

Ukrainian MMA Fighter Challenges 'Chechen Lion' Over Child-Bout Dispute

By [Matthew Bodner](#)

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Ramzan Kadyrov (left) **Instagram**

The stars are aligning for a brouhaha of epic proportions in the former Soviet Union. What began as a rhetorical spat between Russian mixed martial arts (MMA) legend Fedor Emelianenko and Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov on Thursday has drawn in Ukrainian fighter Nikita Krylov.

It all began with an MMA fight in the Chechen capital of Grozny on the eve of Kadyrov's birthday. To the astonishment of even President Vladimir Putin, Kadyrov's pre-teen children entered the fray. The eldest Kadyrov, Akhmad, knocked his opponent out before an audience of cheering adults. The two other sons also won their competitions.

Embed:



A video posted by Ramzan Kadyrov (@kadyrov_95) on Oct 4, 2016 at 1:29pm PDT

All was fun and games until Emelianenko, the head of Russia's MMA union, caught wind of the spectacle. Appalled by the exercise, Emelianenko slammed Kadyrov for allowing children to compete in an MMA tournament. The sport's rules dictate that children under 12 can't even watch. Kadyrov and local Chechen fighters were not amused by the Russian champion's concern.

And thus Thursday night, Abdul-Kerim Edilov — known as “The Chechen Lion” — slammed Emelianenko on Instagram. The aging Russian fighter, Edilov said, may have just been jealous that he was not invited, or that people were not paying attention to his exploits. But Emelianenko is an icon in the MMA community, and Edilov's disrespect did not sit well with Ukraine's Krylov.

On Friday, Krylov also took to Instagram. In a lengthy post, he challenged Edilov to settle things in the ring. “If people these days are not able to speak to the older generations with respect, that is 10,000 times worse than any children fighting.”

“We both fight in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC),” Krylov wrote. “Let's resolve the issue as athletes and as men. I don't like what you wrote about one of the fighters I respect the most, so let's meet in the spring and settle who engages in sport, and who writes on Instagram.”

Edilov has already accepted Krylov's challenge. “I've been waiting ten months for a call from the UFC, and I won't be able to describe my joy, if the first fighter I'm offered in the Octagon [the ring] will be you, Nikita Kyrlov,” Edilov wrote on Instagram (see below).

Embed:



A photo posted by @abdul_kerim_edilov on Oct 7, 2016 at 3:44am PDT

The issue has become so divisive for the MMA community that even American star Jeff Monson — who is currently awaiting Russian citizenship — has gotten involved. On Friday, Monson said he agrees 100 percent with Emelianenko. An online petition in support of the Russian has meanwhile accumulated some 10,000 signatures, Interfax reported.

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