

**9 September 2019****HRK President reiterates call for immediate release of Ahmadreza Djalali following reports of an attempt to force a confession**

The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, has once again shown solidarity with academic Dr Ahmadreza Djalali, who has been detained in Iran since 2016:

"In an open letter, I have again urged the Iranian head of state to immediately release Dr Ahmadreza Djalali from custody in Tehran. I am deeply dismayed by reports that the academic, who has been detained since April 2016, has been temporarily transferred to an undisclosed location in a reported attempt to extract a confession from him. The Scholars at Risk network has also raised the accusation of torture," said Alt today in Berlin. "The global scientific community cannot accept the imposition of the death sentence on Dr Djalali. Leaders in Iran must respect human rights and protect academic freedom. Otherwise, there will be no basis for cooperation with Iranian universities."

The HRK is emphatically supporting the [urgent call](#) by Scholars at Risk, the international network for the protection of at-risk researchers, to send letters of support for Ahmadreza Djalali to the Iranian Government.

On 29 July 2019, Dr Djalali was transferred from Evin Prison to an isolation cell at an undisclosed location. There, according to Scholars at Risk, the researcher was apparently tortured and threatened with the enforcement of his death sentence in an attempt to force him to confess. For some time now, Dr Djalali has been refused proper medical treatment despite it is being strongly suspected that he may have leukaemia. In October 2017, the researcher, who lives in Sweden, was sentenced to death for "corruption on Earth" (ifsad fil-arz). Iran's Supreme Court denied a request to review the verdict in February 2018.

The HRK has already made several appeals to the Iranian Government to release Ahmadreza Djalali.

According to the HRK database <https://www.internationale-hochschulkooperationen.de/en/foreign-countries.html> of international university partnerships, German universities are currently involved in 81 partnerships with Iranian partners.

The open letter from HRK President Alt to the Iranian head of state, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, accompanies this article.