



FROM: www.freethehikers.org

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Families of American Hikers Detained in Iran Submit Petition with 2,500 Signatures to Iran's U.N. Mission

Supporters Appeal to Iranian Authorities to Release Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal As Soon As Possible

The families of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal, the three American hikers detained in Iran, today submitted a petition with 2,500 signatures to the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York appealing for the rapid release of their loved ones.

"The families, friends and supporters of Shane, Sarah and Josh share the deep hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran will show compassion in this unfortunate case and release them as soon as possible," the petition says. It was signed online at www.freethehikers.org and at vigils of hope that took place across the United States on September 30 to mark the hikers' two months in detention.

Bauer, 27, Shourd, 31, and Fattal, 27, were detained on July 31, 2009 when news reports say they accidentally crossed an unmarked border into Iran while on a hiking vacation in Iraqi Kurdistan. The three young Americans received a consular visit from the Swiss Ambassador to Iran on September 29, when they were reported to be well, but have had no contact with their families.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran said last month that he would ask the Iranian judiciary to expedite the case and show maximum leniency.

"President Ahmadinejad said he sympathizes with our plight, and we appreciate that. We urge the Iranian authorities to act on the president's words and let our children return to us as soon as possible," said Cindy Hickey, the mother of Shane Bauer and a spokesperson for the families.

Hickey said supporters from around the world had signed the petition submitted on Thursday. "Our children have been detained for 11 weeks and every hour they remain in detention brings us more heartache. The support we've received from so many people who hope like we do that Shane, Sarah and Josh will be allowed to get on with their lives has been an extraordinary source of strength."

More information about Shane, Sarah and Josh and the efforts to secure their release can be found at www.freethehikers.org