



House of Lords

31 January 2011

His Excellency Thorbjorn Jagland
Chairman
Norwegian Nobel Committee
Henrik Ibsens Gate 51
0255 Oslo
Norway

Dear Chairman Jagland and Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee:

We, the undersigned members of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, respectfully nominate Dr. Óscar Elías Biscet González for the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. Biscet is a Cuban human rights activist and political prisoner. He is distinguished by his extraordinary vision, courage, leadership, and dedication to non-violence in resisting the Cuban government's human rights violations. Since the 1980s, Dr. Biscet has been active in the defense of human rights, conducting and disseminating studies of rights violations, organizing peaceful demonstrations, educational efforts, civic projects, and non-governmental organizations.

Notably, in 1997 Dr. Biscet founded in Havana an organization - the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights - with the mission to defend inalienable rights. This foundation proposed to Cubans the fundamental reform of their political, social, and economic life so as to bring it into accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 2002 Dr. Biscet helped lead a civic project called "Club for Friends of Human Rights," in which Cubans, meeting in small groups, would educate themselves on their human rights and non-violent methods for defending them.

Dr. Biscet undertook his defense of human rights at great risk to himself, and has paid an extraordinarily high price for it. Yet his sacrifice itself has witnessed to the inalienability of human rights. Arrested and beaten dozens of times by Cuban officials, from 1999 to 2002 Dr. Biscet served a three-year sentence for organizing peaceful political protests. Soon after his 2002 release, he met with eleven other dissidents in a private house to discuss a petition drive and human rights - for which he and the others were beaten and arrested. As a result of Dr. Biscet's continued human rights advocacy, in 2002 the Cuban government sentenced him to twenty-five years in prison. Since that time he has been held in wretched conditions - for many months in a small, windowless cell barely larger than his own body, with no natural light, no plumbing, no reading materials, and no contact with



other inmates; then for many months in a cell overcrowded with dozens of inmates, many of them convicted of murder and other violent crimes - resulting in severe weight loss and other illnesses. Yet even in prison Dr. Biscet inspires his fellow prisoners, protests their mistreatment, and sends out messages of encouragement and hope to his fellow Cubans. Dr. Biscet has now spent more than a decade in prison, separated from his family. In recent years, as other Cuban political prisoners have been released abroad, Dr. Biscet has made clear that he will not accept release conditioned upon leaving his country.

Were the Norwegian Nobel Committee to honor Dr. Biscet, it would recognize and vindicate the human dignity and rights of the whole Cuban people. Certainly such recognition would be a powerful encouragement to all those Cubans who seek the democratic reform of their government. The Cuban people have been harshly repressed for almost fifty years - and leading authorities on human rights agree that even today the government of Cuba remains one of the most repressive in the world. Yet all too often the world has ignored or dismissed the severity and scope of human rights violations in Cuba.

We believe that, since Dr. Biscet has explicitly based his defense of human rights on universal principles of human dignity as articulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights agreements, he would be a uniquely suitable choice to receive the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

Cuba today is at a crossroads. As the Cuban people awaits the inevitability of generational change within its government, we believe that the time has arrived in which the recognition of Dr. Biscet - a Cuban human rights defender unalterably dedicated to non-violent social change - will open up a constructive path for the future of Cuba.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Alton".

The Rt. Hon. Professor The Lord Alton of Liverpool, KCMCO, KCSG

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Constance Cox".

The Rt. Hon. The Baroness Cox of Queensbury

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "pp. Michael Bates." with a horizontal line underneath.

The Lord Bates of Langbaugh