

## **Challenges of Law Enforcement Against International Network-Based Human Trafficking in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

*This study analyzes the challenges of law enforcement against international human trafficking networks in Indonesia, which have become increasingly complex due to digital technology developments, cross-border jurisdictional differences, and limitations in national institutional capacity. Using a normative-juridical and empirical approach, the research finds that international syndicates exploit socio-economic vulnerabilities, regulatory gaps, and weak interagency coordination to carry out the recruitment, transfer, and exploitation of victims. The main obstacles identified include difficulties in cross-jurisdictional evidence gathering, the absence of an integrated national database, limited digital forensic capabilities, and inadequate victim protection, all of which hinder investigative processes. Moreover, international cooperation mechanisms have not functioned optimally due to slow information exchange and differing evidentiary standards. This study emphasizes the need to strengthen legal instruments, enhance technical capacity, modernize investigative technology, and harmonize cross-border cooperation to improve the effectiveness of Indonesia's efforts in combating international human trafficking networks.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Human trafficking is a form of organized crime that has serious impacts on social stability, public security, and human rights protection in Indonesia. As an archipelagic nation strategically located along international trade routes, Indonesia is vulnerable to exploitation by transnational criminal networks to recruit, transport, and exploit victims through various methods. The increasing mobility of the population and the distribution of migrant workers from Indonesia to various countries increases the scope for perpetrators to move, particularly due to the weak oversight of the widespread sea and land routes. Furthermore, the development of digital technology allows syndicates to conduct recruitment remotely without face-to-face contact, making it difficult for law enforcement to identify communication patterns and network operations. These conditions encourage the need for more in-depth research into the dynamics and challenges of law enforcement related to the increasingly complex crime of human trafficking.

Law enforcement efforts against human trafficking in Indonesia have been implemented through various national regulatory instruments, including specific laws, government regulations, and implementing regulations at the operational level. However, in practice, law enforcement faces numerous obstacles, particularly when the crime involves international networks. Differences in jurisdictions, varying operational

definitions of human trafficking, capacity gaps among investigators across countries, and differing policy priorities between countries of origin, transit, and destination make synchronization of the investigation process challenging. Furthermore, the exchange of information between international law enforcement agencies is often slow and not as smooth as required for transnational criminal investigations, often hindering Indonesian investigators in obtaining electronic evidence or crucial information related to network structures. This underscores the need for a comprehensive analysis of the substantive, institutional, and procedural legal challenges that arise (Amin, 2023).

On the technical side, Indonesian law enforcement often faces obstacles in determining jurisdiction, particularly if the victim or perpetrator is abroad when the exploitation occurs. Another issue arises when the required digital evidence is stored on foreign servers, requiring inter-state mutual legal assistance mechanisms to access it. Collecting cross-border financial information also presents a challenge, as human trafficking networks typically utilize difficult-to-trace payment systems, including informal transactions, virtual accounts, and the movement of funds through countries with low levels of financial oversight. Investigators' capacity to interpret cross-border fund movement patterns still needs to be strengthened to disrupt the syndicate's funding sources. These challenges are further complicated when the perpetrators arrested in Indonesia are only a small part of a larger, hierarchical, and clandestine international syndicate (Wiyanto, 2023).

In addition to technical and jurisdictional challenges, advances in digital technology have also driven changes in the modus operandi of human trafficking. Online recruitment platforms, social media, and messaging apps have become easy-to-use tools to influence, deceive, and control victims. Many cases show victims recruited through fake job offers, promised high salaries, and then sent abroad to be forced to work in exploitative conditions. The use of digital technology allows syndicates to cover their tracks, utilize anonymous accounts, and operate cross-border networks without meeting local recruiters directly. This presents new challenges for law enforcement, requiring enhanced digital forensic capabilities, expanded collaboration with digital platform providers, and strengthened regulations regarding cross-border data access. The lack of uniform international standards for handling digital evidence makes law enforcement processes increasingly slow and ineffective at the international level.

Weaknesses in the law enforcement system are also evident in the weak mapping of syndicate networks operating in Indonesia. In many cases, authorities only succeed in ensnaring local recruiters without dismantling the larger syndicate hierarchy. Limited access to international intelligence, limited human resources, and the lack of an integrated database that can be exchanged with other countries make the process of uncovering human trafficking cases partial. Many cases stall at the investigation stage due to a lack of strong evidence linking local perpetrators to international coordinators. Inadequate coordination between national law enforcement agencies, such as the police, immigration, prosecutors, and migrant protection agencies, also impacts the less-than-optimal integrated enforcement efforts. These obstacles highlight the need to reorganize coordination channels and improve cross-agency investigative capabilities (Rochmah et al., 2023).

Institutional aspects are a significant factor influencing the effectiveness of law enforcement. The limited number of investigators competent in handling transnational cases often results in lengthy investigations. Furthermore, supporting facilities such as digital forensic laboratories, financial investigation support equipment, and information integration systems are still unequally distributed across Indonesia. Consequently, human trafficking cases involving international networks are more difficult for law enforcement

units in regions with limited capacity to handle. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity is a strategic necessity, particularly through intensive training, the establishment of cross-agency task forces, and increasing the dedicated budget for handling transnational crimes. Strategic collaboration with international institutions also needs to be strengthened to strengthen the capacity of Indonesian law enforcement to address the evolving operational patterns of syndicates (Zahro et al., 2025).

The victim protection dimension is also a crucial aspect of the challenges of enforcing human trafficking laws. Many victims are reluctant to pursue legal action due to fear of threats from the perpetrator's network or due to the deep trauma caused by their exploitation. Furthermore, the victim identification process in the field is often inaccurate due to a lack of understanding by authorities regarding human trafficking indicators, leading some victims to be treated as lawbreakers, such as illegal immigrants or undocumented workers. Victim recovery programs are also still suboptimal due to limited shelter facilities, support staff, and access to psychological and legal services. The lack of social and economic reintegration programs makes victims vulnerable to re-exploitation. Therefore, strengthening the victim protection system must be carried out in an integrated manner between law enforcement agencies, social institutions, and local governments so that victims can receive adequate and comprehensive protection (Warsifah, 2021).

Given the complexity of law enforcement obstacles and the highly dynamic nature of international networks, Indonesia requires a more comprehensive strategy to eradicate human trafficking. Strengthening national legal instruments must be accompanied by more operational international cooperation through mutual legal assistance mechanisms, joint investigations, and harmonization of evidentiary standards. Furthermore, increasing digital forensic capacity, financial intelligence, and data integration across countries will be key to unraveling the structures and operational patterns of international syndicates. Effective law enforcement efforts must also be accompanied by prevention strategies through public education, strengthening migrant worker protection, and improving digital literacy to prevent the public from being easily deceived by illegal recruiters. This study seeks to analyze these challenges in depth and provide strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement against international network-based human trafficking in Indonesia.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is a juridical-normative method combined with an empirical approach to provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges of law enforcement against international network-based human trafficking in Indonesia. The juridical-normative approach is carried out through an in-depth review of laws and regulations, court decisions, and relevant international legal instruments, to identify substantive and procedural gaps in handling this transnational crime. Meanwhile, an empirical approach is applied through an analysis of law enforcement reports, official government data, publications of national institutions, and findings from previous research to map the operational patterns of syndicates, technical obstacles to investigations, and the effectiveness of inter-institutional coordination both domestically and internationally. The combination of these two approaches allows the study to assess the gap between legal formulations and field practices, while simultaneously formulating more realistic strategic recommendations in addressing the complexity of international human trafficking networks in Indonesia.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Research result

The research findings indicate that law enforcement against international human trafficking networks in Indonesia still faces several interrelated structural and operational barriers. Key findings reveal that the movement patterns of transnational networks are increasingly complex as perpetrators exploit victims' socio-economic vulnerabilities, regulatory gaps, and the development of digital technology that supports identity theft, online transactions, and covert coordination between criminal actors. Law enforcement officials in the field acknowledge that victim identification is often delayed due to a lack of early detection in border areas, a lack of integrated inter-agency databases, and limited ability to conduct cross-jurisdictional tracking. Furthermore, the investigation process is often hampered by the fragmented organizational structure of human trafficking networks, making it difficult to identify the main perpetrators who act as controllers or international coordinators. The research also found that most victims are reluctant to provide information due to trauma, economic dependence, or threats from the perpetrators' networks.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of law enforcement is also affected by the low capacity for inter-agency coordination, both at the national and regional levels. Research data shows that cooperation between countries within the framework of mutual legal assistance has not been optimal due to differences in evidentiary standards, slow information exchange, and the lack of uniform mechanisms for handling victims in countries of origin, transit, and destination. Nevertheless, the study notes that a number of progressive steps have been taken, including increased digital investigation training, the establishment of a special unit for handling human trafficking, and the expansion of cooperation networks through ASEAN forums. However, these efforts have not been able to fully suppress the dominance of international criminal networks due to continued budget constraints, a lack of forensic technology, and the absence of a national system that can integrate data, reporting, and enforcement in real time. Overall, the research findings confirm that the main challenges lie not only in the legal aspects but also in institutional governance, technical capacity, and consistent cross-border coordination, which are essential prerequisites for more effective law enforcement.

#### 3.2. Discussion

##### The Complexity of International Criminal Networks

International network-based human trafficking is a form of crime that operates within a complex organizational structure, involving local recruiters, cross-border intermediaries, and international coordinators who control the exploitation process. This complexity is further evident in the syndicates' operating patterns, which utilize land, sea, and air routes simultaneously, making it difficult for law enforcement to map the routes and movement patterns of victims. International syndicates operate not only physically but also digitally through encrypted communication platforms, fake job advertisements, and untraceable payment systems, effectively reducing the risk of detection by authorities. This situation demands a law enforcement approach that relies not only on national instruments but also on comprehensive cross-border cooperation, particularly in intelligence exchange mechanisms and harmonization of transnational crime enforcement (Ilmih, 2024).

The obstacles to unraveling international human trafficking networks become even more apparent when Indonesian investigators encounter perpetrators operating outside national jurisdiction or when digital evidence is stored on foreign servers protected by other countries' privacy policies. In the context of transnational crime, the authority of domestic authorities is severely limited, as they cannot conduct direct investigative actions abroad without formal cooperation. This situation is exacerbated by the nature of syndicate operations, which often exploit loopholes in national borders, use false identities, and switch communication platforms to avoid detection. When investigators need critical data such as digital communication records, online financial transactions, or the location of perpetrators' activities, they must go through lengthy and multi-layered mutual legal assistance request procedures. This situation slows down the evidence collection process, while perpetrators continually modify their operational patterns, making their whereabouts increasingly difficult to accurately map.

The process of requesting mutual legal assistance (MUA) often presents a major stumbling block due to differing legal standards, administrative bureaucracy, and varying institutional capacities in each partner country. Each country has different internal mechanisms for processing requests for witness examinations, digital evidence seizures, or access to international financial records. As a result, waiting times can extend for months, even beyond the required timeframe. In many cases, investigations are stalled, or evidence becomes invalid due to changes in network structures or the loss of access to key witnesses. Some countries also have strict privacy policies, particularly regarding digital data, making access to overseas servers nearly impossible without a special cooperation agreement. This further impacts the effectiveness of investigations, particularly when the required evidence involves online communications, app-based transactions, or time-sensitive digital activity records.

The situation is further complicated when the destination country for victims does not prioritize human trafficking, resulting in ineffective cross-border coordination. This difference in criminal policy priorities leads to delayed or incomplete responses to Indonesian requests. Under these circumstances, Indonesian law enforcement officials face a significant gap between investigative needs and available international support. This imbalance often leaves key international perpetrators untouched by the legal process, as syndicates exploit bureaucratic delays and weak harmonization of evidentiary standards. As a result, only local perpetrators are apprehended, while controlling actors remain free and continue their activities with new networks. This indicates the need for reformulation of international cooperation mechanisms, increased capacity for legal diplomacy, and the establishment of more responsive joint protocols to prevent Indonesia from remaining in a weak position when dealing with transnational organized crime (Pamungkas et al., 2025).

The involvement of transnational criminal organizations operating within human trafficking networks also significantly impacts the increasing frequency and variety of exploitation methods. These networks are highly adaptable to changes in law enforcement policies in Indonesia; for example, when one shipping route is tightened, syndicates quickly switch to other routes or exploit legal loopholes in border areas with minimal oversight. The flexible and widespread structure of these networks makes them difficult to eradicate comprehensively. This emphasizes that tackling human trafficking cannot focus solely on local perpetrators but must be directed at dismantling the chain of command of international syndicates through data integration, increased

investigative capacity, and strengthening the role of law enforcement institutions in regional and global cooperation.

### **Weaknesses in National Law Enforcement**

Efforts to address human trafficking in Indonesia face various institutional barriers that hinder effective law enforcement. Disparities in capacity between regions, particularly in border areas, mean that not all police and immigration units have adequate human resources and technology to handle transnational crimes. In many cases, local law enforcement officers struggle to accurately identify victims due to a lack of in-depth understanding of human trafficking indicators, resulting in victims sometimes being categorized as lawbreakers. Furthermore, coordination between agencies such as the police, prosecutors, immigration, and labor agencies is suboptimal, resulting in bureaucratic delays in case handling. This lack of coordination is further exacerbated by the lack of an integrated national database that can be used collaboratively by all agencies to track perpetrator networks (Ihsana & Anggraini, 2025).

Another obstacle hindering the effectiveness of law enforcement against internationally networked human trafficking crimes relates to the substantive aspects of the law, which still leave significant gaps. When cases involve migrant worker victims, authorities often confront debates about the boundaries of exploitation, recruitment patterns, and departure mechanisms that qualify as criminal acts. These differing interpretations often influence the drafting of charges, as each law enforcement agency has a different analytical approach. In some cases, investigators and prosecutors differ in their assessments of whether the elements of a crime have been fulfilled, preventing the case from proceeding to prosecution. This demonstrates the complexity of the elements of the offense in human trafficking laws, which means that not all criminal acts can be readily deemed to meet legal criteria, particularly as the modus operandi becomes increasingly sophisticated and involves administrative justifications that appear legal in migration documents.

In addition to challenges regarding the interpretation of criminal elements, substantive legal issues also arise from the suboptimal implementation of regulations governing detailed and operational procedures for international cooperation. The mechanism for requesting mutual legal assistance, procedures for exchanging digital evidence, and standards for cross-border document verification are still not fully regulated in comprehensive technical regulations. This situation leaves law enforcement in Indonesia without standard guidelines when accessing evidence stored in other countries or involving international institutions in the investigation process. In the context of cross-border human trafficking, most relevant evidence, from communication records and financial transactions to international mobility data, generally lies outside national jurisdiction. Procedural ambiguity slows down, or even halts, the evidentiary process, as authorities must await responses from partner countries whose legal systems may not prioritize such requests.

These regulatory limitations further emphasize the need to harmonize the substance of national law with international standards so that law enforcement processes can be more adaptive to the transnational nature of crime. Without this alignment, law enforcement practices will continue to struggle when it comes to proving crimes that occur across national borders, while available legal instruments are still oriented towards conventional, domestic evidentiary systems. Harmonization is also necessary for Indonesia to expand its network of cooperation, expedite the

process of information exchange, and ensure that evidence collected from abroad is legally admissible in court. Therefore, improving the substance of the law is not only an administrative necessity but also a strategic foundation for ensuring that human trafficking crimes can be prosecuted effectively, accountably, and in line with the development of modern forms of crime (Lie, 2024).

The lack of supporting facilities and a limited budget specifically for handling human trafficking further weakens institutional capacity to crack down on international syndicates. Not all regions have digital forensic laboratories, dedicated interview facilities for vulnerable victims, or forged document detection equipment, which are essential components of the investigative process. This lack of infrastructure results in poor case file quality and lengthy evidence collection processes, often leading to cases being dropped. Furthermore, the lack of specific training on international operating methods makes it difficult for investigators to interpret network patterns and connect local cases to global syndicate structures. If left unaddressed, these weaknesses will continue to create safe spaces for international syndicates to exploit loopholes in the Indonesian legal system.

### **Challenges of Evidence and Jurisdiction**

The evidentiary process in international human trafficking cases faces significant challenges, particularly when the victims, perpetrators, or evidence are located in other countries. Differences in jurisdiction between countries prevent Indonesian investigators from working directly to obtain the necessary evidence, necessitating lengthy formal cooperation mechanisms. Furthermore, digital evidence, a crucial component of modern crimes, is often stored on international servers, and access to it is restricted by the privacy policies of countries and digital platform providers. Delays in obtaining digital evidence can hinder the investigation process or render the evidence irrelevant due to its deletion by the perpetrator. This situation emphasizes that jurisdictional issues are a structural barrier that must be addressed by increasing the effectiveness of international legal cooperation (Pamungkas et al., 2025).

The challenges of providing evidence in international human trafficking crimes become increasingly complex when victims experience profound trauma, psychological distress, or economic instability. Many victims are mentally unwell, making it difficult to provide consistent and detailed testimony. Fear that the perpetrator or syndicate members still haunt their lives leads some victims to remain silent or provide only partial accounts. In some situations, victims who have been economically dependent on the perpetrator are reluctant to reveal the identity of the main perpetrator for fear of losing their livelihood or the threat of retaliation. This situation places investigators in a difficult position, as victim testimony is a crucial element in constructing a complete criminal case, while the psychological distress and living circumstances of the victims often prevent such information from being fully elicited.

Limited psychological support and legal aid for victims also exacerbate obstacles in the evidentiary process. In some regions, access to forensic psychologists remains severely limited, preventing sensitive and professional examinations of victims in accordance with international standards. The lack of counseling services prevents victims from receiving adequate support to process their trauma before providing testimony, resulting in disjointed, incomplete, or variable information. Furthermore, access to legal counsel for victims remains unequal, resulting in many victims not understanding their rights in the legal process or feeling unsafe when testifying. This

system's lack of comprehensive support directly impacts the strength of the evidence, as unstable victim testimony can weaken the prosecutor's position in proving the elements of the crime in court.

On the other hand, differences in definitions of exploitation and evidentiary indicators across countries present additional obstacles in cross-jurisdictional cases. Countries have inconsistent legal formulations, for example, regarding indicators of forced labor, sexual exploitation, or modern slavery practices. These differences mean that not all evidence collected in Indonesia can be readily recognized or used in legal proceedings in other countries. The reverse is also true, where evidence from abroad does not always meet Indonesian evidentiary standards. This disharmony complicates extradition processes, the admission of witness statements, and the legality of documents needed to link perpetrators' roles within international networks. This complexity highlights the importance of developing regional and global cooperation frameworks that harmonize evidentiary standards and strengthen victim protection systems so they can participate fearlessly in legal proceedings. Such harmonization efforts not only facilitate the collection of evidence but also ensure that victims' rights are protected and justice can be upheld more effectively in the context of transnational crimes (Najieh, 2025).

Difficulties in obtaining travel documents, communication records, financial evidence, and the flow of victims' movements demonstrate that proving human trafficking cannot be resolved solely through domestic legal approaches. Integration of conventional investigative techniques and digital forensics is necessary to trace cross-border communications, map financial flows, and connect local perpetrators with international networks. Furthermore, strengthening the mutual legal assistance system and enhancing bilateral and multilateral agreements are key to accelerating the exchange of relevant evidence. Without the support of these mechanisms, proving international human trafficking crimes will continue to face serious obstacles that hinder effective law enforcement.

### **Weaknesses in the Protection of Victims of Exploitation**

One of the biggest challenges in enforcing human trafficking laws is the weak victim protection system, particularly for migrant workers who are often placed in vulnerable situations abroad. Many victims do not pursue legal proceedings due to fear of retaliation from syndicates or because they have not received guarantees of safety and protection during the investigation. The lack of shelter facilities, psychological support, and legal support makes victims feel unsafe, and they ultimately choose to return to their hometowns without providing complete information. This situation has a significant impact on weak evidence and the failure to connect local perpetrators to larger international networks (Nola, 2024).

In addition to suboptimal initial treatment for victims, another challenge in law enforcement against international human trafficking networks lies in the lack of social reintegration mechanisms to restore victims' well-being upon their return to Indonesia. Many victims return home physically and psychologically weakened, but lack long-term recovery services, including trauma counseling, ongoing legal assistance, or adequate medical facilities. The lack of access to skills training and employment opportunities leaves victims in economically vulnerable situations, placing them at high risk of re-entrainment in a cycle of exploitation. This economic instability creates a loophole that international syndicates can easily exploit for re-recruitment, either

directly through their networks of recruiters or indirectly through social and economic pressure on victims' families.

Furthermore, weaknesses in the reintegration system are also related to the suboptimal coordination between government agencies, civil society organizations, and international institutions handling victim repatriation. Available empowerment programs are often short-term, unintegrated, or only reach a small percentage of victims, thus failing to provide a sustainable recovery impact. In some areas, reintegration services are not even evenly distributed, leaving victims from remote or less developed areas without adequate support. This imbalance exacerbates victims' vulnerability and hinders the effectiveness of national efforts to address human trafficking. This situation demonstrates that victim reintegration is not only a social issue but also a crucial part of the law enforcement process, as the success of victims' recovery significantly depends on their readiness to testify and support the evidence-based process.

On the other hand, law enforcement officials face difficulties in distinguishing between trafficking victims and immigration violations, particularly when victims cannot immediately explain their situation due to trauma or pressure from the syndicate. As a result, some victims are treated as lawbreakers and subject to deportation, temporary detention, or administrative fines. This treatment not only violates the principle of victim protection but also eliminates potentially crucial information that could help law enforcement uncover international syndicate networks. Unclear victim identification procedures, a lack of officer training on trafficking indicators, and limited comprehensive operational guidelines further increase the risk of mishandling in the field. This situation underscores the importance of increasing officer capacity through ongoing training, harmonizing identification guidelines, and strengthening a human rights-based perspective so that victims can be accurately identified and provided with appropriate protection (Kurniawan, 2024).

Strengthening victim protection requires a multidisciplinary approach involving law enforcement agencies, social services, migrant protection agencies, and civil society organizations. Providing adequate safe housing, professional legal assistance, and long-term counseling services is crucial to ensuring victims feel safe and can provide comprehensive information. Furthermore, cooperation with destination countries needs to be strengthened regarding recovery, repatriation, and reintegration, especially while victims are still abroad. If the victim protection system is not improved, the effectiveness of international human trafficking law enforcement will continue to be hampered.

### **Strengthening International Policy and Cooperation**

Addressing internationally networked human trafficking requires strengthening legal policies that are responsive to evolving transnational crime modes. National policies must accommodate the use of digital technology in recruitment and exploitation, including regulations on access to digital evidence, financial investigations, and monitoring cross-border movement. Harmonization between national regulations and international standards is also necessary to ensure more efficient law enforcement and evidence recognition within the context of international cooperation. Furthermore, policy reforms should include prevention strategies based on public education, protection of migrant workers, and oversight of informal industries that often serve as sites of victim exploitation (Felicia, 2025).

International cooperation is a fundamental pillar in combating human trafficking, particularly when the crime is perpetrated by syndicates operating across borders and with complex structures. The nature of the crime, which involves human mobility, the use of digital technology, and international financial flows, makes it impossible for Indonesia to work alone in law enforcement. In this context, Indonesia's role in various bilateral and multilateral agreements needs to be strengthened to ensure a solid legal basis for the exchange of information, the repatriation of victims, and the pursuit of perpetrators located outside national jurisdiction. Mutual legal assistance mechanisms are crucial for expediting the delivery of legal documents, obtaining remote testimony, and accessing digital evidence held on foreign servers. Without effective cooperation instruments, many investigations could potentially stall at an early stage because access to international travel data, cross-border communication records, and financial trails cannot be obtained in the time necessary to maintain investigative integrity.

In addition to formal cooperation in the form of international agreements, operational collaboration with various global law enforcement agencies also plays a strategic role in accelerating the disclosure of human trafficking networks. Working relationships with Interpol, ASEANapol, and various international organizations engaged in migrant protection enable Indonesian authorities to obtain intelligence data, wanted lists, and even the movement patterns of syndicates operating in multiple countries. In some cases, joint investigations have been an effective solution for uncovering the organizational structures of syndicates that exploit bureaucratic loopholes between countries. Cooperation with international migrant protection agencies is also necessary to ensure monitoring of the condition of victims abroad, especially those placed in safe houses or still undergoing the identification process. This cross-agency synergy not only expedites the legal process but also raises standards for victim protection globally.

Cross-border coordination becomes even more crucial when trafficking victims remain abroad or are under the control of syndicates exploiting weak legal protections in the destination country. Repatriation of victims requires intensive communication between the Indonesian government, diplomatic missions abroad, and local authorities to ensure the process is safe and avoids new risks. In addition to expediting the repatriation of victims, international cooperation must also encompass legal protection during the investigation process, including the provision of translators, legal counsel, and psychosocial services to ensure victims can testify without pressure. Therefore, international collaboration is not merely about law enforcement but also an integral part of human rights protection, ensuring every victim receives adequate treatment and access to justice, regardless of their country of residence (Lase et al., 2025).

In addition to strengthening formal mechanisms, increasing the capacity of law enforcement to understand the structure of international syndicates is an urgent need. Developing training in digital investigations, financial crimes, and criminal network mapping will expand investigators' ability to identify links between local perpetrators and international coordinators. Furthermore, developing a national database that can be linked to international systems will expedite the process of detecting connected cases. If policies and international cooperation are simultaneously strengthened, Indonesian law enforcement efforts will be more adaptive in addressing the evolving dynamics of global human trafficking.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that internationally networked human trafficking is a form of transnational crime that has serious impacts on social stability, national security, and human rights protection in Indonesia. The complexity of this crime is exacerbated by Indonesia's geographical location as an archipelagic nation and the high mobility of migrant workers, which provides opportunities for syndicates to operate via sea, land, and air. The development of digital technology further expands the scope of criminal activity by enabling recruitment and covert communication without direct contact, thus complicating the process of early identification and detection by law enforcement. The study shows that although Indonesia has a sufficiently robust legal framework to address human trafficking, its implementation still faces various obstacles, particularly when cases involve jurisdictional differences, capacity gaps between countries, and slow international information exchange. These obstacles highlight the gap between the domestic legal system and the needs of addressing transnational crime, which requires a swift, integrated response supported by effective international coordination.

Furthermore, the study found that the main problems in law enforcement lie not only in the legal aspects but also in institutional and technical aspects, including investigator capacity, technology availability, data integration, and victim protection mechanisms. Limited digital forensic capacity, a lack of supporting laboratories, and uneven investigator competency across regions mean that many cases cannot be fully resolved. At the field level, victim handling still faces difficulties due to a lack of assistance and recovery facilities, resulting in a lack of information that can assist in the evidentiary process. Furthermore, the syndicate's adaptive and widespread structure means that authorities are only able to arrest local recruiters without addressing the main actors in the international network. Overall, this study concludes that effective law enforcement against international human trafficking requires comprehensive reform through strengthened cross-border cooperation, increased institutional capacity, modernized investigative technology, and integrated victim protection systems to enable Indonesia to address the increasingly complex dynamics of transnational crime.

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