

# URGENT ACTION

## IRANIAN ACADEMIC COULD BE SENTENCED TO DEATH

**Iranian academic specializing in disaster medicine Dr Ahmadreza Djalali, a resident of Sweden detained in Iran since 25 April 2016, has been threatened with the death penalty. He has been on hunger strike since 26 December 2016 in protest at his detention.**

**Dr Ahmadreza Djalali**, an Iranian national and resident of Sweden, who has been detained in Tehran's Evin prison since his arrest on 25 April 2016, has been threatened with the death penalty. On 31 January, he was taken before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, without his lawyer present, where the presiding judge told him that he was accused of "espionage" and could face the death penalty. The lawyer he has appointed told Amnesty International that the authorities have yet to issue an indictment and schedule a trial. The prosecution authorities have told his lawyer that he cannot take up Ahmadreza Djalali's case and have refused to share the court files with him. In December 2016, the authorities put Ahmadreza Djalali under intense pressure to sign a statement, "confessing" to being a spy for a "hostile government". When he refused, they said they would charge him with "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*), which carries the death penalty. In protest, he began a hunger strike on 26 December 2016 and his health has deteriorated since.

Ahmadreza Djalali is a 45-year-old medical doctor, lecturer and researcher in disaster medicine, and has taught in universities in Belgium, Italy and Sweden. He was on a business trip to Iran, having been invited to attend workshops about disaster medicine at universities in Tehran and Shiraz, when he was arrested without a warrant by Ministry of Intelligence officials. His family had no knowledge of his whereabouts until 10 days after his arrest, when he was allowed to call them briefly. He was held in an unknown location for a week before being transferred to Section 209 of Evin prison, under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence, where he was held for seven months, three of which were spent in solitary confinement. Ahmadreza Djalali has said that, during this period, he was subjected to intense interrogations and was forced under great emotional and psychological pressure to sign statements, the details of which are unknown to Amnesty International. Despite repeated interrogations, he was not allowed visits from his lawyer until seven months after his arrest, when he was moved to Section Seven of Evin prison.

### **Please write immediately in Persian, English, Arabic, French, Spanish or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to release Ahmadreza Djalali unless he is charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in line with international law and standards, ensuring that he is not targeted for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Urging them to ensure he has access to a qualified health professional who can provide health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending his release, he is protected from any punishment for his hunger strike, including prolonged solitary confinement, which may amount to torture;
- Urging them to ensure that he has regular access to a lawyer of his choice and to his family, including facilities to communicate with those living abroad, and requesting them to grant Swedish consular access to him.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 MARCH 2017 TO:**

Head of the Judiciary  
Ayatollah Sadegh Larjani  
c/o Public Relations Office  
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi  
Vali Asr Street, Tehran, Iran  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Office of the Supreme Leader  
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
Islamic Republic Street- End of Shahid  
Keshvar Doust Street  
Tehran, Iran  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**  
President  
Hassan Rouhani  
The Presidency  
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square  
Tehran, Iran

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** H.E. Hamid Baeidinejad, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 16 PRINCES GATE LONDON SW7 1PT, Tel: 02072254208 or 02072254209 Email: [iranconsulate.lon@mfa.gov.ir](mailto:iranconsulate.lon@mfa.gov.ir)

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmadreza Djalali has been working in the field of disaster medicine since 1999 and has written dozens of journal articles. He left Iran in 2009 to study at a PhD programme at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. He has also worked as a lecturer in the Università Degli Studi Del Piemonte Orientale (CRIMEDIM) in Vercelli, Italy, and the Vrije Universiteit Brussels in Belgium. In April 2016, Ahmadreza Djalali travelled to Iran after having been invited by the University of Tehran and Shiraz University to attend workshops on disaster medicine. His previous trips to Iran, which he took around twice a year, had been without incident. He had been in Iran for two weeks and was due to leave for Sweden on 28 April 2016. Three days before, on 25 April 2016, he was arrested while travelling by car from Tehran to Karaj, a city north-west of the capital. He was initially held in an undisclosed location before being transferred to Section 209 of Evin prison, where he was held for seven months. He was then moved to Section Seven of the prison before being taken without warning back to Section 209 on 29 January. He was allowed only a two-minute telephone call to his family for the next nine days before being moved back to Section Seven on 7 February. Ahmadreza Djalali has lost 20kg in detention and his health has seriously deteriorated since the start of his hunger strike. He has collapsed twice and is experiencing drops in his blood pressure and pain around his kidneys.

Ahmadreza Djalali has said that, when he was held in solitary confinement, his interrogators insulted and threatened him, saying, among other things, that they would send him to Raja'i Shahr prison in Karaj to be jailed with death row prisoners in extremely poor conditions. Amnesty International has previously documented the inhumane conditions in Raja'i Shahr prison. The most common complaints from prisoners include: the deliberate indifference of prison officials to prisoners' medical needs; their refusal to transfer critically ill prisoners to hospitals outside the prison; long periods of time without hot water for washing and bathing; inadequate space; poor ventilation; unsanitary conditions; insect infestations near kitchen areas; insufficient cleaning supplies; and meagre rations of (poor quality) food. Such conditions are believed to have put inmates at risk of infection and various skin and respiratory diseases. Reports from the prison also indicate a pattern of guards beating, verbally assaulting and sexually harassing political prisoners, particularly when transferring them to and from hospital and court.

Article 14(3) of the International Covenant Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, guarantees the right of detainees to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defence and to communicate with counsel of their own choosing. The UN Human Rights Council has stated: "The right to communicate with counsel requires that the accused is granted prompt access to counsel." Under international law, delaying access to legal assistance may only be permitted under exceptional circumstances, which must be prescribed by law and limited to occasions when it is considered to be indispensable to maintain security and good order. However, even in such limited cases, access should not be delayed by more than 48 hours from the time of arrest or detention.

Iran's 2015 Code of Criminal Procedure includes a provision that entitles the accused to request a lawyer from the time of arrest and requires the authorities to inform the accused of this right. However, failure to uphold these rights does not affect the validity of the investigations, allowing courts to rely on evidence gathered during investigations conducted without the presence of a lawyer. Moreover, under Article 48 of the Code, individuals facing national security-related charges are not permitted to access an independent lawyer of their choice for the entire investigation phase and they may only select their lawyers from a roster of lawyers approved by the Head of the Judiciary. Amnesty International has documented numerous instances where the Office of the Prosecutor has used Article 48 of the Code to prevent detainees from accessing lawyers of their own choosing, telling them that they were not on the list of lawyers approved by the Head of the Judiciary, even though no official list has yet been issued.

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