

# Jeremy Corbyn letter to the Prime Minister regarding the independent public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower

**Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party,** has

today written to the Prime Minister regarding the decision to hold a full and independent public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower.

Jeremy Corbyn said:

“Whilst the inquiry should be limited to the awful events at Grenfell Tower, it must be empowered to consider all the steps that were, or were not, taken leading up to and contributing to this most terrible incident. It must also identify the urgent steps that need to be taken in relation to fire safety standards for other buildings of this nature.

“In addition to finding facts, the inquiry must be empowered to make recommendations for the avoidance of any similar future disaster – and in so doing, to consider recommendations arising from previous similar fire-related deaths.”

The full text of the letter is below.

Theresa  
May

16 June 2017

The  
Prime Minister

10  
Downing Street

London

SW1A 2AA

Dear  
Prime Minister,

I  
am writing to note your decision to hold a full and independent public  
inquiry  
into the fire at Grenfell Tower and to seek your assurance that the inquiry  
you  
establish will be held under the provisions of the 2005 Inquiries Act.

On  
the assumption that it is your intention to establish a 2005 Act Inquiry, I  
want to share my view that it is vital that the Terms of Reference be drawn  
with sufficient scope for the inquiry to establish all the relevant facts and  
to ensure that all necessary lessons are learned. Whilst the inquiry should  
be  
limited to the awful events at Grenfell Tower, it must be empowered to  
consider  
all the steps that were, or were not, taken leading up to and contributing to  
this most terrible incident. It must also identify the urgent steps that need  
to be taken in relation to fire safety standards for other buildings of this  
nature.

In  
addition to finding facts, the inquiry must be empowered to make  
recommendations for the avoidance of any similar future disaster – and in so  
doing, to consider recommendations arising from previous similar fire-related  
deaths.

It  
is very important that the Terms of Reference are drawn with sufficient scope  
to require the participation of all those with a legitimate interest – this  
should undoubtedly include the bereaved families, survivors and also  
individuals and organisations with a legitimate interest such as the  
residents'  
campaign and representative organisations who were involved in the period  
leading up to these events. Their views and experiences are as important, if  
not more so, as the expert opinions of state actors and their service  
providing  
contractors.

I am also  
very concerned to ensure that this public inquiry is not used to delay any  
parallel actions which might be taken by interested parties. It is important  
that justice is served in as comprehensive and timely way possible. This must  
include, of course, ensuring that legal funding is available to support those  
involved in the inquiry and any inquests. I would also like to support the  
request of the Mayor of London for an interim report to be produced which I  
believe is important for the community to feel as if justice is being done in  
a  
timely manner.

Whilst  
I believe that the policies and priorities of your government in the arenas  
of

social housing and public safety are legitimate targets for my criticism, I hope we both share a determination to discover the truths underpinning this tragedy so to avoid any repetition. For these reasons, in support of my hope to publicly welcome your decision, I would appreciate early consultation on your government's proposed inquiry Terms of Reference.

In response to my question yesterday, the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service made it very clear that survivors made homeless would be appropriately and locally rehoused. This is imperative in order that they be enabled to re-build their lives and have some hope of recovery from these devastating events. It now appears that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea may not be as committed to ensuring that all are re-housed locally. Your public re-commitment to this is imperative as part of an unequivocal, wider statement that the government will do all it can to provide timely practical support to those who have suffered so much. In this context, I note the announcement of the first government investment of £5million. Given the magnitude and scale of the crisis, this will clearly not be sufficient and I therefore await information regarding further funding plans.

On a related matter, I believe that an attitude of generosity and compassion in relation to the costs of funeral expenses and ensuring that it is possible for families living outside the UK to travel here to attend funerals, as well as participate in the inquiry, is also warranted in such a tragic situation. This is particularly the case given the circumstances of many of the Grenfell Tower residents, including the number of bereaved families who may be resident overseas and the costs of burial and cremation. As was also raised at yesterday's brief discussion in the Grand Committee, I would expect that the Home Office guarantees the replacement, as a matter of urgent priority, of all documentation for those affected.

Finally, on behalf of all those in the Labour Party, may I express our admiration for those in the emergency services who responded with the utmost courage and professionalism and share our deepest sorrow at these harrowing events – and commit that we will do all in our power to ensure that this be the last such tragedy of its kind in our country.

Yours  
sincerely,

Jeremy  
Corbyn

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# Joint EU-U.S. press statement following the EU-U.S. Justice and

On 16 June 2017, the EU – U.S. Ministerial Meeting on Justice and Home Affairs took place in Malta. The meeting reaffirmed the strong and historical bonds of partnership between the United States of America and the European Union, and the commitment to continue working closely together in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs.

The European Union, hosting the meeting in Valletta, was represented by the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos, the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra Jourová, the Union Security Commissioner, Julian King, by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove and by Malta's Minister of Home Affairs and National Security, Michael Farrugia and Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government, Owen Bonnici, on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The United States of America was represented by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and by Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Elaine C. Duke.

The European Union and United States of America underlined the critical importance of their cooperation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs and the need to sustain and deepen cooperation while facing shared security challenges, for the benefit of the security of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic.

The European Union and the United States of America discussed their common efforts to fight terrorism. The discussion focused specifically on working together to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters through improved information sharing, and addressing the challenge of radicalization, particularly on the internet, as well as the role of anti-money laundering legislation in tackling terrorist financing. The two sides also exchanged views and took stock of recent European Union actions in the areas of migration, border management and its role in ensuring internal security.

The discussion further covered the implementation of the U.S.-EU Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and the question of access by law enforcement authorities to electronic evidence.

Both sides welcomed the entry into force of the EU-U.S. Data Protection "Umbrella" Agreement and reiterated their commitment to ensure its full implementation.

The European Union and the United States of America also discussed the threats from terrorism to aviation security and working together to raise global aviation security standards to protect passengers.

The European Union and the United States of America agreed on the importance of advancing towards reciprocal visa free travel under their respective legal frameworks. Both sides endorsed a cooperative approach to assisting Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland and Romania in advancing more rapidly towards the fulfillment of the requirements for designation in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, consistent with U.S. law.

The sides reaffirmed the need to step up joint work on cybersecurity and cybercrime in all its dimensions including with the private sector. They also agreed to continue the good cooperation on fighting illicit drugs and to consider joint efforts on fighting smuggling and trafficking of migrants.

Reiterating the progress made and the need to face global challenges together, the European Union and the United States of America remain committed to reinforce their partnership and meet again in the second half of 2017 in Washington.

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## **Statement by the Spokesperson on the new electoral law in Lebanon**

The agreement reached on a new electoral law governing the next parliamentary elections is an important step towards fully functioning democratic institutions in Lebanon.

Following on the election of the President and the appointment of a new government at the end of 2016, the agreement to hold democratic elections under the new law will enable the government to advance with the necessary economic and structural measures. This will contribute to stabilise the country and stimulate faster economic growth.

As a long-standing partner and friend of Lebanon, the European Union reaffirms its commitment to provide support for the preparation and the holding of the elections.

We will also continue to fulfil the commitments made in the EU-Lebanon Compact. We will continue to work closely together towards a stable, safe and democratic Republic of Lebanon living in peace, security and prosperity with the whole region.

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## [EU signs the Istanbul Convention](#)

Violence against women is rooted in the unequal power relations between women and men and reflects one of the strongest expressions of gender inequality. In this context the European Institute for Gender Equality has been strongly supporting the EU and the Member States in their efforts to eradicate violence against women since the very start of its activities seven years ago. *“The elimination of violence against women involves challenging the unequal division of social, political, and economic power among women and men, and the ways in which this inequality is perpetuated through institutions at all levels of society”* says Virginija Langbakk, EIGE’s Director.

The signing of the [Istanbul Convention](#) by Commissioner Věra Jourová on 13 June 2017 on the basis of two decisions adopted by the Council on 11 May 2017 is therefore an extremely important step in establishing the first legally binding instrument dedicated to combating violence against women. Calling as it does for a regular monitoring of State efforts and policy initiatives and the designing of more effective strategies.

The Chairwoman of EIGE’s Management Board, Prof. Dr Kalliope Agapiou-Josephides, highlighted the importance of the signing by Commissioner Věra Jourová of the Council of Europe Convention (Istanbul Convention) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and underlined EIGE’s commitment to take all necessary actions to fulfil its role in this respect.

Photo (C): Council of Europe

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## [The Government must lift the housing revenue account borrowing cap to free councils to undertake urgent retrofitting work – John McDonnell](#)

**John McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor,**  
commenting on  
the Grenfell Tower fire, said:

“The tragic fire that occurred on Grenfell Tower must never be allowed to happen again. The lessons of Camberwell, Shepherds Bush and Southampton have not been

learned, and it is the responsibility of government to provide solutions.

“The

Government must now as a matter of urgency lift the housing revenue account borrowing cap to free councils to undertake the urgent retrofitting work required on all existing housing stock found not to meet required safety standards.

“Councils

must also be given the power, as Labour’s housing manifesto pledges to do, to borrow to invest in council housing on the scale necessary to allow all those living in homes deemed to be unsafe to be properly rehoused.

“The

next Labour Government will take any and all steps required to address the critical housing crisis in our country. Labour have pledged to invest to build over a million new homes over the course of the next parliament. Within five years, our manifesto commits to building at least 100,000 council and housing association homes a year for genuinely affordable rent or sale.”

Ends