

Edward Snowden Hopes to Renew Russian Visa in June

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Edward Snowden asking a question on Russian surveillance practices during President Vladimir Putin's annual marathon call-in session in April.

Former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, who fled to Moscow last year after revealing details of massive U.S. intelligence-gathering programs, expects his asylum status in Russia to be renewed before it expires this summer, his lawyer said.

Snowden and documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras, who worked with Snowden to reveal NSA documents he took from his job, were given the Ridenhour Prize for Truth-Telling, an award to promote transparency and whistleblowing, at a ceremony in Washington on Wednesday. Snowden appeared on a video link-up from Russia and Poitras appeared from Berlin.

Jesselyn Radack, an attorney for Snowden, said his temporary asylum in Russia will expire at the end of June but that "prospects are good" for it to be renewed.

"Obviously, he misses America and would like to be able to come home," she said. "We just don't see that happening in the near future."

Snowden was believed to have taken 1.7 million computerized documents. The leaked documents revealed massive programs run by the NSA that gathered information on emails, phone calls and Internet use by hundreds of millions of Americans. The U.S. surveillance programs also had international reach, including monitoring German Chancellor Angela Merkel's cellphone.

He was charged last year in the U.S. with theft of government property, unauthorized communication of national defense information and willful communication of classified intelligence to an unauthorized person. Radack said the Justice Department has not wavered on the charges.

"If the Justice Department would like to talk, we'd be glad to," she said. "He's not going to come here to be prosecuted for espionage."

Snowden, who has appeared around the world in similar video link-ups this year, told a crowd at the National Press Club that more laws are needed to protect potential whistle-blowers in the U.S.

Asked what advice he had for them, he said, "Ideally, work with Congress in advance to try to make sure that we have reformed laws, better protection (for whistleblowers) ... so next time we have a U.S. whistleblower who has something the public needs to know, they can go to their lawyer's office instead of the airport."

"Right now I'm not sure that they have a real alternative. But if they're going to do something, they better use encryption and they better do it from an IP address that's not at their home," he said.

In May 2013 Snowden fled Hawaii, where he had worked as a contractor for the NSA, for Hong Kong, where he gave details of U.S. surveillance programs to Poitras and reporter Glenn Greenwald of the Guardian, who shared in a Pulitzer Prize for his Snowden stories.

Snowden then flew to Russia and spent more than a month living in a neutral transit zone in a Moscow airport before being granted asylum over the protests of the Obama administration.

See also:

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