

Attorney-General not rethinking spy case

Attorney-General Christian Porter is not considering dropping spying charges against a former spy known as Witness K and Canberra lawyer Bernard Collaery.

Marnie Banger, AAP. 24 July 2019

Australia's attorney-general has shot down suggestions of dropping spy charges in a Commonwealth case involving East Timor.

The former president of East Timor, Xanana Gusmao, has urged the government to abandon its prosecution against a former spy known as Witness K and Canberra lawyer Bernard Collaery.

But as the pair prepare to return to court, Christian Porter is not budging.

"No," Mr Porter told reporters in Canberra on Wednesday, when asked if he would reconsider the charges.

The pair are charged with revealing information about Australia bugging East Timor's cabinet rooms in 2004 during negotiations over a gas and oil treaty.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison did not rule out dropping the charges when Mr Gusmao raised the issue earlier this month.

"These are matters that obviously get considered within the government and with the attorney-general," Mr Morrison said at the time.

"Based on that advice, we'll continue to consider all those matters very cautiously."

Witness K and Mr Collaery are listed to appear at the ACT Magistrates Court on August 6.