



Former Rupert Murdoch protege Rebekah Brooks has been formally charged with conspiring to hack into the phones of hundreds of well-known people and their associates, a move first announced last month by Britain's Crown Prosecution Service.

The development had been expected since July 24, when prosecutors named Brooks as one of eight people accused of participating in a campaign of espionage which targeted more than 600 celebrities, sports stars, politicians and crime victims.

Brooks, who quit as chief executive of Murdoch's News International when the phone hacking scandal exploded last year, has vowed to fight the charges.

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