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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON GOVERNMENTS TO
STOP MAKING EXCUSES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES**

Amnesty International said today that two out of three people are ruled by governments that torture and kill their citizens and that political opponents are held in more than half the countries in the world.

In a statement marking its 30th anniversary, the worldwide human rights organization called on governments "to stop making excuses for those abuses and instead live up to their international obligations to protect human rights".

Governments often deny that abuses have ever taken place or try to justify them by saying that the victims deserved what they got, that pressing social or economic problems are more important than human rights, or that the way they treat their citizens is an internal matter.

The organization said that as part of its worldwide campaign, it was highlighting 30 victims of human rights violations - showing that in 1991 governments in every region of the world are still jailing, torturing and killing men, women and children.

Those victims include a 59-year-old Vietnamese poet who has spent half his life in jail for his political verses; a doctor in Colombia who "disappeared" last year while campaigning for human rights; a 12-year-old boy killed by government troops in Mauritania because of the colour of his skin; a woman in Iran executed for her non-violent political activities and a man in the United Kingdom who was refused asylum and sent back to Sri Lanka despite the risk that he would be tortured, which did in fact happen.

Starting around the 28 May anniversary date and continuing throughout 1991, Amnesty International's members around the world will be campaigning for an end to such abuses through special events.

To get further information about those events, your correspondents can contact some of Amnesty International's sections and groups listed on the following pages.

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