Effective Strategy for Enforcing Cross-Border Drug Laws Through Package Delivery

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Abstract: Transnational drug abuse through package delivery poses a serious threat to global public security and health. The increasingly sophisticated and complex nature of cross-border drug trafficking requires an effective response from law enforcement agencies. This study aims to analyze the strategy of transnational drug law enforcement through package delivery and identify challenges and effective solutions. This study uses legal analysis and literature study methods by collecting data from various sources, including literature, laws and regulations, and reports from law enforcement agencies such as the Narcotics Directorate of the Indonesian National Police Criminal Investigation Agency, the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), and the Directorate General of Customs and Excise. This study found that transnational drug law enforcement through package delivery requires effective international cooperation, sophisticated surveillance technology, and clear regulations. Effective strategies include increasing the capacity of law enforcement agencies, developing surveillance technology, and enhancing international cooperation. However, the implementation of law enforcement still faces challenges, such as the complexity of international drug networks and limited resources. Transnational drug law enforcement through package delivery requires a comprehensive approach and effective international cooperation. Effective strategies can increase the effectiveness of law enforcement and reduce transnational drug trafficking. Therefore, it is necessary to increase international cooperation, increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies, and develop surveillance technology to increase the effectiveness of cross-border drug law enforcement.

Keyword: Law Enforcement, Drugs, Cross-Border, Package Delivery, International Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

The cross-border distribution of narcotics through parcel delivery has become a complex and difficult-to-detect form of transnational crime in the last decade. The method of sending narcotics through courier services has evolved rapidly with technological advances, the digitalization of logistics, and the increasing volume of online trade (e-commerce). In Indonesia, the trend of narcotics smuggling through parcels has increased significantly since

2019, with several major cases uncovered by the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC). Data (BNN, 2024) indicates that approximately 35% of total narcotics seizures in Indonesia in 2023 originated from shipments via courier and air cargo services.

This phenomenon demonstrates that monitoring the flow of goods across borders can no longer be achieved through traditional approaches, but rather requires multi-agency collaboration and the use of modern surveillance technology. The UNODC (2023) emphasized that international drug syndicates are now exploiting loopholes in the global logistics system, including the use of false identities, layered shipments, and difficult-to-trace digital distribution channels. In the Indonesian context, this poses a strategic challenge for law enforcement, particularly as Indonesia is an archipelagic nation with over 90 active international ports and direct access to Southeast Asian trade routes.

According to Friedman (2020), the effectiveness of law enforcement is determined not only by the substance of the law but also by the institutional structure and legal culture of the community. In the context of transnational narcotics law enforcement, these three elements are closely interconnected. Indonesian law already stipulates strict prohibitions and sanctions against drug abuse, as stipulated in Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics. However, without the support of a strong institutional structure and a legal culture that supports cross-agency collaboration, law enforcement will not be optimal.

Customs and Excise, as the agency authorized to monitor goods entering and leaving customs areas, plays a crucial role in preventing narcotics smuggling through parcel delivery. Meanwhile, the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) and the Indonesian National Police (Polri) play a role in intelligence, investigation, and law enforcement. Collaboration between these three institutions is the spearhead in combating international drug syndicates that often operate across jurisdictions. According to a report (FATF, 2022), cross-sectoral collaboration between law enforcement officials, financial institutions, and regulatory agencies is key to preventing transnational organized crime.

METHOD

This research uses a normative-empirical legal research method, an approach that combines analysis of positive legal norms with empirical studies of law enforcement practices in the field (Soekanto & Mamudji, 2018). This approach was chosen because the problem of drug smuggling through parcel delivery involves two main dimensions: normative aspects (regulations and policies) and empirical aspects (implementation and effectiveness in the field).

The normative approach is used to examine the legal framework governing narcotics law enforcement in Indonesia, including Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, Law Number 17 of 2006 concerning Customs, and other implementing regulations related to international cooperation and cross-border surveillance. Meanwhile, an empirical approach was conducted by reviewing secondary data from annual reports from law enforcement agencies such as the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC), as well as publications from international institutions such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This dual approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the extent to which applicable legal norms have been effectively implemented at the national institutional level within the context of cross-border cooperation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Narcotics Smuggling Through Package Delivery

Drug smuggling via parcel delivery has become a dominant method used by international syndicates to bring drugs into Indonesia. According to data from the National Narcotics Agency (BNN, 2024), more than 1,800 cases of narcotics shipments via domestic and international courier services were uncovered throughout 2023. Most of these cases involved methamphetamine and ecstasy, shipped from Malaysia, Thailand, France, and the Netherlands to major Indonesian cities such as Jakarta, Medan, and Surabaya.

Drug smuggling via courier services typically involves the use of fictitious identities and a multi-layered drop-point system. Perpetrators utilize e-commerce-based online courier services because of their speed, wide reach, and relative security from manual inspection (UNODC, 2023). Customs and Excise have found that international syndicates use double packaging to camouflage goods such as food, cosmetics, or clothing (Bea Cukai, 2024). It demonstrates that the cross-border goods monitoring system faces significant challenges as the volume of packages entering Indonesia increases significantly in line with the growth of digital commerce.

These crimes involve not only international networks but also domestic networks that serve as recipients, storage, and distribution of goods (Indonesian National Police, 2023). In many cases, communication between syndicate members is conducted using encrypted messaging applications that are difficult to trace. It demonstrates that transnational drug crime is now transforming into a complex form of cybercrime and logistics.

Role and Coordination Between Law Enforcement Agencies

In the context of national law enforcement, collaboration between the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and Customs and Excise is a key element. These three institutions have complementary mandates and functions. The BNN serves as the national coordinator for drug eradication policies and strategies. The Polri carries out investigative functions, while Customs and Excise is responsible for monitoring the flow of goods across borders.

In his research (Friedman, 2020), he emphasized that the effectiveness of the legal system depends on the synergy between legal structure and substance. In this regard, the law enforcement structure in Indonesia has been established through inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, such as the Joint Operation Agreement between the BNN, the Polri, and Customs and Excise. One concrete example of this coordination is the Joint Operation "Pangea," conducted annually in collaboration with Interpol and UNODC to eradicate the circulation of illegal drugs and narcotics through online networks and cross-border shipments (BNN, 2024).

However, the effectiveness of this collaboration still faces several challenges. Based on interviews with Customs and Excise officials, limited x-ray scanner technology at some ports prevents the comprehensive inspection of thousands of packages per day. On the other hand, differences in reporting systems between agencies also hamper the rapid and accurate exchange of information. The Indonesian National Police (Polri) revealed that the lack of an integrated data sharing system results in a longer, time-consuming process for identifying package senders and recipients.

To address this, optimization of coordination functions is needed through the development of an Integrated Narcotics Law Enforcement Information System (SITPEN), which allows each agency to access shared data in real-time. This model has been implemented in several countries, such as Singapore and South Korea, with positive results (UNODC, 2023).

Obstacles in Enforcing Transnational Narcotics Laws

Law enforcement against cross-border drug smuggling faces various obstacles, including legal, technical, and institutional barriers. Legally, the provisions of Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics have not fully accommodated the development of digital technology-based crimes. For example, regulations regarding electronic evidence and online transactions remain general, creating difficulties in establishing legal evidence (Lubis, 2021).

Technically, the main obstacle lies in the lack of modern detection equipment, such as sniffer devices, AI-based scanners, and automated package analysis systems at airports and ports. Customs and Excise stated that only 35% of all goods inspection offices have AI-based detection facilities. As a result, many packages slip through initial inspection. Furthermore, limited personnel and specialized training in handling transnational crime also hamper effective law enforcement.

Institutional barriers are also a significant issue (Rahardjo, 2019), who noted that law enforcement in Indonesia is often fragmented across institutions due to differences in organizational culture and sectoral egos. This condition results in a lack of coordination in handling cross-jurisdictional cases. In some cases, overlapping authority between the National Police and the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) has led to confusion in the investigation and prosecution process (Hidayat, 2020). Therefore, integrated coordination guidelines are needed that emphasize the roles of each agency.

Effective Law Enforcement Strategies

Based on the analysis and empirical findings, several strategies can be implemented to increase the effectiveness of cross-border narcotics law enforcement through package delivery:

Strengthening Cross-Agency Collaboration

Collaboration between the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and Customs and Excise needs to be strengthened by establishing a National Task Force on Narcotic Parcel Trafficking, which will serve as a center for operational and intelligence coordination. The establishment of this task force aligns with the UNODC (2023) recommendation regarding the importance of integrating cross-sector law enforcement in combating transnational narcotics crime.

Utilizing Modern Surveillance Technology

The application of technologies such as machine learning, risk profiling, and automated parcel screening can improve the ability of authorities to detect suspicious packages. The FATF (2022) recommends the use of an Artificial Intelligence Risk Detection System to analyze financial and logistical transaction patterns related to narcotics trafficking. Indonesia can adopt this model by adapting its existing technological infrastructure.

Enhancing the Capacity of Law Enforcement Officials

The BNN and the Indonesian National Police (Polri) need to increase training for investigators in cyber forensics and financial intelligence. Customs and Excise also needs to strengthen employee competency in supervising high-risk cargo. Friedman (2020) emphasized that legal success is determined not only by norms but also by the ability of law enforcement agencies to carry out their functions professionally and in a coordinated manner.

Optimizing International Cooperation

Indonesia needs to expand international cooperation in the form of mutual legal assistance (MLA) and joint investigation agreements with major drug transit countries. The National Narcotics Agency (BNN) has signed memorandums of understanding with Malaysia and Australia, but further steps are needed in the exchange of intelligence data and the extradition of transnational perpetrators (BNN, 2024). This collaboration is crucial to closing legal loopholes frequently exploited by international syndicates.

Regulatory Revision and Policy Harmonization

Revisions to the Narcotics Law and its derivative regulations are needed to adapt to the dynamics of modern crime. Strengthening articles related to electronic evidence, digital transaction tracing, and the responsibility of shipping corporations will strengthen the legal position of law enforcement officials. Lubis (2021) emphasized that the law must adapt to technological developments to avoid being left behind by increasingly sophisticated crime methods.

Research Results Implications

The results of this study indicate that the effectiveness of transnational narcotics law enforcement in Indonesia depends heavily on three main factors: inter-agency coordination, surveillance technology, and responsive legal policies. Collaboration between the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and Customs and Excise is a crucial foundation, but must be supported by a shared data system and integrated training.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the legal system theory (Friedman, 2020), which states that legal effectiveness requires a balance between substance, structure, and legal culture. Practically, this research contributes to the development of a coordinated model for narcotics law enforcement in Indonesia that can be adapted to address other transnational crimes, such as human smuggling and cybercrime.

CONCLUSION

Law enforcement against cross-border narcotics trafficking through parcel delivery poses a serious challenge to Indonesia's national legal system. Based on the analysis and discussion, it is concluded that an effective law enforcement strategy requires the integration of adaptive legal substance, a synergistic institutional structure, and a collaborative legal culture.

Developments in information technology and the globalization of trade have transformed the pattern of narcotics crime into a more complex one, particularly in the context of cross-border shipments through courier services. This research found that international narcotics syndicates exploit institutional gaps and the lack of integration in Indonesia's surveillance system to smuggle these illicit goods. Therefore, strengthening inter-agency cooperation is crucial in addressing this phenomenon.

Therefore, a strategy related to transnational narcotics law enforcement through parcel delivery in Indonesia requires a strategy based on cross-agency collaboration, increased human resource capacity, and the use of modern surveillance technology. Cooperation between the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and Customs and Excise must be directed at integrating intelligence and surveillance systems through the National Narcotics Enforcement Information System, which enables real-time data exchange.

The role and collaboration between the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), the Indonesian National Police (Polri), and the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC) are fundamental to efforts to eradicate transnational narcotics. However, research shows that coordination between these agencies remains ineffective due to limited surveillance technology, an unintegrated data exchange system, and differences in operational mechanisms at the implementation level.

The major obstacles identified are technological limitations, low interoperability of information systems between agencies, and the lack of integrated coordination guidelines. Furthermore, organizational culture and sectoral egos often hinder the effectiveness of operational coordination. Legally, there remains a gap in regulations regarding digital transactions, electronic evidence, and the responsibilities of shipping service providers.

Implementable solutions include the formation of a cross-agency task force, increased training for law enforcement officers in cyber forensics and digital surveillance, and strengthened international cooperation in mutual legal assistance (MLA) and joint investigation agreements. Furthermore, Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics needs to be revised to be more responsive to digital technology-based crime modes.

This research also provides input for policymakers to strengthen national narcotics policies to align with international standards set by the UNODC and FATF. These efforts need to be accompanied by information management reforms, increased officer competency, and the adoption of artificial intelligence-based surveillance technology.

Overall, the research findings confirm that the effectiveness of law enforcement in the era of globalization is determined not only by the strictness of regulations but also by the legal system's ability to adapt to changing crime modes. Therefore, strengthening institutional synergy and legal reform are urgent agendas for the Indonesian government to address the increasingly complex transnational narcotics threat.

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