

BELFAST TELEGRAPH

ADVERTISEMENT

Belfast Telegraph - IPR Website of the Year

Search Site

Advanced Search

- Loadzajobs.co.uk
 - Propertynews.com
 - Belfast Telegraph TV
 - Family Notices
 - Ads For Free
- Belfast Telegraph**
- Home
 - News
 - Local & National
 - World news
 - Politics
 - Environment
 - Education
 - Letters
 - Opinion
 - Technology
 - Breaking News
 - Northwest Edition
 - Business
 - Business Telegraph
 - Sport
 - Health
 - Features
 - Columnists
 - Entertainment
 - Homefinder
 - Weather
 - Archive
 - Calendar 2008
 - Telegraph Travel
 - Shopping Directory
- Inside Belfast**
- Jobs
 - Training
 - Dating
 - Casino
 - Bingo
 - Reader Offers
 - Diners' Club
- Services**
- RSS
 - Media Kit
- Other Titles**

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Local & National](#)

Local & National

Raucous applause for acquittal of bomb accused

- Email Article
- Print Version
- Search
- +Most Emailed
- +Most Read

Related Articles

- [Police chiefs face questions on Omagh after not guilty verdicts](#)
- [Senior detective accepts the controversial verdict](#)
- [Judge turns on police investigation as Hoey walks free](#)
- [Viewpoint: We need a professional inquiry](#)
- [Sean Hoey cleared of Omagh bombing charges](#)
- [The history of a trial without precedent](#)
- [Omagh trial was a farce: relative](#)
- [No end to the anguish](#)
- [I always said trial was a farce and this proved it](#)
- [Case flawed from the outset](#)

[Claire McNeilly talks to some of the Omagh bomb victims' relatives who had been hoping for some closure from yesterday's verdict](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Friday, December 21, 2007

Seconds after yesterday's verdict acquitting Sean Hoey of any involvement in the Omagh bombing, raucous applause exploded from the public gallery.

More than 150 people - many of them his supporters - had descended on Belfast Crown Court to hear that, after a long-running trial, the 38-year-old electrician was a free man. He had denied a total of 56 charges, including 29 counts of murder, in Northern Ireland's worst terrorist atrocity.

And yesterday, dismissing every single one of them, Lord Justice Weir ruled that he was an innocent man.

Outside the court, in the midst of a media frenzy, some of the victims' relatives were visibly trying to come to terms with the not guilty verdict.

Some stepped forward to give their heartbroken reactions, many expressed mixed feelings - but there was widespread criticism and condemnation for the investigation which sealed yesterday's result.

Lawrence Rush, who lost his wife, Elizabeth (57), in the bombing, said that he accepted the judge's ruling, but criticised the way in which the investigation had been carried out.

"I feel devastated and stressed," he told the Belfast Telegraph.

"You can ask me if I'm disappointed, but I don't want anyone who wasn't responsible to be punished for my wife's death. I think the judge was fair and honest."

But he added: "Plenty of stones have been left unturned. I don't think it was a serious investigation. It was a political situation. I don't know if I'll ever get any justice for my wife's death."

Don't miss . . .

Cheers!



The best wine in the world (and it only costs £30)

Still Shameless: TV's biggest slob



David Threlfall on playing Frank Gallagher

Nazi dog stuns Germans



Pet's salute lands owner in jail for five months

What a scoop



The ad men were right - Guinness is good for you

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISEMENTS

Sunday Life

Ireland's Saturday Night

Community Telegraph

In total, 29 people - including a woman pregnant with twins - died in the bomb attack, which devastated the Co Tyrone town on August 15, 1998.

Michael Gallagher, whose son, Aidan (21), was among the victims, said he felt "unbelievable despair" and described the case as a disaster for the Omagh families.

"There have to be a lot of questions asked as to why this was allowed to go before the court when it wasn't fit to go before the court," he said.

"The police recommended the prosecution and the DPP allowed it to move forward, then they brought us all here for Christmas to get this news.

"It was despairing to hear the catalogue of errors and mistakes. We certainly want justice and will continue to pursue justice, but it would have been impossible to convict someone under those circumstances."

Mr Gallagher said that the criminal justice system had failed the victims of Omagh and he called for both the British and Irish governments to set up a full cross-border inquiry.

"They can no longer refuse to give families such an inquiry. This case has been a disgrace by any standards," he said.

Mr Gallagher added that the applause which rang out when Hoey was acquitted was "very, very insensitive" towards the Omagh victims.

English lawyer Victor Barker, whose 12-year-old son, James, died in the attack, also hit out at what he described as a "deeply flawed" initial investigation.

"It is the appalling inefficiency of Sir Ronnie Flanagan that has meant Chief Superintendent Baxter has not been able to secure a conviction," he said.

"He (Sir Ronnie Flanagan) said he would fall on his sword if anything was wrong with this investigation - I will give him the sword."

Mr Barker, who was present in court yesterday, along with his wife and 13-year-old son, Oliver, said they were "very disappointed" at the judge's decision which had to be based on the evidence put before him.

Mr Barker appealed to organisations such as the Real IRA to put the past behind them or there would be "no future for this island".

Another relative who was there to hear Mr Justice Weir deliver his verdict was Stanley McCombe, whose wife, Ann (48), was another of the Omagh victims.

He said that he was shocked by the decision.

"I'm flabbergasted, dumbfounded," he said.

"I do not know what to think. All the resources over the last nine and a half years have not got us anywhere."

More articles in Local & National

- [Paisley house is now in his name](#)
- [Prison warning to drivers using mobiles](#)
- [Man arrested over couple burned alive](#)
- [Six-year-old boy fights for his life after crash](#)
- [Paul Quinn's parents meet Secretary of State](#)

Best of 2007

Records



Music stars reveal their pick of this year's tunes

Gigs



The pick of this year's finest concerts and performances

Films



Our experts reveal their pick of the year's movie releases

Books



Authors reveal their pick of this year's finest writing

In Pictures

[Jan & Feb](#)

[March](#)

[April](#)

[May](#)

[June](#)

[July](#)

[August](#)

[September](#)

[October](#)

[November](#)

[December](#)

Video

A taste of tinseltown



Mischa the belle of Belfast city for movie premiere

Festive farewell to Belfast choir



Conductor Harry Grindle bows out on high-note

What's the big Ikea?



The iconic Swedish superstore opens

BT Woman of the Year



Applauding Ulster's most exceptional women

Omagh blaze tragedy



Special report on Northern Ireland's worst house fire

Belfast Telegraph Property Awards



Celebrating excellence at the inaugural awards gala

Best view in town



Special multimedia



report on Belfast Wheel

Fashion Week



Ulster struts the catwalk with a stylish confidence

Carl Verheyen



Interview with one of the world's best guitarists

Final moments of Uboat diver



The last dive of Dublin man Michael Hanrahan

Big Man's big fry



First Minister's vision is outlined over breakfast

Ulster's boy wonder



Watch our interview with golf sensation Rory McIlroy

Twelfth parades



Watch the video of this year's parade in Belfast

Paisley interview



Exclusive: First Minister Ian Paisley talks to Ed Curran

In Pictures . . .

News

- [Ulster Fry event](#)
- [The Twelfth](#)
- [Bull Run](#)
- [Award-winners](#)
- [Flooded Ulster](#)
- [Sunny Northern Ireland](#)
- [Devolution Day](#)
- [Assembly Elections](#)
- [Maze tumbles](#)
- [Blair quits](#)
- [Last watchtower](#)
- [Carrick-a-rede](#)

Events

- [Derry Xmas](#)
- [Boss is back](#)
- [Xmas: what a turn on](#)
- [Property Awards](#)
- [50 Cent](#)
- [Enrique Iglesias](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [Fantasy Fest](#)
- [Rolling Stones](#)
- [Oxegen 07](#)
- [Beach Party 07](#)
- [Balmoral Show](#)
- [Razorlight](#)
- [St Patrick's Day](#)
- [Mardis Gras](#)
- [Justin Timberlake](#)
- [Brit Awards 07](#)

Sport

- [Spain 1 Norn Iron 0](#)
- [Win over Denmark](#)

[Windsor win](#)
[Golf: Rory McIlroy](#)
[British Open](#)
[Copa America Final](#)
[N Ireland v Sweden](#)
[Six Nations](#)
[World in Sport](#)

Eye on the World

Malise Ruthven



How the Saudis exported a hardline ideology

Apocalypse now?



Hersh predicts major conflict if US attacks Iran

Burmese junta? Knickers to that



'Panties for peace' is latest ploy by Burma activists

Conquering sectarianism



Can Ulster be the blueprint for Iraq's future?