

Grenfell ‘the most risk exposed project in the world’

Report from RepRisk assessed more than 25,000 projects to put the stricken tower at the top.

[Bill Tanner](#) 00:01 March 22, 2018



Grenfell Tower tops the list of the 10 most risk-exposed projects in the world.

Drawing on more than 80,000 publicly available information sources, the report from RepRisk assessed more than 25,000 projects based on 28 environmental, social, governance (ESG) and business conduct risk factors, including human rights, labour, environment, and corruption – to rank Grenfell No1.

The report highlights the role of, not only the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO), but also a number of companies in the construction supply chain,

including Rydon Group Ltd and Harley Facades Ltd, as well as the manufacturer of the Hotpoint-branded refrigerator that caused the fire Whirlpool Corp.

Beyond the now familiar narrative of failings relating to the disaster, the report specifically references cites the lawsuit filed in a US District Court against Arconic – manufacturer of the aluminum sheets installed in the block – and its former and current executives.

That lawsuit alleged the company had been deceiving shareholders by failing to disclose the dangers linked to its highly flammable panels.

Seeking class action status, the lawsuit also alleged investors endured heavy losses and damages as Arconic's value dropped by more than \$(US) 1bn after it was revealed that the company had supplied flammable cladding panels to Grenfell Tower, despite knowing that they were prohibited for use on tall buildings.

Following the announcement of an independent public inquiry into the disaster, the Metropolitan Police began investigating Arconic, Whirlpool, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council, and KCTMO on suspicion of corporate manslaughter amongst other offences.

The report also references allegations that in 2013 KCTMO "covered up" complaints from residents about power surges caused by improper wiring, and that the company had threatened tenants, two of whom died in the fire, with defamation lawsuits for reporting the dangers.

The report lists issues that took Grenfell to the top as:

Impacts on communities

Products (health and environmental issues)

Supply chain issues

Local participation issues

So far, more than 530 individuals and organisations have been granted core participant status for public inquiry into the disaster, which resumed preliminary hearings yesterday (March 21).

This is believed to be the largest number accredited to a public inquiry in the UK.

The second preliminary session is expected to fix a firm date for the first evidence to be heard with substantive hearings due to begin before June 4 at the latest.

Studies to be submitted include assessments of the cause and spread of the fire in the flat where it started, ignition of cladding and insulation on the tower's facade, fire protection measures and statutory building regulations.

The reports are due to be sent to core participants by the end of this month, but are intended to remain confidential.

In May, a debate is scheduled in Parliament after a petition "to ensure those affected have confidence in and are willing to fully participate in the inquiry" attracted more than 150,000 signatures.

The Metropolitan Police has asked the Home Office to pay £38m for its own investigation into the disaster – among the biggest and most complex ever undertaken in the UK with possible offences including

manslaughter, corporate manslaughter, misconduct in public office and breaches of fire safety regulations.

An £11.1m claim covers overtime and extra costs in 2017-18 while a request for £27m funds the entire costs of the investigation – which involves 200 officers and staff – for the 12 months from April 2018.

So far, the investigation team has gathered more than 31 million documents and 2,500 physical exhibits.

Some 1,144 witnesses have given statements and 383 companies are part of the investigation focussing on the construction, refurbishment and management of the tower.

Overall, some 2,400 witnesses have been identified for statementing including residents.

Well over 300 Body Worn Video clips have been downloaded for viewing.

Where their role is considered relevant, digital downloads of all business records are being recovered with the number expected to increase beyond that 31 million.

Specialist software is needed to enable officers to process and search these documents in order to secure material that may be relevant as evidence.

The forensic examination of the tower includes photographing and documenting every room on every floor, paying particular attention to fire safety provisions such as fire doors, the standards of construction work, the routing of pipework and smoke extraction systems.

Then come further forensic tests including reconstructions, with an interim report on the investigation is expected in the autumn.