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Bid to get phone-tap recordings

By Staff reporter

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Both sides in the Omagh bomb civil action are to launch legal attempts to force the British government to hand over top-secret phone recordings of the bombers as they carried out the plot.

Lawyers representing some of the five men being sued confirmed that they would be applying for intelligence material which featured in a BBC documentary.

It followed earlier indications by the

victims' families' legal team that they plan to seek subpoenas against the British government's GCHQ specialist listening agency.

Dermott Fee QC, for Colm Murphy and Seamus Daly, said he was prepared to discuss a joint approach.

"Our focus is on the tape recordings which we say would assist us in saying Mr Daly was not present," he said.

Mr Justice Morgan, who said he has not seen the Panorama programme, indicated that he may at some future stage have to study the transcripts.

A full hearing of the application is expected to take place later in the trial, with potential third parties such as the intelligence services put on notice.

British prime minister Gordon Brown has already announced an intelligence review after the programme revealed Real IRA phone conversations were being monitored at the time the bomb team took the 500lb device into Omagh.

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