

## **Orlandos of our own making**

In Peshawar this morning, a road rage incident spiraled out of control when a teenager pulled out an M-16 assault rifle and fired at an unarmed motorcyclist, who had committed the crime of overtaking and coming in the way of the car.

The white Toyota car was bearing a fake government number plate B-5258. The incident took place in the sensitive Cantonment area of Peshawar where vehicles are searched for weapons at all entry points. This vehicle however managed to dodge the search parties for it was impersonating as an official government vehicle, with its fake green coloured 'Government of Pakistan' number plate. Partly scared of rebuff and partly considering that government vehicles are used by trustworthy officials, the law enforcing agencies often let such vehicles go without any serious search.

The link between fake government vehicles, weapons and terrorism has been repeatedly highlighted and is understood by every one except the law enforcing agencies of Pakistan. In the province of Sindh, there are an estimated 2-300,000 fake government vehicles that break rules, park at wrong places, enter prohibited locations, violate all traffic laws, do not pay taxes and indulge in crime and militancy on daily basis. The police however remains completely unmoved, apathetic and unwilling to capture this vital opportunity that puts criminals, weapons and crime in one metal box at the same time.

Many citizens have spent years in understanding the details of lawless vehicles, written on this issue and even sent pictures of fake vehicles to the highest officials of Sindh Police. The police will however not move an inch as they are trained only to fight fires and not to take proactive measures to prevent crime. Another reason could be that the law enforcers are themselves also the biggest law breakers. The Sindh government and the Sindh police have not bothered to register a large percentage of their own vehicles.

It is sad that Pakistan will keep on suffering its daily quota of Orlandos unless the state asks all citizens to surrender all weapons, does away with all government vehicles, implements a nation-wide standard registration number plate system and creates an easily searchable national database for all vehicles in Pakistan.