

Police Check Teen for Ice Bucket Challenge to Belarussian President

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Many national leaders across the world have quietly skulked away from invitations to participate in the viral Ice Bucket Challenge — but only in the authoritarian Belarus has a challenger been accused of anti-government activity for extending such an invitation.

A Belarussian teenager who challenged President Alexander Lukashenko to douse himself in cold water became a target for the country's security services, the country's branch of Radio Liberty said.

Dzmitry Daineka, a native of the town of Berezino in central Belarus, posted his challenge on YouTube in late August.

The video, still available online, shows the teenager get doused by three buckets of water instead of the usual one.

The video did not caused a stir until it was picked up by Belarussian opposition website Charter97.org — at which point Daineka ended up in hot water.

Police threatened to fine him an unspecified sum, allegedly over bad language in the video, and ordered him to delete the clip, Daineka told Radio Liberty.

"It's all really because the video made it to an opposition website," the high schooler was cited as saying last week.

"They said we've gone against the president," he said.

"But we just wanted to pass the baton," Daineka said. "It's only a game."

Lukashenko, 60, has run his Eastern European country with a steel grip since 1994, his suppression of political opposition earning him the unflattering nickname of "the last dictator of Europe."

He never commented on the challenge, made as part of an international, apolitical awareness campaign for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

Participants of the Ice Bucket Challenge have to either douse themselves with cold water on camera within 24 hours of the challenge or donate \$100 to the anti-ALS effort.

Lukashenko's Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Barack Obama have also previously been invited to participate in the challenge, but stayed mum on the matter.

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