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Mar 26 · 18 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1639993673113796608](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1639993673113796608)

In today's [#vatniksoup](#) I'll introduce a French lawyer and politician, Marine Le Pen. She's best-known for her attempts at becoming the president of France and for her connections to the European far-right movement and to Vladimir Putin.

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Le Pen's political career started as early as 1986, when she joined the National Front (later the National Rally, RN) party, a party founded by her father Jean-Marie Le Pen. After becoming the party's leader in 2011, she started a "de-demonization campaign" to clean the...

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...party's image of being anti-globalist, racist and anti-Semitic. The re-branded party was part of the European "far-right" bloc, led by Le Pen, Italian Matteo Salvini, and Dutch Geert Wilders.

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Even though Le Pen has softened the party's views on same-sex marriage, abortion and the death sentence, it still supports strong stance on anti-immigration, nationalism and protectionism.

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This resonates strongly with former president Trump's politics, and Trump actually endorsed Le Pen during her presidential campaign and vice versa. During the 2016 US election, Le Pen said that "For France, anything is better than Hillary Clinton".

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France's Marine Le Pen seen in Trump Tower

12 January 2017



SAMUEL LEVINE

Ms Le Pen declined to say whether her visit was personal or professional

France's far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen has been seen visiting Trump Tower in New York.

She declined to say whether she was there to see President-elect Donald Trump but the Trump team said there would be "no meetings".

Ms Le Pen is currently one of the top candidates for the first round of voting in April, opinion polls suggest.

The National Front leader has called Mr Trump's election "an additional stone in the building of a new world".

What makes Marine Le Pen far right?

Ms Le Pen was seen with three men in the cafe. Agence France-Presse identified one as her partner, Louis Aliot, the National Front's (FN) vice-president.

In 2010 Le Pen compared the public Muslim prayers with the Nazi occupation of France during WW2, calling it an "occupation". Her statement was criticized by various political figures and human rights organizations, ...

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The image is a screenshot of a BBC News article. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the BBC logo, a 'Sign in' button, and links for 'Home', 'News', 'Sport', 'Reel', and 'Worklife'. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'War in Ukraine', 'Climate', 'Video', 'World', 'UK', 'Business', 'Tech', 'Science', and 'Stories'. A third navigation bar lists regional categories: 'World', 'Africa', 'Asia', 'Australia', 'Europe', 'Latin America', 'Middle East', and 'US & Canada'. The main headline of the article is 'France FN leader Le Pen to stand trial over Muslim prayer row', dated '22 September 2015'. There is a red share icon below the date. The article features a large photograph of Marine Le Pen, looking slightly to the side with a serious expression. Below the photo is a caption: 'Marine Le Pen made the comments at a public meeting of FN supporters in Lyon in 2010, before she was party leader'. The text of the article begins with 'Marine Le Pen, the leader of France's far-right National Front, has been ordered to stand trial in October on charges of inciting racial hatred.' It then explains that the charges relate to her 2010 comments comparing Muslim prayers to the Nazi occupation of France in World War Two. It also mentions that the European Parliament removed her immunity as a Member of the European Parliament in 2013, and that she has defended her remarks as 'intimidation'. Finally, it states that she will appear in court in Lyon on 20 October, according to French media reports.

..but as was tradition at the time, this only increased her popularity among the common folk. Before the 2017 presidential election, RN had difficulties in finding funding for Le Pen's presidential campaign in France - many French banks refused to provide the party any credit.7/17

Instead in 2014, the party took a 9 million EUR loan from Czech-Russian bank, despite the EU sanctions placed on Russia after the illegal annexation of Crimea. Later in 2016 they applied for another Russian loan of 27 million EUR, but they were refused.

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Marine Le Pen's Party reaches agreement with Russian creditors

Published: 05 June 2020 WRITTEN BY SANDRINE GAGNÉ-ACQUILON

[Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#)

A day after her trial over an unpaid loan started in Moscow, the French far-right party of Marine Le Pen reached an agreement with its Russian creditor, the Moscow arbitration tribunal confirmed on Wednesday.



The "settlement agreement" had been "approved by the judge," a spokesperson for the court told AFP.

It's a good news for the financially struggling French far-right National Rally, who was represented in court only by its lawyer due to the coronavirus border closure, according to [Russia Today](#).

Russian company Aviazapchast had pressed charges against Le Pen's party to recover a US\$10.3 million loan it took from the First Czech-Russian Bank in 2014 to finance its pre-election campaign.

At the time, the loan added to the controversy of Le Pen's sympathy for Russia after she had expressed support for Crimean separatists and praised Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The owner of the First Czech-Russian Bank had previously worked for Gennady Timchenko, one of Vladimir Putin's billionaire friends.

The choice of the bank was seen as an illustration of Russia's attempt to meddle in French politics, but the National Rally said it was forced to take the loan in Russia in order to get financial equity in the upcoming campaign after being rejected by European and American banks.

The title for the loan was passed on after the First Czech-Russian Bank lost its license in 2016.

It ended up in the hands of aeronautical supplier Aviazapchast, a controversial firm said to be tied to Russian intelligence and doing business with the Syrian Ministry of Defense, according to a 2018 report by the U.S.-based German Marshall Fund.

On the due date of September 2019, the loan still hadn't been repaid and had risen with the interests to US\$12.1 million. Aviazapchast initiated legal proceedings against the RN in December.

According to the AFP, the National Rally is already racked with debt in France. It owes \$ 4.7 million to the further-right party of Marine Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and is awaiting a court decision in the next weeks regarding \$13 million claimed by the French state over the funding of the party's 2012 legislative election campaign.

Now the 2014 loan thing is a BIG mess and way too complicated to describe in a Twitter thread, but I suggest reading this fantastic WaPo article by Paul Sonne (@PaulSonne) from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/a-russian-bank-gave-marine-le-pens-party-a-loan-then-weird-things-began-happening/2018/12/27/960c7906-d320-11e8-a275-81c671a50422_story.html

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In 2017 Le Pen met with Vladimir Putin in Moscow, and according to an aide of RN, Putin wished her "good luck" for the upcoming election. During the same year, she stated that the concerns that Putin was a threat to Europe were a "big scam".

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In a 2017 interview she also claimed that if elected, she'd attempt to swiftly lift EU sanctions imposed on Russia over the annexation of Crimea. "It's now the world of Putin, the world of Donald Trump", she continued.

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Naturally she went on and accused the US and NATO for threatening Russia by arming the countries along their borders. Then she continued with a Mearsheimer classic: "Ukraine is part of Russia's sphere of influence, it's a fact".

After the Russian interference in the 2016...12/17

Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault

The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin

By John J. Mearsheimer September/October 2014

The United States and its European allies now face a choice on Ukraine. They can continue their current policy, which will exacerbate hostilities with Russia and devastate Ukraine in the process — a scenario in which everyone would come out a loser. Or they can switch gears and work to create a prosperous but neutral Ukraine, one that does not threaten Russia and allows the West to repair its relations with Moscow. With that approach, all sides would win.

... US election, she denied any wrongdoing by Russia, saying that "it hasn't led any campaigns against European countries, or against the US". In the same interview she claimed that Russia's intervention in Syria had been good thing and improved overall global security.

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WANTED BY THE FBI

CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT AN OFFENSE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES; FALSE REGISTRATION OF A DOMAIN NAME; AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT; CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT MONEY LAUNDERING

RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN 2016 U.S. ELECTIONS

DETAILS

On July 13, 2018, a federal grand jury sitting in the District of Columbia returned an indictment against 12 Russian military intelligence officers for their alleged roles in interfering with the 2016 United States (U.S.) elections. The indictment charges 11 defendants, Boris Alekseyevich Antonov, Dmitry Sergeevich Badin, Nikolay Yuryevich Kozachev, Aleksey Viktorovich Lukashov, Artem Andreyevich Malyshov, Sergey Aleksandrovich Morgachev, Aleksandr Vladimirovich Osadchuk, Aleksey Aleksandrovich Potemkin, Ivan Sergeevich Yermakov, Pavel Vyacheslavovich Yershov, and Viktor Borisovich Netyksho, with a computer hacking conspiracy involving gaining unauthorized access into the computers of U.S. persons and entities involved in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, stealing documents from those computers, and staging releases of the stolen documents to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The indictment also charges these defendants with aggravated identity theft, false registration of a domain name, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Two defendants, Aleksandr Vladimirovich Osadchuk and Anatoly Sergeevich Kovalev, are charged with a separate conspiracy to commit computer crimes, relating to hacking into the computers of U.S. persons and entities responsible for the administration of 2016 U.S. elections, such as state boards of elections, secretaries of state, and U.S. companies that supplied software and other technology related to the administration of U.S. elections. The United States District Court for the District of Columbia in Washington, D.C. issued a federal arrest warrant for each of these defendants upon the grand jury's return of the indictment.

THESE INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND DANGEROUS, AN INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT RISK, AND AN ESCAPE RISK

If you have any information concerning this case, please contact your local FBI office, or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

www.fbi.gov

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MIDDLE EAST

Russia and Syria conducted dozens of illegal 'double tap' strikes, report says

By Claire Parker
July 21, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. EDT

Syria Civil Defense workers, or White Helmets, search for victims after a reported Russian airstrike on Maarat al-Numan in Syria's northwest on July 22, 2019. (Omar Haj Kadouh/AFP/Getty Images)

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The Russia and Syrian governments have carried out dozens of "double tap" airstrikes on civilians and humanitarian workers in Syria since 2013, according to findings by a Syria-focused rights group, pointing to a pattern of illegal attacks that appears to have continued into Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Le Pen was part of the big group who still in early Feb 2022, believed that Putin wouldn't invade Ukraine. After it happened, she condemned the full-scale invasion harshly, saying that the attack is "a clear violation of international law and absolutely indefensible".

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She also said that the allegations about her being close to Putin are "unfair". Finally, she suggested that "the Vladimir Putin of five years ago is not exactly that of today", which is - pardon my French - a fucking lie.

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Marine Le Pen plays down her Russia ties ahead of election runoff

Far-right candidate has been an unabashed admirer of Vladimir Putin, but insists Ukraine invasion has changed that.



Le Pen has struggled to shake off the image of being a pro-Vladimir Putin candidate | Emmanuel Dunand/AFP via Getty Images

BY MAÏA DE LA BAUME
APRIL 13, 2022 | 8:11 PM CET | 3 MINUTES READ

PARIS — French far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen said Wednesday that accusations she was close to Russia were “unfair,” and reiterated that she had changed her stance on the Kremlin since the war in Ukraine.

“The trial I am subjected to is particularly unfair,” the National Rally politician told a press conference in Paris, at which she set out her proposals on foreign policy ahead of an [April 24 runoff vote](#) against incumbent Emmanuel Macron in the French presidential election.

“Until the triggering of the war in Ukraine, I actually believed that it was in the interest of France to have closer ties with Russia again, and ... prevent Russia from building such a solid alliance with China,” Le Pen said.

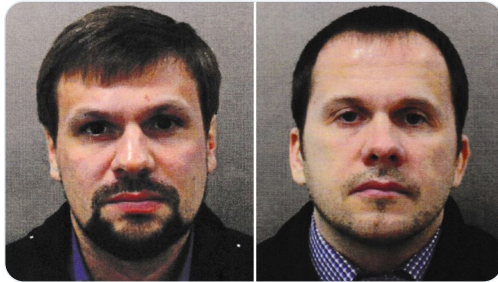
Putin's been the same since he rose to power in 1999. He bombed his own people to start the 2nd Chechen War, invaded Georgia, bombed Syrian civilians and hospitals and has been invading and conducting genocide in Ukraine since 2014.

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In addition, he's been trying to assassinate people with nerve agents and radioactive substances around Europe, sometimes successfully. So Le Pen was either gullible, uninformed or had an agenda to keep supporting Putin, and I don't know which of these options is the worst.

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In today's [#vatniksoup](#) we'll do our first trip to Italy as I introduce an Italian politician and Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, Matteo Salvini ([@matteosalvinimi](#)). He's best-known for his Russia-related funding scandals, and for his Euroskeptic and pro-Putin views.

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10:37 AM · Mar 15, 2023 

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