

'Unbowed' Snowden seeks new havens

By Matt Smith and Tom Cohen , CNN

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(CNN) -- The anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks says it has submitted asylum requests to 19 more countries for Edward Snowden, the ex-National Security Agency computer contractor who has admitted leaking details of U.S. surveillance programs to reporters.

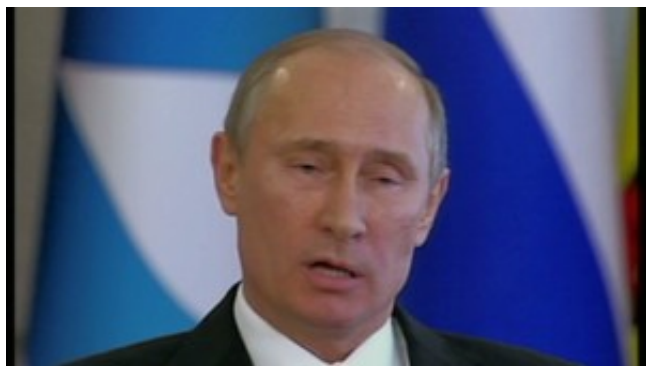
The countries include Russia, where Snowden has been holed up at Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport since June 23. The rest are scattered from South America to several European Union countries, India and China.

"The documents outline the risks of persecution Mr. Snowden faces in the United States and have started to be delivered by the Russian consulate to the relevant embassies in Moscow," WikiLeaks, which has been assisting Snowden's effort to find a haven from U.S. espionage charges, said in a statement issued early Tuesday.

Snowden had already sought asylum in Iceland and in Ecuador, which has said it was considering the request. WikiLeaks released a statement attributed to Snowden late Monday in which he blasted the Obama administration for trying to block his efforts.

"These are the old, bad tools of political aggression," Snowden said. "Their purpose is to frighten, not me, but those who would come after me." But he added, "I am unbowed in my convictions and impressed at the efforts taken by so many."

Snowden has said he was the source of NSA documents leaked to British and U.S. newspapers that revealed details of secret American surveillance programs. He flew to Moscow from Hong Kong after the United States requested his extradition, and there had been conflicting reports Monday about whether he had asked Russia for asylum.



Putin: Russia is not extraditing anyone



Snowden claims U.S. spied on EU

Russian President Vladimir Putin opened the door to Snowden possibly remaining in Russia on Monday, saying he "must stop his work aimed at harming our American partners" if he wants to stay.

In addition to Russia, China and India, WikiLeaks said it had sent new asylum requests to



Bush on Snowden: He damaged the country

representatives of Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and Venezuela.

In Monday's statement, Snowden criticized the Obama administration for yanking his passport once criminal charges were filed, "leaving me a stateless person." But he said the administration isn't afraid of people like him or others accused of

disclosing U.S. secrets.

"No, the Obama administration is afraid of you," he said. "It is afraid of an informed, angry public demanding the constitutional government it was promised -- and it should be."

And while Ecuador has said it was considering Snowden's request, President Rafael Correa told the British newspaper the Guardian that the American fugitive would have to reach Ecuadorian territory for his request to be considered.

"Are we responsible for getting him to Ecuador? It's not logical," Correa told the Guardian, one of the recipients of Snowden's leaks. "The country that has to give him a safe conduct document is Russia."

He added the decision to issue Snowden temporary travel documents that allowed him to leave Hong Kong was "a mistake on our part," the Guardian reported.

Over the weekend, Correa said Vice President Joe Biden has asked Ecuador "to please reject" Snowden's request. And Monday, President Barack Obama said Snowden traveled to Russia without a valid passport or legal papers and that he hoped that Moscow would handle the case as it would any other travel-related matter.

Obama confirmed that the United States and Russia have had "high-level" discussions about Snowden, after an earlier report from Russia that the two nations' top law enforcement officials were working together to resolve the situation.

Snowden says he leaked the classified information because he believes the U.S. surveillance programs he revealed exceed constitutional limits.

CNN's Steve Brusk, Barbara Starr, Miriam Falco, Kathryn Tancos, Alexander Hunter, Claudia Rebaza, Patrick Oppmann, Josh Levs, Catherine Shoichet and Susanna Palk contributed to this report.

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