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Putin Grants Edward Snowden Russian Citizenship – Decree

By AFP

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Zuma \ TASS

President Vladimir Putin on Monday granted Russian citizenship to U.S. whistleblower Edward Snowden, who exposed massive surveillance by the U.S. National Security Agency and was granted refuge by Moscow.

A presidential decree published Monday included Edward Joseph Snowden born June 21, 1983, on a list of newly-minted Russian citizens, at a time when relations between Washington and Moscow are at historic lows over the conflict in Ukraine.

The fugitive whistleblower Snowden said in November 2020 he had applied for Russian citizenship but that he would aim to keep his U.S. nationality.

The former American intelligence contractor, who revealed in 2013 that the U.S. government was spying on its citizens, has been living in exile in Russia since the revelations.

Moscow several years ago relaxed its strict citizenship laws to allow individuals to hold Russian passports without rejecting their original nationalities.

Snowden's lawyer Anatoly Kucherena told Russian state news agency RIA Novosti that his spouse Lindsay Mills would also now apply for Russian citizenship and that their daughter already had a Russian passport having been born in the country.

Putin last week announced a mobilization of Russian men to contribute to the army's fight in Ukraine and Kucherena said that Snowden would not be called up to serve given he had no prior experience in the Russian army.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov meanwhile told news agencies that Snowden had received Russian citizenship as a result of his own request.

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