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'May God Disfigure the Face of This Creature': Russian MMA Star Nurmagomedov Joins Anti-Macron Chorus

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Khabib Nurmagdomedov stunned fans when he announced his retirement after defending his UFC lightweight title last weekend. **Moskva News Agency**

Russian MMA fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov has joined a growing chorus of protests by prominent Muslims against French President Emmanuel Macron's defense of secular values in the wake of two deadly terrorist attacks with a withering Instagram post.

Macron became the target of widespread anger in the Islamic world for defending the display of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad which led to a Chechen refugee beheading a French teacher this month. A 21-year-old Tunisian who had arrived in France earlier in October killed three inside a church in the city of Nice on Thursday in what authorities called a terrorist attack.

Embed:



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Публикация от Khabib Nurmagomedov (@khabib_nurmagomedov) 30 Окт 2020 в 3:29 PDT

“May God disfigure the face of this creature and all followers who offend the feelings of over 1.5 billion Muslim believers under the slogan of free speech,” Nurmagomedov wrote to his 25 million Instagram followers.

“May God humiliate them in this life and the next,” added Nurmagdomedov, who stunned fans when he announced his retirement after defending his UFC lightweight title last weekend.

The caption accompanied a photo of Macron with a shoe print across his face, a common image shared by Muslim protesters. Some protesters held the same printed image in a rally outside the French Embassy in Moscow on Thursday afternoon as the Nice attack unfolded.

Over 900,000 users liked the post in the hour since Nurmagomedov posted it.

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Nurmagomedov, 32, is at least the third MMA fighter from Russia's Muslim-majority republics in the North Caucasus to take to social media and publicly express their feelings about the events unfolding in France. Previously, two Chechen fighters praised the 18-year-old refugee who beheaded teacher Samuel Paty after he showed his pupils Prophet Muhammad cartoons in a lecture on free speech.

The Kremlin called Thursday's knife attack in Nice a "horrific tragedy" but stressed that it is also wrong to insult religious beliefs.

"Believe me, their provocations will go sideways, the end is always with the godfearing," Nurmagomedov wrote in the Instagram post.

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