

The strategy on the fight against stolen vehicles

By Xhavit Shala

For the execution of the National Strategy of Anti-traffic War,¹ it is necessary the drafting of a strategic plan for the prevention of stolen cars intrusion and their authentication especially of the luxurious cars and to lay the blame on the traffickers.²

The destruction of cars market-place, near “Shkemb i Kavajes” constitutes the first official confrontation of the state structures against the criminal activity of the stolen cars traffic, it also constitutes a first test of his power against ‘cars mafia’.

The occasional police operations for the clamping of stolen cars and a recent operation have clearly shown the that the state is capable to attack these cars’ traffickers.

But we should also accept that the owners of these luxurious cars in many cases are just ‘clients’ of this mafia, who accept to buy stolen cars as a consequence of their irresponsibility. Buying stolen cars with honest money, these clients may unintentionally invigorate ‘cars mafia’; they may damage the serious and legal business of cars in our country and may also be in a conflict position to the law because they are the owners of stolen cars.

Anyway the state structures are responsible for permitting the flourishing of such a trade. I think it is time that the war against illegal stolen cars traffic should become more organized.

The war against this traffic is not only a problem of police. We should emphasize that when the competence of putting the plates to the cars is handed over to Ministry of Transport, then the structures of this ministry should be ‘the first fiddle ’in the war against the stolen cars traffic.

Putting the plates to the cars; this is the last chain link of the criminal organizations which deal with stolen cars traffic. At the same time this is the phase of this criminal activity legalization.

The new strategy for the war against stolen cars traffic should give solution to 3 main problems:

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² Published in the Albanian State Police web site and Korrieri daily, October 5, 2002.

- **Firstly** –The prevention of stolen cars intrusion in Albania
- **Secondly**-The prevention of stolen cars legalization, (putting the plate to the cars)
- **Thirdly**-Laying down the mechanisms in order to lay the blame on the responsible persons for the legalization to date.

In respect to the prevention of stolen cars intrusion in Albania, it is necessary to be known the ways, which are used for stealing and entering these cars in Albania.

There are 2 ways in which the cars are stolen:

a. simple stealing. In this case the traffickers realize the stealing abroad and in different ways their entrance in Albania and then aim at putting plates to the cars. These means of transport cross the state borders of some countries until they come in Albania. The arrival of these vehicles in Albania is the responsibility of these countries, too. That is why this war is as much regional as professional of the anti-crime structures, but it is also political. We should make use of all kinds of multilateral relations and especially bilateral relations with the neighbors, in order to call their attention and to seek their assistance, for anti-traffic inter-border war. The partnership relation will make them feel responsible and will not permit them to single us out as the ‘black sheep’ of the traffic.

b. stealing in collaboration. This is realized in 2 ways. There are criminal organizations abroad who buy the cars from the owners at a lower price, so they enable them to profit from insurance companies. In this case there is an agreement according to which they should report the theft of the car only when the criminal organizations had sent it on the sale market, so when it has crossed the borders without any difficulty. When these cars come to Albania, a report should be made for their theft.

Another way is when the owners themselves give the car to the buyer from Albania and in this way they profit from the insurance companies.

The stolen cars enter Albania through official border passages or through illegal passages. It is the duty of the police structures and customs to find the mechanisms for the prevention of the stolen cars intrusion in Albania.

The key issue for the fight against stolen cars traffic is the prevention of their legalization. (Putting the plate to the cars).

For the prevention of the stolen cars legalization, it is necessary to be known the ways to date of the legalization of this criminal activity and the drafting of a strategy for the prevention of any possibility of stolen cars legalization. Different punishments are enacted in these acts for the responsible persons and the responsible controlling structures within the Ministry of Transport.

In all ways of stealing, the owner of the car introduces to the executive boards of Transport to put the plate to his car.

A car bought abroad according to the precise rules, should present to the executive board of Transport these documents:

1. the car book (in original)
2. document writing off, in the state where it has been bought (in the original)
3. Customs Practice for the car intrusion in Albania
4. A physical check-up should be made to the car in order to see the conformity of the no of car carriage to the one marked down in the original car book.

The stolen cars and the trafficked ones can fulfill none of the 4 above points because:

1. The person needs the original car book to profit from the insurance company in the country, the car is stolen. All the stolen cars which present in the executive boarder of transport for their legalization, present a falsified book which is easily distinguished. So the person who is legalizing the car is aware of the legal offence he is committing and is compensated materially for this.
2. The document writing off in the country it came from, is presented falsified and is easily to be distinguished.
3. Customs practice are falsified, in order to get rid of the customs duty of the state, or they are half falsified, by paying fewer than what is to be paid. In this case there is collaboration, against material profits of the customs officers.
4. When the owner of the car wants to put a plate to the stolen car there is no physical check-up of the car data, or intentionally, against a material reward no one speaks.

There is no case of putting a plate to the stolen car without collaborating with the officers of Transport executive boards and customs.

2.3 Laying down the mechanisms in order to lay the blame on the responsible persons for the legislation to date, needs firstly a political will for dealing this case because it will bring forth many problems and it will impinge on many interests. It should face the mafia of stolen cars traffic.

This can be realized in some ways:

- a. It is known that every car the plate of which is put by transport executive board has a file in the archive. The inspection of these files and the lack of the original documents would immediately identify the stolen and the person who had committed this legal offence. To cover one's traces, the traffickers of the stolen cars and their cooperator in the state administration, legalize the car in a district by using falsified documents and then transfer it in another district.
- b. In collaboration with police, common operations may start, in order to clamp the suspected cars, may verify their files and identify the stolen cars author and his cooperator who dealt with the car legalization.

IN BOTH CASES IS RECOMMENDED

- 1.** The establishment of a Task Force inside the Ministry of Transport which deals with this problem. The achievement would have been extraordinary, both in the prevention of cars legalization and in laying the blame on the responsible persons.
- 2.** It is also recommended that this Task Force should have the right of making use of all the data that the General Executive Board of Customs possess only for the cars which come to be legalized in Albania.
- 3.** The collaboration with Tirana Interpol, would have given the possibility to this Task Force to know the data of all the stolen cars in west and the cars wanted from the police of other countries. This information is also accessible in internet.