

- [Jump to content \[s\]](#)
- [Jump to site navigation \[0\]](#)
- [Jump to search \[4\]](#)
- [Terms and conditions \[8\]](#)

- [Sign in](#)
- [Register](#)
- Text [larger](#)
- [smaller](#)



guardian.co.uk

Search:

- [News](#)
- [Sport](#)
- [Comment](#)
- [Culture](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Money](#)
- [Life & style](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [A-Z](#)

- [News](#)
- [UK news](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)

Omagh prosecution 'impossible without new information'

- Virtually no chance of Real IRA arrests, says board
- Father of victim blames intimidation and politics

[Henry McDonald](#), Ireland correspondent
[The Guardian](#), Thursday July 10, 2008

No one will be charged over the Omagh bomb massacre unless fresh evidence is found and new witnesses come forward, the body that oversees policing in Northern Ireland admitted yesterday.

Northern Ireland's Policing Board has concluded that there is virtually no chance of charges being brought against anyone in the Real IRA, the terror group responsible for the attack committed in the Co Tyrone town almost 10 years ago.

The blast that ripped through Omagh's commercial heart on August 15 1998 killed 29 men, women and children - the highest death toll for a single act of terrorism in 35 years of the Troubles.

Relatives of those killed last night accused the police and governments on both sides of the border of "throwing in the towel". Michael Gallagher, whose son Aidan died in the explosion, said he agreed with the policing board's conclusion that the Omagh bombers would never be brought to justice.

"There are several factors why no one will be charged. The first is fear. We still don't have an adequate witness protection programme to encourage new witnesses.

"Then there is the lack of political will. The two governments, despite their promises to hunt down the bombers at the time of atrocity, have not pursued those responsible vigorously. Why? Because the two governments have been told that there would be embarrassing consequences for them in terms of agents being exposed, and for some of those key players in the peace process," Gallagher said.

Last December a Belfast judge cleared Sean Hoey, the only man ever charged in direct connection with the car bomb attack, of any involvement. In response to Mr Justice Weir's ruling the policing board promised to hold an investigation into the Police Service of Northern Ireland's handling of the inquiry.

The judge demolished the prosecution's case against Hoey, saying forensic evidence had been "beefed up" by detectives. He was also critical of the Forensic Science Agency and the Public Prosecution Service for their handling of the case against the South Armagh electrician.

Sir Desmond Rea, the chairman of the policing board, yesterday expressed his regret that prosecution could not be secured without new evidence or witnesses. Despite international outrage the Real IRA has maintained a wall of silence over the bomb plot.

"The board has been mindful of the views that have been expressed by those who have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the Omagh bombing.

"The board accepts the finding of the review, shared by the chief constable, that unless further witnesses or evidence is made available there is no prospect of securing a prosecution," Rea said.

He and his colleagues appealed once more for any evidence.

Some of the Omagh families have taken civil action against a number of men they allege were central to the bomb plot. The case made legal history this year when it moved from Belfast high court to Dublin high court. Among the men the Omagh families are seeking to sue is the Real IRA's founder, Michael McKevitt, who until 1997 was in charge of the Provisional IRA's arsenal.

The civil action continues in Dublin this September and is expected to return to Belfast a month later.

-
-  [Printable version](#)
 -  [Send to a friend](#)
 -  [Share](#)
 -  [Clip](#)
 -  [Contact us](#)
 - **A** [larger](#) | [smaller](#)

Share

Close

- [Digg](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google Bookmarks](#)
- [Yahoo! My Web](#)
- [del.icio.us](#)
- [StumbleUpon](#)
- [Newsvine](#)
- [livejournal](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [BlinkList](#)

Email

Close

Recipient's email address

Your name

Add a note (optional)

Contact us

Close

- Report errors or inaccuracies:
reader@guardian.co.uk
- Letters for publication should be sent to:
letters@guardian.co.uk
- If you need help using the site: userhelp@guardian.co.uk
- Call the main Guardian and Observer switchboard:
+44 (0)20 7278 2332
 - [Advertising guide](#)
 - [License/buy our content](#)

UK news

[Northern Ireland](#)

Politics

[Northern Irish politics](#)

 [Printable version](#)
 [Send to a friend](#)
 [Share](#)
 [Clip](#)
 [Contact us](#)

-  [Article history](#)

About this article

Close

This article appeared in [the Guardian](#) on [Thursday July 10 2008](#) on p11 of the [UK news](#) section. It was last updated at 00:08 on July 10 2008.

- [del.icio.us](#)
- [StumbleUpon](#)
- [Newsvine](#)
- [livejournal](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [BlinkList](#)

Share

Close

- [Digg](#)
- [reddit](#)
- [Google](#)
- [Bookmarks](#)
- [Yahoo! My Web](#)

Email

Close

Recipient's email address

Your name

Add a note (optional)

Contact us

Close

- Report errors or inaccuracies: reader@guardian.co.uk
- Letters for publication should be sent to: letters@guardian.co.uk

- If you need help using the site: userhelp@guardian.co.uk
- Call the main Guardian and Observer switchboard:
+44 (0)20 7278 2332
 - [Advertising guide](#)
 - [License/buy our content](#)



Browse the Guardian bookshop

•



- [How Green are My Wellies](#)
- £14.99 with free UK delivery

•



- [Qur'an](#)
- £25.00 with free UK delivery

- [This week's most popular titles](#)
- [Buy books from the Guardian Bookshop](#)

Latest news on guardian.co.uk

Last updated less than one minute ago

- [News](#)

[Karadzic was working as doctor before arrest](#)

- [Sport](#)

[Dan Chung's China gallery](#)

- **Sponsored features**



[Be inspired by film](#)

Add your movie connections to our interactive film map



[Urban home](#)

Add urban pictures and tips, get weekend ideas and win great prizes

[guardianjobs](#)

- [Operational Officer](#)

mi6. london and worldwide. unspecified.

- [Market Reporter, Platts - London](#)

platts. canary wharf, london. Dependant on experience.

- [Event Director - Travel Show](#)

dragonfly. event director - travel show. £52000 - £58000 per annum + £58,000 + Bonus.

[Browse all jobs](#)

-
- [License/buy our content](#) |
 - [Privacy policy](#) |
 - [Terms & conditions](#) |
 - [Advertising guide](#) |
 - [Accessibility](#) |
 - [A-Z index](#) |
 - [Inside guardian.co.uk](#) |
 - [About guardian.co.uk](#) |
 - [Join our dating site today](#)

- guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2008

Go to: