



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

Contact: [familiesofhikers@gmail.com](mailto:familiesofhikers@gmail.com)

**FAMILIES OF AMERICAN HIKERS RETAIN PROMINENT INDEPENDENT IRANIAN  
LAWYER TO WORK FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S RELEASE**

***Families Continue to Hope Case Will Be Resolved Without A Trial***

A prominent independent Iranian lawyer, Masoud Shafii, will represent the three American hikers detained in Iran and work for their release, their families said today.

The families' decision follows statements reported in the media from Iranian officials that the three friends – Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal – could face trial on unspecified charges.

“We continue to hope that the Iranian authorities will release Shane, Sarah and Josh on humanitarian grounds without further delay or any need for a trial. Given recent news reports, however, it is essential for our loved ones to have proper legal representation and we are pleased that Mr. Shafii has agreed to work on their behalf,” the families said.

Bauer, Shourd and Fattal were detained on July 31, 2009, when news reports say they accidentally crossed the unmarked border with Iran during a brief hiking vacation in Iraqi Kurdistan. All graduates of the University of California, Berkeley, they are being held in Evin Prison, Tehran and have not been allowed to make telephone calls to their families.

“We know that Shane, Sarah and Josh had absolutely no intention of entering Iran and do not understand why they remain in detention. We have not been told what, if any, charges they face or why they can't call us,” the families said.

“We are also increasingly concerned about their state of mind after almost five months of isolation. Their lack of contact with us and the persistent uncertainty are deeply distressing, especially in light of earlier indications that the case would be handled expeditiously,” the families added.