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Attack on son almost made O'Loan quit

(Allison Morris, [Irish News](#))

Nuala O'Loan has revealed that she was on the brink of quitting the post of Police Ombudsman following a serious assault on her youngest son.

Mrs O'Loan said following the attack on her son in 2006 she questioned her position and the impact that the high-profile job was having on her family.

"I didn't want to give it up but there was a part of me thought for the children's sake I needed to," she said.

On Monday Mrs O'Loan will hand over the running of the office of ombudsman to former Canadian Mounted policeman Al Hutchinson, ending a seven-year run in the post.

Mrs O'Loan will now take her experience at the forefront of Northern Ireland's police reforms to the world stage, sharing her knowledge with other post-conflict governments.

She has recently returned from a trip to Romania where she advised officials from one of the newest members of the European Union on how to create a more accountable police service.

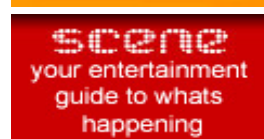
Throughout her tenure as ombudsman Mrs O'Loan has had her fair share of controversy, from her damning report into the Omagh bomb investigation to revelations regarding Special Branch informant Mark Haddock.

Investigators linked UVF informer Haddock to 10 murders with implications that he was involved in the deaths of five more people while in the pay of the security services.

"It was a shock to me and I think it was a shock to many in that (unionist) community," she tells the UTV *Insight* programme to be broadcast on Monday.

A turning point for her career came when she criticised the judgement of the then chief constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan in relation to what she said was a "flawed investigation" into the Omagh bomb that killed 29 people, including a woman pregnant with twins.

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"The response, most of which followed the publication of the report, was hard to deal with personally," she said.

"I knew that the report was evidenced and right.

"I knew that the recommendations, which I made, would enhance policing and from that perspective it just had to be said.

"After the Omagh report I recommended that they begin another investigation, which they did, properly resourced, and the conference of that is that a man has come to trial and has been tried for a part in the Omagh bombing."

Mrs O'Loan admitted that she came under political pressure because of the investigation.

"We were moving into a new political domain, we were moving into a new political order and it was put to me that I might disrupt the peace process," she said.

"I just can't take sides in the peace process and what I had to do was my job as required by statute."

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