

Group Raises \$50,000 for Snowden Legal Defense

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A mysterious group with connections to WikiLeaks has raised almost \$50,000 for the legal support of U.S. intelligence leaker Edward Snowden and launched a website to build public awareness of the mass surveillance operations he revealed.

The group, which calls itself the Journalistic Source Protection Defense Fund, began fundraising in August and has amassed \$25,000 from more than 500 online contributors plus the equivalent of \$24,000 in the digital currency bitcoin. Options to contribute by check and bank transfer have likely gathered further funds.

Who exactly is behind the organization remains an enigma, although the group claims to be "the only fund endorsed by Mr. Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks."

The fund is administered by the London-based accounting firm Derek Rothera & Company, the same firm that handles a separate fund for the legal defense of WikiLeaks founder Julian

Assange.

In addition to building financial support for Snowden's defense, the group aims "to draw attention to the issues his whistleblowing has raised and support his desire for reform of them," according to a statement on its website.

To this end, the website offers extensive background information on Snowden's disclosures and the path that led to his temporary asylum in Russia, as well as listings of relevant events, petitions and ways for users to protect their online privacy.

"We expect to be supporting more journalistic sources and whistleblowers in the future and we expect to grow as more journalistic sources are nominated as recipients," the website says.

Snowden has been charged in the U.S. with theft of government property and two counts of espionage for leaking documents detailing mass surveillance programs conducted by the National Security Agency.

If convicted, he could face up to 30 years in prison.

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