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# Nine judges will rule on right to assisted suicide

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The climax in the legal battle over what sufferers call the "extraordinary, even cruel" law against assisted suicide will be determined next week before a sitting of nine of the highest judges in the land.

The "right to die" challenges, being brought by two terminally ill patients as well as the widow of Tony Nicklinson, the "locked-in syndrome" sufferer who died after losing his appeal, will go ahead in the Supreme Court on Monday.

Nine of the 12 justices, headed by Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, will sit on what is regarded as one of the most sensitive cases ever to come before the UK's highest court.

"The fact that this is a nine-judge rather than five-judge panel symbolises the importance of the legal issues in the case," said Saimo Chahal, of Bindmans, who is acting for the family of Mr Nicklinson and Paul Lamb, a road accident victim, who is also challenging the law.

The action is being brought against the Ministry of Justice with the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Attorney-General, the Government's chief law officer, as interested parties.

In a related appeal, a man known only as Martin, who was severely disabled by a stroke, won his case for clearer prosecution guidance for health workers who help others to die.