

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN-SWEDISH DOCTOR AT RISK OF EXECUTION

On 24 November, Iranian-Swedish academic Ahmadreza Djalali learned that prosecution authorities ordered for his death sentence for “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*) to be carried out. In a brief phone call the same day to his wife, he said he had been transferred to solitary confinement in section 209 of Evin prison in Tehran. He is at imminent risk of execution.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Head of judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi
C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland
iranungva@mfa.gov.ir

Dear Mr Raisi,

On 24 November 2020, at the prosecutor’s office of Evin prison **Ahmadreza Djalali**, his family and lawyer were told that the prosecution authorities had issued an order to the office for implementation of sentences instructing for Ahmadreza Djalali’s death sentence to be carried out. Officials at the prosecutor’s office did not specify the execution date but said that the sentence will be carried out within a week, or no later than 1 December. Ahmadreza Djalali was subsequently transferred to solitary confinement in section 209 of Evin prison. On the same day, he told his wife, who resides in Sweden, in a phone call lasting less than two minutes this news and that he would be transferred to Raja’i Shahr prison in Karaj for the implementation of his sentence. This was also his first phone call to his family since mid-October 2020. Prison authorities had blocked his phone access citing orders by the ministry of intelligence to the prosecution authorities after he conducted an interview with a media outlet abroad. Based on information available to Amnesty International, the prosecution authorities said on 24 November that Ahmadreza Djalali’s death sentence should be carried out as all avenues for appeal, judicial review or pardon had been exhausted.

Ahmadreza Djalali was sentenced to death for “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*) in October 2017 after a grossly unfair trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The court relied primarily on “confessions” that Ahmadreza Djalali says were obtained under torture and other ill-treatment while he was held in prolonged solitary confinement without access to a lawyer. These included threats to execute him, kill or otherwise harm his children, who live in Sweden, and his mother, who lives in Iran. Amnesty International has consistently held that that the offence of “corruption on earth” fails to meet requirements for clarity and precision needed in criminal law and breaches the principle of legality and legal certainty. On 9 December 2018, his lawyers learned that Branch 1 of the Supreme Court had upheld his death sentence without granting them an opportunity to file their defence submissions on his behalf. At least two requests for a judicial review of Ahmadreza Djalali’s case have been rejected by the Supreme Court.

I ask you to immediately halt plans to execute Ahmadreza Djalali, and quash his conviction and sentence, and immediately provide him access to his family and lawyers. I further call on you to release Ahmadreza Djalali immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation, as per the recommendation of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in his case. Pending his release, ensure also that Ahmadreza Djalali is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and order a prompt, independent, effective, and impartial investigation into his allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, bringing to justice anyone found responsible in fair trials and without recourse to the death penalty. I call on you to establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to

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abolishing the death penalty.

Yours sincerely

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 24 November 2020, in response to a tweet posted by Sweden's minister of foreign affairs noting a phone call with Iran's minister of foreign affairs that day and where Sweden "condemns the death penalty and is working with the intent to stop the sentence against [Ahmadreza] Djalali from being carried out", the spokesperson for Iran's ministry of foreign affairs Saeed Khatibzadeh said that this information was "flawed and wrong" without elaborating further.

Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian-Swedish medical doctor and academic living in Sweden, was on a business trip to Iran when he was arrested on 26 April 2016. He was held in Evin prison for seven months in section 209, which is under the control of the ministry of intelligence. He was held for three months in solitary confinement, without access to a lawyer. Ahmadreza Djalali said that during this period he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, in order to force him to "confess" to being a spy. He has said that he was forced to read out "confessions" pre-written by his interrogators in front of a video camera. Ahmadreza Djalali denies the accusations against him and says they have been fabricated by the authorities. In a letter written from inside Evin prison in August 2017, Ahmadreza Djalali said he was held solely because of his refusal to use his academic ties in European institutions to spy for Iran.

On 17 December 2018 Iranian state-run TV aired Ahmadreza Djalali's "confession" during a programme titled *Axing the root*, which used dramatic music, graphics and international news footage interspersed with Ahmadreza Djalali's "confession", along with a voiceover presenting him as a "spy". By extracting and airing these forced "confessions", Iranian authorities violated Ahmadreza Djalali's right to the presumption of innocence as well as the right not to be forced into incriminating himself. Ahmadreza Djalali has since said the broadcast "confession" was filmed while he was being held in solitary confinement, without access to a lawyer.

In November 2017, the [UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) called on Iran to release Ahmadreza Djalali immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, as he had been detained without an arrest warrant, was only formally charged 10 months after his arrest, and had been "effectively prevented from exercising his right to challenge the lawfulness of his detention". They also found that his right to a fair trial had been violated so gravely "as to give Mr Djalali's deprivation of liberty an arbitrary character".

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution. The death penalty violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 21 January 2021.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ahmadreza Djalali (he; him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/0853/2019/en/>

And copies to:

His Excellency Mr Hamid Baeidinejad
Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
16 Prince's Gate SW7 1PT
020 7225 4208-9
Fax: 020 7589 4440
iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir

www.london.mfa.ir