

23 August 2014

Manipuri police re-arrested 42-year-old anti-AFSPA activist Irom Sharmila after taking her away from a protest site. Sharmila has been taken back to her ward at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) to be force fed through her nose. She had been without any kind of nutrition since the time she had been released Wednesday evening.

This is the second time that the police had come to take her. With the sessions court having thrown out charges of section 309 of the Indian Penal Code, attempt to suicide, the Manipur police cannot take her into custody without proper cause.

Sharmila's health remains a main cause for concern after her release. The court order further says that it is the State's responsibility to ensure that her health does not deteriorate and that proper medical attention is provided to her.

Members of the Save Sharmila campaign say that they are unsure whether she has been arrested or simply taken for medical attention. There is a high possibility that she may be released after her force feeding.

A similar drama played out last night amid the pouring rain as police personnel started gathering in front of the shed where Sharmila is spending most of her time. Gypsies and two vans full of police personnel, including women police and some senior police officers arrived at the spot and held lengthy negotiations with her. They tried convincing Sharmila to leave with them so that she could get medical care but she flatly refused.

The senior policemen left after 45 minutes of cajoling, leaving behind two gypsies and around 10 policemen on guard. At around 10.30 pm they were back. This time with a doctor and two nurses. The medical team was taken in. Sharmila once again refused. They were unable to even check her blood pressure.

After a hectic day of meeting people, the frail Sharmila then sat up most of the night under a bright red mosquito net. "I am feeling well. I don't know why the police had come. I don't know if they wanted to arrest me," she said sleepily. The Imas (mothers) surrounding her said that the police would be back to take her.

With the onus of Sharmila's health on them, the police arrived this morning and picked her up. Whether she will be released again is yet to be seen.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/irom-sharmila-forcibly-removed-by-police-from-protest-venue/>