

Snowden receives "Whistleblower Prize" in Germany



The man who leaked documents revealing the extent of US surveillance of electronic media, Edward Snowden, has been awarded the German "Whistleblower Prize" in absentia. He remains on the run in Moscow.

The award goes to people who "reveal grave abuses and dangerous developments for people and society, democracy, peace and the environment in the public interest," watchdog Transparency International said on its website.

Worth 3,000 euros (\$3,942), the prize is co-sponsored by the Federation of German Scientists (VDW) and the German section of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA). For the first time, Transparency International Germany was also involved in awarding the prize.

Explaining why Snowden received the award, Hartmut Grassl from the Federation of German Scientists said, "An open society needs civil courage and brave people like Edward Snowden, so that abuses are revealed and prevented."

Snowden, a former US National Security Agency systems analyst leaked documents last month that revealed that the NSA had collected phone records, while a second NSA program forced major Internet companies to turn over contents of communications to the government.

Snowden, who is being sought by US authorities, has been staying at the transit zone of Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport for almost a month. He applied for asylum in Russia last week and is still awaiting word of whether the application has been accepted.

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