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SHANE BAUER AND JOSH FATTAL CALL HOME FOR ONLY THIRD TIME IN MORE THAN 21 MONTHS; IRAN DETAINEES DISCLOSE THEY WENT ON HUNGER STRIKE FOR 17 DAYS

Families Vow to Continue Rolling Hunger Strike until Bauer and Fattal are Released

Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal, the two Americans detained in Iran for more than 21 months, were allowed to call home on Sunday for only the third time since their arrest and told their families that they had staged a 17-day hunger strike after they were stopped from receiving letters. The families vowed to continue their own hunger strike until the two men, both 28, are released.

Bauer, a freelance journalist, spoke with his mother, Cindy Hickey, and left a message for his fiancée, Sarah Shourd. She was arrested with the two men on July 31, 2009 while they were hiking in an unmarked border area during a vacation in Iraqi Kurdistan. Fattal, an environmental advocate, spoke with his father Jacob. Both calls lasted less than five minutes. The telephone calls were the first the families had received from Bauer and Fattal since November 27, 2010.

“As much as we welcome the calls after six months of silence, they have by no means lessened our concern for Shane and Josh and their mental welfare in light of their awful isolation,” the families said. “While Shane and Josh sounded reasonably well, we learned that they had to stage a 17-day hunger strike earlier this year because they were not being allowed to get the letters we send them every day. Their inhumane treatment has to end with their immediate release. The people responsible for their unjustified imprisonment are bringing shame on Iran by continuing to hold Shane and Josh without due process and for no legitimate reason.”

Hickey, 50, and Laura Fattal, 58, began an open-ended, rolling hunger strike in solidarity with their sons on May 19, the first anniversary of the mothers’ only visit to them. The fast followed the unexplained postponement of the trial of Bauer and Fattal on baseless espionage charges on May 11, when they were not brought to court. Iranian officials have given no reason for their absence. Shourd, 32, a teacher and women’s activist who was released last September on bail, took over the fast on Saturday. Fattal’s brother Alex, who suspended doctoral studies at Harvard to work for Josh’s release in 2009, also joined the hunger strike today.

Indian spiritualist Deepak Chopra, British-Iranian actress Nazanin Boniadi and former North Korea detainee and journalist Laura Ling are among many prominent individuals who have joined the rolling hunger strike, as well as nearly 200 friends and supporters of Bauer and Fattal.



“Iranian authorities are in gross violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” said Boniadi, a spokesperson for Amnesty International USA. “As a signatory, Iran is obligated to comply with its provisions, drop the trumped-up charges of espionage against these innocent men and allow them to return home to their families and loved ones.”

To join the fast, please visit <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=202205963153995>.

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