

Video Inspires Anti-Putin Twitter Trend

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An anti-Putin Twitter message started trending worldwide after opposition activists posted a hashtag inspired by a pre-revolutionary Azerbaijani musical tradition, a type of freestyle rap performed in time to a rhythmic beat.

The Russian-language hashtag "Putin, who are you? Come on, get out of here" (#путинтыкто такой давай досвидания) began spreading Tuesday evening after coordinator of the Moscow branch of the Auto Owners Federation Andrei Filin wrote on Twitter, "Tomorrow I will hang a sign on my car: 'Putin, who are you? Come on, get out of here.' I will make people smile."

The phrase refers to a video that went viral last week showing a group of men performing in the style of the traditional Azerbaijani Meyxana, a literary and folk tradition similar to rap. Several men pass around a microphone singing improvised lyrics that rhyme with the main refrain of the song, "Who are you? Come on, get out of here." A room full of several dozen men wearing dark colors applaud the performers.

The video was shot in the Astara region in the southern tip of Azerbaijan on the border with Iran, where Talysh, a Persian language related to Iranian, is spoken. The men sing in a mix of

Russian, Talysh and Azeri. The video had more than half a million views by Wednesday afternoon.

In October, the hashtag with the words "Thanks to Putin for that" (#СПАСИБОПУТИНУЗАЭТО) became the first Russian-language tweet to make worldwide trends, with Twitter bloggers posting rhyming phrases with the hashtag to ironically thank then-Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on his birthday. The tweet played on a Soviet rhyme that ridiculed the abundant praise for the Communist Party by using traditional folk poetry.

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