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**MOTHERS OF U.S. HIKERS MARK DAY 445 OF THEIR SONS' DETENTION IN IRAN –
SHANE BAUER AND JOSH FATTAL NOW HELD FOR LONGER THAN THE U.S. HOSTAGES
IN 1979-81**

Today marks the 445th day that Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal have been unjustly detained in Iran, surpassing the 444 days for which 52 U.S. citizens were held in Iran during the U.S. hostage crisis from 1979-81.

Iranian border guards detained Josh, Shane and Shane's fiancée Sarah Shourd while they were hiking in Iraqi Kurdistan on July 31, 2009. Iran released Sarah on compassionate grounds on September 14.

Cindy Hickey and Laura Fattal, the mothers of Shane and Josh, released the following statement:

“As long and heartbreaking as this ordeal has been, we never imagined that our sons’ detention would reach this sad and painful milestone. A generation after the U.S. hostage crisis, we pray that Iran and the U.S. will overcome the mistrust and antagonism of the past 31 years. We again thank the Sultanate of Oman for its humanitarian effort to secure Sarah’s release and for its continued support in seeking freedom for Shane and Josh. We hope that the U.S. government will build upon the positive atmosphere that Sarah’s release has created and we repeat our urgent appeal to the Iranian authorities for compassion. Shane and Josh need to get on with their lives, as do our families. We pray that Shane and Josh will soon be in our arms and that the needless suffering their detention has brought upon so many people will end.”

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