



**Middle  
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12 May 2022

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
c/o H.E. Mr. Takht-Ravanchi  
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
Email: iran@un.int  
Fax: +1 (212) 867-7086

Chief Justice Ebrahim Raisi, Head of the Judiciary  
c/o H.E. Mr. Takht-Ravanchi  
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
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Your Excellencies,

We write on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our continued and grave concern over reports that Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali is expected to be executed by 21 May 2022. Dr. Djalali is a scholar of emergency and disaster medicine who has been imprisoned in Iran since April 2016. He was sentenced to death in October 2017 on charges of espionage. This is not the first time Dr. Djalali has had to endure the torment of imminent execution. On 1 December 2020, the judiciary announced their intention to carry out Dr. Djalali's death sentence. We once again implore Your Excellencies to intervene in this unjust decision, rescind the sentence, and immediately release Dr. Djalali.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has over 2,800 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian-Swedish scholar and professor, was arrested by security forces of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence in April 2016. He had traveled to Iran from his home in Sweden, having been invited by several universities in Iran to participate in a series of academic events. We have written numerous letters to you regarding Dr. Djalali (see letters dated [6 February 2017](#), [25 October 2017](#), [21 December 2017](#), [8 February 2018](#), [13 December 2018](#), [4 April 2019](#), [5 August 2019](#), and [14 December 2020](#)), expressing our deep concern about his unlawful arrest, the denial to him of medical attention for serious illnesses brought about by poor prison conditions, his death sentence based on forced confessions, and the Supreme Court's upholding of that sentence without allowing submissions from his defense team.

On 4 May 2022, the semi-official Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported from a 'reputable source' that Dr. Djalali would be executed by 21 May 2022. On 10 May 2022, Iran's judiciary confirmed this report as its spokesperson announced that Dr. Djalali's execution order was final and on the judiciary's agenda. Many human rights groups have raised the concern that this announcement coincides with the Swedish case of an Iranian official, Hamid



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Nouri, who has been accused of war crimes, suggesting that Dr. Djalali is being used by your government as a pawn to yield pressure on Sweden. Although Iran's foreign ministry denied, on 9 May, a link between the cases, we are puzzled and disturbed by the announcement of imminent execution, particularly when, according to the Foreign Ministry's spokesperson, Dr. Djalali's appeal of his execution is still under review. We would like to underscore that these two cases are, in fact, unrelated. Furthermore, Dr. Djalali's life must not be held in balance by Mr. Nouri's trial or its outcome. Besides, the announcement of Dr. Djalali's pending execution itself amounts to cruel and severe mental duress, not only for him, but for his family, friends, and loved ones, as well.

The treatment Dr. Djalali has been subjected to is in conflict with Iran's own laws of due process. Forced confessions are not admissible as evidence in Iranian courts; therefore, Dr. Djalali's sentence is invalid and should be dismissed. Furthermore, to date, Iranian authorities have not disclosed any evidentiary basis for the allegations against him, which Dr. Djalali has consistently disputed. Since his detention, Dr. Djalali has undertaken several hunger strikes in protest of the unsubstantiated charges against him. Additionally, he has suffered from the lack of adequate treatment for a serious blood disease, likely leukemia, which Iranian authorities detaining Dr. Djalali are required by law to treat.

The Committee on Academic Freedom is once again pleading with Your Excellencies to honor Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali's request for appeal, reverse his capital sentence, and show mercy to him. We forcefully object to violations of internationally recognized rights and due process in Iran. The unjust treatment of this prominent scholar is a stain on Iran's image and reputation in the world. We call on you to allow Dr. Djalali's safe return to his wife and children in Sweden.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eve M. Troutt Powell'.

Eve Troutt Powell  
MESA President  
Professor, University of Pennsylvania

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Laurie A. Brand'.

Laurie Brand  
Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom  
Professor, University of Southern California

cc:

His Excellency Ebrahim Raisi, President  
The Honorable Mahmoud Alavi, Minister of Intelligence  
The Honorable Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The Honorable Takht-Ravanchi, Permanent Representative of Iran to the  
United Nations  
The Honorable Michelle Bachelet, The United Nations High Commissioner for  
Human Rights  
The Honorable Javaid Rehman, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of  
Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran  
The Honorable Tlaleng Mofokeng, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to  
Physical and Mental Health  
The Honorable Nils Meltzer, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other  
Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment  
The Honorable Agnes Callamard, UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial,  
Summary or Arbitrary Executions  
The Honorable Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and  
protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression  
The Honorable Leigh Toomey, Chair-Rapporteur for the Working Group on  
Arbitrary Detention  
Ms. Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe  
His Excellency Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden  
The Honorable Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for  
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
Mr. Christophe Poirel, Director of Human Rights Directorate, Human Rights and  
Rule of Law, Council of Europe  
The Honorable Ann Linde, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden