

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
c/o H.E. Mr. Gholamali Khoshroo
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA



19 MARCH 2018

Your Excellency,

The Rector of the University of Copenhagen is writing to express utmost concern regarding the death sentence issued against Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali, a scholar of disaster medicine who was arrested in April 2016 in apparent retaliation for peacefully exercising the right of academic freedom. On behalf of the University of Copenhagen, I hereby respectfully encourage you to contact the appropriate authorities to reverse Dr. Djalali's capital sentence immediately and to guarantee his unconditional release.

RECTORS OFFICE

NØRREGADE 10
1165 COPENHAGEN K

DIR 45 35 32 26 04

rektor@adm.ku.dk
www.ku.dk

It is our understanding from the Scholars at Risk (SAR) organisation that Dr. Djalali was a visitor in Iran in April 2016 – where he participated in a series of workshops hosted by universities in Tehran and Shiraz. Under these visits, the authorities arrested Dr. Djalali for allegedly “collaborating with hostile governments” and “acting against national security.” Subsequently, Dr. Djalali was detained in Evin Prison, where he reportedly has been intermittently held in solitary confinement and is currently suffering increasing health complications without access to proper medical care. Furthermore, it is our understanding that Dr. Djalali has been pressured or forced to sign a statement “confessing” these alleged crimes involving crimes against the national security of Iran and espionage.

Dr. Djalali refused to sign the confession and was threatened with the charge of “Moharebeh” (enmity against God), which carries the death sentence. Since the solitary confinement, Dr. Djalali led a hunger strike in December 2016 in protest and to pursue justice despite medical problems, including heart and kidney pain.

We also understand from SAR that Dr. Djalali, on 21 October 2017, was convicted and sentenced to death on a charge of “corruption on earth” (ifsad fil-arz). Reportedly, this was based on allegations that Dr. Djalali had been paid by the Israeli authorities to spy on the Iranian government. The authorities have not disclosed any evidentiary base for the allegations, which Dr. Djalali has disputed, emphasising that his past refusal to spy on behalf of the Iranian authorities and his ties to the international academic community were the bases of his prosecution. Without additional information that explains these events or clarifies my understanding, Dr. Djalali’s conviction, capital sentence, and the affirmation thereof – in addition to the circumstances of his arrest and confinement – suggest a troubling disregard for international standards of academic freedom, due process, fair trial, and humane treatment of prisoners, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a party.

Furthermore, I feel compelled to raise my voice and remind Iran of its own obligations under the above-mentioned treaties. Protecting and promoting the peaceful exercise of academic freedom and human rights is an essential component to building strong higher education sectors, also in Iran.

As the Rector of and on the behalf of The University of Copenhagen, I respectfully request your positive intervention, by urging the relevant authorities to reverse Dr. Djalali’s capital sentence immediately, to secure his unconditional release from prison, and, pending this, to ensure his access to counsel and proper medical treatment

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Henrik C. Wegener
Rector