

Prime Minister formally appoints new Grenfell Inquiry panel members for Phase 2



The Prime Minister has today appointed Thouria Istephan and Benita Mehra to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry panel. The appointment of the panel members comes ahead of the commencement of Phase 2 hearings on 27 January.

Ms Istephan, a widely respected partner at Foster + Partners architectural practice, and Ms Mehra, a highly experienced chartered engineer, will start work immediately.

They will sit for the duration of the Inquiry alongside the Chair Sir Martin Moore-Bick.

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry is now entering a pivotal stage, expanding its focus from the night of the tragedy to consider important wider issues around the refurbishment and management of the Tower.

Today's appointments will bring a rich diversity of expertise and the relevant experience required given the breadth and complexity of the next phase of the Inquiry.

It is important the Inquiry thoroughly investigate what happened that awful night and ensure lessons are learned so that such a terrible tragedy never happens again.

This Government's commitment to uncovering the truth is absolute.

The letters exchanged between the Prime Minister and the Chair of the Inquiry about the appointments have been published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Further information about the inquiry can be found on the [inquiry's website](#).

Notes to editors:

1. Thouria Istephan is partner and Construction Design Management Manager at Foster + Partners, with responsibility for the application of Construction (Design and Management) Regulations – strategically and operationally – as well as global health and safety compliance. She is also the Technical Design Deputy of the practice's Construction Review Group, advising on buildability. Thouria worked for several UK architectural practices before joining the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as an HM Inspector of Health and Safety, then acting as advisor on Construction (Design and Management) Regulations. Thouria joined Foster + Partners in June 1997. She was made a partner in 2007 and Technical Design Deputy in 2015. Her knowledge and experience of safety standards and the regulatory environment has direct relevance to the issues to be considered by Phase 2 of the Inquiry's work.
2. Benita Mehra is a chartered engineer, formerly Director of Strategic Assets and Property at the London Ambulance Service, a position she took up in January 2018, where she was accountable for their fleet, estate and logistics, including technical engineering governance and assurance. Benita has operated in the aviation, housing and health sectors with roles including design and construction of major terminal buildings. From 1990 – 2006, Benita worked for the British Airports Authority, during which time she was responsible for project managing large construction projects, and also had the responsibility for the maintenance of business critical areas such as the runways at Heathrow airport and their fleet of vehicles including fire tenders. In 2015 she became a Fellow of the Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Estate Management, and in 2016, was recognised by her professional institution, attaining a fellowship of the Institution of Engineering and Technology. In 2016, Benita became President of the Women's Engineering Society. Benita's experience of property and asset management in high-risk organisations where health and safety considerations are paramount, is directly relevant to Phase 2 of the Inquiry's work. Benita also brings broader skills that will be particularly relevant to Phase 2, such as risk assessment and property and facilities management.