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Iran: Release US hikers held for two years

Iran must release two US nationals held for the past two years apparently for political reasons, Amnesty International said today, ahead of a fresh hearing in their case on 31 July.

The hearing comes two years to the day after Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal, both aged 29, were arrested while hiking in the Iraq-Iran border area. The exact circumstances of their arrest remain unclear, but the Iranian authorities have charged them with espionage and illegal entry.

A third US citizen arrested with the men, Sarah Shourd, was released last September on bail equivalent to US\$500,000.

“The Iranian authorities have held these men for two years, subjecting them to legal proceedings that fall far short of international fair trial standards,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“The parody of justice must end here – by now it seems clear that the Iranian authorities have no legal basis for continuing to hold these US nationals, so they must be released and allowed to leave the country.”

During their two-year detention in Tehran’s Evin Prison, Bauer and Fattal have been only been granted one brief family visit, when their mothers visited Iran in May 2010. They have been denied adequate access to their lawyer and have had very limited access to consular assistance.

The Iranian authorities have ignored repeated appeals from the international community and the men’s families to release them and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has hinted that the hikers were being held as a bargaining chip to be used in Iran’s dealings with the United States.

Amnesty International has repeatedly raised its concerns on the treatment of Bauer and Fattal with the Iranian authorities and has called publicly for their release.

- [View footage of Sarah Shourd in conversation with Amnesty International Iran researcher Drewery Dyke in June 2011](#)