

## 2 Russian MMA Fighters Praise French Teacher's Decapitation – Reports

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Zelim Imadaev **UFC**

Two Russian MMA fighters, Zelim Imadaev and Albert Duraev, have shown support for the decapitation of a French teacher by a Chechen refugee this weekend, reports said.

Police [shot dead](#) 18-year-old suspect Abdullakh Anzorov in a Paris suburb Friday after he posted a photo of 47-year-old history teacher Samuel Paty's severed head on his now-suspended Twitter account. Paty had received threats for showing his students cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed as part of a class discussion on freedom of expression.

**Related article:** [Russia Dismisses Links to Chechen Accused of Beheading French Teacher](#)

According to Russian sports reporter Alexander Lyutikov's Instagram [post](#) Sunday, Imadaev called Anzorov a "hero" and Duraev joked that "freedom of speech has lost its beginning in France."

Both Imadaev and Anzorov were born in Russia's majority Muslim republic of Chechnya. Depictions of the Prophet Mohammed are prohibited in the Muslim faith.

“These statements were made in [Instagram] stories and are meant to disappear soon, so I decided to save them here,” Lyutikov wrote.

Neither Instagram story was visible as of Monday, and Lyutikov said the social media company had blocked his post for violating its community guidelines on violence.

Russian imageboards have circulated [screenshots](#) of Imadaev and Anzorov’s statements on the Telegram messaging app.

Imadaev, 25, has logged three losses as a UFC fighter.

Duraev, 31, is a former welterweight and middleweight champion of the Chechnya-based Absolute Championship Akhmat (ACA) organization who was [awaiting entry](#) into the UFC this year.

UFC’s website [restricted access](#) to Imadaev’s profile while other Chechen fighters’ profiles are still publicly available.

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