

Kriss Worthington

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CONSENT CALENDAR
 January 26, 2010

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
 Subject: Send a letter urging the Iran government to release arrested former Cal graduates.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council send a letter to the Iranian government urging for the release of former UC Berkeley students, Shane Bauer, 27, Sarah Shourd, 31, and Josh Fattal, 27, all currently held in jail after being arrested on July 31, 2009 while on a hiking trip near the Iran-Iraq border.

BACKGROUND

On July 31, 2009, three UC Berkeley graduates were arrested by the Iranian government after reportedly crossing over the Iran-Iraq border on a hiking trip. Bauer, Shourd, and Fattal were reportedly in the Kurdish region of Iran for recreational purposes. While hiking, the trio allegedly strayed across an unmarked border into Iran, and subsequently were arrested. They are now held in Evin Prison in Tehran with no clear signs about their legal status. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, commenting on the arrests to the United Nations General Assembly in September, said their entry into Iran could only be considered “illegal”, but also noted that he “can ask... that the judiciary [in Iran expedite] the process and... look at the case with maximum leniency.” Lobbying for the hikers release, in a combined effort with such a luminary as Noam Chomsky (via a letter to be submitted by the Council) may very well help these UC Berkeley graduates to be released.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Miniscule.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attached: Noam Chomsky’s Letter to the Iranian government

“I have been deeply concerned at the continued detention of Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd and Josh Fattal, and hope that the Iranian government will be able to arrange for their release without delay. Iran has ample reason for caution and suspicion with regard to the actions and plans of Washington, but these young people represent a segment of the U.S. population that is critical of these policies, and often actively opposed to them. Hence their detention is particularly distressing to all of us who are dedicated to shifting U.S. policy to one of mutual respect rather than domination. I therefore appeal to the Iranian leadership to act in a humanitarian spirit and release [them].”

To: Honorable President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Mr. President, this letter is to formally plead that you do everything in your power to achieve maximum leniency for Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal from the Judiciary System.

We greatly appreciate your generous comment at the United Nations General Assembly in September that you would “ask...that the judiciary [in Iran expedite] the process and...look at the case with maximum leniency.”

The City Council of Berkeley, California, is deeply concerned for the welfare of these three US citizens recently detained in Iran. Bauer, Shourd, and Fattal were all taken into the custody of Iranian authorities on July 31st, 2009.

As the first city in the United States to oppose military intervention and/or use of force in Iran in 2007, as well as oppose the bombings of Afghanistan, Pakistan, *and* Iraq (as was proposed and/or carried out during the Bush administration), we have a long record of respect for Islamic nations and their rights. However, we do not agree with the decision to further detain these three young Americans, though it is well within the rights of the Iran to do so.

We respectfully ask that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and/or the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran, release U.S. citizens Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal from detention as soon as possible.

It has been reported that the trio had no intention of entering Iran. As such, we can only hope that the trio not be detained any longer for the alleged mistake of crossing over the Iran-Iraq border. These citizens have reportedly been detained without being allowed contact with their families or loved ones, and have been allegedly detained for illegal entry into Iran.

The Bauer, Shourd, and Fattal families are extremely devastated over the detainment of their loved ones. Because the detainees families are unable to contact or visit with Bauer, Shourd, or Fattal, unnecessary inferences and assumptions arise that can easily be thwarted by allowing direct communication and/or releasing the trio. We also urge the Iranian government and/or judiciary to allow the trio to communicate with their families.

The City of Berkeley hopes to communicate that these detainees should be released by the Iranian leadership with all due speed, out of compassion for the families of the detainees, and in the spirit of goodwill.

Thank you,

The Members of the City Council of Berkeley, California

به: ریاست محترم جمهوری اسلامی ایران، آقای دکتر احمدی نژاد

با عرض سلام؛

جناب آقای رئیس‌جمهور، این نامه تقاضای رسمی از شما می‌باشد تا جتبعالی از قدرت قانونی خود استفاده نمایید و بیشترین ارفاق را برای سه زندانی در بند تبعه آمریکا به نام‌های: شین باور، سارا شورد، و جاشوا فاتال از سیستم قضایی محترم آن کشور درخواست کنید.

ما از شما بسیار سپاسگزاریم که سپتامبر سال گذشته در مجمع عمومی سازمان ملل متحد بزرگوارانه عنوان داشتید که از قوه قضائیه محترمتان بیشترین حسن نیت و ارفاق را در رابطه با این موضوع خواستار می‌شوید.

شورای شهر برکلی کالیفرنیا عمیقاً نگران حال شین، سارا و جاشوا، سه شهروند آمریکاییست که در تاریخ سی و یک ژوئیه سال دو هزار و نه میلادی در ایران بازداشت شده‌اند.

به عنوان نخستین شهر ایالات متحده که مخالفت خود را با سیاست‌های مداخله‌گرانه ارتش و یا اعمال زور نسبت به ایران در سال دو هزار و هفت میلادی، و همچنین بمباران‌های افغانستان، پاکستان و عراق (که در دوره ریاست جمهوری بوش انجام می‌شد) اعلام کرده است؛ سابقه‌ای طولانی در خصوص احترام به ملیت‌های مسلمان و احقاق حقوق آنها داریم. و با اینکه در این زمینه به ایران حق می‌دهیم ولی با ادامه حبس این سه جوان آمریکایی موافق نیستیم.

ما احتراماً از دولت و یا قوه قضائیه جمهوری اسلامی ایران خواستار آزادی شهروندان آمریکایی شین باور، سارا شورد و جاشوا فاتال از حبس در سریع‌ترین زمان ممکن هستیم.

در گزارش‌ها آمده است که این سه نفر قصد ورود به خاک ایران را نداشته‌اند. از این رو ما امیدواریم که آنها بیش از این به دلیل عبور اصطلاحاً اشتباهی از مرز عراق به ایران در حبس نمانند. هم‌میتطور بر اساس گزارش‌های رسیده این شهروندان؛ که از قرار معلوم به دلیل وارد شدن غیر قانونی به خاک ایران دستگیر شده‌اند؛ حتی اجازه ارتباط با خانواده و دوستانشان را هم ندارند.

اکتون خانواده‌های باور، شورد و فاتال به دلیل طولانی شدن حبس عزیزانشان در وضعیت بسیار نامساعدی به سر می‌برند. این در حالیست که استنتاجات غیرضروری و فرضیه‌های بوجود آمده؛ که باعث شده خانواده‌های شین، سارا و جاشوا قادر به تماس گرفتن با خانواده‌هایشان نباشند؛ به راحتی می‌توانند با ارتباط مستقیم و یا آزادی این سه نفر خاتمه یابد. ما مصرانه خواستار آن هستیم که دولت و قوه قضائیه محترم جمهوری اسلامی به این سه نفر اجازه دهند با خانواده‌هایشان ارتباط برقرار کنند.

شهروندان برکلی امیدوارند که زندانیان توسط دولت ایران بدون فوت وقت، برای تسلی خاطر خانواده‌هایشان و نشان دادن حسن نیت آزاد شوند.

با تشکر

اعضای شورای شهر برکلی

