



**FREE THE
HIKERS**



FROM: www.freethehikers.org

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SUPPORTERS OF AMERICAN HIKERS DETAINED IN IRAN HOLD VIGILS OF HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Families of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal Say They Are Confident Their Children Have Nothing to Hide

Families, friends and supporters of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal were holding "Vigils of Hope" on Tuesday in the hometown areas of the three American hikers detained in Iran and again called on the Iranian authorities to release them for the holidays.

Vigils will take place later in the day in Berkeley, CA, Shakopee, MN, and Glenside, PA. Full details are available on www.freethehikers.org

Bauer, 27, Shourd, 31, and Fattal, 27, were detained by the Iranian authorities on July 31, 2009 during a brief hiking trip to Iraqi Kurdistan after news reports say they strayed across the unmarked border. Iranian officials have said they will be put on trial but have not specified any charges.

In a message to be read at all three vigils, the families of the hikers said they were deeply concerned about their emotional wellbeing "and what might be going through their minds." The three have had no direct contact with their families.

"We cannot understand why their case is taking so long to resolve. They do not have access to a lawyer and we do not know what charges they face. But we do know that if our loved ones are made to stand trial, they have nothing to hide and can easily convince the judge that they had no intention of entering Iran," the message reads.

The full message reads as follows:

"Sarah, Shane and Josh have endured a difficult detention. For nearly five long months they have been unable to communicate with us, their families. We are deeply concerned about their emotional well-being, and what might be going through their minds.

At this time of year, families around the world come together. Yet Shane, Sarah and Josh continue to languish in near isolation in Evin Prison in Tehran. The prospect of spending this holiday season without them causes us great pain. We therefore again ask the Iranian authorities to find it in their hearts to allow our children to return home before the New Year.

Since Shane, Sarah and Josh were detained, summer has given way to autumn and autumn to winter. We cannot understand why their case is taking so long to resolve. They do not have access to a lawyer and we do not know what charges they face. But



we do know that if our loved ones are made to stand trial, they have nothing to hide and can easily convince the judge that they had no intention of entering Iran.

We also know that people who love them and care about them are working relentlessly for their release. People like everyone gathered here today and others around the world have shown their sympathy and support in many different ways. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We know your support must bring Shane, Sarah and Josh comfort that their freedom will not be far off.

Three months ago, Josh was able to send a brief message to his family that ended with a lyric from a Bob Dylan song: "Any day now, I shall be released." We hope and pray that day will come very soon."

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