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MEMPHIS, Tenn. AP - A panel of eight lawyers was named Sunday by Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle to study "possible violation" of his court order on publicity in the James Earl Ray case.

Battle, who will try Ray on a charge of murdering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., would not say what prompted his naming the committee.

He acted a day after Arthur J. Hanes of Birmingham, Ala., Ray's chief defense attorney, held a news conference to say Ray is the victim of a communist plot. Hanes also charged Saturday that his client's rights are being violated by an around-the-clock television security watch.

Battle said the committee of lawyers met Sunday and could have a report as early as Monday.

At the time Ray was brought to Memphis from London, Battle issued a 10-point order restricting principals in the Ray case from discussing the trial and limiting access of newsmen to Ray, witnesses and others involved in the trial.

The order was amended last Wednesday to prohibit only interviews and statements that would be "prejudicial to a fair trial by an impartial jury."

Ray's trial will begin Nov. 12.

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