

Department of State of the USA, Cuban Affairs
Urgent Petition for Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, Prisoner in Cuba

Dear Friends,

My name is Elsa Morejon Hernandez, I am a Cuban citizen and the wife of Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, president of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights. He is incarcerated in the Kilo 8 Prison in the province of Pinar del Rio, Cuba. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison on July 15, 2003, for violating Cuba's sovereignty and endangering the integrity of the Cuban territory. Since the 17th of the month, prison director, Mario Luis, for no apparent reason, has not allowed the food which is served to all inmates (including breakfast, lunch and dinner) to be taken to my husband in his cell. Since that date, my husband's only nutrition is whatever an inmate offers him.

We were stunned when the prison director notified us of this situation on the 19th at 11:30 a.m. We were at the prison and wanted to give my husband cards and photographs of his children as a Father's Day present.

The director's allegations are as follows:

Dr. Biscet is not going downstairs to the dining hall for breakfast, lunch or dinner. I told him he was not allowed to receive food in his cell. He eats only whatever food is given to him by an inmate. If you brought him something to eat, we are going to let you in to visit him for 30 minutes.

Dr. Biscet's allegations are as follows:

Since the month of April 2003, when I was unjustly sanctioned for this cause, I have never gone to the dining hall in either of the two prisons where I have been. They always isolate me in cells as punishment. On the 16th of January, the director offered to release me from the isolation cell and to move me to a communal cell with 16 other prisoners. I told the director that I accepted as long as I would not participate in any political activity nor go to the dining hall. The dining hall's hygiene is inadequate; there are situations where inmates get into fights; there are violations of established norms of nutrition and hygiene. If I were to attend the dining hall, I would face a confrontation with prison authorities due to these violations. I am a medical doctor, and I consider myself an activist for human rights. The prison director accepted my reasons and allowed for a prisoner to bring food to my cell since the 17th, I have been forced to practically accept starvation. I have not been given an explanation. This new reprisal is directed at me. There are many prisoners here who do not go to the dining hall but still receive food in their cells. I am praying to God that this situation is resolved in the best possible manner. Tell my mother to read psalm 11 which I sent to her. My friends and you should read it also. I have spiritual nutrition and the strength God gives to those who love Him in justice and truth.

Our impressions of the prison visit and of my husband, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet's situation:

I found my husband to be extremely thin. He has lost 60 pounds since he entered prison. He has 2 chronic pathologies: hypertension and hypercholesterolemia. Apparently they are under control. His teeth are deteriorating as a consequence of risk factors such as isolation cells and his refusal to receive medical care from military doctors who, he alleges, are not well intentioned.

Interview with Prison Director:

Please give me a reason why my husband is not allowed to be fed in his cell. You had granted him that concession. You also allowed him to wear his own clothes.

There are new orders that must be followed by all prisoners, except for the more dangerous prisoners who have too many enemies in jail.

Director, I would like to know if you think it appropriate to withhold nutrition from my husband and if you think it would be possible for Dr. Biscet's family to bring him food from home. It has been more than 2 months since we were allowed to bring him 30 pounds of food. Furthermore, don't you think that the restrictions placed upon my husband and his family are too heavy and rigid? Besides, he has been sentenced to 25 years and is only allowed 2 hours visits every 3 months? Only two people can visit. It becomes difficult to choose between mother, brother, father and wife. So far this year, two hour visits have been allowed. He has not been allowed to call family on the phone. He has never been allowed to call his son and daughter who live outside the country. The prison still has no telephone service and you have told me that the television does not work either. Remember when I wanted to bring you a two wave Cuban portable radio, but I was not allowed? Music makes the heart rejoice and Cubans like it; but he was not allowed to listen to music either. Remember, we were not allowed to bring him a mattress to sleep on? He was given something far from a mattress. I couldn't even bring him a fan to keep him from the fatigue that the Cuban summer heat can cause. I couldn't bring water either because there are no refrigerators at the prison yet. You can't shower either because there isn't enough of a water supply. Remember that the landscape surrounding the prison is beautiful, but the prisoners cannot enjoy the view since the windows in the walls of the prison are the cracks on the walls. They do not even resemble the wall in the holy land in Jerusalem.

My husband has kept his word, director. Nevertheless, many things which have nothing to do with my husband have not been fulfilled, for example, to cite a few; Cuban law states that my husband should not be subjected to the regime's most rigorous prison. Even so, my husband and his family have suffered with dignity. I have never asked for a golden cell for my husband. What I have asked for, instead, is his freedom since I believe he is innocent. His only crimes are to have been a soldier and leader of non-violence, life, and human rights for his country. I have never asked for any objects that are out of your reach. But, I have asked that you act responsibly and with justice. My husband is an adversary of ideas, but more importantly he is a man with the right to speak. There is little justification for forcing my husband to eat in a place where he has a reasonable motive for not wanting to eat there.

It is unjust and genocide. Pay attention to the fact that when the communists were persecuted by the fascists, they were forced to eat from the hands of the adversary.

After this interview we called the person until late Tuesday to request authorization to take proper nutrition to my husband who is at a prison located 162 Km. from Havana where he lives. There were no replies to any of our calls. SILENCE.

Mr. Director, I am not silent. I, as Christian am praying for my husband. Keep in mind that you are in my prayers also.

Due to the aforementioned, we are asking that:

All men and women of good will intercede before the Cuban government to resolve this embarrassing situation which has taken so much from my husband's life and that of his family including our integrity and psychological condition. Please allow us to take food to my husband in prison so he will not become ill or die of starvation. Thank you for your attention.



Elsa Morejon
June 23, 2004
Havana, Cuba