

INDIVIDUAL BRIEFING

Dr Ahmad Reza Djalali

Islamic Republic of Iran



Name: Ahmad Reza Djalali
Nationality: Iranian, with Swedish residency
Date of birth: 15 September 1971
Charges: Espionage; “Spreading Corruption on Earth”

Dr. Djali is a Swedish-Iranian academic and researcher in disaster medicine who was sentenced to death in Iran on false charges of espionage. In 2016 he was arrested and charged while he was in Iran attending a series of academic workshops. During his imprisonment, he has been subjected to intense psychological torture and forced to sign statements under threats of execution. He has also repeatedly been denied access to his lawyer.

Timeline

April 2016. Dr. Djalali travelled to Iran after being invited to attend academic workshops by the University of Tehran and Shiraz University. Three days before he was due to return to Sweden, he was arrested without a warrant. He was held in an unknown location for a week before being transferred to Evin Prison, which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence. He is detained for 7 months, 3 of which he spent in solitary confinement.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5632/2017/en/>

December 2016. Dr. Djalali goes on hunger strike to protest his continued detention and denial of access to a lawyer.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7353/2017/en/>

January 2017. Dr. Djalali is taken before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, without his lawyer, and informed that he is accused of 'espionage' and could face the death penalty.

<<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22556&LangID=E>>

February 2017. Dr. Djalali stops his hunger strike, only to resume it 3 days later after a judge orders him to change his appointed lawyer.

<<https://www.nature.com/news/jailed-iranian-researcher-s-health-worsening-rapidly-1.21660>>

August 2017. In a letter written from inside prison, Dr. Djalali writes that he suspects he is being targeted due to his earlier refusal to use his connections in European academic institutions to spy on Iran's behalf.

<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/12/iran-upholding-academics-death-sentence-in-secret-shows-utter-contempt-for-right-to-life/>>

October 2017. Dr. Djalali is sentenced to death for the crime of "spreading corruption on earth" (*efsad-e fel-arz*) after a standing trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The court verdict alleged that Dr. Djalali had worked as a spy working for Israel. His conviction was based on several "confessions" obtained under torture while he was in solitary confinement.

<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7353/2017/en/>>

November 2017. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issues an opinion finding that Dr. Djalali's deprivation of liberty is arbitrary.

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/A_HRC_WGAD_2017_92.pdf>

December 2017. UN human rights experts call on Iran to drop the charges against Dr. Djalali and to release him. Iran state media shows a video of Dr. Djalali's forced confession on state television.

<<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22556&LangID=E>>

February 2018. Dr. Djalali's lawyers learn that the Supreme Court has summarily affirmed his sentence, without allowing them to submit a defence. His death sentence can now be carried out at any time. In response, UN human experts repeat their urgent call to Iran to drop the death sentence against Dr. Djalali.

<<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/actions/ahmadreza-djalali-iran/>>

<<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22645&LangID=E>>

November 2018. Dr. Djalali undergoes surgery for a hernia. He is transferred back to prison two days after his surgery, contrary to medical advice that he should remain in hospital to recover.

<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/0359/2019/en/>>

February 2019. A specialist discovers that Dr. Djalali's bone marrow cells had severely weakened, indicating a high possibility of leukemia. Dr. Djalali was scheduled to see a blood

and cancer specialist at a hospital on February 5, 2019; however, prison authorities prevented him from going.

<<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/2020/03/sar-sweden-calls-for-the-release-of-dr-ahmadreza-djalali/>>

May 2019. Since his arrest, Dr. Djalali has lost 24kg and is in need of urgent medical care. Following his repeated hunger strikes he is experiencing a number of health problems, including fainting, blood in the urine, kidney issues, heart, and stomach pains.

<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/0359/2019/en/>>

July 2019. Dr. Djalali is transferred to a secret detention facility. The authorities have concealed his location from his family. He is placed under great pressure to 'confess' to new crimes.

<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/0853/2019/en/>>

<<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/jailed-iranian-swedish-dual-national-pressured-to-accept-new-charges/30090732.html>>

March 2020. The Scholars At Risk issues a statement calls on Iranian authorities to release Dr. Djalali in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

<<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/2020/03/sar-sweden-calls-for-the-release-of-dr-ahmadreza-djalali/>>

April 2020. Iran is one of the countries worst affected by the coronavirus outbreak. According to official statistics, more than 60,000 Iranians have contracted the virus and over 4,000 have died, though some researchers believe the real figures to be up to ten times higher. Independent media and human rights organizations have reported that inmates from several prisons have tested positive for the virus. Protests in prisons over the lack of coronavirus safety measures have been met with a deadly response. Amnesty International reports that, since February 2020, over 30 incarcerated individuals have been killed during prison protests. While the Iranian government has in recent weeks furloughed or granted pardons in an effort to reduce the risk of coronavirus spreading throughout the prison population, in many cases the pardons have been arbitrarily applied and have not extended to many individuals, such as Dr. Djalali, who have been imprisoned on national security grounds.

<<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-52223193>>

<<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/prison-riot-southern-iran-coronavirus-fears-200330110225199.html>>

<<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/04/iran-prisoners-killed-by-security-forces-during-covid19-pandemic-protests/>>

<<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-security-coronavirus-update-protection-amnesty-deaths-a9457896.html>>