

BELFAST TELEGRAPH

ADVERTISEMENT

Belfast Telegraph - IPR Website of the Year

Search Site

Advanced Search

- Loadzajobs.co.uk
 - Propertynews.com
 - Belfast Telegraph TV
 - Family Notices
 - Ads For Free
- Belfast Telegraph**
- Home
 - News
 - Local & National
 - World news
 - Politics
 - Environment
 - Education
 - Letters
 - Opinion**
 - Technology
 - Breaking News
 - Northwest Edition
 - Business
 - Business Telegraph
 - Sport
 - Health
 - Features
 - Columnists
 - Entertainment
 - Homefinder
 - Weather
 - Archive
 - Calendar 2008
 - Telegraph Travel
 - Shopping Directory
- Inside Belfast**
- Jobs
 - Training
 - Dating
 - Casino
 - Bingo
 - Reader Offers
 - Diners' Club
- Services**
- RSS
 - Media Kit
- Other Titles**

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Opinion](#)

Opinion

- Email Article
- Print Version
- Search
- +Most Emailed
- +Most Read

Related Articles

- Police chiefs face questions on Omagh after not guilty verdicts
- Sean Hoey cleared of Omagh bombing charges
- The history of a trial without precedent
- Senior detective accepts the controversial verdict
- Omagh trial was a farce: relative
- Judge condemns police as only man to be tried for Omagh bombing is acquitted
- Judge turns on police investigation as Hoey walks free
- No end to the anguish
- Raucous applause for acquittal of bomb accused
- I always said trial was a farce and this proved it
- Case flawed from the outset

Viewpoint: We need a professional inquiry

Friday, December 21, 2007

The Omagh bombing in which 29 people died was the single worst tragedy of the Troubles. That tragedy has been compounded by what has been revealed to be one of the most ham-fisted and unprofessional investigations into the massacre.

In the immediate aftermath of the atrocity, the relatives of those killed were promised by no less than the Prime Minister that no stone would be left unturned in the efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice. With the acquittal of Sean Hoey, the Omagh relatives are still waiting for justice to be delivered in any shape or form.

Seldom, if ever, has a judge delivered such a damning indictment of the entire prosecution case as that given by Mr Justice Weir yesterday.

Acquitting Mr Hoey of being involved in a Real IRA bombing campaign, including Omagh, the judge lambasted the police investigation, the handling of vital evidence by the Northern Ireland Forensic Service and, by implication, the Public Prosecution Service for bringing such a shambolic case before the courts.

Mr Justice Weir singled out two police witnesses, Scenes of Crimes Officer Fiona Cooper and DCI Philip Marshall for their "deliberate and calculated deception" during their evidence. And he said that others concerned in the investigation and preparation of the case for trial may also have played a part in that deception. He has sent transcripts of the evidence sent to the Police Ombudsman for further potential action.

Police bungling of the storage of forensic items and a "slapdash and thoughtless" approach by some

Don't miss . . .

Cheers!



The best wine in the world (and it only costs £30)

Still Shameless: TV's biggest slob



David Threlfall on playing Frank Gallagher

Nazi dog stuns Germans



Pet's salute lands owner in jail for five months

What a scoop



The ad men were right - Guinness is good for you

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISEMENTS

Sunday Life

Ireland's Saturday Night

Community Telegraph

officers to the collection of exhibits were also highlighted by the judge. He further criticised the Forensic Service, which he said should have known how to handle exhibits properly.

Little wonder that he had to find Hoey not guilty. Quite simply the evidence did not stack up and that was entirely due to unprofessional police work at virtually every stage.

The judge's criticism bears out the findings of the former Police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan, who also concluded that the RUC investigation of the Omagh atrocity was botched.

Today, the relatives of those killed must feel betrayed. They put their faith in the police and the justice system to jail those responsible for the slaughter of their loved ones. That faith was not repaid.

That a case of such magnitude could be handled so badly is almost inconceivable and it is clear the judge could scarcely come to terms with the paucity of the evidence put before him.

Now the Omagh relatives want a cross-border investigation into the bombing. It is clear that there was a cross-border element in the planning and commission of the crime. Perhaps a fresh, professional approach can finally bring justice.

More articles in Opinion

- [High flyers at BBC come down to earth](#)
- [Viewpoint: BAA humbug, really!](#)
- [DUP: justice powers would be symbolic, but with little power](#)
- [Brian Rowan: The Army Council and the way ahead](#)
- [Viewpoint: Drivers, you are warned](#)

ADVERTISEMENTS

Best of 2007

Records



Music stars reveal their pick of this year's tunes

Gigs



The pick of this year's finest concerts and performances

Films



Our experts reveal their pick of the year's movie releases

Books



Authors reveal their pick of this year's finest writing

In Pictures

[Jan & Feb](#)

[March](#)

[April](#)

[May](#)

[June](#)

[July](#)

[August](#)

[September](#)

[October](#)

[November](#)

[December](#)

Video

A taste of tinseltown



Mischa the belle of Belfast city for movie premiere

Festive farewell to Belfast choir



Conductor Harry Grindle bows out on high-note

What's the big Ikea?



The iconic Swedish superstore opens

BT Woman of the Year



Applauding Ulster's most exceptional women

Omagh blaze tragedy



Special report on Northern Ireland's worst house fire

Belfast Telegraph Property Awards



Celebrating excellence at the inaugural awards gala

Best view in town



Special multimedia



report on Belfast Wheel

Fashion Week



Ulster struts the catwalk with a stylish confidence

Carl Verheyen



Interview with one of the world's best guitarists

Final moments of Uboat diver



The last dive of Dublin man Michael Hanrahan

Big Man's big fry



First Minister's vision is outlined over breakfast

Ulster's boy wonder



Watch our interview with golf sensation Rory McIlroy

Twelfth parades



Watch the video of this year's parade in Belfast

Paisley interview



Exclusive: First Minister Ian Paisley talks to Ed Curran

In Pictures . . .

News

- [Ulster Fry event](#)
- [The Twelfth](#)
- [Bull Run](#)
- [Award-winners](#)
- [Flooded Ulster](#)
- [Sunny Northern Ireland](#)
- [Devolution Day](#)
- [Assembly Elections](#)
- [Maze tumbles](#)
- [Blair quits](#)
- [Last watchtower](#)
- [Carrick-a-rede](#)

Events

- [Derry Xmas](#)
- [Boss is back](#)
- [Xmas: what a turn on](#)
- [Property Awards](#)
- [50 Cent](#)
- [Enrique Iglesias](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [Fantasy Fest](#)
- [Rolling Stones](#)
- [Oxygen 07](#)
- [Beach Party 07](#)
- [Balmoral Show](#)
- [Razorlight](#)
- [St Patrick's Day](#)
- [Mardis Gras](#)
- [Justin Timberlake](#)
- [Brit Awards 07](#)

Sport

- [Spain 1 Norn Iron 0](#)
- [Win over Denmark](#)

[Windsor win](#)
[Golf: Rory McIlroy](#)
[British Open](#)
[Copa America Final](#)
[N Ireland v Sweden](#)
[Six Nations](#)
[World in Sport](#)

Eye on the World

Malise Ruthven



How the Saudis exported a hardline ideology

Apocalypse now?



Hersh predicts major conflict if US attacks Iran

Burmese junta? Knickers to that



'Panties for peace' is latest ploy by Burma activists

Conquering sectarianism



Can Ulster be the blueprint for Iraq's future?