

British Nationals Held in Iran as Family Criticises Lack of UK Action

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Craig and Lindsay Foreman, a British couple arrested in Iran on 3 January 2025, were held without contact for more than a month, leaving their family in agonising uncertainty. The pair, both aged 52, had been travelling by motorcycle through Iran as part of a long overland journey from Armenia to Australia. They were detained in the southeastern city of

Kerman and later accused of espionage, an allegation their family firmly rejects.

For over four weeks, their son, Joe Bennett, received no information from either Iranian authorities or the British government regarding their condition or location. During this period, concerns escalated following a deadly explosion at Evin Prison in Tehran, which killed more than 70 people. Fearing the worst, Bennett described the silence as “paralysing” and said he felt forced to speak out publicly to protect his parents. In a statement to *The Guardian*, he said, “It’s not about putting pressure on the government. It’s about keeping them visible. Silence can be dangerous.”

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the UK department responsible for diplomatic relations and supporting British citizens overseas, has now confirmed the couple are being held in Kerman, not Tehran. While three consular visits have taken place, access has remained limited, and communication has been restricted. According to the family, the couple has suffered physically, with noticeable weight loss, minimal access to exercise, and inadequate prison conditions. Initially, they were denied the ability to purchase basic items from the prison shop.

Concerns have also been raised about their legal representation. The lawyer appointed by the Iranian authorities reportedly speaks little or no English, creating serious obstacles to a fair defence. Iranian officials maintain the pair were involved in gathering intelligence under the cover of tourism, a claim widely regarded as baseless by both their family and independent observers. The Foremans had been documenting their travels publicly and had no known links to any intelligence organisation.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, there has been little in the way of visible leadership or urgency from the Labour government. Critics argue that the current administration has been slow to act and appears unwilling to challenge Iran forcefully. In contrast to previous governments that took a more assertive stance in protecting British nationals abroad, the present response has been muted and bureaucratic.

Joe Bennett continues to call for stronger diplomatic efforts and public awareness to keep his parents' case in the spotlight. With Iran's history of using detained foreigners as bargaining tools, the family believes visibility and pressure are key to ensuring a safe return.