

My name is Marwa Alkaisi and I am speaking on behalf of myself and my family. On 22 February 2011 I lost my beautiful mother Maysoon Abbas. She was a doctor working at The Clinic on Level 4 of the CTV building. That day our lives turned upside down. After the quake I spent four hours walking through the broken and chaotic city centre looking for my mother. I was so sure I would find her. Friends and family told me they were sure she was helping out at the triage at Latimer square and had simply not had time to make contact, as that is the type of person she is. Heartbreakingly we waited for 8 painful days before we heard any word of what had happened to our precious mother. Mum is the pillar of our family when we heard the bad news our world felt like it collapsed much like the catastrophic collapse of the CTV building. Those days we waited for word of what happened to mum were horrific as information was drip fed to us from the authorities. That time was so traumatic for me that I try to block it out completely.

It was as though we were living in a nightmare. How could this have happened to us, why did this happen. I remember thinking there must have been a mistake, mum will just walk through the door any minute now. How could it be that a building collapses completely here in New Zealand? I had only ever heard of these sorts of things happening overseas in less developed countries.

As time went on I watched my family being ripped apart from the inside. The once cheerful father that I had grown up to know disappeared and was replaced with a man worried all the time and forever thinking what he can do next to find out what happened to the CTV building. I watched my sisters cry and hurt every day. I watched myself change and become more and more angry with everything around me.

I think about mum every day. When I am in the kitchen I almost feel inappropriate to try and make the dishes she used to make for us. She was such a great cook. When I have a bad day I crave a hug just a hug from her to make things just a little better. I dream about her often. I had a dream recently where I saw her and held her hand

and begged her to stay and not leave me alone. It hurts so much to know that I will never see her beautiful face again. To know she will not be there for any of the family milestones. Not to be there for my sisters 21st and graduation. Not for the birth of anymore of her grandchildren. And most importantly never to be with the people that love her and appreciate her the most, her family.

On 22/02/2011 a building pancaked and then burned. Columns, beams, floor slabs, steel and concrete fell. Lifeless things taking away so many lives. The building collapsed taking away and injuring so many of our loved ones. For me that building took away my mother and my best friend.

To the commissioners and the royal commission lawyers: I thank you all. I thank you for all your efforts that you have made so far towards answering some the questions myself and my family have. All myself and my family want to know is what happened to that building that day. Why was it the only building in Christchurch to completely pancake and take away our mother from us?

Yes there was a big earthquake but all of Christchurch experienced this not just the CTV building. There were many other buildings older and more vulnerable yet they did not fail completely as the CTV building did.

Listening to all the evidence at the commission has been sometimes hard and takes an emotional toll on us. But I have found it important to listen to it all to understand the full picture. It was hurting to release that we lost our mum possibly because an inexperienced engineer was allowed to carry out work unsupervised risking the lives of hundreds.

What is most important to us is we learn good lessons from this building. Things such as inexperienced engineers should have their work reviewed, that after each

sizeable earthquake, such as the boxing day earthquake, a thorough inspection by qualified engineers is initiated, that once information is found out about a danger in a building the affected parties are informed and this information is recorded and become available to all; to name but a few of the lessons that we must learn. Our beautiful Christchurch city must lead by example from now on, the world is watching us.

For me and my family knowing what happened will help us to get justice for our mother and help us ease the pain we feel inside every day.