Caroline Lucas MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 1AA  

Friday, 1 August 2014  

Dear Caroline Lucas,

Thank you for agreeing to accept this letter. As the sponsor of an Early Day Motion on the misuse of the Terrorism Act against national security journalists and now the plaintiff in a case against GCHQ in the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, we appreciate all you have done to ensure the significance of Edward Snowden’s revelations is recognised in public life. We trust this message will reach those it needs to, and appreciate your assistance in its distribution.

We are writing on behalf of Edward Snowden’s supporters in the United Kingdom, calling on their government to provide a safe haven for Mr Snowden.

Courage runs Edward Snowden’s official defence fund. Today marks a year since Edward Snowden was offered temporary asylum by the government of the Russian Federation, after a month stranded in Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport.

Edward Snowden faces harsh prosecution and persecution in the United States for revealing to his fellow citizens that government’s illegal spying. 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 With Snowden and that they want their governments to offer him protection. We promised to send a letter to the governments of the three countries where the response was greatest to ask them to respond to this call.

As of today, citizens from 39 countries have taken part in Courage’s Stand With Snowden campaign - and the UK is one of the top three responding countries.
Edward Snowden's revelations impact on every country in the world but, in revealing GCHQ's role in international mass surveillance, the implications have been particularly significant for the UK.

Thanks to Edward Snowden, the British public learned that GCHQ operates the Tempora program intercepting nearly every phone call, SMS and internet communication in and out of the UK. It monitors and manipulates social media, online polls and page views; intercepts and retains webcam images; and targets law-abiding non-governmental organisations for surveillance.

Thanks to Edward Snowden, we know that GCHQ, in partnership with the NSA and other intelligence agencies, is collecting the electronic communications of practically the entire UK population.

Edward Snowden's courageous whistleblowing has allowed the institutions of British and European democracy to respond to the reality of mass surveillance for the first time. The Home Affairs Select Committee found the Snowden revelations to be "an embarrassing indictment" of the ineffective oversight and accountability of the security services and called for radical reform. The European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee (LIBE) conducted an in-depth investigation into mass surveillance, to which Mr Snowden testified in March 2014.

Citizens of the UK have demonstrated that they appreciate Edward Snowden's contribution and that they want to ensure his protection. Opinion polls (Angus Reid Global Survey, YouGov) show that a majority of people in the UK think Edward Snowden did the right thing in blowing the whistle on mass surveillance and that newspapers were right to report the revelations.
Mr Snowden's courageous public service has been recognised through several international awards. He has received multiple nominations for this year's Nobel Peace Prize and was elected as Glasgow University rector in April 2014.

The British public has benefited from Mr Snowden's revelations and many MPs have acknowledged their importance. Despite this, the British government has been largely silent about the United States' aggressive persecution of their source. British citizens want to break that silence and are calling for the government to offer Mr Snowden protection.

We ask that the UK government does whatever is in its power to ensure that Edward Snowden remains safe in the face of real and significant threats: to offer him asylum or encourage other countries to take similar measures. We ask that the UK government do the right thing and protect Edward Snowden now.

Thank you for passing on this message.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Assange
Trustee of Courage

Gavin MacFadyen
Trustee of Courage

Sarah Harrison
Acting Director of Courage

Notes:
Angus Reid Global poll, 2013:
YouGov poll, 2013:
http://yougov.co.uk/news/2013/06/16/edward-snowden-hero/
YouGov poll, 2014:
http://yougov.co.uk/news/2014/04/18/reporting-nsa-revelations-good-society/