

I have been asked by the Commissioner today to establish the facts around our inquiry into the alleged unlawful tapping of mobile phones by Clive Goodman and Glen Mulcaire. I was not involved in the original case and clearly come at this with an independent mind.

Just by way of background. In December 2005, the Met received complaints that mobile phones had been illegally tapped.

We identified that Goodman and Mulcaire were engaged in a sophisticated and wide ranging conspiracy to gather private and personal data, principally about high profile figures. Clearly they benefited financially from these matters.

Our inquiries found that these two men had the ability to illegally intercept mobile phone voice mails, commonly known as phone tapping.

Their potential targets may have run into hundreds of people, but our inquiries showed that they only used the tactic against a far smaller number of individuals.

In January 2007, Goodman and Mulcaire were jailed for four and six months, guilty to conspiring to unlawfully intercept communications.

Mulcaire also pleaded guilty to an additional five charges relating to similar matters.

On sentencing the two men, Mr Justice Gross at the Old Bailey said the case was "not about press freedom, it was about a grave, inexcusable and illegal invasion of privacy."

The police investigation was complex and was carried out in close liaison with the Crown Prosecution Service, Senior Counsel and the telephone companies concerned.

The technical challenges posed to the service providers to establish that there had in fact been interception were very, very, significant.

It is important to recognise that our enquiries showed that in the vast majority of cases there was insufficient evidence to show that tapping had actually been achieved.

Where there was clear evidence that people had been the subject of tapping, they were all contacted by the police.

These people were made aware of the potential compromise to their phones and offered preventative advice.

After extensive consultation with the CPS and Counsel, only a few were subsequently identified as witnesses in the proceedings that followed.

I said earlier in this statement that these two men were engaged in a sophisticated and wide ranging conspiracy to gather personal data about high profile figures. One was a private detective and one was a journalist. It is reasonable therefore to expect them to be in possession of data about such matters as it's part and parcel of their job.

I emphasise that our enquiries were solely concerned with phone tapping. This, as far as we are aware, affected a much smaller pool of people.

There has been a lot of media comment today about the then Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. This investigation has not uncovered any evidence to suggest that John Prescott's phone had been tapped.

This case has been subject of the most careful investigation by very experienced detectives. It has also been scrutinised in detail by both the CPS and leading Counsel. They have carefully examined all the evidence and prepared the indictments that they considered appropriate.

No additional evidence has come to light since this case has concluded.

Therefore consider that no further investigation is required.

However, I do recognise the very real concerns, expressed today by a number of people, who believe that their privacy may have been intruded upon.

I therefore need to ensure that we have been diligent, reasonable and sensible, and taken all proper steps to ensure that where we have evidence that people have been the subject of any form of phone tapping, or that there is any suspicion that they might have been, that they have been informed.