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Ambassador Sergey I. KISLYAK
2650 Wisconsin Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20007

Friday August 1, 2014

Delivered by hand to the Russian Embassy in the United States, for the attention of President Putin

Dear President Putin,

Courage runs Edward Snowden's official defence fund. We ask you to grant Edward Snowden permanent asylum.

Today marks exactly one year since the Government of the Russian Federation granted Mr Snowden temporary one-year asylum. This was after 40 days stranded in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, following a decision by the US State Department to announce the cancellation of his passport. During that 40 day period, Edward Snowden applied for asylum to 27 different countries, including Russia. At that time, Russia was the only country willing and able to do the right thing, despite serious diplomatic pressure from the United States Government, and offer Mr Snowden protection. We ask that you continue to show strength in this important area of international humanitarian law and again grant Mr Snowden's request.

Edward Snowden faces serious persecution in the United States for revealing its government's illegal spying on most of the world's population, including Russia's. He faces at least three charges, including two under the 1917 Espionage Act, which was written not with whistleblowers but with WWI spies in mind. As things stand today, Edward Snowden would not be able to present a public interest defence. He would face decades in prison and the possibility of unlawful treatment like that experienced by US military whistleblower Chelsea Manning while awaiting trial on similar charges.

In June this year, Courage launched a campaign to show that concern for Edward Snowden's safety resonates worldwide. We asked supporters to submit photos showing that they Stand

Furthermore, thanks to Snowden we know that a March 2013 report from the NSA's Special Source Operations showed that a FISA Court order authorised the agency to monitor communications relevant to "Germany" and that similar orders have been issued in relation to Russia, among other countries.

The Russian people deserve to know when their privacy is so seriously threatened by an unaccountable foreign intelligence organisation. Edward Snowden made these documents public so that we could see just how far the NSA has expanded its capabilities beyond what is legally authorised, deeming any almost every nation's data legitimate for collection en mass.

Edward Snowden has been recognised internationally for these efforts and has received Nobel Peace Prize nominations in two consecutive years.

Looking favorably on Mr Snowden's new application would show that the Russian government respects the right to asylum. It would send a strong signal about the need for decisive action to defend european privacy and associational rights from interference by other states. We ask that the Russian Government do whatever is in its power to ensure that Edward Snowden remains safe in the face of real and significant threats. We ask that the Russian government continue its previous positive action and again protect Edward Snowden from US persecution.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Julian Assange in black ink, featuring a stylized 'A' and a horizontal underline.

Julian Assange
Trustee of Courage

Handwritten signature of Sarah Harrison in black ink, with a horizontal underline.

Gavin MacFadyen
Trustee of Courage

Sarah Harrison
Acting Director of Courage

Courage originally began in August 2013 as The Journalistic Source Protection Defence Fund and has run Edward Snowden's defence fund since that time. Courage's official Edward Snowden support site is located at <https://edwardsnowden.com> and the related twitter account at @CourageSnowden