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## **MOTHER OF SARAH SHOURED SEEKS URGENT U.N. ACTION OVER DAUGHTER'S SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN IRAN**

### ***Families of All Three Detainees Also Urge U.N. Rights Panel to Intervene Over Their Arbitrary Detention***

The mother of Sarah Shourd, one of the three American hikers held without trial for more than one year in Iran, said today that she had asked the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture to intervene urgently with the Iranian authorities to end her daughter's solitary confinement. Nora Shourd said she had submitted her request this week in light of Iran's continued failure to move her daughter out of isolation or confirm that she is receiving proper medical treatment. Sarah Shourd, 31, has a pre-cancerous condition and recently told her mother that she had discovered a lump in her breast. She also suffers from depression.

"Torture takes many forms and it is widely recognized that protracted solitary confinement constitutes 'invisible' psychological torture, especially in a case like Sarah's when the detainee does not know why she is being held or what will happen to her," Nora Shourd, who is a trained medical nurse, said. "Sarah's treatment is cruel, inhuman and degrading and Iran has been deaf to all my appeals, including for the results of the only medical tests Sarah had five months ago. I hope that the Special Rapporteur, as a respected independent figure, can take up her case as a humanitarian priority and end the nightmare she is being made to live for no reason."

Shourd, her fiancé Shane Bauer, 28, and their friend Josh Fattal, 28, were arrested by Iranian forces on July 31, 2009 while they were hiking on vacation in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan along the border with Iran. The families of the three Americans have also reported the case to the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and requested its intervention with Iran.

"Iran has no legitimate legal basis to continue to hold Shane, Sarah and Josh, under its own laws or international conventions, and has failed for months to take any action to resolve their case. They are being denied any access to their lawyer and are simply pawns in a game Iran is playing with the United States," said Cindy



Hickey, the mother of Shane Bauer, who submitted the case to the Working Group on behalf of the three families.

Shourd, Bauer and Fattal are being held in Evin Prison, Tehran, where they have been allowed only minimal contact with their families, including a short visit from their mothers in May. Bauer and Fattal share a cell. Shourd has been kept in solitary confinement throughout the past year, other than for two brief periods she now has each day when she is allowed to join the two men in the prison yard.

Nora Shourd said she appealed to the Special Rapporteur after receiving an unexpected telephone call from her daughter, only the second in more than 12 months. "Sarah told me she is still being held alone in her cell and had not had any more medical tests. She said she had been allowed to call me for her birthday but it was strange because her birthday is August 10 and Shane and Josh were both denied birthday phone calls home. I could hear voices in the background and it just made it clear to me that Iran is using them for its own political purposes," Shourd said.

The Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak of Austria, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention operate under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, an inter-governmental body established by the U.N. General Assembly. The Special Rapporteur's mandate allows him to act in cases of solitary confinement and denial of medical treatment. The Working Group's definition of arbitrary detention includes "the total or partial non-observance of the international norms relating to the right to a fair trial."

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