



JUST PEACE FOUNDATION

FESTIVAL OF HOPE, JUSTICE AND PEACE

(2 – 6 November 2010)

Concept Note

Ms. Irom Sharmila Chanu has been on indefinite hunger strike since November 2000 demanding the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA). An extraordinary struggle of an extraordinary woman! Sharmila began her non-violent protest after the *Malom* massacre where 10 civilians were gunned down by the Indian security forces on 2 November 2000.

AFSPA provides special powers to arrest, detain and even kill civilians on suspicion. The power to search and destroy properties on mere suspicion is granted to the Armed Forces of the Union in the 'disturbed areas' of the North East (and subsequently in Kashmir). Wherever AFSPA is in operation, enforced 'disappearances', extra-judicial killings, tortures, rapes and arbitrary detentions have been the routine.

Even though when the Union Home Minister introduced the law in the Parliament in 1958 assured that the Act will be only a temporary measure, but it has dragged on for more than 52 years now! The people of Manipur have done whatever is humanly possible to register their protests against AFSPA -- naked protest by mothers, self immolation by student leaders, mass demonstrations, petition to the Supreme Court, complaints to the United Nations etc etc. But Government of India remains completely indifferent on issues of right to life and dignity.

Today, Sharmila's persistent protest has become unprecedented in the history of resilience! Her struggle lies not only in defending the most basic and fundamental human rights of her people, but also in questioning the very foundations of Indian democracy which venerates Mahatma Gandhi and his principles of *ahimsa* or non-violence.

The Just Peace Foundation (JPF), in collaboration with the civil society in Manipur, is celebrating Sharmila's indomitable spirit, her audacity to hope in the midst of adversities, her unwavering stand for justice and her deep yearning for peace. Since 25 July 2010, JPF is organizing a series of cultural programs, concerts, painting competitions, exhibitions, press meets, seminars, literary and artistic activities, public meetings, poet's meet, public rallies, poster campaigns, t-shirt release, book release etc to mark the *100 Days Countdown* towards the decade long hunger strike which will culminate into a **Festival of Hope, Justice and Peace** from 2 to 6 November 2010. Justice H. Suresh, former Judge, Bombay High Court has kindly agreed to inaugurate the festival.

The Festival of Hope, Justice and Peace will be a celebration of the indefatigable spirit of humanity. JPF humbly request you to use this historic occasion to take whatever action possible to collectively engage again with age old concepts of Justice and Peace and to reach out to the ongoing struggles of all the oppressed peoples across the world.

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Program Highlights

Day & Date	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Tuesday 02 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrival of the outstation participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inauguration of the Festival of Hope, Justice & Peace by Justice H. Suresh Painting Exhibition The Spirit of Sharmila Traditional drum beats, folk songs & music Honouring dignitaries by EEVFAM A talk on Hope, Justice and Peace by Justice H. Suresh 	<p>MEIRA PAIBI <i>(Women Torch Holders)</i></p> <p>A play by Civic Chandran's team from Kerala</p>
Wednesday 03 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaugural of Seminar Panel Discussion Illegitimacy of the AFSPA: From the Supreme Court to the Jeevan Reddy Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Discussion Enabling laws and Practices: Institutional and Normative Implications 	<p>MIREL MASINGKHA <i>(The Will of Soul)</i></p> <p>A mime by Kanglei Mime Theatre Repertory</p>
Thursday 04 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel Discussion Misguided or Deliberate Policy: Armed Rebellion and Political Conflict; Law & Order and Civil Rights Movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing Plenary Towards Justice: AFSPA and People's Civil & Political Rights Valedictory Address 	<p>NONG TARAKLE <i>(Rains hath Fallen)</i></p> <p>A play by Aryan Theatre</p>
Friday 05 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit to Sharmila by Guests Visit to Kangla, ancient capital of Manipur & Imphal War Cemetery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Meeting Royal Riders' motor cycle rally around Imphal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candle light vigil Free YOUTH PEACE CONCERT by TAPTA
Saturday 06 November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Community Prayer Unveiling doves by EEVFAM widows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departure of the outstation participants 	

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