

# East Timor bugging lawyer returns to court

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 Bernard Collaery is accused over the leaking of information about bugging East Timor's cabinet.

A lawyer at the centre of a diplomatically sensitive bugging scandal involving Australia and East Timor has returned to court.

Bernard Collaery appeared before the ACT Supreme Court on Thursday for the last in a series of preliminary hearings.

Collaery will next face a "national security" hearing at court on December 11 to determine what documents are kept secret in his matter.

It is understood he will only then be able to explain the case to his own lawyers.

Outside the Canberra courthouse, his counsel would not elaborate on the proceedings, simply saying they were "getting somewhere".

Collaery, who is accused of revealing information about the bugging of East Timor's cabinet rooms in 2004, is fighting the charge.

However his former intelligence officer client known only as Witness K will plead guilty over his alleged role in the affair.

The pair's cases are now being dealt with separately, with Witness K expected to be sentenced at a later date.

*Australian Associated Press*

*See next page for an earlier article the same morning.*

## **This earlier version was on the CT website dated 22 August, 3:30 am**

A lawyer at the centre of a bugging scandal involving Australia and East Timor is expected back before a Canberra court.

Bernard Collaery, who is accused of revealing information about the bugging of East Timor's cabinet rooms in 2004, is fighting the charge.

However, his former intelligence officer client known only as Witness K will plead guilty over his alleged role in the affair.

The pair's cases will now be dealt with separately, with Collaery due to appear before the ACT Supreme Court on Thursday.

Witness K is expected to be sentenced at the ACT Magistrates Court at a later date.

In a written statement released after his latest court appearance earlier this month, Collaery said "mighty forces are at play here to hide dirty political linen".

He said it was a national disgrace to see Witness K treated in such a way.

The bugging took place during negotiations over a gas and oil treaty.

Charged in June 2018, both defence teams have been wrangling with the Commonwealth over a set of orders controlling what information can be revealed during the trial.

"In providing Witness K with advice it became apparent that the misconduct complained of was a culture unrelated in any way, and, in fact contrary to Australia's national security interests," the statement says.

"It was a cheating culture motivated by commercial interests and an abuse of process to utilise our service men and women in its implementation.

"It threatened to undo the great work done in Timor-Leste by our defence forces, in which I am proud to have two family members serving."

Collaery said the accusation Witness K conspired with him was contemptible, adding he was still waiting to be able to explain his case to his lawyers after 14 months.

"I can say no more because I am silenced by a law we gave our political leaders to fight terrorism."

Australian Associated Press