



From [www.freethelikers.org](http://www.freethelikers.org)

May 4, 2011

## **AMERICAN HIKER SARAH SHOURD IS TRAUMATIZED BY PRISON EXPERIENCE; WON'T RETURN TO IRAN FOR TRIAL ON MAY 11**

### ***Families of Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal Are Gravely Concerned For the Two Men Still in Jail***

Sarah Shourd, the American hiker released from solitary confinement in Iran last September, said today that she is suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) brought on by her imprisonment and will not be able to return to Tehran for a trial on May 11 with her fiancé Shane Bauer and their close friend Josh Fattal, who remain in prison.

Shourd, 32, said she had sent the Iranian Revolutionary Court a detailed, five-page evaluation by [Professor Barry Rosenfeld](#), a clinical forensic psychologist, who concluded she is at high risk of renewed or even worse psychological problems if she returns to Iran to face espionage charges.

"I spent 14 months in Evin Prison but the situation is much, much worse for Shane and Josh, who have now been held for more than 21 months. They have to live every second of every day with the fear and uncertainty that comes from not knowing why they are being held, what is going to happen to them or how their families are coping. I experienced that, and it is terrifying. We are not spies and Iran knows it. Shane and Josh should be free to resume their lives and I hope the court will release them, because they have done nothing wrong," Shourd said.

Dr. Rosenfeld, whose clinical work primarily involves psychological evaluations of criminal defendants and civil litigants in the U.S., concluded that Shourd had developed a major depressive disorder during her extended incarceration. Shourd continues to display symptoms indicative of PTSD which "clearly warrant aggressive mental health treatment."

"Given the clear link between her capture and incarceration and the emergence of severe psychological symptoms (both during her incarceration and continuing, even seven months after her release) there is little doubt that Ms. Shourd's symptoms would worsen substantially if she were forced to return to Iran and face criminal sanctions," Dr. Rosenfeld wrote in his report.

The families of Bauer and Fattal, both 28, said they fully supported Shourd's decision.

"All of us have been damaged by the worry and suffering that the Iranian authorities have inflicted on our families. Our sons are innocent and we're innocent too, but Iran is making all of us pay a terrible price for nothing. We want this over and we want it over now. The Iranian



authorities have said time and again that this case would come to a quick end. This time, we expect Iran to keep its promises,” said Cindy Hickey, Bauer’s mother.

Fattal’s mother, Laura Fattal, said: “When Sarah left jail, Josh told her they were all one-third free. We hoped Iran would show Josh and Shane the same compassion but here we are more than seven months later and the Iranian authorities are still holding our sons. We know from Sarah’s experience that they will bear the mental scars of this senseless ordeal for a long time to come. It’s time for them to come home, heal and rebuild their lives.”

Bauer and Fattal, who share a 10-foot by 14-foot cell in Evin Prison, have not spoken to their families since November 2010, when they were allowed one of only two brief telephone calls home. The two men have had no access to their Iranian lawyer, Mr. Masoud Shafii. The first session of their trial was on February 6, when they testified verbally and in writing to their innocence. No evidence was presented against them at that session.

Bauer, Fattal and Shourd, all graduates of the University of California at Berkeley, were hiking behind a popular tourist resort in Iraqi Kurdistan when they were detained by Iranian border forces on July 31, 2009. Bauer, a journalist, and Shourd, a teacher-activist, were living in Damascus, Syria at the time and Fattal, an environmentalist, was visiting them.

###