

210 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRWP No.5858-2023
Date of Decision: 05.07.2023

Mandeep Kaur and another ...Petitioners

Versus

State of Punjab and others ...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. R.K. Kachura, Advocate for the petitioners.

Mr. Aditya Kapoor, AAG, Punjab.

Mr. Kuldip Singh, Advocate for the complainant.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

Fearing for their life and liberty at the hands of the private respondents, the petitioners, invoking the fundamental right of life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, have come up before this Court seeking protection through the State.

2. Counsel for the petitioners submits that he would be confining his prayer to the extent of protection of life and liberty of the petitioners at this stage as they want to live together and have threat perception at the hands of private respondents, reserving their right to take other legal remedies for remaining prayers including filing of fresh writ petition.

3. Counsel appearing for the complainant/Reena Rani submits that both the petitioners are married and such relationship is an immoral/illegal act.

4. This Court is giving protection under Article 21 of the Constitution of India which is foremost fundamental right.

5. The times are changing fast, even in those lands that were left behind and stuck with the old ethos and conservative social milieu. We are governed by the rule of law and follow the Constitutional dharma. In the ever-evolving society, evolving the law with it, the time is to shift perspective from didactics of the orthodox society, shackled with the strong strings of morality supported by religions to one that values an individual's life above all. Every person in the territory of India has an inherent and inalienable fundamental right to life flowing from Article 21 of India's constitution and

the State is duty bound to protect life.

6. In MohdArif @ Ashfaq v. Registrar, Supreme Court of India, (2014) 9 SCC 737, the Constitutional bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[17]. As the determination of this case has to do with the fundamental right to life, which, among all fundamental rights, is the most precious to all human beings, we need to delve into Article 21 which reads as follows:

"21. Protection of life and personal liberty.-No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."

[18]. This Article has its origin in nothing less than the Magna Carta, (the 39th Article) of 1215 vintage which King John of England was forced to sign by his Barons. It is a little known fact that this original charter of liberty was faulted at the very start and did not get off the ground because of a Papal Bull issued by Pope Innocent the third declaring this charter to be void. Strangely, like Magna Carta, Art. 21 did not get off the ground for 28 years after which, unshackled, it has become the single most important fundamental right under the Constitution of India, being described as one of a holy trinity consisting of a 'golden triangle' (see *Minerva Mills v. Union of India*, 1981 1 SCR 206 at 263), and being one of two articles which cannot be eclipsed during an emergency (Article 359 as amended by the Constitution 44th Amendment).

7. If the allegations of apprehension of threat to their lives turn out to be true, it might lead to an irreversible loss. This Court is not adjudicating on the validity of petitioners' marriage but adhering to its fundamental duty of guarding their lives. Thus, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, it shall be appropriate that the concerned Superintendent of Police, SHO, or any officer to whom such powers have been delegated or have been authorized in this regard, provide appropriate protection to the petitioners for one week from today. However, if the petitioners no longer require the protection, then at their request it may be discontinued even before the expiry of one week. After that, the concerned officers shall extend the protection on day-to-day analysis of the ground realities or upon the oral or written request of the petitioners.

8. This protection is subject to the stringent condition that from the time such protection is given, the petitioners shall not go outside the boundaries of the place of their residence, except for medical necessities, to buy household necessities, and for bereavements in the families of the persons who are close to them. However, petitioner(s) shall be at liberty to shift the residence(s) and if the new place falls within the district, then the protection shall be extended to such place. This restriction saves the petitioners from apprehended risk and ensures that the protection is not flaunted.

9. It is clarified that there is no adjudication on merits and that this order is not a

blanket bail in any FIR. It is further clarified that this order shall not come in the way if the interrogation of the petitioners is required in any cognizable case. It shall also be open for the petitioner(s) to approach this Court again in case of any fresh threat perception.

10. **This order shall eclipse after thirty days from today.**

11. *There would be no need for a certified copy of this order, and any Advocate for the Petitioner and State can download this order and other relevant particulars from the official web page of this court and attest it to be a true copy. The concerned officer can also verify its authenticity and may download and use the downloaded copy for immediate use.*

Petition is allowed to the extent mentioned above. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

05.07.2023
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Whether speaking/reasoned:	Yes
Whether reportable:	No.