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Snowden Looking to Leave Russia for Brazil

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Snowden speaks about NSA Programs at the Sam Adams award ceremony in Moscow.

RIO DE JANEIRO — National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden, who is currently living in Russia after being granted political asylum, says he would be willing to move to Brazil to help investigate NSA spying on its soil but could not fully participate without being granted safe haven.

In a lengthy "open letter to the people of Brazil," Snowden also commended the Brazilian government for its strong stand against U.S. spying.

Snowden said he would need to receive asylum in Brazil to assist in a spying inquiry because the U.S. government "would continue to interfere with my ability to speak." He also said that he has been inspired by the global debate ignited by his release of thousands of National Security Agency documents and that the NSA's culture of indiscriminate global espionage "is collapsing."

Revelations about the NSA's spy programs were first published in June, based on some of the

thousands of documents that Snowden handed over to Brazil-based American journalist Glenn Greenwald and his reporting partner Laura Poitras, a U.S. filmmaker.

The documents revealed that Brazil was the top NSA target in Latin America: spying that has included the monitoring of Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff's cellphone and hacking into the internal network of state-run oil company Petrobras.

The revelations enraged Rousseff, who in October canceled an official visit to Washington that was to include a state dinner. She is also pushing the United Nations to give citizens more protections against spying.

Brazilian senators have asked for Snowden's help during hearings about the NSA's targeting of Brazil, an important transit hub for trans-Atlantic fiber-optic cables that are hacked. Both Greenwald and his domestic partner David Miranda spoke before the senate, and Miranda has taken up the cause of persuading the Brazilian government to grant political asylum to Snowden.

Snowden, who is living in Russia on a temporary one-year visa, previously requested political asylum in Brazil and several other nations.

On Tuesday, neither Brazil's foreign ministry nor the presidential office said they had immediate comment on Snowden's letter or any pending asylum request.

Snowden's letter was first published Tuesday in a Portuguese translation by the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper. The AP later obtained the original English version.

The U.S. says a National Security Agency official who suggested the U.S. consider granting Edward Snowden amnesty was expressing his personal opinion.

White House spokesman Jay Carney says President Barack Obama's position has not changed. He says Snowden faces felony charges and should be returned to the U.S. Carney says Snowden would be afforded due process if returned from Russia.

Carney's comments came after NSA official Richard Ledgett said it was worth discussing amnesty for Snowden under the right conditions.

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