

Integration of Forest Management Policy and Environmental Law Enforcement in Efforts to Prevent Illegal Logging in Indonesia

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Article	Abstract
<p>How to cite: Ahmad Syahird, et al., 'Integration of Forest Management Policy and Environmental Law Enforcement in Efforts to Prevent Illegal Logging in Indonesia' (2026) Vol. 7 No. 1 Rechtenstudent Journal Sharia Faculty of KH Achmad Siddiq Jember State Islamic University.</p> <p>DOI: 10.35719/rch.v7i1.373</p> <p>Article History: Submitted: 11/01/2026 Reviewed: 15/02/2026 Revised: 15/03/2026 Accepted: 23/003/2026</p> <p>ISSN: 2723-0406 (printed) E-ISSN: 2775-5304 (online)</p>	<p>Law enforcement against illegal logging in various forest areas in Indonesia remains a persistent challenge in achieving sustainable forest governance. Although Indonesia has enacted Law No. 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, prior studies largely focus on regulatory substance and criminalization, while limited attention has been given to the structural effectiveness of its enforcement mechanisms. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of environmental law enforcement in preventing illegal logging and to identify the institutional and normative gaps that hinder its implementation. This research employs normative juridical legal research with a statutory, conceptual, and case approach. The analysis is based on legislation, court decisions related to illegal logging, and relevant scholarly literature to evaluate the coherence between regulatory design and enforcement practice. The findings indicate that despite a relatively comprehensive legal framework, enforcement remains suboptimal due to fragmented inter-agency coordination, limited institutional capacity, and systemic corruption risks within forestry governance. Moreover, the existing regulatory framework has not been fully supported by integrated monitoring and accountability mechanisms. This study contributes to the discourse on environmental law enforcement by proposing the strengthening of cross-sectoral supervision, institutional integration, and community-based monitoring as key reform directions for improving the effectiveness of illegal logging prevention in Indonesia.</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Illegal Logging, Environmental Law, Forest Management Policy, Sustainable Governance.</i></p> <p>Abstrak Penegakan hukum terhadap penebangan liar di berbagai kawasan hutan di Indonesia tetap menjadi tantangan kritis dalam upaya menjaga keberlanjutan hutan. Indonesia telah menetapkan kerangka hukum untuk menangani masalah ini melalui Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2013 tentang Pencegahan dan Pemberantasan Perusakan Hutan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implementasi penegakan hukum lingkungan dalam mencegah penebangan liar menggunakan pendekatan yuridis normatif. Metode yang digunakan dalam studi ini adalah penelitian hukum normatif, berdasarkan analisis peraturan perundang-undangan, jurnal ilmiah, artikel akademik, dan literatur terkait, serta pemeriksaan yuridis terhadap kasus-kasus terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Indonesia memiliki kerangka hukum yang relatif komprehensif, penegakan hukum masih menghadapi hambatan signifikan,</p>

termasuk koordinasi antarlembaga yang lemah, kapasitas institusional yang terbatas, dan korupsi yang persisten. Studi ini menyoroti kebutuhan mendesak untuk memperkuat mekanisme pemantauan, meningkatkan sinergi institusional, dan meningkatkan kesadaran publik tentang konservasi hutan sebagai bagian dari tata kelola lingkungan yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Penebangan Ilegal, Hukum Lingkungan, Kebijakan Pengelolaan Hutan, Tata Kelola Berkelanjutan.*

Introduction

The definition of environmental law contained in Article 1 paragraph 1 of Law Number 4 of 1982 concerning Basic Provisions on the Environment, which has been updated by Law Number 23 of 1997 concerning Environmental Management, is the same as the definition of the term “environment” itself. Article 1 states that environmental law is a unity of space with all objects, forces, conditions, and living things, including humans and their behavior, which affect the continuity of life and welfare of humans and other living things. A forest is an area densely covered with trees and other plants. Such areas exist in vast regions around the world and function as carbon dioxide sinks, animal habitats, hydrological flow modulators, and soil preservers, and are one of the most important aspects of the Earth's biosphere. According to Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry, a forest is an ecosystem consisting of an expanse of land containing natural biological resources dominated by trees in a natural environment where one element cannot be separated from another.¹

Forests are a form of life that is spread throughout the world. We can find forests in both tropical and cold climates, in lowlands and mountains, on small islands and large continents. A forest is a collection of plants and trees, especially trees or other woody plants, that occupy a fairly large area. As an ecosystem function, forests play a vital role in various aspects such as providing water sources, producing oxygen, serving as a habitat for millions of flora and fauna, balancing the environment, and preventing global warming. As a water provider for life, forests are one of the most important areas because they are where various plants grow. Forests serve to prevent erosion and flooding. Tree roots in forests can absorb a significant amount of groundwater, thereby preventing flooding, as the roots slow down the flow of water. Additionally, the roots of plants in dense forest ecosystems can prevent soil erosion during rainfall, thus helping to prevent natural disasters such as landslides as early as possible.

Indonesia is a country endowed with abundant natural resources that provide substantial benefits for human survival and national development. Humans, therefore, have an obligation to manage and preserve these resources sustainably. However, in recent years, the quality and availability of natural resources have shown a significant decline, underscoring the importance of maintaining their conservation.² Among these resources, forests occupy a particularly vital role due to their ecological, economic, and social functions in supporting national development. In the past, Indonesian forests were renowned for their biodiversity and rich ecosystem. Unfortunately, they are now considered among the most threatened forests in the world as a result of widespread destruction, particularly through illegal logging activities.

¹ Wahyu Nugroho and Mas Subagyo Eko Prasetyo, “Forest Management and Environmental Law Enforcement Policy against Illegal Logging in Indonesia,” *International Journal of Management* 10, no. 6 (2019).

² E M Djafar et al., “Forest Management to Achieve Sustainable Forestry Policy in Indonesia,” in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 1181 (IOP Publishing, 2023), 12021.

Illegal logging has become one of the primary drivers of forest degradation in Indonesia (Iskandar, 2015:4–5). This practice has intensified across various forest regions, involving not only local communities living around forest areas but also actors connected to larger commercial interests and organized networks.³

Illegal logging is not only carried out by communities living near forest areas, but also by businesses that exploit forest resources unwisely. Economic interests focused on exploiting forest resources often disregard the principle of sustainability, thereby causing negative impacts on the ecological function of forests and the balance of the environment. Illegal logging can be understood as the felling of trees in forest areas without official permission and in violation of applicable laws.⁴ This practice causes forests to lose their primary function as the lungs of the world and has the potential to cause various natural disasters, such as floods, landslides, and erosion. In addition, illegal logging also has an impact on soil quality, forest area reduction due to encroachment, decreased income for communities living near forests, and reduced ability of the biosphere to absorb carbon dioxide. These conditions exacerbate global warming and reduce the ability of forests to maintain the Earth's climate stability.

The Indonesian government has enacted a number of laws and regulations governing the prohibition of and penalties for illegal logging, including Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry and Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction. Both regulations contain provisions on forest area protection, prohibition of unauthorized logging activities, and criminal penalties for perpetrators. However, despite the existence of a legal framework, illegal logging practices are still rampant due to weak law enforcement and a lack of public awareness.

One important study relevant to this research is a study published in ScienceDirect, which focuses on the relationship between law enforcement effectiveness and deforestation rates through literature reviews and international case studies. The study shows that strict and measurable law enforcement, such as confiscating logging equipment, halting heavy equipment operations, and imposing administrative sanctions, has been proven to significantly reduce the rate of deforestation. However, the effectiveness of these policies is highly dependent on institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, and the existence of economic incentives that can reduce communities' dependence on forest exploitation. Thus, this study provides an important conceptual framework for understanding how concrete enforcement actions affect illegal logging practices, which serves as a basis for assessing the extent to which policies and law enforcement efforts in Indonesia are in line with global best practices⁵.

Second, Rahmat Amil, Rachman, and Rahmawati (2020),⁶ examined the implementation of Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction and the Forestry

³ Syamsuddin Muchtar and Ahsan Yunus, "Environmental Law Enforcement in Forestry Crime: A Disjunction between Ideality and Reality," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 343 (IOP Publishing, 2019), 12066.

⁴ Anna Christina Sinaga and Sofi Mardiah, "An Integrated Law Enforcement Approach: Targeting the Proceeds of Forest Crime in Indonesia," in *Following the Proceeds of Environmental Crime* (Routledge, 2014), 159–72.

⁵ A. Tacconi, L., Rodrigues, R. J., & Maryudi, "Law Enforcement and Deforestation: Lessons for Indonesia from Brazil," *Forest Policy and Economics* 108, no. November (2019), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1389934118304623>.

⁶ Diding Rahmat, "The Effectiveness of Law Enforcement on Illegal Logging Based on the Value of Justice" 07 (2020): 28–34.

Law through normative and socio-legal approaches with case studies in various regions. These studies generally examine the effectiveness of law enforcement at the local level using regulatory analysis, interviews with law enforcement officials, and studies of illegal logging cases. The findings show that although the existing legal framework is comprehensive, its implementation still faces serious obstacles, such as weak inter-institutional coordination, limited human resources and budget, as well as rampant corruption and slow judicial processes. Several studies also highlight the inconsistent application of sanctions against illegal loggers, which has implications for the weak deterrent effect. These studies reinforce the findings in this research by providing empirical evidence on the root causes of the problems in implementing forestry law enforcement in Indonesia, particularly in relation to coordination, institutional capacity, and the integrity of officials.

Although various literature has discussed certain aspects of forest law enforcement, such as the effectiveness of implementation at the regional level, corporate responsibility for forest destruction, and the role of local communities in monitoring natural resources, comprehensive studies that integrate forest management policy analysis with legal analysis of environmental law enforcement are still relatively limited. In particular, there has been little research examining the integration of forest management policy and legal instruments within the framework of Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction and its implications for inter-agency synergy and the role of non-state actors such as corporations and local communities. This study attempts to fill this gap by using a systematic normative-legal approach to the main regulations in the forestry sector, while also assessing policy integration between the legal and governance aspects of forest management. In addition, this study offers policy recommendations that combine legal, governance, and community participation dimensions, resulting in a more integrative and applicable approach compared to previous studies, which were generally sectoral and focused on only one actor.

Based on the above context, this study aims to examine the legal framework governing the prohibition of illegal logging in Indonesia and to analyze the implementation of sanctions against illegal loggers within the broader perspective of environmental law enforcement.

Research Method

The method used in this study is normative legal research, which focuses on the study of applicable positive legal norms. This approach aims to analyze, interpret, and evaluate legal provisions governing the prevention and enforcement of illegal logging practices in Indonesia. Through this method, the study not only seeks to understand the legal text dogmatically, but also examines the extent to which these norms are applied in practice, including their effectiveness and relevance in the context of environmental protection and sustainable forest resource management.⁷

The data sources used consist of primary and secondary legal materials. Primary legal materials include relevant laws and regulations, such as Law No. 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry, Law No. 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, as well as various Government Regulations and Regional Regulations that support their implementation. Meanwhile, secondary legal materials include various scientific literature, such as research

⁷ I Gusti Ketut Ariawan, "Metode Penelitian Hukum Normatif," *Kertha Widya* 1, no. 1 (2013).

articles, academic journals, environmental law textbooks, and other publications relevant to the topic of law enforcement and forest management policies.⁸

The analysis of these legal materials was conducted qualitatively, focusing on legal reasoning and systematic interpretation, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the existing legal framework works to prevent and combat illegal logging in Indonesia. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between legal norms, forestry policy, and the effectiveness of law enforcement in the field.⁹

Results and Discussion

Legal Framework for the Prevention and Prosecution of Illegal Logging

Efforts to prevent and prosecute illegal logging practices in Indonesia have a fairly comprehensive legal basis. A number of laws and regulations have been enacted, both at the level of statutes and government regulations, which explicitly prohibit and impose sanctions for forest destruction;¹⁰

1. Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry (Forestry Law) establishes the basic principles of national forest management. Article 50 of this law prohibits forest destruction and exploitation of forest resources without a valid permit. Violations of this provision are classified as criminal offenses punishable by criminal sanctions and fines.
2. Law No. 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction (P3H Law) serves as a *lex specialis* that complements and strengthens the Forestry Law. The P3H Law regulates in more detail the forms of forest destruction, whether committed by individuals or corporations. Articles 12 and 18 prohibit logging, transportation, and control of forest products without a permit from the Minister. This law also provides a legal basis for the application of corporate criminal liability, with severe penalties in the form of imprisonment and fines of up to billions of rupiah.
3. Government Regulation No. 21 of 1970 concerning Forest Concession Rights and Forest Product Collection regulates the selective logging system and reforestation obligations for concession holders, accompanied by provisions on sanctions if these obligations are neglected.
4. Government Regulation No. 28 of 1985 concerning Forest Protection reinforces the prohibition of illegal logging as stated in Article 8 paragraph (2) and Article 9, with criminal provisions stipulated in Article 18.
5. Government Regulation No. 63 of 2002 concerning Urban Forests also emphasizes environmental protection by prohibiting the destruction of vegetation in urban forest areas. Violations of this provision are subject to sanctions in accordance with local regulations as stipulated in Article 37.

Of all these regulations, Law No. 18 of 2013 on P3H is particularly important because it provides a stronger, more systematic, and targeted legal framework for combating forestry crimes. This law not only targets individuals, but also affirms criminal liability for corporations

⁸ Jonaedi Efendi, *Metode Penelitian Hukum Normatif Dan Empiris Edisi Kedua* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2022).

⁹ Wiwik Sri Widiarty, *Buku Ajar Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Yogyakarta: Publika Global Media, 2024).

¹⁰ Syaifullah Yophi Ardiyanto, Retno Saraswati, and Eko Soponyono, "Law Enforcement and Community Participation in Combating Illegal Logging and Deforestation in Indonesia," *Environment and Ecology Research* 10, no. 4 (2022): 450–60.

involved in illegal logging practices. Thus, the P3H Law is a major milestone in Indonesia's legislative efforts to eradicate illegal logging in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

General Conditions of Illegal Logging and Legislative Efforts in Indonesia

Illegal logging remains one of the most critical challenges in forest resource governance in Indonesia. Beyond accelerating deforestation, this practice generates multidimensional ecological, social, and economic harms. With forest cover of approximately 130 million hectares around 70% of its land area Indonesia holds one of the world's largest tropical forest reserves. Consequently, illegal logging in Indonesia produces not only domestic environmental losses but also significant global ecological repercussions. In practice, illegal logging extends far beyond unauthorized tree felling. It typically involves a complex chain of unlawful activities, including illegal transportation, processing, and commercialization of timber. Empirical observations indicate that these practices are frequently accompanied by document falsification, manipulation of export data, and abuse of licensing mechanisms to legitimize illegally sourced forest products. The persistent global demand for timber, pulp, and land conversion further intensifies these dynamics, creating strong economic incentives that often outpace regulatory control. As noted by WWF (2013), the rise in commodity demand correlates closely with the escalation of illegal logging across several Indonesian forest regions.

The impacts of illegal logging are systemic. Environmentally, it contributes to ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and increased vulnerability to hydrometeorological disasters such as floods and landslides. From a climate perspective, forest degradation undermines Indonesia's role as a major carbon sink, thereby exacerbating global climate change. These layered consequences demonstrate that illegal logging is not merely a forestry crime issue but a complex governance problem involving environmental security, economic interests, and community welfare. Normatively, Indonesia has established a relatively comprehensive legal framework. Article 33 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia provides the constitutional foundation for state control over natural resources for the greatest public benefit. This mandate is operationalized through sectoral legislation, particularly Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry and Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, which criminalize various forms of illegal logging and related activities. However, the existence of a robust normative framework has not automatically translated into effective enforcement outcomes. Structural problems—such as fragmented institutional authority, overlapping regulatory mandates, weak monitoring systems, and corruption risks in the forestry sector—continue to undermine the deterrent effect of these laws. This indicates a persistent gap between regulatory design and enforcement reality, suggesting that the core challenge lies less in normative insufficiency than in governance and implementation deficits.

At the international level, the strategic role of criminal law in environmental protection has been emphasized in the UN Resolution 1996/10 on The Role of Criminal Law in the Protection of the Environment, which encourages states to utilize penal instruments to safeguard environmental sustainability. Indonesia's legislative developments formally align with this global commitment. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such alignment depends heavily on domestic enforcement capacity, cross-sectoral coordination, and accountability mechanisms. Without addressing these structural constraints, legislative strengthening alone risks producing symbolic compliance rather than substantive environmental protection.

Case Study: Illegal Logging in the Maria Donggo Massa Forest Complex, Bima Regency

One concrete example of illegal logging in Indonesia occurred in the Maria Donggo Massa Forest Complex, Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. This incident began on Monday, May 15, 2023, at around 12:00 p.m. WITA, when a patrol team from the Maria Donggo Massa Forest Management Unit (KPH) discovered land encroachment activities in the So Rontu Kambu forest area, which is managed by the Donggo Massa Forestry Group Management Agency (RTK.67), Teta Village, Lambitu Subdistrict, Bima Regency. During the patrol, officers found a perpetrator with the initials J cutting down trees using a chainsaw and a machete. The trees were cut down with the aim of clearing the forest area for conversion into agricultural land. The area of land cleared is estimated to be 1.5 hectares. Officers then secured the perpetrator and took him to the Mataram KLHK Gakkum Station for further investigation.¹¹

Based on the results of the investigation, investigators named J as a suspect in a forestry crime. The act is considered a violation of Article 82 paragraph (1) letter c in conjunction with Article 12 letter c of Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, as amended by Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022 concerning Job Creation into Law. This article explicitly prohibits anyone from illegally cutting down trees in forest areas. For this violation, the suspect faces a maximum prison sentence of five years and/or a maximum fine of Rp7,500,000,000 (seven billion five hundred million rupiah). Following the designation of the suspect, the perpetrator was detained at the NTB Regional Police Detention Center for investigative purposes.

On July 12, 2023, the West Nusa Tenggara High Court declared that the case file for illegal logging in the Maria Donggo Massa forest complex was complete (P-21). Following this, investigators from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's Law Enforcement Office for Java, Bali, and Nusa Tenggara (Jabalnusra) immediately handed over the suspect and evidence to the NTB High Court for further processing by the Bima District Court. The evidence submitted in this case includes one machete and processed timber from logging machines of various types of wood with a total volume of 4,639 m³.

This case shows how the provisions of the P3H Law and its amendments through the Job Creation Law are implemented in the practice of forestry law enforcement. The naming of suspects, seizure of evidence, and the process of transferring cases to the prosecutor's office demonstrate the coordination between the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's Law Enforcement Agency, the police, and the prosecutor's office in handling forestry crimes. However, this case also reveals the classic challenges that still exist, namely the tendency for communities to encroach on forests under the pretext of economic needs and land conversion for agriculture. Therefore, in addition to strict law enforcement, a more comprehensive policy approach is needed, including through social forestry and the empowerment of communities living around forests, so that the prevention of illegal logging can be more effective.

¹¹ Aman Ma'arij et al., "Deforestation and Disaster Mitigation: Policy Analysis for the Prevention and Enforcement of Forest Function Change in Bima," in *2nd Annual Conference on Education and Social Science (ACCESS 2020)* (Atlantis Press, 2021), 520–23.

Analysis of Factors Hindering Law Enforcement against Illegal Logging

Although Indonesia has a fairly comprehensive legal framework for dealing with forestry crimes, the effectiveness of law enforcement against illegal logging practices still faces various structural and cultural obstacles. In terms of legislation, for example, Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction is still considered to have weaknesses. The scope of the offenses regulated is relatively limited and does not fully address the responsibility of the intellectual actors or masterminds behind organized crime.¹² The criminal provisions in the law are mostly directed at field operators, who are generally local communities, while large corporations or illegal timber distribution networks often escape the law. Furthermore, it can be understood from the following points;

1. Law on Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction

The forestry legal system in Indonesia has undergone significant development in line with the increasing complexity of environmental issues and forestry crimes. Historically, regulations on forest management and protection were initially governed by Law No. 41 of 1999 on Forestry, which was later deemed inadequate in responding to the dynamics of cross-sectoral and organized forestry crimes. In response to these weaknesses, the government then enacted Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction (P3H Law) as a new legal basis for forestry law enforcement.¹³

Normatively, Law No. 18 of 2013 was designed to strengthen law enforcement against illegal logging and other forms of forest destruction, whether committed by individuals or corporations. However, in terms of implementation, this law still has various conceptual and operational weaknesses. The main focus of this regulation is more directed at illegal logging and timber distribution, so it does not fully cover other forms of forestry crimes such as illegal mining, unauthorized plantation clearing, and systematic encroachment on forest areas. Of the total 58 types of criminal acts regulated in the law, only 9 provisions are directly related to criminal acts of mining and/or plantation activities that destroy forest areas. This shows that the substance of the norms in the P3H Law is still sectoral in nature and does not accommodate the entire spectrum of environmental crimes that have implications for forest destruction.

Furthermore, of the 12 articles governing criminal provisions, two articles merely supplement administrative sanctions, one article governs corporate crime, and seven articles relate to direct criminal acts. However, regulations concerning corporate criminal liability are still considered ineffective. This is due to a liability model that tends to place managers or field operators as the parties who can be held criminally liable, while capital owners, key controllers, or masterminds often escape the law. In fact, in many cases of illegal logging, the involvement of large corporations as funders or main beneficiaries is a key factor causing large-scale forest destruction.

In addition, Law No. 18 of 2013 does not explicitly include provisions on ecological compensation sanctions or obligations to restore damaged ecosystems. The absence of

¹² Gregory Rose, "Australian Law to Combat Illegal Logging in Indonesia: A Gossamer Chain for Transnational Enforcement of Environmental Law," *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law* 26, no. 2 (2017): 128–38.

¹³ I K Dewi et al., "The Role of Forestry Police in the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 343 (IOP Publishing, 2019), 12130.

mechanisms for compensation and environmental restoration means that law enforcement efforts tend to be repressive and retributive in nature, without providing any restorative effect on forest sustainability. Thus, this law does not fully reflect the principle of environmental justice, which places ecosystem restoration as an integral part of environmental justice.

The fundamental weakness of Law No. 18 of 2013 lies in its legal orientation, which still focuses on perpetrators in the field, most of whom are local communities with limited economic and educational resources, while the main actors in the forestry crime network, such as large corporations, timber entrepreneurs, and unscrupulous officials, often escape legal proceedings. As a result, the implementation of this law tends to create asymmetrical criminal responsibility, where small community groups become victims of law enforcement, while the main perpetrators who profit economically from illegal logging practices remain free to operate.

2. Law Enforcement Agencies

Law enforcement against illegal logging in Indonesia involves various state institutions with authority in the fields of forestry, the environment, law enforcement, and defense and security. Based on the provisions of Law No. 18 of 2013 and its implementing regulations, there are a number of institutions that play a direct role in combating illegal logging, including the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Transportation, the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, the Ministry of Finance, and law enforcement agencies such as the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian National Police (POLRI), the Attorney General's Office, the courts, and local governments at the provincial and district/city levels.¹⁴ This inter-agency synergy is expected to create an integrated and effective law enforcement system, given that forestry crimes are often cross-sectoral, cross-jurisdictional, and involve actors with significant economic and political power.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) plays a major role in monitoring, investigating, and enforcing administrative law against violations in the forestry sector. In an effort to strengthen enforcement, KLHK has established strategic cooperation with the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) to carry out operations to eradicate illegal logging in vulnerable areas, such as cross-border areas, conservation areas, and areas with high levels of land conflict. This collaboration demonstrates the awareness that forestry crimes cannot be handled on a sectoral basis, but require a multi-agency approach oriented towards national security and environmental sustainability.¹⁵

However, the effectiveness of this cooperation still faces various structural and cultural obstacles. One of the main obstacles is the limited number of personnel and operational resources, while Indonesia's forest area is very large, covering more than 120 million hectares. As a result, surveillance and law enforcement in the field are often not

¹⁴ Ahmad Sofian and Batara Mulia Hasibuan, "Legal Subject Interpretation of Law Number 18 of 2013 Concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction," in *1st UMGESHIC International Seminar on Health, Social Science and Humanities (UMGESHIC-ISHSSH 2020)* (Atlantis Press, 2021), 593–98.

¹⁵ Mohammad Adib et al., "The Controversy of Social Forestry Policy: Public Reaction on the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Decree No. 287/2022/KHDPK in Java, Indonesia," *Forest Science and Technology* 20, no. 4 (2024): 383–400.

commensurate with the level of violations that occur. In addition, overlapping institutional authorities often lead to unclear responsibilities, resulting in weak coordination and duplication of tasks.

The forestry sector in Indonesia is also not immune to systemic problems, namely corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN), which are deeply rooted in the bureaucracy and law enforcement agencies. These practices of abuse of authority exacerbate the law enforcement situation because officials often become part of the illegal logging network themselves. In a number of cases, military and police personnel have been found to be directly or indirectly involved in illegal logging or the distribution of illegal timber.¹⁶ Through opaque business networks, some military personnel even operate sawmills or provide protection to illegal operators in exchange for certain rewards. This situation not only undermines the credibility of law enforcement officials, but also creates a public perception that law enforcement in the forestry sector is discriminatory and transactional.

Similarly, in the prosecution and judicial processes, bribery and abuse of authority are still commonplace. Several cases show collusion between illegal timber entrepreneurs and prosecutors and judges, resulting in court decisions that tend to impose light sentences, and in some cases, the main perpetrators are not prosecuted at all. This phenomenon reflects the weak integrity of law enforcement agencies in applying the principle of the rule of law, while also showing the continuing strong influence of economic power in the environmental criminal justice process.

This situation shows that law enforcement against illegal logging in Indonesia does not only depend on the strength of regulations, but is also greatly determined by the morality, professionalism, and independence of law enforcement officials. Institutional reform needs to be directed towards strengthening internal oversight systems, clarifying inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and building the integrity of individual officials through ethics training, transparency in law enforcement, and the application of digital-based monitoring technology.

3. Values That Exist Within Society

At the community level, the main issues that are at the root of illegal logging are often related to economic and social factors, particularly limited employment opportunities and low income levels among communities living near forest areas. In such conditions, the need to meet daily needs drives some people to seek alternative employment, including through illegal logging. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the social effect of normalization of unlawful behavior—when the majority of community members in a region engage in such activities, these actions are considered normal and no longer a violation of the law. In this context, illegal logging is not only viewed as an environmental crime, but also as a survival strategy due to the community's limited access to legal economic resources.¹⁷

¹⁶ Bherly Andia et al., "Impact of Social Forestry Licensing Policy: Community Plantation Forest for Charcoal Production in the Mangrove Ecosystem of Karimun Regency, Kepulauan Riau Province," *Jurnal Perikanan Dan Kelautan* 29, no. 2 (2024): 283–90.

¹⁷ Pieter Agustinus Mikael Rondo, "Quo Vadis Penegakan Hukum: Kewenangan Pemerintah Terhadap Lingkungan Hidup Dalam Kasus Illegal Logging Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Syntax Transformation* 3, no. 04 (2022): 532–37.

In addition to economic factors, socio-political dimensions also play a major role. Many local communities feel disappointed with the central government's policy, which for years has adhered to a centralized model of forest resource management. This policy has led to the massive exploitation of forest resources by the government and corporations that have obtained concession permits, while the economic benefits received by local communities are minimal. As a result, there is a deep sense of injustice and dissatisfaction at the grassroots level. This disappointment has transformed into distrust of the government and law enforcement agencies, which are perceived as favoring corporate interests over those of local communities.

In addition, weak community involvement in forestry policy planning and implementation exacerbates the situation. When communities do not have the space to actively participate in forest management, they tend to view forest areas as open access resources that are free to exploit.¹⁸ This condition ultimately leads to social conflict and reinforces the cycle of illegal logging as a form of symbolic resistance against structural injustice. Therefore, combating illegal logging cannot be done through a repressive approach alone, but must also be accompanied by policies that emphasize social justice, economic empowerment of communities living around forests, and reconstruction of public trust in the state.

4. Supply and Demand

The phenomenon of illegal logging cannot be separated from economic dynamics driven by basic market laws, namely the mechanisms of supply and demand. In the context of the forestry industry, the imbalance between the very high demand for wood and the availability of legal supplies is a major factor that triggers excessive exploitation of forests. The timber industry, both small and large scale, continues to experience an increase in production capacity in line with high market demand, both domestically for building materials, furniture, and paper, and internationally for exports of processed wood products. However, the supply of legal timber, which should be obtained through official logging permits and based on annual allowable cut quotas set by the government, has been unable to meet this surge in demand.¹⁹

This imbalance between supply and demand has opened the door to illegal logging as a quick, cheap, and practical alternative to cover the industry's shortage of raw materials. Many timber entrepreneurs, especially those operating in remote areas or without strict supervision, choose to obtain timber from illegal sources because production costs are lower and the process is not hampered by bureaucratic regulations. As a result, illegal logging has become part of the timber supply chain, indirectly "legalized" by the urgent needs of the industry.

In addition, high global demand for tropical timber and its derivative products, such as exotic furniture and construction materials, has exacerbated the situation. Developed countries with environmentally friendly consumption policies often remain the end

¹⁸ Andi Nimah Sulfiani and Rizka Firdaus, "Pengawasan Pemerintah Dalam Praktek Illegal Logging Di Kelurahan Battang Kecamatan Wara Barat Kota Palopo," *Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 18, no. 2 (2022): 263–82.

¹⁹ Sofyan Rauf and Aditya Nur Iman, "Tinjauan Yuridis Tindak Pidana Illegal Logging Dikecamatan Abuki Kabupaten Konawe (Studi Kasus Putusan No. 46/Pid. B/LH/2021/PN Unh)," *Lakidende Law Review* 1, no. 2 (2022): 207–20.

market for illegally logged timber through disguised export channels. Meanwhile, the weak Timber Legality Verification System and limited field supervision make it increasingly difficult to break the illegal timber distribution chain. Thus, the root cause of illegal logging lies not only in weak law enforcement, but also in the structural imbalance between supply and demand, which has not been effectively regulated. Efforts to address this problem must be carried out with a comprehensive strategy, such as controlling industrial timber production to match forest carrying capacity, developing alternative substitute raw materials, and increasing the transparency of the timber supply chain so that the entire production and trading process can be legally and ethically accountable.²⁰

Considering the various contributing factors discussed, including regulatory weaknesses in Law No. 18 of 2013, low integrity and coordination among law enforcement officials, the socio-economic conditions of communities surrounding forests, and the imbalance between supply and demand for timber, it can be concluded that the problem of illegal logging in Indonesia is multidimensional and cannot be resolved through a legal approach alone. Prevention and eradication efforts must be placed within the framework of integrated forest management policies with effective environmental law enforcement. This includes strengthening inter-agency synergy, transparency in forest governance, empowering local communities economically through social forestry programs, and monitoring the timber industry supply chain. The integration of forest management policies and law enforcement instruments is not only important for curbing illegal logging practices, but also serves as the foundation for realizing sustainable and equitable environmental governance for future generations.

Conclusion

Illegal logging remains a persistent and systemic problem in Indonesia, generating far-reaching consequences for environmental sustainability, biodiversity protection, and ecosystem stability. This study demonstrates that although Indonesia possesses a relatively comprehensive regulatory framework particularly through Law No. 18 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, its enforcement effectiveness is significantly constrained by structural and institutional weaknesses. The analysis reveals that the core problem lies not primarily in normative deficiency, but in fragmented inter-agency coordination, limited enforcement capacity, weak monitoring integration, and corruption risks within forestry governance. These legal-institutional gaps are further exacerbated by socio-economic pressures, including community dependence on forest resources and persistent market demand for timber. By highlighting the disjunction between regulatory design and enforcement practice, this study contributes to the environmental law discourse by reframing illegal logging as a governance failure rather than merely a criminal compliance issue. Accordingly, policy responses must move beyond formal legislative strengthening toward systemic enforcement reform.

Based on the study's findings, several strategic measures are necessary. First, strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and establishing an integrated monitoring framework directly address the identified problem of institutional fragmentation. Second, enhancing the professional and technical capacity of law enforcement agencies responds to the documented

²⁰ Irvan Maulana and M Nanda Setiawan, "Tindak Pidana Illegal Logging Di Indonesia," *Datin Law Jurnal* 4, no. 1 (2023).

enforcement gap at the operational level. Third, the optimization of modern surveillance technologies such as drones, satellite imagery, and geographic information systems (GIS) is essential to overcome current monitoring limitations and improve early detection of forest crimes. Fourth, empowering local communities through participatory forest governance can mitigate socio-economic drivers identified in this study. Finally, stronger international cooperation in controlling illegal timber trade, combined with consistent and transparent criminal sanctions, is crucial to restore the deterrent effect of the legal regime. In sum, effective eradication of illegal logging in Indonesia depends on transforming the existing legal framework into an integrated, accountable, and technology-supported enforcement system. Without addressing the structural governance deficits identified in this research, legislative robustness alone will remain insufficient to ensure sustainable forest protection.

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