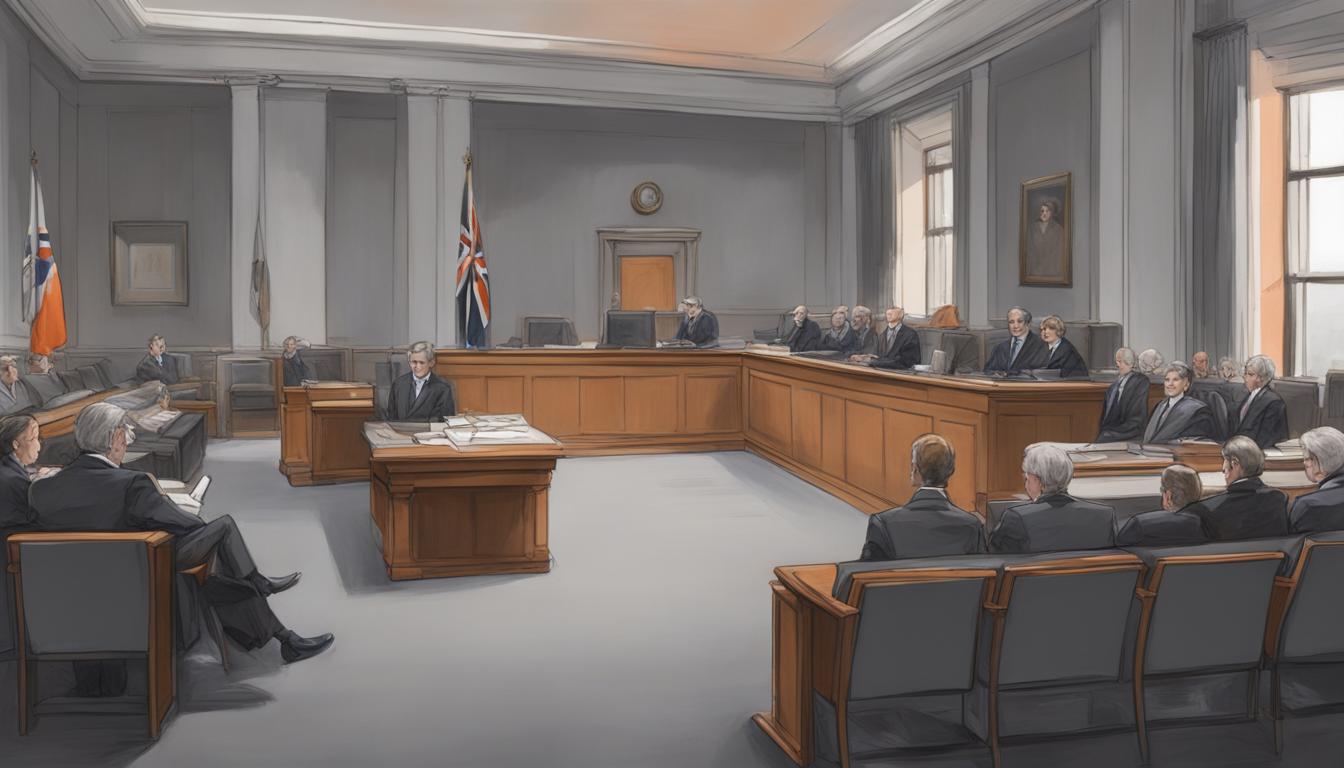
# Committal hearing set for ex-DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson on historical sex offence charges



A committal hearing to determine if there is sufficient evidence to proceed with a trial for former DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson on historical sex offence charges is scheduled for July 3. The case, discussed at Newry Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, involves 61-year-old Donaldson and his co-accused wife, Eleanor Donaldson.

Jeffrey Donaldson faces 11 charges, including rape, gross indecency, and multiple counts of indecent assault, alleged to have occurred between 1985 and 2006, affecting two victims. Eleanor Donaldson, 58, is charged with aiding and abetting related to these offences.

Neither defendant attended the court session, having been excused from appearing. The next review hearing is set for June 12 to ensure preparations for the preliminary enquiry remain on track.

Donaldson, arrested and charged at the end of March, has resigned from his role as DUP leader and will not seek re-election as an MP, although he will continue his duties until the general election. Gavin Robinson has been appointed interim leader of the DUP following Donaldson's resignation.