

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Al Jazeera

Iran convicts US 'hikers' as spies

8/21/2011

Iran has sentenced two American hikers detained in the Islamic republic to eight years in prison on charges of "illegal entry" and "espionage", reported Iran's state television website.

"According to an informed source with the judiciary, Shane Bauer... and... Josh Fattal, the two detained American citizens, have been each sentenced to three years in prison for illegal entry to the Islamic Republic of Iran," the website reported on Saturday.

It also stated that the two have separately been "sentenced to five years in prison on charges of espionage for the American intelligence agency".

The report added that "the case of [Sarah Shourd](#), who has been freed on bail is still open".

The lawyer for the Americans, Masoud Shafii, told international news agencies he had not been informed of any decision since the trial ended on July 31.

Victoria Nuland, a spokesperson for the US State Department, said that the US is "working to confirm these reports and are in contact with the Swiss Protecting Power to obtain more information".

"Shane and Josh have been imprisoned too long, and it is time to reunite them with their families," she added.

Reporting from Washington, DC, Al Jazeera's Monica Villamizar explained the State Department's worries:

"Top US officials say that they are very concerned because they have no access to the prisoners, and they have no recent assessment of their mental health and their physical health. They don't know what conditions they're being kept in. As you know, the US and Iran don't have any type of relations."

The two Americans have 20 days to appeal the sentence.

Sadegh Zibakalam, professor of Political Science at Tehran University, told Al Jazeera:

"We mustn't rush to any hasty conclusions because their lawyer has about two weeks' time to launch an appeal on behalf of the accused. And there is a possibility; there is a chance that the appeal court may actually quash the sentence."

Bauer and Fattal, both 28, were arrested along with Shourd, 32, on the unmarked border between Iran and Iraq on July 31, 2009. The three claimed they were hiking in Iraq's northern province of Kurdistan when they innocently strayed into Iran.

They had earlier pleaded not guilty to spying charges.

Shourd is being tried in absentia. She returned to the United States after being freed on [humanitarian and medical grounds](#) in September, paying a bail of around \$500,000.