

The Role of Criminal Investigation Unit Investigators of Rokan Hilir Resort in Combating the Crime of Human Trafficking Based on Law No. 21 of 2007 Concerning The Crime of Human Trafficking and Human Rights

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Abstract.

Human Trafficking (TPPO) is a serious crime that threatens human dignity and violates fundamental human rights, such as the right to freedom and protection from exploitation. Rokan Hilir Regency, as a border region with high mobility, is one of the areas prone to TIP. This study aims to analyze the role of investigators from the Criminal Investigation Unit (Satreskrim) of the Rokan Hilir Police in efforts to combat TIP based on Law Number 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of TIP and its compliance with human rights principles. The method used is an empirical juridical approach through a review of laws and regulations and analysis of field practices. The results of the study indicate that the role of investigators includes preventive, repressive, and coordinative actions, but there are still obstacles such as limited resources, lack of public understanding, and limited victim protection facilities. Synergy between agencies and improving the quality of human resources are key to effective law enforcement. It was concluded that the role of the Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit has been implemented in accordance with the mandate of Law No. 21 of 2007, but requires capacity building, increased inter-agency coordination, and a more victim-centric approach to increase the effectiveness of combating TPPO.

Keywords: Investigator; Human Trafficking; Rokan Hilir; Law Enforcement and Human Rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

The crime of human trafficking (TPPO) has become a global concern and is considered a form of modern slavery. This crime not only robs a person of their freedom but also violates their dignity, honor, and the most fundamental human rights. Indonesia, as a country with a large population and socio-economic vulnerabilities, is a country of origin, destination, and transit for human trafficking. In response, the Indonesian government passed Law Number 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of the Crime of Human Trafficking, which became the main legal basis for law enforcement against this crime. Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province, has a unique geographic configuration, consisting of mainland and islands (such as Rupat Island and Halang Island), and directly bordering the Strait of Malacca. These characteristics, coupled with the massive palm oil plantation and fisheries sectors, create vulnerability to labor exploitation and other human trafficking practices. The prevailing modus operandi often involves promises of high-paying jobs, both within and outside the region, leading to sexual exploitation and forced labor. Within the Indonesian National Police (Polres), Criminal Investigation Units (Reskrim) at the police precinct level, such as the Rokan Hilir Police, are the spearhead of criminal law enforcement, including those against human trafficking. They have the authority to receive reports, conduct inquiries, prosecute, and take other coercive measures under Law No. 21 of 2007. Therefore, the effectiveness of human trafficking prevention in Rokan Hilir depends heavily on how this strategic role is carried out.

Human Trafficking (TPPO) is a form of organized crime that subjects humans to exploitation through recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt, using threats, violence, deception, and abuse of power. This crime not only violates criminal law but also constitutes a serious violation of human rights as guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Law Number 21 of 2007 serves as a specific instrument to combat TPPO, regulating aspects of prevention, investigation, victim protection, and recovery. In the context of Rokan Hilir Regency, the role of investigators from the Criminal

Investigation Unit is crucial because this region is a transit area and prone to exploitation of migrant workers, sex workers, and child labor. However, efforts to combat human trafficking cannot be separated from a human rights perspective, as case handling must prioritize victim protection and avoid re-victimization. Therefore, this research is important to illustrate the extent to which the role of investigators is implemented effectively and based on human rights. As a commitment to eradicating this extraordinary crime, the Indonesian government passed Law Number 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of the Crime of Human Trafficking. This law provides a comprehensive legal framework, not only defining and punishing perpetrators with severe sanctions but also emphasizing the importance of victim protection, recovery, and empowerment. The existence of this special law represents the state's recognition that human trafficking is a systemic human rights violation and requires a specific and sensitive law enforcement approach.

Locally, Rokan Hilir Regency in Riau Province is highly vulnerable to human trafficking. Its unique geographic configuration, comprising the mainland and islands (such as Rupat Island and Halang Island), and its direct border with the busy Strait of Malacca, makes it a hotspot for illegal human traffic. Furthermore, key economic sectors such as palm oil plantations and extensive fisheries often create demand for cheap and easily exploited labor. Common modus operandi include recruitment fraud with promises of jobs and high salaries, either for exploitation within Rokan Hilir itself or for transfer to other regions or even abroad, ultimately resulting in forced labor or sexual exploitation. Within the law enforcement structure, investigators from the Criminal Investigation Unit (Reskrim) at the Resort Police (Polres) level, such as the Rokan Hilir Police, play a central and strategic role. They are the first line of defense, directly interacting with cases, victims, and perpetrators. Their authority, based on the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) and reinforced by Law No. 21 of 2007, encompasses receiving reports, conducting inquiries, conducting coercive measures such as arrests and seizures, and coordinating with relevant parties, making their effectiveness a determining factor in uncovering and breaking the chain of human trafficking. However, in its implementation, this strategic role inevitably faces various complex operational and structural constraints. Based on the above description, it is important to conduct an in-depth analysis of how this role is actualized in the field. This scientific article attempts to comprehensively examine the role of Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit Investigators in combating human trafficking, focusing on the implementation of Law No. 21 of 2007. The research issues are:

1. How is the crime of human trafficking regulated?
2. What is the role of Rokan Hilir investigators in combating the crime of human trafficking based on Law No. 21 of 2007 concerning the crime of human trafficking?

II. METHODS

This research uses the following approaches:

1. **Normative Jurisprudence**— reviewing Law No. 21 of 2007, Criminal Procedure Code, Human Rights Law No. 39 of 1999, and other regulations.
2. **Empirical Jurisprudence**— analyzing the practice of TPPO investigations at the Rokan Hilir Police through field studies, interviews, and case data.
3. **Types of research:** analytical descriptive.
4. **Data source:**
 - Primary data: interviews with investigators and related parties.
 - Secondary data: legal literature, journals, and official documents.
5. **Analysis Techniques:** qualitative by assessing the effectiveness of the investigator's role based on law enforcement theory and human rights principles.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on data collected from interviews, observations, and document studies, the following are findings regarding the role of Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit Investigators in combating the Crime of Human Trafficking (TPPO).

A. Profile of Human Trafficking Cases in the Jurisdiction of the Rokan Hilir Police

Between 2022 and 2023, the Rokan Hilir Police handled at least five human trafficking cases that reached the investigation stage. These cases were characterized by:

1. Labor Exploitation: The main modus operandi is job fraud in the palm oil plantation and fisheries sectors. Victims are recruited from other areas in Sumatra with promises of good wages and benefits, but in reality, they are placed in forced labor, without wages, and confined to confined spaces.

2. Sexual Exploitation: Some cases involve sexual exploitation, where victims (especially women) are lured with offers of work as cafe waitresses or massage therapists, but are forced into prostitution.

3. Across Regions: As many as 60% of cases have a cross-border element, where the recruitment process takes place outside Rokan Hilir Regency, but the exploitation occurs within the jurisdiction of the Rokan Hilir Police. This adds complexity to investigations, requiring coordination with the police in the region of origin.

B. The Role of Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit Investigators in Combating Human Trafficking

Based on data analysis, the role of investigators can be categorized into three main functions:

1. Preventive Role

Investigators not only act after the incident, but are also active in prevention efforts.

a. **Legal Socialization and Counseling:** Investigators, both independently and in collaboration with the Community Policing Unit, routinely visit vulnerable areas, such as coastal villages, plantation areas, and bus terminals. The material presented includes understanding the modus operandi of human trafficking (TPPO), how to recognize potential victims, and reporting mechanisms. "We focus on areas where many residents migrate or seek work. We remind everyone to always verify the authenticity of the recruiting company," explained one investigator.

b. **Community Development:** Building partnerships with community leaders, traditional leaders, and village heads to create an early warning system. They are expected to serve as sources of information and alert residents who will be traveling to work outside the area.

2. Repressive Role

This is the core role of the Investigator, which is carried out based on the procedures of Law No. 21 of 2007 and the Criminal Procedure Code.

a. **Receipt of Reports and Initial Investigations (Article 43 of the TPPO Law):** Investigators are required to receive reports from victims, their families, or any other party. In one case, the report came from a family member in another area who was concerned because they couldn't contact the victim. The team then conducted an undercover investigation at the site of the alleged exploitation to verify the report before conducting a formal investigation.

b. **Investigation and Coercive Action (Article 44 of the Anti-Trafficking Law):** After finding sufficient preliminary evidence, investigators take a series of steps. The suspect (usually a foreman or labor broker) is arrested. Searches of the victim's workplace and residence are conducted to gather evidence such as fake employment agreements, payment records, or communication devices used to control the victim. Evidence such as money and documents are also confiscated.

c. **Protection of Witnesses and Victims (Articles 45-48 of the Anti-Terrorism Law):** This is a crucial aspect. Investigators collaborate with the local Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) and NGOs to place victims in safe houses (shelters). Victims are also provided with psychological and legal assistance. "Victims are usually traumatized and afraid. We don't force them to share details directly. We involve psychologists to assist with the trauma healing process first," said an investigator. In this regard, the Human Trafficking Law provides special protections that are more advanced than those provided by the Criminal Procedure Code.

d. **Further Investigation and Filing:** Investigators questioned all relevant parties, including company witnesses and expert witnesses. Once the case file was deemed complete (P-21), the case was handed over to the Rokan Hilir District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

3. Coordinating Role

Handling TPPO requires a multidisciplinary approach.

- a. Internal Coordination of the Indonesian National Police:Rokan Hilir Police investigators are coordinating with the Riau Regional Police's Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation to request technical support and resources when facing complex and wide-ranging cases.
- b. Coordination with Other Agencies:Intensive coordination is carried out by:
- c. Rokan Hilir District Attorney's Office:through investigative assistance (litmas) to ensure that the legal construction and completeness of the files are correct from the start.
- d. DP3A Rokan Hilir Regency:for the handling, recovery and social reintegration of victims.
- e. labor offices:to verify the legality of companies suspected of being the site of exploitation.
- f. Partner NGOs:for legal and psychological assistance to victims, which greatly assists the process of examining victim witnesses.

Human Trafficking Case in Rokan Hilir Disclosure of Illegal Recruiter Network in Sinaboi District. The Human Trafficking Crime (TPPO) case in Rokan Hilir, especially the one uncovered by the Rokan Hilir Police in August 2025, is an example of successful law enforcement in the Riau border region. The operation in Sinaboi waters secured 19 people, including 15 prospective illegal migrant workers from Aceh, Central Lombok, Tulungagung, and Malang, as well as 4 suspects (S, H, I, C) who used the KM Sepuluh Putri and KM Putra Tunggal vessels to infiltrate Malaysia. The disclosure began with information from the Integrated Sea Patrol Task Force Jaring Sriwijaya BC-9002 on August 31, 2025 at 00.30 WIB, where the vessel camouflaged as a timber carrier turned out to be carrying illegal workers. The Rokan Hilir Police Water Police Unit in collaboration with Customs took swift action, naming the suspect who admitted to having made three similar shipments.

C. Obstacles and Challenges Faced

In carrying out their roles, investigators face several significant obstacles:

1. **Human Resources (HR) and Budget Limitations:**The number of investigators specifically trained to handle human trafficking remains limited. Budgets for in-depth investigative operations, such as surveys and intelligence gathering, are often inadequate.
2. **Organized and Adaptive Mode:**Trafficking networks are often well-structured and utilize encrypted communication technology, making them difficult to intercept and track. They also adapt quickly and change their modus operandi.
3. **Socio-Economic Factors and Low Legal Awareness:**Economic conditions and low levels of education make it easy for people to believe false job promises. Furthermore, a culture of "not wanting to interfere in other people's affairs" hinders the flow of information within the community.
4. **Confidentiality and Threats:**Trafficking syndicates do not hesitate to intimidate victims, their families, and witnesses, even threatening investigators. This creates fear and hinders the smooth running of the legal process.
5. **Victim Vulnerability and Trauma:**Victims often experience Stockholm Syndrome or severe trauma, leading to inconsistent statements or even defenses against the perpetrators. This requires sufficient time and a specialized approach to obtain valid information, which often conflicts with the target of resolving the case, according to the author's interview with Mr. Henryco Siahaan IPDA/82080198 on November 12, 2025.

D. Discussion: Effectiveness of Roles within the Framework of Law No. 21 of 2007

In general, the Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit has endeavored to carry out its role optimally in accordance with the mandate of Law No. 21 of 2007. Efforts to protect victims involving third parties (DP3A and NGOs) demonstrate a good understanding of the spirit of the victim-centric TPPO Law. However, the effectiveness of the repressive role remains limited to the perpetrators at the executive level (foremen, brokers) in the field. Disclosing the intellectual actors or behind-the-scenes financiers (kingpins) remains extremely difficult, largely due to resource constraints and network complexity. This demonstrates that while the Anti-TIP Law provides adequate authority, its implementation at the field level is highly dependent on human resource capacity, budgetary support, and strong inter-agency coordination. In other

words, there is a gap between the progressive legal framework in Law No. 21 of 2007 and the operational capacity at the police resort level. Efforts to combat human trafficking in Rokan Hilir remain reactive and curative, while strategic prevention efforts and enforcement that address the entire crime chain still need significant improvement.

IV. CONCLUSION

The role of investigators from the Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit in combating human trafficking based on Law No. 21 of 2007 has been implemented through preventive, repressive, and coordinative efforts. However, the effectiveness of law enforcement is still hampered by a lack of human resources and supporting facilities, the complexity of crime methods, and low public awareness. From a human rights perspective, investigators have strived to prioritize victim protection and the principle of respect for human dignity. To optimize human trafficking prevention efforts, investigator capacity building, victim protection facilities provision, and cross-sector synergy strengthening are needed. Rokan Hilir Police Criminal Investigation Unit investigators play a crucial role in combating human trafficking crimes, as stipulated in Law No. 21 of 2007. This is evidenced by the successful resolution of cases such as the rescue of 15 victims of illegal migrant workers in 2025 and the arrest of suspects in border areas. The investigation process, which includes evidence collection, interagency coordination, and victim protection, demonstrates a commitment to effective law enforcement, despite challenges such as organized networks and Rokan Hilir's strategic location.

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