

Convention against AFSPA



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A convention on Repeal [AFSPA](#) (Armed Forces Special Powers [Act](#)) was organized here at [New Delhi](#) today with the objective to bring demand of Repeal [AFSPA](#) in political priorities. This convention was organized on the eve of 2nd Nov where Iron Sharmila, better known [as](#) Iron lady of [Manipur](#) is completing 15 years of her hunger strike with the demand to Repeal [AFSPA](#).

Convention was attended by various eminent speakers that includes NeinguloKrom (Secretary General of Naga Peoples' Movement for Human Rights), BablooLoitongbam (Human Rights Activist from [Manipur](#)), Swami Agnivesh , [Prof](#) NandiniSundar, [Prof](#) DeeptiPriyaMehrotra , Ashok Agrwaal and others. Youths and other activists also attended the convention in large numbers and extended their support towards the cause.

This convention was organized by Save Sharmila Solidarity Campaign (SSSC), Association for Protection of Civil Rights (APCR), Students Islamic Organisation (SIO), Bonded Labour Liberation Front, Just Peace Foundation (JPF), Forum Asia and Human Rights Alert. Those who participated also signed sheets to endorse the demand of Repeal [AFSPA](#) from all regions (North [east](#) and J&K) and release of IromSharmila. Father Denzil delivered his welcome note in [start](#) of convention.

IromSharmila, a woman from [Manipur](#) is completing 15 years of her hunger protest on 2nd Nov. She is observing fast [as](#) a form of protest since the year 2000 (when she was about 28 years old), and she had started it just after Malom massacre where Assam [rifles](#) had fired upon local civilians who were waiting at a bus stand in Malom, [Imphal](#) ([Manipur](#)) and all were killed. Irom decided to register her protest because incidents of torture and killings were common in [Manipur](#) and in the veil of the powers under [AFSPA](#), nothing could be done [against](#) culprit security personals. Iromsharmila started her fast and did not leave it since then. She has only demand, Repeal [AFSPA](#), [as](#) it is [AFSPA](#) that is main culprit , because it provides extra ordinary powers to security personals to operate in [Manipur](#) and other such areas and these powers have been misused widely.

[AFSPA](#) has provisions of [shoot](#) to [kill](#) mere on probability, but it does not [stop](#) here, instead it goes beyond and says that no case can be lodged [against](#) any security personals without pre sanction from central government. Sadly, in all such years, no approval was given by central government and despite hundreds of reported cases of fake killings, torture and rapes, nothing could be done to punish culprits.

[As](#), IromSharmila did not leave her fast, [Manipur](#) police registered a case [against](#) her under section 309 of 'attempt to suicide' and put her in jail. During her release from jail for a day in 2006, IromSharmila came to Delhi, paid tribute to Mahatma [Gandhi](#) at Rajghat and later joined a fast at JantarMantar. Delhi Police also registered another case under same section of attempt to suicide here in Delhi and matter went to court. Presently, IromSharmila is under [arrest](#) by [Manipur](#) police and living her life in security ward of JLN hospital of [Manipur](#). The case in Delhi also, is still going on and IromSharmila appears before Delhi court on court notices and when [Manipur](#) government becomes ready to produce her at Delhi.

Despite her fast since last 15 years and government's ignorance, even suppression through lodging her behind bars, did not break her faith in democracy or non violence. She always smiles, and tells , 'I have faith in democracy. Government will listen one day'

Sadly, government is not listening, and even one of her demand to meet Prime Minister NarendraModi has not been accepted yet. She thinks Prime Minister does not want to meet her [as](#) probably government has no reply for all her [demands](#) and questions about suppression of people through [AFSPA](#).

This act, [AFSPA as](#) one of the most draconian one that is not only dangerous to people, but even damage the reputation of security forces and of world's largest democracy that is advocating for UNSC seat.

Govt's own committees have recommended to repeal this act. Even many fake killings, rapes and cases of disappearances were not only reported but even proved, but till now govt has not repealed this act. Many national and international human [rights](#) organizations also raising their voice to demand to repeal this act. State leadership of BJP in [Manipur](#) and PDP in J&K had favored to repeal of this act, but now they are silent.

NeinguloKrome , Secretary General of NPMHR said "[AFSPA](#) is a violation of Human Rights and if [India](#) is truly a democratic country then this [Act](#) should be removed immediately. He also described about cases that are before Supreme Court [against](#) human [rights](#) violations"

Babloo Loitongbam , a human [rights](#) activist from [Manipur](#) emphasized that this law has no place in a democratic country like [India](#). This process needs to [stop](#) because it violates democracy to its core. He also said that we need to move our struggle in such a way that we should be able to celebrate Irom Sharmila's victory in her struggle and even if Govt of [India](#) accepts her demand, it will be a victory of govt itself [as](#) it will send a message that govt respects for human [rights](#).

Swami Agnivesh said he will lender all his support to the youth of this country in this struggle to repeal [AFSPA](#) from J&K and the North Eastern states of [India](#). He also said that it is painful to see that religious groups raise voice when something happen to any member of their religion, but why [don't](#) they speak upon such issues where laws like [AFSPA](#) are violating human [rights](#) with all acceptance and permission by govt. Are not speaking for these acts are also a thing that religion should call for.

[Prof](#) Sanjoy Hazarika described about how this struggle is all about 15 years of Irom Sharmila, [10](#) years of Jeevan Reddy Committee and many others and therefore we must see that something is happening about which we all need to be concerned upon. Sanjoy also said that future strategies should be developed and [AFSPA](#) is required to be repealed.

[Prof](#) Nandini Sundar talked about the Irom Sharmila Scholarships started by Delhi University three years ago and how to make them more effective. She also shared stories from the students who have received these scholarships.

Ashok Agrwaal, a lawyer and [author](#) of the book 'In Search of Vanished Blood' raised questions [as](#) to when will Sharmila's struggle end...? He wonders whether the people are waiting for Sharmila to die to make her struggle a meaningful statement.

[Prof](#) Deepti Priya Mehrotra, who has also written a book on IromSharmila titled 'Burning Bright' said, "Sharmila is the voice of ordinary people. Let the 21st century be the century of Sharmila." She also emphasized that it is only through solidarity that different voices are joined together and this is the only way in which we can stand up and [fight](#) for it.

From APCR, Kashif Ahmed Faraz feels, 'People are now much aware of this issue and are coming up to [fight](#) for it. But we shouldn't [stop](#) here. We should continue spreading awareness about it..."

Laeq Ahmed Khan from SIO said these laws have multidimensional effect.

Raghu Menon from Forum Asia told that forum Asia is always in support of struggles for Human Rights and we have already extended our support to IromSharmila and we will continue to raise voice through all possible means.

Henry, chairperson of Forum Asia also joined the convention and expressed his solidarity on behalf of organization.

The session was concluded by Ravi Nitesh who said that he has seen a lot of change in these fifteen years. Earlier only the [North East](#) people were fighting for it but now more and more people from all [over](#) the country are standing up in support of IromSharmila.

At the end, it was announced that demand to repeal [AFSPA](#) is a collective struggle and demand that is very much required to protect human [rights as](#) well [as](#) democratic values. It was announced that this full week is being observed in solidarity with 15 years of struggle of IromSharmila nationwide and at many places protests are happening. It was also told that in coming months, this movement will bring more voices together and will [start](#) a big movement to demand Repeal [AFSPA](#).

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