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“We are creating a squad of monsters, for whom no English manager will be good enough” Martin Samuel

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From [Times Online](#) December 20, 2007

## Analysis: back to square one for Omagh justice

David Sharrock, Ireland Correspondent of The Times

The acquittal of Sean Hoey, the only person to have been charged directly with the murders of the victims of Northern Ireland's greatest single act of terrorism, leaves the quest for justice back at its very beginning all over again.

In spite of the pledges of political leaders and police chiefs to leave "no stone unturned" in the aftermath of the Omagh bombing, almost a decade after a Real IRA car bomb devastated the County Tyrone market town not a single individual has been found guilty of carrying out the attack.

Sadly it is an all-too familiar record: more than 90 per cent of terrorist-related killings in Northern Ireland since the Troubles erupted in 1969 remain unsolved.

It is one of the reasons that a police-led Historical Enquiries Team is working its way chronologically through the more than 3,000 deaths, to try to finally provide answers to those who are still grieving the loss of their loved ones.

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It is also why the past will continue not just to haunt Northern Ireland's new-found peace but also to endanger the great political strides which have been

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made in the last decade.

Next year a group of Omagh victims' families will finally bring their civil action to court, in which they accuse named persons of planning and carrying out the bombing attack which claimed the lives of 29 people, including an eight months pregnant woman carrying twin girls.

The trial is set to begin in Belfast on April 24, but today some of those weary relatives came close to acknowledging defeat. Michael Gallagher, who lost his 21-year-old son Aiden, conceded that the trial of Mr Hoey was "the last high-profile case that we will see over Omagh".

And he bitterly noted that for all the fine words in the wake of the bomb justice still has not been served. Omagh, he contended, was the terrorist attack of "which most is known about yet the least has been done about".

There were harsh words too for Sir Ronnie Flanagan, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary who was Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary when the Omagh bomb took place.

Solicitor Victor Barker, whose 12-year-old son James died, blamed Sir Ronnie's "appalling inefficiency" in the early stages of the investigation for the failure to secure evidence which could lead to convictions.

Surely there can be no quarrel with the verdict. Hoey was charged before a British court and found not guilty. How can anyone quarrel with that?

Brian O Cinneide, eThekwini, Afrika Borwa

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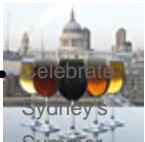
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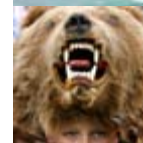
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