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HEARING

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INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

THE HONOURABLE REGINALD BLANCH AM QC

PUBLIC HEARING

OPERATION TARLO

Reference: Operation E15/1982

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT SYDNEY

ON FRIDAY 5 MAY, 2017

AT 10.00AM

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This transcript has been prepared in accordance with conventions used in the Supreme Court.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Rajalingam.

MR RAJALINGAM: Commissioner, I call Ms Adyan Rezag.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Just come forward, Ms Rezag, would you. Just go into the witness box there. Thank you. Will you take an oath or an affirmation?

10 MS REZAG: Sorry?

THE COMMISSIONER: An oath on the Bible or an affirmation?

MS REZAG: (not transcribable)

THE COMMISSIONER: You will need to swear to tell the truth.

MS REZAG: Yeah.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: And you can either do that on the Bible - - -

MS REZAG: Okay.

THE COMMISSIONER: - - - or by way of an affirmation or the Koran.

MS REZAG: It doesn't matter.

THE COMMISSIONER: It doesn't matter?

30 MS REZAG: Yeah.

THE COMMISSIONER: Okay. Swear the witness now. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Just take a seat there. Now, it's unlikely that anything that you say will cause you any problem today but I can make an order to protect you from any consequences of anything you say, either civil or criminal consequences, so I will do that just to make it easier for you.

10 So pursuant to section 38 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, I declare that all answers given by this witness and all documents and things produced by this witness during the course of the witness's evidence at this public inquiry are to be regarded as having been given or produced on objection and there is no need for the witness to make objection in respect of any particular answer given or document or thing produced.

20 **PURSUANT TO SECTION 38 OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ACT, I DECLARE THAT ALL ANSWERS GIVEN BY THIS WITNESS AND ALL DOCUMENTS AND THINGS PRODUCED BY THIS WITNESS DURING THE COURSE OF THE WITNESS'S EVIDENCE AT THIS PUBLIC INQUIRY ARE TO BE REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN GIVEN OR PRODUCED ON OBJECTION AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR THE WITNESS TO MAKE OBJECTION IN RESPECT OF ANY PARTICULAR ANSWER GIVEN OR DOCUMENT OR THING PRODUCED.**

30 THE COMMISSIONER: So that gives you complete protection. Yes, Mr Rajalingam.

MR RAJALINGAM: Thank you, Commissioner. May you state your full name for the record.---Adyan Rezag.

How do you spell your last name?---R-e-z-a-g.

And your first name?---A-d-y-a-n.

40 Are you currently working?---No.

Were you at some stage involved with the Immigrant Women's Health Service?---Yes. I was study there.

Okay. And what did you study?---Certificate II retail and customer service.

Was that a course being conducted at the Immigrant Women's Health Service?---Yes.

Do you recall doing that course between about 2012 and 2013?---Yes.

Was it a two-year course, do you remember?---No, six months to eight months. I can't remember.

10 But you can't remember which year it was completed in, is that what you
- - -?---I got my certificate, yeah, I think 2013.

Okay.---Yes.

Do you know who provided you with that certificate?---The Barrington.

Yeah, Barrington College?---A private, private college, yes.

Did you have to pay anything for your certificate?---No.

20 When was that course held, do you know which day?---It was two days a
week. I can't remember which days.

Do you remember the teacher?---Yes. Her name was – no, I can't remember
her name.

Was the teacher someone from the Immigrant Women's Health Service?
---No. No, from the, the private college, the Barrington, Barrington
College.

30 When you were attending the Immigrant Women's Health Service to do the
course - - -?---Yes.

- - - did you meet Ms Sharobeem?---Yes.

Did you know her then as Dr Sharobeem?---Dr Sharobeem, yes.

Had you known of her before?---Yeah, we – I used to go there meeting the
group and I knew her from there.

40 Okay. Is it the case that your mother also does some work for, or did some
work for the Immigrant Women's Health Service?---Yes.

Your mother's name is Suham Talal?---Yes.

Do you know what she did at the Immigrant Women's Health Service?
---She was holding the Mandaean group, our group, and, yeah, she did
volunteer work there.

Do you know what year she was volunteering at the Mandaean group?---In or about 2012 to – I can't remember what year she started but, yes, that year she was there.

When your mum was there would you also from time to time assist her in her groups?---I was just interpreting because she, she is not speaking English very well.

Would you do anything - - -

10

THE COMMISSIONER: Is that group Mandanian or Mandaean?
---Mandaean.

Mandaean.

MR RAJALINGAM: Is that a religious group?---Yes.

20 Can you describe that a bit more?---It's out – it's a small religion, it's our religion. We used to go there having fun, talk to each other. Sometimes she held like some people from Centrelink to give us some advice about something. People come from like different organisations to give us some advice and some information about country or something. That's all.

You referred in your answer to a she would invite some people from Centrelink to talk.---Yeah.

Who are you talking about?---Eman.

Eman.

30

THE COMMISSIONER: The Mandaean group apparently is on the border of Iran and Iraq. It acknowledges some of the figures from the Old Testament and John the Baptist.---Yeah.

And baptism is a continuous process through the religious group. Correct?
---That's right, yes.

MR RAJALINGAM: Thank you, Commissioner. Do you remember if that group was being held on Mondays?---No, it was Fridays.

40

Fridays. Do you remember how many people attended the group when you were helping out?---Roughly 13. I can't remember exact but I wasn't going there every Friday so I can't really remember everything.

But you had some involvement with that group over a couple of years, is that true?---Yeah, just to go there and sit with them and having chat, laugh and that's it.

And would that have been over 2012 and 2013, do you know which years?
---What is it, sorry?

Do you know which years you were being involved with the Mandaean group?---What year?

Yeah, what year?---Since 2011 until now, like till they closed.

I see. Okay.---Yeah.

10

And would you attend – how often per year would you - - -?---Like once every four months, five months. I had my children so I wasn't – I was busy with them.

And how many children - - -?---Two.

Two. You weren't being paid for your time were you?---No.

20 And you – when you went to the group did you see regular faces there?
---Yes.

You said about 13 people attended that group when you went?---Yes.

Can you list some of the names of people that were at the group? Just their first names?---My sister (not transcribable). Barry, my mother's friend. But others I know them by their children only.

I see.---Like we call them by their children name, not first name, so - - -

30 I see. But you do recall their specific names and their faces don't you?
---Yeah.

How, how often would you see a new face in that particular group?---I haven't seen new faces.

And do I understand the Mandaean community in around Fairfield, if you know, to be a relatively small community?---Yes.

40 Have you ever heard of a person by the name Rachie Kakel?---No.

Have you ever held a bank account in the name Rachie Kakel?---No.

Since – when did you arrive in Australia or were you born here?---2005.

2005?---Yes.

Do you hold a bank account?---In my name, yes.

And is it, do you know – which bank, without saying the account number, which bank account, bank do you bank with?---I have Commonwealth, I have Westpac, I have St George.

Have you ever held an ANZ bank account?---No.

I'll show you some documents. At allegation brief volume 7, page 136. And just before we get to that document, you were talking about the Mandaean group, Ms Rezag?---Yep.

10

Did you ever – were you ever involved in that group on the weekends? ---No.

If I get – if I ask you to turn the page to 137, 138, 139. Do you recognise this document, Ms Rezag?---No.

Do you recognise the handwriting in it?---No.

You never worked on a Thursday did you?---No.

20

Would it have always been a Friday that you were working?---Yep.

Is that your signature next to the signature block?---No.

All right. Will you turn to the next facilitator form? And also, I'm, I'm going to turn to a number of these timesheets?---Okay.

And you tell me if that is your writing, is it?---No.

30

It's not your signature?---No.

And the next form. What about that one? Page 143, is it your writing? ---No.

The next form. Is that your writing on page 145?---No.

Is that your writing on page 147?---No.

Is that your writing on page 149?---No.

40

Is that your writing on page 150?---No.

What about 151?---No.

And 152?---No.

154?---No.

Is that your writing on page 155?---No.

Page 156?---No.

What about on page 157?---No.

Is it your writing on page 159?---No.

How about on page 160?---No.

10

Is it your writing on page 161?---No.

What about on page 163?---No.

Page 164?---No.

That, next to the signature block where it says Rad on page 165, is that in any way your initial?---No.

20

The next page. Page 166. Would you ever sign as Rach?---No.

Is that your handwriting on that page?---No.

Were you ever reimbursed for providing morning tea to the group?---No.

Did you ever purchase morning tea for a Mandaean group?---No.

Did you ever purchase any food for your, for the groups you were assisting with?---No.

30

And do I take it you were only assisting as an interpreter in these groups?
---Yeah.

But would you do other bits and pieces when, when asked by your mum?
---By Eman?

By your mother, sorry.---Yes.

40

And what were some of things that your mother asked you to do?---I just, like if she have something in English she doesn't understand, I interpret it and that's it.

And how many hours would you spend on a Friday volunteering your time, Ms Rezag?---I was not volunteering my time. I was sitting with the group, like as, as a group member.

Oh, I see. So you're an attendee of the group essentially?---Yes.

But you also helped?---Helped mum, yes.

Okay. And the next, 168, is that your handwriting?---No.

And the next form, 169, is that your handwriting?---No.

Is that your handwriting on 171?---No.

What about on page 173?---No.

10

Do you ever recall ever completing any of these facilitator invoices even in your own name?---No.

What about on page 175? Is that your handwriting?---No.

Pardon me, Commissioner. Ms Rezag, just to be clear did you ever receive any payment from Inner Group Women's Health Service for any of your involvement with it?---No.

20 All right. Thank you, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Any questions Mr Chhabra?

MR CHHABRA: No, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Thank you for coming in Ms Rezag. You're excused if you'd like to leave?---Thank you.

30 <THE WITNESS EXCUSED

[10.21am]

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR RAJALINGAM: Commissioner, unfortunately due to lack of witness availability for today, I'm not in a position to call any further witnesses. I understand there are potentially two witnesses to be called on Monday and then Ms Sharobeem at some point after that or perhaps Tuesday. I'll speak to Mr Chhabra about that particular course and let him know. But for the

40

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. We'll adjourn.

MR CHHABRA: Commissioner, perhaps - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR CHHABRA: - - - a moment prior to adjourning. I noted some details that were part of the public brief. Some identification details if I could just draw them - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you, if you could.

MR CHHABRA: - - - to the Commission's attention. Volume 4 of statements, page 202, it's a quotation that contains the phone number of Ms Sharobeem. Volume 4 of the statements, page 217, photographs of jewellery. At the bottom of the page is contained the address of Ms Sharobeem. Volume 1 of statements, page 172, which contains at the top of the page in the middle, the home address of Ms Sharobeem.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you for that.

MR CHHABRA: May it please.

THE COMMISSIONER: Getting rid of all of the personal information in all these volumes is going to be a very significant task, not necessarily covered by the order that I made. Does anyone want to say anything about what should happen about the public website? Should all the material go up on the public website? The risk of course is that there would be some identifying material, personal identification material accidentally published on that basis.

MR RAJALINGAM: Commissioner, if I can indicate my view in relation to that. In my submission perhaps there's no real need for the allegation brief or the bank statements to go onto the public website because they would inherently contain many, many private details, personal details, whereas the brief of evidence or statements and attachments which directs some of these witnesses to pertinent documents could be more easily redacted, but there are personal details in amongst that material. I just suggest that as a potential course to take.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you. So that's the distinction between the brief of evidence and the - - -

MR RAJALINGAM: The allegation and bank statement briefs which constitute about 32 volumes. The statement brief is only four volumes, four thick volumes and one skinny folder. It's still a fair bit of material but it would be a touch easier.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Chhabra, do you have anything to say about it?

MR CHHABRA: I must say I'm minded to pursue the course suggested by Counsel Assisting that if part of the brief were to be put on the public

website it should be confined to the statement brief, which is perhaps five volumes. That would also limit that risk and allow all parties concerned to vet those documents prior to being uploaded.

THE COMMISSIONER: Okay. Did you want to say something about it?

10 MR SULLIVAN: Commissioner, my position would be the same. In relation to the statements, while I don't have specific details it's conceivable that a number of them or their annexures could have personal mobile phones for example of their department's employees possibly, so I recommend the course suggested by Counsel Assisting and Mr Chhabra.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Well then, I'll make that order.

**PUBLICATION OF MATERIAL ON THE PUBLIC WEBSITE TO
BE LIMITED TO THE STATEMENT BRIEF, EXCLUDING THE
ALLEGATION AND BANK STATEMENT BRIEFS**

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MR RAJALINGAM: If it please the Commission.

THE COMMISSIONER: And we'll adjourn.

**AT 10.26AM THE MATTER WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY
[10.26AM]**