
WITNESS STATEMENT OF D668

I, D668, born on DPA, currently residing at Brook House IRC, Perimeter Road South, Gatwick, London Gatwick Airport, RH6 0PQ, state as follows:

1. I was detained at Brook House IRC on 17 May 2017, following which I have been subjected to ill-treatment, in addition to witnessing others being subjected to similar sorts of ill-treatment and neglect.
2. On 29 June 2017, I was served with removal directions. A G4S officer went to my room to tell me to pack my belongings up to go to the airport. The flight was at 4.15pm. I took a shower and packed my things. I called my solicitor at the time, and she told me she had submitted a judicial review to block the removal. One officer told me it was time to go. The officer said to me, "Take your stuff and get out". I explained to the officer that I was waiting for the lady to escort me as per normal procedure. The lady came and picked me up, and they took me to a detainee holding room at Gatwick Airport. I called my solicitor at around 3.20pm. She said she spoke to my Home Office caseworker and she asked to speak to one of the G4S officers who were there with me at the time. She wanted to tell them my removal directions were to be cancelled as she had submitted a judicial review. The G4S officers said that my Home Office caseworker himself needs to tell them that my removal directions are cancelled and they will not accept the confirmation from my solicitor. I became very scared that they were still going to remove me. I started to shake and I had a headache. I looked for paracetamol in my bag. I was told to hurry up by one of the officers. The officers then asked why I did not want to go. One of the officers said, "if you don't want to go, we will force you to go". I was very scared and shocked.

at this statement. I was shaking from fear and anxiety. I felt so useless and hopeless and I felt that they did not have any consideration for me. I was unable to say anything back to them, I was just speechless. I sat down and explained that a judicial review had been submitted so my removal should be cancelled. They refused to give a fax number to me so that my solicitors could fax over the papers. I do not understand why they could not just give a fax number or at least speak to my solicitor on the telephone. The officers finally received confirmation from my Home Office caseworker that the removal was cancelled.

3. The officers took me back to Brook House. When I came back to Brook House, two men who were working at the reception desk saw me coming back into Brook House. They laughed and said "look, he's coming back." I felt hurt that they were laughing as it was not funny. I had just had a horrible experience and I had spent the whole day extremely anxious that I was going to be removed. I felt it was inappropriate and deeply insensitive for them to mock me like this.
4. In early July 2017, I wanted to see a doctor as I was having a stomach ache. The medical surgery at Brook House is open every morning between 9am and 11.30am. You need to see a nurse first before you can be referred to a doctor, and to see the nurse you need to attend the surgery and wait your turn in the waiting room of the medical surgery. I arrived at the surgery at 11.12am. The nurse who was on duty at the time asked why I was there and said that the waiting room was full. I explained that I arrived in time and that I should be allowed to wait for an appointment. The nurse again asked me what I was there for in front of the other detainees. She did the same with the others who were waiting. I felt that it was really inappropriate for these questions to be asked in front of other people. Sometimes, there might be very sensitive and private problems that you do not want to discuss in front of other people.

5. On the D wing, around the second week of August, I was sitting with my friend and eating lunch downstairs. From the second floor, someone threw a whole bucket of water on myself and my friend. It was another detainee. I could not see exactly who it was but when I went upstairs I could see a trail of water and a bucket in a detainee's room. I asked him if he was the one that poured the water but he denied it. I complained about the incident to a manager of the Wing and asked for security to check the cameras to see who it was who poured the water. The manager checked the camera and saw who did it but he did not tell me the name of the detainee. Nothing was done to punish that detainee. Nothing was done to reassure me and I did not sit in the same place to eat for 2-3 days as I felt unsafe. I thought the same thing would happen again and that anything that happens to me would not be considered even if I reported it to the manager of the wing. The friend who was with me has been released. His name is D450

6. On either 17th or 18th August 2017, I was coming down the stairs, and another detainee was coming up the stairs. He was walking in the middle of the stairs. I gave him way to pass on the stairs. The detainee shoved me quite hard with his shoulder as he was passing. I asked him if he was okay but he told me to "fuck off". My first thought was that I did not want to start a fight with him as he looked quite intimidating. I was frightened at what he could do to me if I responded. He was with another two detainees who also looked intimidated. I felt like they could have ganged up against me. The other detainee looked as if he were about to jump towards me but my friend who was with me blocked him. The detainee wanted to punch me. Security was called and I told the officer about the assault. He told me to walk away because the other detainee was a problem-maker. After that nothing happened. I was not informed of anything happening to sanction the other detainee and I was not informed of any action being taken whatsoever. I am still unhappy that nothing has been done about it. I saw the same detainee for the following two-three weeks. I felt threatened by him and I did not feel safe leaving my room at all. Sometimes, on the stairs, there are detainees who sit and block the way. They are really intimidating. They

sometimes sit there and smoke drugs on the stairs. The staff members do not do anything about this. Sometimes, the detainees who are on the stairs do not let you pass without you asking them if you can. I have to deal with this sort of thing every day. It is horrible.

7. I have seen other detainees being mistreated too. Around 18th August 2017, my roommate's t-shirt was stolen by another detainee. We went outside into the garden area and I asked the other detainee who had stolen the t-shirt to give it back. He told my roommate to "fuck off", and they both jumped towards each other. A security guard saw what was happening and rushed out. He dragged my roommate away from the other man and asked the other detainee to leave. The security guard had pushed my roommate very hard away from the other detainee. It was a very aggressive push. My roommate then tried to push the security guard back but the guard grabbed him by his t-shirt. I did not want to ask the security officer why he was grabbing the detainee's t-shirt but my friend asked him instead. The security officer said my roommate had tried to push him. I felt so unsafe. If the people who are supposed to look after us safely attempt to fight you, it means you are not safe anymore. If I got involved, I think the officer would have hit him if the fight had continued. My roommate has been released but we are still in contact. I have not seen the same security officer since two weeks ago. Now if anything similar happens to me or a friend in detention, I keep quiet and walk away. I think security officers can abuse detainees. It makes me feel so useless and powerless.

8. Between the 12th and 20th August 2017, another detainee was put in segregation for one week. I only know that it was because he asked the Home Office to be removed to Guinea. He had stayed in the corridor when everyone else had been asked to return to their wing. He wanted to protest as he had been held in Brook House for 8 months and he wanted answers from the Home Office. I could not believe he was put in segregation just for that. After one week the Home Office sent him to the Verne.

9. On 24 August 2017, my brother came to visit me. I took my immigration papers with me to discuss them with him. The same security officer who told me to take my stuff and get out when I was due to be removed on 29 June 2017 was there. I put my papers on the table and I stood to be searched. The security officer frisked me roughly; it was not gentle. I felt intimidated and humiliated by the way he treated me. Before he frisked me, the way he addressed me was very rude, he told me to "come here" before being frisked. Another detainee had witnessed this happening. The security man looked through my papers and handled the papers very roughly. I asked him why he was doing that and the security man simply stated "I'm just doing my job". The officer's name was Darren Tomsett.
10. On 7 September 2017, I went to the open medical surgery again and I was met by the same nurse. I had arrived at the surgery at 10.55am so this was well in advance of the surgery closing time. The nurse had locked the door and told me I could not come into the waiting room because it was all full. I could see that one seat was empty in the room. I became very angry, and so to calm myself down I simply left and did not see anyone at the surgery. I wanted them to look at the medication they gave me for my stomach problems and headaches. I had to deal with the pain I was having by myself instead without seeing a doctor.
11. The staff will lock us up in our rooms three times a day in order to do their headcounts. These occur at 12.00, 17.00 and 21.00. 15 minutes before each lock-in time, we are expected to be back in our rooms. I do not understand why it is necessary to lock us in our rooms in order to do a headcount. The lock-ins sometimes last from 30 minutes up to one hour. For the last lock-in at 21.00, we are not allowed out of our rooms until 8 am the next day. I feel depressed because it brings back flashbacks of what happened to me in the Ivory Coast. I was tortured there and I feel the same thing is happening at Brook House IRC. I feel like I cannot breathe when

I am locked in the room. The window in the room cannot be opened and I struggle to breathe. The experience of having been put in confinement when I was in Ivory Coast brings back bad memories for me when we have lock-ins here. Being locked in makes me feel so low and anxious. The smell of the toilet is also everywhere. There is no ventilation either so it makes the room smell worse.

12. I am on antidepressants for depression, I feel like I am dying slowly in here. It is a nightmare when I am locked in my room from 9pm. I used to cry during the lock-ins as it would bring back such bad flashbacks from my experiences of torture in the Ivory Coast. The antidepressants make me forget the reality that I face. During the lock-ins I watch TV but there is nothing else to do. When I take my medication I just go to sleep by 10pm. I sometimes wake up early because I have sleeping problems. When this happens there is nothing to do and I just have to sit on the bed. I just count down the hours until they open the door at 8am. I cannot even put the TV on because my roommate is sleeping.

13. Having a toilet in the same room that I am sleeping makes me feel so humiliated and disgusted. I have no option but to use the toilet in front of my roommate during a lock-in. The toilet in my room does not have a door, so everytime I use the toilet, my roommate can see me. The fact that there is no ventilation in the room makes me so sick. I have vomited from the smell of the toilet several times. If I need to use the toilet after 9pm, I am forced to either hold it in or go when my roommate is sleeping as we are locked in. During the daytime, I always ask my roommate to wait outside the room if I need to use the toilet. I just do not see how this place is fit for purpose. I cannot believe we are treated like this here.

14. On the 13th September, I was spoken to very rudely by a security officer. I was talking about something very urgent on the phone with my solicitor and everyone was getting ready to go back into their rooms for the 42pm lock-in. I was winding up and

the phone, but the security officer had shouted at me and said "just get into your room now". I was spoken to as if I were a child. I was not spoken to with any respect.

15. Around the 26th or 27th September, I was downstairs in the Church. When I went back to my room, all my belongings were on the floor. My roommate's things were on the floor too. I was in shock. We checked if we lost things. My coffee along with my sim card with £10.00 on it went missing from that day. I spoke with a security officer, and told them everything that happened and they told me to come back after 30 minutes. I came back after 30 minutes and spoke to the manager of the Wing. The manager told me to come back because the security services will check who went into my room to do that. I went back again later on the same day and security told me they saw the person who did that. They told me to double check all my things to make sure nothing important was lost. I had to go back to security three times in total that day. They did not seem concerned about what I had to complain about. Nothing has happened about this incident. I feel very angry at how the security officers did nothing to reassure me or sanction the behaviour. I feel the same thing can happen again. I feel paranoid that someone will go into my room and take important things like my legal papers. It makes me so anxious all the time.
16. I have never taken any drugs even though it is rife within Brook House IRC. I have seen other people taking a drug called Spice. I have seen people taking it who start vomiting after smoking it. They become like zombies. I saw one person who smoked it who was stuck to the walls and he could not move. I felt so scared looking at him.
17. I think the Spice comes from outside. I know that one person took it because he asked for painkillers and he used the Spice as self medication.
18. The security guards do not check each other for drugs. Some detainees who have come from prison may have brought the drugs with them to Brook House as they were drug dealers previously in prison.

19. The IT system in Brook House is so bad. If I want to print out an email with attachments I have to get a ticket to see someone in the Welfare team first. You have to queue to see them as there are usually only one or two members of staff. It usually takes about 1 hour to 1.5 hours to see them. I can only see them in the morning from 8am to 11.30am, in the afternoon from 13.30-16.30 and in the evening from 18.30-20.30. After that, you cannot see them anymore and the maximum number of people they can take in during each slot is approximately 20 people. There have been occasions where it's been so busy that I have not been able to print anything. Brook House makes things very difficult for me to send things to my lawyers: The IT system has recently been completely down for four days. This means I cannot use my emails at all.

20. I would also like to add that when I received my Rule 35 report, I noticed a body map had not been completed and the section regarding detention having a particularly injurious effect on victims of torture had not been completed either. I went back to my doctor to ask him to do these sections, but the doctor had stated the Home Office had told doctors not to fill these sections in. It seemed to me that he had told me this accidentally. He said he could not complete the section.

21. I was invited to a meeting with a 'Care Officer' on 16th September at 11.20am. She asked me what complaints I had at Brook House. I filled in a form and indicated that I did not feel safe at Brook House. Since filling in this form and explaining my complaints to them, I have not heard back from Brook House management at all. Nothing has been done about the complaints I made. It makes me feel very neglected that they have not done anything about what I said. They clearly do not care about the welfare of detainees. I feel non-existent here because everything I say to staff is not really listened to.

22. I want to be transferred from Brook House IRC. They treat detainees very rudely in detention. I feel unsafe because people fight in detention and nothing happens when these sorts of incidents are reported to security or even a manager. Some of the

detainees have come from prisons and this creates an unsafe and uncomfortable environment. Two weeks ago, I went to see a doctor about my antidepressants as I felt it was not working anymore. The doctor has put me on a higher dosage now because I feel more depressed in Brook House IRC. The lock-ins have made my mental health deteriorate and the way we are made to feel humiliated by the staff members makes me feel so low. I feel scared to do normal things in Brook House like simply walking up some stairs.

I confirm that the contents of this statement are true.

Name

D668

Signed

Signature

Date

12 / 10 / 2017

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