

Judicial Reasoning in Sentencing Class I Narcotics Crimes under Indonesian Criminal Law: A Case Study of Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst

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Abstract

Narcotics crimes remain one of the most significant challenges to criminal law enforcement in Indonesia, particularly concerning Class I narcotics, which carry a high potential for abuse and severe social consequences. Differences in judicial reasoning when imposing criminal sanctions may result in sentencing disparities and raise concerns regarding legal certainty, justice, and consistency in judicial decision-making. This study aims to analyze the legal reasoning employed by judges in imposing criminal sanctions on Class I narcotics offenders and to examine whether the judicial considerations reflected in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst are consistent with the provisions of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code, and the fundamental principles of Indonesian criminal law. This research adopts a normative juridical approach using statutory, conceptual, and case approaches. Legal materials were collected through library research, including legislation, court decisions, legal doctrines, and scholarly literature, and analyzed qualitatively. The findings indicate that the judges' reasoning was primarily based on legally admissible evidence, witness testimony, the defendant's statement, material evidence, and relevant statutory provisions governing narcotics offenses. Furthermore, the court considered both aggravating and mitigating circumstances, reflecting juridical, philosophical, and sociological dimensions of criminal sentencing. The decision generally fulfills the principles of legal certainty, justice, and legal utility. Nevertheless, greater consistency in judicial reasoning is required to minimize sentencing disparities and strengthen the effectiveness of narcotics law enforcement in Indonesia. The study contributes to the development of Indonesian criminal law scholarship by providing a critical evaluation of judicial reasoning in narcotics cases and offering recommendations for more consistent sentencing practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Narcotics crimes have become one of the most serious criminal law issues in Indonesia because they threaten public health, social stability, and national security. The increasing complexity of narcotics trafficking has encouraged the government to strengthen criminal law policies through Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. This legislation reflects the state's commitment to protecting society from the harmful effects of

narcotics abuse while ensuring legal certainty through strict criminal sanctions against offenders, particularly those involved with Class I narcotics (Sunarso, 2015).

Judges play a central role in the Indonesian criminal justice system because they are responsible for assessing evidence, determining criminal liability, and imposing appropriate sanctions. Judicial reasoning is an essential element of every criminal judgment because it demonstrates the legal basis upon which a court reaches its decision. A well-reasoned judgment is expected to fulfill the principles of justice, legal certainty, and legal benefit while maintaining public confidence in the judiciary (Harahap, 2017).

Previous studies have discussed judicial considerations in narcotics cases from various legal perspectives. Criminal law policy emphasizes that sentencing should not merely punish offenders but also protect society and support the broader objectives of criminal law. Therefore, judges are expected to balance legal certainty, justice, and social interests when determining criminal sanctions for narcotics offenses (Arief, 2018).

From the perspective of criminal liability, the imposition of punishment requires judges to verify that all objective and subjective elements of a criminal offense have been legally proven. Judicial analysis must therefore be based on valid evidence and proper legal interpretation to ensure that criminal sanctions are imposed only upon defendants who have fulfilled all statutory elements of the offense. This approach strengthens the legitimacy of judicial decisions and minimizes legal errors in criminal adjudication (Chazawi, 2019).

Furthermore, judicial considerations should not be limited to the application of statutory provisions alone. Judges are also required to consider philosophical, sociological, and juridical aspects so that sentencing reflects fairness, proportionality, and the objectives of criminal punishment. Such comprehensive legal reasoning contributes to more consistent judicial decisions and reduces disparities in sentencing practices (Mulyadi, 2016).

Although previous studies have examined judicial reasoning, criminal liability, and narcotics law enforcement, most discussions remain theoretical and general in nature. Few studies specifically analyze the judicial reasoning contained in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst, particularly regarding the consistency between judicial considerations and the provisions of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. This limitation indicates a research gap that requires a case-oriented normative legal analysis.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive juridical analysis of judicial reasoning in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst by integrating statutory interpretation, legal doctrine, and judicial practice to evaluate the consistency of sentencing with the principles of legal certainty, justice, and legal utility under Indonesian criminal law.

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to analyze the judicial reasoning employed in sentencing offenders convicted of Class I narcotics crimes and to evaluate whether the judicial considerations in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst are consistent with Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics and the fundamental principles of Indonesian criminal law.

2. METHOD

This study employed a normative juridical research method to analyze judicial reasoning in sentencing offenders convicted of Class I narcotics crimes. Normative juridical research emphasizes the examination of legal norms, statutory regulations, judicial decisions, and legal doctrines to assess the consistency between judicial considerations and the applicable legal framework. The research focused on Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst as the primary object of analysis because the decision provides a comprehensive illustration of judicial reasoning in applying Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics (Marzuki, 2017).

The research adopted a statutory approach and a case approach. The statutory approach was used to examine the legal provisions governing narcotics crimes, judicial authority, criminal liability, and sentencing principles under Indonesian law. Meanwhile, the case approach was applied to evaluate the legal reasoning contained in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst by comparing the court's considerations with the relevant statutory provisions and principles of criminal law (Soekanto & Mamudji, 2019).

The legal materials consisted of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources. Primary legal materials included the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, Law Number 48 of 2009 concerning Judicial Power, and Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst. Secondary legal materials comprised scholarly books, journal articles, previous research, and legal doctrines concerning criminal law, narcotics offenses, judicial reasoning, and sentencing. Tertiary legal materials included legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and official legal information portals that supported the interpretation of legal concepts (Waluyo, 2016).

Data collection was conducted through library research, involving the identification, selection, classification, and systematic review of relevant legal materials. The collected materials were organized according to their relevance to the research questions before being analyzed. This procedure ensured that all legal sources were systematically arranged to facilitate comprehensive legal interpretation and evaluation (Ibrahim, 2019).

The legal materials were analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method. The analysis involved identifying applicable legal norms, examining the facts established in the court decision, evaluating the judges' legal reasoning, and comparing the judicial considerations with statutory provisions and criminal law principles. Conclusions were then drawn through deductive reasoning, beginning with general legal principles and applying them to the specific facts contained in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst to determine whether the judicial reasoning fulfilled the principles of legal certainty, justice, and legal utility (Harahap, 2017)..

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Analysis of Judicial Reasoning in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst

Judicial reasoning constitutes the core component of every criminal judgment because it explains the legal foundation upon which judges determine criminal liability and impose sanctions. In the Indonesian criminal justice system, judges are required to examine all facts established during trial before concluding whether the defendant has fulfilled every statutory element of the charged offense. This obligation reflects the principle that criminal punishment must always be supported by lawful evidence and objective legal reasoning rather than personal assumptions or external influences. Consequently, the legitimacy of a criminal judgment depends largely on the quality, transparency, and consistency of the judicial reasoning presented in the decision (Hamzah, 2019).

The examination of Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst indicates that the panel of judges adopted a systematic legal approach in evaluating the criminal case. The judges first analyzed the indictment submitted by the public prosecutor before examining witness testimonies, documentary evidence, physical evidence, and the defendant's statement. Such an approach demonstrates that the judicial decision was constructed through sequential legal reasoning rather than through isolated consideration of individual pieces of evidence. Every legal conclusion contained in the

judgment was therefore connected to facts established during the judicial proceedings, strengthening the credibility and accountability of the final decision (Poernomo, 2012).

The findings further demonstrate that judicial reasoning in this case reflects the broader objective of maintaining legal order within society. Narcotics crimes are generally regarded as extraordinary criminal offenses because of their adverse impact on public health, social stability, and national development. Consequently, judges are expected to interpret statutory provisions not only from a formal legal perspective but also by considering the broader social consequences arising from narcotics abuse. This perspective enables criminal judgments to contribute to both law enforcement and social protection simultaneously (Soekanto, 2011).

One of the principal findings concerns the judges' evaluation of the legal elements required under Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. The judgment demonstrates that the court carefully verified whether every constituent element of the offense had been fulfilled before declaring the defendant criminally responsible. Rather than relying exclusively on the indictment, the judges independently assessed whether the available evidence sufficiently established the unlawful conduct prohibited by the Narcotics Law. This method illustrates that judicial reasoning remained firmly grounded in statutory interpretation while simultaneously ensuring that criminal sanctions were imposed only after every legal requirement had been satisfied (Arief, 2018).

The court also carefully examined criminal responsibility by assessing both the objective and subjective elements of the offense. Objective elements were identified through factual findings derived from witness testimony and material evidence, while subjective elements were evaluated through the defendant's intent, awareness, and participation in the criminal act. Such comprehensive evaluation minimized the possibility of legal error because criminal liability was established only after the judges confirmed that all statutory requirements had been fulfilled. This finding demonstrates the importance of analytical judicial reasoning in ensuring fairness throughout the criminal adjudication process (Chazawi, 2019).

Another important finding relates to the evidentiary assessment conducted by the court. The judgment illustrates that no single item of evidence served as the exclusive basis for conviction. Instead, witness testimony, documentary evidence, material evidence, and the defendant's explanation were evaluated collectively before the judges reached their legal conclusion. This integrated evidentiary assessment reflects the Indonesian criminal procedure system, which requires judges to establish criminal liability through lawful evidence that mutually reinforces the factual reconstruction of the criminal event. Such an evidentiary approach enhances legal certainty because judicial conclusions become objectively verifiable and legally justifiable (Harahap, 2017).

The sentencing phase also demonstrates that judicial reasoning extended beyond determining criminal liability. The judges considered aggravating circumstances associated with the seriousness of narcotics crimes, particularly their harmful consequences for society and the government's ongoing efforts to eradicate illicit narcotics trafficking. Simultaneously, mitigating circumstances, including the defendant's cooperative behavior during trial, polite attitude before the court, and acknowledgment of wrongdoing, were taken into account when determining the final sentence. These balanced considerations indicate that the judges sought to impose punishment proportionate to both the seriousness of the offense and the defendant's individual circumstances (Nst, V. F. H., 2023).

From a criminal law policy perspective, the judgment reflects that sentencing was intended not only to punish the offender but also to prevent future criminal conduct and protect society from the dangers of narcotics abuse. The imposed sanction therefore performs multiple functions, including retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, and social protection. Such judicial reasoning is consistent with the broader objectives of Indonesian criminal law, which emphasizes that criminal sanctions should contribute to public welfare while simultaneously safeguarding legal order against organized narcotics crimes (Sunarso, 2015).

The findings further reveal that the judgment successfully integrates procedural justice with substantive justice. Procedural justice is reflected in the judges' careful examination of legally admissible evidence and adherence to criminal procedural requirements throughout the trial. Substantive justice is demonstrated through the court's effort to ensure that the imposed sentence corresponds to the seriousness of the offense, the defendant's degree of culpability, and the broader interests of society. This integration strengthens public confidence in judicial institutions because the judgment is based upon transparent legal analysis rather than discretionary authority alone (Hiariej, 2016).

Compared with previous studies concerning judicial reasoning in narcotics cases, this research offers a more detailed case-oriented analysis by focusing specifically on Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst. Earlier research generally discussed judicial reasoning from theoretical or policy perspectives without comprehensively examining how statutory provisions were applied to the factual circumstances of an individual criminal case. The present study demonstrates that judicial reasoning involves a continuous interaction between statutory interpretation, evidentiary assessment, sentencing principles, and the objectives of criminal law. Consequently, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Indonesian judges implement legal principles in practical adjudication (Marzuki, 2017).

b. Conformity of Judicial Reasoning with Indonesian Criminal Law

The conformity of judicial reasoning with Indonesian criminal law constitutes a fundamental requirement in ensuring that every criminal judgment is rendered according to the applicable legal framework. Judicial reasoning should demonstrate not only the factual basis of the judgment but also the legal arguments that justify the imposition of criminal sanctions. In the Indonesian legal system, judges are required to interpret statutory provisions objectively while ensuring that their decisions uphold the principles of legality, justice, legal certainty, and legal utility. These principles collectively form the foundation of criminal law enforcement and guarantee that judicial decisions remain accountable within the rule of law (Setyowati, 2005).

The analysis of Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst indicates that the panel of judges consistently applied the legality principle in determining criminal responsibility. Before declaring the defendant guilty, the judges examined whether every constituent element of the offense prescribed under Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics had been fulfilled through legally admissible evidence. Such an approach reflects the doctrine that criminal liability can only arise from conduct explicitly prohibited by legislation and supported by sufficient legal proof. Consequently, the judgment demonstrates consistency with the principle of *nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege*, which serves as the cornerstone of Indonesian criminal law (Moeljatno, 2015).

The judicial reasoning also demonstrates conformity with the evidentiary principles regulated under the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP). The judges examined witness testimony, documentary evidence, material evidence, and the

defendant's statement before establishing criminal responsibility. The judgment illustrates that no single item of evidence was considered sufficient on its own; rather, each form of evidence was evaluated collectively to construct a coherent factual narrative. This comprehensive assessment strengthened the reliability of the court's findings and ensured that the conviction was based on lawful evidentiary standards recognized by Indonesian procedural law (Harahap, 2021).

Another important finding concerns the consistency of the judgment with the objectives of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. The Narcotics Law was enacted to suppress illicit narcotics trafficking, protect public health, and preserve social order. In imposing criminal sanctions, the judges considered not only the defendant's unlawful conduct but also the broader social consequences arising from narcotics crimes. Such reasoning reflects that sentencing serves preventive and protective purposes in addition to punishment, thereby supporting the broader objectives of Indonesian criminal law policy (Nst, V. F. H., 2023).

The decision further demonstrates judicial independence as required under Law Number 48 of 2009 concerning Judicial Power. Judicial independence enables judges to evaluate evidence objectively without interference from external parties while remaining bound by statutory law. In this case, the panel independently assessed the facts presented during trial and formulated legal conclusions based upon applicable legislation and evidentiary findings. This independent judicial assessment enhances the legitimacy of the judgment because it reflects impartial legal reasoning rather than external influence or subjective preference (Mulyadi, 2015).

The conformity of judicial reasoning is also reflected in the court's application of criminal responsibility principles. The judges carefully distinguished between the establishment of factual circumstances and the determination of criminal liability. Objective elements of the offense were supported by material evidence and witness testimony, whereas subjective elements were evaluated through the defendant's awareness and participation in the criminal act. Such analytical separation ensures that punishment is imposed only after both objective and subjective requirements have been legally established, thereby protecting defendants from arbitrary criminal sanctions (Prasetyo, 2018).

The sentencing considerations contained in the judgment demonstrate the application of proportionality principles. The judges balanced aggravating circumstances, including the harmful impact of narcotics crimes upon society, with mitigating circumstances related to the defendant's conduct throughout the judicial proceedings. This balanced assessment reflects that criminal sanctions should correspond to the seriousness of the offense while considering the offender's personal circumstances. Consequently, the imposed sentence represents individualized justice rather than automatic application of statutory punishment (Sunarso, 2015).

Comparison with previous legal studies indicates that many discussions concerning narcotics law focus primarily on statutory interpretation or criminal policy. The present analysis demonstrates that Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst successfully integrates statutory interpretation, evidentiary evaluation, judicial independence, and sentencing principles within a single judicial framework. This integrated reasoning strengthens consistency between criminal legislation and judicial practice while illustrating how legal principles are implemented in actual court proceedings (Utami, 2019).

The judgment also contributes to legal certainty because the legal reasoning clearly explains the relationship between factual findings, statutory interpretation, and sentencing conclusions. Transparent reasoning enables legal practitioners, academics,

and appellate courts to understand how the judges reached their conclusions and whether the decision complies with Indonesian criminal law. Such transparency is essential for promoting consistency in future narcotics cases and reducing disparities in criminal sentencing (Venny Fraya Hartin Nst, 2023).

c. Implications of Judicial Reasoning for Criminal Sentencing in Narcotics Cases

The judicial reasoning contained in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst has significant implications for the development of criminal sentencing practices in Indonesia, particularly in cases involving Class I narcotics offenses. Judicial reasoning serves not only as the legal justification for imposing criminal sanctions but also as an important benchmark for ensuring consistency in future judicial decisions. Comprehensive legal reasoning strengthens the authority of court judgments because it demonstrates that criminal liability has been established through objective legal analysis rather than subjective judicial discretion. Consequently, well-reasoned judgments contribute to greater public confidence in the criminal justice system (Ramadhan, 2015).

One important implication arising from the analyzed judgment is the reinforcement of legal certainty in narcotics law enforcement. The judges systematically connected factual findings with statutory provisions before imposing criminal sanctions, thereby reducing ambiguity regarding the legal basis of the conviction. Such transparency enables legal practitioners, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and appellate courts to understand the rationale underlying judicial conclusions. As a result, judicial consistency can gradually be achieved because future courts may refer to similar legal reasoning when adjudicating comparable narcotics cases (Ratnadewi, 2014).

The findings also demonstrate that comprehensive judicial reasoning contributes to reducing sentencing disparities in narcotics cases. Sentencing disparity frequently occurs when judges impose substantially different punishments for similar criminal conduct without sufficient legal justification. By clearly explaining aggravating and mitigating circumstances together with the applicable statutory provisions, the judges in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst established a transparent sentencing framework that may serve as guidance for future judicial practice. Such consistency is essential for maintaining equality before the law and ensuring public trust in judicial institutions (Romi Asmara & Rasyid, 2013).

Another implication concerns the effectiveness of narcotics law enforcement policies. The analyzed judgment demonstrates that criminal punishment should not merely function as retribution against offenders but should also support broader objectives such as crime prevention, public protection, and deterrence. By emphasizing the harmful consequences of narcotics crimes to society, the judicial reasoning reinforces the preventive function of criminal law while simultaneously affirming the government's commitment to combating illicit narcotics trafficking. Such reasoning strengthens the implementation of criminal policy through judicial practice (Raharjo, 2002).

The decision further illustrates the importance of balancing legal certainty with substantive justice. Although statutory provisions establish minimum and maximum criminal sanctions, judges retain discretion to determine proportional punishment based upon the specific facts of each case. In the analyzed judgment, aggravating and mitigating circumstances were carefully considered before determining the final sentence. This individualized approach demonstrates that criminal sentencing should reflect not only the seriousness of the offense but also the offender's

degree of culpability and personal circumstances, thereby ensuring fairness within the criminal justice system (Venny Fraya Hartin Nst, Ichsan, 2023).

From an institutional perspective, transparent judicial reasoning contributes to strengthening judicial accountability. Every legal conclusion contained in the judgment is supported by factual findings and statutory interpretation, allowing the decision to be objectively evaluated by appellate courts, legal scholars, and the public. Such transparency minimizes the perception of arbitrary judicial decision-making and promotes greater confidence in the independence and professionalism of Indonesian courts. Accountability therefore becomes an essential component of judicial legitimacy in criminal adjudication (Mulyadi, 2016).

The present findings also have implications for the future development of Indonesian criminal law. The analyzed judgment demonstrates that effective criminal adjudication requires an integrated application of substantive criminal law, procedural criminal law, and sentencing principles. This integration ensures that criminal sanctions are imposed not only in accordance with statutory provisions but also in harmony with broader legal values, including justice, proportionality, and legal certainty. Consequently, judicial reasoning may serve as a practical reference for improving the quality of criminal judgments in future narcotics cases (Chazawi, 2019).

Compared with previous legal studies, this research provides a more practical contribution by examining how judicial reasoning is implemented in an actual narcotics case rather than discussing sentencing principles solely from a theoretical perspective. The case analysis demonstrates that judicial reasoning functions as the connecting mechanism between legislation, legal doctrine, evidentiary assessment, and criminal sentencing. This finding contributes to Indonesian criminal law scholarship by illustrating how abstract legal principles are translated into concrete judicial decisions capable of producing legal certainty and substantive justice (Utami & Lamonti, 2019).

Another implication concerns legal reform. The findings indicate that although the current legal framework provides adequate guidance for judges in deciding narcotics cases, further efforts are required to promote greater uniformity in judicial reasoning across Indonesian courts. The development of sentencing guidelines, judicial training, and the dissemination of landmark decisions may reduce inconsistencies in criminal sentencing while preserving judicial independence. Such reforms would strengthen the predictability of criminal judgments without limiting judges' authority to evaluate the unique circumstances of individual cases (Kusmawan, 2014).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the judicial reasoning applied in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst is generally consistent with the principles of Indonesian criminal law governing Class I narcotics offenses. The court established criminal liability through a systematic evaluation of legally admissible evidence and applied the relevant provisions of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics in accordance with the principles of legality, criminal responsibility, and due process. The judicial reasoning demonstrates that the imposition of criminal sanctions was supported by a comprehensive legal assessment rather than solely by the factual circumstances of the case.

The study finds that the judges successfully integrated juridical, philosophical, and sociological considerations when determining the appropriate sentence. The assessment of aggravating and mitigating circumstances reflects an effort to achieve proportional punishment while balancing the objectives of legal certainty, justice, and social protection. This integrated approach indicates that judicial reasoning serves not only as the legal basis

for criminal sentencing but also as an instrument for implementing the broader objectives of Indonesian criminal law in combating narcotics-related crimes.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in providing a case-based normative legal analysis of judicial reasoning in Decision Number 17/Pid.Sus/2025/PN Jkt.Pst, demonstrating how statutory interpretation, evidentiary assessment, and sentencing principles are applied simultaneously in judicial practice. The findings suggest that greater consistency in judicial reasoning and sentencing standards should continue to be promoted in order to minimize sentencing disparities, strengthen legal certainty, and enhance public confidence in the Indonesian criminal justice system, particularly in the adjudication of Class I narcotics offenses.

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