

*JPNN/New Delhi / Mar 02, 2015/The controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) will stay as Union Home Ministry has rejected an official Committee recommendation for repeal of the Act.A senior Home Ministry*

*official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that a recommendation for rejection of B P Jeevan Reddy Committee report has been sent to Cabinet Committee on Security headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.Brushing aside all criticism against the Act which is dubbed as "draconian" by several human rights organisations, the Home Ministry said the Act was needed for Army to operate in areas hit by militancy or insurgency.The Reddy Committee had submitted its report in 2005 suggesting scrapping of the law as it was a "a symbol of oppression".The committee was set up in 2004, in the wake of intense agitation in Manipur following killing of a woman, Thangjam Manorama, while in the custody of Assam Rifles and the indefinite fast undertaken by activist Irom Sharmila against AFSPA.The five-member committee, headed by Justice Jeevan Reddy, a former Supreme Court judge, had submitted its report on June 6, 2005.The 147-page report recommends "the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, should be repealed."The committee in the report observed that "the Act, for whatever reason, has become a symbol of oppression, an object of hate and an instrument of discrimination and high handedness"."It is highly desirable and advisable to repeal the Act altogether, without of course, losing sight of the overwhelming desire of an overwhelming majority of the (northeast) region that the Army should remain (though the Act should go)," it said.Various organisations in Northeast have termed the controversial law as "draconian". Ever since the killing of Manorama, Sharmila has been on an indefinite fast and had declared that she would continue her fast till the Act is repealed. Agency*