Twitter Thread by Kavita Krishnan

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My account in @thewire_in of meeting Muskan and Rashid, victims of a series of violent acts by the Bajrang Dal, and by a range of UP government authorities including the police, shelter home and hospital.

Advised by @SartajAlamIndia Muskan was taken to Bijnor, where she got an ultrasound done at a private clinic. The report shows that there are “retained products of conception” (foetal matter left over after a miscarriage or abortion) in her uterus.

The hospital denies causing Muskan to miscarry – but their denial rings false. They declared no miscarriage had occurred – which is now proven to be a lie. Most shockingly, in actions that befit a Mengele, they did not prescribe any antibiotics to Muskan after the miscarriage.

See how calm, confident Muskan is in the face of Bajrang Dal thugs: asked on camera if her father or “guardian” has given her permission to marry Rashid, she replies, “I am an adult, I am 22, I have married him of my own choice five months ago.” https://t.co/metBLc6Ldi

Muskan told me: “I am an adult, know my own mind, was living on my own when I met Rashid. I knew he was Muslim. We loved each other. I converted to Islam of my own accord, & we married. My mother does not know him, she has just parroted whatever the Bajrang Dal men asked her to.”

Why did Muskan need to convert to Islam, choose a nikah ceremony rather than registration under the Special Marriage Act? Muskan’s experience of trying to get her marriage registered answers that riddle quite well. The SMA discriminates against inter-faith couples.

Unlike religious ceremonies, the SMA process requires a couple to put up a public notice for a month of their intention to marry. Informers within the bureaucracy alert Hindu-supremacist outfits, and they spring into action to prevent the marriage.

In the case of Muskan and Rashid also, the Bajrang Dal thug-in-chief who interfered boasts that he has a network of informers everywhere. Read this sterling report for @newslaundry by @NidhiSuresh_ @AnnaPriyadarsh3 https://t.co/iS4LSmt6kV

It is no wonder that Hindu supremacist thugs in UP act like a shadow government – after all, one of their own is the chief minister. When Adityanath issues death threats to Muslim men who love and marry Hindu women, he is promising the thugs his blessing and protection.

Muskan on the shelter home: “It is a prison, women are tortured there, women in inter-caste/faith love are kept there, prevented from having mobile phones, told they can be free only if they agree to give up their relationship and be released into parental custody.”

The police and shelter home authorities knew Muskan was pregnant. Yet she was taken away from a loving home, violently separated from her husband who was jailed, and taken into custody as though she were a criminal.

Rashid & Salim were escorted into their own home by a "friend of the police", an officious, grim and unsmiling man in a black suit, who kept saying to the family “What are all the tears for, it is all okay now, all is now well,” &trying to disperse media & activists.

The officious man in a suit may say “no harm has been done”, but in fact, Muskan and Rashid and their loved ones are all victims of a series of violent acts by the Bajrang Dal, and by a range of UP government authorities including the police, shelter home and hospital.

It would be truly obscene if we, the people of India, too say “no harm done”, shrug and look the other way. A loving husband and wife were violently attacked by an outfit which trains its members in violence and makes a habit of separating interfaith couples.

The police, instead of acting against the thugs, illegally arrested the victims of the violence. A pregnant woman was subjected to trauma. Whether as a result of the trauma or as a result of forced administration of abortifacients, she suffered a miscarriage.

The authorities lied, denied the miscarriage, and in order to protect the lie, failed to protect her from a possible uterine infection that could affect child-bearing in the future. In two weeks, a pregnant bride in the pink of health has been reduced to a shadow of herself.

UP’s anti-love ordinance is a blood-purity law to rival Nazi Germany’s Nuremberg laws. Muskan’s and Rashid’s case is not a “misuse” of the law. The only “use” of such an ordinance is to give legal cover to Hindu supremacist thugs who inflict violence on interfaith couples.

It is not enough for such ordinances to be struck down and declared unconstitutional by courts. Courts must order a countrywide probe into the violent Hindu supremacist outfits that terrorise interfaith couples, and their enablers embedded in the police and administration.

Courts must mandate changes in the SMA to do away with the month-long notice period. Right to privacy judgement must not just be an elegant piece of prose for the history books. Courts must act to protect the right of interfaith, inter-caste and same-sex couples to privacy...

...so that any government employee who leaks information about impending marriages to vigilante groups, should lose his job and face prosecution. All laws seeking to restrict/regulate conversion must be struck down.

Faith, like love and marriage, is a private affair. The state cannot claim authority to ask adult individuals to furnish justifications for their decision to convert, or to marry.

As I wrote this, I knew that all that I say "should" happen, won't happen under this evil regime. But I wrote it anyway because it is what we all SHOULD, MUST fight for.