

Police lay charges over phone-hacking claims

Reuters

LONDON — Prime Minister David Cameron's former spin doctor and a friend who was a top executive in Rupert Murdoch's media empire face phone-hacking charges, prosecutors said Tuesday.

Prosecutors said they had brought charges against Andy Coulson, Cameron's former communications director, and would charge Rebekah Brooks, who oversaw Mur-

doch's News International and who remains a close friend of the prime minister, at a later date.

"There is sufficient evidence for there to be a realistic prospect of conviction in relation to one or more offences," said Alison Levitt, principal legal adviser to the director of public prosecutions.

"I have concluded that a prosecution is required in the public interest."

The alleged offences were committed between

2000 and 2006 when both Coulson and Brooks served as editor of the *News of the World*, the Sunday tabloid, which Murdoch was forced to close a year ago amid public disgust at the phone hacking revelations.

If found guilty, the maximum penalty is two years in prison and/or a fine.

Among the alleged victims were two former home secretaries, former England soccer manager Sven-Goran Eriksson, Hollywood stars Angelina Jolie and

Brad Pitt, and former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney.

Analysts and opposition lawmakers said Cameron's political reputation would be in the dock too.

"What happens to Andy Coulson and Rebekah Brooks reflects on David Cameron's judgment in both the appointment of Coulson and in being seen to be so close to a certain newspaper empire," said Paul Farrelly, an opposition Labour MP.

Six other people, including some of the most senior

former staff at the *News of the World*, were charged alongside Coulson on Tuesday. Brooks was not charged as she is due to report to London police in August, part of her bail conditions.

Prosecutors said they hoped to reveal the names of more than 600 people who they believe were hacking victims.

The eight defendants will appear at a magistrates court for a preliminary hearing on Aug. 16.

Brooks and Coulson are

also both accused of involvement in hacking the telephone of Milly Dowler, a missing schoolgirl who was later found murdered.

It was the revelation that *News of the World* journalists had hacked her phone, giving her parents false hope that she was alive, which triggered a furor that engulfed Murdoch's News International and led to the closure of the paper.

Both Brooks and Coulson said they would fight the allegations.

Eastern farms in grip of severe drought

The Canadian Press

OTTAWA — Stand far enough away and the fields of Debra Pretty-Straathof's family farm appear green and lush. But a closer look reveals parched earth littered with dead or dying leaves, and crops whose growth has been stunted by severe heat and drought.

The conditions are much the same on neighbouring farms in the eastern Ontario town of Arnprior, an hour's drive west of Ottawa, Pretty-Straathof said Tuesday. The small town in Renfrew County is typical of others across the province that have been starved of rain during one of the worst droughts in recent memory.

"We've had like 10 drops a couple of weeks ago, but we haven't had anything since the third week of June," Pretty-Straathof said. "Up until a week or so before that, we were getting timely showers. Then it just stopped. And so the crops just stopped."

Pretty-Straathof, an Ontario Federation of Agriculture executive, has invited the federal and provincial agriculture ministers to Renfrew County to see for themselves how the drought has wreaked havoc on farmers' livelihoods.

The federal New Democrats warned Tuesday that the price of food is set to soar as farmers in eastern Canada watch their crops wither and die.

NDP MP Malcolm Allen described parts of southern Ontario as a wasteland, where many crops have been damaged too badly to bounce back. "If you look at parts of southwestern Ontario, it looks like a desert," he told a news conference. "The corn is no higher than six inches, and it's burnt. There's no saving that corn."

Farmers in Western Canada have not been as hard hit. As a result, they're reaping the rewards of higher grain prices.

But as bad as things are in Canada, it's even worse south of the border. The extreme drought baking America's breadbasket to a crisp recently sent corn prices soaring to a record-high \$8 US a bushel on the Chicago Board of Trade.

Prices could rise even higher as more corn crop withers in the United States, the world's biggest corn grower and exporter. This week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said 45 per cent is in poor or very poor condition, up from 38 per cent a week ago. Soybeans are also being hard hit, with more than a third in poor or very poor condition.

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ESQUIMALT
 1912-2012

Celebration Update
 44 Days until our
September 8th
Community Celebration

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Aug 12** Esquimalt Arts Festival on August 12th at the English Inn and Resort
- Aug 17** Township Hosts Blue Bridge Comedy Festival Gala Event at Archie Browning
- Aug 18** Summer Flower and Arts Festival at St Paul's: Celebrating Esquimalt's Centennial
- Aug 28** Joe Walsh with Special Guest in Bullen Park on Tuesday August 28th, 2012
- Sept 8** Esquimalt 100 Celebration at Gorge Park on Sept 8th!

FEATURED EVENT

Esquimalt 100 Community Celebration at Gorge Park on Sept 8th!

We're turning 100 and what better place to celebrate than at Esquimalt Gorge Park, the site of so many festive gatherings in the past. This once-in-a-lifetime celebration will feature music on two stages, community displays, food vendors, a beverage garden, a kid's zone with entertainers and much, much more.

What: Esquimalt 100 Community Celebration

Where: Esquimalt Gorge Park

When: Saturday, September 8th, 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Celebrate at the Gorge

- Enjoy live music on Centennial Stage and the Garden Stage. (Performers to be announced shortly!)
- Visit the Centennial Plaza to experience all that our community has to offer: tasty food, informative displays & more.
- Take a free 45-minute historical walking tour of Gorge Park, recalling festivities of a century ago, with author Dennis Minaker.
- Take a ride on the waterway in a voyageur canoe, courtesy of the Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club.
- Have a ball in the Kid's Zone!
- Take aim at the fireman's dunk tank.
- Wander through the revitalized Japanese Garden, one of the oldest such gardens in North America.
- See a display of Victoria Fire Department's 1899 Steamer, used for fire fighting in 1912!
- Enjoy the refreshment garden, hosted by Spinnaker's Brew Pub.

There will be no parking on site during the celebration. Plan to walk, take the bus, or ride your bike to the park (a bike check will be available). Shuttle service will be provided between Archie Browning Sports Centre and the park entrance.

For more information:

Tel 250-414-7122

www.esquimaltcentennial2012.ca

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