



Dear Khabib,

May 2, 2019

A heart-breaking scene has come to the attention of World Animal Protection and our supporters: the video of your recent "fight" with a chained bear cub while onlookers laughed.

While your usual opponents are willing participants, this bear cub was likely torn from its mother's side and forced to interact with onlookers such as yourself, using gruelling training methods. Bears do not naturally walk on two legs—they are trained to do so by being hung by their necks against walls when they're cubs, forcing them to remain upright for hours on end. Despite how tired and frightened they become, they must stay standing on two legs or else they choke.

In the video posted on Instagram, you push the bear down by its collar, which is attached to a short chain restricting the animal's movement. There are moments in which the bear approaches you, and you walk just outside of the cub's reach, which forces the bear to jerk back by its neck to avoid being choked, using the chain to your advantage. Imagine if you were in the octagon with a chain around your neck, you'd be at a serious disadvantage. Unlike your fights with human opponents such as Abel Trujillo (who fights *for* animal protection), this instance of fighting a defenseless baby animal is not a sport, it's animal cruelty.

As a role model for millions of kids and young adults around the world, please consider the dangerous message you're sending to your fans, that fighting—or attempting to fight—wild animals is acceptable and animal abuse is a legitimate form of entertainment, which it is not. In areas where wild bears may be present, children following your example could easily be hurt or killed by attempting the same stunt. While we understand that you did wrestle a cub as a young child, you were lucky that you did not end up with serious injuries.

Fighting a juvenile bear with a chain around its neck is not an accomplishment, it is simply animal abuse for entertainment.

You have the chance to make this right by urging your fans to never support activities where animals are fought or used for entertainment. As the UFC lightweight champion, it's time you get back into the ring with a willing participant worthy of your skills.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Cappiello".

**Julie Cappiello**

Wildlife Campaign Manager

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We were known as **WSPA**  
(World Society for the  
Protection of Animals)