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IRAN

IRANIAN-SWEDISH ACADEMIC FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

Iranian-Swedish medical doctor and academic Ahmadreza Djalali has been subjected to enforced disappearance since 29 July when Iranian authorities transferred him from Tehran's Evin prison to an unidentified location. He is under pressure to "confess" to new crimes. If he does not, the authorities have threatened him with the implementation of his death sentence.



Ahmadreza Djalali with his partner
© Private

On 29 July, Ahmadreza Djalali was transferred, without prior notice and while blindfolded, from Tehran's Evin prison to an unidentified location. The authorities have since concealed the details of his whereabouts from his family and lawyer, subjecting him to enforced disappearance. On 5 August, his family learned, through an informal government contact outside Iran, that he may be in a secret detention facility run by the Revolutionary Guards.

Ahmadreza Djalali has been allowed to make several brief phone calls to his family, revealing that he is being held in solitary confinement and is under renewed pressure to "confess" to new crimes. They say he sounded distressed during these phone calls and said that the authorities had threatened to implement his death sentence if he did not "confess". Amnesty International understands that he was not able to provide his family with any

additional information as security officials were present in the room, preventing him from speaking freely. Amnesty International asserts that, by extracting and airing forced "confessions", Iranian authorities violate the right to the presumption of innocence, as well as the right not to be forced into incriminating oneself. These rights are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a party.

Ahmadreza Djalali was sentenced to death for "corruption on earth" in October 2017 following a grossly unfair trial conducted before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Amnesty International has consistently asserted that the offence of "corruption on earth" fails to meet requirements for clarity and precision needed in international law. It also breaches the principle of legal certainty. In a letter from inside Evin prison in August 2017, Ahmadreza Djalali said he was held only in reprisal for his refusal to use his academic ties in European institutions to spy for Iran. On 9 December 2018, his lawyers learned that the Supreme Court had upheld his sentence in a summary manner without granting them an opportunity to file their defence submissions.

Please send a letter to the Head of the Judiciary.

- * Urge him to promptly reveal the fate and whereabouts of Ahmadreza Djalali, to remove him from solitary confinement and to allow him to receive visits from his family and lawyer.
- * Call on him to quash Ahmadreza Djalali's death sentence, to release him immediately and to accord him an enforceable right to compensation, as per the recommendation of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in his case.

Write to

Head of the Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi
C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland
Salutation: Dear Mr Raisi

Additional information

Enforced disappearance is the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which places such a person outside the protection of the law. Enforced disappearance constitutes a crime under international criminal law and violates a number of human rights, including: the right to security and dignity of the person; the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to life; and the right to family life.

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 by ministry of intelligence officials. 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. These included threats to execute him; his children, who live in Sweden; and his elderly mother, who lives in Iran. He has said that he was forced to make "confessions" in front of a video camera, reading out statements pre-written by his interrogators. Ahmadreza Djalali denies the accusations against him and says they have been fabricated by the authorities.

On 17 December 2018 an Iranian state-run TV station aired Ahmadreza Djalali's "confession" during a program 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 have 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 "confession" aired was the one filmed while he was being held in solitary confinement, without access to a lawyer. Since December 2017, his lawyer has filed at least two requests for a judicial review of Ahmadreza Djalali's case. The first was rejected and a decision on the second, filed in January 2019, remains pending.

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”.

Ahmadreza Djalali has been repeatedly denied the urgent specialized medical care he needs in prison. In the last year, three different blood tests indicated that he has a low white blood cell count. A doctor examined him in prison in early 2019 and said that he must be seen by a specialist in haematology and oncology at a hospital outside of the prison. The authorities did not take Ahmadreza Djalali to hospital for the medical care he required until mid-July 2019, when he finally underwent some blood tests. A specialist doctor advised that he must be returned to hospital for further medical examinations; this has yet to happen. Since his arrest on 26 April 2016, he has lost 24kg and now weighs 51kg ([MDE 13/0359/2019](#)).

The refusal by authorities to provide prisoners with medical care constitutes torture if such deprivation is intentional and inflicts “severe pain or suffering” for such purposes as punishment, coercion or intimidation, obtaining a “confession”, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind. For more information, see Amnesty International's report [Health care taken hostage: Cruel denial of medical care in Iran’s prisons](#), 18 July 2016.