

16 April 2020**In view of the coronavirus pandemic, HRK President reiterates call for immediate release of Dr Ahmadreza Djalali**

In view of the current circumstances, the President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, has reiterated his call for the immediate release of researcher Dr Ahmadreza Djalali from Evin Prison, who has now been in Iranian custody for four years:

“The coronavirus pandemic represents an immediate threat to the life of Dr Ahmadreza Djalali. According to the information provided by the international network Scholars at Risk, his health has continued to deteriorate during his four years in custody and there is no guarantee of proper medical treatment. Dr Djalali is therefore in the at-risk group for whom infection with the coronavirus would be life-threatening.

In an [open letter](#), I have again urged the Iranian head of state to immediately release Dr Ahmadreza Djalali from custody in Tehran. In recent weeks, Iran has released a large number of detainees from its prisons in an attempt to curb the further spread of coronavirus. I am appalled that Dr Djalali is unable to benefit from this intervention, and continues to be detained in Evin Prison. His poor health and specifically his suspected case of leukaemia render an immediate release from custody absolutely necessary.

The death sentence and relentless cruel treatment of Dr Djalali constitute a terrible violation of human rights and academic freedom. The global scientific community cannot tolerate the actions of the Iranian Government.”

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.

Dr Djalali has been in Iranian custody since April 2016. In October 2017, the Swedish-Iranian researcher was sentenced to death for “corruption on Earth” (ifsad fil-arz). Iran's Supreme Court denied a request to review the verdict in 2018. Dr Djalali has been refused proper medical treatment. Scholars at Risk has accused the Iranian security forces of torturing the researcher. Amnesty International has also reported attempts to force him to confess.

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

According to the [HRK database](#) of international university partnerships, German universities are currently involved in 80 partnerships with Iranian partners.