

Evaluation of the Prevention of Goods Smuggling in the Batam Border Area with a Security Theory Approach

Rachmatsah Adi Putera
Universitas Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Rachmatsah Adi Putera
rachmatsahadiputera24@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The borders of a country are areas that are vulnerable to transnational crimes such as smuggling. This threat is vulnerable to occur in the region as the borders have certain characteristics that pose a challenge to efforts to maintain internal security. Hence, this study aims at describing the single-window law enforcement as an alternative solution for the increasing rate of smuggling nowadays. This challenge becomes even greater when a country has an area with an extraordinarily wide landscape and coastline like in Indonesia. The method that has been used in the study is the qualitative method with library study as the data gathering instrument. Indonesia is one of the countries that has handled transnational crime cases in the form of smuggling with several complex challenges. One of these challenges is the region's borders with long landscapes and coastlines, creating several security gaps. This is well illustrated in the case of smuggling in the City of Batam. Therefore, in this study, the focus of the problems raised are: (1) how to analyze the threat of transnational crime in the City of Batam; and (2) how to detect stakeholders in the field of territorial security related to the smuggling of goods in the City of Batam.

INTRODUCTION

The government has recently been paying great attention to the lives of people living near the border. This attention is given not only in relation to the issue of development lag but also the decline in national identity among residents of border areas. This issue is indicated by the activity of crossing the sovereign territory of each country which makes communities or citizens around the border tend to become communities without national borders (Pristiwanto, Sumolang, Triwibowo, & Ulaen, 2013). In addition, due to the slow pace of development in border areas, Indonesian people living in these areas tend to have more in common with the values and way of life of their neighboring countries (Nurgiansah & Rachman, 2022). Based on Bappenas data, Indonesia has direct borders with ten countries, each of which has its own unique border characteristics, including the Philippines, the Republic of Palau, Australia, Timor Leste, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea (Ministry of Defense, 2011; Perwita & Yani, 2014). Fifteen districts/cities and four provinces have land borders with neighboring countries. Indonesia's 92 outermost islands are its maritime borders, but some of these islands are currently experiencing territorial disputes with neighboring countries.

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world today. In line with the report of the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia is recorded as having 17,001 islands (Ministry of Defense, 2011). With its vast natural landscape, Indonesia is also the main access for transporting goods or people between Asia and Australia. On the other hand, Indonesia is also located on the Indian and Pacific Ocean routes that are busy with international trade fleets. This condition also makes Indonesia vulnerable to illegal smuggling of goods, drug trafficking, human trafficking and a number of other crimes (Julianty, Ali, & Mujibussalim, 2014; Aswindo, Hanita, & Simon, 2021; Fitrianna & Senjaya, 2024). This situation also makes state sovereignty vulnerable as threats to national defense and security have a greater scope and significance as national trade activities increase. This complex situation in turn makes state apparatus and military not the only stakeholders in the field of security and defense tasked with protecting a region. Therefore, the presence of non-state actors, including non-governmental institutions and the general public, is important for protecting a region (Roshel & Elvardi, 2022; Prasetyo, Widowaty, & Farid, 2023; Ramadhani, Haryadi, & Apsari, 2023).

If the supply side is not addressed, the problem of human trafficking will not be completely resolved. For a number of reasons, such as unemployment pressure or low wages in the country of origin, early marriage or widowhood, and insufficient funds to support their children, prospective workers are encouraged to leave their homes and seek work in neighboring countries. In this regard, a number of policies must be taken to improve the lives of people, especially women, in their home areas. These efforts include raising the minimum age for marriage, raising wages, and expanding employment opportunities (Widayatun, 2008).

The changes made through Law Number 44 of 2007 and Government Regulation Number 2 of 2009 which stipulates Batam as a free port and free trade

area are in line with Law Number 36 of 2000 (Hutauruk & Susanto, 2019). The determination of Batam as a Free Trade Zone has strengthened the legal basis. The system and requires Indonesian people, especially those domiciled in Batam to obey the law. This increases the prospect of very promising economic growth. Bahrum (2008) said that the government, business owners, and all stakeholders in Batam City need to plan for rapid growth in two economic sectors before the implementation of the Free Port and FTZ (Zaenuddin, Istaridi, & Ansori, 2017). The existence of a "dual economy" that includes illegal trade and transactions as well as formal and informal sectors.

Based on the explanation that has been described in this background section, the focus of this study is the smuggling of goods that occur in Batam City. This topic was chosen because the problem of smuggling of goods in Batam City is a complex problem that needs to be addressed immediately. This handling is urgent to be done immediately as the issue of smuggling of goods has caused vulnerability in border areas such as Batam City. Therefore, handling smuggling of goods effectively and efficiently is expected to help realize a better level of welfare and quality of life for the community in the outermost areas. In addition to being proof of the presence of the state in the area, handling smuggling of goods will also encourage higher public awareness of the dangers and impacts and legal consequences of smuggling of goods. Thus, economic growth in the outermost areas can be encouraged and the outermost points of Indonesia will become stronger against the onslaught of threats from abroad, especially from smuggling activities involving international networks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Smuggling activities are generally associated with border areas such as Batam. A number of individuals continue to take advantage of the daily traffic at a number of busy ports in Batam to profit from the entry of goods into the country without proper documents and permits. The state suffers financial losses due to the activities of these smugglers, but also weakens the legitimacy of the government which is constantly being "cheated" by them (Klein, 2011; Niko & Purnama, 2020). On the other hand, because goods can now freely enter and leave Batam after the enactment of the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) Perpu, it is estimated that the Directorate of Customs and Excise (BC) will have increasingly difficulty in carrying out supervision (Syahrial & Susiatiningsih, 2018; Ayu, Yunanda, & Nulhakim, 2022). The large number of rat ports, or illegal ports, in Batam worsens this situation. Based on the data collected, Batam City has at least 64 rat port locations. Among the 64 points, there are ports that are usually used by the community for small businesses. Every day, various goods are suspected of entering Batam without export-import and customs documents. Security personnel and Customs and Excise officers are believed to have made only a few arrests. The majority of these illegal goods are smuggled through a number of rat ports spread throughout Batam (Zaenuddin, Istaridi, & Ansori, 2017).

Illegal smuggling criminal acts pose a serious threat to the implementation of the nation's economy, because if it is allowed to continue in various forms, both physically and administratively, it will result in more and more state revenues not being collected. This will hinder the state's efforts to meet the target

of customs and excise levies which are expected to increase each year. Every year, losses arise due to smuggling that occurs in Indonesia via air, sea, or land (Hutauruk & Susanto, 2019). Various cases that occur in border areas, such as:

1. Importers are trying to smuggle rice into Indonesia via the Riau Islands which is right next to the Strait of Malaysia.
2. Illegal goods entering Batam
3. Smuggling of firearms in Bintan, Riau Islands region
4. Human trafficking in Batam City

METHODOLOGY

The method used in the research is a descriptive qualitative method with a systematic literature review. In this method, the type of analysis used by the researcher is a synthesis analysis because the researcher will draw conclusions from the results of several similar studies that have been carried out previously (Nightingale, 2009). Specifically, the systematic literature review approach has been chosen because this study aims to identify all studies that have discussed a particular issue with a theme related to the research so that the conclusions of the research conducted will provide a balanced and unbiased summary.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of State Borders and Smuggling Issues in Indonesia

People living in both countries and border areas engage in a variety of mutually beneficial economic activities at more or less the same level (Martinez, 1994; Elyta, 2021). For example, one border region has production facilities, while the other region has access to cheap labor. Alternatively, the border region can also be defined as an integrated area where the economies of the two countries become one and nationalism experiences a significant decline (Blanchard, 2005). The two countries are closely allied. Law Number 43 of 2008 concerning State Territory states that the border area is part of a country's territory located within the state borders that separate Indonesia from other countries (Hutauruk & Susanto, 2019). International law describes a country's territorial boundaries as lines that separate its sovereign powers. Law Number 43 of 2008 explains that because the border areas and outermost regions of a country have strategic interests in maintaining the integrity of its territory, special regulations are needed that provide legal certainty regarding the scope in line with its boundaries.



Figure 1. Illustration of Legal Action against Criminal Acts of Smuggling in Indonesia (Between News, 2025)

Border areas between countries give rise to a number of problems in line with national border management policies and strategies (Rusmiyati, Faridah, Alma'arif, & Nooraini, 2022). These issues include:

1. There is a development gap with neighboring countries
This gap is usually caused by inadequate infrastructure and difficult-to-access border areas. The socio-economic situation of the area is greatly influenced by this. Border areas usually have social and economic conditions that are focused on their neighboring countries. Better socio-

economic impacts and fully developed infrastructure are the causes of this. Over time, the development gap between neighboring countries can cause political problems.

2. Low accessibility

Accessibility to the city center by land, sea, river, or air is still a challenge for border areas. One of the factors that attracts people to move to nearby countries with more accessible facilities and accessibility is the difficulty of reaching and leaving border areas. This actually allows nationalism to decline in society.

3. Low quality of human resources

The lack of infrastructure in education and other fields also causes the low quality of human resources. Another significant problem is the low quality of human resources. Because community involvement is very necessary for a region to develop. It is possible that the development of border areas will be hampered by the lack of human resources involved if the border community focuses more on its neighboring countries.

4. There is cross-border activity

One of the reasons for cross-border activities is the existence of industries that can meet the financial needs of people living along the border. Accessibility to urban centers in this country is more challenging compared to neighboring countries, and this is one of the reasons.

In general, security is seen as closely related to aspects in the military field, regional conflicts, and territorial borders. However, today this view has undergone significant changes following the dynamics of developing geopolitics. This change is mainly caused by issues that have occurred almost throughout the world after World War II such as human trafficking, global warming, hunger, terrorism, poverty, and the spread of disease outbreaks (Wahyuni, 2021). So, nowadays security is understood as a human condition that is free from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and oppression (Khemili & Belloumi, 2018; Wahyuni, 2021). The creation of an ideal security atmosphere will certainly help the community, especially in border areas, to realize better welfare and quality of life so that the community has a sufficient life and livelihood.

The opposite or antithesis of the ideal situation above is a threat. A threat is basically a person's determination to cause harm to another person (Prunckun, 2015). Based on the definition, it is important to understand that threats cannot be caused by natural forces or natural events as both of these are classified as dangers or hazards. Considering this nature, it can be concluded that threats can only be caused or generated by humans as humans require goals and capacities that are expressed in the form of organizations, associations, businesses or other forms of corporate bodies that require staff (Carroll, 1996; Virgaus, 2020).

One concept that needs to be considered in relation to this threat is vulnerability (Prunckun, 2015). Vulnerability can generally be defined as a weakness in an asset that can be exploited by a threat agent. The term asset used in this context represents a resource that requires protection. This resource can refer to a person, a group of people, or a physical entity (e.g. critical infrastructure). On the other hand, vulnerability can also be understood as the

ability of an asset to withstand losses caused by threats. These losses have various forms ranging from small-scale disruptions to major disasters. Then, in general, vulnerabilities can be divided into three categories as follows:

1. Physical vulnerability of the built infrastructure, which refers to the vulnerability of the infrastructure to certain threat aspects.
2. Social vulnerability, which refers to the situation of social vulnerability in the face of threats.
3. Economic vulnerability, which refers to the vulnerability of an economy to hazards.

Vulnerability is a function consisting of several factors, namely: (1) target attractiveness; (2) the possibility of carrying out an attack (feasibility); and (3) potential impact (potential) (Prunckun, 2015). These three factors usually include a number of considerations such as target status, the potential for an attack to succeed, the potential for a threat agent to escape an attack, and the potential for causing losses. These three factors can be weighed according to their size in order to mitigate losses and prevent attacks on an asset. As a preventive measure, the generic approach that can be taken to this issue is as follows:

1. Determining what constitutes an asset (critical infrastructure, transportation networks, food chains, distribution networks, or other essential services such as electricity, gas, water, sewerage, etc.);
2. Place these assets into a number of categories;
3. Determine the level of importance for each asset; and
4. Identify the potential impact on assets if they experience a loss.

Law Enforcement Against Criminal Acts of Smuggling in Batam City

It is undeniable that transnational crime has become a threat that endangers the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). One of the transnational crimes that is of concern in the territory of the NKRI is smuggling which includes smuggling of goods to human trafficking (Julianty, Ali, & Mujibussalim, 2014; Roshel & Elvardi, 2022). This threat appears along with the security gaps that are actually caused by citizens in the territorial area. The triggering factor for this crime is citizens who have the urge to fulfill their daily needs. This urge becomes even greater when the needs of citizens cannot be accommodated by the government in the relevant area. Therefore, the triggering factor is related to humans or human resources in the territorial area of Indonesia as humans need goals and capacities that are expressed in the form of organizations, associations, businesses or other forms of corporate bodies that require management.

A number of smuggling cases that have occurred in Batam City have well described the phenomenon between the urge to meet life's needs (motive) and the gap to commit smuggling crimes (opportunity). For example, towards the end of 2024, the Batam City Authority, Riau Islands, noted that smuggling attempts had increased by 6.12 percent compared to 2023 with prominent findings in cases of smuggling of goods in the form of used clothing, electronics, textiles, machinery, and narcotics (Arpandi, 2024). In detail, by the end of 2024, the number of smuggling cases that were successfully prosecuted reached 857

cases with potential state losses reaching IDR 77 billion, while in 2023 the number of smuggling cases that were successfully prosecuted reached 364 cases. Furthermore, the increase in smuggling activity is suspected to be caused by three factors, namely: (1) the status of Batam City as a Free Trade Zone; (2) the geographical conditions of Batam City which directly borders Singapore and Malaysia; and (3) the suspicion that law enforcement officers were involved in smuggling activities (Arpandi, 2024).

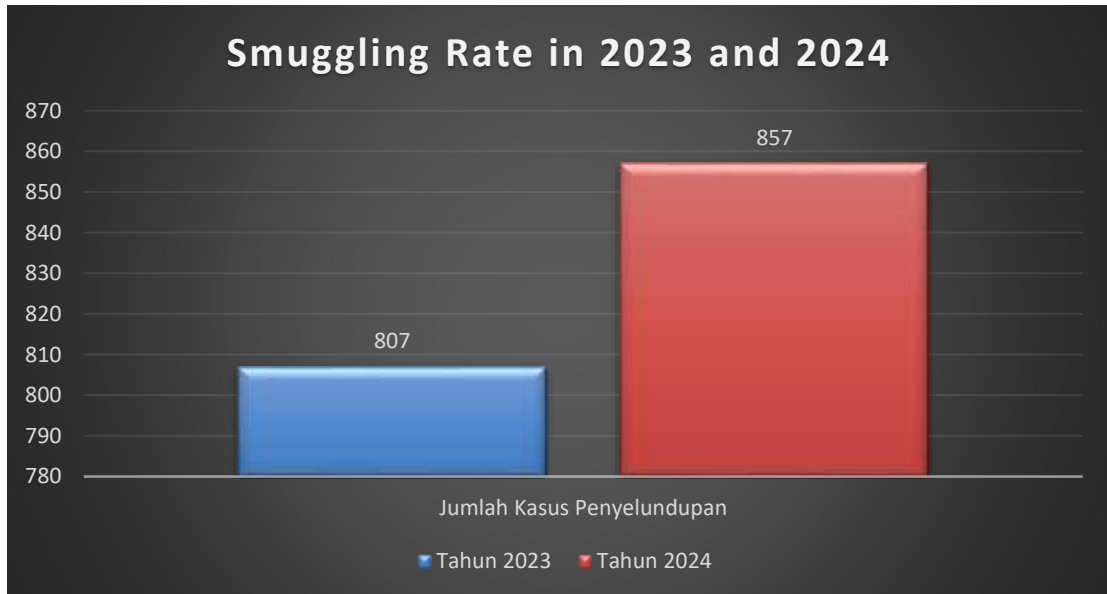


Figure 2. Rate of Smuggling of Goods in 2023 and 2024 in Batam City (CNN Indonesia, 2024; Lubis, 2024)

If observed more closely, the increasing number of smuggling cases in the Batam and Singapore border areas is caused by overlapping between law enforcers themselves. As an illustration, from the explanation above, it can be seen that law enforcement officers are walking in their respective corridors so that this situation further strengthens their ego-sectoralism. In fact, in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, specifically Law Number 32 of 2024 and Law Number 17 of 2007, one state institution has been chosen to carry out the main task of eradicating criminal acts in maritime areas, including smuggling. The institution in question is the Maritime Security Agency or Bakamla. According to Law Number 32 of 2024 and Law Number 17 of 2007, Bakamla has the following duties and responsibilities (Mirza & Almubaroq, 2022):

1. Forming national policies in the field of security and safety in Indonesian waters and the jurisdiction of the Indonesian people.
2. Organizing an early warning system for safety and security in Indonesian waters and Indonesian jurisdiction.
3. Coordinate and monitor water patrol operations by related agencies.
4. Provide technical and operational support to relevant departments.
5. Providing search and rescue assistance in Indonesian waters and Indonesian jurisdiction.
6. Carry out other tasks in the national defense system.

The presence of Bakamla should be an alternative solution that is effective and efficient in law enforcement in the maritime territory of Indonesia. With centralized law enforcement, the process of investigating and handling crimes at sea becomes more effective and efficient (Sudirman, Djuyandi, & Rebecca, 2022). Thus, the number of cases resolved will be able to increase and, at the same time, efforts to secure the regional borders will be more optimal. In addition, through centralized law enforcement, the potential or opportunity for leaks can be closed as all law enforcement is centralized at Bakamla. However, this is actually the main challenge as long as each law enforcement officer has interests and maintains their respective ego-sectors and idealism in the field.

Referring to the problem of smuggling in border areas, which in the context of this research is the Batam area, it is clear that the main problem faced in this smuggling activity is the economic factor (Klein, 2011). This economic factor can be said to be the main threat in enforcing state sovereignty in border areas. This happens because the community, and sadly the security forces or law enforcement officers, have economic motives in the form of fulfilling the needs of life, whether due to economic pressures or their lifestyle. In general, this economic factor also creates vulnerabilities in three domains, namely physical, social, and economic, as the smuggling activities carried out have a broad and massive impact on the three domains. Inevitably, this economic factor also becomes an attraction for the community and security forces or law enforcement officers who become threat agents in smuggling activities (Gabriella, 2019).

In the long term, the threats and vulnerabilities caused by these smuggling activities will also endanger the sovereignty of the country, especially in border areas. This issue will also be a significant issue considering that Indonesia is an archipelagic country with a long landscape and coastline, which poses its own challenges in efforts to maintain the country's sovereignty. Therefore, threats to the country's sovereignty need to be addressed as early as possible by paying attention to the landscape and coastline, considering that these two aspects are the "door" for the smuggling activities that have occurred. This "door" certainly needs to be monitored carefully so that the country's sovereignty is not eroded from the outside in, making Indonesia vulnerable to smuggling and other forms of transnational crime.

Considering the developing dynamics, a number of efforts are deemed necessary to handle and prevent the impacts caused by transnational crime. These efforts certainly require cooperation from all stakeholders in the Batam region related to preventing smuggling in Batam City in the short, medium and long term. In relation to this, the second sub-section in this study will relate to detection carried out by stakeholders related to preventing smuggling in Batam City. The discussion in this detection sub-section is also expected to provide a better understanding and contribute to the decision-making process regarding the prevention of smuggling activities in the future.

Law Enforcement Issues Against Smuggling in Batam City

Economic factors are the main threat as these factors have encouraged citizens and law enforcement officers to get involved in smuggling activities. This

finding is very ironic because smuggling activities are still occurring amidst government efforts to intensify development in border areas in order to stem global influences, especially transnational crime (Niko & Purnama, 2020). Another more ironic fact is that security forces or law enforcement officers are found to be involved in smuggling activities even though these officers should actually enforce the law in order to maintain public order and security as well as conducive domestic security. A number of initiatives also need to be taken to prevent the dangers and impacts of transnational crime, especially those related to smuggling activities, as an effort to maintain state sovereignty in border areas.

Regarding this initiative, one of the steps that can be taken is to carry out some kind of detection activity, or early detection, in the community environment, especially at points where smuggling activities have occurred (Syahrial & Susiatiningsih, 2018; Sudirman, Djuyandi, & Rebecca, 2022). Through this detection, and supported by adequate investigation activities, the potential threats caused by smuggling activities will certainly be handled well. Specifically, in these investigation activities, the intelligence function can also be activated in order to gather all actors or perpetrators involved in smuggling activities. This gathering activity can be carried out by referring to the principle of intelligence as knowledge where intelligence functions as a series of steps and/or procedures that are integrated to form an intelligence cycle (Prunckun, 2015). This cycle begins when a decision maker asks for guidance on a problem or an answer to a question.

Furthermore, in this mobilization process, the elements of desire and hope need to be considered carefully considering that these two elements form significant components for the threat intent or goal to be achieved from the threat posed. This mobilization process will later be used to map threats and vulnerabilities related to smuggling activities in relation to the social, physical (infrastructure), and economic domains. Through adequate mapping, threats and vulnerabilities in these three domains can be handled properly and in turn the negative impacts due to smuggling activities can be prevented effectively and efficiently in the short, medium, and long term. On the same occasion, the losses incurred by the state due to smuggling activities can be reduced and the state's sovereignty in the border area can be maintained properly.

One-Stop Law Enforcement Strategy: Bakamla Placement Related to One-Stop Law Enforcement Function

Early detection has succeeded in mapping the areas of smuggling activities so that prevention of smuggling activities can be carried out effectively and efficiently. However, a number of weaknesses are still found so that smuggling activities still occur regardless of the prevention efforts that have been made (Tavipiyono, 2016). The weaknesses were found in the customs and excise administration system and the authority held by the officers. In order to improve the ability to prevent smuggling in the future, these two aspects need to be considered carefully so that prevention efforts can be improved to be even better. In this regard, cross-sectoral cooperation can be an alternative that can be considered so that harmony and solidarity between stakeholders in the field of smuggling prevention can be achieved.

Early detection efforts that have been carried out by law enforcement officers will be able to be followed up optimally through centralizing law enforcement. This can be made possible as Bakamla has full authority to enforce the law against criminal acts at sea in accordance with the relevant laws as previously mentioned (Sudirman, Djuyandi, & Rebecca, 2022). On the same occasion, this idea is also in line with the view that entrepreneurs actually do not mind expensive or high administrative costs as long as the rules and their use are clear. In other words, these entrepreneurs actually only need certainty regarding law enforcement so that their operational activities continue to run optimally in the midst of the legal process being undertaken (Rusmiyati, Faridah, Alma'arif, & Nooraini, 2022). Another positive impact of this one-stop law enforcement is that the potential for leaks by law enforcement officers can be prevented effectively and efficiently as law enforcement is carried out in a one-stop manner so that the chronology of criminal acts can be known to be handled carefully.

As a follow-up to the early detection, Bakamla is considered necessary to be placed in the institutional structure related to this one-stop law enforcement. The placement can be guided by the principle of governance known as good governance (Sedarmayanti, 2012). The preparation of the framework or institutional structure of this new cooperation can be implemented by referring to the principles of good governance, namely community participation, enforcement of the supremacy of law, transparency, stakeholder concern, orientation towards consensus, equality, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra, 2004; Nurhidayat, 2023). The use of this principle is believed to bring effectiveness and efficiency in one-stop law enforcement as law enforcers hand over enforcement authority to Bakamla so that Bakamla has adequate support to realize good governance. Thus, law enforcement will be more effective and efficient so that the future law enforcement process does not affect national economic activities.

The idea of cross-sectoral cooperation can be said to be urgent to be formed immediately in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement against smuggling activities. On the same occasion, this cross-sectoral cooperation will certainly also help minimize the potential involvement of law enforcement officers as indicated by illegal levies (pungli) so that the law enforcement process becomes a one-stop shop. The idealism of one-stop shop law enforcement will certainly provide certainty of doing business for investors and prospective investors so that economic activity in Batam City can increase and in turn contribute to the national economy. Thus, the rate of smuggling activities in Batam City can be suppressed to a minimum in the short, medium, and long term. To answer this challenge, Bakamla can be appointed as an institution with full authority to implement one-stop shop law enforcement with support from other law enforcement officers. Thus, law enforcement will be more effective and efficient in the future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that economic motives are the main driving factor that triggers smuggling activities in the Batam City

area. This economic motive has driven citizens and, sadly, security forces or law enforcement officers to get involved in smuggling activities. In detail, citizens get involved in smuggling activities to escape from economic pressures or pressures, while security forces or law enforcement officers get involved in smuggling activities to obtain profit or benefits with a certain nominal value. Given the amount of money generated from this smuggling activity is relatively large, the money obtained will certainly be able to support their needs even though this activity has harmed the country and endangered the country's sovereignty.

To prevent potential losses and other dangers from this smuggling activity, a system and authority are needed to close all loopholes so that smuggling activities can be prevented effectively and efficiently. This can be achieved through cross-sectoral cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, especially in the field of combating smuggling crimes, so that the same and harmonious programs and policies can be realized. Through adequate cross-sectoral cooperation, the dangers, impacts and losses of smuggling can be prevented so that losses suffered by the state due to smuggling activities can be avoided. In the medium and long term, effective and efficient smuggling prevention efforts will also help maintain the country's sovereignty from transnational crimes in border areas.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study highlights the urgent need for a multidimensional and integrated research agenda that investigates the structural, economic, and institutional dynamics enabling smuggling activities in Batam City, particularly at the intersection of community vulnerability and systemic corruption. Future research should adopt an interdisciplinary approach that combines economic analysis, criminology, and public policy to explore the mechanisms through which economic desperation and institutional weaknesses converge to normalize illegal cross-border trade. Emphasis should also be placed on evaluating the effectiveness of current anti-smuggling frameworks and developing predictive models to identify high-risk areas and actors. Furthermore, longitudinal studies assessing the socio-economic impact of smuggling on both state revenue and community development will be essential to inform evidence-based interventions. Such advanced research will contribute significantly to designing a comprehensive and adaptive governance model that not only deters smuggling but also addresses its root causes, thereby safeguarding national security and economic stability in the long term.

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