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Brown to discuss security claims with Omagh families

Monday, 9 February 2009

Prime Minister Gordon Brown is to meet the Omagh bomb families this week to discuss claims - recently rejected in an official report - that intelligence agents tracked the bombers on the day of the attack but failed to alert police.

Sir Peter Gibson, the Intelligence Services Commissioner, said last month he had found no evidence to back up allegations by BBC's Panorama that the government's listening station GCHQ intercepted information that could have prevented the 1998 atrocity.

Twenty-nine people, including a mother pregnant with twins, were killed when a Real IRA car bomb exploded in the town centre after misleading warnings.

No one has ever been convicted for the attack which inflicted the single biggest loss of life during the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

The families meeting Mr Brown at Downing Street on Wednesday afternoon have said they are unimpressed with the Gibson report.

Michael Gallagher, who lost his son in the bombing, said today: "I have not met anybody who was impressed with what Sir Peter said.

"He did not address the central part of the Panorama programme which asked why all available information was not passed on."

Mr Gallagher said the families would also be discussing with Mr Brown their landmark civil action against the five men they suspect were responsible for the bombing and which is currently entering its final stages in the High Court in Belfast.

They believe the intelligence services are still holding back information which could aid their case.

The families are also preparing a presentation next month to MPs on the Northern Ireland Select Committee over their continuing call for an independent cross border inquiry into the Omagh bomb investigation.

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