

## **Why Peshawar and Charsadda will keep on happening**

The complex crisis of Pakistan may well be described by a simple picture – three tents and a Nelson paint picket. Right in the middle of the prestigious DHA of Karachi, at least a dozen policemen and a police mobile guard just one privileged individual – one of the hundreds of state-sponsored ‘mini militias’ that protect the richest at the expense of the poorest.

All citizens are entitled to equal protection of law, says Article 25 of our Constitution. Defying this document, Pakistan deploys more than 30 percent of its entire police force to protect and pamper less than 10,000 rich, influential and spoiled individuals. The rest must fend for themselves. As long as the state remains interested only in protecting the lives of 0.005% of its population, Peshawar and Charsadda will keep on happening.

The Nuclear Republic finds it easy to throw bombs and bullets on the mountain militants, but impossible to touch those who are their cohorts in the towns and cities of Pakistan. A government that is still looking for evidence against Lal Masjid, Jamia Hafsa, JeM or LeT, either has a soft corner for militants or is absolutely dysfunctional. Nurturing radical ideologies will only produce more foot-soldiers and facilitators – ever ready to participate in misguided adventures.

There are 20 million guns in the hands of civilians in Pakistan. Unable to protect its citizens, the government has resorted to disburse yet more weapons. Other than Sattar Edhi and Malala Yousafzai, not many in this country have taken a public position to demand complete elimination of guns and creation of a weapon-free society. The government, the gun-sellers, the license-makers and the private security agencies all have one common product and one common agenda - to sell fear. ‘Immediate relief’ capsules in the form of Kalashnikovs follow suit. As long as the state does not understand that peace lies in elimination and not proliferation of weapons, Peshawar and Charsadda will keep on happening.

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