

OMAGH

BOMBING INQUIRY

Invitation to participate in Omagh Bombing Inquiry

On the 15 August 1998, the tragic bombing of Omagh caused untold damage to the town and wider communities. 31 lives were lost, hundreds of people were injured and the bombing caused significant damage to businesses and property across the town. These figures alone, however, do not truly reveal the damage that the bombing caused and the real-life human impact.

As Chairman of the independent Omagh Bombing Inquiry I am tasked with assessing whether the bombing could have been prevented by UK state authorities. To properly inform the direction of the Inquiry it is important that I fully understand the significance of the bombing and its impact.

In January and February of 2025, the Inquiry is hosting four weeks of Commemorative and Personal Statement hearings.

The purpose of these hearings is to commemorate those who were killed in the bombing and also to hear personal statements of people who were affected by the bombing. This can include people who were injured, both physically and psychologically, those who responded in formal roles, local businesses or people who witnessed the events.

When I opened the Inquiry earlier this year I said that I wanted to hear directly from those most affected by the bombing. Today I am inviting anyone who wishes to share their experiences with the Inquiry to complete a personal statement on how they were affected by the bombing. All of your experiences are important.

There is no obligation for anyone to participate, nor do people need to give oral evidence at the hearings. Legal representation is not required to contribute, and the Inquiry team can provide support to anyone who needs help writing a personal statement.

If you wish to share your experience all you need to do is complete a personal statement form, which is available on the Inquiry website. There are no rules about how you write your statement. It should reflect your own personal experience.

Not everyone who submits a personal statement will be asked to provide oral evidence at the Commemorative hearings in January and February, and there will be no obligation to give evidence if you would prefer not to. But I will read every statement, and your experiences will help to inform the direction and approach of the Inquiry.

I fully understand what a difficult topic this is and the real risk this Inquiry bears in bringing back the trauma of what happened in Omagh in 1998. The Inquiry is also working with WAVE Trauma Centre to provide emotional or wellbeing support for those wishing to engage with the Inquiry.

More information is available on the Inquiry website on the hearings or support provided by WAVE. Or you can contact enquiries@omagh.independent-inquiry.uk for further information.

There have been many investigations into the terrible events of 15 August 1998. My Inquiry may be the final opportunity to get to the truth of whether the bombing could have been prevented by the UK state. The experiences of those most affected on the day will be invaluable in helping me do so.

The Rt Hon Lord Turnbull
Omagh Bombing Inquiry Chairman