

# Edward Snowden letter to German government in full

Full text of NSA whistleblower's letter on US surveillance to chancellor Angela Merkel, the German parliament and federal prosecutors, passed on by German politician Hans-Christian Ströbele

theguardian.com, Friday 1 November 2013 12.48 GMT  
Jump to comments (...)



NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden and German politician Hans-Christian Ströbele in Russia. Photograph: Hans-Christian Ströbele/EPA  
To whom it may concern,

I have been invited to write to you regarding your investigation of mass surveillance.

I am Edward Joseph Snowden, formerly employed through contracts or direct hire as a technical expert for the United States National Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency.

In the course of my service to these organizations, I believe I witnessed systemic violations of law by my government that created a moral duty to act. As a result of reporting these concerns, I have face a severe and sustained campaign of persecution that forced me from my family and home. I am currently living in exile under a grant of temporary asylum in the Russian Federation in accordance with international law.

I am heartened by the response to my act of political expression, in both the United States and beyond. Citizens around the world as well as high officials – including in the United States – have judged the revelation of an unaccountable system of pervasive surveillance to be a public service. These spying revelations have resulted in the proposal of many new laws and policies to address formerly concealed abuses of the public trust. The benefits to society of this growing knowledge are becoming increasingly clear at the same time claimed risks are being shown to have been mitigated.

Though the outcome of my efforts has been demonstrably positive, my government continues to treat dissent as defection, and seeks to criminalize political speech with felony charges that provide no defense. However, speaking the truth is not a crime. I am confident that with the support of the international community, the government of the United

Share Tweet this Email



### The NSA Files: Decoded



What the surveillance revelations mean for you

#### World news

Edward Snowden · US national security · United States · Germany · Angela Merkel · NSA · The NSA files

#### More news

#### More on this story



Edward Snowden willing to travel to Germany for parliamentary inquiry  
Whistleblower says in letter he would be prepared to speak to inquiry about US National Security Agency surveillance

Germany may invite Edward Snowden as witness in NSA inquiry

NSA files – Edward Snowden's letter to Angela Merkel – live coverage

Congress should grant Edward Snowden amnesty

Edward Snowden: 'The US government will say I aided our enemies' – video interview

### Today's best video



#### European football papers review

James Richardson brings you all the continental reaction to the European Champions League last 16 draw



#### Inside the mind of Lee Rigby's killer

Forensic psychiatrists and Michael Adebolajo's brother discuss what might have motivated him to kill soldier Lee Rigby



#### Seattle gunman wrestled to ground by bus passengers

CCTV footage of the moment a gun-wielding man is disarmed by passengers on a bus in Seattle



#### The Guardian Film Show

The team discuss American Hustle, All is Lost, The Secret Life of Walter Mitty and

Anchorman 2 in our 100th episode

### GuardianWitness



States will abandon this harmful behavior. I hope that when the difficulties of this humanitarian situation have been resolved, I will be able to cooperate in the responsible finding of fact regarding reports in the media, particularly in regard to the truth and authenticity of documents, as appropriate and in accordance with the law.

I look forward to speaking with you in your country when the situation is resolved, and thank you for your efforts in upholding the international laws that protect us all.

With my best regards,

Edward Snowden

31 October 2013

[Share](#) [Tweet this](#) [Email](#)

## Comments

[Click here to join the discussion.](#)

We can't load the discussion on [theguardian.com](#) because you don't have [JavaScript](#) enabled.



### GuardianWitness Awards 2014

Upload your contributions to GuardianWitness before 20th January to be entered into our reader awards



#### Extreme weather in the UK

The latest storms have brought power cuts, transport problems and flood warnings across

parts of the UK, share your videos and images and help shape our coverage



#### Recipe swap: smoothies and juices

Share your recipes for a delicious vitamin boost after the over-indulgences of the

Christmas and New Year holiday

#### Send us your assignment ideas

Do you have an idea for an assignment you think should run on GuardianWitness? [Let us know.](#)

## THE NSA FILES



**Live:** Follow NSA-related developments as controversy over leaks continues to make headlines

### On World news

[Most viewed](#) [Latest](#)

#### Last 24 hours



1. Mikhail Khodorkovsky 'exhausted but happy to be free' after Putin's pardon

2. Ugandan MPs rush through draconian laws against homosexuality

3. Nelson Mandela 'received weapons training from Mossad agents in 1962'

4. Chinese military reacts angrily to Japan swelling defence force

5. Barack Obama rejects claims 2013 has been worst year of his presidency

[More most viewed](#)

#### Last 24 hours



1. Chinese hotelier among four feared dead in France helicopter crash

2. Eyewitness: Hula Valley, Israel

3. Iraq suicide bombers kill at least 18 military officers

4. Obama: now is not the time for new Iran sanctions - video

5. NSA surveillance issue is being taken 'very seriously', says Obama - video

[All today's stories](#)

## guardianbookshop

### This week's bestsellers



**1. Stoner**  
by John L. Williams  
£7.19

**2. Stephen Ward Was Innocent, OK**  
by Geoffrey Robertson £9.74

**3. Guardian Quick Crosswords 5 & 6**  
£8.00

**4. Tales from the Secret Footballer**  
£7.99

**5. Ammonites and Leaping Fish**  
by Penelope Lively £10.99

Search the Guardian bookshop

Search

## guardianjobs

Find the latest jobs in your sector:

[Arts & heritage](#)

[Health](#)

[Charities](#)

[Marketing & PR](#)

[Education](#)

[Media](#)

[Environment](#)

[Sales](#)

[Government](#)

[Senior executive](#)

[Graduate](#)

[Social care](#)

[Browse all jobs](#)

Search