

## The Challenges of Intergovernmental Organizations in Combating Transnational Crime: An Indonesian Perspective

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### ABSTRAK:

Perdagangan manusia merupakan isu global yang mendesak, terutama di kawasan Asia Tenggara, di mana Indonesia berperan sebagai negara asal, transit, dan tujuan. Tujuan penelitian ini mengidentifikasi kerja sama Kepolisian Indonesia dan ASEANAPOL dengan menggunakan metode penelitian secara deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini juga menyoroti peran ASEANAPOL melalui 4 strategi penanganan Kepolisian Indonesia dalam kolaborasi dengan ASEANAPOL yang meliputi peningkatan kapasitas melalui pelatihan (ATCM), pertemuan internasional (AMMTC dan SOMTC), pertukaran informasi secara real-time berbasis elektronik (System e-ADS), dan penguatan mekanisme investigasi lintas batas melalui Joint Coordination System (JCS) dengan penjagaan di batas wilayah dan pengiriman personel seperti Atase POLRI (ATPOL) dan Staf Teknis POLRI (STAFNISPOL). Meskipun penelitian ini berfokus pada penanganan preventif perdagangan manusia, terdapat batasan yang perlu diperhatikan, termasuk aspek pencegahan dan penindakan yang melibatkan identifikasi serta perlindungan korban. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan untuk mengeksplorasi keseluruhan aspek, termasuk langkah-langkah pencegahan dan penindakan, guna mengembangkan kerangka kerja organisasi ASEANAPOL dalam menangani kejahatan transnasional.

### ABSTRACT:

Human trafficking is a pressing global issue, especially in the Southeast Asian region, where Indonesia plays a role as a country of origin, transit and destination. This study aims to identify the cooperation between the Indonesian Police and ASEANAPOL using descriptive qualitative research methods. This research also highlights the role of ASEANAPOL through 4 strategies of handling Indonesian Police in collaboration with ASEANAPOL which include capacity building through training (ATCM), international meetings (AMMTC and SOMTC), electronic-based real-time information exchange (System e-ADS), and strengthening cross-border investigation mechanisms through the Joint Coordination System (JCS) with border guarding and dispatching personnel such as Attache POLRI (ATPOL) and POLRI Technical Staff (STAFNISPOL). While this research focuses on preventive responses to human trafficking, there are limitations that need to be considered, including aspects of prevention and prosecution involving victim identification and protection. Future research is recommended to explore all aspects, including prevention and prosecution measures, to develop ASEANAPOL's organisational framework in addressing transnational crimes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is a global concern, including in Southeast Asia. Countries in Southeast Asia are often at the centre of attention in the context of human trafficking, whether as countries of origin, transit or destination (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2010). Factors such as poverty, social inequality, and weak law enforcement in some areas make countries in the Southeast Asian region fertile ground for this practice (Haynes, 2023). Data from the U.S. Department of State shows that human trafficking in Southeast Asia has reached 10,000 cases in the last three years (U.S. Department of State, 2023). This shows that there is an annual increase in human trafficking cases in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, the human trafficking case report in Indonesia in 2023 also recorded 998 identified cases (U.S. Department of State, 2023). To prove that human trafficking in the Southeast Asian region is high, we can refer to the distribution map of human trafficking based on the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report by the U.S. Department of State, among others (Figure 1).

Based on the figure 1 show that ASEAN countries based on the level of human trafficking standards consist of several qualifications/tiers. Tier 1 is marked in green, meaning that the government fully

meets the minimum standards for addressing human trafficking. Tier 2 is marked in yellow, which means that the government does not fully meet the minimum standards, but is working hard to achieve them. While at tier 2 watch list marked in orange means the country is at tier 2, but the number of victims has increased significantly or the commitment in handling human trafficking is questionable. Finally at tier 3, marked in red, the country does not meet the minimum standards and is not making significant efforts to meet them.

Indonesia, which is at distribution level 2, is proof that the country has not fully met the minimum standards, but is working hard to achieve the minimum standards for handling human trafficking. As Indonesia's own efforts are contained in Law No. 21 of 2007 concerning the Eradication of Trafficking in Persons (Syugiarto, 2022). This confirms that the Indonesian government is trying to minimise the occurrence of human trafficking cases within the country and abroad involving Indonesian citizens (*WNI*) (Paksi & Hutami, 2023). On the other hand, these human trafficking cases often involve organised international criminal networks (Khotami et al., 2021), thus requiring integrated handling and involving cooperation between countries. In this context, the strategy of the Indonesian



Source: Adaptation of 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report, 2023

**Figure 1. Map of the Distribution of Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia**

Police joining international organisations is very important, especially having become part of the Southeast Asian Police Organisation/ASEAN Nations Police (ASEANAPOL) which plays a key role in cooperation in handling human trafficking in the Southeast Asian region (Pinatih et al., 2023).

As an intergovernmental organisation, ASEANAPOL aims to facilitate international police cooperation in addressing cross-border crimes in the Southeast Asian region, including human trafficking (Dellmuth et al., 2018). ASEANAPOL's role is not only limited to strengthening international cooperation, but also in coordinating law enforcement efforts between member states, especially in the Southeast Asian region, which is known as one of the most active human trafficking routes in the world (Arifin et al., 2023). Various previous studies have discussed human trafficking in the Southeast Asian region from various perspectives. Research (Pinatih et al., 2023) revealed that human trafficking in Southeast Asian countries involves victims from vulnerable groups, including women and children, who are employed as domestic workers, commercial sex workers, or even in forced labour in various industries. Southeast Asian countries, which are mostly developing countries with high levels of poverty, often face serious challenges in combating human trafficking. Social factors such as economic inequality, weak access to education, and lack of employment opportunities are the main reasons why many vulnerable individuals are trapped in human trafficking networks (Anggraeni et al., 2023).

Previous studies McEwen et al. (2020) & Benveniste & Mizrahi (2023) have also highlighted the important role of intergovernmental organisations in tackling this cross-border crime. Several studies mentioned that the lack of coordination between countries is often an obstacle in

law enforcement efforts against human trafficking. In addition, there are still gaps in information exchange and resource sharing between countries, which slows down the investigation and prosecution process (Tang et al., 2018). This research is important because it fills a gap regarding the challenges ASEANAPOL intergovernmental organisations face in addressing transnational crime, particularly from Indonesia's perspective. This is also supported by Indonesia's location as a strategic country that is often a transit route or source of cross-border crime.

This research differs from previous studies as it provides a deeper focus on how ASEANAPOL intergovernmental organisation cooperation actually operates on the ground, particularly with the Indonesian Police. We highlight that operational dynamics and challenges such as legal differences between countries, bureaucratic constraints, and technological limitations will also be an important part of the analysis. This has rarely been addressed in previous research which tends to look at the issue from a global perspective and not delve into the operational details at the local level. In addition, the locus of discussion in this study also focuses on exploring the strategies used by the Indonesian Police to address human trafficking, such as increasing the capacity of law enforcement through training, real-time information exchange, and strengthening cross-border investigation mechanisms. By understanding more about the obstacles and successes faced by the Indonesian Police, this research is expected to provide a clearer picture of how intergovernmental organisations can play an effective role in tackling transnational crimes.

Of course, this research will also look at how collaborative efforts between the Indonesian Police and other police forces in the Southeast Asian region can strengthen preventive measures against

human trafficking. This is particularly important given that most victims of human trafficking are unaware of the risks they face until they are trapped in exploitative situations. The results of this research will provide a better conceptual understanding of intergovernmental organisations. By focusing on the Indonesian Police who are members of ASEANAPOL, this research can also provide specific insights into handling human trafficking in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. Another contribution of this research could be the development of an international organisational framework in the context of tackling transnational/cross-border crimes. This can help in the adaptation of more efficient strategies that are tailored to the conditions of a country within its own group of international organisations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Intergovernmental Organization in Handling Transnational Crime**

According to Edward H. Buehrig, intergovernmental organisation is a process of government organisation cooperation that aims to facilitate and regulate relations both between national government organisations and with other countries' government organisations (international) (Broome, 2022). This *Intergovernmental Organization* can take the form of cooperation between countries (bilateral), between regions (regional) or globally (universal). In essence, Intergovernmental Organizations or IGOs gain authority from agreements that have been made between countries, this is usually formed as a goal in overcoming common problems (Khotami et al., 2021).

Referring to Archer's (2001) view of international organisations which explains the 3 (three) functions of international organisations. First, a country uses intergovernmental organisations as an instrument to conduct diplomacy with the

relevant interests with other countries. Secondly, intergovernmental organisations are used as an arena for communication by promoting interests in ratifying and formulating the formation of international agreements. Finally, intergovernmental organisations as independent actors, meaning that they are actors that cannot be influenced by outside forces (Haug et al., 2024).

Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) also play a vital role in helping countries tackle and eradicate cross-border crime. As institutions formed based on cooperation between states, IGOs are able to unite global efforts to address the challenges of increasingly complex and organised crime (Erturk, 2015). One of IGO's main roles in tackling transnational crime is to create an international legal framework that binds its member states. In addition, IGOs also play a role in facilitating law enforcement cooperation between countries. Such collaboration is necessary, as transnational crimes often involve criminal networks operating in different regions.

Another important role is to increase state capacity in dealing with transnational crime. Many countries, especially developing countries, have limited resources or technology in dealing with modern crimes such as cybercrime or money laundering committed through global financial networks. Through IGOs, these countries can receive support in the form of training, technology and technical assistance to strengthen their ability to detect, investigate and prosecute criminals (Warnecke, 2020). Overall, the role of IGOs in tackling transnational crime is crucial. They not only act as international policymakers and facilitators of law enforcement cooperation, but also as technical advocates and leaders in creating global standards. In an



increasingly connected world, cross-border collaboration facilitated by IGOs is one of the most effective ways to combat complex and evolving transnational crime.

### **Human Trafficking**

Muhammad Kamal's view in his book entitled "Human Trafficking: Combating the Crime of Human Trafficking in Indonesia" defines that human trafficking is a very cruel and terrible type of human trafficking where the victim's human rights are taken and utilised by the perpetrator (Luh et al., 2022). Meanwhile, according to Haynes (2023) human trafficking is defined as the forced movement of humans (especially women and children) within a country or abroad, for all forms of exploitative labour. Based on the above definition, in general, human trafficking refers to criminal acts committed in groups with the aim of exploiting other humans in taking a profit. The exploitation in question is the exploitation of sexuality, slavery, labour trafficking and even organ trafficking (Rosenberg, 2003). Therefore, human trafficking is one of the organised crimes to take advantage by exploiting humans (McDonald et al., 2024). Thus, human trafficking is a problem that is a challenge for every country.

The importance of addressing human trafficking cannot be underestimated, as it involves victims who are often caught up in complex and dangerous networks (Stöckl et al., 2021) and a public health and global development issue. Violence is often a hallmark of human trafficking. This study aims to describe documented cases of violence amongst persons identified as victims of trafficking, examine associated factors throughout the trafficking cycle and explore prevalence of abuse in different labour sectors. Methods and findings: The IOM Victim of Trafficking Database (VoTD). This certainly has a negative impact on the state, because this is a form

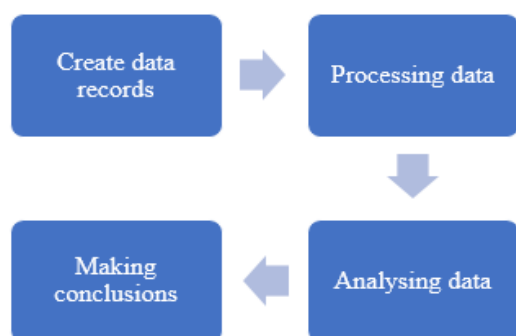
of state responsibility for the rights of its citizens (Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017). In addition, handling human trafficking also includes legal aspects that must be enforced. States need to have clear and strict laws regarding human trafficking, as well as effective law enforcement mechanisms to arrest and punish perpetrators. International cooperation is also crucial, as human trafficking often involves cross-border networks. Through cooperation, information and strategies can be exchanged to combat this crime more effectively (Dellmuth et al., 2018).

### **METHODS**

This research uses a type of qualitative research with a descriptive approach (Creswell, 2013). Data sources come from primary data and secondary data. Primary data will be sought through key informants, the police department that mediates with the Southeast Asian Police, namely the International Relations Division of POLRI. Meanwhile, secondary data used in this research is obtained from literature studies of books and journals on intergovernmental organisations, transnational crime, and ASEANAPOL collaboration in handling human trafficking. Other international institutional documents such as reports published by the U.S Department of State and other reports related to Human Trafficking both globally and regionally (Southeast Asia).

Data collection techniques in this study used three stages, (1) Observation, researchers looked at how the challenges and dynamics of ASEANAPOL international organisations in handling human trafficking from an Indonesian perspective, (2) Interviews, researchers conducted interviews with key actors as subjects to explore strategies carried out by the Indonesian Police in handling human trafficking in Southeast Asia together with ASEANAPOL, (3) Documentation,

researchers will explore documentary data that can support the objectives of this study related to policies both related institutional reports and documents and other supporting data in the process of handling human trafficking. Data analysis techniques in this study, researchers used analytical techniques according to Creswell which were used to analyse data with stages including, (a) Reading the entire data that has been obtained then making notes on the data that has been obtained previously. (b) Processing information as credible data in developing problem formulations in research. (c) Analysing data based on Intergovernmental Organization glasses. (d) Making conclusions on the results of the discussion that has been analysed or can be visualised in the following steps (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Research Data Processing**

As for the locus of this research, it is in Indonesia through the scale of Southeast Asian regional cooperation, with the consideration that Indonesia was chosen as one of the countries with high cases of human trafficking. Of course, this can be a lens for the government regarding efforts to deal with human trafficking that is still rampant. In addition, by seeing the incorporation of the Indonesian Police in the ASEANAPOL international organisation, Indonesia certainly gets a good step in handling and minimising the occurrence of human trafficking involving Indonesian citizens (*WNI*) as well as the place of origin and destination of human trafficking. Therefore, this research

determines Indonesia as the locus in examining the dynamics and challenges of the ASEANAPOL intergovernmental organisation towards handling human trafficking.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

### Human Trafficking in Indonesia

Considering that Indonesia is one of the transit and destination countries for people who want to cross borders or move inside or outside the country, this does not rule out the possibility of human trafficking in Indonesia. This can be proven by considering that human trafficking in Indonesia is increasing every year. As in the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs report on cases of human trafficking in Indonesia (Table 1).

Table 1. Human Trafficking Cases in Indonesia in 2016 - 2024

YEAR	NUMBER OF CASES
2016	478
2017	340
2018	164
2019	259
2020	383
2021	361
2022	752
2023	998

Source: Processed by the Researcher based on the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Report, 2024

The data above is an annual report of human trafficking cases of Indonesian citizens (*WNI*) as victims. This shows how concerned human trafficking cases are increasingly prevalent in Indonesia. In addition to the rise of human trafficking cases that make Indonesian citizens as victims, the following data on human trafficking cases committed by Indonesian citizens as perpetrators (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of Human Traffickers in Indonesia as Perpetrators

Year	2020	2021	2022
Number of Indonesian Suspects	163	165	159

Source: Processed by Researcher based on Data Report Bareskrim and the Regional Police, 2023

This data shows that human trafficking cases against Indonesian citizens do not only occur as victims, but can become perpetrators in human trafficking cases. The practice of human trafficking in Indonesia is usually identical to the acts of violence given to workers by being used as a destination for trafficking women and children, for example as migrant workers, sex workers, and even human exploitation. This phenomenon makes human trafficking a serious issue to be addressed. In addition, the government's policy on human trafficking in Indonesia has been regulated in Law No. 21 of 2007, which is one of the government's efforts to anticipate human trafficking (Susilo, 2024). This has become a public demand based on the fact that Indonesia is one of the countries where human trafficking takes place.

High levels of unemployment and poverty, limited number of jobs and difficulties in obtaining education, make human trafficking easy to occur with the mode of working as Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) (Utami, 2017). Law No. 21 of 2007 also outlines that there are several aspects that are certainly a significant form in handling human trafficking, including aspects of prevention, punishment and social reintegration processes (Nugroho & Okky, 2018). The field phenomenon that reinforces the prevalence of human trafficking in Indonesia is because Indonesia is used as an area of origin, transit area, and destination for human trafficking cases.

Of the 3 (three) reasons for the prevalence of human trafficking in Indonesia, what is meant by Indonesia as an area of origin is that there are many economic problems, low quality of

education, and so on which make it easier for traffickers to get victims from Indonesia. Meanwhile, what is meant by Indonesia as a transit area is considered weak supervision, especially in border areas so that the outflow and entry of humans occurs quite high. Finally, Indonesia as a destination means that Indonesia has become a destination country for sexual exploitation, due to the weak legal process in Indonesia against human traffickers.

Given the prevalence of human trafficking cases that occur, intensive action is needed from the government to deal with one of them by cooperating with international organisations, given that human trafficking is a transnational crime / cross-border crime. In Indonesia, such cooperation is carried out by the Indonesian Police as a state crime handling agency with the international organisation ASEANAPOL. As an intergovernmental organisation, ASEANAPOL (ASEAN Nations Police) is a police organisation of ASEAN countries that plays a role in handling transnational crimes in Southeast Asia. Therefore, the intergovernmental organisation is one of the alternative efforts made by the Indonesian government in handling transnational crimes, especially human trafficking (Dewi & Burhanuddin, 2024).

#### **ASEANAPOL Intergovernmental Organization Dynamics and Challenges in Addressing Human Trafficking in Indonesia**

As a coordination platform, ASEANAPOL allows for the exchange of information, experiences, and law enforcement strategies among its members. Indonesia,

as one of the largest countries in ASEAN, greatly benefits from the existence of this organisation as human trafficking often involves crossing national borders, both physically and digitally. Through ASEANAPOL, Indonesia has access to direct collaboration with its neighbouring countries in addressing increasingly organised human trafficking cases. Indonesia faces great challenges when it comes to human trafficking. The modus operandi of human trafficking is also increasingly diverse, making many victims of human trafficking especially vulnerable communities, including women, children, and migrant workers.

ASEANAPOL's role in helping Indonesia address this issue is crucial. The organisation facilitates joint investigations, cross-border operations, and intelligence gathering useful for uncovering human trafficking networks (Y. Kim et al., 2023). However, the dynamics on the ground in Indonesia often pose new challenges for law enforcement. Therefore, here are some of the dynamics and challenges ASEANAPOL faces in addressing human trafficking:

### **Differences in Laws and Policies**

Each ASEAN country has different legal and policy frameworks to address human trafficking, reflecting the different priorities, legal norms, and social structures unique to each country. In Indonesia, for example, the government has issued Law No. 21/2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons (TPPO) as a form of serious commitment in combating the crime of human trafficking (Susilo, 2024). One of the main challenges is the difference in legal interpretation between Indonesia and other countries in the ASEAN region. For example, the definition and parameters of what constitutes human trafficking can vary between countries. Some countries may have looser standards in categorising

acts that are considered exploitation, while in Indonesia, the definition is broader and multi-faceted.

In the context of ASEANAPOL, this makes coordination difficult, especially when dealing with human trafficking cases involving multiple countries. For example, human trafficking cases involving recruitment of victims in Indonesia, but exploitation in a neighbouring country can be hampered due to differences in legal regulations and enforcement approaches between the two countries. This makes it difficult to conduct effective joint investigations, which can also lead to imbalances in law enforcement and victim protection, ultimately slowing down case disclosure and prosecution of perpetrators.

### **Inter-Agency and Cross-Border Coordination**

Although ASEANAPOL has become an important platform for inter-police cooperation, the challenges in terms of inter-agency co-ordination in Indonesia are still significant. Handling human trafficking is not only the responsibility of the police, but also involves various other agencies such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as other government and non-governmental organisations that also have important roles in handling various aspects related to human trafficking, from prevention, prosecution, to victim recovery (Kaburuan & Damayanti, 2022). As a result, there is often an overlap in duties and authorities, which results in a lack of unity of action in preventing and handling human trafficking cases.

In addition, different national interests among Southeast Asian countries often hamper the effectiveness of cooperation. Some countries may have other priorities in law enforcement cooperation or be protective of their national sovereignty, and therefore reluctant to accept interference



or involvement of other countries in law enforcement matters in their territory. This attitude often limits the scope of cooperation and reduces the effectiveness of cross-border operations, even though human trafficking is clearly a transnational crime.

### **Technological Advances and Cybercrime**

One of the main challenges in tackling human trafficking in the modern era is the increasingly sophisticated use of technology by criminals. Human trafficking networks now intensively rely on the internet, digital platforms, and social media to recruit, control, and exploit victims. Offenders utilise the easy access to information, anonymity, and speed of communication offered by digital technology to spread their operations widely, both locally and internationally (Nainggolan, 2024). In Indonesia, this trend is seen in various cases of online sexual exploitation, involving children and women.

ASEANAPOL, as a transnational organisation focused on police cooperation in the Southeast Asian region, is faced with a major challenge in dealing with this new dimension of technology-based human trafficking. Cybercrime, which is growing rapidly, requires a different and more complex law enforcement approach. While ASEANAPOL has made progress in terms of cross-border information sharing, it often faces limitations in tackling these crimes due to uneven technological capacity and resources among its member states. Some Southeast Asian countries including Indonesia, also still have limitations in terms of technological capacity and resources to crack down on cybercrimes related to human trafficking.

### **Victim Protection and Recovery**

One of the most crucial aspects of addressing human trafficking is victim protection and recovery, a process that involves not only

law enforcement against perpetrators, but also giving full attention to the physical, psychological, and social well-being of victims. In Indonesia, while there have been various efforts made to provide protection to victims of human trafficking, the challenges faced are still enormous. Victims often suffer deep physical and psychological trauma after being trapped in human trafficking, whether through sexual exploitation, labour slavery or other forms of modern slavery.

While ASEANAPOL focuses on law enforcement, the organisation also recognises the importance of victim protection in the overall context of addressing human trafficking (Sundram, 2024). ASEANAPOL, through cooperation among Southeast Asian countries, seeks to promote synergy in protecting victims, especially those trafficked across borders. This includes coordinating efforts to ensure that victims who are abroad receive legal protection, access to consular services, and assistance in returning to their home countries.

### **Strategy of the Indonesian Police and ASEANAPOL in Handling Human Trafficking in Indonesia**

In an effort to address human trafficking, the Indonesian National Police collaborated with ASEANAPOL to develop and implement strategies aimed at strengthening law enforcement and victim protection. The Indonesian National Police has four main strategies in its implementation.

*First*, by increasing the capacity of human resources in handling and enforcing the law. In this preemptive (*planning*) effort, the Indonesian Police collaborates with ASEANAPOL by conducting joint training between the Indonesian Police and the Police of other Southeast Asian countries (Kim et al., 2023). This is a strategy in preventing transnational crimes including

human trafficking. This cooperation is also supported by the Indonesian Police, which is ready to collaborate with other parties to encourage the transformation of a precise and superior police force in the Police 4.0 era. Through the International Relations Division of POLRI, there are several activities that have been carried out in cooperation with the police of countries in the Southeast Asian region, such as:

- a. ASEANAPOL Training Cooperation Meeting (ATCM), which is a meeting between police forces of countries in the Southeast Asian region to exchange experiences, crime handling practices, and training in improving the capacity of police personnel. It is also a momentum for the ASEANAPOL organisation in providing exposure in ASEANAPOL's future planning.
- b. International Police Training, this training is an effort by the National Police to prepare its personnel to be ready for peace missions. This training is carried out at the Headquarters of the Indonesian National Police (Mabes POLRI) by inviting the police forces of other countries both regionally (Southeast Asia) and on a global scale.

**Second**, international meeting. The ASEANAPOL international meeting is an annual event that brings together police forces from Southeast Asian countries. The forum is a key tool to strengthen regional co-operation in dealing with the growing threat of cross-border crime in the region. Every year, the forum is held to discuss and formulate joint strategies to deal with serious issues such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, cybercrime and terrorism. In this international meeting, ASEANAPOL conducts two main forums, namely AMMTC (*ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime*) dan SOMTC (*Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime*).

- a. AMMTC (*ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime*) is a short meeting that plays a role in discussing cross-border crime in the Southeast Asian region. Indonesia has participated in the AMMTC since its inception. The role of POLRI as Indonesia's representative is based on POLRI's duty in handling crime cases in Indonesia, especially in handling human trafficking. In addition, the AMMTC is also attended by representatives of



Source: Processed Data, 2024

**Figure 3. Human Trafficking Response Strategy**

ministers who join the forum. So far, the AMMTC has been organised 18 times, among others (Appendix 1).

In the last AMMTC forum, the theme was 'Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience', which emphasised cooperation against various forms of transnational crimes such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, cybercrime, and terrorism. One of the key outcomes was the adoption of a Joint Declaration and a number of guiding documents to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action (2016-2025). These documents aim to strengthen prevention and law enforcement efforts, particularly through better coordination among Southeast Asian countries and engagement with external partners such as China, Japan, and South Korea.

- b. SOMTC (*Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime*) is another forum where countries in the Southeast Asian region meet to combat cross-border crime. The existence of the SOMTC is a form of encouragement in the implementation of the ASEAN declaration on cross-border crime which includes a work programme and a plan to tackle crime. The SOMTC also involves countries in Southeast Asia and 3 (three) countries outside Southeast Asia, namely China, Japan and South Korea. The difference is that this SOMTC is conducted with a Dialogue Partner Consultation mechanism, which is a dialogue between each country in the Southeast Asian region and 3 (three) countries outside the Southeast Asian region. In addition, the SOMTC forum involves dialogue sessions with other countries such as the European Union, Russia, and so on. The following is the organisation of SOMTC, which is as follows (Appendix 2).

The last SOMTC forum had key outcomes including an agreement to strengthen cross-border collaboration, continue the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action to combat transnational crime, and strengthen the resilience of countries in the Southeast Asian region against emerging threats. The meeting also emphasised the importance of enhancing legal frameworks and mutual assistance between countries to deal more effectively with transnational crimes.

These forums allow member states to share information and views on trends and patterns of cross-border crime and evaluate successes or challenges in tackling them. The Indonesian National Police, particularly through the International Relations Division of POLRI, actively participates in these meetings by bringing Indonesia's views on cross-border crime priorities and sharing relevant experiences and policies. It is also a platform to convey the need for support from other countries in cross-border law enforcement, including necessary resources or training.

**Third**, real-time information exchange. In this exchange of information, ASEANAPOL coordinates with police forces in Southeast Asia through a coordination system called Police to Police. Coordination with the *Police to Police* system utilises the *Electronic ASEANAPOL Database System* (e-ADS) technology, which is a means of information exchange in receiving and giving information data on transnational crimes, such as human trafficking (Sundram, 2024). e-ADS is a database system that is digitally connected to fellow state police in the Southeast Asian region. e-ADS serves to publish information about the list of wanted persons (*DPO*) in transnational crimes.

However, there are shortcomings in the implementation of this e-ADS which is facilitated through the I-24/7 (*Information 24/7*) network owned by Interpol. Therefore, in addition to e-ADS coordination, the Indonesian Police also conducts a *Police to Police* coordination system by relying on relationships with police forces in other Southeast Asian countries. This is much more effective than extradition, which sometimes slows down the handling of human trafficking crimes. The Indonesian Police also has a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) in establishing cooperation with police forces in Southeast Asian countries. The MoUs that have been carried out and are still valid are as follows (Appendix 3).

**Fourth,** strengthening cross-border investigation mechanisms. In this strengthening, ASEANAPOL uses the *Joint Coordination System* (JCS) cooperation model. Due to the agreement and shared vision in handling human trafficking, the joint investigation mechanism through the *Joint Coordination System* (JCS) cooperation model has become a joint force in handling human trafficking cases in Southeast Asian countries (Y. K. Kim et al., 2023). Strengthening investigations through this model is also initiated by the ASEAN Way with its principle of non-interference. So that if there is a problem such as human trafficking involving fellow countries in the Southeast Asian region, the investigation is carried out in dialogue as

Table 3. List of POLRI ATPOL and STAFNISPOL Officers

No.	Personnel Name	Position	Placement
1.	Kombes Pol. Gaspar Mikel B.L.P. Da Costa, S.H., Dipl. Tr.	ATPOL	Indonesian Embassy Dili, Timor Leste
2.	Kombes Pol. Juliarman Eka Putra Pasaribu, S.Sos., S.I.K., M.Si	ATPOL	Indonesian Embassy Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
3.	Kombes Pol. Retno Prihawati, S.Sos., S.I.K., M.H.	ATPOL	Indonesian Embassy Manila, Philippines
4.	Kombes Pol. Indra Fadhillah Siregar, S.H., S.I.K., M.H.	ATPOL	Indonesian Embassy Singapore, Singapore
5.	Kombes Pol. Endon Nurcahyo, S.I.K.	ATPOL	Indonesian Embassy Bangkok, Thailand
6.	AKBP. Agus Siswanto, S.H. AKBP. Muliyawaty Syam, S.I.K., M.M.	STAFNISPOL	Consulate General in Tawao, Sabah, Malaysia
7.	AKBP. Sofyan Arief, S.I.K.	STAFNISPOL	Consulate General in Penang, Malaysia
8.	AKBP. M. Sandhi Satyatama, S.H., S.I.K., M.SC.S.	STAFNISPOL	Consulate General in Kuching, Malaysia
9.	AKBP. Yunik Dwi Astuti MW, S.I.K., M.Si.	STAFNISPOL	Consulate General in Johor Bahru, Malaysia
10.	AKBP. Alex Willem Tlonaen, S.T., M.M., M.Tr.A.P.	STAFNISPOL	Consulate General in Davao City, Philippines

Source: Susilo, 2024



an effort to resolve the human trafficking case that occurred.

This can also be done by strengthening the guard at the border, which can later be anticipated if there are crimes that have escaped outside the region through coordination with the relevant state police. In addition, other efforts can be made by sending police personnel abroad, especially in Southeast Asian countries to bridge communication and coordination in cross-border crimes involving Indonesian citizens (WNI) including human trafficking. The dispatch of these personnel is better known as the dispatch of ATPOL (POLRI Attaché) and STAFNISPOL (POLRI Technical Staff). The ATPOL are police personnel who serve as Diplomatic Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia abroad, while the STAFNISPOL are police personnel who serve as Consular Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia abroad.

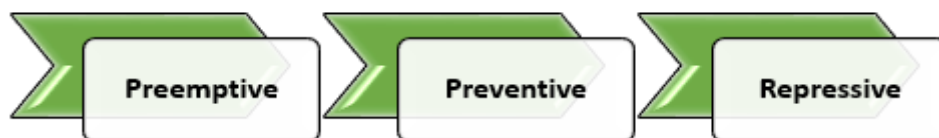
Another goal of sending Police personnel is a collaborative effort to improve coordination in handling transnational crimes, while contributing to the protection of Indonesian citizens. In addition, the dispatch of Police personnel also plays a role in efforts to increase the capacity of POLRI, as well as in law enforcement with certain countries. In addition, the ATPOL and STAFNISPOL of the Indonesian Police serving abroad (countries in the Southeast Asia region) totalled 5 (five) ATPOL and 6 (six) STAFNISPOL. The list of ATPOL and STAFNISPOL are (Table 3).

From the collaborative efforts made by the police forces of Southeast Asian countries, the importance of developing

an international organisational framework to address transnational crimes through this strategic step is very important in the context of ASEANAPOL itself. Transnational crimes, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and terrorism, do not recognise national borders, thus requiring close cooperation between countries in the Southeast Asian region. ASEANAPOL, the network of police cooperation in Southeast Asia, serves as a platform to enhance collaboration and information exchange among its member states.

In order to create an effective framework, ASEANAPOL should focus on several key elements. *First*, there is a need to standardise procedures and policies for handling cross-border crimes. With clear guidelines and protocols in place, member states can respond quickly and effectively to emerging threats. *Secondly*, the development of an efficient information exchange system is crucial. This framework should allow for quick and secure access to intelligence data, evidence and information related to cross-border crime. Through this system, police forces in member states can provide relevant information to each other, thereby tracking and apprehending criminals more effectively.

*Thirdly*, training and capacity building is also a key focus in this framework. ASEANAPOL can organise joint training programmes for police officers from different countries, so that they can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with cross-border crimes. This not only enhances individual capabilities, but also



Source: Processed Data, 2024

**Figure 4. POLRI's Framework for Handling Crime**

builds better working relationships between countries. *Furthermore*, collaboration with international and non-governmental organisations is also very important. The framework developed by ASEANAPOL should include partnerships with agencies such as Interpol, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and other organisations that focus on cross-border crime issues. This will enable ASEANAPOL to utilise a wider range of resources and expertise in tackling these crimes.

Of course, a strategic framework should also include regular evaluation and monitoring mechanisms. By conducting regular reviews of the effectiveness of its co-operation and policies, ASEANAPOL can identify challenges faced and adjust strategies as necessary to address evolving needs. By developing a comprehensive international organisational framework, ASEANAPOL not only strengthens the ability of its member states to address transnational crime, but also contributes to regional security and stability. In the face of increasingly complex cross-border crime threats, solid and integrated co-operation is key to achieving success in tackling this issue.

To make it easier to analyse their respective roles in cooperation, the researcher outlined them in an analysis table, among others (Appendix 4).

Apart from the ASEANAPOL joint strategy, the Indonesian Police also has a strategy in handling human trafficking in Indonesia internally, which is divided into 3 (three) stages/efforts.

**First**, preemptive measures are steps taken by the Indonesian Police by providing understanding (socialisation) to the public about the dangers of human trafficking. This is done to instil firmness in the community so that they are not easily influenced by all modes of human trafficking crimes. This effort is also carried out by cooperating

with other institutions in the country to assist in providing good understanding to the public both directly and indirectly (digital). **Second**, preventive (*minimising*), are steps taken by the Indonesian Police by conducting patrols in vulnerable areas and border areas to minimise the occurrence of human trafficking cases. **Third**, repressive measures are the follow-up steps to reports of human trafficking efforts that occur, this is done by identifying and arresting human traffickers.

## CONCLUSION

This research investigates the serious problem of human trafficking in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Indonesia, which serves as a country of origin, transit, and destination for this criminal practice. In the global context, human trafficking is a pressing issue that involves not only victims, but also perpetrators, with data showing that Indonesia experiences an increase in cases every year. Recent reports suggest that by 2023, there will be 998 identified cases of human trafficking, illustrating the challenges the country faces in tackling the cruel practice. The causes of human trafficking in Indonesia are closely linked to factors such as poverty, social inequality, and weak law enforcement. The Indonesian government has sought to address this issue through Law No. 21 of 2007 on the Eradication of the Crime of Trafficking in Persons, which aims to provide a strong legal basis for combating this crime.

ASEANAPOL plays an important role in tackling human trafficking in Southeast Asia, especially as a platform for police forces in Southeast Asian countries, including the Indonesian Police. The cooperation between the Indonesian Police and ASEANAPOL can be measured through four main coordinated strategies. Firstly, capacity building of law enforcers can be built through training

and development of expertise needed for handling human trafficking, one of which is the ASEANAPOL Training Cooperation Meeting (ATCM) organised by ASEANAPOL. One of the results of this capacity building can be proven by the creation of a precise and superior police transformation in the Police 4.0 era. with coordination that utilises technology. Secondly, annual forums and meetings provide a space for member states to align strategies and share best practices organised by ASEANAPOL namely AMMTC and SOMTC. The forum resulted in the development direction and strategy of ASEANAPOL for the next period in addressing cross-border crimes, particularly human trafficking.

Third, effective information sharing through ASEANAPOL's e-ADS system enables member states to share data quickly, accelerating detection and prosecution. The results can be seen with operations tracking cases and arrests of human trafficking through this remote communication system. Lastly, joint operations and cross-border investigations facilitated by ASEANAPOL as a coordination platform to strengthen collaboration in dismantling human trafficking networks with border reinforcement and dispatch of ATPOL/STAFNISPOL personnel.

Other results showed that ASEANAPOL as an Intergovernmental Organization facilitating cooperation between countries for law enforcement needs to improve its effective framework through standardising procedures and policies for handling human trafficking, developing faster access to information exchange and responsiveness and security, continuing capacity building in improving understanding of handling cross-border crimes, and conducting broader collaboration with other government and non-government agencies.

This research is limited to exploring the preventive handling of human trafficking between the Indonesian Police and ASEANAPOL on an Intergovernmental Organisationscale. Therefore, the preventive aspect, which relates to initiatives to reduce the triggering factors of human trafficking, and the repressive aspect, which includes the identification and arrest of traffickers, as well as the recovery and protection of victims, are not the focus of this study. Future research can identify all aspects related to the need to discuss starting from prevention, handling, and prosecution steps to be more focused in developing the ASEANAPOL organisational framework in the transnational crime of human trafficking.

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## Appendix 1. Organizing of AMMTC

No.	AMMTC Forum	AMMTC Chair	Organizing
1.	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime	Philippines	December 18 – 20, 1997 Manila
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup> AMMTC	Myanmar	June 21 – 23, 1999 Yangon
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup> AMMTC	Singapore	October 9 – 11, 2001 Singapore
4.	4 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Thailand	January 7 – 10, 2004 Bangkok
5.	5 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Vietnam	November 28 – December 1, 2005 Hanoi
6.	6 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Brunei Darussalam	November 5 – 7, 2007 Bandar Seri Begawan
7.	7 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Cambodia	November 16 – 18, 2009 Siem Reap
8.	8 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Indonesia	October 10 – 12, 2011 Bali
9.	9 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Lao PDR	September 16 – 18, 2013 Vientiane
10.	10 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Malaysia	September 28 – 30, 2015 Kuala Lumpur
11.	11 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Philippines	September 18 – 21, 2017 Manila
12.	12 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Myanmar	October 29 – November 1, 2018 Nay Pyi Taw
13.	13 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Thailand	November 26 – 28, 2019 Bangkok
14.	14 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Vietnam	November 24 – 26, 2020 <i>Dalam Jejaring Online</i>
<i>Since 1 January 2021, the AMMTC Chair follows the ASEAN Chairmanship</i>			
15.	15 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Brunei Darussalam	September, 28 – 30 2021 <i>In Online Networking</i>
16.	16 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Cambodia	September 20 – 22, 2022 <i>In Online Networking</i>
17.	17 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Indonesia	August 20 – 22, 2023 Labuan Bajo
18.	18 <sup>th</sup> AMMTC	Lao PDR	August 26 – 30, 2024 Vientiane

Source: Processed by Researcher through ASEAN Secretariat Website, 2024

## Appendix 2. Organizing of SOMTC

No.	SOMTC Forum	SOMTC Chair	Organizing
1.	ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime	Thailand	December 28 – 30, 2001 Bangkok
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup> SOMTC	Malaysia	May 16 – 17, 2002 Kuala Lumpur
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup> SOMTC	Vietnam	9 – 10 Juni 2003 Hanoi
4.	4 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Brunei Darussalam	September 26 – 29, 2004 Bandar Seri Begawan
5.	5 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Cambodia	June 13 – 17, 2005 Siem Reap
6.	6 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Indonesia	June 5 – 9, 2006 Bali
7.	7 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Lao PDR	June 25 – 28, 2007 Vientiane
8.	8 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Malaysia	June 16 – 19, 2008 Kuala Lumpur
9.	9 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Myanmar	June 30 – July 3, 2009 Nay Pyi Taw
10.	10 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Philippines	October 25 – 28, 2010 Manila
11.	11 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Singapore	July 25 – 28, 2011 Singapore
12.	12 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Thailand	September 17 – 20, 2012 Bangkok
13.	13 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Vietnam	June 18 – 21, 2013 Da Nang
14.	14 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Brunei Darussalam	June 23 – 26, 2014 Bandar Seri Begawan
15.	15 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Cambodia	June 8 – 11, 2015 Siem Reap
16.	16 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Indonesia	May 23 – 26, 2016 Jakarta
17.	17 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Lao PDR	May 23 – 26, 2017 Vientiane
18.	18 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Malaysia	September 24 – 27, 2018 Putrajaya
19.	19 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Myanmar	July 23 – 26, 2019 Nay Pyi Taw
20.	20 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Philippines	September 24, 2020 <i>In Online Networking</i>
<i>Since 1 January 2021, the SOMTC Chair follows the ASEAN Chairmanship</i>			
21.	21 <sup>st</sup> SOMTC	Brunei Darussalam	July 27 – 29, 2021 <i>In Online Networking</i>
22.	22 <sup>nd</sup> SOMTC	Cambodia	July 19 – 21, 2022 <i>In Online Networking</i>
23.	23 <sup>rd</sup> SOMTC	Indonesia	June 20 – 23, 2023 Yogyakarta
14..	24 <sup>th</sup> SOMTC	Lao PDR	June 24 – 29, 2024 Vientiane

Source: Processed by Researcher through ASEAN Secretariat Website, 2024

## Appendix 3. MoU on POLRI's Co-Operation with Police Forces in Southeast Asia

No.	Country	MoU Document	Parties Involved	Description
1.	Brunei Darussalam	MoU on Cooperation in Eradicating Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia and the Royal Brunei Police	POLRI and the Royal Brunei Darussalam Police	<b>Applicable</b>
2.	Lao PDR	MoU on Prevention and Eradication of Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the Indonesian National Police and the Government of Lao PDR	POLRI and the Government of Lao PDR	<b>On Extension</b>
3.	Malaysia	MoU on Eradication of Illicit Traffic in Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances, Precursors, Hazardous Substances and Enhancement of Police Cooperation between the Indonesian National Police and the Government of Malaysia	POLRI and the Government of Malaysia	<b>Applicable</b>
4.	Philippines	MoU on Cooperation in the Prevention and Eradication of Transnational Crimes between the Indonesian National Police and the Government of the Philippines	POLRI and the Government of the Philippines	<b>Applicable</b>
5.	Timor Leste	MoU on Cooperation in the Prevention and Eradication of Transnational Crimes and the Development of Police Collaboration between the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia and the Police of Timor Leste	POLRI and the Police of Timor Leste	<b>Applicable</b>
6.	Timor Leste	MoU on Technical Arrangements between the Indonesian National Police and the Timor Leste Police on Capacity Building of the Indonesian National Police and the Timor Leste Police	POLRI and the Police of Timor Leste	<b>Applicable</b>
7.	Myanmar	MoU on Cooperation in Prevention and Eradication of Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the Indonesian National Police and the Myanmar Police	POLRI and Myanmar Police	<b>In the Making</b>
8.	Lao PDR	MoU on Cooperation in the Prevention and Eradication of Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the Indonesian National Police and the Lao PDR Ministry of Public Security	POLRI and the Lao PDR Ministry of Public Security	<b>Applicable</b>
9.	Singapore	MoU on Cooperation in the Prevention and Eradication of Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the Indonesian National Police and the Singapore Police	POLRI and Singapore Police	<b>Applicable</b>



No.	Country	MoU Document	Parties Involved	Description
10.	Thailand	MoU on Transnational Crime Prevention, Eradication and Capacity Building between the Indonesian National Police and the Royal Thailand Police	POLRI and Royal Thailand Police Valid	<b>Applicable</b>
11.	Vietnam	MoU on Cooperation in Crime Prevention and Eradication between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam	POLRI and the Government of Vietnam	<b>Applicable</b>
12.	Cambodia	MoU on Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Cambodia	POLRI and the Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Cambodia	<b>Applicable</b>
13.	Malaysia	MoU on Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Transnational Crimes and Capacity Building between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of Malaysia	POLRI and Royal Malaysian Police	<b>Applicable</b>

Source: Susilo, 2024

## Appendix 4. Comparison of the Roles of ASEANAPOL and the Indonesian Police

No.	Actor	Strategy	Role
1	ASEANAPOL	Human Resource Capacity Building	Organising the ASEANAPOL Training Cooperation Meeting (ATCM), which is a forum for ASEAN police to exchange experiences, crime handling practices, and provide training to improve the skills of police personnel.
	The Indonesian Police		Sent personnel to participate in the ATCM to gain new knowledge, skills and insights in dealing with cross-border crimes, as well as to adapt their practices to ASEAN regional standards.
2	ASEANAPOL	International Meeting	Organise annual meetings such as AMMTC (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime) and SOMTC (Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime) as forums for ASEAN countries to discuss joint strategies in dealing with cross-border crimes, including human trafficking, drugs, and terrorism.
	The Indonesian Police		Actively participates in ASEANAPOL international meetings, bringing Indonesia's perspective on key issues, and coordinating with other ASEAN member states in formulating effective cross-border crime response policies.
3	ASEANAPOL	Real-Time Information Exchange	Operate the Electronic ASEANAPOL Database System (e-ADS) that enables real-time information exchange between ASEAN police forces in addressing transnational crimes, such as human trafficking.
	The Indonesian Police		Uses e-ADS to exchange crime information with other ASEAN countries quickly, especially to obtain data on criminals outside Indonesia, and strengthen preventive measures.
4	ASEANAPOL	Strengthening Cross-Border Investigation	Mechanism Initiate the Joint Coordination System (JCS) as a joint investigation mechanism among ASEAN countries to strengthen coordination in handling cases of human trafficking and other transnational crimes, while adhering to the 'ASEAN Way' and non-interference principles.
	The Indonesian Police		Collaborate in the JCS with other ASEAN countries in cross-border investigations, sharing evidence and information, and conducting integrated investigations to address transnational crimes impacting Indonesia.

Source: Processed Data, 2024