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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Telegram Founder Durov Unleashes Storm of Shirtless Russian Men

August 15, 2017



Pavel Durov **Screenshot / Instagram Pavel Durov**

Internet maverick Pavel Durov is calling on Russians to take off their shirts in the footsteps of President Vladimir Putin.

Inspired by photos from Putin's fishing trip to Siberia — during which the 64-year-old president undressed — the founder of the Vkontakte website and Telegram messenger service published a shirtless photograph of himself on Instagram in response.

Embed:

My instagram had to seriously step up the game to keep up with the increased competition from Mr. Putin’s shirtless photos. If you’re Russian, you have to join #PutinShirtlessChallenge (or face oblivion). Two rules from Putin – no photoshop, no pumping. Otherwise you’re not an alpha.

Публикация от Pavel Durov (@durov) Авг 14 2017 в 12:52 PDT

“My Instagram had to seriously step up the game to keep up with the increased competition from Mr. Putin’s shirtless photos,” he wrote in English.

“If you’re Russian, you have to join #PutinShirtlessChallenge (or face oblivion). Two rules from Putin — no photoshop, no pumping. Otherwise you’re not an alpha.”

Russians were quick to respond. Within a day of the post, there were more than 360 shirtless photos — with some Russians clearly taking themselves more seriously than others.

Here’s a selection of the best ones so far.

Russian politician Dmitry Gudkov:

Embed:

> Нет, ну слушайте, как-то вяло идет #PutinShirtlessChallenge Надо поддержать, я считаю. Есть еще торсы в русских селеньях, в конце концов. pic.twitter.com/M0PVoiDsGJ
>
> — Дмитрий Гудков (@gudkovd) August 15, 2017

Embed:

Прошли хорошие дожди и грозы. А из-за того, что #картоха уже зацвела - полоть приходится аккуратно, чтобы не сломать, не затоптать. Не поехал на этих выходных купаться, решил в #садпавленко поработать. Спина уже сгорела, а трава ещё не закончилась, пришлось сменить позицию #PutinShirtlessChallenge

Публикация от Сергей Александрович Павленко (@pavlenko_s) Июл 30 2017 в 4:35 PDT

Embed:

Павел Дуров предложил флэшмоб. Если вы русский - бросьте вызов Путину. #putinshirtlesschallenge. Не все поймут при чем здесь я, гражданин Казахстана со статусом постоянного жителя США . А притом, что я за мир во всём мире.

Публикация от John Gray (@john_gray_100) Авг 14 2017 в 6:05 PDT

Embed:

#PutinShirtlessChallenge

Публикация от DenisM (@denismakoviichuk) Авг 4 2017 в 10:49 PDT

Embed:

□♂□#newtimecoon #mainecoonlove #mainecoonkitty #mainecoonstagram #mainecooncorner #diegocooncat #mainecooncats #mainecoonlover #mainecoonlovers #PutinShirtlessChallenge

Публикация от Diego (@diegocooncat) Авг 12 2017 в 10:06 PDT

Embed:

Россия и Америка - жить в согласии□□□□Любовь к обеим странам! □□ #PutinShirtlessChallenge

Публикация от KIRILL POPOVICH (@kirillpopovich) Авг 5 2017 в 11:29 PDT

Embed:

#putinshirtlesschallenge

A post shared by @ignatfoto on Aug 14, 2017 at 6:13pm PDT

Durov sold his shares in Vkontakte in 2014 and left Russia after running foul of the authorities and proceeded to launch the encrypted messenger service, Telegram. In recent months, he once again clashed with the Russian media watchdog Roskomnadzor after it threatened to ban Telegram unless it officially registered with the Russian authorities.

Durov eventually agreed for Telegram to be registered, but said he would not grant authorities access to users' data.

Related article: How Telegram Became the Durov Brothers' Weapon Against Surveillance

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