

More Than One Million People Urge Obama to Pardon Snowden



Washington, January 16 (RHC)-- More than one million people have signed onto a petition asking outgoing President Barack Obama to pardon former U.S. intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, charged with espionage and theft of state secrets and documents.

"Pardoning Snowden would show the world the U.S. cares about human rights at a time of great concern," said Ben Wizner, Snowden's attorney who along with other privacy activists began the Pardon Snowden Campaign in September.

The Obama administration has said repeatedly that Snowden must face the charges against him and that he'll be afforded a fair trial, something Wizner describes as a dodge. In 2013, Snowden fled to Russia and was granted temporary asylum there.

Snowden leaked classified NSA documents detailing surveillance programs run by the U.S. and its allies to journalists in 2013, kicking off a heated debate on whether Americans should be willing to sacrifice internet privacy to supposedly help the government protect the country from terrorist attacks.

Activists are also concerned that the possible mending of ties between Moscow and Washington under the rule of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump would lead to Snowden's extradition to the U.S. and his serving of jail sentence.

However, Snowden has said he is not worried about his fate and future in the Trump era that will start on January 20. If convicted in the U.S., he faces up to 30 years in prison.

Trump's pick for national intelligence director Dan Coats has openly attacked Snowden's NSA disclosures. Many people around the world consider him a hero who did what was morally correct and performed a public service.

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