

Freed U.S. hikers express support for California prisoners on hunger strike

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy | Oct. 21, 2011 NCR Today

Shane Bauer, Josh Fattal and Sarah Shourd visited Occupy Oakland on Monday, where they expressed support for California prisoners on a hunger strike in protest of their prolonged solitary confinement.

Bauer, Fattal and Shourd were arrested in July 2009 while hiking along the Iran-Iraq border. Shourd was released last year. Bauer and Fattal, who were originally sentenced to eight years in an Iranian prison, were released a month ago.

The [prisoner hunger strike](#) [1], the second such strike in California this year, began Sept. 26. At its peak, the strike involved thousands of prisoners, including inmates from Pelican Bay, a high-security prison where the average length of time spent in solitary confinement is 6.8 years. Some California prisoners have been held in isolation for decades.

Addressing the Oakland "occupiers" from the steps of City Hall, Bauer said he was proud to see an occupation happening in his hometown.

"But you know, another thing that we learned when we got out is that, here in California, there have been thousands of people on hunger strikes in prisons. ? These people in Pelican Bay, thousands of people went on a hunger strike and it spread throughout California. This is incredible, you guys. This is really incredible. These people are struggling like we had to struggle in Iran for changing their conditions. We lived through solitary confinement and it is psychological torture. They are living through that and they are struggling to change that. Every day, there's at least 20,000 people in this country that are in solitary confinement. I can't tell you guys standing here what it means to be in solitary confinement. It's hell. No person should have to live that."

Democracy Now, a daily TV and radio news program filmed the hikers' remarks which you can view here: (Start at 17:18.)

[Read more about the California prisoners' hunger strike.](#) [2]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/04/justice/california-prison-hunger-strike/index.html>

[2] <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/california-prisoners-assert-their-humanity-hunger-strike>