

## Report on

### Press Conference

Held at Guwahati Press Club, Guwahati, Assam

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016

Briefed by Ms Binalakshmi Nepram and Team



Control Arms Foundation of India in collaboration with Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network and Northeast India Women Initiative for Peace conducted a press briefing under the title “**2<sup>nd</sup> Northeast India Women Peace Congregation and Women led Non-violence Peace Movements in Northeast India**” on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016 at Guwahati Press Club in Guwahati, Assam. The objective of the press conference was to brief media about women’s situation in Northeast India and work that has been done for women, peace and development issues in Northeast India by Control Arms Foundation of India.

Speaking at the press conference Ms Binalakshmi Nepram, Founder, Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network, said, “The Northeast India has been marred by incidences of crime against women, riots, insurgencies etc. The situation is getting worst in the region be it Kokrajhar attack, the present scenario of Manipur, frequent bomb-blasts in Assam. The region has become one of the most highly militarized and conflict prone zones. Women bear the major impact of such conflict with growing sexual violence, cultural problems relating to widowhood, trafficking etc.”



She also mentioned that women of Northeast India and the rest of the country have been informally working for peace in the region but they are yet to be recognized formally. The North East India Women Peace Congregation is an initiative to address the problems of women and also to bring women of

the region in decision making process.

She said, “Women in the region are excluded of decision-making structures and are discriminated due to cultural, ethnical reasons, patriarchal structure and customary laws. Northeast India has been a part of seventeen peace-talks for the past seventeen years with few of them ever reaching a long term viable solution. A cursory glance would reveal that the number of women in all these talks and negotiations have been two, out of which one is only alive now.”



Hitting on the naïve response of the government on delicate matters like Arms Force Special Power Act (AFSPA), Binalakshmi Nepram commented, “How can the Government act as a mute spectator and do nothing but watch women like Irom Sharmila sacrifice decades of their life for the cause of repealing of AFSPA and ultimately end their struggle without any solution. There is still democracy in our country so we should all be united ensuring that we seek a collective peace in the region.”

She further added that “We are against any kind of violence be it terrorism, insurgency etc. We are here to seek solutions but not to fight within the region.”



The press meet was also addressed by Reena Mutum, Coordinator, Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network, and Indrani Deb, Chairperson, FICCI Ladies Organisation, Northeast Chapter.