



The Fight Against Human Trafficking Within Indonesia's Fisheries Industry

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Abstract

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Purpose: This study seeks to explore Indonesia's initiatives to combat human trafficking, particularly within the fisheries industry, which poses a significant threat to national security. Furthermore, Indonesia's national reputation is jeopardized by the Benjina case, which has garnered international scrutiny. This situation also threatens national resilience, especially if local fisheries products are subjected to boycotts in the global market.

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Study Design/Methodology/Approach: Employs the 4Ps framework—comprising Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership—as a lens through which to analyze Indonesia's initiatives in combating human trafficking. Furthermore, this research adopts a qualitative methodology, drawing upon secondary data to systematically map the measures that have been implemented in this specific industry

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Findings: Indonesia's initiatives have successfully met at least half of the indicators in each category of the framework. However, several challenges persist, including the lack of specific legislation addressing cases within this industry and the absence of reports on programs. This makes it challenging to evaluate their effectiveness.

Originality/Value: The 4Ps framework serves as a global benchmark for assessing the initiatives undertaken by countries to combat human trafficking. However, the scarcity of literature surrounding this framework presents a significant gap in existing research. This analysis offers valuable insights for policymakers, encouraging reflection on the programs that require sustainable implementation and further development to enhance the effectiveness of efforts against human trafficki.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, particularly since the early 21st century, human trafficking has become a major international concern, attracting significant global attention. McCarthy (2014) observes that numerous public figures have championed initiatives to combat the issue, while leading media outlets have launched projects to raise public awareness. Additionally, human trafficking is frequently portrayed in films, television series, and literature. Investigative journalists and activists have played an essential role in exposing the realities of human trafficking through impactful works. By 2005, over 900 international and non-governmental organisations had prioritised human trafficking or were established specifically to address this pressing issue (Kempadoo, 2012). Consequently, human trafficking has evolved into a pervasive global challenge, prompting coordinated responses from governments, organisations, and advocacy groups worldwide. This recognition of its impact on human rights has spurred significant efforts across multiple sectors to combat the issue on a global scale.

By 2012, 134 countries had enacted laws criminalising human trafficking, yet 28 countries still lacked such legislation (UNODC, 2012). This demonstrates progress in the global fight against human trafficking, though significant obstacles remain. McCarthy (2015) points out that law enforcement agencies often hesitate to pursue human trafficking cases due to several factors. Institutional disincentives may discourage action on these cases, which are viewed as complex, lengthy investigations that strain limited resources. While there have been advancements in legal frameworks to combat trafficking, these challenges underscore the complexity of enforcing such measures. Furthermore, trafficking networks are increasingly linked to transnational organised crime (TOC), making the issue not merely a matter of human rights but also one of national security. In regions with weak law enforcement and porous borders, human trafficking often intertwines with illicit activities such as drug smuggling, arms trafficking, and money laundering, exacerbating the challenges of governance and stability.

The UNTOC Protocol (UNODC, 2004) defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals through methods such as threats, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, or exploitation of vulnerability. The ultimate objective is exploitation. Bales (2004) explains that various forms of slavery, including forced and bonded labour, are integral to the broader understanding of human trafficking, which involves violence, loss of freedom, and total domination. However, this definition has sparked debate among scholars. In 2012, the United States began equating human trafficking with forced labour, leading to a rise in reported victim cases, as reflected in the State Department's 2012 and 2013

reports (Weitzer, 2015). Chuang (2014) terms this expansion of definitions as "exploitation creep," where issues previously seen as separate become conflated to highlight specific concerns. Consequently, human trafficking is often referred to as "modern slavery," stressing the exploitation of human beings for profit by treating them as commodities (Hernandez & Rudolph, 2015). The conceptualisation of human trafficking as modern slavery has significant implications, particularly in the context of labour migration, maritime security, and economic sustainability, which are crucial to countries such as Indonesia

As an archipelagic state, Indonesia spans approximately 6,400 km between its eastern and western borders, roughly one-eighth of the Earth's circumference. The distance between its northernmost and southernmost points is about 2,500 km, encompassing vast economic potential (Drake, 2019). Indonesia comprises around 1.92 million km² of land and an additional 3.1 million km² of archipelagic waters and territorial seas, including a 12-nautical-mile boundary. Its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extends 2.7 million km² up to 200 nautical miles (Sulistiyono & Rochwulaningsih, 2013). Due to its expansive maritime resources, fish catches have surged from 324,000 metric tonnes in 1951 to over 1 million tonnes annually. This increase has positioned Indonesia as the second-largest fish producer globally, after China, and the largest within ASEAN (Rochwulaningsih et al., 2019). The fisheries sector is crucial to Indonesia's economy, contributing to employment, food security, and the livelihoods of coastal and rural communities. However, this economic advantage has also facilitated an environment in which **human trafficking, forced labour, and exploitative recruitment practices** have flourished, particularly among fishing vessel crew members (ABK).

The fishing industry and human trafficking in Indonesia are inextricably linked. According to the 2016 Global Slavery Index report, Indonesia ranks among the top ten countries with the highest number of human trafficking cases. The report also indicates that there were at least 2,000 documented cases of human trafficking within the national fishing sector in 2016 (Walk Free Foundation, 2017). The association between human trafficking and organized crime can instill a sense of national insecurity among the public (Jahic & Finckenauer, 2015). Consequently, human trafficking within Indonesia's fishing industry not only has severe social repercussions for individuals but also presents a significant threat to national resilience and security. This issue undermines economic stability, fosters organised crime, and challenges the country's integrity in maintaining sovereignty and safeguarding its citizens. Furthermore, the weak governance of Indonesia's maritime borders and the lack of stringent monitoring mechanisms contribute to the persistence of illegal fishing, human smuggling, and trafficking, exacerbating Indonesia's vulnerability to transnational crime networks.

The connection between human trafficking and the fishing industry in Indonesia has been extensively examined in the literature, particularly regarding the measures the country has undertaken to combat this issue. According to Ajikusumo (2023), individuals in the fishing sector are particularly susceptible to becoming victims of human trafficking. This observation is supported by Lisandro & Olii (2017), who contend that human trafficking—especially modern slavery—primarily occurs within the fishing industry in Indonesia, involving both local and foreign workers and operating as part of organised and transnational criminal networks. The aforementioned research establishes that this problem has persisted in Indonesia for several years and necessitates targeted efforts for resolution. Additionally, previous studies have mainly concentrated on the initiatives of specific organisations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Oktariani & Suhermanto, 2017) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Putri & Utomo, 2019). A noticeable gap in this body of research is the insufficient comprehensive analysis of the Indonesian government's overall efforts to address human trafficking, especially within the fishing sector. Moreover, the application of the 4Ps framework—Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership—in combating human trafficking in Indonesia has not been thoroughly explored. This framework could offer a more systematic and integrated approach to designing and evaluating Indonesia's strategies for addressing this critical issue.

A high-profile case underscored human trafficking within Indonesia's fishing industry in 2015. The Associated Press (AP) reported on the exploitation of men from Myanmar, who were held captive, tortured, and poorly compensated while working for PT. Pusaka Benjina Resources on the remote Benjina Island. Upon their rescue, hundreds of men, reportedly victims of slavery, sought freedom. The AP described their ordeal as "slavery" and classified them as "victims of trafficking" (David, 2015). Susi Pudjiastuti, then Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, declared Indonesia's commitment to eradicating these practices to prevent a potential international boycott of the nation's fishery products. In response, the government formed a special task force to address labour abuses, safeguard fishery workers, and combat human trafficking in the industry (Secretariat of the Indonesian Cabinet, 2015). The Benjina Island case serves as an alarming reminder of the persistent gaps in law enforcement, lack of inter-agency coordination, and the systemic exploitation of migrant workers in Indonesia's maritime industry. It also highlights the urgent need for robust policies integrating maritime security, labour rights, and anti-trafficking measures to prevent such human rights violations in the future.

This research aims to analyse the measures taken by the Indonesian government since the Benjina incident to combat human trafficking in its fishing industry. By

evaluating these efforts through the 4Ps framework, this study seeks to assess the extent to which Indonesia's policies align with international standards, identify existing gaps, and propose necessary policy interventions.

Literature Review

Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) encompasses criminal groups that operate across national borders, engaging in illicit activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and money laundering. These activities are primarily driven by economic gain and are often exacerbated by weak legal systems and socio-economic conditions in the countries of origin (UNODC, 2004). TOC is characterised by groups of three or more individuals who collaborate over time to pursue shared criminal objectives, posing significant threats to both international security and human rights. Human trafficking, a critical component of TOC, involves the exploitation of individuals through force, coercion, fraud, or deception, with a particular impact on women and children who are subjected to forced labour or sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2004). The transnational nature of this crime complicates legal responses, as traffickers exploit disparities in legal jurisdictions and socio-economic conditions between countries. Addressing TOC, including human trafficking, necessitates a comprehensive international strategy that includes enhanced cooperation and robust legal frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. In this context, Indonesia's response to human trafficking, particularly within its fisheries sector, serves as an example of how nations can implement targeted frameworks to combat this escalating issue while addressing its broader implications on national resilience and maritime security.

A fundamental aspect of TOC is its intricate link with maritime crime, particularly in archipelagic states such as Indonesia. The country's extensive coastline and porous maritime borders create vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit, making the fishing industry a critical sector for monitoring and intervention. The UNODC (2019) highlights that human trafficking in the fisheries industry is often intertwined with illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, where trafficked individuals are subjected to forced labour aboard vessels operating under flags of convenience. The connection between IUU fishing and human trafficking underscores the necessity of integrating anti-trafficking strategies within Indonesia's maritime law enforcement and border security policies. Furthermore, a comparative analysis with Thailand and the Philippines demonstrates that stronger interagency coordination and data-sharing mechanisms can significantly improve enforcement outcomes, reducing vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit.

The 4Ps Framework in Anti-Trafficking Efforts

In examining Indonesia's initiatives to combat the threat of human trafficking, particularly within the fisheries sector, this research adopts the 4P Paradigm, also known as the 4Ps Framework. This approach, recognised internationally as an effective strategy in addressing human trafficking, has been widely acknowledged (Bosma & Rijken, 2016). Over two decades have passed since the initial adoption of the "3P" framework, which serves as the foundation for many countries' strategies to combat human trafficking (McDonald, 2014). Originally, this framework included three key components: Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution. However, in 2009, the United States Department of State (2010) introduced a fourth "P," Partnership, which was officially recognised and adopted worldwide in 2023 (Sheldon-Sherman, 2012)

Prevention

Prevention highlights the importance of addressing the root causes that make individuals vulnerable to human trafficking, aiming to reduce risk factors and increase public awareness. Educational campaigns, training programmes, and initiatives targeting at-risk populations play an essential role in disseminating information and equipping vulnerable groups with knowledge about the dangers of human trafficking (Sun-Suon, 2014). This framework also includes a field guide that illustrates key indicators for measuring the success of preventive efforts, such as ethical recruitment practices, identification of vulnerable individuals, anti-corruption measures, and demand reduction strategies that curb exploitative practices.

In the fisheries sector, preventive efforts must consider the regulation of recruitment agencies, the implementation of vessel monitoring systems, and the standardisation of labour conditions to mitigate trafficking risks. Research by ILO (2021) suggests that unscrupulous labour brokers often play a pivotal role in the trafficking of fishery workers, exploiting legal loopholes to circumvent oversight. Indonesia has made strides in ratifying the Palermo Protocol and implementing Government Regulation No. 7 of 2000, yet gaps in enforcement persist, particularly in remote maritime regions where regulatory oversight is limited. Strengthening legal frameworks and harmonising domestic policies with international conventions remain crucial in closing these gaps

Protection

Protection, the second key element, focuses on the needs of human trafficking victims, ensuring that they receive adequate legal, medical, and psychological support. Initiatives in this area provide direct services, including physical and psychological health interventions, legal assistance, and safe housing. These efforts facilitate the reintegration

of victims into society, mitigating the risk of re-victimisation (Sun-Suon, 2014). Indicators for protection efforts include survivor engagement, repatriation and reintegration programmes, specialised care for child survivors, and law enforcement interactions that prioritise victim safety.

A significant challenge in Indonesia's fisheries sector is the lack of clear victim identification protocols, particularly among migrant workers and undocumented labourers. Many victims fear deportation or prosecution if they come forward, discouraging them from reporting their exploitation. The establishment of National Fishers Centres (NFC) and specialised task forces, similar to those implemented in Thailand, could enhance victim identification and facilitate coordinated rescue efforts. Furthermore, integrating biometric identification systems and expanding reporting hotlines in multiple languages could increase the accessibility of protective services.

Prosecution

Prosecution aims to hold traffickers accountable by establishing a robust legal framework and effective law enforcement capacity. This component prioritises traffickers as the main target of anti-trafficking initiatives. Key indicators for prosecution include the effectiveness of the justice system, the strength of legal frameworks, and the availability of witness protection programmes. Regulations governing the prosecution of human traffickers impose significant penalties, aligning with the standards set by the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (Sun-Suon, 2014).

A major gap in Indonesia's prosecution efforts is the lack of specific legislation targeting human trafficking within the fisheries sector. Although Law No. 21 of 2007 criminalises human trafficking, it does not adequately address the complexities of forced labour on fishing vessels, nor does it provide specific protections for fishery workers. Comparative studies of Thailand's Royal Ordinance on Fisheries (2015) and Malaysia's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2007) suggest that stronger industry-specific legislation, coupled with harsher sentencing guidelines, could significantly improve prosecution outcomes in Indonesia.

Partnership

Partnership expands the approach by involving stakeholders from various sectors, fostering collaboration between governments, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities to create a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy. National task forces, regional alliances, and international cooperation enhance intelligence-sharing mechanisms and strengthen collective enforcement efforts (USAID, 2023). Indicators for

effective partnerships include national coordination, data collection, international cooperation, and intergovernmental collaboration.

Indonesia has strengthened its partnerships through agreements with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and ASEAN Counter-Trafficking initiatives. However, data-sharing mechanisms remain underdeveloped, particularly in tracking victims across multiple jurisdictions. A more integrated regional database, similar to INTERPOL's Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants Task Force, could enhance real-time data sharing and improve victim identification processes. Furthermore, strengthening partnerships with corporations in the seafood supply chain to ensure transparency and accountability would be a crucial step towards eliminating trafficking in fisheries

METHODS

This research utilises the qualitative analytical framework established by Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction phase, pertinent information concerning Indonesia's counter-trafficking policies in the fisheries sector was extracted from legal documents, government reports, and institutional responses. The 4Ps framework—Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership—was employed to evaluate the efficacy of these policies and to discern their strengths and weaknesses. The data display phase entailed the systematic organisation of selected information via content analysis and comparative evaluation, particularly by benchmarking Indonesia's initiatives against those of Thailand and the Philippines, both of which have established frameworks to combat human trafficking in the maritime sector.

The conclusion and verification stage affirmed that the findings accurately reflected Indonesia's anti-trafficking initiatives in the fisheries sector, consistent with international standards, including the UN Palermo Protocol and ILO Work in Fishing Convention No. 188. Triangulation was utilised to improve reliability by integrating multiple independent sources, such as academic studies, government documents, and NGO publications (Sugiyono, 2020). This study employed cross-case validation to analyse enforcement challenges and best practices in Indonesia and other regional maritime nations, enabling a thorough assessment of policy effectiveness and implementation deficiencies.

This study employs a descriptive methodology, concentrating on the documentation and analysis of Indonesia's policy measures related to human trafficking, without making direct comparisons among different governance systems (Sugiyono, 2020). The study utilises both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data includes government-

issued documents, official regulations, and case studies, particularly focusing on the Benjina case, which acted as a catalyst for policy evolution from 2015 to 2024. Secondary data comprises peer-reviewed journal articles, international reports (such as those from UNODC, IOM, Walk Free Foundation, and US TIP Reports), and publications from NGOs. This collection offers a broader context and facilitates the cross-referencing of findings (Yin, 2015).

The research included legal consistency checks, assessments of inter-agency coordination, and comparisons of regional policies to validate and ensure the reliability of the data. The evaluation assessed Indonesia's adherence to international anti-trafficking standards, highlighting possible regulatory shortcomings and avenues for enhancement. This study provides a systematic and evidence-based assessment of Indonesia's strategies to address human trafficking within the fisheries sector, synthesising findings from multiple perspectives and evaluating the effectiveness of policies (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prevention

Preventing human trafficking is an essential effort to reduce its recurrence and alleviate its long-term prevalence. Comprehending the underlying causes and systemic factors of human trafficking in Indonesia's fishing sector is crucial for formulating effective responses. The vulnerability of Crew Members (ABK) to trafficking arises from insufficient skill levels, lack of awareness of legal rights, ineffective reporting systems, and disjointed enforcement of regulatory statutes. The absence of rigorous control in labour recruitment intensifies the risk, as numerous ABK originate from marginalised communities with limited economic prospects, rendering them susceptible to exploitative recruitment practices.

The Indonesian government has implemented specific training programmes, including Technical Guidance (Bimtek) and Nautical Expertise Training for Fishing Vessels (ANKAPIN), to mitigate these vulnerabilities. These programmes enhance ABK competencies, expand career opportunities, and reduce reliance on informal, exploitative recruitment networks. The training modules cover Basic Safety Training (BST), navigation techniques, maritime labour rights, and adherence to international norms (Direktorat Jenderal Perhubungan Laut, 2021). Furthermore, by incorporating legal literacy elements pertaining to Government Regulation No. 7 of 2000 and international marine regulations, these programmes enable ABK to identify, report, and combat exploitative behaviours (SMK Negeri 3 Sibolga, 2021). Nonetheless, variations in

programme accessibility among provinces and poor implementation reduce their overall efficacy.

In addition to training activities, Indonesia has established regulatory frameworks to combat human trafficking in the fishing sector. The ratification of the Palermo Convention and the Protocol on Human Trafficking in 2009, along with Law No. 31/2004 (amended by Law No. 45/2009) concerning Fisheries, underscores Indonesia's legal commitment to addressing Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, a domain often associated with trafficking networks (Samima et al., 2022; Irawan et al., 2024). Additionally, Ministerial Regulation No. 35/2015 requires human rights due diligence in fishing activities, guaranteeing equitable treatment and legal accountability (Ikrami, 2017). Nonetheless, discrepancies in enforcement, especially at regional levels, continue to diminish the efficacy of regulations. The legal safeguards for ABK are inadequate, with several instances of modern slavery remaining unreported or unresolved, underscoring the pressing need for enhanced inter-agency collaboration and oversight.

These findings substantiate the Prevention pillar of the 4Ps concept, illustrating how education, legal empowerment, and regulatory reforms act as deterrents to human trafficking. Nonetheless, consistent with Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) theory, these measures should be analysed within the context of the extensive globalised criminal networks that enable trafficking (UNODC, 2004). Human trafficking in Indonesia's fishing sector is intricately linked to sophisticated, transnational illegal economies. This corresponds with literature indicating that traffickers exploit jurisdictional gaps, fragmented law enforcement, and socio-economic inequalities to perpetuate unlawful activities (Bosma & Rijken, 2016). Consequently, although Indonesia's preventative initiatives are commendable, they require enhanced regional cooperation and synchronised policy implementation to more effectively dismantle trafficking networks.

Protection

Crew members (ABK) form part of a profession that is particularly vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking. Regrettably, several individuals become ensnared in slavery and trafficking, highlighting the pressing need for targeted preventive interventions for this at-risk population. The Indonesian government must provide various services and assistance for ABK who have fallen victim to human trafficking. These services should encompass rehabilitation, empowerment, protection, repatriation, and healthcare, all with a singular objective: prioritising the victims in every protective initiative.

It is imperative to provide specialised support and protective strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of human trafficking. The Indonesian government, through the

Ministry of Social Affairs, has established the Rehabilitation and Protection Trauma Centres (RPTC), which are directly overseen by the ministry. These centres provide protection and rehabilitation services specifically for victims of human trafficking, including at-risk children (ABK). The RPTCs function as shelters and serve as primary treatment facilities for victims following rescue operations (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2023).

The RPTC not only provides accommodation but also offers health services, including nutritional rehabilitation and psychological therapy designed to address trauma resulting from human trafficking experiences (Kementerian Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2020). Empowerment activities are organised, including sports, skills training, leisure programmes, and other initiatives aimed at facilitating victims' comfort and emotional expression. Harry Hikmat, the Director-General of Social Rehabilitation at the Ministry of Social Affairs, has emphasised that the principal objective of the RPTC is to safeguard and assist victims of human trafficking while preserving their physical and psychological welfare (Suara Surabaya, 2020). The RPTC is integral to the repatriation process, covering individual needs such as social reintegration support and the development of adaptation skills for reintegration into society. An exemplary instance of the RPTC's engagement is illustrated by the case of 14 Indonesian ABK victims trafficked aboard the *Long Xing* fishing vessel in May 2020. The RPTC was involved in the entire process, from the rescue effort to the patients' rehabilitation, which lasted approximately 14 days.

Facilitating accessible avenues for ABK to lodge grievances and obtain assistance is essential for the protection and enforcement of their rights. The Fisher's Centre Indonesia, or the National Fishers Centre (NFC), is a programme created by Destructive Fishing Watch (DSW) Indonesia to safeguard and empower Indonesian ABK against human trafficking, enslavement, and exploitation. DSW is a national organisation established through an open alliance and consortia dedicated to Sustainable Human Development and Sustainable Ocean Development (Destructive Fishing Watch Indonesia, 2024). Since its establishment in 2019, NFC has functioned as a platform for ABK to report work-related grievances. The platform not only addresses complaints but also provides educational services to inform individuals about their rights, operational procedures, and strategies for preventing human trafficking (Destructive Fishing Watch Indonesia, 2022). NFC collects and analyses data on reported cases to enhance further examination and advocacy in relevant policy domains. The Indonesian government, in collaboration with NFC, offers online complaint services via the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (Kemenkomarves) on the website *maritim.go.id*. Additional tools, such as the Crisis Centre from BP2MI and the Indonesian Citizens Protection Portal

overseen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are available to address ABK concerns (Serikat Buruh Migran Indonesia, 2020).

Indonesia's initiatives to safeguard trafficking victims in the fisheries sector align with essential metrics of the 4P framework; however, notable deficiencies remain. The Rehabilitation and Protection Trauma Centres (RPTCs) serve as shelters and initial treatment facilities for rescued victims, addressing the criteria associated with "Survivor Engagement and Support Services," "Repatriation and Reintegration," and "Special Needs of Child Survivors of Trafficking." Moreover, the National Fishers Centre (NFC) serves as a reporting mechanism for fishing crew (ABK) to raise work-related issues, thereby improving access to justice and further strengthening the "Survivor Engagement and Support Services" indicator. Nevertheless, inadequate law enforcement in victim identification and police engagement obstructs effective protection, potentially leaving many trafficking cases in the fishing sector unaddressed. Strengthening law enforcement measures is crucial to ensuring comprehensive protection for at-risk workers in the fisheries industry.

Prosecution

Legal action The prosecution is essential in combating human trafficking by holding perpetrators accountable, preventing future offences, and providing justice for victims, so disrupting trafficking networks. Indonesia's legal framework for combating human trafficking is predominantly founded on Law No. 21 of 2007, which governs multiple facets of human trafficking offences, encompassing the recruitment, transportation, and placement of victims both nationally and internationally. The legislation includes components of fraud, assault, and exploitation, enforcing stringent criminal sanctions, such as life imprisonment and fines reaching 120 million rupiah (Liantina et al., 2024). Nonetheless, despite its extensive legislative provisions, the law fails to specifically encompass human trafficking in the fishing sector, resulting in a considerable legal void that is often emphasised by activists, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and human rights proponents. The lack of a sector-specific legal framework obstructs the efficient prosecution of trafficking offences involving ABK (Anak Buah Kapal) and restricts the government's capacity to sanction enterprises and recruitment agencies involved in exploitative employment practices.

Attorney General's Instruction No. 14 of 2023 provides a framework to support Presidential Regulation No. 19 of 2023, concerning the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Human Trafficking (RAN PPTPPO). This document aims to improve the efficacy of tackling human trafficking in the fishing sector and the exploitation of migrant workers by bolstering inter-agency coordination and advocating

for victim-centered methodologies. It underscores the necessity for enhanced collaboration among national and international law enforcement agencies, the development of capabilities for investigators, prosecutors, and judges, and the application of social justice concepts to safeguard victims' rights. The directive emphasises the necessity of "providing training for prosecutors and other law enforcement personnel to prevent and address human trafficking offences within the marine and fisheries sector." Notwithstanding these agreements, obstacles in implementation endure, primarily due to restricted regional enforcement capabilities, different prosecution methods within provinces, and inadequate court oversight over trafficking-related offences. Moreover, corruption in the marine sector, encompassing bribes and falsified documentation, allows traffickers and unethical employers to escape prosecution, so undermining the deterrent impact of anti-trafficking legislation.

A case of law enforcement capacity-building was exemplified in a four-day training program on financial crime investigations pertinent to human trafficking, conducted from November 14 to November 17, 2023, by the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Training Centre (Pusdiklat APUPPT). This program aimed to provide law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and financial intelligence units with specific abilities to trace illicit financial flows associated with human trafficking (PPATK, 2023). Participants comprised investigators from the Indonesian National Police, prosecutors from the Attorney General's Office, staff from the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (PPATK), officers from the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA), BP2MI PPNS, and personnel from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights Immigration Directorate General. Considering that numerous human trafficking syndicates function transnationally, the incorporation of financial intelligence instruments into prosecutorial strategy is crucial for monitoring unlawful profits, dismantling organised criminal networks, and enforcing more stringent financial penalties on trafficking perpetrators. Nonetheless, given the absence of a specialised anti-trafficking task force targeting the fisheries sector, these financial crime procedures are inadequately employed in tackling forced labour incidents inside Indonesia's maritime industry.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office, has released a revised manual entitled Handling Human Trafficking Crimes to tackle prosecution problems. This updated edition expands upon the previous guidance created by IOM Indonesia in collaboration with the Indonesian National Police, the Attorney General's Office, and the Supreme Court of Indonesia. The guide offers detailed insights into the numerous obstacles encountered by law enforcement professionals, especially public prosecutors, in managing trafficking cases.

It addresses particular legal matters specified in Law No. 21 of 2007, including the management of cases involving minor victims, the identification of perpetrators' profiles, and the facilitation of restitution claims for survivors. This resource serves as a pragmatic reference for judges, prosecutors, and legal practitioners, facilitating the prosecution of traffickers and safeguarding victims. The book also includes the most recent legal instruments pertaining to human trafficking, including Law No. 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers and Attorney General's Regulation No. 1 of 2021 on Access to Justice for Women and Children in Criminal Cases. Nonetheless, despite these achievements, numerous trafficking victims—particularly ABK—encounter substantial legal obstacles while pursuing justice, since procedural intricacies, insufficient victim-oriented legal services, and apprehension of retaliation from traffickers deter them from engaging in legal processes.

This program corresponds with the 'Justice System' indication under the 4Ps framework, as it is underpinned by a comprehensive legislative framework that criminalises human trafficking. The lack of specific legal regulations concerning trafficking in the fishing sector undermines enforcement procedures, enabling exploitative recruitment agencies, vessel operators, and supply chain participants to avoid accountability. To improve prosecutorial efficacy, it is essential to implement sector-specific legislation that unequivocally criminalises forced labour, trafficking, and labour exploitation in the maritime industry. Moreover, enhancing judicial training programs, especially for regional courts addressing maritime labour conflicts, could bolster legal enforcement and promote uniformity in the sentence of trafficking criminals.

Alongside legal reforms, augmenting inter-agency coordination is essential for boosting prosecution success rates. Enhancing bilateral agreements with ASEAN member states—specifically regarding extradition, intelligence-sharing, and victim repatriation—would promote more efficient cross-border investigations. Moreover, creating a specialised anti-trafficking task force inside the Attorney General's Office, concentrating exclusively on fisheries-related human trafficking cases, would enhance case management, optimise evidence collection, and accelerate prosecution procedures. Mitigating court bottlenecks, improving transparency in case reporting, and implementing victim-centric legal procedures are crucial for ensuring traffickers are held accountable and that survivors obtain sufficient legal representation and restitution.

Indonesia has achieved notable advancements in establishing legislative frameworks and institutional procedures to address human trafficking; nonetheless, ongoing enforcement deficiencies, sector-specific legal shortcomings, and inadequate prosecutorial cooperation continue to pose substantial obstacles to justice. In the future, extensive legislation reforms, more judicial control, and increased inter-agency

collaboration will be crucial for bolstering the prosecution of trafficking offences in Indonesia's fishing sector.

Partnership

The final element is Partnership, highlighting the significance of collaboration among governmental entities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the commercial sector, and civil society in combating human trafficking. An organised initiative guarantees the dissemination of information, intelligence collaboration, and legal cooperation across local, national, and worldwide spheres. In 2023, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) collaborated with the Maluku Police to investigate a human trafficking case in Tual, Maluku, subsequent to the confiscation of the fishing vessel KM MUS in the Arafura Sea. KM MUS was found to have unlawfully recruited Indonesian workers as crew members aboard the foreign vessel MV Run Zeng 03 (Kompas, 2024). The Tual District Attorney's Office was instrumental in examining legal documents and clarifying charges against the captain of MV Run Zeng 03 and KM MUS, assuring adherence to Indonesia's anti-trafficking and marine labour regulations (KKP, 2024). Maluku Police Chief Irjen Pol Drs. Lotharia Latif underscored that addressing human trafficking in the fishing sector necessitates a multi-faceted approach, comprising collaboration among law enforcement, marine authorities, and prosecution offices (KKP, 2024). This underscores the necessity of enhancing law enforcement collaboration to avert labour exploitation and safeguard seafarers' rights, while preserving Indonesia's maritime sovereignty and economic security.

In addition to governmental collaboration, alliances with foreign groups have been essential in augmenting law enforcement capacities and victim assistance programs. A significant project is the partnership between KKP and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). IOM Indonesia, in collaboration with the Directorate General of Capture Fisheries at KKP, provided specific training for fisheries officers on recognising trafficking victims, ensuring adherence to human rights, and developing victim referral procedures (IOM, 2022). The training programs were enhanced by collaborative efforts among law enforcement agencies, military personnel, and government departments, enabling a coordinated and comprehensive response to anti-trafficking initiatives. A pivotal moment in this collaboration was the 2015 Benjina tragedy, which revealed egregious instances of human trafficking in Indonesia's fisheries industry. IOM Indonesia and KKP provide direct assistance to a minimum of 1,342 trafficking fishermen in several places, including Benjina, Ambon, and Pontianak (IOM, n.d.). This highlights the enduring dedication of international and domestic organisations to alleviate trafficking

risks, rescue victims, and rehabilitate survivors via legal, psychological, and economic reintegration initiatives.

The formalisation of these collaborations was signified by a partnership agreement executed on 1 April 2019, intended to enhance victim identification, fortify legal mechanisms, and bolster KKP's initiatives against trafficking and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (InfoPublik, 2019). This agreement represents a significant advancement in institutionalising counter-trafficking tactics, specifically in enhancing the oversight of recruitment procedures and upholding worker rights on fishing vessels. Nonetheless, obstacles remain in attaining complete adherence to international labour norms, especially concerning the safeguarding of undocumented migrant workers, the eradication of forced labour on foreign-owned vessels, and the enhancement of maritime monitoring initiatives. Enhancing multi-sectoral collaboration, particularly by ensuring business sector accountability via slavery-free supply chain activities, is essential for addressing current enforcement deficiencies.

The last recognised collaboration involves non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In 2023, members of the KORAL Coalition collaborated with Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) Indonesia to perform a comprehensive investigation into the working circumstances of fishery workers, focussing on labour rights breaches, recruiting fraud, and exploitative contracts (Koalisi KORAL, 2023). KORAL, a coalition of marine conservation NGOs, is essential in campaigning for policy reforms, advancing sustainable fisheries management, and tackling systemic labour exploitation (Gerungan et al., 2023). Their collaborative findings indicated the persistent occurrence of human trafficking in Indonesia's fisheries sector, encompassing unlawful recruitment methods, perilous working conditions, and insufficient legal safeguards for both migrant and native fishery labourers. Moreover, recruitment fraud perpetrated by unregistered labour brokers continues to pose a significant concern, as several workers are deceived regarding contract stipulations, remuneration, and employment circumstances. Mitigating these structural deficiencies necessitates enhanced regulation of recruiting agencies, improved transparency in hiring procedures, and more robust worker protection policies.

Discussion

Indonesia has made significant advancements in combating human trafficking in its fisheries sector by enhancing regulatory frameworks, victim protection initiatives, and legal prosecution systems; nonetheless, considerable enforcement shortcomings, interagency cooperation obstacles, and cross-border intelligence constraints remain. The 4Ps framework demonstrates that although preventive measures—such as skills training, legal awareness initiatives, and recruitment regulations—have progressed, they remain

largely unattainable for a substantial segment of ABK (Anak Buah Kapal), necessitating enhanced outreach, ethical recruitment standards, and obligatory labour contracts. The creation of Rehabilitation and Protection Trauma Centres (RPTCs) has facilitated victim recovery; however, restricted outreach and insufficient geographical coverage impede access for affected workers, underscoring the necessity for expanded RPTC facilities, mobile legal aid units, and improved reintegration programs. The lack of a sector-specific legal framework for human trafficking within the fisheries industry constitutes a significant policy deficiency, necessitating the development of targeted legislation that explicitly addresses ABK recruitment, employment rights, and trafficking-related offences, as well as the enhancement of specialised judicial training and intelligence-sharing with ASEAN member states to bolster enforcement efforts. Partnerships between governments and NGOs have enabled cross-sector participation; nevertheless, ongoing deficiencies in data transparency, national reporting accuracy, and corporate accountability hinder advancement. The absence of a centralised database for monitoring trafficking cases, labour exploitation incidents, and judicial outcomes undermines evidence-based policymaking, highlighting the need for enhancements in real-time data sharing and a cross-agency reporting system to ensure increased accountability and policy efficacy. To eradicate trafficking in the fisheries sector, Indonesia must promptly rectify policy fragmentation, bolster inter-agency enforcement mechanisms, and augment international collaboration, especially via bilateral accords on cross-border investigations, the establishment of a regional ABK employment database, and increased corporate oversight within the seafood supply chain. Despite significant progress in Indonesia's counter-trafficking activities, addressing structural and enforcement impediments is crucial for the sustained protection of maritime worker rights and national security.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia has achieved notable advancements in combating human trafficking in its fisheries sector by implementing prevention efforts, victim protection measures, legal prosecution frameworks, and multi-sectoral collaborations. Preventive measures, including training programs for crew members (ABK) and legal awareness initiatives, have been instrumental in mitigating vulnerability; nonetheless, deficiencies in enforcement, restricted access to training, and inadequate recruitment oversight persistently expose ABK to exploitative labour conditions and trafficking threats. Strengthening ethical recruitment practices, enforcing mandatory labour contracts, and ensuring stricter monitoring of recruitment agencies are essential next steps in closing these prevention gaps. Likewise, protection services—especially those offered by Rehabilitation and Protection Trauma Centres (RPTCs)—have improved victim care; yet,

geographical constraints and inadequate outreach impede access to legal aid and reintegration initiatives. Expanding RPTC facilities, incorporating mobile legal aid units, and establishing community-based support networks will substantially improve victim protection measures.

The pursuit of legal action is limited due to the lack of a specialised legislative framework addressing human trafficking in the fisheries sector. Although Law No. 21 of 2007 criminalises human trafficking, it inadequately addresses the specific vulnerabilities of ABK, resulting in inconsistent enforcement and lenient sentencing for offenders in marine industry. Presidential Regulation No. 19 of 2023 has instituted a National Action Plan (RAN PPTPPO) to improve law enforcement responses; however, judicial training on trafficking cases is insufficient, and intelligence-sharing among ASEAN member states is restricted. Formulating sector-specific laws, bolstering cross-border legal collaboration, and improving law enforcement training are essential for achieving more effective prosecutions and destroying trafficking networks within Indonesia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Collaborations among government agencies, NGOs, and international organisations have enhanced cross-sector coordination, exemplified by the effective partnership between the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in intelligence-sharing, victim repatriation, and joint enforcement initiatives. Nonetheless, irregular data collection, inadequate reporting procedures, and the absence of a national trafficking database persistently obstruct long-term policy efficacy. Implementing a real-time data-sharing system, improving inter-agency communication, and enforcing corporate accountability measures inside the seafood supply chain will enhance transparency and enforcement efficacy. Additionally, bilateral agreements on cross-border investigations and a regional employment database for ABK could significantly improve tracking and protection measures for migrant workers within the fisheries sector.

Notwithstanding significant progress, Indonesia's counter-trafficking efforts continue to encounter obstacles in enforcement, inter-agency cooperation, and international coordination. To elevate its international status and advance its Tier 2 classification in the US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, the nation must prioritise sustainable policy reforms, fortify legal frameworks, and augment victim protection services. Rectifying institutional and enforcement deficiencies is essential for eliminating human trafficking in the fisheries sector and ensuring that Indonesia adheres to international norms for maritime labour rights and security. Future research must prioritise empirical data gathering, field-based case studies, and improved coordination among politicians, academic institutions, and enforcement agencies to facilitate data-driven and adaptive counter-trafficking tactics. Indonesia may achieve a more transparent, responsible, and resilient anti-trafficking framework in the fisheries sector by implementing a more integrated and evidence-based strategy.

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