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Russia Labels Author Lyudmila Ulitskaya Foreign Agent

By AFP

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Lyudmila Ulitskaya looks on during a press conference presenting a new book called “Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Articles. Dialogues. Interviews,” in Moscow on Jan. 20, 2011. **Andrey Smirnov / AFP**

Russia on Friday declared the acclaimed novelist Lyudmila Ulitskaya a "foreign agent" for opposing the war in Ukraine and allegedly promoting LGBTQ+ "propaganda."

The 81-year-old literary icon, who lives in exile, began protesting the Kremlin's authoritarian tendencies in the Soviet era and is a fierce critic of President Vladimir Putin.

Ulitskaya "opposed the special military operation in Ukraine" and "carried out propaganda of LGBT relations," Russia's Justice Ministry gave as the reason for her listing.

Already a longtime favorite for the Nobel Prize in literature, she joins a long line of Russian cultural figures — including writer Boris Akunin — shunned by the Kremlin.

Russia applies the term "foreign agent" to people it sees as traitors and enemies of the state,

and requires all those labeled to mark their publications with a warning.

Related article: Ludmila Ulitskaya Is the Latest Russian Writer Under Fire

Ulitskaya, a trained biologist, was born in central Russia in 1943 when the U.S.S.R. was in the throes of World War II. She has authored 22 volumes including plays and children's tales.

Her best-seller "Daniel Stein, Interpreter," published in 2006 and translated into more than two dozen languages, is based on the real story of a Polish Jew who becomes a Catholic priest.

"The Kukotsky Case," her 2001 novel that traces the lives of a doctor and his family over several decades of the Soviet era, won the Russian Booker Prize in 2001.

When Putin ordered his military operation in Ukraine, Ulitskaya left for Germany, predicting that the "senseless" conflict would be "catastrophic" for Russia.

Many prominent cultural figures have fled Russia since it launched its invasion of Ukraine, and those who have stayed face strict censorship or court proceedings.

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