

Russian Novelist Ulitskaya Awarded France's Legion D'Honneur Decoration

By [The Moscow Times](#)

November 27, 2014



Lyudmila Ulitskaya, a Russian novelist.

France has awarded Lyudmila Ulitskaya, an acclaimed Russian novelist and short-story writer, the country's top Legion d'honneur decoration, news reports said.

Ulitskaya was formally named an "officier of the Legion d'honneur" — a decoration that stems from the time of Napoleon Bonaparte — by French Ambassador to Russia Jean-Maurice Ripert at his Moscow residence Friday, Lenta.ru reported.

Ulitskaya's most famous books include "Kukotsky's Case," which brought her the Russian Booker Prize in 2001, and "Daniel Stein, Translator."

Ulitskaya has recently been outspoken in her criticism of the government, accusing it of clamping down on freedom of speech.

"What is happening feels like an unwritten chapter from Orwell: We are right, we are always

right, we are right in everything, and whoever questions the correctness of this indomitable unfailing power is cursed," Ulitskaya wrote in a comment piece in British newspaper The Guardian earlier this year.

Ulitskaya has been labeled a "traitor" by activists in Russia for her opposition to the Kremlin's support of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

During an anti-war march in Moscow this fall, pro-government activists greeted the peace demonstrators with a banner that read "March of Traitors" and featured portraits of Ulitskaya and other prominent public figures such as rock musician Andrei Makarevich.

A few months earlier, prosecutors launched checks into a collection of children's stories edited by Ulitskaya, citing complaints by activists that the books promoted tolerance of same-sex relationships and as such presented a "threat to the cultural values" of Russians.

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