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## Democracy and Presidential elections hijacked in Iceland

Current Icelandic presidential elections have been hijacked by the state run Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RUV). There has been a serious breach of Icelandic law No. 23/2013 set to protect democratic dialogue in the public funded RUV and law No. 38/2011 governing democratic principles in the media.

Starting with an interview with former Prime Minister scheduled several weeks in advance in Kastljós the main current affairs television program in Iceland. This RUV program is managed by Thora Arnorsdóttir who was a candidate in the presidential elections 2012 following a Facebook campaign sponsored by the politically appointed president of the board of RUV that time Björg Eva Erlendsdóttir.

The interview with former Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson was recorded 11th March 2016, then broadcast to the nation on 3 April 2016 on national television RUV after promoting the upcoming program over a period of time to gain wide public interest.

The 3 April evening news on RUV television was introduced as dedicated to revelations about former prime minister and discussions around this. Suddenly, in the news set next to the RUV news anchor, a relatively unknown historian, Gudni Th Johannesson appeared with his personal views and thoughts on the story.

Unknown to public at large was that RUV was introducing their next candidate in the Icelandic presidential elections. Following he was smuggled into almost every broadcast on television and radio of the state run broadcasting service, for several days and weeks for the purpose of building up a profile for their candidate to win the elections.



This included Kastljós 4 April a program that already refused to interview other presidential candidates. Over the coming days dozens of appearances were made by Gudni Th in RUV on television and radio. This amounted to several hours of free promotion for his presidential campaign on prime time television and radio while other candidates were completely and deliberately bypassed.

Stylists have noted how the RUV candidate changed his dress code ahead of this campaign by RUV. Known previously as a casually dressed scholar, now as a part of promoting him into a position to hijack the presidential elections their candidate appeared dressed more aligned with the image of a presidential candidate in a carefully selected blue suit and tie. As the CEO of tiesnecktie.com said on ABC news in a



discussion about dress code for US presidential candidates: „Blue is one of the safest and most common tie colors for politicians because most people associate well with blue. Blue is the color that people most commonly name as their favorite color and it has very calming effect on people”.



In the days and weeks that followed the 3 April broadcast RUV which is funded by the state with a special radio tax levied on the general population of Iceland, did not seem to be able to find any other than Gudni Th, amongst presidential candidates or others amongst the whole nation worthy or fit to discuss it. The state funded media used large part of it's resources to give Gudni Th introduction and ongoing promotion with appearances mounting to several hours on television and radio to view his personal opinions what would be an appropriate action by the president of Iceland at this time.

Over several days presidential hopeful Gudni TH was smuggled into almost every program produced by the state funded media network television and radio. This included several of the the RUV main news broadcast, news magazine and public interest program Kastljós, Vikan an entertainment program about current affairs on prime time and even Hradfrettir a comic analyzes of news and current affairs.

Interestingly the same pattern appeared as 4 years ago when the chief editor of Kastljós surfaced as a presidential candidate. As before a Facebook campaign was started, using sponsored advertising that appeared on the Facebook timeline of almost every person in the country to induce them to start challenging Gudni Th to become a candidate by giving a „LIKE“ to the page. This was followed with planting news that a large number of people wanted Gudni Th as president. Nobody reported the fact, or even asked about the fact, that the LIKE campaign was conducted with paid Facebook advertising.

Gudni Th played his part in the hijack of the Icelandic presidential elections extremely well bluffing the nation completely. Dubious opinion polls started to appear giving him landslide margin on others. Initially internet based polls from the private companies Zenter and Maskina both had received complaints previously about unprofessionally conducted polls. Third poll by a small business magazine Frjals Verslun that said valid opinions where from 445 people. Questions included a complete fiction for example if the choice was only between the incumbent president Olafur Ragnar Grimsson (poll made after his lies on CNN exposed) and Gudni Th Johannesson which one would you vote for. The results where in the favour of Gudni Th and made the headline news in the RUV state television and radio. I asked the person in charge of the RUV election coverage what rules RUV has regarding opinion polls and was told a criteria these polls do not match. In a written text to me I have been informed that access to candidate debates will be based on polls.

Plugging Gudni Th as the next president of Iceland has continued in a similar manner while other candiates have been ignored and mostly kept our of the news and media. A poll was published 11th April with opinion



from 590 people and as before this was presented as headline news in the state radio and media stating that most people want Gudni that he is troning at top with 70% of the Icelandic people wanting him as president.

In an interview with Bylgjan radio 12th April Gudni Th confirmed he was already considering running for president and discussed this with people before and after 1. January 2016. Visir.is reported 12th April that former leader of the conservative party faces some challenges collecting signature for his candidacy as many from the party central committee are working for Gudni Th. More and more information are transpiring revealing how Gudni Th dishonestly played a part in the abuse of state funded broadcasting.

What is happening in Iceland is so shocking and extreme diversion of democracy and public opinion with the abuse of state funded media in elections that people have started to align this with the recent movie „Our brand is crisis“ the story of how the 2002 Bolivian presidential elections where won with trickery.

I announced my candidacy for presidential elections in Iceland on 2 January 2016 with a letter to OSCE appealing to you to send inspectors to Iceland well ahead of the elections to monitor the media. This was because of my past experiences how the media has been misused in previous elections here like 1996. The fact that the campaign manager of the incumbent Olafur Ragnar Grimsson was the same person as the managing director of the largest independent media company in Iceland underlines this.

Already public opinion has been formed by breaking almost rule in the book about free and democratic elections. We are now watching how another president may be elected in Iceland with trickery. If the OSCE has any morals and real intensions to honor its obligations under it's charter to ensure that democracy functions in the western world their inspectors should jump on the next flight to Reykjavik.

For your information I ran in the Icelandic presidential elections 1996 and 2004. My candidacy was declared invalid year 2000 after an attack launched on my signature lists which crossed out unusually large number of names after the deadline which led to the incumbent being elected again without vote. In 2012 another attack was done against my lists with accusations of names being fraudulently placed on my lists and my candidacy declared invalid. The police investigated these lists for 3 years and then dropped the case against the person accused as they could not prove the accusations in court.

The breaches of RUV Icelandic National Broadcasting Service has started to influence the independent media many now ignoring their obligations under law No. 38/2011 to uphold good priniples of democracy. The 2016 Icelandic presidential elections are moving towards an authoritarian style similar to what happened in Yugoslavia 1992 under the dictatorship of Slobodan Milošević. Observers at the Helsinki Commission, political experts, and journalists alleged that Milošević and his supporters had manipulated the election results through improper use of state media. We are now watching this happen in Iceland in the aftermath of resignation of Prime minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson after lying on TV about offshore assets, and withdrawal of President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson from the elections after lying to CNN about similar.

I can only repeat that the OSCE must immediately send it's inspectors to Iceland.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Astthor Magnússon Wium'.

Astthor Magnússon Wium

Candidate in the Icelandic Presidential Elections 2016