

URGENT ACTION

DOCTOR ON HUNGER STRIKE AFTER DISMISSAL OF LAWYER
Iranian academic Dr Ahmadreza Djalali has resumed his hunger strike and has said he has stopped taking liquids as well as food. He is protesting his ongoing detention and the authorities' refusal to grant him access to a lawyer of his choice. He has said that he would "rather die from his hunger strike than be convicted of baseless charges".

Iranian-born Swedish resident **Dr Ahmadreza Djalali**, a medical doctor and academic who is currently being held in Tehran's Evin prison, resumed his hunger strike on 15 February and stopped taking liquids on 24 February. He went on hunger strike after he was taken before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran where the presiding judge told him that he is not allowed to have contact with or be represented by his chosen lawyer- who was told in late February that she should withdraw from the case - and that he must find a replacement or else the court would appoint a state-approved one for him. The authorities had already dismissed his first lawyer. In response, Ahmadreza Djalali told the judge, "My lawyer has been my lawyer for months but you won't allow her to defend me. There is nothing against me in my case. It's better for me to die from my hunger strike than be accused of such baseless charges and get a sentence like this." Ahmadreza Djalali had ended his previous hunger strike around 12 February after a Ministry of Intelligence official who visited him in prison on the same day told him there had been a mistake in his case, that the charges against him were incorrect, and that his case was being sent back to the Office of the Prosecutor for further investigation. Ahmadreza Djalali's wife, Vida Mehrannia, who lives in Sweden with their two young children and has been denied contact with her husband, told Amnesty International that his mental and physical health have significantly declined in recent weeks as a result of his hunger strikes and the abuse he has experienced at the hands of the authorities.

Ahmadreza Djalali, who has taught in European universities, was on a business trip to Iran when he was arrested on 25 April 2016. He was held for three months in solitary confinement and has said that, during this time, he was forced to sign statements without a lawyer present. In December 2016, he was again put under intense pressure by interrogators to sign a statement "confessing" to being a spy for a "hostile government". When he refused, the interrogators threatened to charge him with "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*), which carries the death penalty.

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 he be granted Swedish consular access.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 APRIL 2017 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
 Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
 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. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 38/17. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5632/2017/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmadreza Djalali is a medical doctor, academic and researcher who has been working in the field of emergency disaster medicine since 1999. He left Iran in 2009 to study at a PhD programme at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. He has 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 when he was arrested without a warrant by Ministry of Intelligence officials on 25 April 2016 while travelling by car from Tehran to Karaj, a city north-west of the capital. 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. He 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 access to a lawyer until seven months after his arrest, when he was moved to Section Seven of Evin prison. He was then allowed intermittent access to his lawyer until the authorities stopped him seeing both his lawyers at the beginning of February 2017. In recent months, he has been repeatedly moved between Section Seven, which is a general ward, and sections 209 and 240, which are both under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence.

On 31 January, Ahmadreza Djalali 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 that he could face the death penalty. The first lawyer he had appointed told Amnesty International in February that the authorities had yet to issue an indictment (*keyfarkhast*) and schedule a trial. The prosecution authorities had told him that he could not take up Ahmadreza Djalali’s case and had refused to share the court files with him. In the last week of February, Ahmadreza Djalali’s second lawyer went before the presiding judge in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran and was told to withdraw from his case. After the authorities’ dismissed both Ahmadreza Djalali’s lawyers, he has effectively been left with no legal representation.

Ahmadreza Djalali’s health has significantly deteriorated while in detention and has been aggravated by the numerous hunger strikes he has undertaken. He has lost about 20kg in weight since the start of his detention, has collapsed twice, and has experienced 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.

Name: Ahmadreza Djalali

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 38/17 Index: MDE 13/5807/2017 Issue Date: 2 March 2017