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Irish-British group to debate Omagh phone transcripts

A cross-party group of parliamentarians from Ireland and Britain will today debate an emergency motion calling for transcripts of telephone conversations that may involve the Omagh bombing suspects to be made available.

The British Irish Inter Parliamentary Body, meeting in Newcastle, England, will discuss revelations in a recent *Panorama* programme that claimed telephone calls between the suspects were recorded by the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) on the day of the attack.

The bombing was the worst atrocity during the conflict in the north, killing 29 people, including a woman pregnant with twins.

Hundreds more were injured when the Real IRA bombed the Co Tyrone town on a busy Saturday afternoon in August 1998.

Irish Fine Gael TD Brian Hayes and British Labour party MP Andrew McKinley, who brought the motion on behalf of 15 cross party members of the Body, hope it will put pressure on the British Government to disclose the contents of surveillance gathered more than 10 years ago.

Mr Hayes said the Omagh victims have waited too long for justice.

"It is crucial that all information, documents and transcripts from the surveillance at the time leading up to and after the Omagh bombing be given to the family's legal team," Mr Hayes said.

Although nobody has been convicted for the terrorist attack, families of some of the victims have taken a landmark civil case against five men they believe responsible for the blast.

Named on the family's £14 million (€17.4 million) lawsuit are Michael McKeivitt, the alleged leader of the Real IRA; the man said to be his number two, Liam Campbell; and Colm Murphy, Seamus McKenna and Seamus Daly.

All deny any involvement.

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The motion calls on the UK Government to immediately disclose to the legal counsel of the families of the victims of the Omagh Bombing, details of and all information relating to and arising from, the request made by the RUC to GCHQ, for surveillance of those subsequently suspected of preparing and carrying out the atrocity in Omagh a decade ago; including transcripts and time lines.

PA

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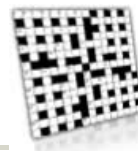
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