Cuban Human Rights Advocate Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet Gonzalez Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

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Washington, D.C. – Freedom Now and the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights are pleased to announce the nomination of Dr. Óscar Elías Biscet González for the Nobel Peace Prize by the Prime Minister of Hungary , members of the Parliament of Canada, members of the United States Congress , members of the European Parliament , members of the British House of Lords , and a leading member of another government.

In a letter to Thorbjørn Jagland, Chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee in Norway, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán wrote, “Dr. Biscet is a man of courage and dignity,” and asked that the Committee consider Dr. Biscet’s “relentless and self-sacrificing struggle for universal human rights and freedom.”

The Secretary General of the European People’s Party (EPP) and MEP, Antonio López-Istúriz, has said, “Dr. Biscet is one of the most relevant and peaceful voices denouncing the ongoing violation of human rights in Cuba, as a way to advance towards a democratic system in the country. His fight for freedom of speech in Cuba has been recognized internationally since many years. For this reason, I have recently promoted the support for his Nobel Prize candidature also by the European Parliament.” Members of the British House of Lords praised Dr. Biscet as a man “distinguished by his extraordinary vision, courage, leadership, and

dedication to non-violence in resisting the Cuban government's human rights violations."

Dr. Biscet is a renowned human rights activist who has paid tremendous personal cost for his advocacy since the 1980s. As a medical professional, founder and President of the Lawton Foundation for Human Rights, and leading organizer of the "Friends of Human Rights" group in Cuba, he has dedicated his life to defending the fundamental rights of the Cuban people. Dr. Biscet was arrested most recently in late 2002 for exercising basic civil liberties, convicted on sham charges, and continues to serve a 25-year prison sentence.

For many years now, Dr. Biscet has repeatedly faced inhumane treatment in prison, including confinement to a punishment cell and denial of food for extended periods of time. Yet, as members of the European Parliament describe in their letter to the Committee, even throughout these horrific times, Dr. Biscet has "continued to call for non-violence, and has called forth the memory of personal heroes such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr."

Members of the United States Congress wrote, "Cuba today is at a crossroads. Awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Dr. Oscar Biscet Gonzalez—a Cuban human rights defender unalterably dedicated to nonviolent social change—will point the way ahead, toward a constructive future for all of the people of Cuba."