

Undercover police officer accused Icelandic police of 'brutality'

Mark Kennedy claimed authorities incited 'potentially fatal' violence towards people protesting against construction of a dam



Mark Kennedy accused Icelandic police of acting with 'ignorance and [a] complete disregard for the safety of people around them'. Photograph: Guardian

Amelia Hill in Reykjavik

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Mark Kennedy, the undercover policeman who posed as an environmental activist for seven years and [helped found the protest movement in Iceland](#), accused the country's police of brutality and inciting "potentially fatal" violence towards protesters.

Kennedy made the accusations in an article he wrote for a book about the 2005 protest in [Iceland](#) against the Kárahnjúkar dam. It was so powerful that activists later used it in evidence against the police in a court case.

In the article, Kennedy accused police of acting with "ignorance and [a] complete disregard for the safety of people around them".

He added: "Their inability to address the situation could have been potentially fatal and certainly encouraged acts of violence by the security guards without fear of retribution.

"The police's ignorance and inabilities is to our advantage," he warned. "Their lack of understanding is our element of surprise.

"In effect they and their governmental and corporate puppet masters are startled and confounded by the tide of protest and direct action," he added. "The [environmental destruction that is happening throughout Iceland](#) and beyond will continue to be protested and fought against whatever police tactics or corporate intimidation."

[Birgitta Jónsdóttir](#), a member of the Icelandic parliament for the Movement party, was a co-editor of the book. "There were discussions about the book and who would or could write about different bits and pieces among the activists. Kennedy wanted to write about police brutality against the activists," she said. "I thought his piece was honest and was happy to include it."

In an email Kennedy wrote to Jónsdóttir when he sent her the article, he explained why he felt compelled to write it: "I have not really done this before but really wanted to give my interpretation of the collusion between police and Impregilo [the construction company] and the subsequent danger that their actions brought to people on the second blockade."

A campaigner who was at the 2005 protest and knew Kennedy well said the article was "very much in tune with the general feeling among the people in

the camp at the time. But," he added, " I find it interesting how little attention he brings to ... the reasons for taking this action."

Ólafur Páll Jónsson, an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Iceland and author of a book on issues concerning the environment and democracy, said the article accurately describes the "utter inability of the police to deal decently with the situation".

"It also draws out the close relation between the police and the private security guards that may be questionable," he added. "But I find it having little bearing on what I find to be the main issue, which is the relation to the UK police and their reasons for sending someone to Iceland."

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