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Saturday, 9 August 2008

An investigation is under way after a woman who lost her teenage brother in the Omagh bomb blast was ordered to leave the memorial garden in the town, just one week before the 10th anniversary of the Real IRA outrage.

Carol Radford said she was asked to leave the site of the new memorial when she tried to have her picture taken there yesterday. She was stunned when she was told that she had no right to be at the memorial garden before its official opening on August 15.

Carol, 37, explained that her 16-year-old brother Alan Radford, a trainee chef, was killed in the outrage and she said she had every right to be at the memorial garden.

She said: "We were unable to take the pictures we wanted because the workmen were in the way and refused to move even though they were asked to do so very politely."

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The row is the latest of a series of clashes between families of the Omagh bomb victims and Omagh District Council which is organising the official 10th anniversary commemoration service on Friday. Many relatives have vowed to boycott the official service and are holding their own special commemoration the following Sunday instead.

Omagh District Council's chief executive Daniel McSorley said in a statement yesterday: "Two members of the public entered the memorial garden site without authorisation this morning.

"The final construction works at the memorial garden are ongoing and, as such, the site remains a construction site which is not open to the public. This unauthorised entry is therefore a breach of site security and contravenes Health & Safety Regulations.

"Staff at the construction site requested the persons to leave the site and an investigation into the incident is being carried out. The matter may then be reported to the Health & Safety Executive."

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