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    - Local & National
    - World news
    - Politics
    - Environment
    - Education
    - Letters
    - Opinion
    - Technology
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  - Business Telegraph
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  - Health
  - Features
  - Columnists
  - Entertainment
  - Homefinder
  - Weather
  - Archive
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  - Casino
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### Police chiefs face questions on Omagh after not guilty verdicts

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Friday, December 21, 2007

Past and present police chiefs were today facing a string of questions in the wake of the not guilty verdicts against the only man brought before Northern Ireland's courts for the Omagh bombing.

Sean Hoey was yesterday cleared of the murders of the 29 people killed in the August 1998 attack, with the judge severely castigating the police's handling of forensics in the case.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is now seeking an early meeting with PSNI Chief Constable Sir Hugh Orde.

And ex-RUC head Sir Ronnie Flanagan is under fire from angry relatives of Omagh victims over the original bomb investigation.

The families are today continuing to press for a full scale cross-border public inquiry.

They have also stressed that their civil action against individuals allegedly involved in the attack will continue. It is scheduled to begin in Belfast next April.

Michael Gallagher, whose son Aidan (21) was among the victims, said: " We have no choice. Our backs are to the wall."

Sir Ronnie has yet to make any public comment on criticism voiced yesterday by Victor Barker, who lost his

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The ex-chief constable is now head of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, which oversees police forces across the UK.

Community Telegraph

Secretary of State Shaun Woodward today refused to be drawn on Sir Ronnie in radio interviews.

He told the BBC that he was examining the judgement in the court case in full.

Asked if the former chief constable's position was in question, Mr Woodward said: "Again, that's a matter that we have to look at this morning."

The judge, Mr Justice Weir, accused two police officers, Philip Marshall and Fiona Cooper, of "lies" in connection with not wearing forensic clothing at a mortar bomb find.

He has referred the matter to the Police Ombudsman.

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