



Michael Gallagher

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Policing Board consider Omagh inquiry

Calls for a cross-border public inquiry into the Omagh bombing will be considered by the Northern Ireland Policing Board next week, it

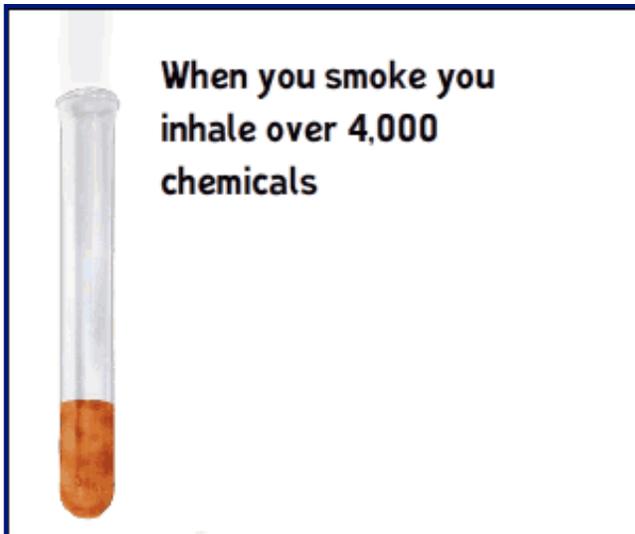
was learned tonight.

Members of the board met the Omagh families in the Co Tyrone town for more than two and a half hours and agreed to consider adding their considerable weight to the demand for an all-Ireland judicial inquiry.

The board had its first meeting with the Omagh families since the acquittal of Sean Hoey on all charges related to the bombing and the judge's criticism of police.

The discussions were held ahead of the board's expected decision to on the terms of reference for a planned external investigation of how the police have investigated the atrocity which claimed the lives of 29 people including the mother of unborn twins.

Politicians were a bit thin on the ground at the meeting - only three of the 10 political representatives on the board attended - although seven



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independent members were there.

The MLAs who did travel to Omagh were Tom Buchanan of the DUP, Dolores Kelly of the SDLP and Daithi McKay of Sinn Fein.

Michael Gallagher, whose son Aiden died in the bombing, said their discussions with the board had been "very robust".

He added: "We expressed our amazement that the board was thinking about appointing an investigator to investigate the previous investigations.

"What we need now is one final overarching investigation into all aspects of the bombing. This is an all-island problem and we need an all-island investigation into the bomb investigations on both sides of the border."

Board chairman Professor Sir Desmond Rea said: "Members listened carefully to all the views expressed at today`s meeting and provided an assurance to the families that matters raised would be brought to the February 2008 board meeting."

He added: "At a meeting earlier this month board members agreed that before taking any further action in respect of agreeing terms of reference for the external review, a meeting should be held with the Omagh families."

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