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The families of Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal made the following appeal to the leaders of Iran today for their humanitarian release on the occasion of Nowruz:

“We understand that Nowruz is a time for families to come together, reflect on the year that has passed and look with hope to the future. We extend our best wishes to everyone in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the United States and around the world who celebrates this important occasion and, from the depths of our despair, appeal to the political and religious leaders of Iran to show compassion and make this a time when we too can at last be together again as families.

Shane and Josh have spent nearly 600 days in detention. Their mothers have met with them just once during these long and painful days and Shane and Josh have had only two brief telephone calls with family members. Shane and Josh have explained their innocence to the Court and that they meant no harm to the Iranian people or their government. We implore the Iranian authorities to show compassion and end their isolation from their families and people around the world who love and care for them.

The past 19 months have taken a devastating toll on our families. Our fears for the psychological well being of Shane and Josh grow with each day that they remain unnecessarily detained. Many of us have fallen sick. We endure nights without sleep and days of restless anxiety. We have sacrificed jobs, income, and education to work for Shane and Josh’s release. We beseech the Iranian authorities to show compassion and end our heartbreak too.

Shane and Josh are good people whose work in teaching and journalism from Palestine to South Africa, and from inner-city San Francisco to rural Guatemala, exemplifies their commitment to social and environmental justice. They are true global citizens who stand for the rights of peoples everywhere, regardless of race, religion or nationality.

It is time for Shane and Josh to resume their good work. It is time for Shane to marry Sarah Shourd, to whom he proposed in Evin prison, and for Josh to share their joy as Best Man. It is time for this to end. It is time for a humanitarian spirit to prevail and to begin a new year, filled with happiness and renewed faith in the liberating power of compassion.”