



Karolinska
Institutet



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Head of the Judiciary
Public Relations Office 4,
Deadend of 1 Azizi Vali Asr Street,
Tehran, Iran

Your Excellency,

Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian national and resident of Sweden, was arrested without a warrant by Iranian Ministry of Intelligence officials while traveling to Iran to attend workshops in disaster medicine at universities in Tehran and Shiraz. He has been detained in Tehran's Evin prison for approximately 16 months for alleged "collaboration with a hostile government" and "acting against national security." During the first seven months of captivity, he was threatened with the death penalty and he was denied a lawyer. On Saturday October 21st, Ahmadreza has been sentenced to death. The court verdict, which was shown to one of the lawyers, states that Ahmadreza Djalali worked with the Israeli government, who subsequently helped him obtain his residency permit in Sweden.

A physician and expert in disaster medicine, Dr. Djalali is a highly respected scientist who is well known and admired within the international community for his high quality research and teaching. Since 1997 till 2007, Dr. Djalali was working in Iran in the field of natural and technological disaster management, as a researcher, lecturer and planner. His working place was the ministry of health and then he moved to the natural disaster research Institute. In 2008, Dr. Djalali started studying for his PhD at Karolinska Institutet (Stockholm, Sweden) and obtained a masters degree in Disaster Medicine (EMDM) from the Università del Piemonte Orientale (Vercelli, Italy) and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Brussels, Belgium). From 2012 to 2016, he was a post-doc fellow at the Research Center in Emergency and Disaster Medicine (CRIMEDIM) of the Università del Piemonte Orientale and was academically affiliated with Karolinska Institutet and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He coordinated various training and research programs, from which 3 projects were granted by the EU Research Commission. These 3 projects were relevant to health systems, in the area of crisis management, education, counter-terrorism and CBRNE, of EU countries, e.g. Italy, Spain, France, UK, Germany, Sweden, etc. In parallel, he retained academic and operational cooperation with Iranian University, and research centers through contributing in crisis management and passive defense programs, all public and unclassified from security aspects. In all matters he has always been a proud example for Iran, spoke highly of his heritage and served Iran as an international example of excellence in research, someone Iran should be extremely proud of.

Dr. Djalali has worked alongside researchers from all over the world to improve the operational capacity of hospitals in countries affected by disasters, terrorism and armed conflicts. He has authored more than 45 publications. Dr. Djalali is known by his colleagues and students to be very respectful of his native home, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and one of his aims was to increase the understanding and shared relationship between the country where he lived and the work he did with other countries in the region in fostering excellence in the development of Emergency and Disaster Medicine and research applied to humanitarian assistance.

The facts suggest that Dr. Djalali has been sentenced to death for peacefully exercising his right to academic freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly, and has been denied proper access to legal counsel and due process.

We, the Karolinska Institutet, the Università del Piemonte Orientale and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, would like to express our deepest concern over the detention of Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali who could now face the death penalty. As of today, the evidentiary basis of his arrest remains undisclosed.

We, the Karolinska Institutet, the Università del Piemonte Orientale and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, are calling for Djalali's immediate release and speedy return to his family and employment unless he is charged with a recognizable and evidence-based criminal offence, in line with international law and standards. We are concerned that he has been targeted for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

We are also demanding that prosecution authorities ensure that Dr. Djalali has immediate 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.

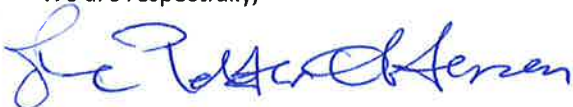
We urge colleagues including medical, scientific and humanitarian organizations worldwide to join, support, and spread this appeal to ensure that Dr. Djalali's case is properly adjudicated.

We believe it is vital that the international medical and scientific communities and their academic institutions defend the fundamental freedoms of researchers, especially Dr. Djalali, who has been sentenced to death in apparent retaliation for international scholarly collaboration within his field of study. This is critical to preserve the rights and freedoms of future generations of researchers and humanitarians in Iran and worldwide.

Moreover, all citizens are entitled to due process and a fair trial, and no citizen should be subjected to the death penalty. The death penalty is an act of violence that creates more violence and is in conflict with human dignity, human rights, a wealth of research, and all the values our universities stand for.

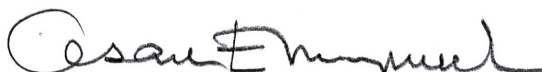
Thanking you in advance for your time on this important and urgent matter,

We are respectfully,



Prof. Ole Petter Ottersen
Vice-Chancellor Karolinska Institutet
Stockholm, Sweden

Prof. Cesare Emanuel
Rector Università del Piemonte Orientale
Vercelli, Italy



Prof. Caroline Pauwels
Rector Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Brussels, Belgium

