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Indonesia Police Institution (POLRI) Roles in Preventing Criminalization of Human Rights Abuse (HRA) and Human Trafficking (HT) For Indonesia Informal Migrant Workers Safety, Welfare and Protection System

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Abstract: Indonesian informal migrant workers have a strategic contribution to the global economy, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. However, this group is also vulnerable to criminalization, human rights violations, and human trafficking crimes. The Indonesian National Police (POLRI), as a law enforcement institution, plays an important role in the migrant worker protection system, ranging from early detection and law enforcement to cross-border assistance. This study uses a normative juridical method with legislative and conceptual approaches to examine the role of POLRI in the context of migrant worker protection, as well as to explore the need for strengthening collaborative governance between POLRI, BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Indonesian representatives abroad. The results of the study indicate that the success of migrant worker protection highly depends on data integration, institutional synergy, and the utilization of intelligent technology based on artificial intelligence (AI). This research recommends strengthening regulations, establishing cross-sector task forces, and developing a digital roadmap as innovative strategies to create a responsive and adaptive protection system.

Keywords: Informal Migrant Workers, Indonesia Police Institution (POLRI), Fast-Emergency Response, International Police Network, Legal Standing/Safety/Security

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian informal migrant workers play a highly strategic role in the structure of the global labor force, particularly in domestic and informal sectors such as domestic helpers, elderly caregivers, construction laborers, and cleaning workers. Their presence is highly needed in various destination countries, especially in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, where the demand for cheap and flexible labor is high but not always accompanied by adequate labor protection regulations. (Beliu, 2023) Informal migrant workers tend to be vulnerable to exploitation, yet at the same time, they fill labor shortages in sectors considered unattractive by local citizens in destination countries. (Longgarini, 2023) In this regard, Indonesian informal

migrant workers are essential in maintaining social and economic stability in host countries, even though their contributions are often not formally recorded in global labor statistics.

On the other hand, from a national perspective, the contribution of migrant workers, including those with informal status, has a significant economic impact on Indonesia, especially through the remittances they send home. Remittances are one of the country's important sources of foreign exchange and contribute to strengthening household economies in migration-prone areas such as West Nusa Tenggara, East Java, and Lampung. The remittance funds are used for consumption needs, education, house construction, and as capital for productive enterprises in their home villages. (Hidayah, 2019) On a macro scale, this remittance flow acts as an economic stabilizer, particularly during times of global economic crisis. (Budiyanto, 2024) Therefore, informal migrant workers not only serve as breadwinners abroad but also as national economic development actors whose contributions should not be overlooked.

Indonesian informal migrant workers face various serious threats while in destination countries, especially in the form of criminalization, human rights violations, and human trafficking practices. Reports from various international organizations such as the ILO, IOM, as well as records from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and BP2MI, show an increase in the number of Indonesian migrant workers who fall victim to labor exploitation, arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, and even death penalty without adequate legal assistance. (Mone Kaka, 2023) These cases mostly occur in countries with weak labor protection systems or that do not recognize domestic workers as part of the formal labor force. Many informal migrant workers are arrested for violating residence permits or working illegally, even though most of them are victims of fraudulent agents or organized human trafficking networks. (Adinda, 2024)

The lack of legal status is the root of the weak bargaining position of informal migrant workers. Because they are not officially recorded in the legal labor placement system, they do not have clear work contracts, are not registered under labor protection schemes, and find it difficult to access legal or diplomatic aid services when facing problems. Under such conditions, informal migrant workers become the most vulnerable group to gender-based violence, forced labor, and intimidation from law enforcement in destination countries. Their status as "invisible" labor makes violations against them hard to detect and legally addressed. On the other hand, many of these workers are unaware of their rights due to the lack of pre-departure education or the inability to speak the local language, which further exacerbates their vulnerability to criminalization and arbitrary treatment. (Santoso, 2024)

The challenge of protecting migrant workers in destination countries is becoming increasingly complex because legal systems and protection approaches toward migrant workers vary widely between countries. Some countries, such as Saudi Arabia or Malaysia, employ the sponsorship (kafala) system, which structurally places workers in a subordinate position to employers, making it difficult for them to change jobs or report inhumane treatment. Meanwhile, Indonesia's limited ability to intervene diplomatically in other countries' legal systems also poses a barrier to protecting migrant workers facing legal issues. (Shalihah, 2023)

As a national law enforcement institution, the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) has a strategic role in supporting the protection of Indonesian citizens abroad, including informal migrant workers. The legal basis for POLRI's authority in this context is stipulated in several regulations such as Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police and Law No. 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers. These regulations authorize POLRI to investigate criminal offenses related to human trafficking, placement fraud, and cross-border labor exploitation. Moreover, cooperation with Interpol and foreign police institutions grants POLRI crucial access and positioning in tracing, prosecuting, and repatriating migrant workers who are victims of criminalization and human rights violations abroad. (Puanandini, 2020)

POLRI's role is not limited to law enforcement but also includes early detection, monitoring of illegal placement networks, and legal assistance in resolving legal cases involving Indonesian migrant workers overseas. With the establishment of special units such as the Human Trafficking Task Force (TPPO), POLRI aims to dismantle trafficking syndicates from upstream to downstream, including illegal agents, brokers, and fake corporations. In international law, POLRI can collaborate with police attachés at embassies and access the Interpol system to coordinate actions in cases of detention or legal threats against migrant workers. (Ilmah, 2024) However, significant challenges remain in terms of limited resources and the absence of responsive and fast cross-border mechanisms to rescue Indonesian citizens in legal emergencies.

To enhance protection effectiveness, there is a need for an integrated information and database system between POLRI and other institutions such as BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and even labor information systems in destination countries. Currently, data disconnection often hinders rapid intervention in cases involving informal migrant workers, especially those who go through unofficial channels. Therefore, developing an integrated digital system—capable of connecting placement data, case reports, locations of Indonesian citizens, and the legal status of migrant workers—is an urgent necessity. POLRI needs to be actively involved in building such a technology-based system, through the use of big data technology, application-based rapid reporting, and AI-based security system integration.

More broadly, the protection system for Indonesian migrant workers requires a collaborative governance approach involving key actors, including POLRI, BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Indonesian diplomatic representatives abroad. So far, sectoral approaches and overlapping authorities between institutions have often resulted in ineffective and slow handling of migrant worker cases. Lack of coordination causes the loss of protective momentum when critical cases suddenly arise in destination countries. Therefore, collaborative governance is a strategic approach to building a system that is responsive, accountable, and adaptive to the dynamics of migrant worker issues.

Amid the complex problems faced by Indonesian informal migrant workers, the use of information technology and artificial intelligence (AI) offers great opportunities to improve the effectiveness of protection systems. One major challenge is the limited access migrant workers have to accurate information and emergency support services when facing high-risk situations such as harassment, physical violence, legal threats, or even confinement. Many migrant workers do not know where to report, whom to contact, or even lack safe communication tools. Therefore, developing AI-based systems such as an integrated mobile application that provides direct access to legal, health, psychological, and diplomatic services is urgently needed. Ideally, this application should be integrated with geolocation features, a panic button, automatic translation, and an AI-based chatbot that can provide 24/7 fast responses in various destination country languages.

In addition, the application of AI also opens up opportunities for early detection of potential human rights violations and human trafficking cases through big data analysis collected from various sources, such as complaint reports, migrant movement data, suspicious remittance patterns, and digital activity of labor agents. With the right algorithms, the system can identify areas or individuals at high risk of becoming victims of HRV and HT, and issue warning signals to POLRI, BP2MI, or Indonesian representatives abroad to take preventive action. However, for this system to function effectively, interoperability between platforms is required—that is, the ability of POLRI, BP2MI, and international agencies' systems to exchange data in real-time and securely. Without interoperability, the potential of AI will be hampered by data fragmentation and limited coordination.

The reality of protecting Indonesian informal migrant workers on the ground reveals a significant gap between the real needs of workers and the currently available protection

systems. Although various policies and regulations have been developed, their implementation is often hindered by weak inter-agency coordination, limited resources, and the absence of a fully integrated and responsive system to the dynamics in destination countries. Many informal migrant workers are not reached by official protection mechanisms because their status is unregistered or they are located in areas far from the reach of government representatives. In this context, POLRI plays a strategic role as a connector between the domestic system and the international network-through cross-border police cooperation, coordination with diplomatic missions, and the establishment of rapid case detection and response systems. Therefore, a renewal of migrant worker protection approaches is needed- one that is more innovative and adaptive, emphasizing inter-agency integration, utilization of advanced technology, and collective commitment to making the safety and welfare of migrant workers a national and transnational priority.

METHOD

This study employs a normative juridical method, which is a legal research approach that relies on the analysis of legal norms written in legislation and other legal documents. The approach used includes the statute approach, which involves examining various relevant regulations such as Law Number 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, as well as implementing regulations, bilateral agreements, and related international conventions. In addition, a conceptual approach is also used to explore legal thoughts and theories on human rights protection, human trafficking, and collaborative governance within the framework of cross-border migrant worker protection.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data in the form of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include laws, government regulations, and international agreements; secondary legal materials include academic literature, journals, scientific articles, and official institutional reports; while tertiary legal materials consist of legal dictionaries and legal encyclopedias. The data collection technique is carried out through library research, by inventorying and classifying all relevant legal documents and literature. Subsequently, the data analysis technique is conducted qualitatively by interpreting regulations and legal concepts to identify the relationships among norms, and to assess the alignment between applicable legal norms and the protection needs of migrant workers in the context of inter-agency cooperation and the use of modern technology, particularly by the Indonesian National Police (POLRI).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) in Preventing Criminalization, Human Rights Violations, and Human Trafficking Against Indonesian Informal Migrant Workers

The role and authority of the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) in preventing criminalization, human rights violations, and human trafficking against Indonesian informal migrant workers have a strong legal basis within the national legal system. In general, the primary legal foundation concerning the duties and functions of POLRI is found in Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, which in Article 13 states that POLRI is tasked with: a) maintaining public security and order; b) enforcing the law; and c) providing protection, guidance, and services to the public. More specifically, Article 14 paragraph (1) letter g mentions that POLRI is authorized to “cooperate with foreign police forces in addressing international crimes.” This provides a legal basis for POLRI to be directly involved in the protection efforts of Indonesian migrant workers abroad, particularly in the context of

law enforcement and cross-border cooperation on human trafficking and exploitation cases. (Runturambi, 2022)

In addition, Law Number 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (UU PPMI) reinforces POLRI's role in the protection system for migrant workers. Article 69 paragraph (1) letter d explicitly states that the central government, through relevant ministries and institutions, is responsible for "prevention, supervision, and law enforcement against syndicates involved in non-procedural dispatch of Indonesian Migrant Workers." In this context, POLRI is the institution with the function of law enforcement and investigation, including handling human trafficking (TPPO) crimes that often occur in the recruitment and informal placement processes. Meanwhile, Article 77 also emphasizes the importance of interagency cooperation, including with law enforcement, in providing legal protection to migrant workers who are victims of exploitation or criminalization in destination countries. (Apri Tri Longgarini, 2023)

In addition to the Police Law and the UU PPMI, the Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) provide a normative framework for POLRI in carrying out investigation and inquiry functions. Article 1 point 1 of the KUHAP defines an inquiry as a series of actions to search and find a criminal event to determine whether an investigation can be conducted, while Article 6 states that an investigation is conducted by a POLRI officer authorized by law. Regarding specific crimes such as trafficking in persons, Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Human Trafficking Crimes (UU TPPO) is a key legal instrument. Article 2 of the TPPO Law states that anyone who recruits, transports, shelters, sends, or receives a person for exploitation purposes can be punished, and Articles 13–16 govern the authority of POLRI in investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of this crime, both within and outside the country. (Faudzan, 2019)

In the context of international authority, POLRI also has a legal basis for establishing cross-border cooperation through international agreements and membership in global police organizations such as Interpol. POLRI is an active member of the Interpol network, which enables operational cooperation in terms of data exchange, red notices, cross-border fugitive arrests, and intelligence gathering related to transnational crimes including human trafficking and migrant worker exploitation. Moreover, in various bilateral agreements between Indonesia and migrant destination countries (such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates), POLRI may be authorized to collaborate with local police in handling cases involving Indonesian citizens. This cooperation is also supported by Article 4 paragraph (1) of Law No. 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations, which states that Indonesian diplomatic representatives may cooperate with law enforcement agencies to protect Indonesian citizens abroad. (Muhammad Azzam Alfarizi, 2021)

POLRI's preventive function in the context of migration is one of the key pillars in the protection system for Indonesian informal migrant workers. This function includes early prevention efforts against illegal recruitment practices, trafficking, and various forms of exploitation that often occur before, during, and after workers are placed abroad. Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, in Article 13 letter a, states that one of POLRI's principal duties is to maintain public security and order, which includes preemptive activities (counseling, community guidance, and outreach) and preventive actions (preventing potential crimes). In the migration context, this is realized through early detection of trafficking syndicates and illegal recruitment routes, particularly in migrant-sending regions such as West Nusa Tenggara, East Java, Central Java, and parts of Kalimantan. (Setyawanta, 2020)

Early detection is carried out through police intelligence and field monitoring that focuses on non-procedural recruitment activities, whether conducted by individuals or unregistered agents. POLRI collaborates with institutions such as BP2MI (Agency for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers) to identify new trafficking modes and forged

placement documents. Legal support for these efforts is reflected in Article 69 paragraph (1) letter d of Law Number 18 of 2017 (UU PPMI), which mandates the central government to take action against illegal migrant worker dispatch syndicates. In practice, POLRI frequently conducts joint operations with BP2MI to dismantle illegal shelters and prosecute unauthorized recruitment agents.

In addition to early detection, POLRI also plays a role in supervising informal recruitment routes, which are critical points in the migration process. Many migrant workers are recruited through family or acquaintances, without following official procedures and lacking sufficient information about their legal rights. In this regard, POLRI is obligated to conduct legal patrols and advocacy, as well as assist in the reporting process by communities that suspect illegal recruitment activities. This is reinforced by Article 14 paragraph (1) letter e of the Police Law, which states that POLRI is responsible for providing legal counseling and assistance to the public to prevent them from becoming victims of crime.

A concrete example of POLRI's preventive function is legal education for the public, especially prospective migrant workers and their families. This education includes understanding formal migration procedures, the risks of working illegally abroad, and the importance of legal protection before departure. These activities are often carried out through community policing or partnerships with community leaders, village officials, and local NGOs. In this context, POLRI plays a crucial role in reaching grassroots communities that are often targeted by trafficking syndicates. Such preventive efforts not only protect prospective migrants from the risk of criminalization and exploitation but also reduce diplomatic and legal burdens in destination countries.

POLRI's law enforcement function is a crucial element in protecting Indonesian informal migrant workers, particularly in addressing human trafficking and exploitation crimes. Based on Law Number 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of Human Trafficking, Article 2 affirms that anyone who intentionally recruits, transports, shelters, sends, or receives a person by means of threats, violence, abduction, fraud, or abuse of power for exploitation purposes can be criminally charged. POLRI is fully responsible for investigating and prosecuting trafficking offenders, including those operating across borders. Often, TPPO victims are migrant workers dispatched through informal channels, lacking legal protection, and subsequently subjected to physical, sexual, or economic exploitation in destination countries. (Ahmad Irzal Fardiansyah, 2025)

Enforcement against illegal agents and transnational criminal networks is a vital part of POLRI's investigative function. Illegal recruitment activities are often carried out by transnational syndicates exploiting systemic weaknesses, limited legal literacy, and gaps in interagency coordination. In this context, POLRI not only conducts sting operations and raids against illegal brokers domestically but also traces network movements through cyber investigations, financial tracking, and collaboration with the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK). These enforcement actions also include legal proceedings against officials or private parties involved in document forgery, unauthorized departures, or other migration-related crimes. (Hardi Alunaza, 2022)

In handling cross-border cases, investigative cooperation between POLRI, the destination country's police, and Interpol is crucial. POLRI has a formal channel through NCB-Interpol Indonesia, allowing information exchange, red notice issuance, and cooperation in arrest or extradition of transnational criminals. Additionally, bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and destination countries such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Hong Kong includes legal assistance, support for victimized citizens, and joint investigations into human rights violations or trafficking cases. Through police attachés stationed in various Indonesian diplomatic missions abroad, POLRI also plays a role in coordinating legal processes, facilitating evacuations, and supporting evidence collection. This investigative function aims

not only to prosecute perpetrators but also to ensure recovery and justice for migrant workers vulnerable to criminalization and exploitation.

Legal protection and assistance for Indonesian migrant workers, especially those working informally, is an integral part of the state's responsibility to guarantee the constitutional rights of its citizens, including when they are outside national jurisdiction. In this context, POLRI plays a strategic role through the presence of police attachés in several Indonesian missions abroad. Police attachés act as liaisons between POLRI and the host country's police, performing monitoring, investigation, and legal assistance functions for Indonesian citizens facing legal issues. The legal basis for this role is stated in Article 14 paragraph (1) letter g of Law Number 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, which mentions that POLRI may establish cooperation with foreign police to combat transnational crimes, including violations affecting migrant workers.

In crisis situations—such as exploitation, unlawful detention, or violence experienced by migrant workers—POLRI also plays a role in the evacuation and repatriation of victims. This often involves rapid response actions, such as protection at temporary shelters owned by the Indonesian Embassy/Consulate, facilitating communication with the victim's family, and repatriation through diplomatic and humanitarian channels. The legal basis for this is provided in Law Number 18 of 2017 (UU PPMI), particularly Article 77, which underscores the importance of interagency cooperation, including with law enforcement, in protecting and restoring migrant workers' rights. In addition, Article 19 of Law No. 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations affirms that Indonesian diplomatic missions are tasked with providing protection and legal assistance to Indonesian citizens abroad, supported in implementation by technical elements such as POLRI.

Coordination between POLRI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and Indonesian missions abroad is crucial to ensure effective legal protection. Indonesian missions, through their consular and protocol functions, serve as the front line in receiving reports, intervening, and delivering assistance to migrant workers who are victims of legal violations or criminalization. POLRI, through cooperation with police attachés, can support Indonesian missions in documenting evidence, overseeing legal processes, and facilitating intelligence exchange with the host country's police. In some cases, POLRI's intervention is also necessary to pursue restorative justice for victims or conduct further investigations against illegal recruiters domestically. This synergy is vital in forming a comprehensive legal protection chain—from pre-departure to post-return phases of migrant workers.

One of the key internal challenges POLRI faces in protecting migrant workers is the limited human and logistical resources, particularly in terms of cross-border operational capacity. Although POLRI has a decentralized structure nationwide down to the local level, not all personnel possess adequate understanding of international migration dynamics, transnational crimes, or the handling of trafficking victims. The lack of specialized training or dedicated units focused on migrant worker issues results in preventive and enforcement efforts that are often incidental and unsystematic. Additionally, the limited number of police attachés abroad and uneven deployment of POLRI representatives in migrant destination countries hinder the provision of prompt and direct legal protection for Indonesian citizens encountering legal or exploitative situations.

Interagency coordination challenges constitute a structural external obstacle that significantly impacts protection effectiveness. Information systems between POLRI, BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and local authorities are not yet optimally integrated, leading to overlapping mandates, data duplication, and delayed responses in emergency situations. For instance, data on illegal migrant workers or trafficking victims is often inconsistent across institutions, causing delays in strategic decision-making, evacuation, and law enforcement efforts. This information system fragmentation also impedes POLRI's ability to conduct early

detection of potential crimes or track offender networks operating across regions and countries. These challenges are exacerbated by low digital literacy and lack of system interoperability among institutions that should ideally collaborate.

At the global level, POLRI also faces significant challenges from the growing globalization of organized crime and rapid migrant mobility. Human trafficking, sexual exploitation, forced labor, and illegal recruitment are now conducted through more sophisticated patterns, using information technology and transnational financial networks. This demands that POLRI not only act reactively but also develop intelligence-based detection systems, big data analysis, and international collaboration. However, in practice, POLRI's access to global intelligence platforms remains limited, whether due to diplomatic constraints, cooperation agreements not covering all destination countries, or the underdevelopment of specialized units to handle transnational crime. To address these challenges, POLRI requires strategic policy support and institutional capacity building to adapt to the evolving complexity of international migration issues.

Collaborative Governance and the Use of AI Can Effectively Support the Migrant Worker Protection System

Collaborative governance is an approach in public policy in which actors from various sectors including government, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations are directly involved in the decision-making process and policy implementation to resolve complex problems that cannot be addressed by a single actor alone. According to Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance is defined as “a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative.” The main principles of collaborative governance include equal participation, information transparency, inter-actor trust, and long-term commitment. This approach is increasingly relevant in addressing cross-border and multi-sectoral issues such as international migration, as various parties have interconnected roles and responsibilities from law enforcement institutions, migrant protection agencies, foreign diplomatic services, to migrant communities themselves.

In the context of protecting Indonesian informal migrant workers, the collaborative approach is particularly important because the issue involves complex actors (POLRI, BP2MI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NGOs, local governments), overlapping legal jurisdictions (national law and the laws of destination countries), and cross-sectoral aspects (law enforcement, labor, human rights, diplomacy). In the absence of integrated coordination, overlaps in authority, delayed responses to cases, and confusion in the field often occur. One example of successful collaborative practice is the tripartite cooperation between the Indonesian government, IOM, and destination countries in handling trafficking victims, including through safe return and reintegration. Another example is the development of a “Multilateral Intelligence Sharing Platform” among ASEAN police forces under ASEANAPOL for early detection and joint response to cross-border human trafficking networks. These practices demonstrate that collaboration is not only a choice but a necessity to build a migrant protection system that is adaptive, responsive, and fair.

In Indonesia's migrant worker protection system, each agency has a strategic and complementary role. POLRI is responsible for prevention and law enforcement, especially with regard to human trafficking, exploitation, and illegal placement of migrant workers. BP2MI (the Indonesian Migrant Worker Protection Agency) functions as a technical institution responsible for pre-placement, placement, and post-placement stages, including education, training, and the compilation of migrant data. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Directorate for the Protection of Indonesian Citizens and Indonesian missions abroad such as embassies and consulates, plays a role in legal protection, emergency assistance, and

repatriation of citizens facing problems in destination countries. With such a distribution of authority, synergy among agencies is key to ensuring effective protection from upstream to downstream.

The urgency of role and function integration through a unified communication platform is very high given that migrant worker issues cannot be addressed sectorally. Without strong coordination and fast communication flows, case handling is often hampered, especially during emergencies such as detention, violence, or evacuation. A unified platform that integrates data, information, and response protocols among POLRI, BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and overseas Indonesian missions is urgently needed to ensure there are no delays or gaps in responsibility. Digital technology and online information systems can be a solution to speed up information exchange and collective decision-making. The development of a command center directly connected to all related units will also speed up cross-border coordination.

However, interagency synergy still faces several obstacles, especially from the perspective of sectoral bureaucracy. Each institution often works with its own system, budget, and priorities that are not yet integrated. This leads to task duplication, delayed case response, and a lack of shared accountability. It is not uncommon for state institutions to shift responsibility in handling migrant worker cases abroad. Therefore, a cross-agency integrated mechanism is needed, such as the establishment of a Joint Task Force on Migrant Worker Protection or a Joint Command Center, which operates under a mutually agreed standard operating procedure, with a clear mandate and strong regulatory support. This collaborative approach will not only improve the effectiveness of protection efforts but also enhance public trust in the state's ability to ensure the safety of its citizens abroad.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the migrant worker protection system is a strategic step to address the complexity and speed of transnational crimes such as human trafficking and labor exploitation. AI holds great potential for risk prediction and crime pattern detection, for example by processing migration data, recruitment histories, and remittance flow patterns to identify suspicious activity. With big data analytics integration, AI systems can help POLRI and relevant agencies track trafficking syndicates, map illegal migration routes, and analyze connections between illegal recruiters and transnational criminal networks. This technology also allows for real-time proactive analysis that speeds up the prevention and intervention of crimes targeting migrant workers.

A concrete example of AI use is the development of an AI-based integrated mobile application that can be accessed directly by migrant workers from their home country to their destination country. This app can combine important features such as GPS-based location tracking, an emergency button connected to POLRI, embassies/consulates, protection shelters, and BP2MI, as well as an AI chatbot that provides legal education, procedural information, and initial responses to complaints or reports. With machine learning algorithms, the app can learn from case patterns and improve the accuracy of risk detection. Additionally, automatic translation and digital tracking features enable cross-country and cross-language use, making it a vital tool for migrant workers in vulnerable situations.

As a benchmark, several developed countries have integrated AI into their migrant protection systems. For instance, Australia and the European Union use predictive analytics to detect potential labor exploitation in agriculture and fisheries by combining immigration data, investigation reports, and workplace surveillance. The United States, through ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), uses AI-based criminal network mapping to uncover transnational human trafficking syndicates. These examples show that with strong regulatory frameworks and adequate digital infrastructure, AI can become a strategic tool to improve the accuracy and speed of migrant protection and to strengthen international cooperation in combating trafficking.

One of the main challenges in protecting Indonesian migrant workers is data fragmentation among institutions. Currently, POLRI, BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Indonesian missions abroad each have their own information systems and databases, which are not yet fully integrated. This often results in duplication, data inconsistencies, and delays in exchanging crucial information, especially in emergencies such as violence, trafficking, or detention. A viable solution would be to establish a single data system or national migrant worker data lake that consolidates all information from pre-departure to post-return and allows limited access for all relevant stakeholders. This system would enable faster, more accurate, and real-time decision-making.

To ensure effective and secure integration, data exchange protocols and information security standards among institutions must be established. Technologies such as blockchain or secure cloud platforms can guarantee transparency, auditability, and protection against data manipulation or breaches of migrant workers' personal data. Blockchain technology, for example, allows all data changes to be recorded permanently and traceably, which is suitable for high-accountability systems like tracking legal status or case histories. On the other hand, encrypted cloud platforms allow multi-sector and cross-border institutions to access data with strict authorization controls, while accelerating international collaboration in protecting citizens. This interoperability not only improves bureaucratic efficiency but also strengthens Indonesia's position in international forums concerning migrant worker rights.

From a policy standpoint, regulatory reform is needed to explicitly encourage and facilitate interagency collaboration and the use of technology in migrant worker protection. Revisions to Law No. 18 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers should include provisions mandating institutional information system integration and provide a legal foundation for the use of digital technologies, including AI, in the early detection of trafficking and legal protection. In addition, government or presidential regulations should be formulated to govern collaborative governance among institutions such as POLRI, BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, to ensure effective coordination within a unified framework that guarantees accountability, fast response, and sustainable protection.

Institutionally, it is recommended to establish a cross-sectoral special task force focused on technology and rapid response for migrant worker protection. This unit should consist of representatives from POLRI (especially cybercrime and human trafficking units), BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and technical experts from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology as well as AI specialists. This unit would be responsible for running data-based monitoring and intervention systems, conducting coordinated international investigations, and acting as a liaison between migrant workers and the state during emergencies. The task force could also function as a joint command and coordination center equipped with digital infrastructure such as monitoring dashboards, integrated databases, and secure cross-border communication channels. This approach enables interagency synergy to be built based on each institution's functional expertise rather than purely administrative lines.

From a technical perspective, a roadmap is needed for the development of a comprehensive digital protection system that incorporates AI. This roadmap should include initial phases such as digitalization and integration of migrant databases, development of AI-based mobile applications with rapid reporting and real-time legal aid features, and implementation of predictive technologies to detect potential trafficking cases using big data analysis. It should also address the need for capacity building among human resources in relevant institutions to ensure sustainable digital system management. Infrastructure such as secure cloud systems, blockchain for data auditing, and cross-border communication protocols must be designed with interoperability and data security principles. The implementation of this roadmap will not only strengthen practical migrant protection but also position Indonesia as a

leader in the use of intelligent technology for human rights and migrant justice enforcement in Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

Protection of Indonesian informal migrant workers faces complex challenges stemming from weak bargaining positions in destination countries, the prevalence of human trafficking and human rights violations, as well as limited coordination and information systems among government institutions. In this context, the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) holds a highly strategic role, not only as a law enforcement agency but also as a key actor within the cross-border protection system. The authority of POLRI, as regulated in various national laws and international cooperation frameworks, covers preventive, repressive, and transnational legal assistance functions. However, the effectiveness of this role largely depends on how well POLRI is able to synergize with other institutions such as BP2MI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Indonesian missions abroad within a collaborative governance framework that is responsive and adaptive to the dynamics of global migration.

To strengthen this protection system, several strategic steps are needed. First, in terms of regulation, there must be revisions and improvements to legislation that reinforce the obligation for data integration and cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as encourage the use of technologies such as AI within the migrant worker protection system. Second, institutionally, it is essential to establish a joint cross-sectoral task unit based on technology to accelerate response and intervention in emergency situations. Third, the development of a technological roadmap that includes AI-based mobile applications, inter-agency data integration, and the implementation of blockchain and secure cloud systems is imperative. If these steps are implemented consistently and sustainably, they will not only enhance the protection of Indonesian migrant workers but also strengthen Indonesia's role in global migration governance and in the fight against transnational crime.

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