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### **PROMINENT MOTHERS CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF SHANE BAUER, SARAH SHOURD AND JOSH FATTAL ON MOTHER'S DAY IN IRAN**

Seven prominent mothers, including two Nobel Peace Laureates and a former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, appealed to the Iranian authorities on Thursday to release Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal on the occasion of Mother's Day in Iran. Bauer, Shourd and Fattal have been detained for more than 10 months with no access to their lawyer and little contact with the outside world since they were arrested on July 31, 2009 in the unmarked border area with Iran while hiking in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The statement reads: "On the occasion of Mother's Day in Iran, we urge the Iranian authorities to use this happy occasion to demonstrate the values of mercy and compassion and release Shane Bauer, Josh Fattal and Sarah Shourd on humanitarian grounds. These three young people have been denied their freedom for too long. It is high time they came home to their families. As mothers, our hearts go out to the mothers of Shane, Josh and Sarah, and to their families. Their children's detention and the emotional pain and suffering it has caused them arise from the tensions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States. Individual citizens should not pay the price of tensions between nations or be used as bargaining chips."

The statement was signed by **Louise Arbour** of Canada, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2004 to 2008; **Mia Farrow**, the American humanitarian activist who has highlighted the plight of the people of Darfur, Sudan; **Ela Gandhi** of South Africa, the leading peace activist and granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi; **Mairead Maguire and Betty Williams**, who shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976 for their work to end sectarian violence in Northern Ireland; **Clara Rojas** of Colombia, a lawyer and academic who was held by FARC guerrillas for six years and gave birth to her son in captivity; and **Cindy Sheehan**, the American anti-war activist whose son Casey was killed in 2004 while serving as a soldier in Iraq.

Iran allowed the mothers of the three detained Americans, Cindy Hickey, Nora Shourd and Laura Fattal, to visit their children in Tehran on May 20 and 21 – the families' only direct contact other than a brief telephone call that Bauer, 27, Shourd, 31, and Fattal, 27, were allowed to make home on March 9.

"On Mother's Day in Iran, our hearts go out to all Iranian mothers who are suffering the pain and anguish of separation from loved ones held in foreign jails," the three mothers said in a joint statement. "We are grateful to all mothers around the world who have expressed concern and support for our children. Their maternal solidarity is graciously symbolized by the signatories of today's appeal. Shane, Sarah and Josh share the same commitment to peace and social justice as the signatories and need to be free to resume their work. Iran can make that happen by releasing them without further delay. We again urge the authorities to do so on humanitarian grounds."