



Fri, Jan 12, 2007

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3. [Sport](#)
4. [Business](#)
5. [Technology](#)
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- [Technology](#)

[Next Day](#) 

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Omagh trial to finish next week

The Omagh bomb trial is expected to finish next week, a lawyer revealed today.

Closing submissions will begin on Monday before the judge Mr Justice Weir retires to consider his verdict. It is expected to be a reserved judgment delivered within two months.

Legal representatives for Sean Hoey (37), the south Armagh man accused of murdering 29 people in the bomb, confirmed the case was likely to close after they dealt with a new statement from a forensics witness.

The trial has sat for 53 days since it opened at Belfast Crown Court last September.

Mr Hoey is charged with 56 terrorist-related charges, including the murders of 29 people in the August 1998 Real IRA bombing in Omagh. The prosecution case depends heavily on DNA profiling and fibres evidence.

The trial was adjourned until Monday when closing submissions will begin.

Meanwhile, the Northern Ireland police ombudsman Nuala O'Loan has begun an investigation into how two crucial witnesses changed their statements to the trial.

Fiona Cooper, a forensics officer, and Detective Chief Inspector Philip Marshall both admitted strengthening their original accounts on evidence gathering.

Both were heavily criticised for their conduct by Mr Justice Weir, the trial judge, who ordered an investigation into how some statements were altered and others lost.

The two witnesses admitted strengthening their original accounts to suggest specialist forensic precautions were taken at one of the explosives finds allegedly connected to Mr Hoey, when in reality they had not.


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TODAY



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TOMORROW



3-9 °C

SUNDAY



4-9 °C

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