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Snowden may be granted entry to Russia Wednesday

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Russia's Immigration Service may grant entry permission to NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, who has been stranded at a Moscow airport since last month.

Snowden, who had been living in the transit zone of Sheremetyevo Airport since the day he arrived from Hong Kong on June 23, applied for temporary asylum in Russia last week.

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His request followed weeks of searching for a way to leave the country, which he intended to pass briefly on his way to another destination and where he was stranded because the US revoked his travel passport.

It usually takes the Russian immigration authorities up to seven days for an initial assessment of an asylum request, according to Snowden's Russian lawyer Anatoly Kucherena. If they choose to proceed with the process, Snowden would be issued provisional documents to that effect.

"When he gets those documents in his hands, he will be released from his temporary home at Sheremetyevo Airport and will be able to go freely about the Russian Federation," explains RT's Lindsay France, who is among the journalists waiting for the decision to be announced.

It can take up to three months to either grant or reject the asylum request. If granted, temporary asylum would allow Snowden to remain in Russia for one year and be renewed annually. If the request is rejected by the Immigration Service, Snowden may appeal the decision in court.

Earlier Kucherena said Snowden may decide to become a permanent resident in Russia rather than stay in the country seeking an opportunity to get asylum elsewhere.

"He's planning to arrange his life here. He plans to get a job. And, I think, that all his further decisions will be made considering the situation he found himself in," he told RT.

Edward Snowden is wanted in the US over leaking classified documents detailing the massive surveillance programs of the National Security Agency. He is facing espionage charges if handed over to US custody. The US has been applying diplomatic pressure to countries which voiced their intention to harbor the fugitive.

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