

**Since 1969, Friends of the Earth has fought to protect the rights of all people to live in a safe and healthy environment. Our campaigns demonstrate that the fight for justice and the movement to protect the health of the planet are part of the same struggle. A great irony on this Earth Day 2010 is that three nature enthusiasts, Josh Fattal, Shane Bauer and Sarah Shourd, have been detained by Iranian authorities for over eight months. They cannot celebrate the freshness of the morning air, the sweet smell of blooming flowers or the beauty of mountain ranges, like the one they were hiking in when they were detained near the Ahmad Awa waterfall in Iraqi Kurdistan on July 31, 2009.**

**Josh, Shane and Sarah are dedicated stewards of the Earth, who strive to advance both respect for its diversity and sustainability of its resources. Their protracted detention and separation from their families has been unnecessarily long. We call on Iran's leaders to release Josh, Shane and Sarah to their families and friends so they can continue their pursuit of a safe and healthy environment. Perhaps this simple act of compassion can serve to start a larger restoration between nations, which is an important component of caring for the planet.**

***Eric Pica, Executive Director for Friends of the Earth***