



Extrait du FIDH - Worldwide Human Rights Movement

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International protection for whistleblowers should be increased

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Description :

FIDH calls for asylum to be granted to Edward Snowden

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FIDH urges concerned states to accept Edward's Snowden asylum application and condemns the United States' aggressive approach towards whistleblowers, which poses a severe threat to Snowden's rights, potentially leading him to face ill-treatment and an unfair trial.

Snowden's civil disobedience provided information essential to ensure transparency, respect for democratic principles and protection of the right for US and worldwide citizens and countries not to be the subject of unlawful interference.

The former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor, who disclosed a large number of documents unveiling the US mass national and international surveillance programs, now faces the possibility of being extradited to the US where he has been charged with theft of government property, unauthorized communication of national defense information and willful communication of classified communications intelligence to an unauthorized person, the latter two offenses falling under the U.S. Espionage Act 1979.

The leaks disclosed a secret court order that demanded Verizon pass to the NSA the details of phone calls related to millions of customers, as well as details on the Prism NSA intelligence system, aimed at collecting data on intelligence targets from the systems of some of the major tech companies. More recently Snowden also leaked files with evidence that the NSA intelligence service was also spying on European Union Institutions as well as the diplomatic corps including of a number of EU Member States.

The US has on a number of occasions recognized the importance of whistleblowers in denouncing a government's unethical or illegal practices, including by granting asylum to whistleblowers from China and other countries. However so far whistleblowers who are US citizens have been subject to severe persecution, leading to ill-treatment and breaches of the right to a fair trial, as in the case of Bradley Manning, who spent 1000 days in pre trial detention in conditions judged by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, to amount to inhuman and degrading treatment and possibly torture. He is currently facing court martial for various charges carrying life imprisonment, including that of aiding the enemy, which attracts the death penalty.

"Given the US's approach to whistleblowers, Snowden's fears of facing grave human rights violations should he be extradited to the US are founded and his asylum requests should be granted," said Karim Lahidji, President of FIDH.

Moreover double standard in the use of their airspace by European countries is also shocking. **"It is quite a paradox that European States authorised CIA flights on and over their territory, in violation of international law, but refused to allow Evo Morales's plane on the grounds that Edward Snowden might have been on board,"** said Katie Gallagher, FIDH Vice-President and Senior Staff Attorney at (CCR).

FIDH calls on Governments of namely European Union Member States and Latin America to recognize Edward Snowden may face grave violations of his rights and persecution for his political opinions and consequently approve his request for asylum.

FIDH calls also on the US to ensure the rights of whistleblowers are respected throughout the course of investigations and trials and to review its approach towards such figures taking into consideration the role they play in safeguarding the values of transparency and democracy.

International protection for whistleblowers should be increased

FIDH calls on the international community to promote the implementation and development of legal instruments and framework providing safeguards for those who make disclosures in the public interest and in accordance with universal standards.