# Grenfell Tower inquiry faces rising costs and family frustration as investigation nears 2026



In a warehouse seemingly unremarkable at first glance—large enough to house 25 London double-decker buses—an immense police investigation is underway into the Grenfell Tower fire, a tragedy that claimed 72 lives on June 14, 2017. This warehouse, stocked with the remnants of the once 24-storey block, serves as a vital base for the Metropolitan Police, where forensic analysis of the cladding panels, insulation, and various components of the tower is being meticulously undertaken.

The scale of the evidence gathered is staggering: over 27,000 exhibits, supported by more than 12,000 witness statements, have been processed. In total, 152 million documents have been reviewed, reflecting what is arguably one of the largest investigations ever carried out by any UK law enforcement agency. As part of the effort to provide clarity for jurors, the police plan to construct a full-scale replica of part of the tower to facilitate better understanding of how the fire spread. This monumental task has drawn concern and scepticism from victims' families, many of whom feel overwhelmed by the ongoing nature of the inquiry.

Eight years have passed since the fire, and as the investigation continues, the estimated costs have reached £100 million. The police have increased the manpower dedicated to the case to 180 officers, with nearly £24 million spent in just one year. However, families are expressing growing frustration and disillusionment. “Will we ever get justice?” one relative remarked, highlighting a pervasive sense of hopelessness that has developed amid the protracted process. The completion date for the investigation has slipped to at least September 2026, suggesting that any trials may not occur until the 2030s.

The expansive nature of the investigation has left many families questioning whether their grief has been commodified; they feel their suffering is exploited for financial gain, raising concerns that the police's significant financial demands mirror a form of extortion. Kimia Zabihyan, an advocate for Grenfell victims, articulated this sentiment, reflecting a broader belief among the bereaved that the legal apparatus has shifted focus away from delivering timely justice to indulging in a non-stop cycle of legal expenditures and procedural delays.

Despite assurances from the Metropolitan Police that the investigation is not delaying the reconstruction project, many remain sceptical. Families are haunted by the worry that the prolonged wait for justice will result in eventual dismissal of charges against the corporations responsible for the refurbishment, a process that has already encountered setbacks. Legal complexities arise, as defence lawyers may exploit any perceived procedural missteps or negative publicity from the concurrent public inquiry to argue for dismissal of charges.

The public inquiry into the Grenfell fire has already revealed a “systematic dishonesty” among construction firms involved in the refurbishment, who misrepresented the safety of the highly flammable cladding used on the building. This inquiry shed light on failures on part of government regulators and the construction industry that turned Grenfell Tower into a “death trap.” The implications are stark—senior executives of companies implicated in the scandal, some earning substantial salaries and living opulent lifestyles, face little accountability.

As the police investigation unfolds, families are left to grapple with the enormous toll that both the tragedy and the subsequent legal proceedings have taken on their lives. Many have expressed the belief that, despite the vast resources and time devoted to the investigation, justice feels increasingly out of reach. The sentiment is echoed by victims like Maria Jafari, who lost her father in the fire. She noted the disillusionment in trusting a system they believed would deliver justice, only to find themselves mired in bureaucracy with no clear end in sight.

Further compounding the anguish is the financial burden placed on the taxpayer for investigations that have yet to yield tangible results. Nearly £173 million was spent on the public inquiry alone, with millions allocated to lawyers, prompting anguish among bereaved families who feel sidelined in the compensation process. Many legitimate next of kin have been left inadequately compensated while public funds continue to flow towards extensive legal apparatuses.

The police, while acknowledging the pressures of public scrutiny and the concerns of victims’ families, emphasise their commitment to thoroughness. According to a statement, “the circumstances are highly unusual,” highlighting the dual demands of the criminal investigation and public inquiry. Yet, even as they strive for accuracy and justice, families fear that the passage of time will ultimately dilute accountability.

As the shadow of the Grenfell tragedy looms large, the demand for swift and fair justice remains overwhelming. Inquiries into the deeply flawed systems that allowed such a disaster to occur continue, but for the families left behind, hope of meaningful resolution grows fainter with each passing day. The question remains: how much evidence is truly requisite for justice? As one member of Grenfell Next of Kin articulated, given the extensive documentation collected, the call for accountability is not just urgent; it is imperative.

**Reference Map:**- Paragraph 1: (1), (2) - Paragraph 2: (2), (3) - Paragraph 3: (1) - Paragraph 4: (2), (5), (6) - Paragraph 5: (5), (4) - Paragraph 6: (6), (7) - Paragraph 7: (3), (4) - Paragraph 8: (1), (3) - Paragraph 9: (4), (6) - Paragraph 10: (5), (7)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14712725/A-replica-tower-block-evidence-room-big-fit-25-London-buses-12-000-witness-statements-152m-documents-100m-taxpayer-bill-eight-years-Grenfell-victims-fear-theyll-never-justice.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/05/31/uezq-m31.html> - This article discusses the extensive scale of the Grenfell Tower fire investigation, highlighting the retrieval of over 152 million documents and files, the examination of more than 27,000 exhibits, and the collection of over 12,000 witness statements. It also mentions the construction of a replica of part of the tower to assist juries in understanding the fire's spread. The article emphasizes the prolonged duration and escalating costs of the investigation, with completion not expected until at least September 2026, leading to concerns among victims' families about the pursuit of justice.
3. <https://news.met.police.uk/news/investigation-into-grenfell-tower-tragedy-487374> - The Metropolitan Police's official update on the Grenfell Tower tragedy investigation details the retrieval of over 152 million documents and files, the examination of more than 27,000 exhibits, and the collection of over 12,000 witness statements. The report also mentions the evaluation of 1,600 witness statements provided to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and the submission of early investigative advice files to the Crown Prosecution Service. The police emphasize the complexity of the investigation and the need to fully assess the public inquiry's report before presenting evidential files for charging decisions.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/09/04/grenfell-fire-systematic-dishonesty-cladding-inquiry/> - This article reports on the conclusion of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which found that the fire was caused by the 'systematic dishonesty' of construction companies that manufactured cladding for the tower's refurbishment. The inquiry also criticized government ministers and officials for ignoring warnings over the risk of cladding fires. The report exposed multiple failings that led to the fire in June 2017, in which 72 people died. The article highlights the need for accountability and the potential for criminal charges against those responsible.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/grenfell-fire-inquiry-report-london-361f5e836218a1feee0bd66cb5d0ef92> - The Associated Press article discusses the findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which concluded that decades of failures by government, regulators, and industry turned Grenfell Tower into a 'death trap' where 72 people lost their lives. The inquiry found that a combination of dishonest companies, weak or incompetent regulators, and complacent government led to the building being covered in combustible cladding. The article also mentions the ongoing police investigation into 58 suspects and 19 companies or organizations for possible criminal charges, including corporate manslaughter and gross negligence.
6. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/world/2024/09/04/uk-grenfell-tower-fire-damning-final-report-blasts-systematic-dishonesty-and-decades-of-govt-failures/149261> - This article reports on the final report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which condemns firms involved in supplying rainscreen cladding panels and other insulation products for their 'systematic dishonesty.' The report also criticizes the London Fire Brigade for a 'chronic lack' of leadership and the government and other authorities for failing to assess the dangers of cladding over decades. The article highlights the need for accountability and the ongoing pursuit of justice for the victims.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/sep/04/police-under-pressure-to-accelerate-criminal-investigation-into-grenfell-fire> - The Guardian article discusses the pressure on police to accelerate the criminal investigation into the Grenfell Tower fire following the publication of a damning report that laid bare 'decades of failure' by central government and egregious behavior by firms involved in the tower’s refurbishment. The report found that companies manufacturing combustible materials used on the tower engaged in deliberate strategies to mislead the market. The article emphasizes the need for swift action to bring those responsible to justice.