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NOTABLE IRANIAN-AMERICANS JOIN HUNGER STRIKE FOR FREEDOM OF IMPRISONED HIKERS SHANE BAUER AND JOSH FATTAL

Former Detainee Roxana Saberi Will Launch Week Three of Solidarity Fast

Prominent Iranian-Americans including former detainee [Roxana Saberi](#) will join a solidarity hunger strike on Thursday in the campaign for the release of imprisoned American hikers Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal after almost 22 months in virtual isolation.

Saberi, who was working as a freelance journalist in Tehran at the time of her arrest in January 2009, will launch Week Three of the rolling fast on June 2 before passing the torch to Amnesty International USA Spokesperson [Nazanin Boniadi](#), the British-Iranian actress, and Bauer's fiancée, released hiker Sarah Shourd, the following day.

Saberi was sentenced to eight years in jail on false charges of espionage and released 100 days after her arrest after an Iranian court overturned the sentence. Bauer and Fattal, both 28, have now been held for more than 670 days – nearly seven times as long. They also face unfounded charges of espionage but were not brought to court for a scheduled trial hearing on May 11. Iranian authorities have not explained their absence.

"I stand in solidarity with Shane and Josh and call for their immediate and unconditional release. Iranian authorities are in gross violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As a signatory, Iran is obligated to comply with its provisions, drop the trumped-up charges of espionage against these innocent men and allow them to return home to their families and loved ones." Boniadi said.

Shourd, who was released in September 2010 on compassionate grounds after 410 days in solitary confinement, will join Boniadi for their joint fast on Friday, June 3. They will be available throughout the day for joint interviews in Los Angeles.

"Hunger striking makes me think of all the selfless things that Shane and Josh did for me in prison. Our love and friendship were all that defended us against the constant pain of separation from our families and the extreme physical and mental restriction of being imprisoned without reason," Shourd, 32, said. "Now that I'm free, all I want is the same freedom for Shane and Josh. The world knows they've done nothing wrong and we are determined to continue fasting for as long as that takes."



The entire Fattal family will hunger strike on June 4, Josh's 29th birthday and his second in Evin Prison, where he and Shane share a 10x14 foot cell to which they are confined for 23 hours a day.

Trita Parsi, the founder and president of the National Iranian American Council, and a group of Iranian exchange students will also join the hunger strike in Week Three.

The mothers of Shane and Josh, Cindy Hickey and Laura Fattal, launched the hunger strike in solidarity with their sons on May 19. Hundreds of friends and supporters have joined family members and prominent U.S. and overseas campaigners to support their cause.

Bauer and Fattal have been denied any access to their lawyer, Masoud Shafii, and have been allowed to make only three brief telephone calls to their families in more than 21 months. In their most recent call, on May 22, they disclosed that they had staged a 17-day hunger strike earlier this year after the prison authorities stopped bringing them letters from their families.

Bauer, Fattal and Shourd, all graduates of the University of California at Berkeley, were arrested by Iranian forces on July 31, 2009 on the unmarked border with Kurdistan, a relatively safe region of Iraq where they were hiking behind a local tourist site during a vacation. Bauer, a photojournalist, and Shourd, an activist-teacher, were living in Syria at the time of their arrest. Fattal, an environmental advocate, was visiting them.

Boxing legend Muhammad Ali and other prominent U.S Muslims, Yusuf Islam, Íngrid Betancourt, Noam Chomsky, Mia Farrow, Rashid Khalidi, Mairead Maguire, Sean Penn, Desmond Tutu, Ban Ki-moon, Terry Waite and President Barack Obama, among others, have called for their immediate release. For more information about the hunger strike and to join the fast, please click [here](#) or [here](#). Shortlink: <http://bit.ly/SSJfast>

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