

## IN THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

## SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF HANAN WAHABI

I, Hanan Wahabi, previously of Flat 66, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor of Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Road, London, W11 1TG, WILL SAY as follows:

1. This witness statement should be read alongside my first Inquiry witness statement dated 18 April 2018 (which I will refer to as "my first Inquiry witness statement"). The purpose of this witness statement is to correct, clarify and add to my first Inquiry witness statement.

**Concierge Desk**

2. At paragraph 17 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I explain that before the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower, there was a concierge desk on the ground floor of the building. I should add that when the concierge desk was in operation, someone manned the desk at all times. On Mondays through Fridays, someone employed by the KCTMO sat at the concierge desk during the day from 9am until 5pm. The KCTMO had their offices on the third floor of Grenfell Tower before the refurbishment, and it was common knowledge that the person at the concierge desk who worked during office hours was a KCTMO employee. The last KCTMO employee I can remember who worked at the concierge desk was a Spanish lady named Victoria.
3. The KCTMO staff at the concierge desk had access to the names and other details of each

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of the Grenfell Tower residents and which flat they lived in. As the KCTMO's offices were within Grenfell Tower, the computer at the concierge desk was probably hooked up to their general IT system.

4. An outsourced security guard would take over the concierge desk on weekday nights and also on the weekends, both day and night. I'm not sure what company they were from. We paid for the outsourced security guard through our service charge; this cost was itemised on our service charge bill. The same security guard always seemed to be on duty when I walked past the concierge desk, although I presume someone relieved him at times. I don't know his name, but I used to chat to him. He recognised me and some residents. I'm not sure whether he was given access to the computer or provided with a list of residents and their flat numbers. Residents would access the building using their fob and keys, and generally he did not check who they were. He only asked questions of people who didn't have a fob or keys. I don't think the security guard had contact details (like mobile phone numbers, for example) for the residents either. He did have access to CCTV screens, however, which were located just next to the concierge desk, and showed what was happening inside the lifts. Anyone walking past the concierge desk could also see the CCTV screens. By the time of the fire, we didn't have a security guard on the ground floor. The CCTV screens had also been removed.
5. I attended a meeting between Grenfell Tower residents and the KCTMO during the refurbishment at which other residents and I argued that the security guard and concierge desk should be kept after the refurbishment. I am not sure of the date of this meeting, but it was held in the original community room, which was just outside and opposite the tower. KCTMO said that keeping the security guard would increase the service charge.
6. Peter Maddison was the Director of Assets and Regeneration at KCTMO. His office was

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located in the Network Hub, 292a Kensal Road, London W10 5BE and his contact numbers were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. His email address was [REDACTED]@kctmo.org.uk. He told us that the KCTMO had done a questionnaire for Grenfell Tower residents about whether to keep the concierge desk, and the majority said they weren't willing to pay the extra amount. I think I might have completed the questionnaire but I'm not sure. As a compromise position, we asked for CCTV cameras to be put in on each floor (they were only in the lifts). But the KCTMO refused to do this for financial reasons.

### **Floor Numbering**

7. At paragraph 17 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I mention that the floors of Grenfell Tower were renumbered following the refurbishment. I would add that the new floor number on my floor was stenciled with black paint on the white walls in the stairwell.

### **Refurbishment**

8. At paragraph 20 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I describe the problems with the windows that Rydon replaced in our flat during the refurbishment. I would add that the new windows opened fully if you took the latch off, and partially when the latch was on. I was concerned about the fact that the windows opened so widely when the window was unlatched, as I feared that someone could accidentally fall out, especially as I had children. I had heard about a boy who died falling out of a window by accident in another residential tower nearby.
9. A 2 bedroom show flat was open for a few months during the refurbishment on one of the higher floors in Grenfell Tower. I believe this was in 2015/2016. It was created so residents could see what the flats would look like after the refurbishment. I went to meetings open to Grenfell Tower residents at the show flat several times, and what I saw concerned me. It

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was only when I saw the show flat that I realised that the new windows opened fully. It was also only then that I realised that the new boilers would be installed in the hallway rather than the kitchen, which had been the plan at the outset.

10. When I made complaints to Rydon and KCTMO about the various problems arising from the refurbishment, as I describe at paragraphs 14 to 25 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I usually called Lynda Price at Rydon on her work mobile number. Her number was [REDACTED]. I still have it saved in my phone. Lydia was our contact person at Rydon. Before Lynda was in that job, there was someone called Maxine. I can't remember Maxine's surname but I have her work number saved in my phone as well: [REDACTED]. I used to call Maxine on this number when I had complaints. I didn't use email to contact Lynda or Maxine. I also sometimes complained to Claire Williams at KCTMO. Her email address was [REDACTED]@kctmo.org.uk, and the number to contact her was 0800 137 111. She was the project manager. Her office was at the same address as Peter Maddison's. I would meet her either in her office or in the show flat and when I made complaints she would refer them to Rydon.

11. Rydon had offices in portacabins on the premises. Lynda's office was located in one of these portacabins. She would come to our flat in person to check the problem when I made complaints. For the problems with the windows that I explain in paragraphs 19 to 21 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I called Lynda several times and she came more than once to our flat to see the windows herself. After she came, she arranged for workers to attend. They came more than once, and put in more filler to try to reduce the draught. This improved but did not fully resolve the situation. The kitchen window remained the draughtiest.

12. The problem with the living room window coming off of the top hinge continued even after

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Rydon came to fix it twice. The workers taught [REDACTED] how to put the window back on the hinge when it came off, so [REDACTED] did this himself from that point onwards.

13. I mention at paragraph 23 of my first Inquiry witness statement that the extractor fan in Abdulaziz's kitchen gave a lot of trouble. I should add that ours was also noisy, though never as bad as the one in Abdulaziz's flat. A lot of residents complained of the noise from the new extractor fans in our Grenfell Action Group meetings and meetings with KCTMO. As a result, Rydon agreed to make an adjustment to the extractor fans throughout the building. I am not sure if they followed through with this in every flat, but they did come to our flat and adjusted something in the fan. The fan looked the same after the adjustment, but the sound did get a bit quieter. I wasn't at home when they came round.

14. I mention at paragraph 20 of my first Inquiry witness statement that the key locks in the windows in [REDACTED]'s room broke soon after the new windows were put in. I should add that despite our complaints to Rydon, Rydon made no attempt to fix this problem.

15. At paragraph 22 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I explain that Rydon put in new gas pipes in our flat during the refurbishment. I should add that Lynda noticed splatters on our kitchen ceiling when she came to see the flat before the new gas pipes and boiler were installed. She said that these marks looked like asbestos and that we shouldn't touch the ceiling. She said a specialist should come to see it, but no specialist ever came to visit, to my knowledge, and the new boiler was put in anyway. The workers painted over the splatters and nothing more was said. I was worried, but I figured that they knew best.

16. I should also add that we had problems with the radiators that were installed during the refurbishment. Rydon showcased the new radiators in a showroom on the ground floor and showed us how to adjust the temperature and so on. When ours were installed, the radiator

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in the corridor didn't heat up and water leaked from it. I complained to Lynda and workers from Rydon came and tried to fix it. They said that the boiler was the problem. They came a couple of times. After the workers came, most of the radiators were okay. The one in the corridor still didn't get very hot, but I didn't complain again since the others worked.

### Grenfell Action Group

17. I discuss my participation as a committee member of the Grenfell Action Group at paragraphs 25 to 29 of my first Inquiry witness statement. I should add that initially, the core committee included David Collins, Edward Daffarn, Marcio Gomes, Turufat Yilma Girma, Antonio Roncolato, William Thompson, and myself. David Collins originally led the Grenfell Action Group although he moved out of Grenfell Tower a few months before the fire. Previously, he lived in flat 185, on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor of the building, the same floor as my brother, for about a year and a half. He was very active in standing up for residents' rights. He wrote parts of the Grenfell Action Group blog, and he met personally with the KCTMO and RBKC to discuss concerns about the refurbishment with them. After David left Grenfell, no one took over the lead as such. We all just worked together.

18. Other residents were also quite active in the work of the Grenfell Action Group, although they were not part of the committee and some didn't put their names on the paperwork. Flora Neda, Maryam Adam, Steve Power, Dennis Murphy, Nadia Choucair, and Tunde Awoderu (David Collins' landlord) were active in the group and came to many of the meetings. My sister-in-law Faouzia El-Wahabi, niece Nur Huda El-Wahabi, and Yusuf (Mouna El-Ogbani's husband) used to come to the meetings as well. Everyone became really close from working together.

19. The Grenfell Action Group initially met once a week, and sometimes even twice a week. Later we changed the frequency to once a fortnight. Sometimes it was just the committee

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members that met in Edward Daffarn's or David Collins' flat. When we met as a bigger group, we held meetings in the original community room opposite the tower. We put up posters about the meetings in the lifts, so you could see them as you walked in. Occasionally, when we were meeting with KCTMO and/or Rydon, the meetings were held in the show flat. There is a video recording of a meeting in the show flat, which was taken by Constantine Gras for RBKC.

20. At committee meetings, we decided as a what would be added to the Grenfell Action Group blog, and then Edward Daffarn and David Collins wrote the blog posts. There were posters put up about the blog in the tower.
21. The committee members were on an email group, and there were frequent emails with minutes of meetings and about admin. Edward Daffarn and David Collins drafted the minutes.
22. At paragraph 27 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I describe the petition that the Grenfell Action Group started to complain about safety and quality issues with the refurbishment. I should mention that the complaints and signatories were emailed to Judith Blakeman, a local councillor and board member of the KCTMO, as well as Peter Madison of KCTMO. Edward or David would have sent those emails.
23. I would add that the Grenfell Action Group also complained to KCTMO about emergency access to Grenfell Tower. Before the Kensington Aldridge Academy was built, there were football fields in front of Grenfell Tower. There was also a car park. There was ample space for fire engines and emergency services to get close to the building. On one occasion, an air ambulance landed there. But the Kensington Aldridge Academy was built on that space, greatly reducing access for emergency services vehicles to the building. During the

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refurbishment, portacabins for Rydon were put outside as well. The space became congested. Although we complained about this, nothing was done. Our complaints were made to various people, including Kiran Singh, Head of Neighbourhoods North at KCTMO. His number was [REDACTED]. His office was at the same address as Peter Maddison's and Claire's. His email address was [REDACTED]@kctmo.org.uk.

#### Escape from Grenfell Tower

24. At paragraph 42 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I say, "We didn't call 999 before we left and we didn't try to cover our faces with wet towels or anything like that. We just got out". I should mention that while I didn't use a wet towel, I did use my headscarf, which was made from a thin material, to cover my nose and mouth, occasionally as I made my way down the stairwell.

#### Aftermath of the fire

25. At paragraph 64 of my first Inquiry witness statement, I say that later in the morning of 14 June 2017, I went to the Rugby Portobello Club. I should add that it was my nephew, [REDACTED] who arranged for the Rugby Portobello Club to be opened. It wasn't RBKC who arranged this. [REDACTED] knew the club's caretaker, Chris, who lives nearby. Initially, he knocked on the wrong door and spoke to a lady who works at Kensington Town Hall. She directed him to the right flat and Chris opened up the club.

26. During the night of the fire and the next day on 14 June 2017, I didn't notice anyone from RBKC or KCTMO taking charge of the situation. The community organised itself. I did see someone who said that he was there to represent KCTMO. He was wearing a lanyard with a name badge, but I don't remember his name. I saw him at the end of Walmer Road towards the Rugby Portobello Club. I told him the names of my family and he wrote down their names and my mobile number on his notebook. I asked him to get back to me but he never

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did. I didn't see anyone from RBKC or TMO until much later that day.

27. The first people to come to help when it was still dark, in the early hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> of June were from the mosque who came with blankets and water. Then the media came. I was wearing my bathrobe and it was clear that media representatives had identified me as a resident because they asked me for interviews. If the media identified me and other residents with ease, then RBKC and KCTMO people should have been able to identify us. But I wasn't approached by any officials, apart from the one man from KCTMO that I saw at the end of Walmer Road, until late in the day on 14 June 2017, when people from RBKC came to the Rugby Club and allocated my family a room at the [REDACTED], as I describe at paragraph 66 of my first Inquiry witness statement.

**Calls with my brother Abdulaziz and his family**

28. Since signing my first Inquiry witness statement, I have listened to the audio recordings of various emergency services calls made by Abdulaziz and his family on the night of the fire. On one call, which lasts for 13 minutes, the caller is passed between LFB and BT operators. I do not believe that a transcript of this call has yet been made available to the Inquiry or my solicitors. In my view, it is a very meaningful call, because in the background of this call, I could hear my brother say something to the effect that, "if we hadn't listened to them", meaning the LFB call operators, "we could have gotten out". I agree with him.
29. I have listened to the audio recording of a 59 minute call made by my family at 1:36am, initially answered by a BT operator and then put through to LFB at 1:38a.m. On it, you can hear background conversations which are not fully reflected on the transcript of this call (LFB00000677). Most importantly, you can hear my brother's wife, Faouzia, telling my brother, while he is on the phone with LFB, that someone is telling them to come downstairs. That someone was me, and other family members at times. It was also me who

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told them that the fire was next door. I would also like to add that the photograph that [REDACTED] took of Faouzia at the window of their flat, which I refer to at paragraph 52 of my first Inquiry witness statement, was taken at 1:37 a.m.

**I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.**

Signed: H. Wahabi ..... Dated: 22/10/18 .....

**Hanan Wahabi**

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