

## Russia Grants Snowden One-Year Asylum

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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On June 23, he arrived in Moscow. He applied for asylum. He's been stuck in Sheremetyevo Airport transit zone limbo.

Putin was clear and unequivocal. He won't extradite him. No treaty obligation exists. Official requests don't matter.

Snowden's initial ordeal ended. A greater one awaits. He's able to travel freely.

On August 1, [Itar Tass](#) headlined "Edward Snowden gets asylum and leaves Sheremetyevo transit zone," saying:

He's "formally in Russia's territory."

"Earlier, a source close to the matter reported this information explaining that the customs officers received the required papers from Federal Migration Service giving Snowden the right to stay in Russia."

"He added that the former CIA employee currently has all the necessary documents to legally stay in Russia."

He "cannot be deported to the United States, even if the country makes an official request, a source in the Russian law enforcement agencies told Itar-Tass on Thursday."

"The granting of temporary asylum protects Snowden from deportation, because under the law a person, who was granted temporary asylum, cannot be returned against his will to the country, a citizen of which he is, or to the place of his permanent residence."

On August 1, [Russia Today](#) headlined "Snowden granted 1-year asylum in Russia, leaves airport."

His legal representative, Anatoly Kucherena said:

"I have just handed over to him papers from the Russian Immigration Service. They are what he needs to leave the transit zone."

Kucherena told state broadcaster Russia 24:

"I have just seen him off. He has left for a secure location. Security is a very serious matter for him."

Kucherena told [Reuters](#):

"He is the most wanted man on planet Earth. What do you think he is going to do?"

“He has to think about his personal security. I cannot tell you where he is going.”

“I put him in a taxi 15 to 20 minutes ago and gave him his certificate on getting refugee status in the Russian Federation. He can live wherever he wants in Russia. It’s his personal choice.”

He left accompanied by WikiLeaks representative Sarah Harrison. She twittered saying:

“We would like to thank the Russian people and all those others who have helped to protect Mr. Snowden. We have won the battle - now the war.”

He’s granted temporary asylum through at least through July 31, 2014. He can extend it annually on request.

Doing so lets him stay in Russia permanently. He can make a new life there if he chooses. He’s got plenty of time to decide.

He won’t be sent back to America. At 15:30 Moscow time (11:30 GMT), he left Sheremetyevo Airport transit zone limbo.

According to Kucherena, his location’s secret. It won’t be made public.

“He is the most wanted person on earth and his security will be a priority,” he said.

“He will deal with personal security issues and lodging himself. I will just consult him as his lawyer.”

He’s America’s public enemy number one. Safety’s his main concern. He’s got good reason to worry. He’s a wanted man.

He knows how NSA operates. He knows the system. It’ll try every way to monitor him. He’ll do his best to stay out of its dragnet. Whether he succeeds remains to be seen.

Washington has human intelligence everywhere. CIA agents infest Russia. They’ll search him out. They’ll learn where he’s staying.

They’ll monitor his every move. They’ll likely watch but not touch. At least for now. What happens later remains to be seen.

Snowden acted responsibly. He connected important dots for millions. He exposed lawless NSA spying. He did so courageously

He sacrificed financial security and personal safety. He did so saying:

“You can’t come up against the world’s most powerful intelligence agencies and not accept the risk.”

“I understand that I will be made to suffer for my actions, and that the return of this information to the public marks my end.”

“There’s no saving me.”

“The only thing I fear is the harmful effects on my family, who I won’t be able to help any more. That’s what keeps me up at night.”

He doesn’t expect to see home again. Returning assures arrest, harsh treatment, prosecution, police state injustice, and longterm hard time.

At the same time, he acted out of high ethical and moral principles.

“I do not want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded,” he said. That is not something I am willing to support or live under.”

“I don’t want to live in a world where there’s no privacy, and therefore no room for intellectual exploration and creativity.”

“I have no intention of hiding who I am because I know I have done nothing wrong.”

“I had been looking for leaders, but I realized that leadership is about being the first to act.”

“There are more important things than money. If I were motivated by money, I could have sold these documents to any number of countries and gotten very rich.”

“The great fear that I have regarding the outcome for America of these disclosures is that nothing will change.”

People “won’t be willing to take the risks necessary to stand up and fight to change things.”

“And in the months ahead, the years ahead, it’s only going to get worse.”

Snowden’s currently in seclusion. Eventually he’ll talk to the press. He needs quiet time to decompress, settle in, and decide what’s next.

He need permanent quarters, work, and a new life. He needs to learn a new language and customs. He needs trusted associates. He needs protection. America’s long arm won’t rest.

As long as he’s free, he’s a wanted man. He understands. He took the risk. He acted responsibly. Doing the right thing is its own reward. Millions thank him for it.

How his status affects US-Russia relations remains to be seen. They’re less than cordial. They’ll unlikely deteriorate further.

Greater major issues remain unresolved. Snowden’s minor by comparison. He’s a thorn, nonetheless, in bilateral relations.

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