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**MOTHERS OF THE AMERICAN HIKERS DEMAND THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR DETENTION IN IRAN**

***Protest at the Iranian Mission to the U.N. launches "Weekend of Action" Around
the World***

The mothers of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal today called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to release their children immediately and stop using them as "bargaining chips" in a statement marking the first anniversary of their detention.

Cindy Hickey, Nora Shourd and Laura Fattal issued their call ahead of a protest outside the [Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York](#) starting at 12:30 pm ET. The gathering is the centerpiece in a "[Weekend of Action](#)" that family, friends and supporters are holding in the United States and around the world to highlight Iran's unlawful treatment of the three Americans.

"After 12 months of broken promises to resolve their case quickly and compassionately, no one believes Iran when it says our children's fate is in the hands of the country's judiciary. Our children are bargaining chips and Iran contravenes its own laws by continuing to deprive them of their freedom. Shane, Sarah and Josh have lost an entire year of their lives, a year they have spent in almost complete isolation. Iran can end this terrible injustice by doing the right thing, which is to release them and release them now," the mothers said in a joint statement.

ONE YEAR UNJUSTLY DETAINED

Bauer, 28, Shourd, 31, and Fattal, 28, were arrested by Iranian border police on July 31, 2009, on the border with Iraqi Kurdistan, where the three friends, all graduates of the University of California at Berkeley, were on a brief hiking vacation. Shourd, who has serious health issues, has been held in solitary confinement throughout the past year and is allowed to spend only brief periods with Bauer and Fattal each day. Held in Evin Prison, Tehran, the three have been denied access to their Iranian lawyer and allowed to make only one telephone call to their families. They have not been publicly charged with any alleged offence. In May, Iran allowed their mothers to meet with them under supervision at a hotel in the Iranian capital but cut the visit from one week to 48 hours amid heightened tensions with the United States.



WEEKEND OF ACTION

Friday's protest in New York will be led by the three mothers. Hadi Ghaemi, Executive Director of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, and a spiritual leader will also address the gathering. It is one of more than 30 "Free the Hikers" events that have been organized through the weekend in the United States and around the world, including in Canada, France, India and the United Kingdom.

CONTACT:

In the United States:

Samantha Topping

samantha@toppingmedia.com

Office: +1 212 935 3150

Cell: +1 212 810 9753

In Iran:

Masoud Shafii Esq.

shafiimasoud@yahoo.com

Cell: +98 912 198 5643

MOTHERS' PREPARED REMARKS:

Following are remarks prepared for delivery by Cindy Hickey, Nora Shourd and Laura Fattal at Friday's protest in New York.

My name is **Cindy Hickey** and Shane Bauer is my son.

It is hard to believe that one day short of a year ago I was working in my office, having a usual day, when I got a call from the U.S. embassy in Baghdad. The caller said, "Your son is believed to have been detained by Iranian officials around the border of Iran. That is all we know at this point. You will be notified when we get more information".

My heart sank, adrenaline rushed to my head and I began to pace the floor as I waited for the phone to ring again. My mind raced with the task of locating Shane's father and his sisters to let them know what had happened. I could not stop thinking, where do we begin and what do we do to resolve this immediately? Little did I know how much work we would have to do and for how long.

I know no more officially about Shane's case today than I knew on July 31st, 2009.



I was able to visit Shane once in the past 12 months, to fill him with hope, and touch him physically and emotionally, and for that I am very grateful. I know that I miss him deeply. I also know that his detainment has taken a heavy toll on my family physically and emotionally, and that Shane feels very worried about us.

What I don't know is why Shane, Sarah and Josh are still being held without charge, why their basic human rights are being violated, why they are not allowed regular consular visits or calls to our families and why they have had no access to their lawyer.

I have not heard anything about Shane's condition since my visit to Iran. My final moment with him was watching him being escorted onto an elevator. I lingered there until the doors completely closed. I wondered at that moment when I would see him again. This is a vision I will never forget.

Working for Shane's release has become my life. I have closed the doors to my business of 18 years; I do not go anywhere without a phone for fear of missing an important call or worst of all, missing another brief call from Shane. I worry not only about Shane, but also about my two daughters, Nicole and Shannon, and many other relatives and friends who have been working hard each day for the freedom of Shane, Sarah and Josh. I think about how our lives have changed and how our lives of a year ago seem so distant. And I think of what life will look like after Shane is free.

These thoughts follow me every second of every day. They enter my dreams.

I ask you to hear my words and please raise your voices and ask why the injustice? Why the violation of human rights? Why the disregard for human life?

My family and I have felt the warmth and prayers of everyone who has supported us in any way. It has kept us strong. Shane himself spoke of his deep gratitude for everything that is being done all around the world. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, personally and on behalf of my family, including Shane. Your support does not go unnoticed and is essential to a release.

Today, we still have a big task in front of us. Our work will not end until Shane, Sarah and Josh are home and in our loving embrace.



Shane's life's work as an independent journalist is to expose the injustices subjected upon people in our country and in other countries around the world. He has done extraordinary work for the rights of others through his words and photography. It is time for some of that to be returned.

I have had faith from the beginning that we will prevail and that Shane, Sarah and Josh will be free. I pray that because of this situation, eyes have been opened, hearts have been softened and relationships between countries will begin to heal. I believe that this has happened for a reason and it is much bigger than Shane, Sarah, Josh and all of their families.

The gathering of all of you here today is much appreciated and will never be forgotten. Thank you. Let's continue with the task at hand and get them home soon.

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My name is **Nora Shourd** and my daughter is Sarah Shourd.

One year ago tomorrow Sarah, Shane and Josh were arrested and put in prison in Iran.

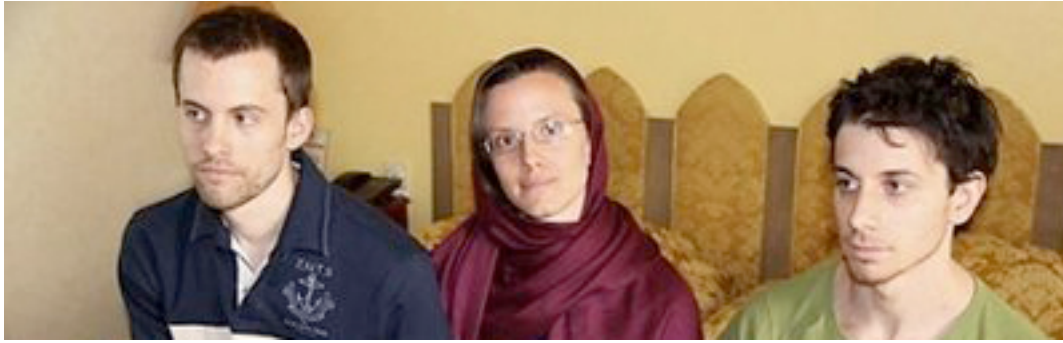
One year ago today, they were contentedly walking along a trail near the waterfalls of Ahmed Awa – feeling grateful for the chance to be there, enjoying their hike and loving each other's company.

We will not know all the details of their arrest until they get out. We will not know how they have been treated until we get them out. And we may never know precisely what we did that worked to get them out.

But what we do know is that we must not stop until they get out.

This protest today is "work is love made visible." It is one of Sarah's favorite quotes. The words are those of Khalil Gibran. He was a poet, writer and artist who was born in Lebanon and lived and worked here in the United States. The words next to his grave read: "Close your eyes and look around, you will see me in front of you." I close my eyes now and I see Sarah, here with us, in front of me. I see Shane and Josh. They are here with us too ... and I know they will be free.

Our presence here today, your presence here today, will be seen around the world. Our voices raised will be heard around the world and our energies joined will be felt



around the world. I know most assuredly that this coming together will be felt and appreciated by three young people in Evin Prison. And I know it will be noticed by the people who keep them there for no just reason against their will.

It is not one thing that we do that will help set Sarah, Shane and Josh free. It is everything we do. It is the hushed voices in quiet conversations and the more forceful voices we raise outside this mission and at other places around the world – on this anniversary and at other times. It is the letters we write pleading for their liberty and the ears we bend to say “this is wrong.” It is the emails we send and the interviews we give to the media explaining who Sarah, Shane and Josh are. It is the telling and re-telling of their story until all the people of the world know it well.

Blessed unrest! The dam cannot hold back the force of the water any longer. The powerful force we have created and that we see here today will bring them home to us. It will finally bring Sarah, Shane and Josh home to all of us.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for your love and support.

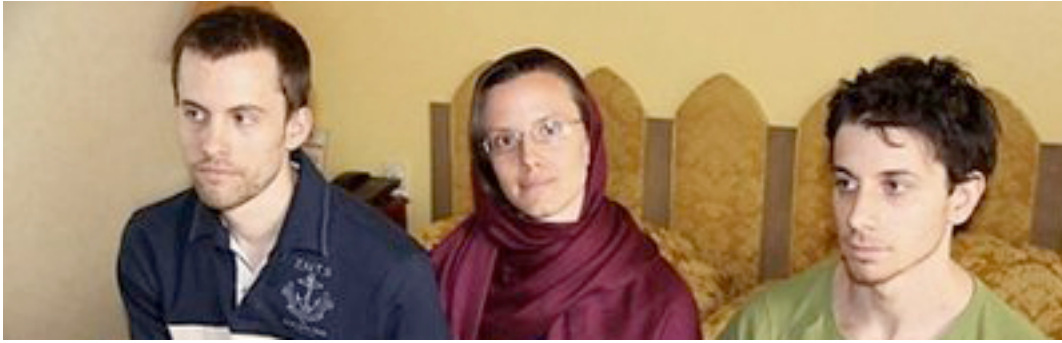
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My name is **Laura Fattal** and my son is Josh Fattal.

I am heartsick that my son, Josh and his friends, Shane and Sarah, continue to endure the cruel injustice of a year-long detention in Iran. It is unfair, unethical, and unnecessary. I have not heard a word from Josh since I saw him on May 20th and 21st – this is more than two months ago. My family did not receive a call on his birthday nor were we allowed to call him. We do not get letters from him but are heartened that he does receive our letters that we send all the time.

I miss Josh every day and I worry about him every day. I fear for the mental and physical well being of Josh and his friends in their isolation from the outside world. If I stay too long reconstructing his days, I become immobilized and frightened of what could happen to him.

In May, I know I reassured Josh by telling him of the enormous international and national support that has been mobilized to gain his release. But I also apologized to Josh that all of these efforts regrettably have not gained his freedom. I am anxiously awaiting a ‘new morning’ with Josh who still has his beautiful smile, his strength, his



resilience and his sense of humor. He exercises, reads, and the three hikers have discussion groups on reading passages that they share. I came home from Iran more energized than ever to move heaven and earth to gain our children's release.

One year ago tomorrow, July 31, my father's 85th birthday, I received a call from the US Embassy in Baghdad telling me that Josh, Shane and Sarah had been detained by the Iranian authorities while hiking in Iraqi Kurdistan. Never did I imagine that the change of seasons rolling by would get me sick to my stomach. I can just imagine Josh in his cell in Evin Prison marking the length of the days - when the sun rises and when it sets - charting the temperature changes of the days when he is allowed to exercise for short periods of time outdoors. I remember going online to the Weather Channel in October and November and worrying that Tehran would get very cold and Josh would not have sweaters or warm clothes for autumn and winter. Little did I ever expect that we would reach the height of summer and Josh and his friends would still be imprisoned.

The leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran knows the tenacity of mothers; we will never give up until the inhumane and outrageous detention of our children ends. With continued optimism, I am waiting today for a call from the Iranian authorities telling me where I should meet Josh after he takes off from Imam Khomeini International airport in Tehran. Because of the outpouring of your support, assistance and encouragement, Jacob, Alex and I have managed our lives the best we could through this terribly long year. For all my family, including for Josh, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Tehran, enough is enough. The hikers need to come home now!!!

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