

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF.



Statement on the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in North East India

September 2012

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The Government of India failed to advance human rights and justice when it did not accept the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council to repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) still in force today in the North East of India. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) expresses our grave concerns about the non-acceptance by India of this critical demand during the *Universal Periodic Review* Report of India on 20 September 2012.

In solidarity with all affected by the AFSPA, we call on the Government of India to repeal the AFSPA immediately. Such action would contribute to ending impunity and reduce oppression and violence in the region.

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act continues to increase militarization in the North East, augment impunity and facilitate human rights abuses including rape and other forms of torture, forced disappearances, and killings of civilians. The provisions of the AFSPA, which enable arrests without warrants, and firing upon civilians to kill, violate international law and human rights. Furthermore, the AFSPA provision providing legal immunity for all actions of Indian army officers create a culture of injustice and impunity. Lack of accountability for crimes fails victims and leaves individuals and families without any form of redress.

Our WILPF Section in India supports the efforts of peace groups in the North East and particularly Ms. Irom Sharmila in combating this military regime. Ms. Sharmila started her hunger strike in 2000 in protest of the AFSPA and each year is taken into custody and force-fed but her message remains clear that the effects and impacts of the illegal AFSPA must not be silenced.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, said during his visit to India in March 2012, the AFSPA is a 'hated' and 'Draconian' law, which has become 'a symbol of excessive State power' and it 'has no role to play in a democracy' and 'clearly violates International Law'. Given these remarks, WILPF calls on all actors in the international community to support the calls to repeal the AFSPA as a matter of urgency.

Finally, we send our messages of solidarity to all affected by the AFSPA as they continue to struggle for justice, equality and peace. The Government of India must respond to the demands to repeal the AFSPA.