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FREEDOM NOW

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DR. BISCET FACT SHEET

Biographical Information

- Full Name: Oscar Elías Biscet Gonzáles
- Birth Date/Place: 20 July 1961/Havana, Cuba
- Citizenship: Cuban
- Religion: Catholic
- Familial Status: Married to Elsa Morejon Hernandez;
father of two children



Background Information

Dr. Biscet is a medical professional and a noted advocate for human rights and democratic freedoms in Cuba, his native country. He is the founder of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights and a leading organizer of the “Friends of Human Rights” group, both of which engage solely in non-violent activities.

Arrest and Detention

Dr. Biscet is serving a twenty-five year prison sentence in Cuba for allegedly committing crimes against the sovereignty and the integrity of the Cuban territory.

Dr. Biscet was arrested on December 6, 2002, on the way to a colleague’s home for a meeting with the “Friends of Human Rights,” a grassroots organization through which small groups of civilians meet to discuss human rights. When the police tried to arrest Dr. Biscet, he and sixteen other individuals sat on the ground and shouted, “long live human rights” and “freedom for political prisoners.” The group was beaten and arrested.

During his imprisonment, the Government of the Republic of Cuba has subjected Dr. Biscet to inhumane treatment, such as confining him to a punishment cell barely larger than his own body for seven months and refusing to feed him for three weeks. As a result, he has lost forty pounds and nearly all of his teeth since his imprisonment. He suffers from hypertension, gastric ulcers, chronic gastritis, and hypercholesterolemia.

In 2003, in response to a petition concerning Dr. Biscet and other Cuban prisoners of conscience, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined that Dr. Biscet is being held in violation of Articles 9, 10, 19, 20, and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and called for his immediate release.

On September 1, 2005, in response to an Urgent Action Appeal filed by Freedom Now on behalf of Dr. Biscet, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on the Question of Torture, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Association issued a joint urgent appeal to the Government of the Republic of Cuba calling once again for Dr. Biscet’s immediate release.

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