Your Excellency,

We write to express grave concern for the well-being of Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian-Swedish scholar of disaster medicine whose health has severely deteriorated and who is at imminent risk of execution. We respectfully urge you to call on the appropriate authorities to suspend the capital sentence issued against Dr. Djalali and to secure his immediate release so he may receive the dire medical care he urgently needs. We thereby strongly support the United Nations’ independent human rights experts in their recent call to immediately release Dr. Djalali from prison and to end months of prolonged solitary confinement.

We understand from The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, and Scholars at Risk that in November 2020, Iranian authorities put Dr. Djalali in solitary confinement in preparation to carry out his death sentence. Since then, authorities have postponed the execution but have kept Dr. Djalali in solitary confinement, where his health has further deteriorated rapidly. According to UN human rights experts, Dr. Djalali is in a critical condition and near death.

The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (Sveriges universitets- och högskoleförbund / SUHF) and the German Rectors’ Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz / HRK) are the umbrella organisations of higher education institutions in Sweden and Germany. 38 Swedish universities and university colleges are members of the SUHF. The HRK brings
together all major German universities and universities of applied sciences and has a total of 268 member institutions. The two national rectors’ conferences and their member institutions believe that cooperation with Iran in the fields of science, research, and exchange holds great potential. Currently, the broad scope of cooperation ranges from the exchange of students, doctoral candidates, and senior researchers to joint research and publications.

These past achievements and the future of our cooperation are severely at risk should Iran execute Dr Ahmadreza Djalali or should he die in detention. As science organisations from Sweden and Germany, we are united in our strong belief that European-Iranian cooperation in science, research, and exchange cannot continue as before should Iranian authorities fail to suspend the death sentence against a highly-respected member of the international academic community and citizen of the European Union.

International cooperation must be firmly grounded in the standards of academic freedom and the protection of human rights. Without these principles, a successful and lasting partnership with Iran will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to uphold. We ask you to respect the foundations on which the future of Iranian-European partnership must rest. A strong and unwavering commitment to academic freedom and human rights must be at the very centre of our cooperation.

We therefore respectfully urge you to direct the relevant authorities to suspend the capital sentence issued against Dr. Djalali, to secure his immediate release, and, pending such action, to ensure his well-being and access to legal counsel, family, and medical treatment.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Professor Dr. Peter-André Alt
HRK President

Professor, Ph.D. Astrid Söderbergh Widding
SUHF Chair and
President, Stockholm University
CC:

- Scholars at Risk Network
  New York, United States of America
- President Hassan Rouhani
  President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- The Honorable Ayatollah Ebrahim Raeisi
  Head of the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- The Honorable Abdolreza Bagheri
  Acting Minister, Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology
- The Honorable Stefan Löfven
  Prime Minister of Sweden
- The Honorable Ann Linde
  Minister for Foreign Affairs Sweden
- The Honorable Santiago Villalpando
  Legal Adviser and Director of the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs, UNESCO
- The Honorable Michelle Bachelet
  United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles
  High Representative / Vice-President, European Commission
- Mr. Eamon Gilmore
  EU Special Representative for Human Rights
- Ms. Cornelia Ernst
  Chair of the European Parliament’s Delegation for Relations with Iran
- Task Force Iran
  European Union external Action Service