

Blogger gagged by council after warning about Grenfell Tower fire threat

 [rt.com/uk/392272-council-grenfell-blogger-fire/](https://www.rt.com/uk/392272-council-grenfell-blogger-fire/)

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A blogger who warned the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea council of the dangers lurking in Grenfell Tower was threatened by local officials for writing about problems in the building.

Home to over 600 people, Grenfell Tower, in the Lancaster West estate, west London, was [engulfed in flames in the early hours of Wednesday morning](#). The true scale of the tragedy is only gradually becoming clear.

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As early as 2013, a man named Francis O'Connor, a member of the Grenfell Action Group (GAG), urged councillors and landlord Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organization (KCTMO) to address the [fire safety risks that new works on the building](#) would cause.

GAG had several times tried to warn the council and the landlord that the building of a school and gym next to the estate would restrict emergency services' access, including firefighting vehicles.

But a leaked letter reveals that officials at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea tried to silence the campaigners, sending a lawyer to threaten O'Connor.

"I am instructed that you previously posted blogs that have in general been critical of everything that takes place at Lancaster West in relation to the Kensington Academy Leisure Centre and investment on the estate," solicitor Vimal Sarna wrote to O'Connor in July 2013.



It then instructs the group to delete the blog – an order the group did not follow.

In 2016, an article on the blog chillingly predicts that only a tragedy would bring serious attention to the tower's problems.

"It is a truly terrifying thought but the Grenfell Action Group firmly believe that only a catastrophic event will expose the ineptitude and incompetence of our landlord, the KCTMO, and bring an end to the dangerous living conditions and neglect of health and safety legislation that they inflict upon their tenants and leaseholders," the post reads.

"It is our conviction that a serious fire in a tower block or similar high density residential property is the most likely reason that those who wield power at the KCTMO will be found out and brought to justice!"

But the scandal seems to reach beyond local council remit, as the Mirror reports that former Housing Minister Brandon Lewis "sat on" information about the several fire risks in buildings such as Grenfell Tower.

According to the newspaper, Lewis did not take action on safety irregularities on tower blocks over 30 meters tall because it could "discourage building." Instead he shrugged off suggestions that sprinklers should be installed in the block. [Other ministers are believed to have also known](#) about the damning evidence.