

# URGENT ACTION

## JAILED ACADEMIC NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL CARE

Iranian-Swedish academic Ahmadreza Djalali needs urgent specialized medical care unavailable inside prison. The Iranian authorities previously conditioned his transfer to a hospital outside of prison on being shackled, which would amount to degrading treatment. He was sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial, which used “confessions” Ahmadreza Djalali has said were obtained under torture.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Prosecutor General of Tehran Ali Alghasi Mehr  
Office of the Prosecutor  
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square  
Tehran, Iran*

*Dear Mr Ali Alghasi Mehr,*

*Medical doctor and academic **Ahmadreza Djalali**, imprisoned in Tehran's Evin prison, is being denied the urgent specialized medical care he needs. In the last year, three different blood tests indicated that he has a low white blood cell count. A doctor who examined him in prison in early 2019 said that Ahmadreza Djalali must be seen by doctors specialized in haematology and oncology in a hospital outside of prison. To date, the authorities have not taken Ahmadreza Djalali to hospital for the medical care he requires. Since his arrest on 26 April 2016, he has lost 24 kg and now weighs 51 kg.*

*On two occasions, most recently in February 2019, Ahmadreza Djalali was scheduled to be transferred to a hospital outside of prison to see a specialist, but, on the day of the transfer, he was told that the transfer was conditioned on him being shackled and wearing a prison uniform. He protested against these degrading conditions and, in reprisal, the authorities cancelled the transfer. Amnesty International considers that the conditions imposed on Ahmadreza Djalali's transfer to the hospital were unnecessary and excessive, and deliberately designed to humiliate and punish him. This treatment violates the absolute prohibition on cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments under international law; Iranian authorities have an obligation to treat prisoners respectfully in accordance with their inherent dignity as human beings.*

*In November 2018, Ahmadreza Djalali underwent hernia surgery in a hospital outside prison, after being in severe pain. After surgery, his legs were unnecessarily shackled to the hospital bed, which caused him emotional distress as well as physical discomfort. The authorities transferred him back to prison less than two days later, despite medical advice that he should remain hospitalized for longer. In February 2019, a prison doctor told him that he required a follow-up procedure to treat his hernia, but this has not taken place yet.*

***I urge you to immediately grant Ahmadreza Djalali the specialized medical care he needs outside prison and stop using the denial of timely and adequate medical care as a form of additional punishment. I further call on you to release Ahmadreza Djalali immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation, as per the recommendation of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in his case.***

*Yours sincerely,*

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian-Swedish 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 by ministry of intelligence officials for seven months. 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 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 by reading out statements pre-written by his interrogators. Ahmadreza Djalali denies the accusations against him and says they have been fabricated by the authorities.

Ahmadreza Djalali was sentenced to death for “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*) in October 2017 after a grossly unfair trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Amnesty International has consistently held that the offence of “corruption on earth” fails to meet requirements for clarity and precision needed in criminal law, and also breaches the principle of legality and legal certainty. In a letter written from inside Evin prison in August 2017, Ahmadreza Djalali said he was held solely 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 Branch 1 of the Supreme Court had upheld his death sentence in a summary manner without granting them an opportunity to file their defence submissions on behalf of Ahmadreza Djalali. On 17 December, an Iranian state-run TV station aired Ahmadreza Djalali’s “confession” during a programme 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 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, had only been 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 to such a gravity “as to give Mr Djalali’s deprivation of liberty an arbitrary character”.

The refusal of 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,

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 27 June 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Ahmadreza Djalali (he/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7353/2017/en/>