

# INDIAN JOURNALISTS UNION (IJU)

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## **Govt Asked to Place Orders on J&K Communication Lockdown**

New Delhi, 16 October: In the case related to press freedom being curtailed in Jammu & Kashmir, the Supreme Court has directed the Government to produce the orders under which it imposed complete clampdown on communications there. The three-member bench was hearing the matter following a rejoinder filed by the State government to the writ petition filed by Kashmir Times Executive Editor Anuradha Bhasin and intervened by the Indian Journalists Union and Foundation for Media Professionals Media, both in support of Press freedom.

The State government, noted the IJU, had again cited 'national security' concerns in response to the Petitioner's and the Intervenors' demand for disclosure of orders issued under the Telecom Suspension Rules and the restrictions imposed and various detentions in the State. However, Senior Advocate Huzefa Ahmadi for IJU stressed the Government cannot make an omnibus statement and it must demonstrate how disclosure of each order can threaten national security. Likewise, Senior Advocate Dushyant Dave for FMP said that unless the government produces the orders, the Petitioner and the Intervenors are being forced to argue this case with their hands tied behind their back. The Court thus insisted that the Government either produce the orders or file its reasons for not placing any order on record.

The petitioner and intervenors have pleaded that the citing of orders are critical because Rule 2 of the Telecom Suspension Rules requires that any order issued by the competent authority must contain reasons, as stated in the petitions. In addition to the orders, the Intervenors have also sought information about whether these orders have been reviewed and approved by a State Level Review Committee in accordance with the Rules. The matter is listed next for October 25.

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