

Inquiry begins into leaked climate emails in Britain

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An independent investigation began Thursday into leaked emails from a British climate research centre which appeared to show scientists trying to manipulate the data, and sparked a major global row.

More than 1,000 emails and 3,000 other documents were stolen from the server of the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, leaked online and seized upon by [climate change](#) sceptics who said they supported their cause.

In one private email, CRU director Professor Phil Jones referred to a "trick" being employed to massage temperature statistics to "hide the decline", but he insisted the emails had been taken out of context.

The investigation launched Thursday will not look into the actual scientific work of the CRU, but it will examine email exchanges and data "to determine whether there is any evidence of the manipulation or suppression of data".

The affair, dubbed 'climategate' in the British media, caused global waves just weeks before the UN talks on climate change in Copenhagen in December because the CRU is one of the world's leading climate research centres.

Jones has admitted the pressure from the scandal caused him to consider suicide.

He stood aside as director pending the investigation, and although he stands by its research, he revealed in a newspaper interview last week that he had considered killing himself "several times".

He told The Sunday Times he was also receiving death threats, saying: "I was shocked. People said I should go and kill myself. They said that they knew where I lived. They were coming from all over the world."

The University of East Anglia appointed Muir Russell, a senior top civil servant, to head the investigation and will be funding the probe -- although Russell insisted it would be independent.

"They're not influencing the way we're doing this," Russell said at the launch Thursday of the investigation, which is due to last several weeks.

It will look at whether there was evidence of poor scientific practice which could call the research into question, and whether the unit should have better procedures for managing its research and keeping data safe.

Separately, police are investigating the hacking of the university's data.

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