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By Alan Murray and Lesley-Anne Henry
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David Trimble, the former First Minister, has urged Gordon Brown to "urgently" release the secretly recorded conversations of the Omagh bombers.

Lord Trimble said it is imperative that the recordings and transcripts of what the bombers said as they drove to put the "brick in the wall" should be shared with lawyers for the families in the ongoing Omagh civil case.

In a letter signed by fellow peer Baron Bew, the Professor of Irish Politics at Queen's University, and British Labour MP Dave Anderson he also said that public servants should be able to assist the lawyers and give evidence without fear of prosecution or punishment.

Last week's BBC Panorama programme revealed that the British Government's secret listening station, GCHQ, made recordings of at least two of the bombers communicating between a scout car and the bomb

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car on their way to Omagh and again just seconds after the bomb was placed.

What are these?

“The internal review you have announced will help establish if the bombers’ phone calls were monitored in real time, why intelligence was not passed to the investigation team and what lessons can be learned for the future,” the letter to Downing Street said, adding that “time is short” as the civil case ends within a few weeks.

Meanwhile, yesterday relatives of Omagh bomb victims lashed out at the Irish government for not taking a tough stance with the British intelligence services.

Michael Gallagher, whose 21-year-old son was among the 29 people killed in the blast, said Brian Cowen’s government lacked the back bone to tackle the issue.

Three Irish citizens, Buncrana schoolboys Oran Doherty (8), Sean McLaughlin (12) and James Barker (12) died in the Omagh bomb.

He told a Sunday newspaper: “If the Irish government had any backbone, it would be raising the matter with the British.

“If China or Russia apparently failed to stop a bomb which killed British citizens there would be an international crisis.”

There were nine exchanges between the bomb car and the scout car as it drove from the Republic towards Omagh. According to Panorama the first call monitored was as the bomb run began in Castleblaney, Co Monaghan.

He said Brian Cowen should be seeking an urgent meeting with the British Prime Minister and demanding answers: “GCHQ, violating Irish airspace raises issues of national sovereignty. I expected Dublin to be demanding answers from Britain, asking why this happened, and requesting copies of the telephone transcripts. Yet, the silence from Dublin has been deafening.”

Gordon Brown announced an internal review and gave Sir Peter Gibson, the Intelligence Services Commissioner, three months to examine intercept security and intelligence service material.

However Mr Gallagher said the families had little faith in this review: “I suspect they have played a very dirty game,” he said.

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