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Aftermath of bombing

TUESDAY  
01/04/2008  
09:01:54

### Ex-police chief to head Omagh probe

A review of the failed investigation into the Omagh bomb atrocity is being headed by an ex-chief constable who probed the role of Special

Branch in the aftermath of the terrorist outrage.

A review of the failed investigation into the Omagh bomb atrocity is being headed by an ex-chief constable who probed the role of Special Branch in the aftermath of the terrorist outrage, it was revealed today.

Sir Dan Crompton, the former head of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, has been called in by the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

He will deliver an interim verbal report when he meets members on Thursday, but he has been told to have his final written report ready by the end of next month.

The review was ordered following the acquittal of south Armagh man Sean Hoey who was cleared last December of all 29 murders in the August 1998 no-warning attack by the Real IRA. The police handling of the case was bitterly attacked by the trial judge Mr Justice Weir as well as some of the relatives

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of the dead and injured.

Sir Dan, a former chief constable of Nottinghamshire Police, was in Belfast in 2002 when he made a series of recommendations for change to the Special Branch following a review of its structures and the way it shared information with the rest of the police. His report followed scathing criticism by the then Police Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan of the RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan and the original investigation into the bombing.

As part of the review the three will meet with senior officers involved in the investigation and some of the victims' relatives. Michael Gallagher whose son Aidan, was among the 29 murdered said: "Sir Dan has already been in touch and he will see us to hear our real concerns about this case, especially the quality of evidence and quality of witnesses."

Meanwhile, politicians on all sides are facing new pressure to back demands for a full cross-border judicial inquiry into the atrocity.

All 180 Stormont Assembly members as well as MPs and Euro MPs have been asked to attend a special presentation at Parliament Buildings, Belfast, tonight when some of the victims' relatives will urge them to pledge their support.

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