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# Omagh families say phone tap review will come too late

**Henry McDonald**, Ireland correspondent  
[The Guardian](#), Thursday September 18 2008

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Families of those killed in the Omagh bombing yesterday claimed that a review of intelligence ordered by the prime minister would report too late to help their civil case.

Sir Peter Gibson, the intelligence services commissioner, will examine all intercept material and how it was shared, after claims on the BBC Panorama programme that phones of the Real IRA unit were tapped by GCHQ as they allegedly carried out the attack in which 29 people died.

Families of those killed called on Gordon Brown had to speed up the process of handing over the evidence. The Cabinet Office said yesterday the review should be done within three months, but Michael Gallagher, spokesman for Omagh victims, said their action would be over by then.

His group is suing men they allege were central to the plot to bomb Omagh in 1998. Gallagher said: "We need this evidence available in court very soon. Otherwise, what will be the point of handing it over?"

Sir Hugh Orde, chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, welcomed the review. "It's important that we now step back and wait and see what this inquiry uncovers."

Gallagher also said the group asked to meet Brown in January, but only received a letter last month saying he was unavailable; a letter to GCHQ in 2001 has had no response. A GCHQ spokesman declined to comment on the Panorama claims.



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