

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

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(Please use this reference in your reply)

26 May 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/7, 51/8, 53/4, 51/21, 55/19 and 58/14.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government worrying new information we have received concerning **Mr. Ahmadreza Djalali**, an Iranian national, Swedish resident, medical doctor, lecturer and researcher in disaster medicine, who is deprived of liberty in Evin prison, in the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are especially concerned that his health situation has become life threatening following a heart attack this month, and we urge your Excellency's Government to address his health situation without delay in order to help protect his life and preserve his health and avoid irreparable harm.

We further remind your Excellency's Government that it is unlawful under international law to arrest, prosecute and/or keep detained any individual for the purpose of leveraging another entity, including another State, as such conduct may constitute not only wrongful detention but also hostage-taking, including pursuant to the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, acceded to by Iran on 20 November 2006.

According to the information received:

Mr. Ahmadreza Djalali was arrested, reportedly without a warrant, on 25 April 2016, during a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran to attend workshops on disaster medicine at the invitation of the University of Tehran and Shiraz University. He was subsequently sentenced to death on espionage charges in October 2017.

Mr. Djalali was allegedly convicted based on a confession extracted under torture and/or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, after he was held in solitary confinement for three months, during which he was

subjected to harsh interrogations, and following a trial marred by alleged violations of fair trial and due process.

Since entering Evin prison and over the ensuing years, Mr. Djalali's health has reportedly deteriorated, suffering from kidney pain, blood in his urine, very low blood pressure, and loss of consciousness on a number of occasions. Furthermore, his weight dropped by 24 kg.

In November 2017, the case of Mr. Djalali was examined by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD). In its Opinion No. 92/2017, which is deemed to be referred to in full herein, the WGAD found that Mr. Djalali's deprivation of liberty was arbitrary and fell within categories I and III and requested Your Excellency's Government to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation without delay.¹

The WGAD also found that Mr. Djalali was denied medication and treatment for serious health conditions, in violation of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the "Nelson Mandela Rules"), notably rules 24, 25, 27 and 30.

These rules state, *inter alia*, that the provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility, that all prisons should ensure prompt access to medical attention in urgent cases, and that prisoners who need specialized treatment or surgery be transferred to specialized institutions or civil hospitals.²

Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, the WGAD considered that the appropriate remedy would be to release Mr. Djalali immediately and to accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law.³

Between 2017 and 2022, various special procedures mandate-holders raised the case of Mr. Djalali with Your Excellency's Government, on different occasions.⁴ They expressed concern that, *inter alia*, the Iranian authorities would use the possibility of enforcing the death penalty imposed on Mr. Djalali as leverage over the Government of Sweden in order to impact the outcome of a court case in Sweden against a former Iranian prison official.⁵

Special Procedures mandate-holders called publicly on the Iranian Government to release Mr. Djalali, expressing alarm at his critical health situation which, in

¹ See A/HRC/WGAD/2017/92: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/WGAD/2017/92>

² On this, see also Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/10/24 on Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: the role and responsibility of medical and other health personnel: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/10/24, paragraphs 9 and 10; as well as Human Rights in the administration of justice, Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/42/20): <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/42/20>.

³ See A/HRC/WGAD/2017/92, quoted above, footnote 1.

⁴ See UA IRN 9/2022; UA IRN 13/2020; UA IRN 6/2020; UA IRN 12/2019; UA IRN 7/2019; UA IRN 30/2017; and UA IRN 7/2017.

⁵ See UA IRN 9/2022 quoted above, footnote 3.

the absence of adequate medical care, was feared could cause his death.⁶

Furthermore, the case of Mr. Djalali was identified as forming part of a broader pattern of arbitrary detention of dual and foreign nationals, and the use of them for leverage and prisoner swaps, by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁷ The Special Rapporteur noted that many of those arbitrarily detained within this context had serious underlying medical conditions which had been left untreated, or health conditions that had significantly deteriorated, during the detention.⁸ The Special Rapporteur urged the Iranian authorities to refrain from violating international law by taking foreign and dual nationals hostage, and sought an immediate review of all cases and the release of all individuals arbitrarily and unjustly detained.⁹

In spite of the above, Mr. Djalali continues to be detained. According to the new information received, he is not receiving the necessary care for his health conditions, leading to further deterioration and, on 9 May 2025, he suffered a heart attack. Mr. Djalali was transferred to the hospital section of the Evin prison, however, he was allegedly informed that he would not be able to see a cardiologist until the following Sunday (11 May 2025).

These circumstances continue to inflict severe psychological harm and physical suffering to Mr. Djalali whose health situation continues to deteriorate and is life-threatening, and traumatizing for his family in Sweden.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of the above-mentioned new information, we remain extremely concerned by Mr. Djalali's reportedly declining health situation, brought on by and/or exacerbated by the conditions of his detention, which he has endured for nine years, and the uncertainty as to the enforcement of the death penalty imposed against him.

We are of the view that, without immediate access to adequate medical care, his present conditions may constitute an increasingly imminent threat to his life and cause irreparable harm to his physical and mental health.

We remind your Excellency's Government that, by depriving persons of their liberty, the State assumes responsibility to care for their lives and bodily integrity and must therefore take all necessary measures to protect them.

Persons deprived of liberty must always be treated in a humane manner and with respect for their inherent dignity. They shall always have access, *inter alia*, to effective legal representation and adequate medical assistance; prompt judicial review of their initial and continuing deprivation of liberty; remedies for any violations; and have the possibility to communicate with a lawyer of choice, their relatives, and to be visited by

⁶ See Iran: Ahmadreza Djalali nearing death in solitary confinement, torture must end now: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/03/iran-ahmadreza-djalali-nearing-death-solitary-confinement-torture-must-end?LangID=E&NewsID=26911>

⁷ See Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/HRC/55/62) [OHCHR](#)

⁸ See Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/HRC/49/75) [OHCHR](#)

⁹ See A/HRC/55/62, quoted above, footnote 6.

independent human rights monitoring bodies. In the case of foreigners, they shall also be promptly informed of their right to communicate with a consular post or the diplomatic mission of the State of which they are nationals. Persons deprived of liberty also have the right to be informed at the time of arrest of the reasons for their arrest, and subsequently of any charges brought against them.

Inadequate conditions of detention and standards of treatment constitute violations of the prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and may even amount to torture. When such conditions are seriously inadequate, they may further present an immediate or longer-term danger to health and life.

Based on this, we warn against the risk that the case of Mr. Djalali could amount to a violation of his right to life, protected by article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1975; his right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including the requirement of humane and dignified treatment in detention, protected, *inter alia*, by article 5 of the UDHR, as well as articles 7 and 10 of the ICCPR; and of his right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, recognised in article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, also ratified by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1975.

We stress that the obligation to respect and ensure the right to life extends to reasonably foreseeable threats and life-threatening situations that can result in loss of life even if such threats and situations do not result in loss of life.¹⁰

We emphasize that the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is absolute and non-derogable. No circumstances, no matter how exceptional they may be, can ever justify torture or ill-treatment nor any form of impunity for such acts (article 4 (2) of the ICCPR; article 2 (2) and (3) of the CAT).

Furthermore, based on the findings of the WGAD, as well as the concerns expressed by Special Procedures mandate holders over the past years, we reiterate that the arrest and subsequent detention of Mr. Djalali is arbitrary, in violation of his right to liberty and security of the person and not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, enshrined in article 9 of the UDHR and article 9 of the ICCPR, and point out that arbitrarily detaining foreign nationals under fabricated, false or exaggerated charges with the purpose of using them for financial, political or other forms of leverage against another entity, also constitutes a violation of the absolute prohibition against taking hostages, set forth, *inter alia*, in the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, acceded to by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2006.

We emphasize that hostage-taking may amount to psychological torture or result in cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment depending on the circumstances of arrest or detention. Likewise, such circumstances can inflict pain and suffering on the family members of the persons taken hostage. We refer you to the report of the Special Rapporteur on torture on hostage-taking as torture,

¹⁰ See Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36, article 6, right to life (CCPR/C/GC/36): <https://docs.un.org/en/CCPR/C/GC/36>.

In light of the above, we respectfully request that Mr. Djalali be provided with urgent, adequate and comprehensive medical care, treatment and monitoring of his health situation, as appropriate, in a civil hospital. We stress that time is of the essence.

We also respectfully call on your Excellency's Government to release Mr. Djalali, unconditionally and without delay, and to reopen and quash the case against him in view of the serious allegations of irregularities in relation to the ground for his arrest and prosecution and lack of due process safeguards, as well as allegations that his interrogations were marred by torture and/or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, contrary to international treaty and customary law. The circumstances of his arrest and continued deprivation of liberty must be effectively investigated, pursuant to international standards, and those found responsible of any violation, must be brought to justice.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response as soon as possible on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person in compliance with international instruments.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would also be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide updated and detailed information on the present state of Mr. Ahmadreza Djalali physical and mental health. Please explain what measures have been taken, or may be envisaged to be adopted, to protect his life and preserve his health and well-being, including timely access to adequate medical care, and in a civil hospital, as appropriate. Please assess them against international human rights standards.
3. Please provide detailed and updated information on the conditions of Mr. Djalali's deprivation of liberty and please assess them against international human rights law and standards, in particular, the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including the requirement of humane and dignified treatment in detention, and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the "Nelson Mandela Rules").
4. Please provide information on measures taken, or envisaged to be adopted, to implement Opinion No. 92/2017 of the Working Group on Arbitrary

¹¹ See Hostage-taking as torture, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (A/HRC/88/55): <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5855-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading-treatment-or>

Detention regarding Mr. Djalali's arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Please explain whether there has been any investigation in this connection, and please provide the results of it, including in terms of accountability of persons possibly found responsible of any violation. If there has been no investigation, please explain why.

5. Please provide information about measures being taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure the full implementation of the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, including in respect of criminalization, investigation and prosecution of hostage-taking, preventing and cooperating in the prevention of hostage-taking, and easing the situation of Mr. Djalali and securing his release and departure from the country.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issue/s in question.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

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