

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

12 September 2013

Call for an inquiry into the Omagh Bomb

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Theresa Villiers): After consultation and careful consideration, I have decided not to instigate a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the bombing in Omagh on 15 August 1998.

This morning, I informed the Omagh Support and Self Help Group of my decision. This group represents a number of survivors and victims' families and they had called for a full, cross-border public inquiry into this atrocity.

I considered this matter carefully. I consulted a range of people including survivors, families of those killed in the bomb and other interested parties. Some of them supported an inquiry, but many did not.

These views were weighed against other factors, including the significant number of inquiries that have been held already on the Omagh bomb and the investigation currently underway by the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

I do not believe there are sufficient grounds to justify a further review or inquiry above and beyond those that have already taken place or are ongoing. The current investigation by the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland is the best way to address any outstanding issues relating to the police investigation of the Omagh attack.

The Government does not believe that selecting a further series of cases for public inquiries is the best way to deal with the past in Northern Ireland.

I express my sincere sympathies to those who survived the Omagh attack and my condolences to the families of the 29 people who died. I hope that the ongoing police investigation will ultimately bring to justice those who committed this horrific crime.