Twitter Thread by Mujtaba Rahman



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The French Govt has adopted its draft law on “strengthening Republican values” which has already provoked so much anger – & distortion, frankly – in parts of Muslim world & US media. At least now we can have a debate on what’s actually in the bill. Some thoughts post presser 1/

The text mentions no religion by name & will apply to all faiths but the Prime Minister, Jean Castex, presenting the law at a presser this afternoon, made it clear that “radical Islamism” – not Islam - was the intended target 2/

“This text is not aimed at any religion or at the Muslim religion specifically,” Castex said . “It’s a law of emancipation from religious fanaticism.” 3/

One person’s “fanaticism” is, of course, another person’s “devout faith”. Parts of the draft law may be open to question or quibbling. But there is nothing, imo, that can be fairly described as an attack on Islam itself. 4/

Crucially, the Fr Govt has (after weeks of silence) remembered another key part of Macron’s speech in October which promised this new law. There will be new action - including more social housing, more widely spread - to relieve pressure on the struggling, multi-racial suburbs 5/

In the law itself, there are tougher restrictions on home-schooling which will have to be “exceptionally authorised” (but there will not be a virtual ban from the age of three as first suggested) 6/

This will apply to all kids but is intended to keep Muslim children, especially girls, out of extremist schools 7/

There will be rule changes to restrict foreign funding of places of worship and to make it easier for French Muslims – or any other faith – to raise money within France. Religious groups seeking public funds will have to sign a charter recognising the rule of secular law 8/

Doctors will be punished if they provide “virginity certificates”. There will be a new drive against arranged marriages. There will be new constraints on physical threats and hate campaigns on line… Fifty articles altogether ENDS