

Putin Honors Andrei Lugovoi, Suspect in Litvinenko Murder

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Andrei Lugovoi, now a member of parliament, is suspected by Britain of using radioactive polonium to poison Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko in London nearly a decade ago.

President Vladimir Putin awarded a state honor to a man suspected by Britain of using radioactive polonium to poison Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko in London nearly a decade ago.

The medal "for services to the fatherland," second degree, was given to Andrei Lugovoi for his contribution to developing Russia's parliament, according to a citation posted on the official state bulletin.

Litvinenko died in a London hospital in 2006. An investigation found he had been exposed to polonium, a radioactive isotope. British authorities named Lugovoi and another Russian, Dmitry Kovtun, as suspects.

They have denied involvement, and Russia refused to extradite them to stand trial. Lugovoi is now a member of parliament with a nationalist party.

Litvinenko was a Russian state security agent who made allegations about corruption inside the government. He moved with his family to London, saying he feared reprisals. He had meetings with Lugovoi and Kovtun shortly before he fell ill.

A public inquiry into his death has been taking place at the High Court in London.

Also on Monday, the Kremlin announced Putin had awarded the "badge of honor" to Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of the Russian region of Chechnya. The citation said the award was for his professional achievements, long service and civic work.

Kadyrov said late on Sunday a Chechen former police officer charged with killing opposition figure Boris Nemtsov may have wanted to punish Nemtsov for defending the publication of satirical cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

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