



**FREE THE
HIKERS**



From: www.freethelikers.org

Contact: familiesofhikers@gmail.com

MOTHERS OF DETAINED AMERICAN HIKERS SEND VIDEO MESSAGES TO THEIR CHILDREN

Families Again Call on Iran to Show Compassion and Let Them Return Home

The mothers of the three American hikers detained in Iran for almost four months today sent video messages to their children and made a direct appeal to the Iranian authorities to release them from Evin Prison, where they are being held without any contact with their families.

The video messages were made public on the eve of the US Thanksgiving holiday and ahead of Eid-e Qorban (Eid al-Adha), the festival marking the end of the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. They were sent to the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, with a request to forward them to the three hikers – Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal – and to the Iranian authorities.

“I love you, I miss you, I want you to be home,” Fattal’s mother Laura said in the video. “We sleep with our cell phones close to our beds in case, and hopefully, you’ll be able to call home. We say to ourselves every day, any day now, any day now, Josh will be released; Josh, Shane and Sarah will come home,” Mrs. Fattal said.

Bauer, 27, Shourd, 31, and Fattal, 27, were detained on July 31 when news reports say they accidentally strayed across the border with Iran during a brief hiking trip in a resort area of Kurdistan, a peaceful region of northern Iraq. Iran has said they are suspected of illegal entry. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said two months ago that he would ask the Iranian judiciary to expedite the case and show maximum leniency to the three Americans, all graduates of the University of California, Berkeley. Despite this encouraging signal, the three friends remain held without charge.

“If Sarah were here, Sarah, I would tell you I love you very, very much,” Shourd’s mother Nora told her daughter. “I want the Iranian officials, and especially President Ahmadinejad, to know that these three young people meant their country no harm, [and] please to search their hearts. They had no intention of entering Iran for any reason,” Mrs. Shourd said.

The video messages follow repeated appeals to Iranian leaders from the families to release their loved ones on humanitarian grounds.

“I wish you were sitting here right now. Most of all, I can’t wait to hold you in my arms again,” Bauer’s mother, Cindy Hickey, told her son. “To the people who are detaining Shane and his good friends Sarah and Josh, I respectfully ask you to listen to us. I ask you to show compassion ... We love them and we miss them. Our lives have become empty without them.”

The video can be seen at http://freethelikers.org/?page_id=1345. A full transcript follows.



**FREE THE
HIKERS**



**TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO MESSAGES FROM THE MOTHERS OF SHANE BAUER,
SARAH SHOIRD AND JOSH FATTAL, NOVEMBER 25, 2009**

Laura Fattal

“Dear Josh. I love you, I miss you, I want you to be home and I’m scared for you, being in an environment where you don’t know Farsi, where you’re separated from your friends. This is what scares us. But I know with your calm, and your composure and your kindness and your compassionate nature that you will do well and you will come out. We sleep with our cell phones close to our beds in case, and hopefully, you’ll be able to call home. We say to ourselves every day, any day now, any day now, Josh will be released; Josh, Shane and Sarah will come home. And we are eager that the Iranian authorities will release you. You were only a small hiking trip in Iraqi K and we know you had no intention of going to Iran. We miss you terribly. I don’t want to look at pictures of you. I want the real Josh. I don’t want to hear a recording of you. I want to hear the real voice.”

Nora Shourd

“If Sarah were here, Sarah, I would tell you I love you very, very much. I love you, like, from the day you were born. It feels so strong. I know that you are strong and I know that you’ll be strong there. I want the Iranian officials and especially President Ahmadinejad to know that these three young people meant their country no harm, please to search their hearts. They had no intention of entering Iran for any reason. It was a regrettable mistake on their part and I ask that you please be compassionate, release them to their families as soon as possible.”

Cindy Hickey

“Shane, I love you and I miss you so much. I am staying strong but it is very difficult. I know this must be very difficult for you. Know that we are doing everything we can and we will not stop until you are home. I long to see your words on paper. I long to hear your voice on that call that I wait for every moment of the day. I wish you were sitting here right now. Most of all, I can’t wait to hold you in my arms again. To the people who are detaining and his good friends Sarah and Josh, I respectfully ask you to listen to us. I ask you to show compassion. I know with everything I am that Shane, Josh and Sarah were on a short hiking trip. Shane and I spoke of this trip for many weeks before they left. I also know that he would never knowingly put his friends in harm’s way. We love them and we miss them. Our lives have become empty without them.”

For further information, please visit www.freethehikers.org