

# URGENT ACTION

## IRAN: DOCTOR AND ACADEMIC SENTENCED TO DEATH

**Dr Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian-born Swedish resident and academic, has been sentenced to death for “corruption on earth” after a grossly unfair trial. His conviction was based on torture-tainted “confessions” that he was forced to make while in solitary confinement without access to his lawyer or family. He is a prisoner of conscience.**

Iranian-born Swedish resident **Ahmadreza Djalali**, a scientist, medical doctor and academic, has been sentenced to death and fined 200,000 euros after being convicted of “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*) following a grossly unfair trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The court verdict alleged that Ahmadreza Djalali had worked as a spy for Israel in the 2000s. According to one of his lawyers, the court produced no evidence to substantiate the claims against him. The court also failed to provide a copy of the verdict and instead summoned one of the lawyers on 21 October 2017 to read the verdict in court.

Ahmadreza Djalali, who has taught in universities in Belgium, Italy, and Sweden was on a business trip to Iran when he was arrested by Ministry of Intelligence officials in April 2016. His family had no knowledge of his whereabouts for 10 days after his arrest. He was held in an unknown location for a week before being transferred to section 209 of Tehran’s Evin prison, where he was held for seven months, three of them in solitary confinement. He has since said that, while in solitary confinement, he was denied access to a lawyer and was forced to make “confessions” in front of a video camera by reading out statements pre-written by his interrogators. He has said that he was put under intense pressure through torture and other ill-treatment, including threats to execute him, his children who live in Sweden, and his elderly mother who lives in Iran, to “confess” to being a spy. He denies the accusations against him and says they have been fabricated by the authorities. In an August 2017 letter written from inside Evin prison, he says he was asked by the Iranian authorities in 2014 to “cooperate with them to identify and gather intelligence from EU states...My answer was ‘no’ and I told them that I am just a scientist, not a spy.”

On 24 October 2017, during his weekly press conference with journalists, the Prosecutor General of Tehran, Abbas Ja’fari Dolat Abadi said, without specifically naming Ahmadreza Djalali, that “the defendant” had held several meetings with [Israeli intelligence agency] Mossad and provided them with sensitive information about Iran’s military and nuclear sites in return for money and residency in Sweden.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Quash Ahmadreza Djalali’s conviction and sentence, and release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely in reprisal for his refusal to use his scholastic and work ties in European academic and other institutions to spy for Iran;
- 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 that the Swedish consulate be granted access to him;
- Emphasize that evidence obtained under duress, torture, or as a result of forced “confessions” may not be used as evidence in court, and they must conduct an independent, effective investigation into his allegations of torture.

**Contact these two officials by 8 December, 2017:**

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
c/o Public Relations Office  
Number 4, 2 Aziz Street Intersection  
Tehran, Iran

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

H.E. Gholamali Khoshroo

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations

622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor New York, NY 10017  
Phone: (212) 687-2020 | Fax: (212) 867-7086

Email: [iran@un.int](mailto:iran@un.int)

**Salutation: Dear Excellency**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 38.17*

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmadreza Djalali works in the field of emergency disaster medicine. He left Iran in 2008 to study for a PhD at the Karolinska Institute, a medical university, in Sweden. He has worked as a lecturer in Belgium and Italy. He had travelled to Iran in April 2016 to attend university workshops on disaster medicine 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 make a brief telephone call to them. He was held in an unknown location for a week before being transferred to section 209 of Evin prison, which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence. Despite repeated interrogations, he was not allowed access to a lawyer until seven months after his arrest when he was moved to Section Seven of Evin prison. He undertook at least two hunger strikes between December 2016 and February 2017 in protest at his detention and denial of access to a lawyer of his choosing. He was eventually permitted intermittent access to his lawyer until the authorities stopped him from seeing her in February 2017, at which point he resumed the hunger strike he had started in December 2016 that he had stopped only days earlier. He did so after being told by the judge presiding over his case that he was not allowed to have contact with or be represented by his chosen lawyer, whom the judge had separately ordered to withdraw from the case. The judge had already dismissed his first lawyer. Ahmadreza Djalali ended his second hunger strike later that month in February 2017 but was left without legal representation for some time before he was given a court-appointed lawyer. His trial took place over two sessions on 2 August 2017 and 24 September 2017. He has appealed the conviction and sentence.

In the letter Ahmadreza Djalali wrote from prison, he said that, in 2014, Iranian authorities including individuals from the Ministry of Intelligence asked him to identify and gather intelligence from EU states, including on their critical infrastructures, counter-terrorism and CBRNE [chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear warfare including terrorism] capabilities, sensitive operational plans, and research projects related to terrorism and crisis. He refused, saying *"If you ask me to [spy], I would rather stop my cooperation with Iran. The [individuals then] asked me to forget that meeting and the offer, and ensured me there would not be any problem for me and I should continue my cooperation with Iran's academic centres...[In 2016] during my academic trip to Tehran, I was suddenly detained by the Ministry of Intelligence and accused of acting against national security. They told me 'you have gathered...secret data about Iran's critical infrastructures, crisis management and passive [defence] systems and projects, and have transferred them to Israel.' They accused me of being the spy of Israel since 2008 and told me 'all your PhD studying and post-doc fellow processes, and the visa and residency... in EU (Sweden and Italy) have been arranged and offered by Israel...in exchange for your spying services for them.' I rejected the accusation...and emphasized that all processes as well as the residency have been legally conducted by the universities. I have never had relationships and cooperation with any Intelligence services, not from Israel or any other country. I have never travelled to Israel...Dozens of professors and researchers in Sweden and Italy are available [for] contact, who are fully informed about my daily activities...The investigators from the Ministry of Intelligence did not care what I explained. They detained me in [a solitary confinement cell in Section 209 of Evin prison], using multiple psychological and physical tortures, threats, humiliating, deluding me and also not allowing me to access an attorney until month 7, which made me declare false confessions, and then fabricated a crime file full of lies and groundless accusations, without any documents and reasons. I have never acted against my country, I have never spied for Israel or any other country. My only fault is that I [refused to deceive] the trust of my colleagues and universities in EU to spy for Iran's intelligence services."*

Ahmadreza Djalali's health has significantly deteriorated while in detention and has been aggravated by the hunger strikes he has undertaken.

Name: Ahmadreza Djalali

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 38/17 Index: MDE 13/7353/2017 Issue Date: 27 October 2017