

Grenfell Testimony Week 2024

A Note from the Chief Coordinators of Testimony Week

This summary exists to ensure a written record of Testimony Week. It has been developed by Testimony Week's Chief Coordinators, Minnie Rahman and Gracie Mae Bradley. It includes quotations and summaries from testimonies only where the people who gave testimony have consented to this.

The courage, strength, emotion, depth and gravitas of the testimonies delivered during Testimony Week cannot rightfully or fully be captured in writing, and especially not by people other than those who gave testimony.

Please note that this version of the summary transcript has been updated to include testimonies 11 and 26. It was finalised 24th May 2024.

Introduction

Testimony Week took place from 23 to 26 January 2024. It was included as part of an agreement which was signed in 2023, and settled a damages claim brought by a large group of bereaved, survivors and residents affected by the Grenfell Tower Fire, against a group of Defendants whom they claimed were responsible for the Fire.

Many of the bereaved, survivors and residents affected by the Grenfell Tower Fire wished to express publicly, in particular to those they hold responsible, the impact the fire had on them and the people they care about. The purpose of Testimony Week was to provide them with a platform to do so. It also gave participants an opportunity to outline the changes they believe should be made to ensure that such a tragedy is never repeated.

The shape and content of the event was driven by the people participating. Their contributions included live spoken testimony, pre-recorded film and audio, written statements, and other works such as paintings and poetry. As well as attending presentations in the main Assembly Hall space, visitors were welcome to visit the exhibition halls throughout the week, where they could view artworks contributed by participants, including 'situated testimony' video interviews.

Testimony Week was completely independent of, and had no impact upon, the ongoing Grenfell Tower Inquiry which is due to publish its final report later in 2024. Nor did it have any connection with, or impact on, any forthcoming decision by the Crown Prosecution Service as to whether to pursue criminal charges after publication of that report. In those respects, the campaign for justice by the bereaved, survivors and local residents continues.

Senior representatives from all Defendants involved in the settlement of the claim were invited to attend Testimony Week: Arconic, Celotex, Exova, Kingspan, Central Government (the Home Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, the RBKC Tenant Management Organisation, Rydon, Whirlpool and the London Fire Brigade. All Defendants apart from Arconic accepted the invitation and were present in the main Assembly Hall. Other groups in the invited audience included politicians, professionals from relevant fields such as architecture and building safety, representatives from human rights and social justice organisations, journalists, and academics.

Testimony Week was convened by Lord David Neuberger, Baroness Lola Young, and Bill Marsh. Their role was to bear witness to the experiences of those who were affected by the Grenfell Tower Fire. This included remembering the seventy-two people who lost their lives, and who must never be forgotten. It also meant lending strength and support to those whose lives have changed immeasurably, and helping to ensure that lessons are learned that would prevent another tragedy of this nature from occurring again. The Convenors were also the stewards of the key values that informed the design of Testimony Week: dignity, fairness, recognition, respect, and choice.

Format of Testimony

Bereaved, survivors and residents who signed the settlement agreement were free to choose whether or not to give testimony, and those who did choose to participate were given the freedom to decide what format that testimony would take.

The format of testimony can be divided broadly into the following groups:

Live Testimony

A person or group of people stood on stage and delivered their testimony in the format of a speech or presentation, in person, in front of an audience.

Pre-Recorded Testimony

A person or group of people recorded an interview, or compiled existing video, images, or audio recordings into a film. This film was played on screen during Testimony Week to an audience.

Artwork

Bereaved, survivors and local residents who had signed the settlement agreement were able to contribute objects and artworks for display in the exhibition spaces of Testimony Week.

A series of paintings by Gina Smith, who lived in Flat 95, on the 12th floor of Grenfell Tower, were displayed, as well as a collage by a resident of the Walkways, who wished to remain anonymous. In addition were displayed a poem and two artworks written and painted by Sheila, who lived and passed away in Flat 132 on the 16th floor of Grenfell Tower.

The bereaved family of Khadija Saye (12 December 1992 – 14 June 2017) contributed a further set of artworks. Khadija Saye lived in Flat 173, on the 20th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Situated Testimony

Nine people affected by the Grenfell Tower fire – bereaved family members, survivors, and nearby residents – worked with researchers from Forensic Architecture, at Goldsmiths, University of London, to tell their stories using a 3D model of the tower and its surrounding environment.

This process of interviewing, which is called 'situated testimony', uses 3D models of environments in which traumatic events occurred, to help survivors and witnesses to those events to access their memories in new ways.

The situated testimony films, along with a group film combining individual testimonies, were available to view by everyone who attended Testimony Week, including dedicated screening time for Defendants.

Edward Daffarn

Edward, a co-founder of the Grenfell Action Group, lived in Flat 134 on the 16th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Sarah Ali

Sarah lives with her family in Barandon Walk.

Marcio Gomes

Marcio lived with his wife and two daughters in Flat 183 on the 21st floor of Grenfell Tower. Their unborn son, Logan, became the youngest victim of the fire.

Audience

Open Sessions

Those who were delivering testimony in an 'open session', taking place in the Assembly Hall, had control over who was invited as an audience member outside of the Defendant group.

Closed Sessions

There were a small number of 'closed sessions' attended by Defendants only. These sessions were closed to a general audience and to those who had signed the Settlement Agreement, either at the request of the person delivering testimony, or because the content of the testimony contained moving imagery of fire, imagery from the inside of the tower after the fire, or was considered to contain images or descriptions which would have been traumatic for a general audience. These sessions were only closed after discussion with and with the consent of the person delivering testimony.

Bereaved, survivors and residents who signed the Settlement Agreement were welcome to attend any part of Testimony Week, outside of the closed sessions.

Day One – Summary of proceedings

Testimony Week Opening Remarks – *Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.*

The week began with a welcome and an introduction by the conveners, Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

The conveners expressed their gratitude to all taking part and paid tribute to the courage, generosity and resilience of all the bereaved and survivors of the tragedy. They asked the audience to listen actively and honestly. The conveners explained the five important values underpinning Testimony Week: choice, fairness, recognition, respect and dignity. They emphasised the importance of justice, equality and preserving the memory of those lost to the people giving testimony.

“If we truly want to be able to say in all sincerity that nothing like this must ever happen again, then we will need to ensure that the future isn’t beset by any form of historical or institutional amnesia.” – Baroness Lola Young.

Seventy-two victims

To mark the beginning of each day of Testimony Week, the names of the 72 victims of the Grenfell Tower Fire were read while their names appeared on screen. This was followed by a 72 second silence in remembrance.

Abdeslam Sebbar

Ali Yawar Jafari

Denis Murphy

Mohammad Alhajali

Jeremiah Deen

Zainab Deen

Steven Power

Sheila

Joseph (Joe) Daniels

Husna Begum

Kamru Miah

Mohammed Hamid

Mohammed Hanif

Rabeya Begum

Khadija Khalloufi

Vincent Chiejina

Fatemeh Afrasiabi

Sakina Afrasehabi

Isaac Paulos

Hamid Kani

Berkti Haftom

Biruk Haftom

Gary Maunders

Deborah (Debbie) Lamprell

Ernie Vital

Majorie Vital

Maria Del Pilar (Pily) Burton

Amal Ahmedin

Amaya Ahmedin

Amna Mahmud Idris

Mohamednur Tuccu

Victoria King

Alexandra Atala

Mary Mendy

Khadija Saye

Farah Hamdan

Leena Belkadi

Malak Belkadi

Omar Belkadi

Jessica Urbano Ramirez

Ligaya Moore

Abdulaziz El-Wahabi

Faouzia El-Wahabi

Mehdi El-Wahabi

Nur Huda El-Wahabi

Yasin El-Wahabi

Logan Gomes

Firdaws Hashim

Hashim Kedir

Nura Jemal

Yahya Hashim

Yaqub Hashim

Fatima Choucair

Mierna Choucair

Nadia Choucair

Sirria Choucair

Zainab Choucair

Bassem Choukair

Anthony (Tony) Disson

Mariam Elgwahry

Eslah Elgwahry

Raymond (Moses) Bernard

Gloria Trevisan

Marco Gottardi

Fethia Hassan

Hania Hassan

Rania Ibrahim

Hesham Rahman

Mohamed (Saber) Amied Neda

Abufra Mohamed Ibrahim

Isra Ibrahim

Fathia Elsanuosi Ahmed

Testimony 1 - Marcio Gomes

Marcio Gomes lived in Flat 183 on the 21st floor of Grenfell Tower. Marcio's son, Logan Gomes, was stillborn and died as a result of the fire.

In a live testimony, Marcio described what his life would have been like if his son Logan had been born by emergency c-section and had not died on June 14th 2017.

"In the blink of an eye, Logan transformed from a toddler to a chatty, imaginative pre-schooler. His days were filled with finger painting, building block towers, and the uncontainable excitement of show-and-tell. Each evening, he plied us with tales of his adventures, his eyes sparkling with the magic of a world seen through the lens of innocence."

"This is what Logan's life would have been. This was what our life would have been like, except it would have been even better because Logan would have lived, and in living, would have been even more full of life, and more himself than I have been able to conjure him. This is what you have taken away from me."

Testimony 2 - 'I Don't Remember' 'I Don't Recall'

The idea for this film came from several claimants. It reflects their personal experience of listening to evidence from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, when witnesses from defendant organisations answered that they couldn't recall the answers to questions they were asked.

The film compiles a series of audio recordings from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry in which senior representatives of many of the defendant organisations present, including RBKC, Government and private companies, repeatedly answer that they do not recall or do not remember key conversations, information or events taking place in the lead-up to the fire.

"By all means, sir, feel free to ask me as many questions as [you] like, but could I respectfully remind you that you did promise that we would be away this morning, and I have changed my schedules to fit this in. I do have an extremely busy day meeting people, but this is more important than anything, but I would urge you to use your time wisely." – Lord Pickles, Day 262 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry as quoted in the film.

Testimony 3 - Behailu Kebede

Behailu Kebede lived in Flat 16 on the 4th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Behailu did not attend Testimony Week in person for reasons explained in his statement. His statement was read by an actor, Michael Workeye, in the presence of his family and friends.

"After the fire, I wanted and needed to meet the families of the bereaved, and to pay my respects to the deceased, and also meet up with other survivors from the Tower. But with all the press coverage going on, I did not have the courage to do this. I just wanted to hide away. I became paranoid, I thought people were following me, I felt traumatised in my every waking breath."

"I do want the defendants to understand what happens to an individual like me, an ordinary person, not someone with wealth or power, who is caught up in a catastrophe, created and caused by wealthy and powerful forces in our society, who then stay silent to protect themselves."

Testimony 4 - Emma O'Connor

Emma O'Connor lived in Flat 171 on the 20th floor of Grenfell Tower. Emma describes herself as having autism and she is disabled, with limited mobility.

Emma's statement was read out by Pia Baker while Emma was present beside Pia on stage.

"No-one seemed to think about what would happen in a fire when the lifts could no longer be used."

"10 fire stations closed in 2014, leaving just 102 stations. I cannot stress this enough. These closures are an absolute disgrace. The maths doesn't make sense. It's a fact that house fire deaths actually went up, not down, after the closure of stations. Over the past 6 years, all I can see is money put before lives. Why do our lives matter so little? We need to be like Scotland and scrap the 18 metre rule. Put lives before money, public services before money."

Testimony 5 - Sandra Ruiz

Sandra Ruiz's niece Jessica Urbano Ramirez (12) died in Grenfell Tower. Jessica lived in Flat 176 on the 20th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Sandra's testimony took the form of a pre-recorded interview, following which Sandra addressed the audience live.

"I feel that she was managed into her death, and that's a strong statement to make, but I stand by that. Because there was time. At that stage, there was time. Instead of keeping her on a call, there was time to have saved her."

"This loss, this pain, is never-ending, and you should know that. But the important thing here is what you do with the information that you hear and the pain that you see. Because you see, it would have all been worthless if next week you go back to your offices and resume business as usual."

Testimony 6 - Mustafa Abdu

Mustafa Abdu lived in Flat 184 on the 21st floor of Grenfell Tower.

Mustafa's testimony was given as a written statement, read live to the audience by actor Michael Workeye.

"[It is] so hard to believe the failings from all parties involved in the process of the decision making, starting from the consultation, the preparation of the design, the planning and installation. No one was aware of the danger waiting to happen. No one raised the concern with regard to the health and wellbeing of the residents. They simply put profit before safety, and sadly, as the result of the irresponsible and negligent decisions from all the parties involved there was a huge loss of human lives, cut[ting] short people's journeys of hope and vision. All gone forever."

"The loss and damage inflicted cannot be cured particularly on those bereaved individuals who have lost their family members."

Testimony 7 - Daniela Burigotto and Giannino Gottardi

Daniela Burigotto and Giannino Gottardi's son, Marco Gottardi (27), and his girlfriend Gloria Trevisan (26), died in Grenfell Tower. Marco and Gloria lived in Flat 202 on the 23rd floor.

Daniela and Giannino's testimony took the form of a statement written in Italian, translated into English and read by a friend of the family, Valentina Fruzzetti.

"Our son Marco arrived in London with Gloria to gain experience and create a future as an architect. His CV had enabled him to find a job at the C.I.A.O. Studio in London, less than two months after his arrival. He was excited because he had managed to realise his dream, but after only a month and thirteen days of work, the Grenfell Tower fire shattered all his dreams and pierced our hearts."

"Will the British justice system succeed in inflicting the right and proper punishments on those responsible, but more importantly, how much longer will we have to wait for this to happen? If we think that our son Marco graduated in restoration and died, at only 27 years of age, because of a restoration job carried out circumventing any form of safety and prevention, in London, near one of the most important residential areas of the city; where will this society, where everything is based on money, go?"

Testimony 8 - Willie Thompson

Willie Thompson lived in Flat 52 on the 8th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Willie's testimony took the form of a pre-recorded interview, which he introduced himself in person.

"I can't emphasise enough the problems that we had with them in Grenfell Tower, the failure to look after people, to respect people, it was absolutely horrendous. And especially the vulnerable where they knew they could just bully them and do what they wanted to do and walk away from it."

"We as lay people were looking at this fire and knew they couldn't put this fire out. They couldn't get to it. They couldn't get to the side of it. And at this stage, it was too high anyway, it was just, there was no way. So we screamed and screamed and screamed, 'get the people out, fuck the fire, you can't get it, you can't get the fire out, get the people out'. They just didn't. It was frightening. We knew, we just knew people were dying as we were looking at it."

"I was brought up Catholic, I'm a Catholic boy, and I was taught it's a sin to hate, but I fucking hate them [Defendants]. I'll make my peace with God, but I fucking hate them."

Testimony 9 - Rasha Ibrahim and Moaz Shahin

Rasha Ibrahim's sister Rania Ibrahim (31), and nieces, Fethia Hassan (4) and Hania Hassan (3), died in Grenfell Tower. Rania, Fethia, and Hania lived in Flat 203 on the 23rd floor. Moaz Shahin is Rasha's son.

Rasha and Moaz's testimony was given as a pre-recorded interview. Rasha introduced her film in Arabic through an interpreter, Nacera Silarbi.

"Rania was my hero. She gave me strength and support and everything else. I lost the meaning of life when I lost her. It was unbearable to lose her, especially the way she died, or she died with her two daughters. Rania and her two daughters deserved to have a great and beautiful life." - Rasha Ibrahim

"I wanted it to stay as it was because if she hadn't died, I wouldn't be here, I would still be in Egypt and I would still have a better life." - Moaz Shahin

"I just hope that people's support at the time of the accident was better than what happened, just because you're a native means that you're prioritised and foreigners keep being lost, with no guidance. I didn't like how the government dealt with me at first. They treated a foreigner with weak English skills badly. No-one explained anything to me." - Rasha Ibrahim

Testimony 10 - Georgina Smith

Georgina (Gina) Smith lived in Flat 95 on the 12th floor of Grenfell Tower. Georgina gave her testimony in person.

"Something that is still so difficult to me is that we were 12 and 13, and we kept having conversations about the death of our friends. It was a concept that none of us that age should be familiar with. There is a sub-community of people my age who grew up with the same trauma and experiences. As young people, what we witnessed that night will stay with us forever, and our hearts will remain heavy."

"Show me empathy, show me compassion, and take accountability for your neglectful actions. Those in power must strive to use their influence responsibly and promote inclusivity, diversity, and social justice. Organisations and institutions can easily implement policies that address systemic inequalities and create environments that empower all individuals, regardless of their background or identity."

Day One Closing Remarks – Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

Day Two - Summary of proceedings

Day Two Opening Remarks – Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

Testimony 11 - Representatives of the Ethio-Eritrean community of Bereaved and Survivors.

This testimony was given by six members of the Ethio-Eritrean Survivor and Bereaved Group. The Habesha (Ethiopians and Eritreans) community were the second largest demographic to suffer deaths from the Grenfell Tower fire. Each member of the group delivered testimony in turn and in different formats. Daniel Beyene interpreted for members of the group where required, and delivered his own testimony on his experiences working with the Ethio-Eritrean group for several years following the fire. To end, Mark Scott read out a statement on behalf of the group.

Paulos Tekle and Genet Shawo

Paulos and Genet's testimony began with a film in loving memory of their son, Isaac. It included footage of Isaac's friends and teachers, as well as footage of Paulos delivering a speech at a commemoration hearing. The film displayed the Isaac Paulos Centre for Education and Well-being, which offers therapy spaces, an activity-packed sensory room, modern classrooms, intervention rooms, a spacious kitchen, and a reflective garden area, which has been founded in Isaac's memory. The film ended with footage of a Channel 4 interview featuring Paulos and Genet.

Genet delivered a live testimony in Amharic, with the assistance of the interpreter, Daniel. Paulos delivered a live testimony, which featured images of Grenfell Tower on fire and of Paulos on the window ledge of his flat, trying to escape on the day of the tragedy.

"We named our firstborn Isaac in our mother tongue language, Amharic; it means joy, to love. Isaac made us very happy every day, he was my spitting image, and he was my little man." – Paulos Tekle

"One thing we are asking the Memorial Commission, we want the building to remain as it is. Because we don't want it changed, we haven't claimed the body yet. We want that building to remain. Whatever you do on the building, please leave it as it is. Do not detach from our loved ones. From where I came from, in my culture, you don't touch where the body is, especially [when a person has been] lost in the manner we lost our loved ones." – Genet Shawo

"At around 2am the fire fighter came and knocked on our door, and we opened the door. We thought he was going to rescue us because the fire started over one hour ago. He advised us to put a blanket on the bottom of the front door and to open the windows and left us. I remember he said you are safe; It is not on your side. How come he said that? Before he reached the 18th floor where we were, the fire had already reached the top of the floor and spread to both sides." [Level of the fire image is included in the testimony video] – Paulos Tekle

"All these fire-fighters were professionals and made a decision to [tell us to] remain in the flats. If we had taken that advice at that time, I guarantee you we would not be here today. Around the same time, other fire-fighters went one floor above us and rescued the people who were there. I am glad they survived, but why? Why not us? Why, why were we treated differently to the others?" – Paulos

"I'm torn with grief not knowing what happened in the last minutes. How did he [Isaac] die? What was he thinking? Did he call out for me or his mum? I will never know. ... I have to live with this the rest of my life not knowing this. I want all of you [defendants] to try and imagine what that feels like. You simply will not be able to unless it happened to you. So, when you think about compensation as being the end of the matter, it isn't. It isn't." – Paulos Tekle

"About 4 years ago I visited the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. It showed the horrors of what happened almost 75 years ago. I wondered why people would want to see such awful images and be reminded of it. I realised that it is absolutely vital that people see these things to make sure what happened at that time never happens again. That is why, in my view, we need to make sure that the tower, in all its horrifying glory remains as it

is as a reminder of what happened to innocent families during the course of one tragic night. It should be seen from all over London and beyond. Every time a person sets eyes on it, they should not only feel sadness for those that died with anger as to how it was that all of you did things which led to the death of 72 people and suffering of hundreds of others.” – Paulos Tekle

Hayelom Woldegabir

Hayelom’s Woldegabir’s son Biruk Haftom (12) died in Grenfell Tower. Biruk’s mother Birukti Haftom (29) also died in the fire. Biruk and Birukti lived in Flat 155 on the 18th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Hayelom’s testimony began with a video in memory of Biruk and Birukti. After the film, Hayelom addressed the audience in Tigrinya through the interpreter, Daniel.

“There are no words to express it... this is sad to witness, a child watching their mother die before him... you would wish for a mother and son to live together, not to die together.”

“Yes, one day we will all die, but the manner in which my son and his mother died always makes me angry... I cannot explain it.”

“The Grenfell disaster’s story does not end; it continues as there are more ‘why?’ questions than answers. This is from [monetary] greed, no accountability... they [defendants] never took responsibility. There was discrimination and unfairness.”

“One of the principles for the Fire Brigades is to save lives, but where were they when 72 people died? To save a life, you do not need a degree, you do not need an education, you just need a sense of humanity.”

“Nobody is above the law, whether you are a politician or company director, you’re not above the law. I hope one day, we will get justice in the name of my son.”

Ibrahim Toukou

Ibrahim Toukou’s brother Mohamednur Tuccu (44) died in Grenfell Tower. Mohamednur’s wife Amal Ahmedin (34), and daughter, Amaya Tuccu (3), also died in the tower. They lived at Flat 166 on the 19th floor. Amal’s cousin, Amna Idris (27), was visiting on the night of the fire, and also died in the tower.

Ibrahim gave a live testimony, addressing the audience in Tigrinya, through an interpreter, Daniel Beyene. Images of Mohamednur, Amal, Amaya and their family, played in the background.

“Mohammed Nur is my life, that is how I would express our relationship. He was my hope and big brother. Our entire family sees his death as a dream. My mother, until now, has not registered that she has lost her son, his wife and her beautiful granddaughter.”

“The owners of the companies and the defendants, whether they are public or private sector...in order to evade the truth when being asked questions in the inquiry, they’d answer ‘we don’t know’ or ‘we don’t recall’. But what surprises me, is from the day you were questioned in the inquiry until today, nobody has said ‘honestly, I remember this’ or ‘yes, I did make that decision.’”

“On the fifth anniversary of Grenfell Tower, in the Westminster Hall, my lawyer said this: “You, the politicians, you are sitting among this family... if you don’t work for justice, the family does not want to see you any more on the sixth anniversary.” My question here to my lawyer is about the justice he spoke, where is it?”

“People who saw the fire from the A40 were included in the claim, but a mother who has lost her child is not. Is this justice?... If you know about justice, about the ADR. A mother who lost three members of her family, her son, his

wife, and beautiful granddaughter, without putting them to be included [in the ADR] or without advising me. How did you make the decision without consulting us?”

Sadik and Bedriya Jemal-Kelbeto

Nura Jemal (35), sister to Sadik Jemal-Kelbeto and Bedriya Jemal-Kelbeto, died in Grenfell Tower. Nura's husband Hashim Kedir (44), and their children Yahya Hashim (13), Firdaws Hashim (12), and Yaqub Hashim (6) all died on the night of the fire. Nura, Hashim, Yahya, Firdaws and Yaqub lived in Flat 192 on the 22nd floor of Grenfell Tower.

Sadik and Bedriya's testimony (in Q&A format) began with a short video of Firdaws speaking at Debate Mate, about winning the competition and meeting Bill Gates. They were then interviewed live by convenor Lord David Neuberger. Sadik and Bedriya spoke in Amharic, through the interpreter, Daniel Beyene. Sadik and Bedriya's testimony ended with footage of Firdaws singing a rendition of Read All About It, Pt.III by Emile Sandé during a school competition.

“You saw a glimpse of our loved ones that we lost, how beautiful they were and how my niece had a dream [referencing Firdaws' interview after winning Debate Mate]. Her brothers, her mother, and her dad, I've lost them all. Why did I have to lose all of them? Who will take responsibility?” – Sadik Jemal-Kelbeto

“What will you tell the next generation about this dark history?” – Sadik Jemal-Kelbeto

“The civil claim should have come once justice has been served. Before the claim, you'd think justice should come first. People's lives should have come first. We are in pain; we have not got justice yet. I'm hoping one day justice will come. One thing I want to say to you is your [compensation] money, it doesn't bring back the lives of our loved one. What I want is justice.” – Sadik Jemal-Kelbeto

“We know from the inquiry that there were wrongdoings. But the Police have not yet told us what exactly happened on that night... They have a lot of evidence in their hands but why are they hiding it? In the inquiry, we heard that when they made calls to the control rooms [on the night of the fire] they were making jokes towards our family.” – Sadik Jemal-Kelbeto

“In our religion [Islam], when you bury the body, you must wash the body. But I can tell you, I did not get that chance. I have been suffering mentally... I haven't really buried a body. I've buried ash.” – Bedriya Jemal-Kelbeto

“When you [LFB] advise someone to 'stay put', you should have a plan to save them otherwise you should *not* advise that. Is this the rules of the country? To tell someone to 'stay put' and let them burn?” – Bedriya Jemal-Kelbeto

“Yahya would have been 21 today, Firdaws would have been 20 and Yaqub would have been 14. This is a generation we lost... On the day of the fire my sister Nura, when the helicopter was above the tower, was waving a white cloth to get help but nobody noticed this. I've seen on the video; she was waving a white cloth for mercy. A mother asking for help while her children are dying was not seen.” – Bedriya Jemal-Kelbeto

Ethio-Eritrean Group Statement

The testimony of the Ethio-Eritrean Group concluded with a statement read out by Mark Scott, a solicitor at Bhatt Murphy acting for some members of the group. The statement described the corporate greed contributing to the fire, the 'stay put' advice of the London Fire Brigade which worsened its outcomes, and the delays in justice and lack of transparency by the Metropolitan Police. It concluded with a call to the Memorial Commission:

“Throughout their time living in the tower, they experienced being mistreated, ignored and overlooked by corporations and their local council. The corporate greed, desire for profits and money were evidently more important than hundreds of human lives. To make matters worse on the day of the tragedy, the lack of communication and ill advice from the LFB worsened the outcome of the negligence... The Ethio-Eritrean group

affirm and petition the Memorial Commission for the building to remain erected and unaltered to pay homage to those who are no longer with them following the tragedy. This small act of solidarity can have an immensely positive effect for the Grenfell bereaved and survivor community.” – Mark Scott on behalf of the Ethio-Eritrean Group

Testimony 12 – Anne Marie Murphy and Tim Murphy

Anne Marie Murphy and Tim Murphy’s brother Denis Murphy (56) died in the tower. Denis lived in Flat 111 on the 14th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Anne Marie gave live testimony with her brother Tim present on stage. During Anne Marie and Tim’s testimony, an image of Denis was shown in the background. A short clip of Denis’ neighbour speaking about him played, and the family’s solicitor, Joanna Kamath, read a statement about Denis by North Kensington-based artist Constantine Gras. To close, Tim read a poem written by the Murphy family.

“Collectively, you were all complicit. You cannot escape accountability and there must be an outcome for you all. What is keeping me going is the hope that we are going to see people in a criminal court and facing criminal charges. That hope is keeping me going, if I lose that hope, I do not know what comes next. This is what you deserve, and this is what must happen next.” – Anne Marie Murphy

“As for you Arconic, where there is an empty desk. And to those who are not present today, when we know they were responsible for key decisions before the fire. You had your part to play and you couldn’t be bothered to show up. You think that because we have had monetary compensation, that you no longer have to face the consequences.” – Anne Marie Murphy

“Denis, if you could only see the hurt and pain I’m going through
I must have cried 10 million tears since the tears I cried when I lost you
I know you’re never far away I almost feel you close to me
Oh how I’d love to hug you now your loving smile I’d love to see
But in my heart you’re still alive I think about you every day
My dear brother why did they let you die and leave me here so far away”
– Tim Murphy

Testimony 13 – Paul Menacer

Paul Menacer lived in Flat 33, on the 6th floor of Grenfell Tower.

Paul’s testimony is a pre-recorded interview in which he describes the loss of several people he knew who lived in Grenfell Tower, and the impact of the fire on his mental health.

“I was happy, I was sociable. I’m none of these things now. Deep inside, this is me. This is me opening up and understanding that this is my chance to interact with people that have put me in this position and changed my life for the worse. So, this is my opportunity [...] to try and express myself, and not bottle things up or try and hide things away. I have to try and be as open and as transparent and honest, so people can see this, and actually see the effects of people’s negligence that’s caused this for me now. I don’t want this to ever happen again, not anywhere.”

“All I would want to see is that there was a legacy piece where we actually build a football pitch for the community in memory of the 72 people that passed away. That’s something that I want us, myself and others, to try and work towards. We can build for our children’s children, and it will be there long after we’re all gone.”

Testimony 14 – Hanan Wahabi

Hanan Wahabi lived in Flat 66 on the 9th floor of Grenfell Tower. Hanan’s brother, Abdulaziz El-Wahabi (52) died in the tower. Abdulaziz’s wife Faouzia El-Wahabi (42) and their children Yasin (20), Nur Huda (15) and Mehdi (8) also died. The El-Wahabi family lived in Flat 182 on the 21st floor of Grenfell Tower.

Hanan's testimony was split into five parts: a reading of Homesick, a poem by her daughter Sara Chebiouni; her own testimony, which featured video footage of her nephew Mehdi and photographs of her former husband, who has since passed; a reading by actors of extracts of 999 calls between her family and the Fire Brigade; her closing remarks, and a reading of Has It Really Been Six Years?, a second poem by her daughter Sara.

"We lost peacemakers, and changemakers, and role models, not just sisters and brothers and cousins and fathers and mothers. We inhabit a world of what might have been. The impact is on an entire community. The trauma is generational."

"My questions to all of you are, will you allow what I shared to touch your soul and humanity and leave you changed forever? Will you allow what I shared to enter your dreams and silent moments and drive change? Will you share it with those that were directly involved in decisions pre-Grenfell? Will you share it across your organisations and with your supply chains and contractors, will you lobby to make those organisations not here, face what they have done?"

Day Two Closing Remarks – Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

Day Three - Summary of proceedings

Day Three Opening Remarks – Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

Testimony 15 – Hassan Awadh Hassan

Hassan Awadh Hassan's wife Rania Ibrahim (31) and children Fethia Hassan (4) and Hania Hassan (3) died in Grenfell Tower. Hassan, Rania, Fethia, and Hania lived in Flat 203 on the 23rd floor of Grenfell Tower.

Hassan's testimony took the form of a pre-recorded film. Hassan did not speak on camera. His words appear as a statement at the film's conclusion.

"Your rehearsed lines will not save you. Your expensive lawyers will not save you. Statements like, "I do not recall", "I do not remember", and "no comment" will not save you. Unlike you, I have dedicated my life to do good. I have turned my pain into purpose, building mosques, orphanages, and nurseries in my family's name. I do not do it for praise or enjoyment, I do it in the hope that one day I reunite with my family in heaven. Every action and every project I do, I do as a step to get closer to this goal. Only once I'm reunited with my family, and the guilty are punished, only then, will justice be served. Due to your negligence and your greed, there was a 73rd person who died on the 14th of June 2017. That person was me."

Testimony 16 – Martyn Smith, Harriet Smith & Rachel Smith

Martyn Smith's mother Sheila (84) died in the tower. Harriet Smith and Rachel Smith are Sheila's granddaughters. Sheila lived in Flat 132 on the 16th floor of Grenfell tower. Martyn, Harriet and Rachel delivered a live testimony in turns, including a video of Sheila at a residents' meeting with the TMO, as well as a reading of her poetry. Martyn's partner, Denise Marshall, also addressed the defendants. Also present on stage were Adam, Sheila's son, and Duncan Matthey, Harriet's husband. To end their testimony, Rvd Dr Alan Everett, former Vicar of St Clement's, read a poem.

"In the weeks, months, and now years that follow, I've struggled to open up about the impact this tragedy has personally had on me. How could I? I'm not a victim, nor a survivor, and nor do I live in the surrounding area. In my opinion, there are people who have far greater suffering than me from that day, and it's those people who should get the help and support they need. I'm at the back of this very long line." – Harriet Smith

"Once a year I give a Grenfell Tower talk to construction students, in the hope that one day they will remember what ignoring advice, cutting costs, and putting profit before human lives, can do. The knowledge that out there, there is still cladding, still faulty appliances, and that there are still so many people not safe in their homes, not safe in their beds at night, is sickening. It haunts me." – Rachel Smith

"We had placed a wooden memorial bench in the Peace Garden alongside St Clement's Church. The inscription on the bench is "Sheila, a truly magical lady". We think that's a good way of capturing what we all thought of her." – Martyn Smith

Testimony 17 – Yousra Chaer-Yemlahi

Yousra Chaer-Yemlahi's uncle Abdulaziz El-Wahabi (52) died in Grenfell Tower. Abdulaziz's wife Faouzia El-Wahabi (42) and their children Yasin (20), Nur Huda (15), and Mehdi (8) also died in the tower. The El-Wahabi family lived in Flat 182 on the 21st floor.

Yousra's testimony was read out by an actress, Lisa Zahra.

"A whole family has gone. It still feels surreal. I look up at the Tower and think about how the last time I saw them they were in their kitchen window during the fire. I was outside looking up at them. I will never forget that night. The waiting, watching the fire, the desperate calls and then running around trying to find some information about our five beloved relatives, trying to find out how they had survived."

"I will never forgive those people who caused this fire, those people who failed to prevent it, those people who told them to stay put, who failed to rescue my family. They were good people, innocent people, who brought joy to our lives every single day."

Testimony 18 - William Wake

William Wake is a resident of the Walkways, the low-rise residential buildings adjacent to Grenfell Tower which were evacuated on the night of the fire. William was at home on the night of the fire and witnessed it.

William's statement was read by an actor, Anthony Turner.

"The point is that people living in social housing were treated with an utter lack of care and this fed into all the dealings. There is no way that this contempt did not feed into what led to the fire and the frustration led to fully justified anger of those on the Grenfell Action Group."

"Only a massive building plan will work for the country in the long term. It will prevent the poor and most vulnerable from being marginalised in the way they have been for nearly half a century. It will help the economy in the long term by providing employment and giving a lot of people a decent disposable income. And down the line it will help save the NHS as people are enabled to live happier, more fulfilled lives."

Testimony 19 - Nadia Mahraoui

Nadia Mahraoui is a resident of the Walkways. Nadia was at home on the night of the fire and witnessed it.

Nadia's testimony was delivered through questions and answers, via an interpreter, Hayat Benhalima. Questions were asked by Lord David Neuberger.

"The screaming and shouting of people, asking for help, and finding myself helpless, just watching people through that window, screaming and shouting... I still find it distressing."

Testimony 20 - Agnes Murray

Agnes Murray is a resident of the Walkways. Agnes was at home the night of the fire and witnessed it.

Agnes read parts of her statement aloud, while other parts were read by a small number of her friends and supporters.

"It is over six and a half years now, since the fire, five years approximately since the meeting at Hilton Hotel and we are let down, and every day passes by we are left to live with fear and worry that every time we get some infection, some skin problems, when we feel not well, we think 'is it the consequence of the toxicity?', and how many of us, our own family members, find ourselves with some strange new symptoms, skin problems, lumps, hair loss, cancers and when we go to the doctors we are told, always, it is not connected to the Grenfell Tower toxicity."

Testimony 21 - Miriam Lamprell

Miriam Lamprell's daughter Debbie Lamprell (45) died in Grenfell Tower. Debbie lived in Flat 161 on the 19th floor.

Miriam's statement was read in person by Debbie's former boss, Michael Volpe OBE.

"She loved her little flat in Grenfell, though, and she kept it lovely. But the refurbishment became a nightmare. She had problems with the electricity, problems with the heating. She was very upset about having the boiler in the corridor, right where you opened the door. That was very upsetting to her. But I did used to think well, at least when I go, she's got a roof over her head."

“Nothing seems worth it any more. If she had died a normal death, I would have been able to hold her, to comfort her, to say goodbye. But I feel a part of me has been ripped out. She’s not here and she should be. When I think of Debbie, I think of her laughing. She was always laughing. She was a good girl, she was my girl. People envied me because she was so good to me. After the fire, people have come up to me to say ‘for that short time you had more love from Debbie than most people get in a lifetime’.”

Day Three Closing Remarks – *Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.*

Testimonies 22 - 25

A closed session consisting of four testimonies took place in the Convocation Hall.

Day Four – Summary of proceedings

Day Four Opening Remarks – Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

Testimony 26 – Sadik and Bedriya Jemal Kelbeto

Sadik Jemal Kelbeto and Bedriya Jemal Kelbeto's sister Nura Jemal (35) died in Grenfell Tower. Nura's husband Hashim Kadir (44), and their children Yahya Hashim (13), Firdaws Hashim (12), and Yaqub Hashim (6) also died. Nura, Hashim, Yahya, Firdaws and Yaqub lived in Flat 192 on the 22nd floor of Grenfell Tower.

Sadik and Bedriya's testimony took the form of a pre-recorded interview in Amharic, with English subtitles. Their film entails their memories of their sister, niece, and nephews, how they heard the news on the night of the fire and testimony of the tragedy.

"I request the government to bring out the truth and bring those who have been negligent in this case to the court. We request the government to bring those who are responsible to justice. Getting justice is important to us. I guess the Inquiry is good for others. Our families have been sacrificed. But for it to be a lesson, the responsible bodies must be brought to justice" – Sadik Jemal Kelbeto

"The children always come to me in my dreams. I see Nura in my dreams when I talk to her. If I got justice, my heart would have calmed down a bit. It would have been a lesson to those thinking of committing a crime. This is what I regret. I still want justice. I want justice for my family. This is my question." – Bedriya Jemal Kelbeto

Testimony 28 – Masoud Shahabeddin

Masoud Shahabeddin's cousin Hamid Kani (61) died in Grenfell Tower. Hamid lived in Flat 154 on the 18th floor.

Masoud gave his testimony in person, while pictures of Hamid played in the background.

"From a very young age he was cheeky, witty and very, very funny. Always wanting to make people laugh, he had this knack of being able to joke about any topics being discussed. He very rarely complained, always smiling and always saw the best in people."

"Justice must be served. Those who are responsible for this travesty must be held accountable. This has to be regardless of their positions in society, their wealth or their status. My greatest wish is that those who are accountable & responsible pause & reflect on this. To date all I have witnessed is a defensive, cover up and 'shift the blame culture' from those who have had a part in this tragedy. This has been further impacted by burying the whole disaster in mountains of bureaucracy."

Testimony 29 – Anonymous

This contributor wishes to remain anonymous. Their partner died as a result of the fire.

This anonymous testimony consisted of an audio recording played over an animated film. The animation depicted the words of the person delivering testimony. The testimony ended with the video for Ghosts of Grenfell by Lowkey.

"The reason that we lived separately is because we're both Muslims, so religiously we can't live together unless we're married. So that was the reason that we lived separately, because it's against our religion and our culture."

"I would have thought the English law would take me into consideration and I feel like it didn't."

"It's fundamental to be recognised as someone who has lost someone. Because you fall through the cracks and you don't get the help that you need. I don't know if I was seen as maybe less, but it's not less than anybody else's. You know, I lost the most special person in my life. So I just felt like it was undermined and they didn't understand the depth of my loss and the depth of my mental health and how much help I needed."

Testimony 30 – Shahrokh Aghlani

Shahrokh Aghlani's mother Sakina Afrasehabi (68) and his aunt Fatemah Afrasiabi (65) died in the tower. Sakina lived on Flat 151 on the 18th floor of Grenfell Tower. Fatemeh was staying with her sister on the night of the fire.

Shahrokh's testimony took the form of a pre-recorded interview, after which Shahrokh spoke live. Shahrokh asked the Defendants to write the answer to his questions on a piece of paper, and to return this to the coordinators of Testimony Week.

"It was funny because my mum and my aunt were like musketeers, always together, always going out together, going and coming in. And they kind of complemented each other's behaviour and attitude, you know, in a way that was funny. To me it was just like Laurel and Hardy, you know, it was funny, it's things they were coming out with. I guess that comes from having life within you."

"The reason I am here today is because I hope to bring a change in the culture that have given rise to Grenfell. I have a question... I have one question to all of you sitting here, and the question is, what will you do to change the culture that led to Grenfell? And that goes to every single one, especially the representative for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Because I think after six-and-a-half years, we deserve an answer."

Testimony 31 – Bernie Bernard

Bernie Bernard's brother Raymond (Moses) Bernard (63) died in Grenfell Tower. Raymond lived in Flat 201 on the 23rd floor.

Bernie gave live testimony, supported on stage by her sister Jackie Leger, with a picture of Moses shown in the background.

"Moses developed the street name Moses, named after the biblical figure, because he was so kind and gentle, always putting others before himself. If Moses had only one slice of bread to eat, you can be sure, he would share it with you, he would never allow anyone close to him to come to any harm, a real protector to all, my protector, my hero, a brother to all."

"I would like to conclude my feelings by saying to you all sat around this table today, and those not present. One day, I hope, before you, and all those involved in the decisions regarding Grenfell, take your last breaths and close your eyes, for the last time on this earth, I hope you see the towering inferno you created from greed, and a lack of human decency, and feel the devastation and pain you brought not only to me and my family but to the many lives of the families of Grenfell Tower."

Testimony 32 – Bereaved and Survivors

This testimony was an impromptu addition, made at the request of Sandra Ruiz and Hanan Wahabi.

During this testimony, all present bereaved and survivors were called on to stage by Sandra Ruiz and Hanan Wahabi, and those who joined them turned to face the defendants.

Defendants stood up and faced the bereaved and survivors of the Grenfell Tower Fire while the names of the 72 victims were read, and for the 72 seconds of silence that followed.

Testimony Week Closing Remarks – Delivered By Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger and Bill Marsh.

Testimony Week closed with a series of reflections from each of the Convenors.

"I wholly underestimated the mutual support, friendliness, and respect which existed within the Grenfell community, even though you've been scattered as a result of the fire, not able to be in the building. The smiles, the hugs, the

warm handshakes in this room. The convivial atmosphere and the friendly discussions, and the respect shown both during the presentations and during the breaks, has been heartening and moving, and words really can't express how impressive and moving I have found it." - Lord David Neuberger.

"There is a Zulu word, Sawubona. It's used as a greeting. Literally, the word means "I see you", or "we see you". But it doesn't just mean we see you in a physical sense, it means we see you in the fullest sense. We acknowledge you. We acknowledge your personhood. We recognise and validate what makes you up. Your experiences, your passions, your strengths, your weaknesses, your pain. You are valuable. All in that one word." - Bill Marsh.

"What if Grenfell could come to represent significant change? What if the people with the power made the choice to mark a different era of real corporate responsibility that actually meant something? A transformation of the way in which we conceptualise, identify, develop, and reward a more accountable kind of leadership. What if this leadership recognised that many, many people are really tired of being treated like units from which profit can be extracted for shareholders and directors, rather than thought of as human beings that you exist to serve?" - Baroness Lola Young.

Defendant Responses

As the purpose of Testimony Week was to create a platform for bereaved, survivors and residents who had signed the settlement agreement to speak about their experiences, Defendants did not have a speaking role during the week itself. However, after Testimony Week, they had the opportunity to make statements to be sent to all bereaved, survivors and residents who signed the settlement agreement, and entered into this public summary transcript. These statements follow.

Exova (UK) Limited

“The Grenfell Tower fire was an appalling tragedy. Our thoughts continue to be with those who very sadly lost their lives, their families and friends, the firefighters and other emergency responders, and all those who have been, and continue to be, so deeply impacted by this terrible event. Testimony Week was a vital part of the healing process and it was incumbent on Exova to be represented throughout to listen to the testimonies of those affected. We will continue to support the broader inquiry as it progresses.”



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing & Communities

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

2 Marsham Street

London

SW1P 4DF

Dear Friends,

8/3 March 2024

TESTIMONY WEEK

I would like to thank you for inviting me to Grenfell Testimony Week.

The courage of this community continues to have a profound impact on me, my Ministerial colleagues, and senior officials in my Department. The loss of 72 people can never be forgotten and the testimony shared should engrave this injustice in the consciousness of those present.

On behalf of the Government, I want to reiterate my apology for the failings that allowed the horrifying events of 14 June 2017 to happen, as well the aftermath that has continued to affect every one of you. Your testimony was a reminder that for every life that was lost, hundreds more were irrevocably changed. I understand that we can never make things truly right and nothing we do can make up for what has been taken from you.

I recognise the Government still has much to do to correct the problems that led to the tragedy, as well as the related issues onto which it, and your community's tireless campaigning, have shone a shameful light. Your voices were not listened to in the months and years before the fire and I am determined that we listen and learn from you now.

There were many important questions asked across the week. The one that remained particularly consistent from many of those who spoke: "What will you do?"

I will keep your words at the heart of what we do. I will make sure my Department understands the debt that we owe to you and your community. I will share your determination to see the truth uncovered, make change happen, and do everything within my power to ensure that justice is delivered.

My thoughts are with you and your families, and I hope to see you soon.

In the meantime, please do continue to speak to my officials should you have any questions or concerns.

Yours,
Michael

RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP

Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities

Minister for Intergovernmental Relations



Home Office

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime,
Policing and Fire

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

To: Testimony Week Contributors and Attendees

07/03/2024

Dear Testimony Week Contributors and Attendees,

I would like to take this opportunity to give my heartfelt thanks to all the bereaved, survivors and residents who attended Testimony Week and so bravely shared your accounts of the terrible night of the fire, your experiences in its aftermath and the devastating impact it has had on your lives. I and everyone that attended from the Home Office were humbled by your testimonies and found enormous value in the Week: not only has it helped us to better understand your enduring, profound concerns and frustrations, but it has also helped us strive to grasp what it feels like to stand in your shoes. I know that your pain and suffering will never leave you. I also respect that it is impossible for me, and my Home Office colleagues, to fully understand the experience you endured and the trauma you continue to confront each day.

I want to assure you, on behalf of the Home Office that we have listened and will continue to listen and do everything we can to try and ensure a devastating tragedy like the Grenfell Tower fire can never happen again. Much has been done since the fire to make buildings safer, fire safety legislation tighter and to learn and act on the operational lessons that the fire and Inquiry process have taught us. I know that there remains more to do, and we stand ready to learn and act on the Inquiry's forthcoming findings from Phase 2.

I know from your testimonies that deep frustrations and doubts remain around fire safety and the fight for justice. The Home Office fully respects these concerns and is determined to support you in any way we can.

Once again, on behalf of the Home Office, I thank you for your bravery and strength and for giving me and my Home Office colleagues the opportunity and privilege to listen to your testimonies.

Yours faithfully,

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire

5 March 2024

To the survivors and bereaved family members,

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to you and to everyone involved in what was a truly extraordinary week of testimony. I wish you to know that bearing witness to the vivid and moving accounts of all those who gave testimony and to your deep personal pain and loss has had a profound effect on those of us who attended.

I could see from those giving testimony that you did so at great personal cost but with a determination to be heard and as a powerful call for change. For my part, as MD of Kingspan Insulation Limited in the UK (since May 2022) you have my word that issues highlighted during the Public Inquiry have been meaningfully and comprehensively addressed.

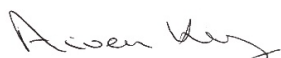
- We engaged Eversheds Sutherland (a global law firm) in 2020 to undertake a comprehensive and independent external review of our organisation in light of the evidence which emerged.
- All their recommendations have been implemented in full, as recently verified by them.
- We have delivered demonstrable improvements in the traceability, testing and marketing of our products, along with increased oversight and governance of quality control and compliance within our business.
- We have improved how we recruit, train and oversee our people.
- We have enhanced and promoted our whistleblower policies and code of conduct policy Group-wide.
- We will continue to invest in ensuring an explicit culture of integrity, honesty and compliance within our business and more broadly across our Group.

Despite continuing progress, we recognise that legacy safety concerns remain for the broader building industry (of which we are part) and for those still living or working in potentially unsafe buildings. To this end, we are committed to working with all relevant stakeholders on meaningful industry wide initiatives to improve building safety and to paying our share of remediation costs where we have responsibility. We first made this commitment in February 2021 and continue to stand by it.

Finally, I wish to relay our enormous respect and gratitude for your extremely powerful and moving testimony and for your enormous courage and dignity. We also thank the event organisers and Convenors for their role in the very respectful manner in which Testimony Week was conducted.

We will never forget. Your testimonies will reinforce our decision making as leaders in Kingspan and will impact how we conduct ourselves, in an industry where safety is paramount.

Yours sincerely



Aiveen Kearney
Managing Director
Kingspan Insulation Ltd, UK and Ireland

Cc. Baroness Lola Young, Lord David Neuberger & Mr Bill Marsh – Convenors. Ms Gracie Bradley & Ms Minnie Rahman – Co-Chief Coordinators

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner is the
fire and rescue authority for London

Date: 23 February 2024

Dear Grenfell Bereaved and Survivors,

I am writing this letter to you following Grenfell Testimony week and in response to what I heard and saw.

There has not been a day since 14th June 2017 when I have not thought about the Grenfell Tower Fire and what I saw and experienced as the final incident commander. It is very difficult to put into words how powerfully and repeatedly your testimonies each day brought me back to that terrible night, as if I was standing in front of the tower or up inside it again.

As I listened to your words or watched your film, the sounds and images from that night were as real to me then as they were the night of the fire. The stories of your devastating individual loss and the destruction of families and community were quite simply heart-breaking.

One of you spoke of how he hoped the ghosts of those that lost their lives would haunt the defendants that sat in front of him every night. Whilst I do not believe that I can ever make up for the terrible loss of those you loved, I can assure you that those ghosts are real for me and act as a daily reminder of why I must lead and effect the change in LFB that I consider is needed.

I am also clear, that despite the response and actions of so many firefighters that night, sadly too many of you and your family were let down by LFB. I do not seek to minimise nor use comparison with other organisations involved to either mask or deflect that.

It is also clear that many of you do not believe we have accepted our responsibilities nor that we are changing as we need to. I would not seek to try and persuade you we have in this letter; it is not proof of anything. I would rather invite you, if you can give us the time, to show you the very real changes we have made first hand and evidence the difference they make. The process of change at LFB is constant and ongoing, so along with your scrutiny and challenge I would also welcome your participation to inform and shape it.

Finally, you spoke powerfully and movingly of the lack of accountability and transparency from those organisations involved in this tragedy. I want to assure you that I am clear in my own mind as to our responsibilities and do not seek to blame other institutions for what we must hold ourselves.

Listening carefully to your testimonies it is evident that there are questions you have for LFB that you feel still haven't been answered. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you face-to-face, so that I may try to address the concerns that you still have. If you are able to meet with me, please contact Donna Peters, Head of Community Engagement. Donna and her team will work with you to ensure a meeting is set up with me, that meets your needs. They can be contacted on 07385 382580, or by emailing Donna.peters@london-fire.gov.uk.

To listen to you during Testimony week was one of the greatest privileges of my life. To witness your courage in unveiling your anger, pain and loss in such a dignified and articulate way was both devastating to experience and humbling in its power.

I have been present sadly at so many scenes of terrible loss, both large and small, in an operational career stretching back 30 years, but I have never experienced the expression of personal grief so profoundly as you shared during Testimony Week. I commend you for finding the strength to do so. I hope, if it is helpful, to meet and talk to each and every one of you. I and LFB are at your service.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Roe', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

Date: 26.02.2024

Dear Testimony Week participants,

Grenfell Testimony Week

Following Testimony Week we wrote separately to everyone who participated, reflecting on the personal matters raised, taking accountability, and committing to specific actions. We wanted to share this public letter as well, as part of the broader written record of Testimony Week.

Listening to you speak and watching your videos at Grenfell Testimony Week was incredibly powerful; it has left a lasting impact on us both. We are so very sorry for your experience, and for the losses you have faced.

We felt ashamed as we listened to each of you. We felt ashamed that the council let you all down and that we treated you, your family and your neighbours and friends so poorly.

We understand and fully accept the anger that was shown and are so sorry to see the pain our actions and inactions caused. It was devastating to see the impact this continues to have. Our role in what happened is unquestionable and your Testimony emphasised the need for us to show greater candour in accepting that blame going forwards.

The descriptions of your loved ones was heartbreaking. You showed so clearly how our failings have changed your lives for the worse, and it laid bare the continued human impact of the tragedy. We heard clearly that you had hoped the Council would care for you and your families, how we had a duty of care to protect you. We are so very sorry for how badly we let you all down.

We were struck by the collective films that were shown, particularly “I don’t recall” which had extracts from the Inquiry. The collective impact of all of that footage was compelling as we saw how disrespectful those kind of answers were. We understand how you felt more transparency, humanity, and humility should have been shown. The film clearly and powerfully questioned whether people and organisations were taking responsibility for their actions.

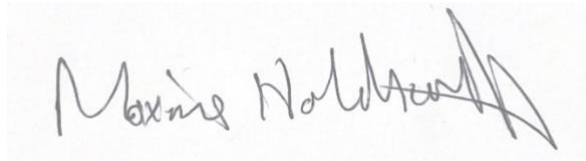
As we reflect on the week, we are acutely aware that there was a broader demand for action and change. We heard this clearly and agree that is not enough just to listen or say sorry.

We are determined to complete a fundamental change of culture across the entire Council. We accept that not enough has changed over the last 6 and a half years, and do not want to pretend that we have all the answers, or that this change will happen overnight, but we are clear that we must work tirelessly.

As we said in our letters to you, we would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about how we can deliver this change, if that is something you would be interested in. After Testimony Week, we are clearer than ever that the council will only improve if we listen and act on your experiences. We are sorry the Council did not understand this fully before.

We will never forgive ourselves for what happened and are determined to deliver the change you and your family deserve,

Elizabeth and Maxine

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Cannyon". The script is cursive and fluid.A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Maxine Holdstock". The script is cursive and includes a large, stylized flourish at the end.