



From: www.freethehikers.org

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**FAMILIES OF THE AMERICAN HIKERS DETAINED IN IRAN EXPRESS
GROWING CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE**

***Supporters Urged to Send Messages to the Hikers to Help Ease Their
Isolation in Evin Prison***

The families of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal, the three American hikers detained in Iran, said today they are increasingly concerned for their children's emotional wellbeing after nearly 16 weeks in custody and again called on the Iranian authorities to release them.

They also urged friends and supporters of the three young Americans to send them messages of support to help ease their isolation. The families have set up a special PO Box where messages can be sent for onward delivery to Evin Prison in Tehran.

"Sarah, Shane and Josh are being well treated and seem to be physically well, but we are more and more worried about their state of mind," said Nora Shourd, the mother of Sarah Shourd. "Our children are virtually cut off from the world outside their jail cells and have hardly any contact with each other. Not being able to call us, and not knowing their fate, must weigh on them ever more heavily as their detention drags on."

Bauer, 27, Shourd, 31, and Fattal, 27, were detained on July 31, 2009 when news reports say they accidentally crossed the unmarked border with Iran while hiking in a resort area of Iraqi Kurdistan. "Shane, Sarah and Josh have been held without charge for almost four months. Only last week, the prosecutor said their case would be decided in the 'not distant future' but we've heard that before and nothing happens. It's high time Iran put an end to this, showed compassion and let them come home," said Cindy Hickey, Shane Bauer's mother.

Swiss diplomats who represent U.S. interests in Iran have been allowed to visit the hikers only twice since their arrest. "We know from the consular visits that our kids are aware of how hard people are working to secure their release and they have received some letters," said Laura Fattal, the mother of Josh Fattal. "It's vital for them to know they're getting support and one way to do that is to send them messages. It also shows the Iranian authorities that people care and won't let them be forgotten."

Messages to the hikers should be written on a postcard and mailed in an envelope to Free The Hikers, PO Box 15065, Duluth, MN 55815, USA

For more information, please visit www.freethehikers.org.