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Release: Dr Oscar Elías Biscet González

Cuba

(See appeal in *Harming the Healers*, ACT 75/002/2000, May 2000)

Key words release / prisoner of conscience

Release of Dr Dr Oscar Elías Biscet González

In the publication *Harming the Healers* (2000) Amnesty International called for action on behalf of Dr Oscar Elías Biscet González, who had been arrested on 3 November 1999. Amnesty International has now learnt that Dr Oscar Elías Biscet González was released on 31 October 2002. He had been imprisoned for almost three years.

Background information

Dr Oscar Elías Biscet González was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on charges of making an "insult to the symbols of the homeland", "public disorder", and "incitement to commit a crime". The first charge was reportedly brought against him because he hung a Cuban flag sideways on his balcony during a press conference at his home on 28 October 1999. The two other charges were added later.

Elsa Morrejon, Dr Biscet's wife, told news agency Reuters that her husband had suffered a serious gum infection in prison that caused three molars to fall out. She said he refused treatment because he did not trust the medical staff at the prison.

The news agency Associated Press reported that, following his release, Dr Biscet stated to reporters outside his mother's home: "Despite my three years in prison, I have not given up my struggle for the liberty of Cuba, especially for the prisoners."

For further information on current prisoners of conscience in Cuba, see the attached press release: Cuba: Freedom of expression still curtailed despite recent release (6 November, AMR 25/009/2002). This press release and the related report can also be accessed at:
<http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/AMR250092002>