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زبانهای اروپایی

Dear Revolutionary Comrades at CPI (ML):

The Free Afghanistan Portal received your article about “**Solidarity with Ms. Sharmila’s Indefinite Fast against AFSPA**” from MLOA. The members of the Portal thank you and MLOA for sending us this piece of vital significance. The Free Afghanistan Portal also declares its solidarity with Ms. Smarmila’s cause under any circumstance. The Portal hopes that this occasion will help us establish cordial and comradely relationships in the future.

Regards’

Free Afghanistan (AA-AA)

## Declare Solidarity with Ms. Sharmila’s Indefinite Fast Against AFSPA

### Support Struggle of People of North-East for Repealing AFSPA

Ms. Irom Chanu Sharmila who is continuing her ten year old fast surmounting all obstacles is the symbol of the struggle of not only the people of Manipur, but of the whole North East India against state terror intensified through the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). From her childhood she had heard and seen the atrocities committed against the women and the people of Manipur as a whole by the military, para-military and numerous other security forces under the licence provided by the AFSPA in order to suppress their struggle for self-governance. From the time Nehru government deployed armed forces in 1948 to Naga areas to suppress the Naga people’s movement for the right of self-determination these atrocities are continuing in North East.

In October 2000, to do something against this barbarity Ms. Sharmila volunteered her service to the Justice Suresh’s People’s Tribunal enquiring about it. There she heard the testimony of a victim who was raped by the army men in front of her father-in-law. Then she felt more bitterly to do something to protest, to revolt against the brutal system. It was then Assam Rifles killed ten innocent people including a woman in Malom near Imphal airport on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2000. She could not tolerate it any more. On the very same day

after witnessing the bloody scene she declared her decision to start indefinite fast until the AFSPA is repealed, and started it.

When M.K. Gandhi, acclaimed as the father of the nation, went on indefinite fast a number of times during independence struggle, the British colonialists have never arrested him on the charge of attempt to suicide. But the Indian rulers who claim to uphold him, got Sharmila arrested on 5<sup>th</sup> November alleging attempt for suicide. She was removed to the Security Ward in JN Hospital, presently JN Institute of Medical Sciences, and put under painful forced nasal feeding.

Though the central and state governments continued the drama of releasing and re-arresting her many times, though popular movement has broken out in support of her fast many times, and though her case was taken up even up to Supreme Court, the ruling system remained unmoved about any steps to repeal the AFSPA. But Sharmila, in spite of the inhuman attitude of the authorities continued the fast undaunted.

On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2004 when the bullet ridden naked body of Manorama Devi who was in Assam Rifles Custody and subjected to mass rape was seen on the public road, intense agitation broke out. In protest against torture, rape and killing of Ms. Manorama ten women marched naked in front of the head quarters of Assam Rifles. It became an international news exposing the autocratic policies of Indian government and its virtual imposition of military rule in North East and Jammu Kashmir. It was then the central home minister followed by the prime minister visited Imphal and then set up a five member committee under the chairmanship of Justice Jeevan Reddy, former Judge of the Supreme Court, to advise the government on the continuation of the AFSPA.

The commission after visiting all the seven states of North East, based on the materials presented before it and the impressions gathered during the inter-actions with various sections stated in its Report submitted to the central government on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005 : “ The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, should be repealed. Therefore recommending the continuation of the present Act, with or without amendments, does not arise. The Act is too sketchy, too bald, and quite inadequate in several particulars..... We must also mention the impression gathered by it during the course of its work, viz., the Act, for whatever reason, has become a symbol of oppression, an object of hate and an instrument of discrimination and highhandedness. It is highly desirable and advisable to repeal this Act altogether”. In spite of this absolutely clear recommendation by the Commission no action is so far taken on it by the government. The military, para-military and other security forces are still continuing their reign of terror. The judiciary is turning a blind eye towards these acts of terror in spite of so many appeals. The bureaucracy and the elite political class are abetting these crimes against the people while engaged in perpetuating the corrupt regime.

In this gruesome situation, in the lonely corner of the Security Ward of JNIMS in Imphal Ms. Irom Chanu Sharmila is continuing her heroic struggle in spite of the irreparable damages to her body from the ten years of forced nasal feeding. Outside, led by Ima Taruni, the women are continuing their indefinite relay fast. The people are hurt and angry. On the occasion of every act of atrocity they come out on the streets and protest. If a plebiscite is conducted, overwhelming majority of the people of North East shall vote against the draconian AFSPA and for self-governance. Ms. Sharmila, Ima Taruni, the people of Manipur and the people of North East as a whole expect the solidarity of women, solidarity of progressive democratic forces of India and abroad to their life and death struggle to get the barbarous AFSPA repealed.

The All India Convention of the activists of the All India Revolutionary Women's Organization (AIRWO) declares its firm solidarity with the struggle of Ms.Sharmila and the people of Manipur and North East for getting the AFSPA repealed and vows to take up this struggle at all India level.

The AIRWO appeals to all women's organizations in India and all over the world to raise their voice against the AFSPA for its repeal as early as possible, and in support of the heroic struggle continued by Ms. Sharmila for last ten years sacrificing her life for the cause of democracy, for the cause of the people. The AIRWO resolves to raise the solidarity with Ms. Sharmila's struggle as one of the main slogans of the March 8, International Women's Day, 2010, programmes and appeals to all women's organizations in India and abroad to do the same.

Chennai

7<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Sharmistha

Convenor, All India Organising Committee

AIRWO