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LOCAL NEWS



Omagh bomb, 1998

Wednesday 09 July 2008 18:03

Omagh judgment criticised by board

Two of the UK`s former top policemen have criticised the senior judge who acquitted the only man to be charged with the Omagh bomb murders.

The Policing Board set up it's own investigation into the atrocity, following the collapse of the case at Belfast Crown Court just before Christmas last year.

It was headed by former chief constables Sir Dan Crompton and David Blakey.

Mr Justice Weir was highly critical of the police inquiry and also accused a detective sergeant and a PSNI scene of crime officer of a "deliberate and calculated deception".

Sir Dan and Mr Blakey say they were left wondering why that passage was included in the judgment.

They add: "We conclude that the judgment in this respect amounted to speculation by Mr Justice Weir, but we are left uninformed as to what triggered that speculation."

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The review also upheld a decision by a PSNI deputy chief constable not to suspend the two officers - Philip Marshall, who has since risen to the rank of Detective Chief Inspector and scenes of crime of officer Fiona Cooper, who is now a PSNI constable - from duty after the judge`s criticism of them and referral of the case to the Police Ombudsman.

Michael Gallagher, who lost his son in the bomb, gave his reaction to the report.

"I sat through the 64 day trial and I think the judge had no option but to deliver the verdict he did," he said.

Policing Board chairman Professor Sir Desmond Rea said members had considered the report in detail and agreed by a majority view to adopt it.

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