



Strengthening Electoral Criminal Law Enforcement Through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center: A Normative Analysis of the Role of the Batu Bara Regency Election Supervisory Agency

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ABSTRACT

Law enforcement of general election crimes is one of the important instruments in ensuring the implementation of democratic, integrity, and fair general elections. In the Indonesian legal system, the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) has a strategic role in handling election crimes through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Gakkumdu Center) together with the Police and the Prosecutor's Office. However, the regulation regarding the implementation of this authority still faces various normative problems that have the potential to affect the effectiveness of law enforcement. This study aims to analyze the role of the Bawaslu of Batu Bara Regency in law enforcement of general election crimes through the Gakkumdu Center and examine normative constraints and efforts to strengthen its regulation. This research uses normative legal research methods with a regulatory approach, a conceptual approach, and a case approach. Legal materials are obtained through literature studies of laws and regulations, court decisions, books, and relevant scientific articles, then analyzed qualitatively by prescriptive analysis methods. The results of the study show that Bawaslu has a strategic position as an institution that receives reports, conducts preliminary studies, and coordinates the handling of alleged election crimes through the Gakkumdu Center. However, the effectiveness of law enforcement is still influenced by the lack of optimal arrangements regarding the coordination mechanism between institutions, the potential for differences in interpretation of elements of election crimes, and the limitations of procedural arrangements in handling cases.

INTRODUCTION

General elections are one of the main instruments in realizing people's sovereignty as guaranteed in Article 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Through general elections, the people are given the constitutional right to determine their leaders and representatives directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly. Therefore, the holding of general elections is not only required to produce a democratic government, but also must ensure integrity, justice, and legal certainty in every stage of its implementation. Violations of these principles have the potential to reduce the legitimacy of election results and reduce public trust in the democratic system (Norris, 2013).

The implementation of general elections in Indonesia is still faced with various forms of violations, especially election crimes. These violations include *money politics*, abuse of authority by state apparatus, manipulation of voter lists, campaigns outside the provisions, intimidation of voters, to falsification of documents and other violations that are qualified as criminal acts based on Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. The existence of general election crimes not only hurts the principles of democracy, but also threatens the realization of elections with electoral *integrity* and justice (Aris Septiono, Pujiyono, Bambang Joyo Supeno, Afif Noor, Eman Sulaeman, Maria Anna Muryani, 2023).

The complexity of handling general election crimes is different from general crimes because it involves special characteristics in the form of very short processing deadlines, complex evidence, and coordination across law enforcement agencies. To answer this need, Law Number 7 of 2017 establishes the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Sentra Gakkumdu) as a coordination forum between the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Indonesia in handling general election crimes in an integrated manner. The presence of the Gakkumdu Center is expected to be able to eliminate sectoral egos between law enforcement while creating a common perception in the process of investigation, investigation, prosecution, and the implementation of court decisions against general election crimes (Muhammad Fadel Kadir, Nur Fadhilah Mappaselleng, 2026).

The implementation of the Gakkumdu Center in practice still faces various challenges. Various studies have shown that differences in interpretations of criminal elements, limited evidence, differences in perspectives between members of the Gakkumdu Center, and the short deadline for handling cases often cause many reports of alleged election crimes to not be continued until the prosecution stage. This condition shows that the effectiveness of election law enforcement is not only determined by the existence of regulations, but also influenced by the quality of institutional coordination, the professionalism of law enforcement officials, and the institutional capacity of Bawaslu as the entrance to handling election criminal violations.

The General Election Supervisory Agency of Batu Bara Regency has a very strategic position. As an institution that receives reports and conducts preliminary studies on alleged election crimes, the Batu Bara Regency Bawaslu

plays a key role in the law enforcement process through the Gakkumdu Center. This role is not limited to the supervisory function, but also includes collecting preliminary information, analyzing alleged violations, coordinating with elements of the Police and the Prosecutor's Office, and ensuring that each report is processed in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations. Thus, the effectiveness of law enforcement for general election crimes in Batu Bara Regency is highly dependent on the institutional capacity of Bawaslu in optimizing the function of the Gakkumdu Center (Diding Rahmat, Sujono Sujono, Sudarto, 2025).

The dynamics in the implementation of general elections in Batu Bara Regency show that the optimization of the role of Bawaslu through the Gakkumdu Center still faces a number of obstacles, both normative and implementive. From the normative aspect, the regulation of the coordination mechanism between members of the Gakkumdu Center still leaves room for different interpretations in determining the fulfillment of the elements of election crimes. Meanwhile, from the implementation aspect, limited human resources, proof that depends on the availability of evidence in a short time, and coordination between agencies that are not yet fully effective are factors that affect the success of election law enforcement. As a result, not all reports of alleged election crimes can be followed up until a court decision with permanent legal force is obtained.

Research on law enforcement of general election crimes in general focuses more on the effectiveness of the Gakkumdu Center nationally, law enforcement of money politics, or analysis of Bawaslu's authority in election supervision. Until now, there is still relatively limited research that specifically examines the role of the Bawaslu of Batu Bara Regency in law enforcement of general election crimes through the Gakkumdu Center by analyzing the relationship between institutional functions, inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, and the effectiveness of law enforcement at the regional level. The vacancy of the study is important considering that the social, political, and institutional characteristics of each region can affect the successful implementation of the general election law enforcement system.

This study aims to analyze the role of the General Election Supervisory Agency of Batu Bara Regency in law enforcement of general election crimes through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Sentra Gakkumdu), as well as identify factors that affect the effectiveness of its implementation. This research is expected to contribute to strengthening the general election law enforcement system, especially in increasing institutional synergy between Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office, so as to be able to realize general elections with integrity, democracy, and justice.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Law Enforcement Theory

Law enforcement theory is one of the fundamental theories in law that explains how legal norms are implemented to realize order, justice, and legal certainty in social life. Law enforcement is not only understood as the formal application of legal provisions, but also as a process involving various

institutions, mechanisms, and factors that affect the effectiveness of the law. Thus, the success of law enforcement is not only determined by the quality of the substance of the law, but also influenced by the institutional structure, law enforcement officials, the legal culture of the community, and the facilities and infrastructure that support the implementation of the law (Friedman, 1975).

One of the figures who made an important contribution to law enforcement theory was Joseph Goldstein, who argued that criminal law enforcement could not be implemented absolutely due to various normative and practical limitations. According to Goldstein, law enforcement consists of three dimensions, namely total enforcement, full enforcement, and actual enforcement. Total enforcement is ideally law enforcement of all applicable criminal provisions without exception. However, this condition is difficult to realize due to the restrictions set by law and limited resources owned by law enforcement officials.

Collaborative Governance Theories

The theory of Collaborative Governance developed in response to the increasingly complex administration of government that can no longer be effectively solved by a single institution. This theory emphasizes that solving public problems requires integrated cooperation between various government agencies and other stakeholders through a process of coordination, communication, and joint decision-making. A collaborative approach is seen as able to produce more effective policies because it combines the authority, resources, and capacities of various actors involved (Chris Ansell, 2008).

According to Ansell and Gash, collaborative governance is a governance arrangement in which one or more public institutions directly involve various stakeholders in a decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and aims to formulate or implement public policy. In this model, the success of collaboration depends not only on the division of authority, but also on the quality of inter-agency relationships built through effective communication and mutual trust.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a normative legal research *method* that focuses on the study of legal norms that govern the enforcement of general election crimes through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Sentra Gakkumdu). Normative legal research views law as a system of norms that is composed of laws and regulations, court decisions, doctrines, and legal principles that are the basis for the implementation of law enforcement. Therefore, this study is directed to analyze the legal arrangements regarding the authority of the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) in handling general election crimes, as well as to evaluate the suitability between the applicable normative construction and the principles of effective and integrated law enforcement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of the BatuBara Regency General Election Supervisory Agency in Law Enforcement of General Election Crimes Through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center

The General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) is one of the general election organizing institutions that has a strategic position in ensuring the implementation of democratic, honest, fair, and integrity elections. Based on Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, Bawaslu not only carries out the function of supervision over all stages of the election, but is also given the authority to prevent, prosecute violations, and handle alleged election crimes. This authority shows that Bawaslu has undergone an institutional transformation from just a supervisory institution to an institution that plays an active role in the election law enforcement system (Waid, 2021).

The strengthening of Bawaslu's authority is a consequence of the development of the concept of electoral justice, which is a system that provides guarantees that any violation of the electoral process can be resolved through a fair, transparent, and accountable legal mechanism. In this perspective, election supervision is not only interpreted as an administrative activity, but also as part of the protection of citizens' constitutional rights to obtain elections with integrity. Therefore, the authority of Bawaslu in handling alleged election crimes is a legal instrument to maintain the legitimacy of election results while strengthening the principles of a democratic state of law (Yuanita, 2023).

The implementation of this authority is realized through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Sentra Gakkumdu) which was formed based on Law Number 7 of 2017. The Gakkumdu Center is a coordination forum involving Bawaslu, the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia, and the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Indonesia in handling election crimes in an integrated manner. The establishment of the Gakkumdu Center shows that election law enforcement is no longer carried out sectorally, but through a collaborative mechanism that integrates the functions of supervision, investigation, and prosecution in one institutional system.

Bawaslu has a central role in the Gakkumdu Center because it is the first institution to receive reports or find alleged election crimes. Furthermore, Bawaslu conducts a preliminary study on the fulfillment of the formal and material elements of a violation before discussing it together with elements of the Police and the Prosecutor's Office. Thus, Bawaslu functions as a gatekeeper in the process of enforcing election crimes, because the quality of the initial study greatly determines the sustainability of a case towards the investigation and prosecution stage.

Judging from the Law Enforcement Theory put forward by Joseph Goldstein, the authority of Bawaslu in the Gakkumdu Center reflects the implementation of *full enforcement*, namely law enforcement that is carried out by considering normative and procedural limits set by laws and regulations. Not all alleged election crimes can be processed to the judicial stage because they must meet the elements of the criminal act, the adequacy of evidence, and the applicable procedural provisions. Therefore, the effectiveness of law enforcement is not solely determined by the number of cases processed, but also by the quality of the

application of legal norms that guarantee legal certainty, justice, and utility (Rosidin, 2023).

From the perspective of Collaborative Governance, the Gakkumdu Center is a form of collaborative governance that places Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office as actors who have a shared responsibility in realizing effective election law enforcement. The success of this mechanism is greatly influenced by the common understanding of the elements of criminal acts, effective communication, information exchange, and continuous coordination between institutions. Thus, the existence of the Gakkumdu Center not only strengthens institutional coordination, but also becomes an instrument to improve the quality of law enforcement for general election crimes in an integrated manner.

Based on this analysis, it can be understood that normatively Bawaslu has a very strategic position in the election law enforcement system in Indonesia. This role is not only limited to the supervisory function, but also includes coordinating, preventive, and repressive functions in handling election crimes through the Gakkumdu Center. This position emphasizes that the effectiveness of election law enforcement is highly dependent on optimizing the authority of Bawaslu in carrying out the functions that have been given by laws and regulations.

Obstacles and Efforts of the BatuBara Regency General Election Supervisory Agency in Law Enforcement of General Election Crimes Through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center

Law enforcement of general election crimes is an important part of maintaining the integrity and legitimacy of the implementation of elections. Although Law Number 7 of 2017 has given authority to the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) to handle alleged election crimes through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Sentra Gakkumdu), the implementation of this authority still faces various normative and institutional obstacles. These obstacles not only affect the effectiveness of case resolution, but also have the potential to reduce legal certainty and public trust in the election law enforcement system (Faizal, 2023).

One of the main obstacles lies in the construction of the Gakkumdu Center arrangement which emphasizes the coordination function rather than the operational division of authority. Law Number 7 of 2017 does stipulate that the handling of election crimes is carried out in an integrated manner by Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office, but it has not regulated in detail the settlement mechanism if there is a difference in interpretation regarding the fulfillment of the elements of criminal acts. As a result, the decision-making process is highly dependent on inter-institutional agreements, which has the potential to cause inconsistency in the application of the law.

The next obstacle is related to the short deadline for handling election crime cases. The arrangement aims to provide legal certainty before the election stage ends, but at the same time limits the space for law enforcement officials to carry out evidence optimally. In cases that have complex evidentiary characteristics, time constraints can affect the quality of investigations, investigations, and

prosecutions. This condition shows that procedural law certainty is sometimes not fully in line with the need to realize substantive justice (Alfiantoro, 2021).

In addition, there are obstacles in the form of potential differences in legal interpretation between Bawaslu, Police investigators, and the public prosecutor in interpreting the elements of general election crimes. Each institution has a different legal perspective according to its functions and authorities. These differences can affect the process of discussing cases in the Gakkumdu Center, especially in determining whether an act has met the elements of a criminal act as stipulated in Law Number 7 of 2017. This condition shows that the success of law enforcement does not only depend on the clarity of norms, but also on the common understanding between law enforcers.

Based on the Law Enforcement Theory put forward by Joseph Goldstein, these various obstacles show the difference between total enforcement as an ideal condition and actual enforcement as the reality of law enforcement. Although normatively all alleged criminal acts that meet the legal elements should be processed in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations, their implementation is influenced by procedural, institutional, and legal interpretation limitations. Thus, the effectiveness of law enforcement is determined not only by the existence of the rule of law, but also by the ability of the legal system to accommodate the various obstacles that arise in practice.

From the perspective of Collaborative Governance, these constraints show that the effectiveness of the Gakkumdu Center is greatly influenced by the quality of collaboration between institutions. Effective collaboration is not enough to be realized through the establishment of a coordination forum, but requires a common perception, trust between institutions, continuous communication, and a commitment to achieve common goals. Without these elements, coordination in the Gakkumdu Center has the potential to turn into just an administrative forum that has not been able to produce effective and consistent decisions.

To overcome these various obstacles, it is necessary to strengthen legal arrangements regarding the Gakkumdu Center. This strengthening can be done through improving regulations that regulate coordination mechanisms, clearer division of authority, and settlement procedures in the event of differences of opinion between members of the Gakkumdu Center. In addition, harmonization between Law Number 7 of 2017 with Bawaslu Regulations and other technical regulations is also needed so as not to cause differences in interpretation in the implementation of law enforcement.

Another effort that needs to be made is to strengthen the institutional capacity of Bawaslu as an institution that has an initial function in handling alleged election crimes. The strengthening is not only related to improving the competence of human resources, but also the development of more integrated case handling guidelines, improving the information system for handling violations, and the preparation of standard operating procedures that are able to ensure uniformity in the application of the law in all regions. Thus, Bawaslu not only carries out the supervisory function, but is also able to be the main driver in realizing an effective, accountable, and oriented election law enforcement system that is oriented towards protecting the integrity of general elections.

Obstacles in law enforcement of general election crimes do not only stem from the implementation aspect, but also from the construction of legal norms that govern the working mechanism of the Gakkumdu Center. Therefore, strengthening regulations, harmonizing authority, and improving the quality of coordination between institutions are important prerequisites to increase the effectiveness of Bawaslu's role in law enforcement of general election crimes. The reformulation of the regulation is expected to be able to realize an election law enforcement system that provides more legal certainty, ensures justice, and strengthens the integrity of democracy in Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) of Batu Bara Regency has a strategic role in law enforcement of general election crimes through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Gakkumdu Center). Normatively, the authority is based on Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections which places Bawaslu not only as a supervisory institution, but also as an institution authorized to receive reports, conduct preliminary studies on alleged election crimes, and coordinate its handling with the Police and the Prosecutor's Office in the Gakkumdu Center. This position shows that Bawaslu plays a role as a liaison between the supervisory function and the law enforcement function to realize elections with integrity, democracy, and justice. The effectiveness of Bawaslu's role in law enforcement of general election crimes still faces various normative obstacles, including the lack of optimal arrangements regarding the coordination mechanism in the Gakkumdu Center, potential differences in interpretation of elements of election crimes, and limitations in procedural arrangements that affect the effectiveness of case handling. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen regulations through the harmonization of laws and regulations, improve coordination and decision-making mechanisms in the Gakkumdu Center, and strengthen the coordinating function of Bawaslu as an institution that has a central role in law enforcement of general election crimes. This step is expected to increase legal certainty, strengthen synergy between law enforcement agencies, and support the realization of a more effective, accountable, and oriented election law enforcement system that is oriented towards protecting democratic integrity.

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