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**STATEMENT FROM THE FAMILIES OF
THE AMERICAN HIKERS DETAINED IN IRAN**

The families of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal, the three American hikers detained in Iran since July 31, 2009, issued the following statement today in response to comments by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran in an interview with the Associated Press following his arrival in the United States:

“We are greatly encouraged that President Ahmadinejad has said that he will ask the Iranian judiciary to treat the case of our children with maximum leniency. His expression of compassion raises our hopes that the day they return to us will not be far off. Shane, Sarah and Josh were hiking in Iraqi Kurdistan when they were detained and accused of illegal entry. If they strayed across the border into Iran, it can only have been by accident and it is obviously a matter we regret. Our immediate concern now is to know that our children are well. We hope the Iranian authorities will allow our children to speak to us without delay and grant them their right to consular access.”