

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 25/26/98
Distr: PG/SC

To: Health professionals
From: Medical office / North America and Caribbean Team
Date: 23 November 1998

FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**(See AMR 25/43/97, 28 November 1997; AMR 25/40/97, 17 November 1997;
AMR 25/28/97, 19 August 1997)**

**Dr Desi MENDOZA Rivero
CUBA**

Amnesty International has learned that Dr Desi Mendoza, who had been sentenced to eight years in prison in November 1997, was released on 20 November 1998 for "humanitarian reasons" due to his ill-health. His release, together with that of another prisoner of conscience, Jesus Chamber Ramírez, follows the visit to Cuba from 9-11 November of the Spanish Foreign Minister, Abel Matutes, to whom Amnesty International had handed a list of POCs prior to his visit.

Dr Desi Mendoza had been arrested in June 1997 and imprisoned in connection with a critique he had made of the handling of a dengue fever epidemic in Santiago de Cuba in the east of the country. During the trial in November 1997 he was reportedly accused of having behaved in a way which was "politically opposed to the Cuban social system".

The release of Dr Desi Mendoza was conditional on him leaving the country. He is expected to go into exile in Spain.

**No further action is required by network members.
Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.**