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Snowden Calls Meeting at Sheremetyevo Airport

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Former U.S. intelligence analyst Edward Snowden on Friday invited representatives of Russian and international human rights organizations and lawyers to meet with him at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport where he has been living for the last three weeks.

In an invitation sent to human rights activists the U.S. whistleblower said that he is going to make a statement followed by a discussion of his "next steps forward."

"In recent weeks we have witnessed an unlawful campaign by officials in the U.S. Government to deny my right to seek and enjoy ... asylum," Snowden said in the invitation. The text was posted on the Facebook profile of Tatyana Lokshina, deputy head of the Human Rights Watch's Moscow office.

The meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. and will take place at Terminal F of the airport.

Among those who received the invitation are head of Amnesty International in Russia Sergei Nikitin, Mikhail Krasnov of Transparency International, Human Rights Watch's Inna Khadzhiyeva, and the United Nations' representative in Russia, Interfax reported, citing a source at Sheremetyevo's administration. Snowden also invited lawyers Anatoly Kucherena, Genri Reznik, and Genrikh Padva.

Many of the activists said they plan to attend the meeting.

"I received an invitation and will definitely attend the meeting," Kucherena told Interfax, adding that he has "a number of questions" to ask. Reznik said he is interested in as well, but has another meeting scheduled for that time. "The person and the situation are extraordinary," he said. "I expect that Snowden will most likely ask for an asylum in Russia. I don't see any other reason to call human rights activist," he added.

Snowden is wanted by the U.S. for disclosing a top-secret surveillance program that allegedly targeted millions of Americans. He was seeking refuge in a number of countries, but most have refused to provide asylum unless the request is made from their soil. As a result, Snowden, whose U.S. passport was annulled, has been confined the transit zone at Sheremetyevo Airport.

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