



Police Efforts in Tackling Environmental Crimes Due to Illegal Gold Mining

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Abstract

Illegal gold mining in Manggani, Nagari Koto Tinggi, Fifty Cities Regency, causes serious environmental damage as well as a source of livelihood for the community, so that the countermeasures face ecological and socio-economic dilemmas. This study aims to analyze the role and obstacles of the 50 City Police Satintelkam in overcoming environmental crimes due to illegal gold mining through cross-police cooperation, especially with the Pasaman Police. This research is a legal research supported by empirical data; Secondary data is obtained through literature studies, while primary data is collected through interviews, then analyzed qualitatively. The results of the study show that Satintelkam plays a strategic role in early detection, mapping of actors and networks of cross-regional miners, collecting and disseminating intelligence information, and mobilizing cross-agency cooperation for unlicensed mining control operations. Cross-police cooperation expands the scope of supervision and enables enforcement of illegal gold distribution channels and financiers outside the administrative area of the 50 City Police. However, the effectiveness of countermeasures is constrained by limited human resources and monitoring technology in protected forest areas, the support of some communities for mining as an economic source, indications of collusion between individuals and mining companies, and coordination between institutions that are not optimal. It is recommended to strengthen the capacity of police intelligence, increase sustainable multi-sector coordination, and legal education to the public to realize more effective and equitable enforcement of environmental laws.

Introduction

Indonesia is known for being a country rich in resources, especially natural resources. As an archipelago located on the equator, Indonesia has amazing nature. This can be seen from the vast area of forest which has a high amount of flora and fauna. In this case, the fauna in Indonesia ranks second in the world after Brazil. While from 1. 812,700 species are found in the world, 31,750 of which can be found in Indonesia.¹ However, Indonesia is also one of the countries with the highest rate of threat and extinction of plant species in the world.² The unprofessionalism is caused by a lack of Human Resources (HR) in terms of supervision, mining activities carried out by community groups that do not have permits, and the distance

¹ Agus Setiawan, "Indonesia's Biodiversity: Conservation Problems and Efforts", *Indonesian Journal of Conservation*, 11(1) (2022), pp. 13-21, 2022.

² Agus Hikmat and Cecep Kusmana, "The Biodiversity of Flora in Indonesia", *Journal of Natural Resources and Environmental Management*, 5 (2), pp. 187-198, 2015.

of the mining location from the residential environment so that the quality of government monitoring is not strong. This is what causes environmental crimes.³

Supervision of environmental crimes caused by illegal mining can be carried out by the intelligence function of the Police. In the context of the implementation of intelligence tasks within the National Police, Intelkam operational activities are classified into 3 (three) forms that are also universally applicable, namely: investigation, security, and fundraising.⁴ Intelkam's operational activities are carried out with the aim of obtaining information, securing certain objects/activities, and creating conditions conducive to the implementation of other Police duties. In addition, Intelkam's operational activities can be carried out openly or privately.

According to Kunarto, the investigation is an effort to find and collect information; Security is an effort to secure the organization so that it does not become a target of opponents; Fundraising is an effort to create conditions and situations that benefit the organization. Therefore, the spectrum of Intelkam activities in the implementation of the Police's duties is to precede, accompany and end every police operational activity carried out by the Police.⁵

The term mining without a permit is that people's mining has spread even though it is not like that. Many are misrepresented as if the people mining is a people's mine, even though the real people's mining has rules and regulations. Meanwhile, Peti does not follow existing regulations, does not follow good governance, is dangerous and destructive. This mining concept will have bad consequences because philosophically the exploitation of natural resources is an externality that occurs when one or more people suffer losses in the form of losses in their welfare.⁶

It cannot be denied that illegal gold mining not only brings negative effects, but also has an effect on improving the economy of the local community (in this case the *Gunuang Omeh* Community, Fifty Cities Regency) and even reducing the unemployment rate in the Indonesian people. In Manggani, illegal gold mining is owned and funded by local residents, but most of the illegal miners in Indonesia come from North Sumatra, Aceh and the mainland islands of Java and Sulawesi. This mining causes environmental damage that is detrimental to the community around the mine. Countermeasures against this crime are carried out with cooperation between police stations.

Some of the problems in this study are the efforts of the Police in overcoming environmental crimes due to illegal gold mining and its obstacles.

Research Methods

The specification of the research is *descriptive analytical*, with a normative juridical approach supported by empirical juridical approaches. The types of data used are secondary data and primary data. Secondary data was obtained from document studies, primary data was obtained by means of interviews. The data obtained was then analyzed qualitatively.

³ Nur Efendi, Aldri Frinaldi, Rembrandt, Dasman Lanin, Genius Umar, Mulya Gusman, Unlicensed Gold Mining (Peti): Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts and the Role of Environmental Law, *Tambusai Education Journal*, 1(3), pp.123-128, 2023.

⁴ Saronto and Karwita, *Intelligence, Theory, Application and Modernization*, Ekajaya, Jakarta, 2001, p. 47.

⁵ Kunarto, *Intelligence (Its Meaning and Understanding)*, Cipta Manunggal, Jakarta, 1999, p. 57.

⁶ Satya Dharma, *Transcendental-Based Unlicensed Mining Law Enforcement*, *Journal of Law* Vol. 5 No.1 of 2022 ISSN 2548-6055(print), ISSN (online) accessed from <https://ejournal.iahntp.ac.id/index.php/satya-dharma> on July 23, 2024.

Results and Discussion

Police Efforts in Tackling Environmental Crimes Due to Illegal Gold Mining

Environmental crime is a serious threat to ecosystems, the economy, and human life. The impact is not only local but also global, accelerating climate change and worsening the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable communities. Factors such as weak law enforcement, corruption, and economic limitations are the main causes of this increase in crime. Therefore, handling and prevention efforts must involve all parties through close cooperation, both at the national and international levels. If not addressed immediately, environmental crimes will continue to threaten the future of the planet as well as future generations.

Fifty Regency of West Sumatra City is one of the places where there are many illegal gold mines, overall the number of illegal gold mining increases every year. In 2021, there were about 15 identified illegal gold mines, most of which were located in the Gunuang Omeh and Lareh Sago Halaban areas. These mines are small-scale and some of them have been successfully closed by authorities such as Satpol PP and the police through control operations. However, these locations are quite remote, so surveillance is not always optimal. This has sparked concerns about potential environmental damage, especially to the river ecosystem around the region.

In 2022, the number of illegal mines increased to 18. Mining activities are increasingly rampant in the Kapur IX and Suliki areas, which is allegedly triggered by the increase in gold prices in the global market. Despite some law enforcement efforts and routine raids, illegal mining is difficult to fully eradicate due to limited surveillance resources and high profits from gold sales. In addition, the economic factors of the local community that depend on mining activities make this activity continue to survive despite violating regulations.

In 2023, the number of illegal mines will reach 22 points, with the emergence of new mines in the Situjuh Limo Nagari and Pangkalan Koto Baru areas. This shows the expansion of mining activities to a wider area, even to previously untouched areas. Some of these new mines are still under investigation by the Environment Agency and related agencies, because it is feared that they will cause water pollution and forest damage. Although control continues to be carried out, illegal mining remains a challenge for the government due to the re-emergence of mines in places that have been closed previously.

The illegal gold mine in Manggani, Nagari Koto Tinggi, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatra, is one of the real examples of unlicensed mining (PETI) that has a bad impact on the environment and society. In 2021, there are 7 illegal mines operating in the Manggani area, with the main activity being manual mining using wallets (simple gold sucking tools). These mines cause pollution of small rivers around the site and trigger erosion of residents' farmland. The local government is still limited to socializing rules and warnings, with law enforcement not being maximized due to limited resources.

In 2022, the number of illegal mines increased to 10 points, and some of them began using heavy equipment such as excavators to speed up excavation. This activity exacerbates forest damage and causes sedimentation in rivers that flow into residential areas. Some control operations are carried out sporadically by the local government and the local police, but illegal mines are difficult to eradicate due to their hidden location and high demand for gold.

In 2023, illegal mining in Manggani is increasingly rampant, with 12 mines spread across remote areas. This mining is increasingly difficult to monitor, and the impact on the environment is more significant, such as forest degradation and river water pollution. The government, together with the TNI and the National Police, began an integrated operation to close several illegal mining sites. However, the main challenge is still in the form of limited supervision and the difficulty of providing economic alternatives for communities that depend on the mine.

Despite being located in a wildlife sanctuary forest area, this mining activity continues to operate and involves hundreds of workers from various regions in Indonesia. Mining in Manggani is not only illegal, but also disregards the safety of workers, with miners working in the pits of old former mines without adequate protection.

Satintelkam has the main responsibility in detecting and providing warnings against problems related to public security and order (Kamtibmas). In the context of illegal gold mining, this role includes early detection, cooperation, and counseling and education. Satintelkam in early detection serves as the "eyes and ears" of the National Police to identify threats to the environment due to illegal mining activities. This includes monitoring locations that are prone to environmental crimes. Satintelkam in raising cooperation needs to build a communication network and cooperation with the community and related agencies to increase the effectiveness of crime prevention. Cooperation between police stations is also important to overcome problems that are cross-regional. Awareness in counseling and education can increase public awareness about the negative impacts of illegal gold mining, so that the community can participate in prevention efforts.

Satintelkam is tasked with identifying the actors behind illegal mining activities and miner networks from outside the region operating in the Manggani area. Cross-police and cross-regional cooperation is needed because these activities often involve workers from various provinces, so collaboration with the Pasaman Police and other law enforcement agencies is crucial in expanding supervision and enforcement operations. In addition, Satintelkam plays a role in providing strategic input to regional leaders and related agencies regarding mining-prone points and overseeing the control process so that there is no neglect by certain parties.

However, despite various coordination efforts, the handling of illegal gold mining in Manggani still faces serious obstacles. Reports from several NGOs show indications of weak law enforcement and the involvement of certain individuals who facilitate these activities. A number of institutions have written to the 50 City Regency Governments to take firm action immediately, but the government's response is still considered slow. In addition, there were allegations that local officials were involved in the practice of "flirting" with the miners.

In the theory of criminal policy put forward by various experts, including Wolf Middendorf, it is emphasized that law enforcement must be carried out in a comprehensive and integrated manner. This theory emphasizes the importance of integrated strategies and policies in dealing with crime, including environmental crime. According to this theory, it is necessary to carry out policy integration, effective law enforcement, and community participation. Criminal policy should involve a variety of aspects, including criminal law and a non-criminal approach. In this case, law enforcement against illegal gold mining needs to be balanced with preventive efforts such as public education and cross-agency cooperation. The theory also highlights the importance of consistent and effective law enforcement to prevent crime. In the context of illegal mining, decisive action from Satintelkam and related agencies is urgently needed to crack down on violations of the law effectively. Successful criminal policy requires active participation from the community. Satintelkam can facilitate discussion forums between the community and the police to discuss issues related to illegal mining and its impact on the environment.

To address this problem comprehensively, the role of Satintelkam is not only limited to mapping and extracting information. Joint operations involving environmental agencies, local governments, and central institutions are needed, accompanied by firm and sustainable enforcement measures. Satintelkam also has a role in educating and inviting local communities not to engage in these illegal activities, given its far-reaching impact on the local ecosystem and economy. Good inter-police collaboration and cross-agency coordination are expected to

stop illegal mining activities in the Manggani area completely, ensuring the sustainability of protected forest areas and protecting communities from long-term environmental impacts.

The illegal gold mine in Manggani has posed cross-border challenges as its activities involve miners from different regions. To deal with this problem comprehensively, the 50 City Police Satintelkam has established strategic cooperation with the Pasaman Police and other related agencies. This cooperation includes the exchange of intelligence information, joint operations, and coordination of control to close illegal mines and arrest the perpetrators involved.

The 50 City Police and the Pasaman Police shared information related to distribution routes and the movement of illegal miners who often move around the border area. Given that illegal gold mining often involves a network of miners from outside the province, this inter-police collaboration is essential to expand the scope of operations. In addition, the Pasaman Police supports handling at access points in the western region of Sumatra, where several miners and mining materials are suspected of moving across the border of the two districts. Within the framework of this cooperation, the 50 City Police identified financiers or mining dealers and coordinated enforcement with the authorities in Pasaman. The joint operation involving the two police forces aims to not only stop mining, but also prevent the re-entry of illegal miners after control. Satintelkam plays an important role in mapping miner networks, as well as ensuring that every control step is not only temporary, but sustainable.

Although this cooperation is ongoing, the main challenges still arise from weak law enforcement and the alleged involvement of certain individuals that complicate the control process. Some reports mention neglect by the local government and the authorities at a certain level, which hinders joint operations. In addition, the mining area is located within protected forests and wildlife sanctuaries, so additional synergy with forestry and environmental institutions is needed to ensure successful management. Overall, the cooperation between the 50 City Police and the Pasaman Police plays a crucial role in dealing with these cross-regional environmental crimes. With coordinated operations and intelligence support from Satintelkam, it is hoped that illegal gold mining activities in Manggani can be stopped completely, while protecting the ecosystem and communities from more severe damage.

Cross-police cooperation between the 50 City Police and the Pasaman Police in dealing with illegal gold mining in Manggani has shown several positive results, although it still faces various operational challenges. From a technical perspective, this collaboration allows for the alignment of information and intelligence related to the movement of miners and financiers operating across regions. This increases the effectiveness of joint operations, as each access point and miner route can be monitored more comprehensively by two adjacent police stations.

Police Obstacles in Tackling Environmental Crimes Due to Illegal Gold Mining

One of the main obstacles is the limited human resources and technology owned by the 50 City Police Satintelkam. Mining areas are located in protected forest areas that are difficult to reach and have heavy terrain, so they require monitoring technology such as drones or satellite imagery to effectively monitor illegal activities. However, such infrastructure and supporting facilities are not yet fully available. In addition, control operations often require cross-agency joint teams, which demand complex coordination and long time. The lack of trained personnel to deal with environmental problems is also an obstacle. Police units in general focus more on handling conventional crimes, so operations related to environmental crimes require collaboration with other agencies, such as the forestry and environmental services, which sometimes do not run optimally.

The illegal mining in Manggani involves hundreds of workers, including miners from outside the area. The presence of these miners creates a conflict of interest at the local community level. Some residents support the existence of the mine because it is considered a

source of income, while others oppose it because of the environmental damage it causes. In such a situation, public support for policing becomes fragmented, which makes law enforcement efforts difficult.

Another social barrier is the threat to officers, both from miners and from interested parties involved in illegal mining. Some reports indicate that miners may be aggressive during control operations. Without adequate security, the risk of clashes and violence becomes high, delaying or even derailing operations. One of the biggest challenges is the indication of collusion between government officials and mining officials. Reports from NGOs stated that there was neglect or even involvement of certain individuals who facilitated mining activities in the Manggani protected forest area. This alleged involvement makes enforcement efforts ineffective, as it is difficult for local law enforcement officials to take decisive action without pressure from civil society and the media. In addition, the weak law enforcement system and the lack of sanctions for illegal mining perpetrators are other factors that worsen the situation. Captured miners are often only given light sentences or released, so there is no deterrent effect. This makes it easy for illegal mines to resume operations even though they have been ordered several times.

Handling illegal mining requires coordination between many agencies, including the National Police, the environment service, the forestry service, and local governments. However, this coordination often does not go smoothly due to differences in interests and convoluted bureaucracy. For example, there are cases where local governments claim to have not received official instructions or letters related to the control of illegal mining, indicating a lack of effective communication between agencies. In addition, regulations related to environmental law enforcement are often not implemented properly. The overlap of authority between the central and regional governments also slows down the decision-making process in closing mines.

The obstacles faced by the 50 City Police Satintelkam in dealing with illegal gold mining in Manggani reflect the complexity of environmental crimes involving many actors and interests. Limited resources, social conflicts, weak law enforcement, and difficult geographical terrain are the main challenges in mine control. Therefore, a multi-sectoral approach and continuous collaboration between various institutions and communities are needed to stop this illegal activity completely. Only in this way, environmental sustainability and community welfare can be guaranteed in the future.

According to Soerjono Soekanto, legal awareness includes knowledge of regulations, understanding of legal obligations, and acceptance of the law. This theory emphasizes the importance of public understanding and awareness of the applicable law, which affects the effectiveness of law enforcement. Analysis using Soerjono Soekanto's theory of legal awareness shows that obstacles in the role of the 50 City Police Satintelkam in dealing with environmental crimes due to illegal gold mining in the 50 City Regency are greatly influenced by low legal knowledge and awareness both among the apparatus and the community. To increase the effectiveness of crime prevention, there needs to be efforts to increase education and socialization about mining laws and the environmental impact of illegal activities, as well as strengthen cooperation between police departments to create synergy in law enforcement.

Conclusion

The role of the 50 City Police Satintelkam in overcoming environmental crimes due to illegal gold mining in Manggani Regency 50 City with cooperation between police departments is to collect information and coordinate across sectors to stop illegal mining operations. Satintelkam has the main responsibility in detecting and providing warnings and early detection. Identify the actors behind illegal mining activities and networks of miners from outside the region operating in the Manggani area. Cross-police and cross-regional cooperation

is needed because these activities often involve workers from various provinces, so collaboration with the Pasaman Police and other law enforcement agencies is crucial in expanding supervision and enforcement operations. Cooperation with the Pasaman Police allows the prosecution of illegal gold distribution channels involving collectors and economic actors outside the 50 city area.

The obstacle of the 50 City Police Satintelkam in overcoming environmental crimes due to the illegal gold mine in Manggani Regency 50 Kota is the limitation of human resources and technology to reach mining areas located in protected forest areas. Some community members support the existence of mines because they are considered a source of income. There are indications of collusion between government officials and mining officials. Lack of coordination between many institutions, including the National Police, the environment agency, the forestry service, and local governments. However, this coordination often does not go smoothly due to differences in interests and convoluted bureaucracy.

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