

Avaaz has come under attack from a major media-mogul

Thursday, 16 September 2010

Huge numbers of Canadian Avaazers recently mobilized against government favours for a new radical-right propaganda network run by the Prime Minister's former spin doctor. The media empire behind the network and its billionaire owner, Pierre Karl Peladeau, has attacked our community with several smear pieces in their own newspapers, and one of their executives admitted insider knowledge of a criminal sabotage of our campaign. Now the mogul has threatened to sue Avaaz if we don't take down our campaign within 24 hours!

This is how big corporate power works to silence people's voices. But Avaaz is a community of almost 6 million people -- together we're far stronger than any corporate bully.

"Crony-media" and its incestuous combination of unscrupulous politicians and biased reporting is a rising threat to democracy in many countries, from Italy to the US to Australia. Let's take a stand, and show them their intimidation tactics will only backfire. They've given us a 24 hour ultimatum: Let's donate to give them our answer and keep the fight alive against crony-media across the world:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand_up_to_crony_media/?v1

Democracy is on the march across the world, but anti-democratic interests have figured out a counter-attack: crony-media. When a political leader teams up with a massive media empire, they become hard to beat at the polls, no matter how bad they are.

In Italy, Prime Minister Berlusconi controls over 80% of the news channels, and has a major stake in leading newspapers, magazines and publishing. Berlusconi is mired in scandal and corruption allegations, but the spin on his networks is always positive. In the US, UK, and Australia, mega-mogul Rupert Murdoch exploits his empire to get sweet deals from politicians, whom he in turn backs for office. His infamous Fox News is the largest cable news network in the US. After President Barack Obama spurned Murdoch and boycotted his propagandistic network, Fox News spawned the radical right Tea Party group, and provided a platform for hate and racism, suggesting that Obama is a terrorist and hates white people.

The idea for a new Canadian crony-media network was reportedly hatched in a secret lunch between Rupert Murdoch and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Harper was George W. Bush's closest ally on climate change and many other issues, and is widely understood to be importing a radical form of right-wing politics to Canada from the US. The new network, dubbed "Fox News North" would transform Canada's media landscape, bringing an unscrupulously biased mouthpiece for a political leader. Avaaz's campaign opposes a special government favour that would force taxpayers to foot the bill for this new network through their cable TV fees. This is an example of how crony-media works -- a billionaire gets government-mandated funding for their media network while pushing propaganda that backs that government's leader.

Many of these media barons are also ruthless in how they achieve their political objectives: pushing opinions that poison people's hearts and polarize our world, threatening democracy and peace. Canada is the latest battle -- let's make it the battle where people-power begins to turn the tide on crony-media. We have 24 hours to win this one -- click below to donate:

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Part of the promise of the Avaaz movement is our ability to work on the issues that cut across all others. The subversion of democracy by the collusion of political leaders and media-corporations is a threat to all the things we care about, from climate change to poverty to human rights. With our global reach, Avaaz might be one of the only organizations that can fight this rising threat to democracy. We've been given a 24 hour challenge -- let's rise to it.

With hope,

Ricken, Luis, Iain, Emma, Alice, Ben, Giulia, Alex and the rest of the Avaaz team.

More information on this below:

Avaaz's Executive Director, Ricken Patel, debates Crony-media front-man, Kory Teneycke on Canadian national TV: http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/News/Featured_Videos/ID=1582123926

Ricken Patel speaks to big corporate bully tactics on Canadian TV yesterday: <http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/News/Politics/ID=1592304620>

Don Newman, CBC News, "The absolute last thing this country needs":
<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2010/06/10/f-vp-newman.html#socialcomments#ixzz0r6MC4p46>

Globe and Mail, "Is Stephen Harper set to move against the Canadian Television Radio and Telecommunications Commission?":
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/lawrence-martin/is-stephen-harper-set-to-move-against-the-crtc/article1677632/>

BBC profile of Silvio Berlusconi:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3034600.stm>

Newser, "Can the Brits get Rupert?":
<http://www.newser.com/off-the-grid/post/540/can-the-brits-get-rupert.html>

Media Matters, "Fair and balanced Fox News aggressively promotes "tea party" protests":
<http://mediamatters.org/reports/200904080025>