps all her stuff in her room. I have known Elsa a long time and she moved in around two years ago and occupies the room next to the living room. She pays me £100 a week. Neither of them smoke or use incense or candles.

I am an Uber driver and on Tuesday evening I finished my last job at about 11.15pm and got home about 11.30. Both women were in their bedrooms and I did not see them. I washed my face and went straight to bed in the living room. The sliding doors to the kitchen were closed. At around 00.55 I was woken up by the sound of the fire alarm, which I think was the one in the kitchen. I can't remember if the one in the corridor came on. The alarm sounded funny, it was bleeping but much fainter than the time I had heard it when it was installed. I couldn't smell anything but went into the kitchen via the main door, which was open. I could see light coloured smoke in the area next to the fridge/freezer and window. It was in the general area there, I cannot be more specific about exactly where it was coming from. This area is marked as E on BEK/2. The window was open by about ten inches. (The window has two central panes that open inwards with a "flip-up" pane running along the top. The windows have keys and were installed as part of the general refurbishment).

The smoke was rising up from floor level and coming towards me. I thought it was coming from a floor below but I did not go to investigate, I was in a state of shock. I immediately went back into the living room and grabbed my phone and a pair of trousers (I was barefoot and in a t-shirt) and banged on Almaz and Elsa's doors, shouting "Fire, fire, fire" before going out into the communal corridor and banging on the neighbours' doors, shouting "Fire" and waking them up. I was in the flat for no more than two or three minutes after seeing the smoke, I didn't even grab my key on my way out. I turned off the electricity supply at the fire box by the front door. I also called the fire brigade from my mobile number [REDACTED] and said there was a fire. I gave my address and told them it was on the fourth floor. I was

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on the phone to them at the same time I was waking up neighbours, I can't remember the exact sequence, so I didn't see either Almaz or Elsa leave the flat. The next time I saw Almaz was on the stairs. She was carrying a large "carry-on" bag. I next saw Elsa outside the building, she didn't have any bags with her. I had left the door open so while I was in the communal corridor I saw that the smoke had changed colour and become darker. The neighbours saw this too through the doorway. The smoke did not enter the communal corridor, it stayed in the kitchen and I never smelt anything. I don't think the alarm in the communal corridor went off.

All the neighbours came out into the corridor, though one of them, a Somali guy, didn't wake up straight away. I then went down the emergency stairs. I don't know how long I was in the corridor, I was panicking. When I got down to the ground floor I went to the grassy area outside. I got a call from someone in the emergency service, I thought it was the police, and I told them I had called the Fire Brigade. The Fire Brigade then arrived and I explained to a fireman that I had seen smoke coming from the area of the fridge and window. This must have been ten or fifteen minutes after I called. It was when I was outside the building that I first saw flames coming out by the window. I can't remember where they were coming from exactly, whether it was my floor or not, I was too panicky. The flames were very small at that point – I took some photos on my phone.

When I saw the smoke in the kitchen it was coming from the area of the fridge-freezer between the cooker and window. This is a Hotpoint fridge-freezer which I bought about five years ago new from somewhere in Brent Cross. I paid cash, I can't remember how much but it wouldn't have been more than £270. I was alone when I bought it and got a receipt but don't know if I kept it or where it would be now. It had a standard one year guarantee, which I didn't extend. I've never had any problems with it except when it got iced over about a year ago and I had to defrost it for a couple of days. It's never been faulty. It is plugged into a double socket behind it, half way up the wall, marked A on BEK/2 and is kept constantly plugged in and on. The socket was marked "fridge" by the council. The other socket is unused. All the sockets were installed by the council as part of a refurbishment of the whole building quite a long time ago.

There is another, smaller, fridge in the kitchen which I had stored on top of an old freezer in the corner opposite, by the window. The smaller one was brought by Elsa while the fridge-freezer was being defrosted so it was only used for a few days. It works but I keep it unplugged so as not to use up electricity. The freezer under it stopped working about nine years ago so it is also unplugged. I had not bought it long before it stopped working so I called in a fridge technician from the Yellow Pages who told

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me the fuse had gone. He wanted money to replace it but it was too much so I decided to leave it. I haven't got rid of it because I haven't actually had much use out of it and I thought I would get it fixed easily. When I was using it it was plugged into a socket in the living room via an extension cable because where the fridge-freezer is now there used to be a kitchen cabinet and the freezer cable was too short to extend to the socket there. I cut out the kitchen cabinet myself when I bought the fridge-freezer. I can't remember the make of the freezer, I paid about \$400 for it. I don't know what make the small fridge was. The kitchen has laminate flooring which I laid myself around twenty years ago.

I use a pre charged key to pay for the electricity meter. I pay for this in a shop and generally spend about £20 to £30 a month. I am the only one with the key, the woman sometimes contribute cash towards it. Everyone uses the kitchen but none of us uses it regularly as they both leave early and come back late and I also am out a lot. I don't know if either of them used it that evening before I got back. We all eat in our own rooms. Besides the socket behind the fridge-freezer there are three others, which I have marked F, G and H on BEK/2. They are all double sockets. The other appliances in the kitchen are an electric cooker, a washing machine, a microwave, kettle and a toaster. They're all quite old and I couldn't say what makes they are. On a typical day the fridge-freezer, cooker, washing machine, microwave and toaster would be plugged in to their nearest sockets but only the fridge-freezer would have the switch on at the socket, although the cooker might have had the switch on too. The kettle is normally disconnected. There are no extension leads, I have never had to call an electrician or report an electrical fault to the council and am not aware of any problems with power surges or sparks etc. I have never had a problem with the electricity supply.

I only occasionally smoke but never in the flat, I did not smoke that night and I did not drink either. There is no gas in the flat and I do not use candles or incense.

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