

Snowden to Stay in Russia for Now, Lawyer Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Edward Snowden may be settling in for a long stay in Russia, his lawyer indicated Wednesday, saying the National Security Agency leaker plans to start studying the Russian language and culture and that, for the time being, Russia is his final destination.

Anatoly Kucherena's comments came after the lawyer met with Snowden in the transit zone of Moscow's Sheremetyevo international airport amid Russian news reports that Snowden was about to receive documents that would allow him to leave the airport, where he's apparently been marooned for more than a month.

Some Russian news agencies cited unidentified sources as saying Kucherena would deliver the documents to Snowden, prompting journalists to flock to the airport, but the lawyer later said there was no such paperwork and that he had simply been bringing Snowden fresh clothes and pizza.

In addition, he brought several Russian classics for the American to read, including one by Anton Chekhov and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel "Crime and Punishment."

The novel is about the mental anguish and moral dilemmas of a poor ex-student who kills a pawnbroker for her cash, and Kucherena said Snowden might find it interesting. But the lawyer told Rossia-24: "I'm not implying he's going through a similar mental anguish."

Kucherena also informed Snowden that he would have no problems finding a place to stay in Russia, saying that many girls have offered him refuge in their own apartments. Snowden laughed in response and asked the lawyer to thank them as well as all the journalists who are writing about his situation objectively. He added that he would be willing to give interviews as soon as his situation will be formalized by the Russian authorities.

In a meeting with human rights activists two weeks ago, Snowden reportedly said he eventually wanted to visit Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua, all of which have offered him asylum. But Kucherena cast doubt on those intentions after Wednesday's meeting.

"Russia is his final destination for now. He doesn't look further into the future than that," Kucherena said on state television.

The lawyer said Snowden is staying in the transit zone "for now" and "intends to stay in Russia, study Russian culture."

The American applied for temporary asylum in Russia last week after his attempts to leave the airport and fly out of Russia were thwarted. The United States wants him sent home to face prosecution for espionage.

Snowden, who revealed details of the NSA's wide-ranging spying activities targeting data and phone communication, is believed to have been staying at the transit zone of Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport since June 23, when he arrived on a flight from Hong Kong.

President Vladimir Putin has said Snowden can be granted asylum in Russia only if he stops leaking NSA secrets.

A spokeswoman for Russia's Federal Migration Service told The Associated Press on Wednesday that it had no information about the status of Snowden's application for asylum.

Granting Snowden asylum would add new tensions to U.S.-Russian relations already strained by Washington's criticism of Russia's pressure on opposition groups, Moscow's suspicion of U.S. missile-defense plans in Europe, and Russia's resistance to proposed sanctions against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

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