

**OPEN LETTER FROM THE LAWTON FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO THE SUMMIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRACY IN CUBA, TO BE HELD IN PRAGUE , CZECH REPUBLIC ON SEPTEMBER OF THE YEAR 2004.**

**HONORABLE FRIENDS OF DEMOCRACY:**

TODAY, I AM HERE TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF A CUBAN CITIZEN WHO IS CONFINED TO A CLOSE PUNISHMENT CELL IN CUBA. HIS NAME IS DR. OSCAR ELIAS BISCET, A CHRISTIAN, AFRO-CUBAN, MEDICAL DOCTOR BY PROFESSION. DR. BISCET IS 43 YEARS OLD AND HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE STRUGGLE TO FREE CUBA FROM A TOTALITARIAN REGIME. FOR THIS REASON HE HAS BEEN INCARCERATED FOR ALMOST 5 YEARS AND CURRENTLY IS BEING HELD IN A PUNISHMENT CELL BLOCK AT THE MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON KM 8, IN PINAR DEL RIO, CUBA.

DR. BISCET INITIATED HIS PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES IN 1992. IN 1997 HE FOUNDED THE LAWTON FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS A NON-VIOLENT, NON-GOVERNMENTAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION, BASED ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, WITH THE PURPOSE OF DEFENDING AND DENOUNCING THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO ESTABLISH A STATE OF LAW IN CUBA.

DURING THE SAME YEAR IN 1997, DR. BISCET DEFENDS THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND SUED THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HEALTH BEFORE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA. DR. BISCET DENOUNCED THE USE OF AN ABORTIVE METHOD EMPLOYED DURING THE THIRD TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY USING THE RIVANOL METHOD, WHICH CAUSES THE EXPULSION OF THE FETUS AND IN MOST CASES, THE FETUS PRESENTS SIGNS OF LIFE. AS A RESULT OF THIS, THAT SAME AFTERNOON DR. BISCET WAS EXPELLED FROM THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROHIBITED FROM PRACTICING MEDICINE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY. THREE WEEKS LATER, HE WAS EVICTED FROM HIS HOME SHARED WITH HIS WIFE AND 2 ADOLESCENT SIBLINGS. HIS WIFE, A NURSE BY PROFESSION, ELSA MOREJON, WAS ALSO EXPELLED FROM HER JOB AFTER 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO HER COMMUNITY.

IN 1999, DR. BISCET ORGANIZED IN HAVANA EL AYUNO DE TAMARINDO 34 {THE FASTING AT TAMARINDO 34}. DURING 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS OF CONTINUED PRAYERS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA WERE DENOUNCED. THE CUBAN DICTATOR CASTRO WAS FORCED TO RECOGNIZE TO THE WORLD AND THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS THAT THERE WAS AN OPPOSITION IN CUBA WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY STATING THAT DR. BISCET WAS INSANE. ONLY 2 DAYS AFTER CASTRO'S SPEECH DR. BISCET WAS INCARCERATED AND ON FEBRUARY 2000 HE WAS TRIED AND

SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS IN PRISON, CHARGED WITH THE SO CALLED CRIMES OF “DISHONORING NATIONAL SYMBOLS”, “PUBLIC DISORDER”, AND “INSIGHTING DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR”.

DR. BISCET WAS SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS IN PRISON IN HOLGUIN, ORIENTE, 768 KILOMETERS FROM HIS HOME IN HAVANA. DR. BISCET AS WELL AS HIS WIFE WERE SUBJECTED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL TORTURE. DR. BISCET ENDURED PUNISHMENTS THAT INCLUDED CONFINEMENT IN TAPIADAS{ A HUMID DARK CELL WITH NO SUN LIGHT}, SUSPENSION OF VISITING PRIVILEGES AND RESTRICTIONS OF MAIL AND WRITING.

DR. BISCET WAS SET FREE ON OCTOBER 31, 2002 AND ARRIVED AT HIS NEIGHBORHOOD IN LAWTON, HAVANA. HE WAS RECEIVED AS A HERO BY THE MEMBERS OF HIS COMMUNITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. HE IMMEDIATELY CALLED TWO PRESS CONFERENCES WHERE HE DENOUNCED THE CONDITIONS AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS INSIDE CASTRO’S PRISONS. PETITIONING FOR THE SUPERVISION OF CASTRO’S PRISON SYSTEM BY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS. IN THIS PETITION HE FOUND SUPPORT IN THE CUBAN PEOPLE AND WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN TWO THOUSAND SIGNATURES IN ONLY 15 DAYS.

DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCES, DR. BISCET CLARIFIED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE CASTRO REGIME WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS; “I STAND THAT AS LONG AS THE CASTRO-COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP IS IN EXISTENCE WE THE CUBAN PEOPLE CANNOT LIVE UNDER DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS WILL CONTINUE TO BE VIOLATED. MY PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE WITH VEHEMENCE IN FREEDOM, ENJOY AN ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AS A RESULT OF THEIR EFFORTS”.

DURING THE 36 DAYS THAT HE WAS FREE, DR. BISCET PROCEEDED TO ORGANIZE THE FRIENDSHIP CLUBS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DEFINED AS CLUSTERS OF CELLS COMPOSED OF 10 MEMBERS EACH, WITH THE OBJECTIVE TO EDUCATE THE CUBAN PEOPLE ON THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO DISCUSS STRATEGIES TO BRING DEMOCRACY TO CUBA.

IN THE SAME 36 DAYS, DR. BISCET DEVELOPED THE CONCEPTS FOR THE DECLARATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES. THIS DECLARATION ESTABLISHES THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DEMOCRACY IN CUBA. THESE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES HAVE AS THEIR PILLAR THE UNCONDITIONAL FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE OF CUBA UNDER A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED IN FREE AND GENERAL ELECTIONS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, THE REPEAL OF THE ILLEGITIMATE COMMUNIST CONSTITUTION OF 1976 AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOVEREIGN

CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY, THE UNCONDITIONAL AND IMMEDIATE AMNESTY FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND THE RECOGNITION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY AND FREE ENTERPRISE.

ON DECEMBER 6 2002, AFTER ONLY 36 DAYS OF FREEDOM , DR. BISCET WAS PLACED UNDER ARREST WITH A GROUP OF 17 PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS WHILE THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY TO A MEETING AT THE HOME OF A FRIEND OF HUMAN RIGHTS. ON APRIL 2003 HE WAS TRIED AND SENTENCED TO A 25 YEAR PRISON TERM. DR. BISCET HAS BEEN IN UNDER GROUND TAPIADAS, IN CLOSED CELLS WITH HIGHLY DANGEROUS INMATES. AT THE PRESENT TIME HE HAS BEEN IN A BLOCK PUNISHMENT CELL{HOLE} UNDER INHUMANE CONDITIONS. HE IS ISOLATED FROM HIS FAMILY. HE IS PROHIBITED FROM RECEIVING VISITS, PHONE CALLS, FOOD AND LITERATURE. HIS MAIL IS CENSORED, HE SLEEPS ON A CEMENT BLOCK AND ONLY AT 10 PM HE IS GIVEN A MAT . HE IS BEREFT OF SUNLIGHT AND OF ANY BELONGINGS. DURING THE TIME FROM FEBRUARY TO SEPTEMBER 2004 DR. BISCET HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO RECEIVE ONLY 4 FAMILY VISITS AND 3 DELIVERIES OF FOOD. NOT A SINGLE PHONE CALL HAS BEEN PERMITTED. DURING THE 5 MONTHS THAT HE WAS CONFINED WITH HIGHLY DANGEROUS INMATES HE FELT HARASSED AND PRESSURED TO OBEY A DISCIPLINE THAT IS INCONGRUENT WITH HIS PERSONALITY AND PRINCIPLES AND HE TOTALLY OPPOSES SUCH TYPE OF CONFINEMENT.

IN ONE OF HIS CLANDESTINE LETTERS FROM PRISON DR. BISCET WRITES: "I AM CONVINCED OF MY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES, THE SUFFERING OF ANOTHER HUMAN BEING IS ALSO MINE, I CANNOT ACCEPT EVIL, BECAUSE IF I DID MY BONES WILL ERODE AND MY SOUL WILL NEVER LIVE IN PEACE".

THE LAWTON FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DR. OSCAR ELIAS BISCET'S FAMILY AND THE CUBAN PEOPLE REQUEST OF THIS DEMOCRATIC FORUM TO DEMAND THE LIBERATION OF DR. OSCAR ELIAS BISCET AND OF ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN CUBA. THIS CUBAN PHYSICIAN HAS ALWAYS HONORED HIS PEOPLE AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL, THANK YOU.

**DR. ANGEL E. GARRIDO**

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

**LAWTON FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

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