



Narcotics Brokers and Logistics Routes in Indonesia: Legal System Weaknesses from *Hifz al-'Aql* Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines the roles of brokers and logistics routes in Indonesia's narcotics supply chain, which has evolved into a transnational network connecting Golden Triangle production centers (particularly Myanmar's Shan State) with domestic markets through intermediate distribution nodes. The research employs a normative juridical method supported by a socio-legal approach and qualitative analysis, utilizing data from UNODC, BNN (National Narcotics Agency), Customs, and previous research reports to analyze the intersection of global economic dynamics, legal system weaknesses, and narcotics trafficking operations. Findings reveal that brokers serve three critical functions: connecting international manufacturers with domestic markets, controlling pricing mechanisms, and designing logistics routes through major ports (Tanjung Priok, Batam) and minor harbors across maritime and air channels. Indonesia's consumer market comprises approximately 3.3 million narcotics users (1.73% of the population aged 15-64 years), with high prevalence rates in North Sumatra (6.5%), South Sumatra (5%), and DKI Jakarta (3.3%). However, law enforcement remains concentrated at the downstream level, with over 70% of prosecuted cases targeting users and couriers rather than intermediate brokers. Legal system weaknesses—particularly in Money Laundering (TPPU) instruments, customs supervision, and international cooperation—enable brokers to exploit regulatory gaps and maintain network resilience despite increased arrests. From the Maqasid Syariah perspective, specifically the principle of *Hifz al-'Aql* (protection of reason), this study proposes non-penal policy reconstruction emphasizing preventive, educational, and rehabilitative approaches that extend beyond criminal sanctions to protect community morals, reason, and welfare through structural reforms in financial regulation, logistics supervision, and international legal diplomacy.

Keywords: Chain Supply, Global Economy, *Hifz Al-Aql*, Narcotics Broker, Weakness Law


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Introduction

The circulation of narcotics in Indonesia represents not merely a criminal law issue but encompasses complex dimensions of the global economy. Previous research has predominantly emphasized two aspects: first, the repressive law enforcement targeting users and couriers; second, the socioeconomic impacts of narcotics abuse.¹ However, studies examining the supply chain at the intermediate level, particularly the role of brokers and the utilization of maritime and air logistics routes, remain relatively limited. In fact, this intermediate level constitutes a strategic node in the global narcotics market architecture. Brokers play crucial roles in connecting international manufacturers with domestic markets, regulating price negotiations, and designing logistics routes through maritime and air channels.² The failure of the national legal system to address this level has resulted in Indonesia frequently apprehending street couriers or users while rarely succeeding in dismantling transnational intermediate networks.³

In the context of the global economy, trade liberalization, digital technology development, and cross-border capital mobility have strengthened the ability of narcotics networks to penetrate national borders.⁴ This situation exposes gaps in the Indonesian legal system: customs regulations and logistics supervision lag, Money Laundering (TPPU) instruments remain suboptimal, and international cooperation remains limited to repressive operations without addressing regulatory harmonization.⁵ Consequently, this research possesses novelty by shifting focus from downstream (users/couriers) to the intermediate supply chain (brokers and logistics) while connecting it with global economic challenges and national legal system weaknesses.

Recent data demonstrate these legal weaknesses. Throughout 2024, Customs thwarted the smuggling of 7.4 tons of narcotics, yet smuggling modes through small harbors and domestic interprovincial routes continue to evade supervision.⁶ In the first three weeks of January 2025, BNN confiscated narcotics worth Rp1 trillion from the Aceh-Malaysia, Medan-Malaysia, and Kalimantan-Malaysia networks; however, only minimal TPPU assets were confiscated compared to the enormous transaction volume.⁷ Additionally, the overcapacity of correctional institutions, resulting from the predominance of convictions for minor users, demonstrates that Indonesian law remains heavily focused on downstream rather than upstream supply chains.⁸ Even the Head of the National Narcotics Agency acknowledged intelligence weaknesses in maritime border areas such as East Sumatra, North Kalimantan, and the Sulawesi coast, which international networks continue to exploit using wooden boats or unofficial routes.⁹ These conditions indicate that Indonesian law remains trapped in a

¹ Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, “Indonesia Drug Report 2025” (Jakarta: Puslitdatin BNN, 2025).

² R M Wattimena, “Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Penyelundupan Narkotika Melalui Jalur Maritim,” *Jurnal Hukum & Pembangunan* 54, no. 2 (2024): 211–14.

³ Indonesia, “Indonesia Drug Report 2025,” 2025.

⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “World Drug Report 2025” (Vienna: UNODC, 2025).

⁵ Lilik Mulyadi, *Tindak Pidana Pencucian Uang: Kebijakan Hukum Pidana Dalam Perspektif Penegakan Hukum Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2021).

⁶ Era.id, “Bea Cukai Gagalkan 7,4 Ton Penyelundupan Narkotika Ke Indonesia Sepanjang 2024,” 2024, <https://www.era.id/read/gvvvN3-bea-cukai-gagalkan-74-ton-penyelundupan-narkotika-ke-indonesia-sepanjang-2024>.

⁷ Indonesia, “Indonesia Drug Report 2025,” 2025.

⁸ Direktorat Jenderal Pemasarakatan, “Statistik Pemasarakatan 2024” (Jakarta: Ditjen PAS, 2024).

⁹ Kompas.com, “Kepala BNN Akan Perkuat Intelijen Di Perbatasan Yang Rawan Penyelundupan,” 2024, <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2024/11/25/153000565/kepala-bnn-akan-perkuat-intelijen-di-perbatasan-yang-rawan-penyelundupan>.

downstream enforcement pattern. At the same time, the intermediate supply chain nodes that constitute the main nexus of the global narcotics market have not been adequately addressed.¹⁰ Brokers and international logistics networks continue to operate within significant legal gaps, particularly regarding customs supervision, TPPU, and cross-country cooperation.¹¹ Without a comprehensive analysis of this intermediate level, the national legal system will perpetuate its reactive and repetitive nature, merely severing minor chain links without dismantling the larger, more complex narcotics market structure.¹²

Several recent studies have examined narcotics networks in Southeast Asia, yet significant gaps remain in understanding the intermediate supply chain dynamics. Luong (2022) investigated transnational narcotics trafficking in Southeast Asia, analyzing law enforcement agencies' capacities and regional cooperation frameworks under the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025.¹³ However, the study concentrated primarily on institutional arrangements and governmental policy responses without examining the economic dynamics and logistics infrastructure that enable broker networks to operate and persist across multiple jurisdictions. Furthermore, the analysis focused on supply reduction strategies at the production level rather than investigating the critical intermediate layer where brokers coordinate cross-border operations. Bright et al. (2024) examined the structure of drug trafficking networks through social network analysis, revealing how criminal organizations prioritize either efficiency or security based on information-processing requirements.¹⁴ Nevertheless, their research focused predominantly on network topology and organizational structures without addressing how global economic factors—such as trade liberalization, digital technology, and capital mobility—facilitate broker operations and strengthen network resilience. The study also did not integrate legal system analysis or examine regulatory gaps that allow these networks to flourish. Campana and Varese (2022) analyzed money laundering mechanisms in transnational organized crime, mapping financial flows and asset concealment strategies employed by criminal networks in Southeast Asia.¹⁵ Yet, their investigation concentrated on downstream financial transactions and formal banking systems without addressing the upstream role of brokers in coordinating cross-border capital movements or the integration of these financial networks with logistics operations. The study overlooked how brokers exploit gaps in customs supervision and TPPU enforcement to facilitate illicit financial flows. Ellis-Petersen and Agencies (2025) documented the surge in methamphetamine trafficking from Myanmar's Golden Triangle region, highlighting record seizures and evolving trafficking routes through Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia.¹⁶ However, the analysis remained descriptive of trafficking patterns without investigating the operational mechanisms of intermediary brokers who coordinate these maritime and land-based logistics routes. Additionally, the study did not examine the intersection of these trafficking networks with legal system weaknesses or propose policy

¹⁰ Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Indonesia Drug Report 2025" (Jakarta: Puslitdatin BNN, 2025).

¹¹ Crime, "World Drug Report 2025."

¹² Era.id, "Bea Cukai Gagalkan 7,4 Ton Penyelundupan Narkoba Ke Indonesia Sepanjang 2024."

¹³ Truong Hoang Luong, "Transnational Drug Trafficking in Southeast Asia: Identifying National Limitations to Look for Regional Changes," *Revista Científica General José María Córdova* 20, no. 37 (2022): 177–98.

¹⁴ David Bright, Carlo Morselli, and Caitlin E Hughes, "Mapping Drug Smuggling Networks in Japan: A Social Network Analysis of Trial Documents," *Trends in Organized Crime* 27, no. 2 (2024): 220–41.

¹⁵ Paolo Campana and Federico Varese, "Organized Crime and Money Laundering in Southeast Asia: Patterns and Dynamics," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 78, no. 4 (2022): 431–57.

¹⁶ Hannah Ellis-Petersen and Agencies, "Methamphetamine Trafficking Surges from 'Golden Triangle' Region," *The Guardian*, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/29/methamphetamine-trafficking-golden-triangle>.

frameworks grounded in normative legal perspectives. Wulandari and Kirana (2023) assessed ASEAN cooperation in controlling illicit drug trafficking, evaluating regional coordination mechanisms and the role of UNODC in facilitating inter-agency collaboration.¹⁷ Nevertheless, their analysis emphasized macro-level institutional frameworks without examining micro-level dynamics of how broker networks exploit regulatory gaps between member states. The study also did not incorporate alternative legal frameworks, such as Islamic legal perspectives, for formulating non-penal policy interventions.

These gaps in existing literature demonstrate the necessity for a comprehensive study that integrates intermediate supply chain analysis with an examination of global economic dynamics and legal system vulnerabilities, while incorporating the Maqasid Syariah framework—a dimension that this research addresses.

The present study is conducted to fill this gap in narcotics law research in Indonesia. To date, the majority of research and policy have emphasized downstream aspects, namely, users and couriers. At the same time, the intermediate supply chain, specifically the role of brokers and cross-country logistics networks, has received minimal attention.¹⁸ In fact, this intermediate node determines transaction channels, capital flows, and the sustainability of the global narcotics market. This study is positioned on three main contributions. First, it shifts analytical focus to brokers and international logistics routes as crucial points in narcotics circulation networks.¹⁹ Second, it combines legal analysis with a global economic perspective, including trade liberalization, capital mobility, and digital technology development that strengthen cross-border networks.²⁰ Third, it presents systematic criticism of Indonesian positive law weaknesses, including customs regulations, TPPU mechanisms, and international cooperation, which have thus far remained reactive without addressing root problems.²¹ This study not only expands existing discourse but also offers a newer analytical framework relevant to contemporary transnational challenges and complex narcotics markets.

In this context, the Maqasid Syariah approach, particularly the principle of *Hifz al-'Aql* (protection of reason), offers a more comprehensive perspective. Islam positions reason as the foundation of humanity; therefore, every form of damage to reason, including narcotics abuse, is viewed as *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth) that must be prevented. Consequently, narcotics countermeasure policies should not only emphasize punishment but also education, rehabilitation, and the protection of community morals. Through this perspective, this research analyzes the role of brokers in Indonesia's narcotics supply chain, the global economic challenges influencing it, and national legal system weaknesses, while presenting a Maqasid Syariah framework as the foundation for more humane and welfare-oriented non-penal policy reforms.

This study employs a normative juridical method supported by a socio-legal approach and is qualitative in nature.²² The normative approach is utilized to analyze positive legal provisions,²³ particularly the Narcotics Law, Customs Law, and Money Laundering Law, as well as international instruments related to narcotics eradication. The socio-legal approach is

¹⁷ Sinar Aju Wulandari and Putri Kirana, "ASEAN States Cooperation in the Control and Prevention of Illicit Drugs Trafficking," *Yuridika* 38, no. 3 (2023): 665–84.

¹⁸ Indonesia, "Indonesia Drug Report 2025," 2025.

¹⁹ Wattimena, "Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Penyelundupan Narkotika Melalui Jalur Maritim."

²⁰ Crime, "World Drug Report 2025."

²¹ Mulyadi, *Tindak Pidana Pencucian Uang: Kebijakan Hukum Pidana Dalam Perspektif Penegakan Hukum Di Indonesia*.

²² Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1986).

²³ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2017).

employed to understand the reality of narcotics circulation through brokers and logistics channels, utilizing data from UNODC, BNN, Customs, and previous research reports.²⁴ Data sources consist of primary legal materials (legislation and court decisions), secondary legal materials (academic literature, journals, official reports), and tertiary legal materials (legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, Maqasid Syariah texts, and credible media). Data is collected through bibliographic and documentation studies, then analyzed qualitatively to identify gaps between legal norms and field practice.²⁵ The analysis is directed toward evaluating the weaknesses of the Indonesian legal system in confronting global narcotics market dynamics and formulating a more appropriately targeted policy framework.

Result and Discussion

The results of the data analysis demonstrate that brokers and intermediate logistics chains constitute strategic nodes in cross-country narcotics circulation. They not only connect international manufacturers with domestic markets but also control pricing, transportation routes, and exploit gaps in customs and logistics supervision.²⁶ Weaknesses in the Indonesian legal system, particularly in Money Laundering (TPPU) instruments, customs regulations, and international cooperation, render these nodes difficult to dismantle.²⁷ Conversely, law enforcement remains trapped at the downstream level (users and couriers), while intermediate nodes remain secure and adaptive. Narcotics networks have grown even stronger by leveraging the global economy and digital technology, such that their capacity has not significantly diminished despite increased arrests.²⁸ From the Maqasid Syariah perspective, particularly the principle of *Hifz al-'Aql* (protection of reason), these conditions demonstrate the need for policy reconstruction that extends beyond criminal sanctions to protect community morals, awareness, and rationality. Narcotics eradication efforts must be directed toward preventing damage to reason (*fasād al-'aql*) through educational, rehabilitative, and structural policies, enabling the protection of reason and human welfare to be realized sustainably.

Structure of Narcotics Distribution

Cross-country narcotics trafficking operates through an organized mechanism, spanning from production stages to end consumers. The Golden Triangle area in Myanmar, particularly Shan State, serves as the primary production center for methamphetamine and opium in Southeast Asia. From this region, industrial-scale laboratories produce large quantities of methamphetamine by exploiting weak supervision in rural areas and the availability of precursor chemicals entering through both legal and illegal channels.²⁹ Production outputs are subsequently distributed to various countries, including Indonesia, through intermediate distribution chains that utilize major ports, minor harbors, and air routes. Cases such as the seizure of 319 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine in Merak waters, Banten, and the disclosure of ecstasy smuggling via air routes by international networks demonstrate how intermediate nodes maintain vital control in sustaining supply flows to domestic markets.³⁰

²⁴ Johnny Ibrahim, *Teori & Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif* (Malang: Bayumedia, 2006).

²⁵ Lexy J Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018).

²⁶ Indonesia, "Indonesia Drug Report 2025," 2025.

²⁷ Mulyadi, *Tindak Pidana Pencucian Uang: Kebijakan Hukum Pidana Dalam Perspektif Penegakan Hukum Di Indonesia*.

²⁸ Crime, "World Drug Report 2025."

²⁹ Associated Press, "Myanmar Remains World's Largest Meth Producer despite Military Crackdown," *AP News*, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/cb5de08da123b150210793a667c0c149>.

³⁰ Antara News, "BNN Launches Integrated Operation against Drug Smuggling," *Antara News*, 2023, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/282648/bnn-launches-integrated-operation-against-drug-smuggling>.

Upon arrival in Indonesia, narcotics do not flow directly to consumers but rather traverse broker networks that determine pricing, fragment distribution, and disguise goods movement within legitimate logistics. This model renders the narcotics supply chain highly adaptive to courier arrests at lower levels. Consequently, despite high enforcement numbers, supply remains stable and domestic market prices remain relatively controlled. Indonesia's consumer market itself is substantial, with approximately 3.3 million narcotics users in 2023, or 1.73 percent of the population aged 15-64 years.³¹ The majority of users are of productive age, rendering Indonesia an attractive market for international networks. High prevalence rates in provinces such as North Sumatra (6.5 percent), South Sumatra (5 percent), and DKI Jakarta (3.3 percent) indicate that demand is not only concentrated in major cities but has also spread to regional areas.³²

This series of facts demonstrates how cross-country narcotics trafficking operates as if it were a structured global business, with production centers, intermediate logistics nodes, and extensive consumer markets. Intermediate nodes play the most strategic role because they maintain supply smoothness while exploiting legal and logistical gaps. As long as this supply chain remains untouched, every enforcement effort at the downstream level will only be temporary, while network capacity remains intact and is even strengthened by support from global trade flows and digital technology.

The Role of Brokers and Logistics Chains

The phenomenon of broker and intermediate logistics node dominance in cross-country narcotics circulation reveals fundamental weaknesses in Indonesian law enforcement policy orientation, which remains concentrated on downstream actors—users and couriers—thereby strengthening the position of intermediate nodes. This unequal criminalization model produces high arrest numbers but does not significantly impact network capacity. Intermediate nodes can regenerate distribution structures, close gaps through technology utilization, and simultaneously maintain supply stability in domestic markets. Consequently, the deterrent effect that constitutes the primary objective fails to be achieved.³³ Economic globalization and digitalization add complexity to the problem. Narcotics networks exploit cross-border flows of goods and capital to disguise transactions through trade-based money laundering mechanisms and shell companies.³⁴

Meanwhile, developments in digital communication technology, the dark web, and crypto assets strengthen payment and coordination systems that are difficult to detect.³⁵ Indonesia has indeed committed to various international legal instruments related to narcotics and money laundering. Still, implementation at the technical level remains weak, particularly regarding real-time intelligence sharing and cross-jurisdiction data exchange.³⁶ These

³¹ Kompas.com, “Kepala BNN Ungkap 3,33 Juta Orang Usia 15-64 Tahun Salahgunakan Narkotika Di Indonesia,” 2025, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2025/05/05/10510261/kepala-bnn-ungkap-333-juta-orang-usia-15-64-tahun-salahgunakan-narkotika-di>.

³² Kupastuntas.co, “BNN Ungkap Ada 3,3 Juta Pengguna Narkoba, Mayoritas Usia Produktif,” 2025, <https://www.kupastuntas.co/2025/05/05/bnn-ungkap-ada-33-juta-pengguna-narkoba-mayoritas-usia-produktif>.

³³ Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, “Laporan Akhir Tahun 2023: Situasi Dan Kebijakan Narkotika Di Indonesia” (Jakarta: BNN, 2023).

³⁴ Crime, “World Drug Report 2025.”

³⁵ David Decary-Hétu and Luca Giommoni, “Do Police Crackdowns Disrupt Drug Cryptomarkets? A Longitudinal Analysis of the Effects of Operation Onymous,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 67, no. 1 (2017): 55–75.

³⁶ International Narcotics Control Board, “Annual Report 2021” (Vienna: INCB, 2022).

conditions demonstrate the urgent need for non-penal policy reconstruction. Prevention efforts must be directed toward strengthening financial regulations, particularly by enhancing Money Laundering (ML) instruments, digital-based financial transaction supervision, and customs regulation harmonization.³⁷ Additionally, international legal diplomacy must function more operationally, not merely limited to convention ratification, but also building effective cross-country collaboration systems.³⁸

Weaknesses of the Indonesian Legal System

Weaknesses in legal instruments across the financial, customs, and international cooperation sectors have provided safe havens for intermediate nodes to operate. First, the implementation of Money Laundering (TPPU) laws has not fully succeeded in ensnaring narcotics-related illicit cash flows. The "follow the money" principle, which should be the primary strategy, is often constrained by limited access to banking transaction data, insufficient financial intelligence analysis capacity, and suboptimal coordination between PPATK (Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center) and law enforcement authorities.³⁹ Consequently, many narcotics networks can maintain financial stability even when several members are arrested. Second, in the customs sector, the most frequently exploited modes are trade misinvoicing and smuggling through minor harbors.⁴⁰ These gaps occur because container detection and inspection systems are not yet fully integrated with international databases, while supervision of non-commercial maritime routes remains highly limited. Weak synergy among Customs, BNN (National Narcotics Agency), and police authorities exacerbates this situation. Under such conditions, cross-country circulation continues to flow smoothly through both formal and informal logistics routes.

Third, regarding international cooperation, Indonesia has indeed ratified the 1988 UN Convention on Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and other relevant instruments.⁴¹ However, implementation remains ceremonial in nature. Intelligence exchanges do not always occur in real-time, while joint investigation mechanisms are seldom operationalized. These limitations enable cross-country networks to adapt more rapidly than law enforcement apparatus. These conditions strengthen the argument that excessive law enforcement focus on the downstream level precisely weakens efforts to sever circulation chains.⁴² If non-penal policies are not swiftly reconstructed with a focus on financial instruments, logistics supervision, and effective international diplomacy, strategic nodes in narcotics circulation will persist and grow even more entrenched.

One fundamental weakness in Indonesia's narcotics policy is that law enforcement is oriented more toward targeting downstream-level actors—namely, users and couriers—rather than strategic actors at the intermediate level. BNN data for 2022 recorded that over 70% of narcotics cases processed in courts involved users and couriers, while the number of successful cases ensnaring dealers and logistics nodes remained relatively minimal.⁴³ This situation demonstrates law enforcement inequality: the state appears busy with field

³⁷ Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan, "Tren Pencucian Uang Di Indonesia" (Jakarta: PPATK, 2021).

³⁸ Romli Atmasasmita, *Hukum Pidana Internasional* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2020).

³⁹ Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan, "Laporan Tahunan 2022" (Jakarta: PPATK, 2022).

⁴⁰ Mohammad Mahfud MD, *Politik Hukum Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2021).

⁴¹ United Nations, "United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988" (New York: UN, 1988).

⁴² Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Strategi Nasional Pencegahan Dan Pemberantasan Narkotika 2023-2027" (Jakarta: BNN, 2023).

⁴³ Badan Narkotika Nasional Republik Indonesia, "Laporan Akhir Tahun 2022" (Jakarta: BNN, 2022).

operations, but does not truly address the nodes that control supply and narcotics pricing. This weakness is clearly visible in maritime narcotics smuggling cases. In 2018, for example, police authorities working with Customs successfully thwarted the smuggling of 1.6 tons of crystal methamphetamine from Malaysia via maritime routes in the Batam area.⁴⁴ However, further investigations revealed that only couriers and field operators were arrested, while the cross-border brokers who arranged distribution routes and fund flows were not touched. This proves that although large-scale operations succeeded, intermediate nodes remained secure because they operate through remote mechanisms utilizing technology and regulatory gaps.

In the financial aspect, law enforcement weaknesses regarding money laundering crimes also provide safe havens for narcotics networks. For example, in the Freddy Budiman network case, indications of billions of rupiah in cash flows connected to international transactions were discovered.⁴⁵ However, several large assets could not be confiscated due to limitations in cross-country asset recovery mechanisms. This fact demonstrates that without a robust "follow the money" strategy, intermediate nodes can easily maintain capital stability and network regeneration after arrests occur.

From the customs perspective, legitimate trade lanes are also frequently exploited for smuggling. The case at Tanjung Priok Port in 2019 serves as a concrete example, when Customs officers thwarted the smuggling of 1.1 tons of crystal methamphetamine hidden in containers carrying machinery from Taiwan.⁴⁶ Trade misinvoicing and export-import document manipulation methods of this kind demonstrate that narcotics networks can disguise transactions by exploiting supervisory system gaps. From these cases, it is clear that weaknesses in TPPU instruments, customs regulations, and limitations in international cooperation create profitable ecosystems for intermediate nodes. They remain secure and adaptive, while users and couriers continue to be operational targets. This confirms that without a non-penal policy reconstruction focused on financial, logistics, and international diplomacy aspects, cross-country narcotics circulation will persist despite year-on-year increases in arrest numbers.

Social and Economic Impacts

Beyond regulatory weaknesses and law enforcement orientation, there are significant socioeconomic impacts from policies that predominantly target users and couriers. As a consequence of massive criminalization, correctional institutions in Indonesia are experiencing extraordinary overcapacity. Directorate General of Community Development data for 2022 shows that over 50% of prison residents are narcotics case prisoners, the majority with user status.⁴⁷ This condition creates a double burden: the state must bear high socialization costs, while the objective of rehabilitating users as victims of narcotics abuse is precisely neglected. Conversely, narcotics network capacity has not significantly diminished despite high arrest numbers. Arresting thousands of couriers and users annually does not significantly reduce the narcotics supply in domestic markets. This is because intermediate nodes can rapidly recruit new couriers, exploit alternative distribution routes, and maintain supply. UNODC in the World Drug Report 2022 confirmed that methamphetamine supply in Southeast Asia has instead increased rapidly over the past five years. However, law

⁴⁴ Kompas.com, "Polisi Gagalkan Penyelundupan 1,6 Ton Sabu Di Batam," 2018.

⁴⁵ Tempo, "Mengenal Freddy Budiman, Bandar Narkoba Yang Punya Jaringan Internasional," 2016.

⁴⁶ C N N Indonesia, "Bea Cukai Gagalkan Penyelundupan 1,1 Ton Sabu Di Tanjung Priok," 2019.

⁴⁷ Pemasarakatan, "Statistik Pemasarakatan 2024."

enforcement in this region has conducted massive arrests.⁴⁸ This fact demonstrates that law enforcement success indicators cannot be measured solely by the number of arrested suspects.

Another equally important weakness is the lack of integration among domestic law enforcement agencies. Overlapping authorities among the Indonesian National Police, BNN, Customs and Excise, and PPATK often generate sectoral egos, preventing optimal coordination. The case of smuggling 800 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine in Aceh in 2020 serves as a concrete example, when coordination delays occurred between maritime and land apparatus, resulting in partial evidence being shifted by the network before the apparatus arrived at the location.⁴⁹ Such conditions demonstrate that without strong institutional synergy, intermediate nodes will continue to benefit from law enforcement fragmentation.

Relatedness with the Global Economy

The phenomenon of cross-country narcotics circulation cannot be separated from the global economic context. UNODC estimates that the value of the global narcotics trade reaches over 320 billion US dollars annually, making it one of the largest sectors in the world's dark economy.⁵⁰ Indonesia, as a country with a strategic position on international trade routes, serves not only as a consumption market but also as a transit area vulnerable to exploitation by global networks. Narcotics entering Indonesia consistently follow global economic dynamics, including trade liberalization and international logistics connectivity. The economic impact of narcotics on Indonesia extends beyond societal health to financial system stability. The 2021 PPATK report stated that a significant portion of narcotics transactions in Indonesia is concentrated in the real sector, particularly property and trade, through money laundering schemes.⁵¹ This causes economic distortions as illegal funds circulate outside taxation mechanisms and financial authority supervision. Thus, narcotics not only damage social aspects but also undermine the foundations of the country's formal economy.

Furthermore, Indonesia's connectedness with international trade opens gaps for trade-based money laundering (TBML) modes, namely, disguising narcotics crime proceeds in export-import transactions. The case of smuggling 1.1 tons of crystal methamphetamine disguised in machinery containers at Tanjung Priok Port in 2019 provides concrete evidence of how narcotics networks utilize global trade flows to integrate illicit goods into legitimate logistics routes.⁵² Thus, the global economy is not merely an external context but serves as the primary medium used by intermediate nodes to maintain and expand networks.

Broker and intermediate logistics node dominance in the narcotics supply chain across countries demonstrates that they serve as primary controllers of pricing, distribution routes, and shipment patterns. By exploiting customs gaps and law enforcement coordination weaknesses, their positions remain secure despite continuous increases in courier and user arrests. Indonesia's connectivity with the global economy strengthens this condition. Networks utilize international trade flows and digital payment systems to disguise transactions through trade-based money laundering, shell companies, and crypto assets. The case of smuggling 1.1 tons of crystal methamphetamine at Tanjung Priok in 2019 exemplifies

⁴⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "World Drug Report 2022" (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).

⁴⁹ DetikNews, "Penyelundupan 800 Kg Sabu Di Aceh, Polisi Akui Ada Keterlambatan Koordinasi," 2020.

⁵⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "World Drug Report 2020" (Vienna: UNODC, 2020).

⁵¹ Keuangan, "Tren Pencucian Uang Di Indonesia."

⁵² Indonesia, "Bea Cukai Gagalkan Penyelundupan 1,1 Ton Sabu Di Tanjung Priok."

how narcotics enter alongside legitimate logistics flows. However, Indonesian legal system weaknesses—ranging from suboptimal TPPU implementation, limited customs supervision, to international cooperation that remains normative in nature—render intermediate nodes difficult to dismantle. Consequently, policies overly focused on downstream levels fail to sever supply chains and instead strengthen broker positions in distribution systems. These conditions confirm the need for non-penal policy reconstruction focused on strengthening financial regulations, customs, and international cooperation as strategic solutions.

Solutions to Address Broker and Intermediate Logistics Node Dominance

Non-penal policy reconstruction constitutes a strategic step for severing the narcotics supply chain in Indonesia. Policy focus must shift from merely enforcing against users and couriers to prevention efforts in financial, logistics, and international diplomacy domains. First, strengthening Money Laundering (TPPU) instruments must become a priority. To date, efforts to track narcotics fund flows have been suboptimal, even though intermediate nodes depend on capital stability to maintain supply. The "follow the money" principle needs to be institutionalized through financial data integration, PPATK capacity enhancement, and faster asset freezing mechanisms. Thus, network capital flows can be halted even while law enforcement against physical actors remains in process.⁵³

Second, customs and logistics aspects require technology-based supervision reform. Legitimate global trade routes can no longer serve as venues for narcotics smuggling. Implementation of risk-based profiling, big data utilization, and export-import manifest integration with customs systems will minimize trade-based money laundering practices. Customs must also establish integrated surveillance units with BNN and the National Police to reduce inter-agency bureaucratic gaps.⁵⁴ Third, Indonesia must strengthen international legal diplomacy. Convention ratification is insufficient if not followed by operational mechanisms such as real-time intelligence sharing and joint investigations among countries. Considering that Southeast Asia is the global crystal meth production epicenter, cooperation with neighboring countries must be directed toward integrated field operations and cross-jurisdiction financial data exchange mechanisms.⁵⁵

Fourth, narcotics countermeasure success metrics need to shift from merely arrest numbers to structural indicators, such as frozen asset amounts, successfully dismantled intermediate networks, and reduced narcotics supply in domestic markets. Thus, policy orientation will be more appropriately targeted: to dismantle distribution structures, not merely add courier and user arrest statistics. Through non-penal policy reconstruction directed at financial, logistics, and legal diplomacy dimensions, intermediate nodes that have thus far constituted weak points can precisely be transformed into key points for reducing cross-country narcotics network capacity in Indonesia.

Beyond financial aspects, customs and logistics supervision reform is also urgently needed. Implementation of risk-based profiling on containers, big data utilization to detect suspicious trade patterns, and formation of integrated surveillance units at major ports will narrow the movement space for narcotics networks. This reform not only protects domestic markets from narcotics entry but also strengthens the credibility of international trade routes crossing

⁵³ Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan, "Laporan Tahunan 2021" (Jakarta: PPATK, 2022).

⁵⁴ Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia, "Laporan Kinerja Direktorat Jenderal Bea Dan Cukai 2022" (Jakarta: Kemenkeu, 2023).

⁵⁵ Board, "Annual Report 2021."

Indonesia. Thus, global supply chain integrity increases because routes frequently exploited for smuggling, utilizing legitimate trade, can be cleansed of illegal practices.⁵⁶

International legal diplomacy also needs to be practiced more operationally. Indonesia cannot merely ratify conventions but must be active in real-time intelligence sharing mechanisms and joint investigations with other countries, particularly in the ASEAN region. With the existence of mutual legal assistance agreements allowing cross-jurisdiction account blocking within hours, narcotics capital circulation, which typically rotates rapidly through shell companies, can be swiftly disconnected. The global effect is a greater obstruction of narcotics cartels' ability to utilize international financial systems, ultimately contributing to world economic stability.⁵⁷

Finally, narcotics countermeasure success metrics in Indonesia must shift from mere arrest numbers to structural indicators such as successfully confiscated assets, disconnected intermediate networks, and declining narcotics supply in domestic markets. If the supply chain successfully narrows, global narcotics prices tend to rise because supply is reduced, resulting in decreased consumption at global levels. Thus, Indonesian policy not only impacts national stability but also makes real contributions to narcotics countermeasures on a global scale.⁵⁸

Implications for Non-Penal Policy from the Maqasid Syariah Perspective

In the context of Indonesian legal policy, which remains oriented toward a penal (criminal) approach, the Maqasid Syariah perspective,⁵⁹ Specifically, the principle of Hifz al-'Aql (protection of reason) offers a non-penal paradigm that is more preventive, educational, and rehabilitative in nature. This approach emphasizes that law enforcement does not merely aim to deter but also to maintain and restore human reason's potential as a source of morality and social rationality. First, strengthening moral and spiritual education constitutes the primary step in the Hifz al-'Aql context, as education functions to cultivate self-awareness and direct reason away from destructive behaviors such as narcotics abuse. In maqasid, education serves as a means of tahdzib al-nafs (soul guidance) to guard reason's purity and morals.⁶⁰

Second, rehabilitation needs to be positioned as an instrument of *islah* (reparation) for victims of narcotics abuse, not merely as an administrative action. From the Maqasid Syariah perspective, the recovery of reason and human dignity constitutes part of realizing *maslahah 'ammah* (general benefit), as every individual possesses the potential to return to the path of righteousness.⁶¹ Third, supervision of dark economy flows through ethical financial policies and Sharia economic instruments forms part of Hifz al-Mal that supports Hifz al-'Aql. By controlling prohibited economic sources, the state participates in protecting the public from moral and intellectual damage consequent to unjust economic systems.⁶²

⁵⁶ Indonesia, "Laporan Kinerja Direktorat Jenderal Bea Dan Cukai 2022."

⁵⁷ Board, "Annual Report 2021."

⁵⁸ Crime, "World Drug Report 2022."

⁵⁹ Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008).

⁶⁰ Ahmad Raysuni, *Imam Al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intentions of Islamic Law* (London: IIIT, 2005).

⁶¹ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh Al-Halal Wa Al-Haram Fi Al-Islam* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1994).

⁶² Muhammad Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Kuala Lumpur: Ilmiah Publishers, 2003).

Thus, non-penal policy within the Maqasid Syariah framework functions not only to reduce narcotics crime numbers but also to restore reason, morality, and social structure that constitute the foundation of civilized human life.

Conclusion

Narcotics circulation in Indonesia has evolved beyond a local phenomenon into a component of complex transnational supply chains. Within this system, brokers function as critical connectors ensuring distribution smoothness while exploiting economic gaps and legal system weaknesses. Consequently, Indonesia serves not only as a consumption market but also as a strategic transit route within the global dark economy network. From a global economic perspective, narcotics networks demonstrate high adaptability to market changes, exchange rates, and international policies. Cross-border capital flows and digital transactions strengthen broker positions, while cross-sectoral supervision weaknesses render law enforcement frequently reactive and partial, failing to address the economic roots that sustain these networks.

Weaknesses in the Indonesian legal system are evident through institutional coordination deficiencies, inadequate non-penal efforts, and persistent political-economic influences on legal processes. The dominant penal (criminal) approach focuses on individual deterrent effects rather than dismantling the logistics and dark economic structures supporting the narcotics business. From the Maqasid Syariah perspective, particularly the principle of *Hifz al-'Aql* (protection of reason), narcotics countermeasure policies should be directed toward maintaining reason, morals, and human consciousness. Islam emphasizes that reason constitutes the foundation of responsibility and civilization; therefore, all activities damaging it—including narcotics trade and distribution—constitute *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth).

The *Hifz al-'Aql* approach promotes non-penal policies that are educational and preventive, encompassing moral education strengthening, victim rehabilitation, and economic supervision free from illicit practices. Through this method, narcotics countermeasures extend beyond punishment to restore reason and human dignity. Therefore, narcotics eradication efforts in Indonesia must shift from solely criminal law enforcement toward reconstructive unification of positive law policies with Maqasid Syariah values. This synergy will strengthen the state's moral legitimacy while forming a more humane, just legal system oriented toward collective welfare.

Limitation of the Study

This study acknowledges several limitations that warrant consideration for interpreting findings and designing future research. First, data limitations arise from the covert nature of narcotics networks, which inherently restricts access to comprehensive, real-time operational information. The research relies substantially on secondary data from law enforcement reports, court documents, and official statistics, which may not fully capture the sophisticated mechanisms employed by intermediate brokers or the complete extent of cross-border logistics operations. Consequently, certain operational dynamics and network adaptations may remain inadequately documented.

Second, the study's reliance on Indonesian legal and institutional contexts may limit the generalizability of findings to other Southeast Asian countries with differing legal frameworks, enforcement capacities, and political-economic conditions. While the analysis incorporates regional data from UNODC and ASEAN sources, the specific recommendations for policy reconstruction are primarily tailored to Indonesia's institutional

architecture. They may require substantial adaptation for application in neighboring jurisdictions with distinct governance structures.

Third, the Maqasid Syariah framework, while providing valuable normative guidance for non-penal policy formulation, requires empirical validation through implementation studies. The proposed integration of Islamic legal principles with positive law systems represents a theoretical framework whose practical effectiveness, acceptance across diverse stakeholder groups, and operational feasibility in Indonesia's pluralistic legal environment necessitate further investigation through pilot programs and longitudinal assessment.

Fourth, the temporal scope of the study, focused primarily on developments from 2020 to 2025, may not fully account for longer-term trends in narcotics trafficking patterns or the evolving sophistication of broker networks over extended periods. Additionally, the rapid evolution of digital technologies, cryptocurrency mechanisms, and global financial systems utilized by narcotics networks means that findings may require periodic updating to maintain relevance as these technologies and their regulatory environments continue to develop.

These limitations suggest several directions for future research, including: (1) ethnographic or interview-based studies with rehabilitated network participants to gain deeper insights into broker operations; (2) comparative legal analyses across multiple ASEAN jurisdictions to identify regional best practices; (3) pilot implementation and evaluation studies of Maqasid Syariah-based interventions; and (4) longitudinal studies tracking the effectiveness of proposed policy reforms over extended timeframes. Addressing these limitations will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of intermediate supply chain dynamics and more effective policy interventions.

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