

## Supporting Information

### Unusual "OFF-ON" fluorescent sensor including a triazole unit for Al<sup>3+</sup> detection via selective imine hydrolysis and its cell image study

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**Scheme S1.** The synthetic pathway of compound **3** and **4**

**Scheme S2.** The synthetic route for the receptors **A1** and **A2**

**Figure S1.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **1**

**Figure S2.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **3**

**Figure S3.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **3**

**Figure S4.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectra of **4**

**Figure S5.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **4**

**Figure S6.** FTIR spectra of **A1**

**Figure S7.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **A1**

**Figure S8.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **A1**

**Figure S9.** APT NMR spectra of **A1**

**Figure S10.** COSY NMR spectra of **A1**

**Figure S11.** FTIR spectra of **A2**

**Figure S12.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectra of **A2**

**Figure S13.** <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectra of **A2**

**Figure S14.** APT NMR spectra of **A2**

**Figure S15.** COSY NMR spectra of **A2**

**Figure S16.** The plot of normalized fluorescence intensities of **A1** at 429 nm versus Al<sup>3+</sup> concentration

**Figure S17.** Emission intensity responses of **A1** with competitive metal ions in the absence (black bars) or presence (red bars) of Al<sup>3+</sup>

**Figure S18.** Time-dependent fluorescence changes of **A1** (2.0 μM) at 429 nm in presence or absence of Al<sup>3+</sup> in a mixture of EtOH–H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 6/4, 0.01 M, 0.01 M, potassium phosphate, pH = 6.90).

**Figure S19.** Emission intensity changes of **A1** (2.0 μM) and **A2** (2.0 μM) at various pH values in the presence or absence of Al<sup>3+</sup> in a mixture of EtOH–H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 6/4, 0.01 M, 0.01 M, potassium phosphate, pH = 6.90).

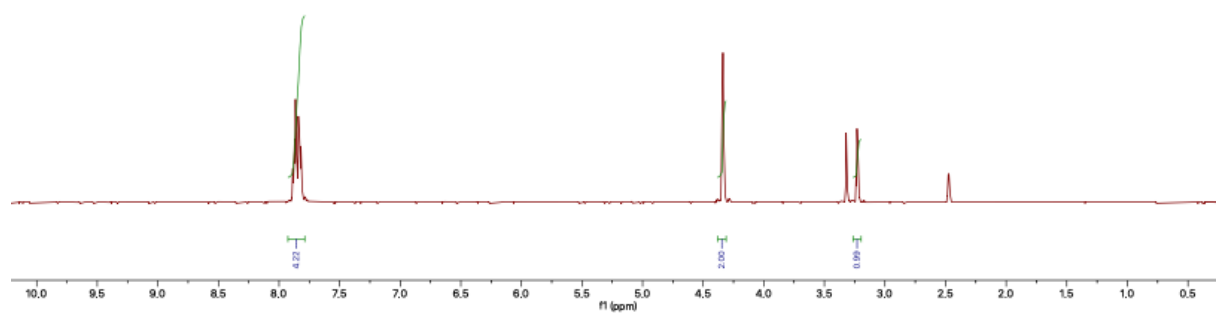
**Figure S20.** The HPLC chromatography of the probe **A1** (A, 40.0 μM), compound **4** (B, 40.0 μM) and the probe **A1** treated with Al<sup>3+</sup> (80.0 μM) (C, after 10 min; D, after 20 min)

**Figure S21.** Alamar Blue assay to determine the IC<sub>50</sub> value (that is the concentration of receptor **A1** which exhibited 50% cell viability for DLD-1 (red line) and CCD-18Co cells (blue line)). DLD-1 and CCD-18Co cells were exposed to the receptors for 48 h. The values are averages of three replicates. The results were normalized to 100% with viability of untreated cells.

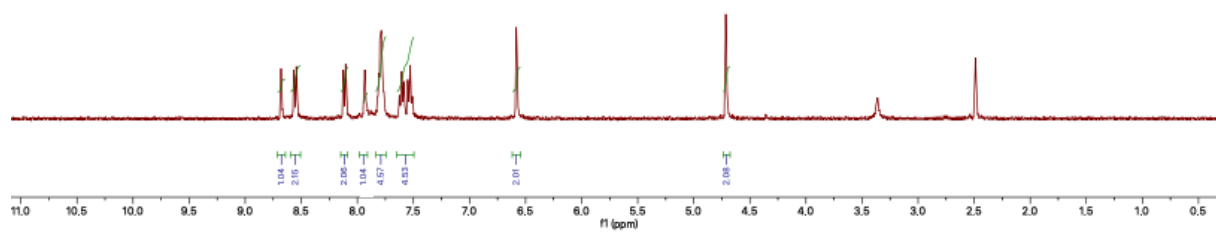
**Fig. S22** Bioimaging performance of receptor **A1**. Fluorescence microscopy images of live DLD-1 cells prestained with 5 μM of Al<sup>3+</sup> for 45 min then stained with 5 μM of receptor **A1**. Left panels (a, d and g) represent the bright field images, middle panels (b, e and h) represent the fluorescence images and right panels (c, f and i) represent the merge of the images. Scale bar a-f: 100 μm and g-i: 20 μm

**Fig. S23** Bioimaging performance of receptor **A1**. Fluorescence microscopy images of live CCD-18Co cells prestained with 5 μM of Al<sup>3+</sup> for 45 min then stained with 5 μM of receptor **A1**. Left panels (a, d and g) represent the bright field images, middle panels (b, e and h) represent the fluorescence images and right panels (c, f and i) represent the merge of the images. Scale bar a-f: 100 μm and g-i: 20 μm

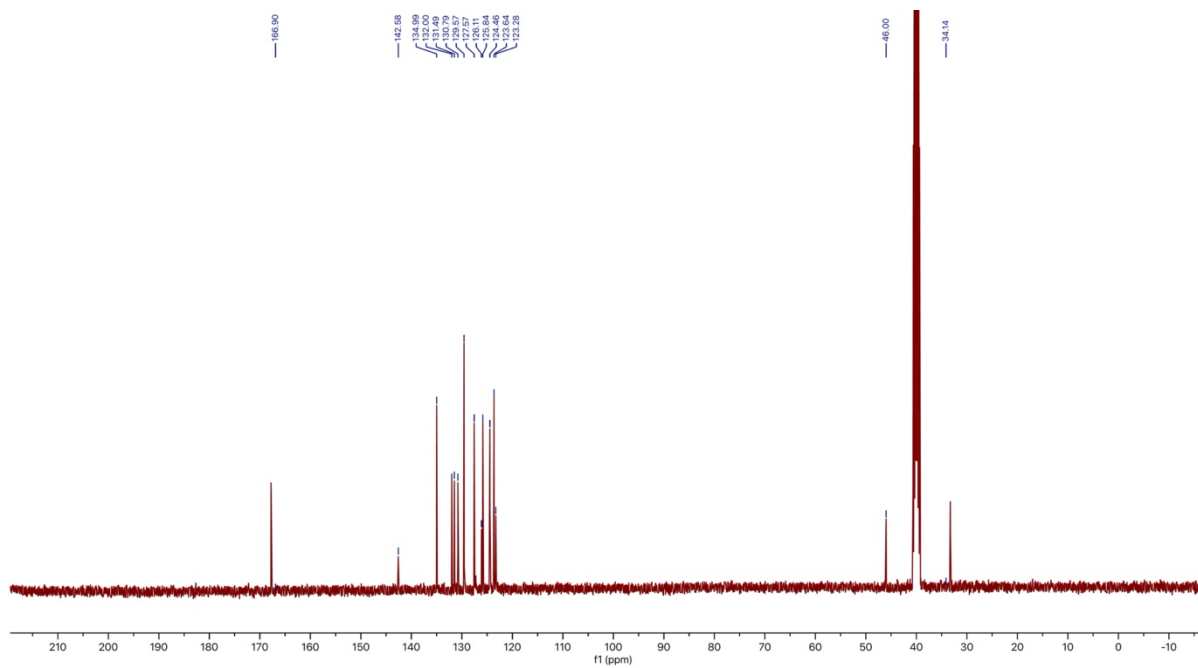




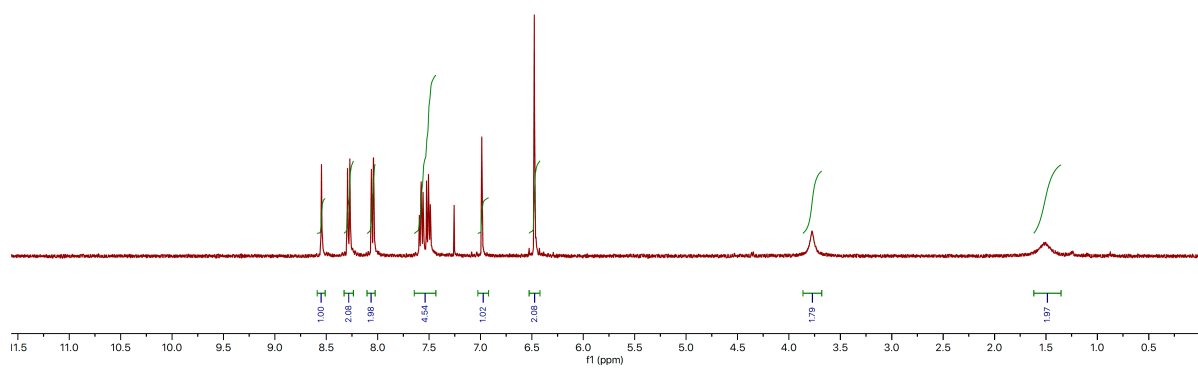
**Figure S1.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **1**



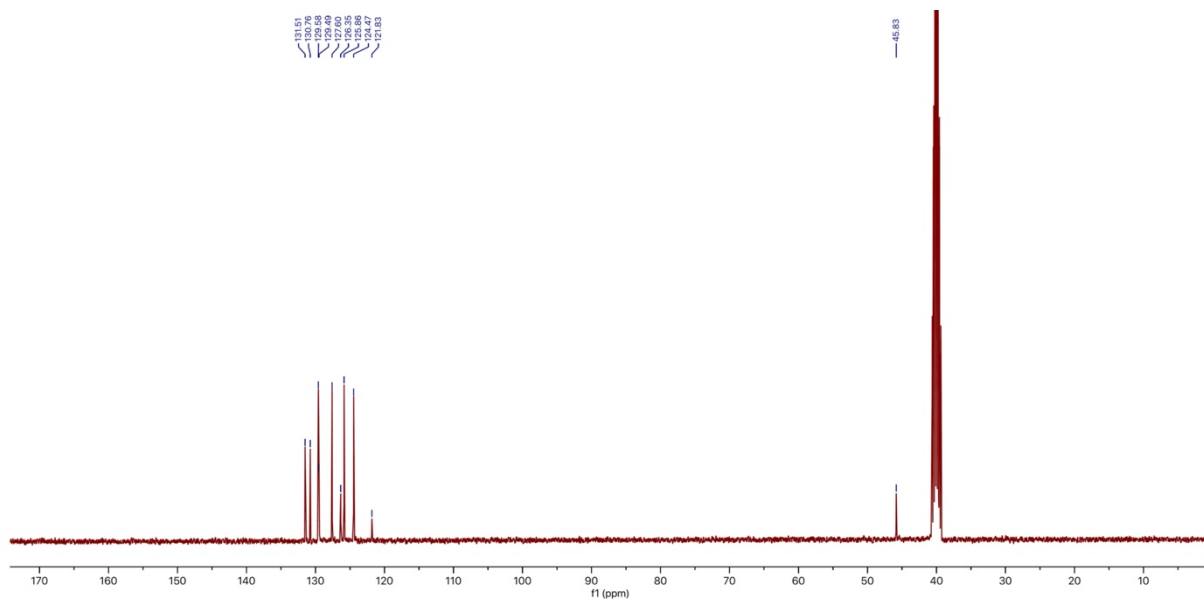
**Figure S2.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) spectra of **3**



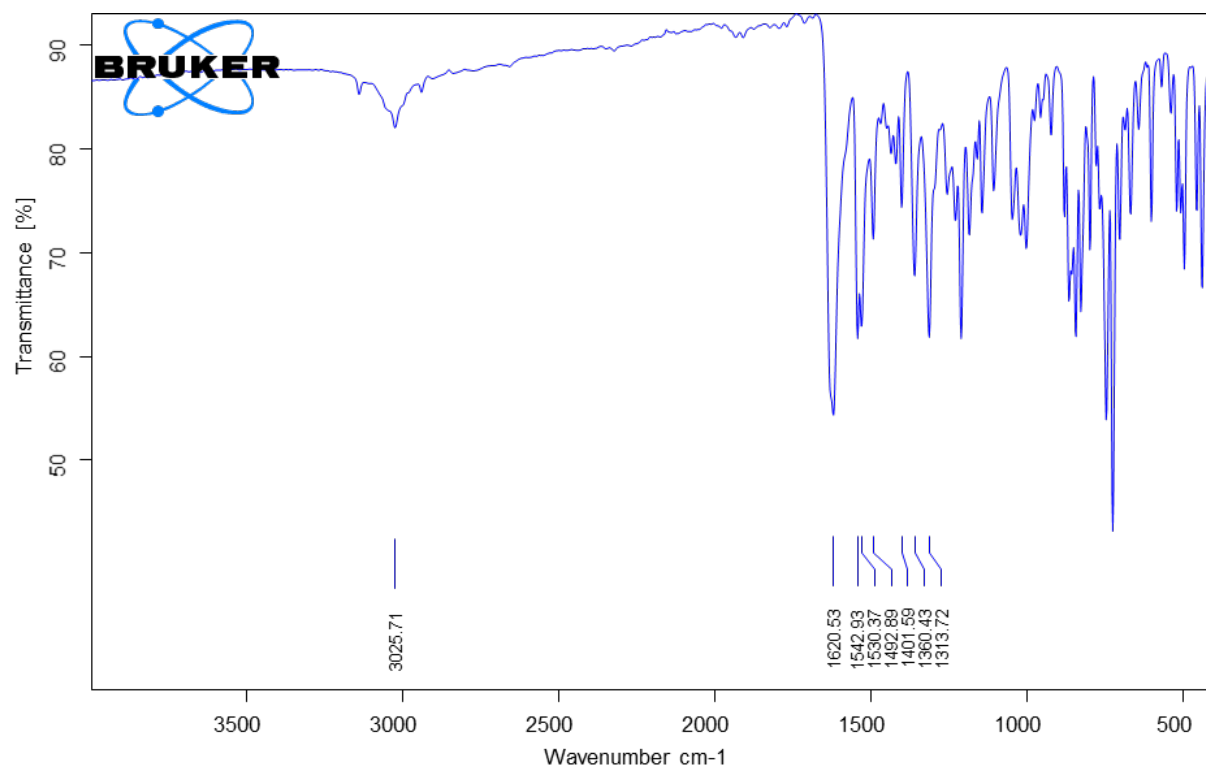
**Figure S3.**  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ ) spectra of **3**



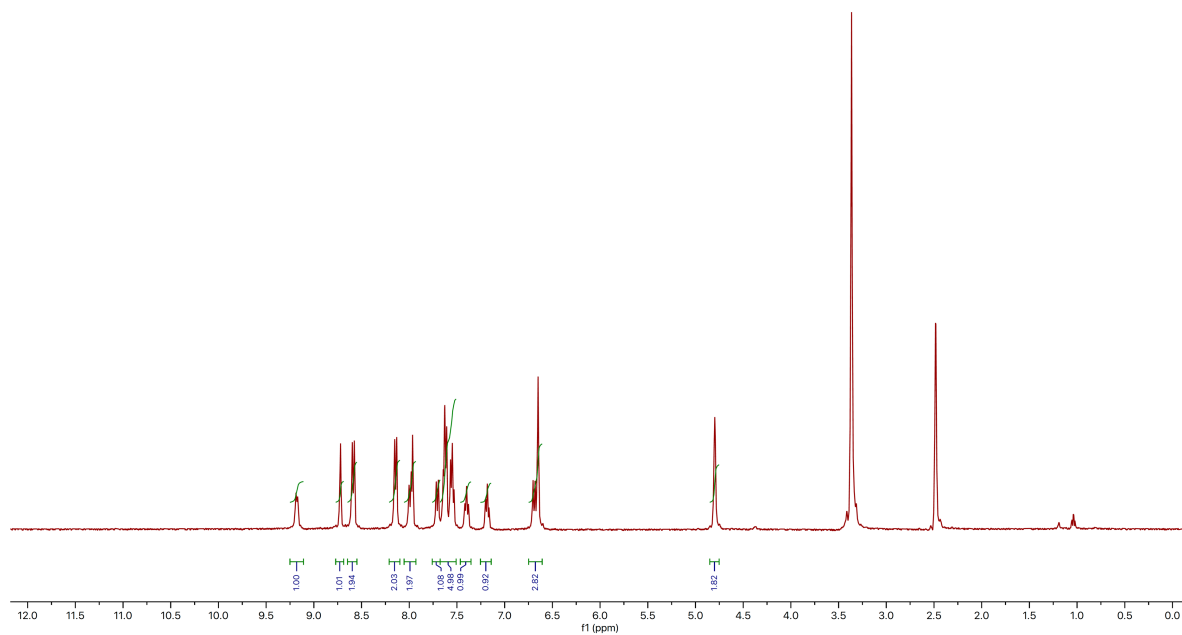
**Figure S4.**  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) spectra of **4**



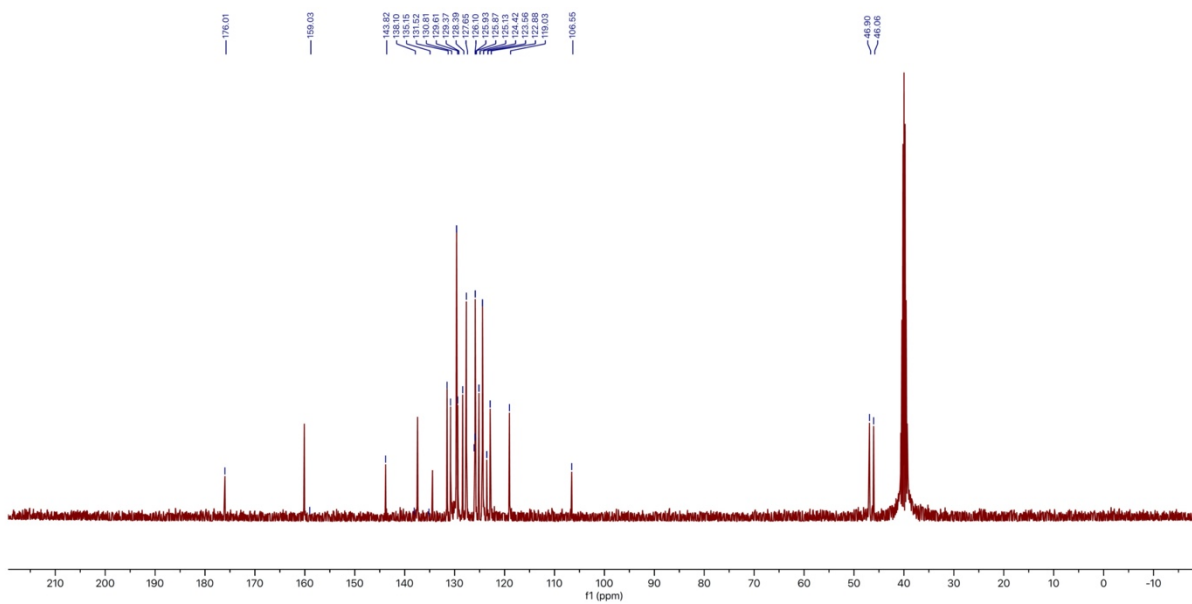
**Figure S5.**  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ ) spectra of **4**



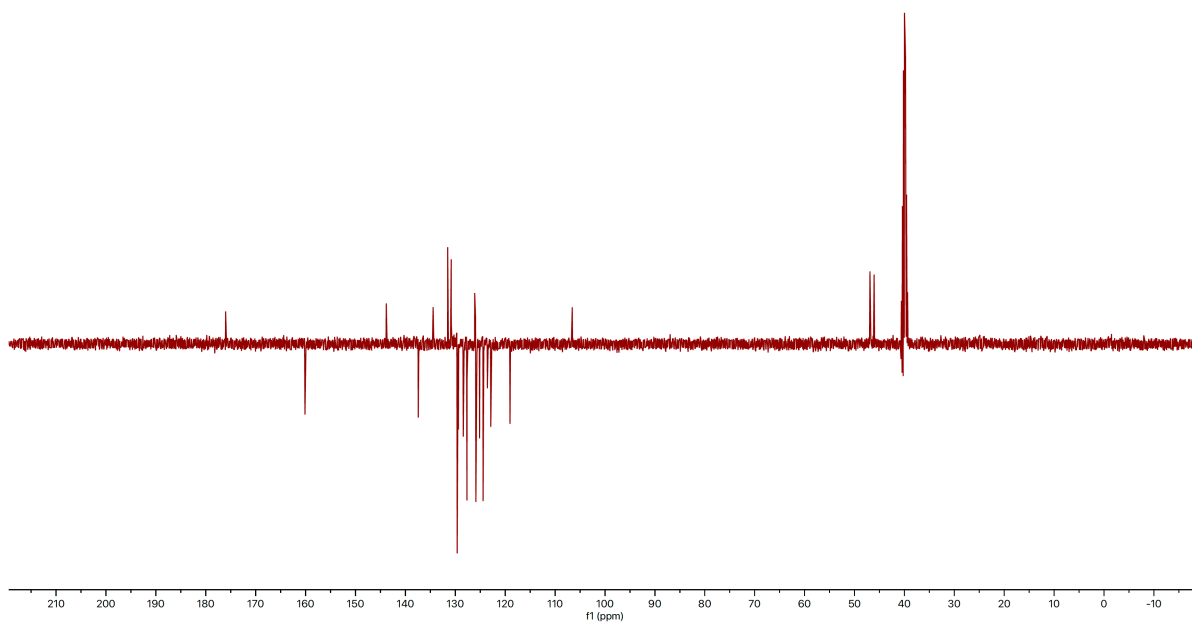
**Figure S6.** FTIR spectra of **A1**



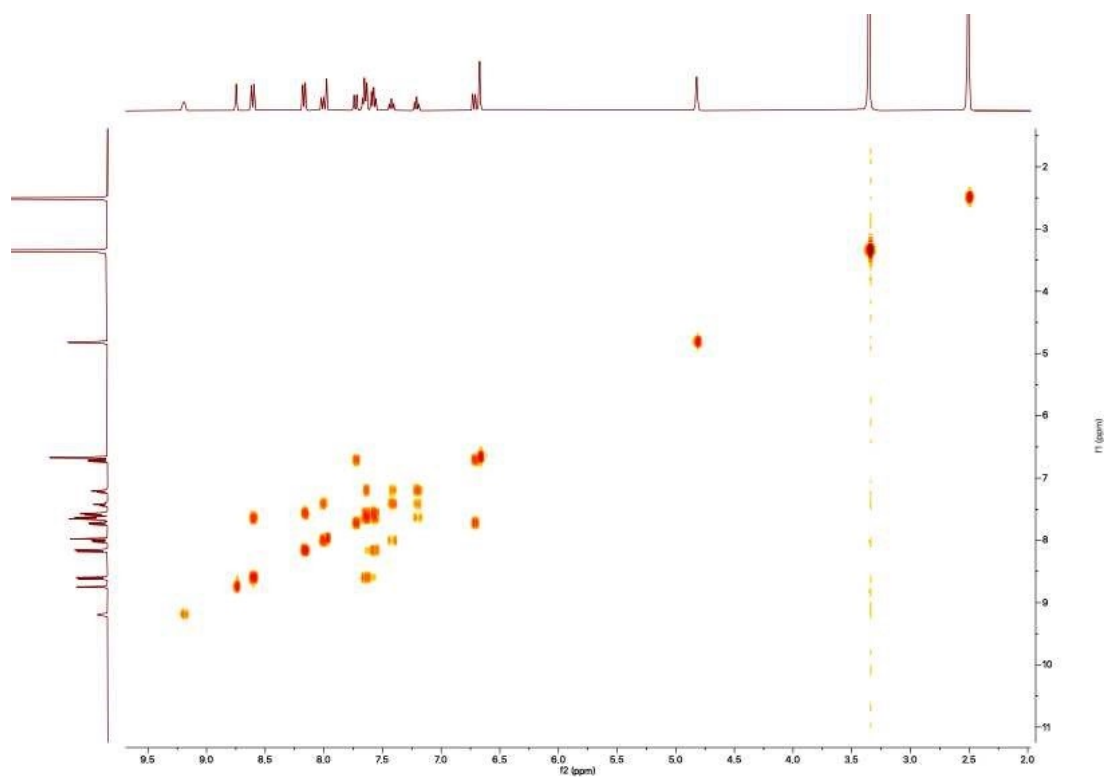
**Figure S7.**  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ ) spectra of **A1**



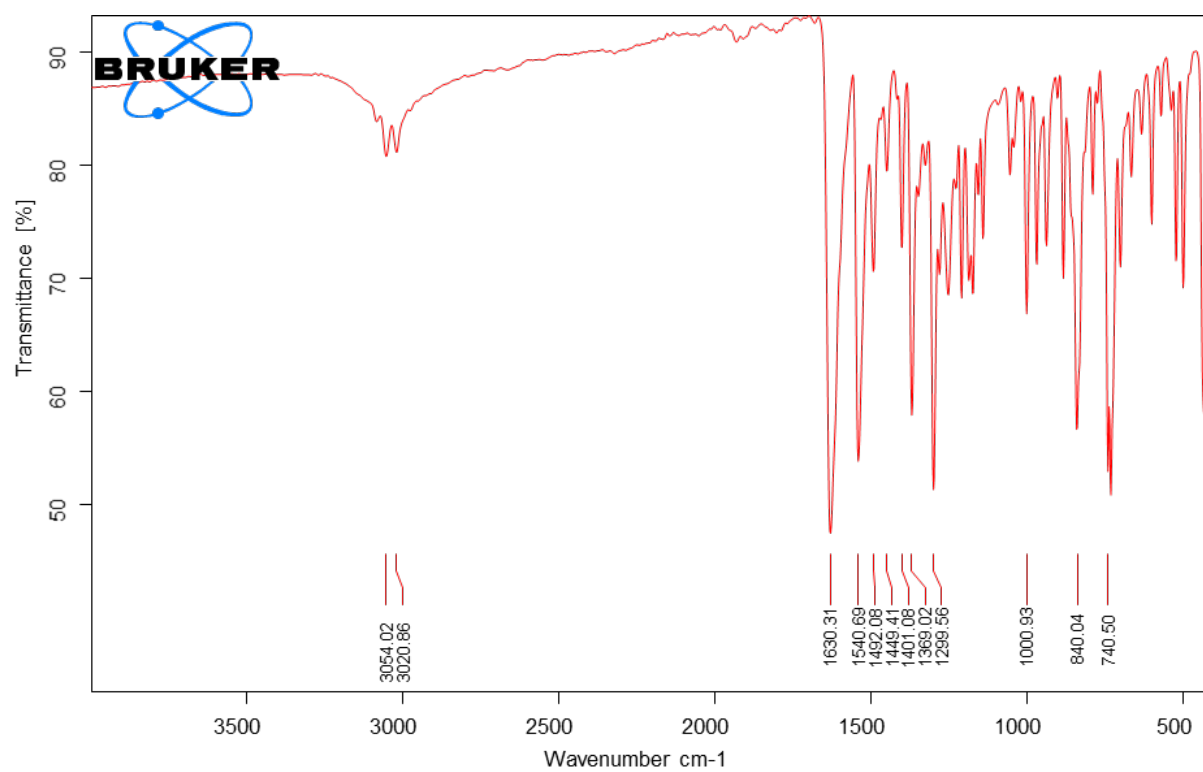
**Figure S8.**  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ ) spectra of **A1**



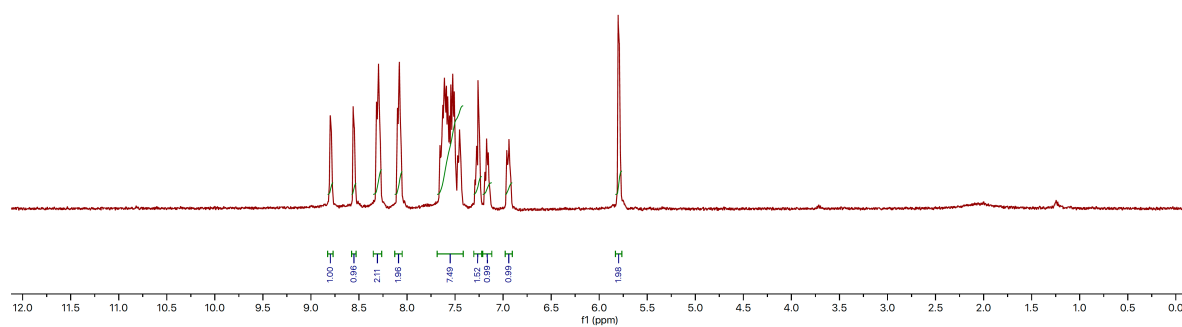
**Figure S9.** APT NMR spectra of A1



**Figure S10.** COSY NMR spectra of A1

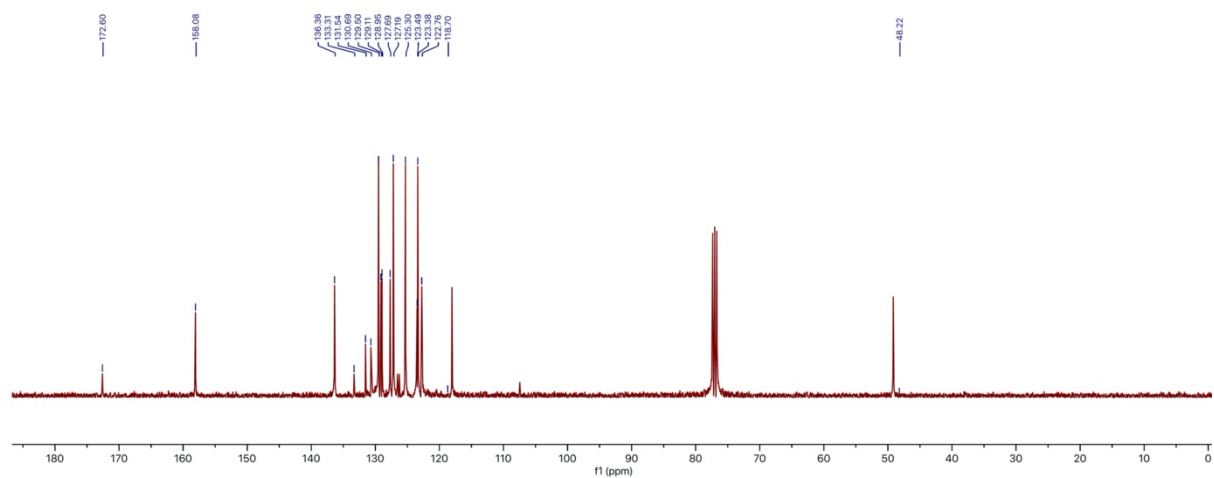


**Figure S11.** FTIR spectra of A2

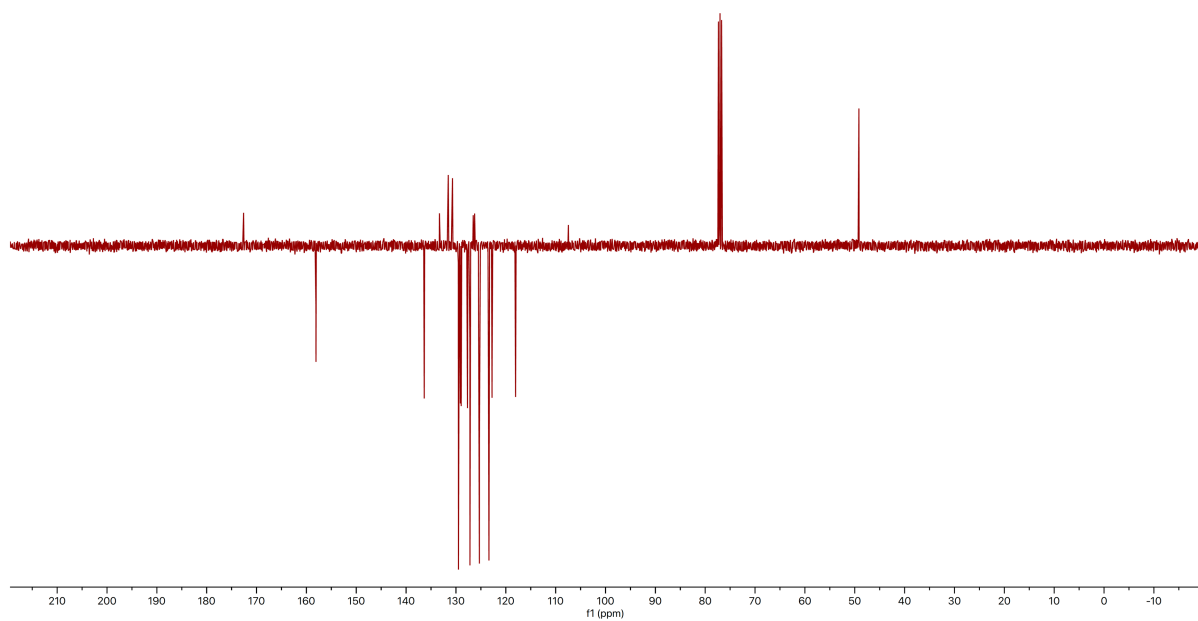


**Figure S12.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) spectra of A2

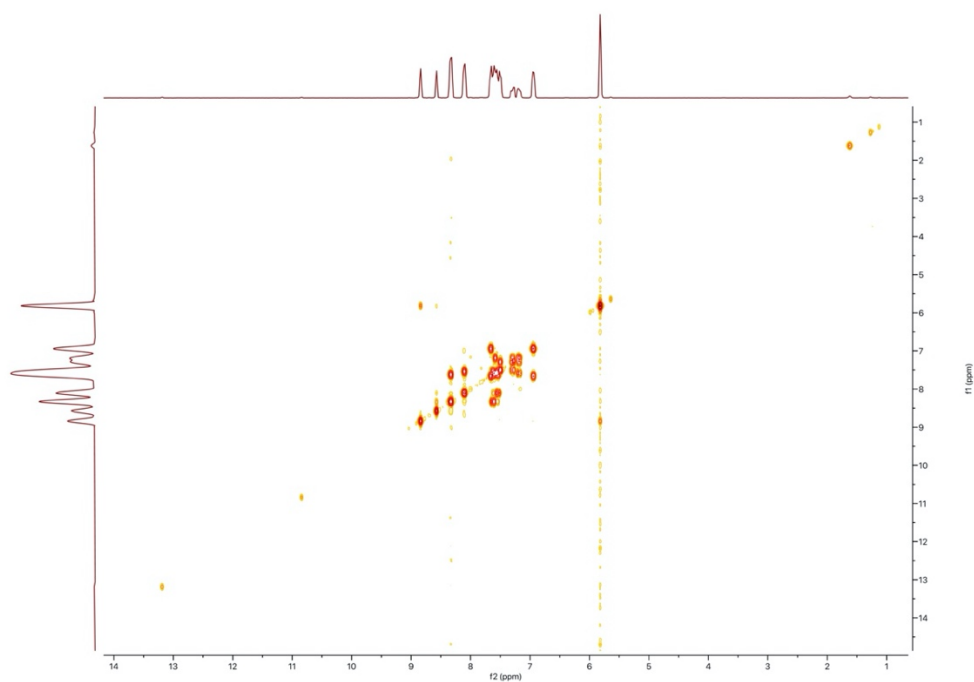




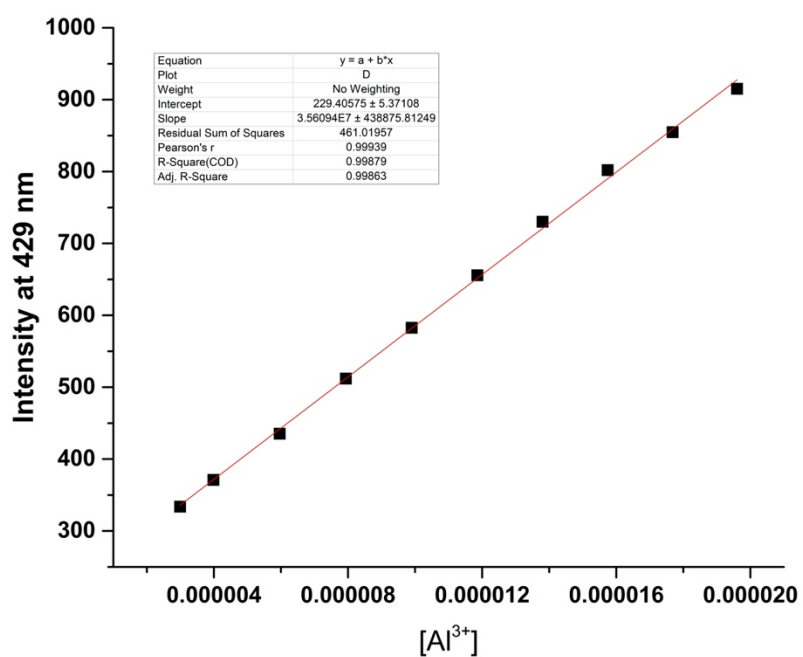
**Figure S13.**  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) spectra of **A2**



**Figure S14.** APT NMR spectra of **A2**



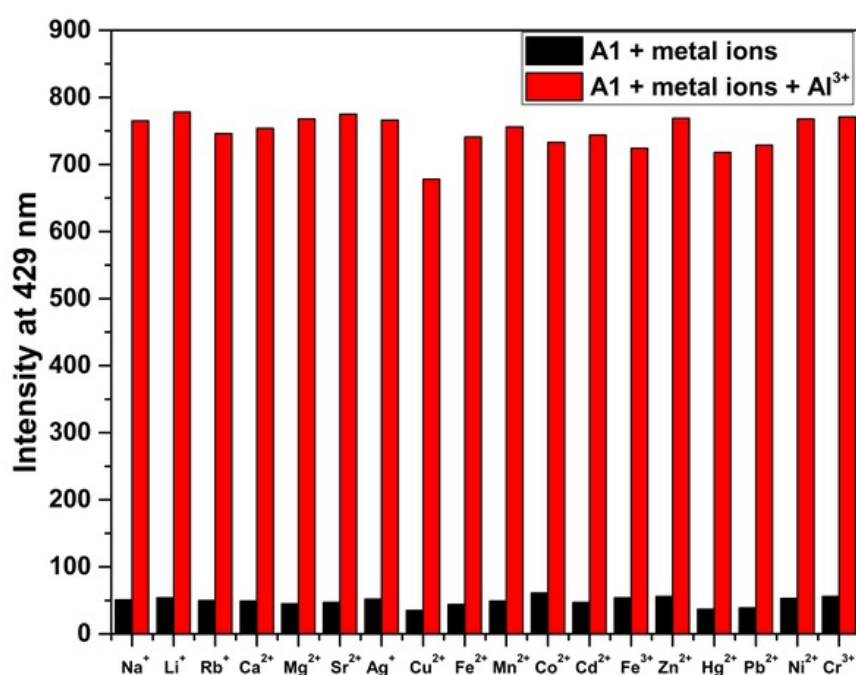
**Figure S15.** COSY NMR spectra of **A2**



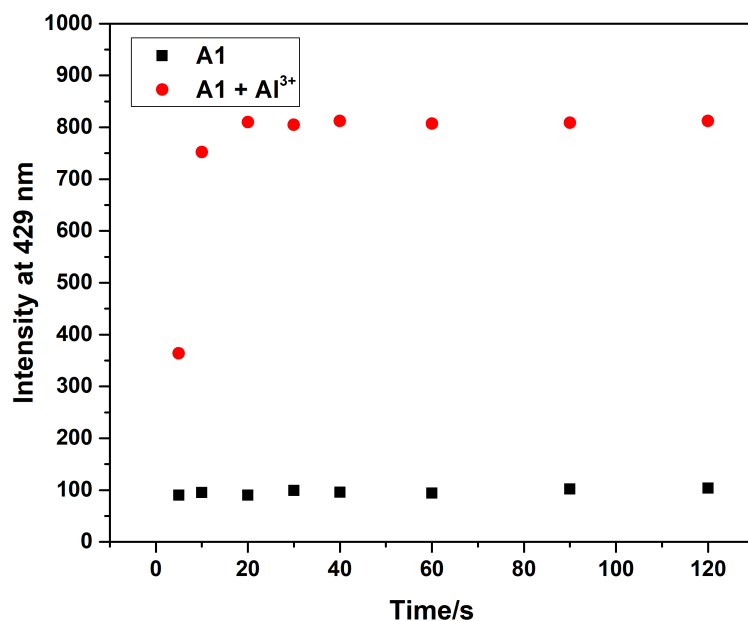
**Figure S16.** The plot of normalized fluorescence intensities of **A1** at 429 nm versus  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  concentration

**Table S1.** Comparison of the related probes reported for  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  detection by fluorescence.

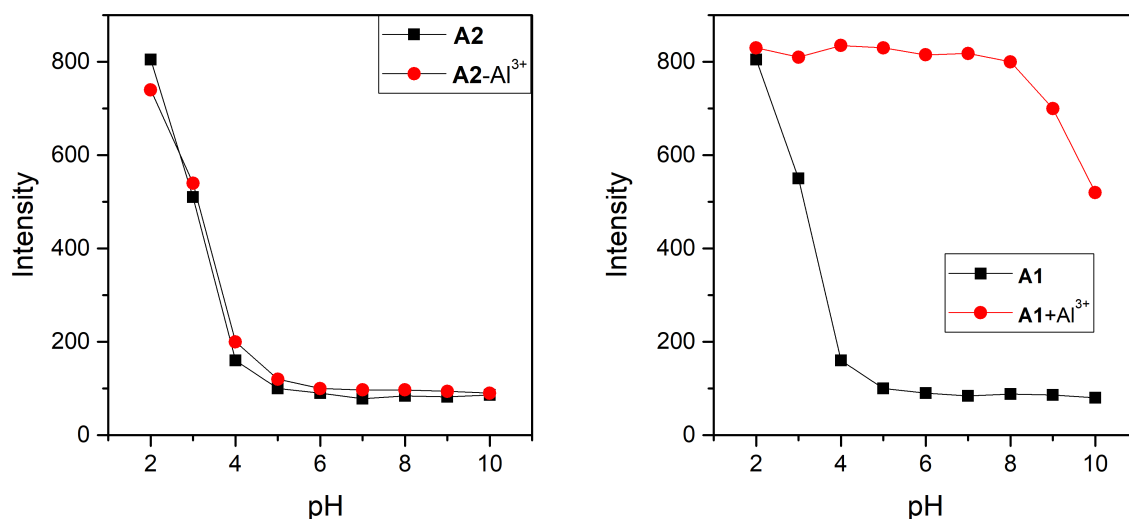
Reference	Detection limit	Bioimaging	Response time
[27]	1 $\mu\text{M}$	None	None
[37]	2.05 $\mu\text{M}$	HeLa	None
[38]	2.67 $\mu\text{M}$	None	None
[39]	6.98 $\mu\text{M}$	None	None
Present study	0.117 $\mu\text{M}$	DLD-1 and CCD-18Co	within 10 s



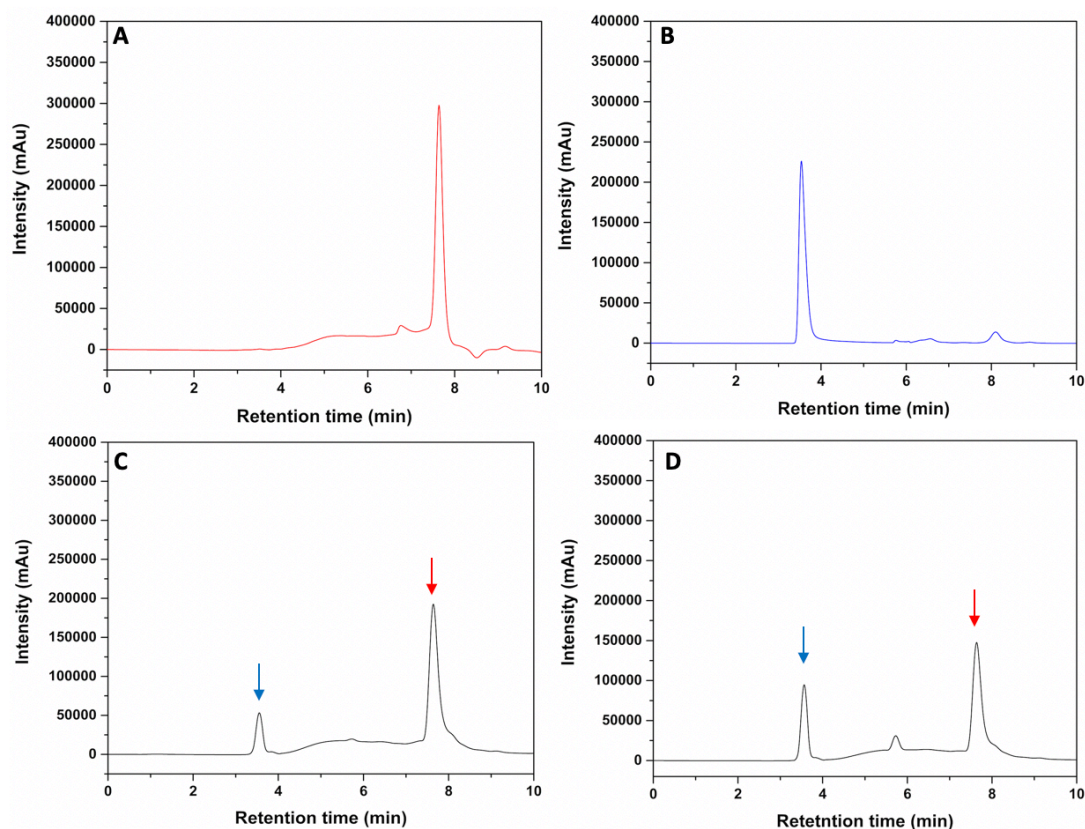
**Figure S17.** Emission intensity responses of **A1** with competitive metal ions in the absence (black bars) or presence (red bars) of  $\text{Al}^{3+}$



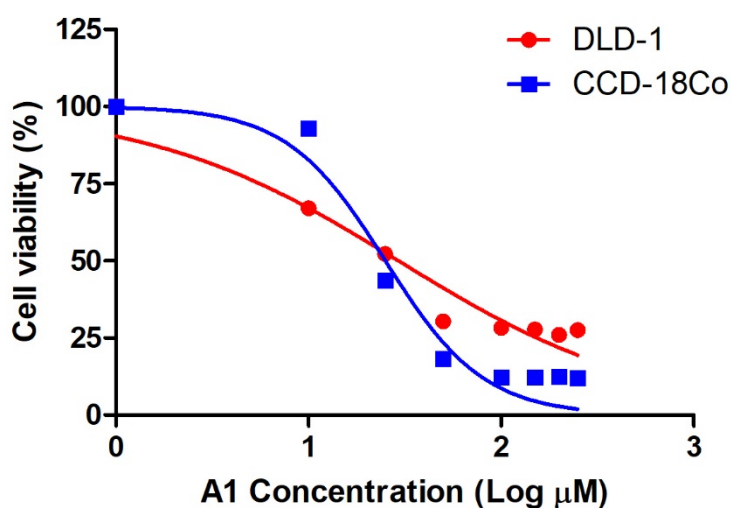
**Figure S18.** Time-dependent fluorescence changes of **A1** (2.0  $\mu\text{M}$ ) at 429 nm in presence or absence of  $\text{Al}^{3+}$  in a mixture of EtOH–H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 6/4, 0.01 M, 0.01 M, potassium phosphate, pH = 6.90).



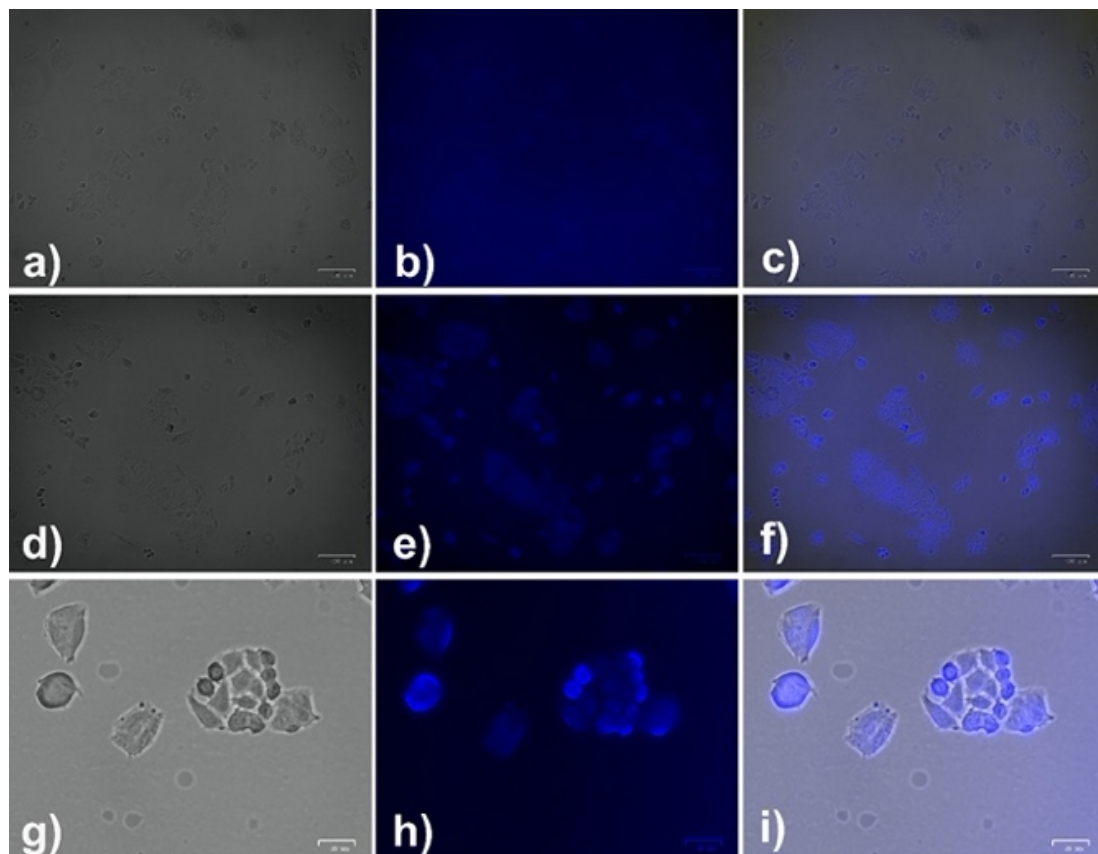
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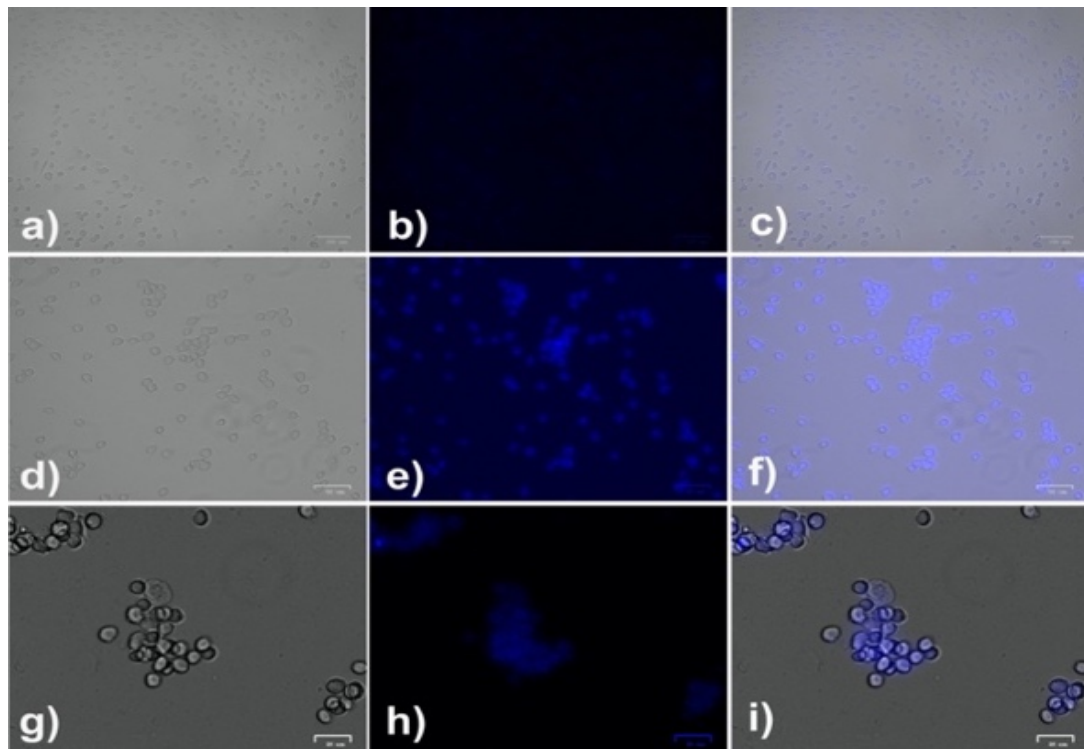
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