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## Iran: Arbitrarily detained Swedish Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali at grave risk of retaliatory execution

Reacting to alarming developments indicating that Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali, who has been arbitrarily detained in Iran since April 2016, is at grave risk of imminent retaliatory execution in the country, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa Diana Eltahawy said:

“Amid a sharp spike in executions in Iran since November, mounting evidence indicates that Iranian authorities are threatening to carry out Ahmadreza Djalali's execution in retaliation for their unmet demands to pervert the course of justice in Sweden. The cruel toying with Ahmadreza Djalali's life immediately after a Swedish court of appeals upheld the conviction and life sentence against former Iranian prison official Hamid Nouri over his role in the 1988 prison massacres heightens concerns that Iranian officials are holding Ahmadreza Djalali hostage to compel Sweden into a prisoner swap.”

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Diana Eltahawy, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa

"The international community, including Sweden, must immediately call on the Iranian authorities to halt any plans to execute Ahmadreza Djalali, end their shocking assault on the right to life, release him immediately, and put a moratorium on all executions. Iranian officials must be investigated for the crime of hostage-taking".

## BACKGROUND:

On 19 December 2023, a Swedish appeals court upheld the conviction and life sentence against Hamid Nouri for his role in the 1988 prison massacres in Iran. The next day, on 20 December, Iranian state media disseminated a propaganda video with Ahmadreza Djalali's forced "confessions", which included being a spy for Israel. Ahmadreza Djalali has repeatedly denied these accusations and said his forced "confessions" were made under torture and other ill-treatment. The propaganda video includes the forced "confessions" of Swedish-Iranian Habib Chaab, whom the Iranian authorities arbitrarily executed in secret in May 2023, further raising grave concerns that Ahmadreza Djalali is at risk of imminent execution.

Then, on 22 December 2023, an official from the judiciary visited Ahmadreza Djalali in prison warning that his conviction and death sentence are "confirmed" and "will soon be implemented", according to information revealed by Ahmadreza Djalali's family. Outrageously, the official also claimed that Sweden is holding Hamid Nouri to pressure Iran to release Ahmadreza Djalali. These implausible claims have been repeated on Iranian state media in recent days, even though Ahmadreza Djalali has been in prison in Iran since 2016, more than two years before Hamid Nouri was arrested.

The Iranian authorities sentenced Ahmadreza Djalali to death for "corruption on earth" (*efsad-e fel-arz*) in October 2017 after a grossly unfair trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran.

The Iranian authorities have recently embarked on another alarming executions spree, executing at least 115 people in November 2023 alone.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

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