

Human Trafficking within Southeast Asia's Online Gambling Industry: International Resilience and Policing Challenges

Submitted 6 January 2026, Revised 31 March 2026, Accepted 11 April 2026, Published 24 April 2026

Muhammad Syaroni Rofii¹, Ruben Firman Ardiyansah²

^{1,2}National Resilience Studies, Graduate School of Sustainable Development, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email Corresponding Author: muhammadsyaroni@ui.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35879/jik.v20i1.706>

Abstract

Human trafficking has become a major concern for the Indonesian government, especially over the last five years, due to the increasing number of cases involving Indonesian citizens. Current trafficking patterns differ from earlier forms because they are increasingly shaped by digital recruitment, ASEAN mobility, and the use of online gambling and online scam operations as a cover for exploitation. This study examines the factors behind the growing number of trafficking cases, the relationship between online gambling and human trafficking targeting Indonesian citizens in Southeast Asia, and the law enforcement challenges faced in addressing this crime within the framework of ASEAN cooperation. This research applies a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through structured interviews with informants who have direct knowledge of cross-border mobility and victim handling, including police attachés and Indonesian diplomats in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. These data were supported by field observations at major mobility hubs, particularly international airports, and by secondary data from the Indonesian National Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers. The findings show that domestic economic pressures make young people vulnerable to deceptive job offers promising high salaries. At the same time, trafficking syndicates exploit regulatory gaps and weak oversight in several countries. In law enforcement, eradication efforts remain constrained by the uneven commitment of ASEAN member states to fully implement the principles of ACTIP. As a result, bilateral cooperation is often considered more effective than regional mechanisms in repatriating victims. This study contributes to understanding recruitment patterns and trafficking networks and provides a basis for strengthening national and regional policy responses.

Keywords: ASEAN cooperation, digital exploitation, human trafficking, international resilience, online gambling, policing challenges.

Copyright (c) 2026 Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is a new issue that has attracted the attention of ASEAN regional leaders. In the past five years, particularly between 2019 and 2025, Southeast Asia has attracted international attention as a key hotspot for human trafficking practices. In 2023, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) specifically identified human trafficking practices directly linked to online fraud. INTERPOL's findings also confirmed the existence of transnational crime centered in Cambodia and then spreading to Laos and Myanmar. This situation has made Southeast Asia a hub for these criminal activities (INTERPOL, 2023). Previously, the United Nations also issued a report in 2019 showing patterns and forms of exploitation related to human trafficking around the world, including sexual exploitation, forced labor, begging, and other forms (UNODC, 2019).

Furthermore, the increasing phenomenon of human trafficking, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic in Southeast Asia, is linked to one country after another. This is confirmed by reports from several regions in Indonesia concerning alleged human trafficking crimes using the modus operandi of job offers in sectors related to the digital economy. However, in reality, victims are directed to become part of online fraud perpetrators. Moreover, those who have fallen into the trap of syndicates operating in Cambodia will be exploited if they are unable to meet targets. This condition then becomes the reason for governments in the ASEAN region to classify cases as human trafficking. As a form of preventative action, law enforcement officials and Indonesian government representatives in the Southeast Asia region strive to be selective and careful in categorizing who meets the criteria as a victim of human trafficking and who falls into the category of perpetrator. This step is taken based on experience in handling previous cases (Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

Based on data held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Table 1), especially over four years, the Indonesian government has actively advocated and attempted to rescue Indonesian citizens caught in the clutches of transnational crime syndicates. Data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows that between 2020 and 2024, there were online scam practices involving Indonesian citizens in countries such as Cambodia, 4,300 people, the Philippines, 770 people, Laos 690 people, Thailand 464 people, Myanmar 429 people, Malaysia 72 people, Vietnam 46 people, South Africa 7 people, and the United Arab Emirates 4 people. Of the total of 6,782 people sourced from Indonesian representatives in these countries, 1,348 were confirmed to be directly related to the practice of Human Trafficking (Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025). The above issues then became a consideration for the Indonesian government to actively bring the issue of human trafficking in the context of Southeast Asia to be a priority issue for ASEAN leaders, namely at the 2023 summit. The Indonesian government hopes that with the attention of ASEAN leaders, efforts to eradicate human trafficking from upstream to downstream can be carried out systematically and organized by involving all stakeholders in ASEAN.

Table 1. Number of Online Scam Cases Handled by Indonesian Representatives Abroad

No	Country	Number of Cases
1	Cambodia	4,300
2	Philippines	770
3	Laos	690
4	Thailand	464
5	Myanmar	429
6	Malaysia	72
7	Vietnam	46
8	South Africa	7
9	United Arab Emirates	4
Total		6,782

Source: Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2025), Author's elaboration.

Furthermore, regarding the profile of human trafficking victims in Indonesia, they come from remote areas of Indonesia, which statistically show high rates of open poverty, such as East Nusa Tenggara, West Java, and East Java (Tribrata News, 2024). In terms of education, human trafficking victims have diverse educational backgrounds, with some having bachelor's and master's degrees, falling victim to these trans-regional syndicates. The perpetrators typically offer jobs in Middle Eastern countries like the United Arab Emirates, but in reality, they are taken to Cambodia or Myanmar (Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025). As for the methods used by the perpetrators to recruit victims, as found by the Indonesian Police, the perpetrators also offer free travel, no work permits, and no competency requirements; all expenses are covered by the sending party. This situation influences the victims and allows the perpetrators to exert control over their victims (Indonesian National Police Media Hub, 2026).

In an effort to enforce the law on human trafficking cases, the Indonesian government has intensified its efforts to arrest perpetrators suspected of being part of human trafficking syndicates in several regions across Indonesia. The Indonesian government also established a Task Force for the Prevention and Handling of Human Trafficking Crimes under the coordination of the Coordinating Ministry for Political and Security Affairs, consisting of the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture and the Chief of the Indonesian National Police as its daily chair. Through Presidential Regulation Number 49 of 2023, the Indonesian government aims to ensure that the handling of human trafficking cases is national and integrated (Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). In its implementation, the government's efforts to prevent the departure of potential victims have been effective. However, a challenge arises when Indonesian victims are already in foreign countries, such as Cambodia or Myanmar. Law enforcement agencies require further coordination between law enforcement agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, due to the needs and policies of each ASEAN country.

The characteristics of human trafficking in the ASEAN region indicate a combination of online gambling, online fraud, and human trafficking. The perpetrators have networks connecting the ASEAN region and beyond. They utilize encrypted communication platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and TikTok to recruit victims and coordinate with their networks in China. Their presence in special zones further highlights the potential for the circulation of criminal proceeds undetected by security authorities (International Crisis Group, 2023; Darmosumarto, 2025). This situation emphasizes the significant impact of transnational crime, which transcends geographical boundaries, on the resilience of the ASEAN region. Recently, the Indonesian government has strived to strengthen its resilience in the face of the surge in cases through several regulations, including Presidential Regulation No. 130/2024 and Ministerial Regulation No. 2/2024 for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, as the basis for preventing human trafficking. However, on the ground, there are challenges in law enforcement. Law enforcers, especially prosecutors and judges, must deal with a wide variety of cases and, at the same time, are expected to interpret the spirit of government regulations. On the one hand, police officers expect perpetrators to receive the maximum penalty under articles related to human trafficking, but based on the facts of the trial, judges have chosen to use articles related to other crimes, such as fraud. (IOM UN Migration 2025).

Legal instruments are considered incapable of breaking the chain of human trafficking syndicates that connect one country to another due to their closed organizational structure and the disconnect between the networks. This disconnected network is an obstacle for law enforcement officials to eradicate the perpetrators to the root (IOM, 2023). In addition, at the regional level, each country has legal sovereignty that cannot be intervened in by other countries; every legal effort requires more specific cooperation when it comes to criminal acts, which, in practice, countries use mutual legal assistance schemes to resolve legal issues bilaterally. ASEAN adheres to a system of non-intervention for each member country, so that in matters of victim repatriation, fulfillment of victims' rights, and coordination for prosecution, a consultation mechanism between countries is required, a scheme that limits the room for law enforcement to eradicate the perpetrators quickly but is hampered by regulations at the regional level. (IOM, 2023). Despite regulatory barriers within the ASEAN region, the Indonesian government is utilizing all available options to ensure effective law enforcement in human trafficking. The existence of a National Task Force responsible for coordinating efforts to eradicate human trafficking has yielded results. This is evident in the downward trend in cases in the regions. In February 2025, the Indonesian government successfully repatriated 6,800 Indonesian citizens suspected of being victims of human trafficking. Through bilateral cooperation with the assistance of the Thai government, 6,800 Indonesian citizens were repatriated (Pusiknas Polri, 2025; Nurcahyo, 2024). Meanwhile, at the national

level, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) is maximizing the presence of its newly formed directorate, the Directorate for the Protection of Women and Children and the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Human Trafficking, to monitor cases in Indonesia and establish similar directorates at the regional level. The organizational approach implemented by the police is a signal that is able to reduce the trend of human trafficking cases (Polri, 2026).

The rise in human trafficking cases has opened a new chapter in the transformation of crime, with online gambling becoming a cover for the activities of human traffickers. When traffickers obtain operational permits in the countries where they operate, online gambling appears to be a cover for more serious crimes. Trafficker syndicates exploit loopholes in operational permits to commit organized crime (International Crisis Group, 2023). At the same time, violations of the principles of human rights protection have occurred (Brysk 2009). In the modern context, human security is a fundamental element on the national agenda, with every country having development targets that culminate in the protection of citizens wherever they are. Therefore, the existence of perpetrators who exploit economically disadvantaged groups who are powerless due to their lack of options provides the basis for asserting that human trafficking syndicates intend to target groups they deem vulnerable and easily controlled. Thus, offers of high-paying jobs without requiring academic qualifications or professional skills are seen as attempts to ensnare victims in the human trafficking chain (Yousaf 2018).

The increasing trend of human trafficking cases in Indonesia and the Southeast Asian region that are connected or integrated with daring fraud with cross-border networks is a topic that deserves attention to be explored in security studies, resilience studies, as well as criminology and police studies, considering that such cases are multidisciplinary. Human trafficking is no longer seen as an ordinary act but also touches the dimensions of the ASEAN regional structure that has a common umbrella to create stability in the region and protect the ASEAN community, countries are required to play an active role in overcoming human trafficking because it has a cross-border dimension, exploiting regional instability, and manipulating the digital economy for organized crime that directly damages the reputation of the ASEAN region that is seen as a crime when interacting with transnational acts. (Srikanth 2014).

Based on the problem description above, this study seeks to analyze how victims fall into the trap of human trafficking syndicates in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesian citizens. It investigates the factors influencing their choice to leave Indonesia for countries perceived as offering decent jobs with high salaries. This research is important because previous studies have mostly explored earlier events that are not yet connected to the current digital economy. On the one hand, victims need work and a decent life, while on the other hand, human trafficking networks disseminate job offers massively through social media with promising offers and without burdensome conditions. This portrait shows how perpetrators exploit regulatory loopholes, creating a broad impact on countries in the Southeast Asian region because they include aspects of legal sovereignty, established jurisdictions, and the lack of legal harmonization among ASEAN member states. The principle of non-intervention in the ASEAN region, which differs from the European Union, which has provisions that provide access to law enforcement across borders, is a loophole exploited by perpetrators. This study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how transnational crimes in the form of human trafficking exploit economic vulnerabilities, weaknesses in the digital economy, and regional instability to ensnare victims in the systematic crime of online gambling and online fraud.

Research Method

This research is a qualitative case study (Miles et al., 2014), which attempts to comprehensively uncover the phenomenon of human trafficking practices related to online fraud. Case studies were chosen to delve deeper into the phenomena behind the high number of cases and the connected networks. As Cresswell (2009) explains, Case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. To draw comprehensive conclusions regarding the case under study, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with five sources, including members of the Indonesian Police task force on human trafficking under the Criminal Investigation Agency (Bareskrim), Indonesian Police Attachés in Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines, as well as diplomats in those countries. Furthermore, researchers conducted observations at departure points such

as Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Bangkok Airport, Manila Airport, and Kuala Lumpur Airport, which are frequently used as transit routes. The observations lasted for two hours to obtain a comprehensive picture of each country's policies regarding granting entry to foreign nationals at airport crossings. The study was conducted over five months, from September 2024 to January 2025. After data collection, researchers condensed the data, displayed it, and drew conclusions or verification (Miles et al., 2014). Fieldwork involved interviews with informants who possess direct knowledge and expertise concerning human trafficking dynamics in Indonesia and its linkages to broader ASEAN migration patterns. All interviews were conducted at Indonesian diplomatic premises, and informed consent was secured from participants through explicit permission to record the discussions and a clear explanation of the study's objectives.

This research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the discourse on human security and transnational crime, which has undergone significant transformations, particularly in the last five years. Human security is a topic that deserves attention because it overlaps with the global agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which calls for ending inequality and realizing peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Theoretical Framework

Human Trafficking, Human Security, and Non-Traditional Threat

Human trafficking represents one of the most complex and concealed forms of human exploitation, involving transnational organised crime networks and operating beyond the geographical and legal boundaries of jurisdiction. The most comprehensive and widely accepted definition derives from the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), adopted in 2000. This document defines trafficking in persons as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation' (Chamie, 2015). According to reports by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the forms of exploitation encompassed within this definition include sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, illegal organ removal, and forced marriage. Human security has been a topic of debate among scholars focused on international law, human rights, and international relations. Each argues that human security is part of a historical transformation marked by the mainstreaming of basic human rights in international affairs. This shift in focus has shifted from state security to human security. This perspective, of course, is not a unified one, as there are differing perspectives between East and West (Acharya, 2001).

It must be acknowledged that human security emerged amidst changes in the post-Cold War world political landscape, marked by the spread of universal values within the global order. Globalization spread rapidly, simultaneously influencing the world community's perspective on security issues. Initially, the state was considered the primary element in protecting human security. It had an obligation to protect every entity within its borders, and therefore, state instruments were directed to support the decision to protect humans. This decision, also driven by the United Nations, had a widespread influence and sparked thinkers, such as constructivists, who sought to explore it from a more academic perspective (Tsai, 2009). Newman (2010) argues that human security is closely related to the direct shift in the context of threats, from external threats caused by the state to changing dimensions of threats that lead to the presence of non-traditional threats that appear to be becoming dominant in various countries around the world. Newman argues that the concept of human security and non-traditional threats is considered a starting point for a broader debate among neorealist thinkers.

Furthermore, human security is also related to non-traditional security. This is evident in the tendency of countries worldwide to focus their attention on contemporary threats that originate beyond the state. This is evident in China and ASEAN. Leaders in the Asian region have positioned non-traditional threats as a shared issue to be addressed collectively, given that the cooperation addresses several forms of non-traditional threats, such as piracy, smuggling, human trafficking, drug trafficking, transnational crime, terrorism, and other emerging threats (Tang, 2016). Tang further elaborated on the challenges faced in implementing this cooperation, as the agreement does not address direct intervention. States are given the flexibility to ratify or implement agreements based on consensus. Although considered ineffective, this step could provide a way to

address non-traditional threats as a shared threat. This situation can be seen in the experience of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted regional and global economic development (Tardy, 2020; Seloom, 2020).

The above study concludes that human security has become a major concern for regional and global leaders. This is further reinforced by the emergence of several consensus within the United Nations calling for serious attention to addressing contemporary humanitarian issues. The practice of human trafficking, linked to cross-border crimes committed by organized crime groups, marks a new era of crime that impacts not only one country but also the surrounding region, with a modus operandi that leverages technology and the ease of human mobility from one country to another. This portrayal of a non-traditional threat, however, presents losses that are equal to, or even greater than, traditional threats. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge the gap between how the phenomenon of human trafficking poses a threat to human security at the national and regional levels. Previous research has focused more on human security phenomena from the perspective of regional cooperation and international regimes that regulate state efforts to address non-traditional threats. This research focuses on the real issues faced by countries like Indonesia: how the Indonesian government protects its citizens, how the Indonesian government deals with regional norms and regulations regarding the repatriation of its citizens, and the consensus within the region regarding security gaps that need to be addressed and enhanced to ensure regional security from threats that endanger humanity in the ASEAN region.

DISCUSSION

Addressing violations against Indonesian migrant workers is a priority for the Indonesian government. Through the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Indonesian government is working to advocate for those deemed victims. Field interviews with Indonesian Police Attachés in Thailand and Malaysia revealed that one of the problems faced by Indonesian workers abroad is exploitation, often involving employers withholding passport documents and then denying wages. In some cases, the Indonesian government has advocated for those who are not paid, even bringing these cases to court. The goal is to ensure workers' rights are fulfilled, and perpetrators who violate their rights are punished (Nurcahyo, 2024).

In addition, the categorization of violations of migrant workers' rights as activities related to human trafficking requires further study, considering that the intentions of perpetrators of human trafficking and those of ordinary criminal offenses have different legal consequences. Human trafficking perpetrators can be charged with harsher penalties, and a global agreement has been reached to combat this issue collectively. At the law enforcement level, in-depth verification efforts are carried out when dealing with cases deemed human trafficking, and the final decision rests with judges, who have binding decisions. Judges render verdicts based on the facts of the trial. Meanwhile, researchers have attempted to differentiate between labor exploitation and human trafficking itself, establishing qualifications such as coercion, deception, abuse of vulnerability, or restriction of liberty as constitutive elements based on international legal standards. This includes the practice of confiscating passport documents, blocking access to communication with the outside world, and unsafe working conditions, as in the case of Malaysia (Yahya and Krisiandi, 2020).

The Indonesian government recognizes that the problem of migrant workers abroad is caused by several factors ranging from low literacy of the world of work abroad, low awareness to report themselves to embassies or representative institutions abroad, the continued practice of sending workers outside the official corridors prepared by the government, as well as the massive offers that appear from human trafficking syndicates targeting prospective workers. There is a difference between before the pandemic and after, before the pandemic, especially before 2020, the recruitment mechanism used conventional methods by relying on labor dispatch services that had branches in several regions in Indonesia, this mechanism lasted for a long time while after 2020 there was a shift where the use of social media was so massive and this method was effective in reaching prospective workers with very diverse backgrounds ranging from educational backgrounds and regions of origin because the wide reach made many young people fall into the trap of human trafficking syndicates under the camouflage of employers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

These activities also lead to cases where domestic workers, who should be focused solely on domestic work, are trapped in commercial sex work because they have no choice or are forced into it (IOM Indonesia, 2023). Women remain vulnerable to human trafficking, a pattern reflected in cases uncovered by the Indonesian National Police. Several investigations have revealed recruitment schemes where victims are promised jobs as domestic workers, only to be forced into commercial sexual exploitation. These deceptive practices illustrate how gendered work expectations are manipulated to facilitate exploitation. Furthermore, authorities have documented cases involving forced marriages, where victims are forced to marry men they have never met, further demonstrating the diverse and coercive nature of human trafficking (Pusiknas POLRI, 2023).

The above portrait demonstrates the relationship between gender-based vulnerability, deception in the recruitment process, and weak cross-border surveillance, reinforcing the need to address human trafficking as a comprehensive discourse, as it concerns human dignity and human security. Based on this research, it was found that human trafficking patterns in ASEAN countries, particularly in the Mekong region, differ from those in the Middle East. In the Mekong region, human trafficking is directly linked to well-organized and well-run online fraud operations. This pattern has become increasingly apparent since June 2022, when the world entered a period of economic recovery from the pandemic, which led countries to reopen tourism and cross-border mobility after two years of COVID-19 restrictions. Informants consistently reported that the resumption of regional movement created new operational space for human trafficking networks embedded in online fraud and gambling schemes (International Crisis Group, 2023; Nurcahyo, 2024).

The Cambodian case served as an early indicator for Indonesian law enforcement to investigate human trafficking cases nationally. The Cambodian case emerged in August 2022, highlighting allegations of torture and illegal detention by a syndicate against 36 workers tasked with running online gambling operations at a company located in a special economic zone (International Crisis Group, 2023). This was further corroborated by the Indonesian National Police Attaché in Bangkok, Senior Commissioner Endon Nurcahyo, who explained that human trafficking cases in the Mekong subregion—Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam—showed a different operational pattern compared to cases in the Middle East and Malaysia. In the Mekong context, human trafficking is closely linked to online fraud operations rather than conventional labor exploitation (Nurcahyo, 2024). According to Nurcahyo, this pattern became evident in mid-2022, following the gradual reopening of economic activities after the COVID-19 pandemic. As tourism and cross-border movement resumed, reports of online scamming compounds began to surface. The first reports he received originated from Cambodia. By August 2022, documented cases included allegations of torture and unlawful confinement involving approximately 36 Indonesian nationals employed in online gambling and scam-related operations (Nurcahyo 2024). This testimony indicates that post-pandemic economic recovery created conditions that trafficking networks exploited to expand scam-based operations across the Mekong subregion.

After 2020, the development of the digital industry in Southeast Asia has given rise to new forms of exploitation in trafficking in persons practices, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic crises, mobility restrictions, and increased internet usage created new spaces for cross-border criminal activities, including the recruitment of victims to work in online fraud centres affiliated with the online gambling industry in Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos (UNODC 2023; IOM 2023). Victims were recruited through fake job advertisements on social media with promises of high salaries and decent working conditions, but upon arrival, they were detained and forced to work under threats of physical and psychological violence. This phenomenon marks a shift in exploitation from labour-based sectors to digital exploitation that focuses on financial gain through cybercrime, including investment fraud, online gambling, and love scams. This form of online exploitation demonstrates how technology has become a new instrument in transnational human trafficking that is difficult to detect through national legal mechanisms (Tumangger and Yusuf 2025; Azis and Azhari 2025).

This shift in exploitation patterns is also driven by the digital economy trend and ease of access to the digital world, which several online gambling operators have exploited to create a new platform for those seeking to generate income through online gambling. Although gambling is categorized as a prohibited activity, the strong digital penetration of online gambling syndicates has led to an increase in this activity during the pandemic. Studies have shown an increase in online gambling activity across nearly all age groups, particularly among young people, due to economic factors, easy access to technology, and weak digital oversight (Ginting and Ginting 2023; Supratama et al. 2022). Meanwhile, from a socio-economic perspective,

online gambling is seen as a way to escape economic and social pressures, while simultaneously presenting new vulnerabilities exploited by transnational criminal networks to recruit victims (Jadidah et al. 2023). Thus, the existence of the online gambling industry not only functions as an arena for digital crime but also represents a new frontier of human exploitation in Southeast Asia, blurring the lines between economic crime, cybercrime, and human trafficking (UNODC 2023; IOM 2023).

The practice of human exploitation in the online gambling industry reflects the complex human security crisis in Southeast Asia. From a human security perspective, this type of threat impacts not only physical safety but also the economic, personal, and community dimensions of victims. Digital recruitment across national borders demonstrates how non-state actors exploit economic and social vulnerabilities to create a form of modern slavery that adapts to technology. Countries in the Southeast Asian region, including Indonesia, face serious challenges in developing protection systems capable of anticipating this threat as they continue to rely on conventional law enforcement approaches. Therefore, countermeasures should be directed towards strengthening human resilience through cross-sectoral policies that emphasise inclusive economic development, digital literacy, international cooperation, and the protection of migrant workers and victims of online exploitation (UNODC 2023; IOM 2023).

New Patterns And Recruitment Mechanisms

Based on the conducted research, several significant findings have emerged, including the existence of regions that have become centres of activity for gambling, casinos, prostitution, fraud, and human trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that there are 100,000 victims of human trafficking in Southeast Asia (UNODC 2023). The high number of victims is undoubtedly due to the ease of human mobility and the weak supervision at the ASEAN level in preventing human trafficking in the region. Specifically, the Government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that in the last five years, there has been a growing trend of human trafficking and fraud cases involving Indonesian citizens. Between 2020 and 2025, there were approximately 10,000 Indonesian nationals linked to fraud-related crimes, 1,500 of whom were identified as victims of human trafficking. Cambodia has been cited as one of the preferred destinations for Indonesian citizens seeking employment, attracted by offers of administrative or marketing positions with salaries ranging from 1,000 to 1,200 USD (Pusiknas Polri 2025; Maarif 2025; Nurcahyo 2024).

Indonesian citizens caught in cases of human trafficking and online gambling practices have been found across Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. According to the data handled by the Indonesian National Police Headquarters, most victims departed on their own initiative after receiving overseas job offers (Figure 1). Brokers who acted as intermediaries for job seekers managed their passport administration and travel tickets. Once the required documents were completed, victims were flown from the nearest airports to their place of residence, most commonly Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Bali, and the international airport in Batam (Darmosumarto 2025). These airports were chosen due to their high flight traffic and their routes connecting to the target Indonesia. From airports in Indonesia, victims were flown to Kuala Lumpur or Bangkok, and upon arrival abroad, they were transported by land to compounds that serve as centres for online gambling and fraud operations.

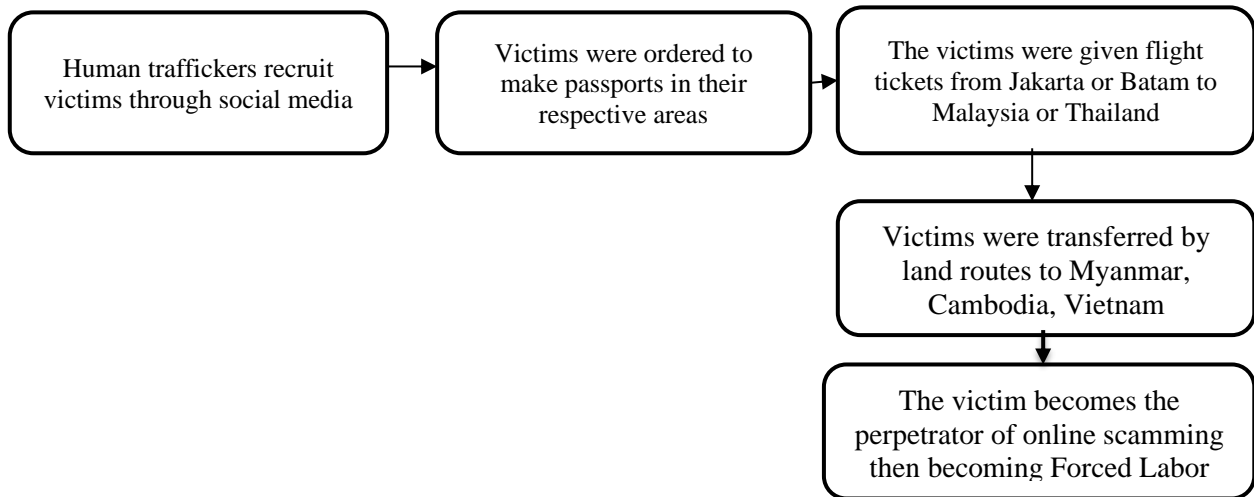


Figure 1: Network of Online Scams and Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia

Source: Authors (2025)

The recruitment pattern utilising social media platforms proved to be highly effective in reaching victims who were generally young and proficient in using electronic devices (Figure 2). Job offers circulated through social media also escaped the attention of law enforcement agencies, which traditionally assumed that human trafficking could only occur in countries with weak legal systems and unstable governance. This gap was exploited by traffickers to recruit as many victims as possible. In Indonesia, the same situation occurred within Indonesia’s Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs, which possesses the technological capacity to detect cyberattacks against national facilities, yet recruitment camouflage conducted by traffickers through social media proceeded smoothly without detection. This was evident from the widespread circulation of job ads freely posted on social media across Indonesia. The government began to suspect these activities after incidents of abduction and confinement involving trafficking syndicates and Indonesian victims came to light (Kementrian Luar Negeri, 2025). Many of the victims in Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam had departed after being influenced by job advertisements they encountered on social media (International Crisis Group, 2023).

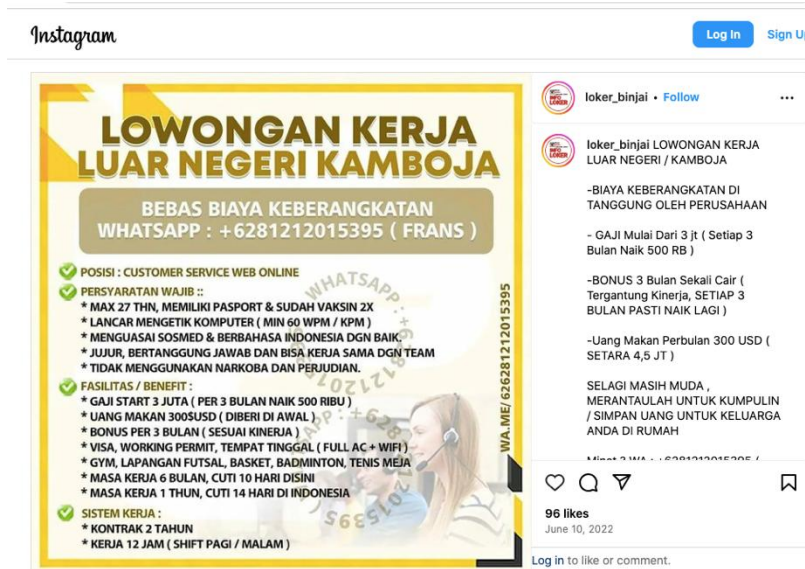


Figure 2: Form Job Advertisement in Social Media for Customer Service in Cambodia

Source: Authors (2025)

Referring to data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as illustrated in Figure 3, there was a sharp increase in the number of Indonesian citizens entering Cambodia between 2020 and 2024. In 2020, 14,565 Indonesians crossed into Cambodia, declining to 8,410 in 2021, but sharply rising again to 75,653 in 2022, reaching 127,178 in 2023, and peaking at 166,795 in 2024. In 2024, out of 166,795 Indonesians arriving in Cambodia,

only 131,184 had residence permits, which means that almost 30,000 did not possess legal residence status. The high number of Indonesian citizens arriving in Cambodia for tourism reasons has become a concern for the Indonesian Embassy in Cambodia, considering that this large number of Indonesian citizens has the potential to become victims of human trafficking. The 2024 data indicate that employment in the online industry accounted for 58 percent of all occupations. Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Migrant Workers Protection (KP2MI), which is responsible for the placement of Indonesian migrant workers abroad, the top five destinations for job seekers are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, and Singapore (KP2MI, 2025). These countries are categorized as recommended by the Indonesian government. Meanwhile, Cambodia has not been included in the list of favorite destinations for Indonesian migrant workers. Cambodia emerged as a destination for job seekers precisely when the trend of online gambling and online fraud drastically increased after the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, according to data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from cases that have been revealed, Cambodia has indeed become one of the destinations for workers recruited by human trafficking syndicates in Indonesia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

Table 2. 2025 Transnational Crime Data

No	Type of Crime	Number of Cases
1	Narcotics	35,171
2	Authentic Data Manipulation	12,901
3	Selling and Distributing Drugs	2,041
4	Psychotropics	371
5	Human Trafficking	349

Source: Pusiknas POLRI, 2025.

Table 3. Human Trafficking Case Trends 2023–2025

No	Year	Number of Cases
1	2023	958
2	2024	691
3	2025	349

Source: Pusiknas POLRI, 2025.

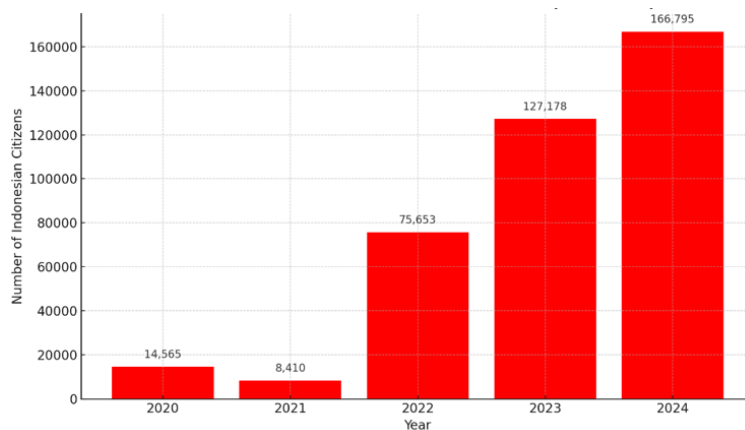


Figure 3: Number of Indonesian Citizens in Cambodia (2020-2024) (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Phnom Penh, 2025; Authors, 2025)

The mobility of Indonesian citizens to countries suspected of being centres of online gambling and fraud activities has contributed to the increase in human trafficking cases handled by the Indonesian National Police (Table 2, Table 3). Transnational crimes in the form of human trafficking represent a major component of the cases investigated by the Indonesian National Police. As an illustration, in 2023, there were 958 cases handled domestically, 691 cases in 2024, while by October 2025, the number had reached 380 cases, with potential for further increase as law enforcement operations continue until the end of the year (Pusiknas Polri 2024). What has occurred in Cambodia exemplifies one of the ASEAN countries where online gambling and fraud are widespread, with similar incidents also reported in Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam.

Policy Gaps

The existence of transnational crimes such as human trafficking in Southeast Asia has opened up a space for discourse regarding the governance of human mobility, whether for tourism, work, or other activities, requiring comprehensive policies at the national level in Indonesia and the Southeast Asian region. Despite the consensus and commitment among countries in the ASEAN region, including the shared norm of the Convention on the Eradication of Human Trafficking (ACTIP), ASEAN has not been able to fully coordinate and harmonize legal aspects and law enforcement mechanisms in addressing human trafficking. Although ACTIP contains shared principles regarding prevention, protection, and prosecution, at the implementation level, there are gaps between countries, indicating a lack of shared commitment among all members. Differences in domestic legislation, evidentiary standards, victim protection protocols, and law enforcement authority create structural fragmentation that is often exploited by perpetrators of human trafficking.

In reality, the absence of a common legal framework at the ASEAN level has led ASEAN member states to rely heavily on bilateral schemes for victim repatriation and rescue operations. Rather than operating through an integrated regional law enforcement architecture, countries negotiate cooperation mechanisms on a case-by-case basis, particularly when rescuing victims from cross-border fraud complexes or forced labor centers. This bilateral dependence reflects a significant policy gap: ASEAN has a normative will, but it lacks a supranational enforcement mechanism capable of ensuring a swift, coordinated, and binding response. Furthermore, in certain regions of Southeast Asia, authority vacuums exist, creating ample space for transnational criminal activity, particularly human trafficking. In parts of Myanmar, for example, areas outside the full control of the central government, particularly those influenced or controlled by ethnic armed organizations, have developed into permissive environments for illicit economic activity, including operations related to human trafficking. These semi-autonomous or conflict-affected zones present unique jurisdictional challenges. Law enforcement officials from several ASEAN countries face serious limitations in conducting investigations, conducting extraditions, or carrying out rescue missions in areas where state sovereignty is fragmented or disputed.

The absence of the state and the lack of authority create a haven for transnational criminal activity. This situation contributes to the emergence of irregularities such as the freedom to conduct illegal transactions, the ease of protection for armed groups, an informal tax system, and limited international monitoring, allowing the human trafficking complex to operate unimpeded. This reality reveals the disharmony between ASEAN's state-centric legal instruments and its inaccessible territorial realities. Regional cooperation and agreements assume functional and cooperative state authorities; however, in a fragmented political environment, this assumption does not always hold. As a result, multiple policy gaps arise. First, there is a gap in legal harmonization, where differences in national anti-trafficking laws hinder smooth cross-border prosecutions. Second, there is a gap in institutional coordination, marked by the lack of a binding operational authority in ASEAN mechanisms. Third, there is a gap in regional management, marked by the existence of areas in Southeast Asia that are not under the full control of authorities, which hinders law enforcement. Such factors contribute to ASEAN's limited collective capacity to combat human trafficking networks that are increasingly moving rapidly and adaptively, exploiting the digital economy and the ease of human mobility in the region.

Consequently, the region faces a structural asymmetry: while trafficking networks operate fluidly across borders and governance vacuums, state responses remain bounded by sovereignty, legal fragmentation, and political sensitivities. Addressing this policy gap requires not only stronger ACTIP implementation and legal

harmonization but also innovative mechanisms for cross-border operational coordination, enhanced intelligence-sharing, and structured engagement strategies for conflict-affected or weakly governed areas. Without bridging these structural divides, ASEAN risks perpetuating a reactive model of cooperation—one that depends on episodic bilateral negotiations rather than institutionalized regional enforcement—thereby allowing trafficking networks to continue exploiting legal inconsistencies and governance vacuums across Southeast Asia.

Recognising the high number of cases, the Government of Indonesia has taken firm action. The President instructed ministries and state institutions to respond swiftly to the issues of online gambling and human trafficking. The Indonesian government even elevated the issue of human trafficking as one of the key agendas among ASEAN leaders during the ASEAN Summit held in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, in 2023 (ACT 2025). As a follow-up to meetings among ministers and senior officials in ASEAN, Indonesia has played an active role in supporting regional cooperation efforts by strengthening coordination within the frameworks of the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Organised Crime (SOM) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Organised Crime (AMMTC). These initiatives aim to ensure the repatriation of victims and to address human trafficking issues continuously and sustainably with a five-year target for 2023–2028 (ASEAN Secretariat 2023). Through solid planning as well as gradual monitoring and evaluation, the Government of Indonesia, together with ASEAN leaders, hopes to resolve the human trafficking problem within a specific timeframe.

At the domestic level, the Government of Indonesia has encouraged law enforcement agencies, particularly the Indonesian National Police, to conduct large-scale operations across the country to arrest perpetrators and rescue victims of human trafficking. According to AW, a member of the Criminal Investigation Directorate of the Indonesian National Police, as a form of particular attention to these cases, the Chief of the Indonesian National Police announced an incentive programme for regional police departments (POLDA) (AW 2023). Those capable of apprehending a high number of perpetrators or rescuing a significant number of victims would receive direct recognition from the leadership. This policy was welcomed by regional police offices, each reporting their respective results (AW 2023). The measure had a direct impact on efforts to prevent individuals from departing abroad. For perpetrators, the nationwide operations revealed a complex network of syndicates involved in every stage of trafficking, from recruitment and document preparation, including passports and tickets, to brokers facilitating movement from one point to another until reaching Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. Knowledge of these trafficking networks was followed by cross-border operations involving ASEAN law enforcement agencies. Through cooperation within ASEANAPOL, police forces in the region coordinated joint operations to rescue victims and apprehend the individuals identified as masterminds behind human trafficking crimes.

The implications of regional cooperation and the large-scale arrests carried out by Indonesian law enforcement included increased awareness among families of victims, encouraging them to report the whereabouts of their relatives who had become victims, either before or after their departure abroad. The growing number of reports from the public provided important indications for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to monitor the presence of Indonesian citizens in countries identified as main destinations for online gambling and fraud-related employment, such as Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. The Indonesian government also dispatched senior police officials to coordinate with law enforcement agencies in Thailand and the Philippines to prevent further human trafficking cases. In addition, the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs blocked websites that were actively engaged in illegal online gambling activities in Indonesia. From late 2024 to mid-2025, the Ministry reported the closure of 1,192,000 websites identified as being linked to online gambling activities (Komdigi 2025). While these policy measures signify progress, the persistence of trafficking networks suggests deeper structural factors driving vulnerability.

This study concludes that the high number of human trafficking cases in Indonesia cannot be separated from both pull and push factors. The pull factors of human trafficking originate from the availability of overseas job offers in countries such as Malaysia and Thailand. For many young Indonesians, securing employment abroad with a salary paid in foreign currency is a dream, particularly in Thailand, which is widely known as a country that welcomes foreign workers in the creative industry sector. Similarly, Malaysia, as Indonesia's neighbouring country, is considered more advanced in terms of wages and provides broader employment

opportunities. For university graduates seeking professional careers, offers to work in Malaysia and Thailand represent opportunities that are difficult to ignore. These reasons have led many young Indonesians to fall into the traps of transnational criminal syndicates engaged in human trafficking.

Several Indonesian nationals who fell victim to trafficking reported that they were initially recruited for seemingly legitimate positions, such as administrative staff or restaurant workers in Thailand or Malaysia. Upon arrival, however, they were transferred to third countries, particularly Myanmar or Cambodia, without prior knowledge or consent. This cross-border relocation reflects a deliberate operational strategy employed by trafficking syndicates, whereby victims are moved across multiple jurisdictions to obscure detection, complicate law enforcement coordination, and reinforce dependency. In these destination locations, victims were compelled to work as operators in online gambling and fraud compounds, often situated within special economic zones characterized by weak regulatory oversight. They operated under strict surveillance, including restricted communication, confiscation of travel documents, and performance-based intimidation (Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan, 2024). The systematic monitoring and geographical displacement reduced opportunities for escape and limited access to diplomatic or legal protection.

The transnational transfer of Indonesian victims from one country to another thus illustrates how contemporary trafficking networks exploit regional mobility regimes and governance gaps within Southeast Asia. By relocating victims across borders, syndicates not only evade national enforcement mechanisms but also fragment responsibility among states, further prolonging victim vulnerability and institutional response delays. The issue of human trafficking has become an iceberg phenomenon that spreads from one country to another. The victims' national backgrounds are diverse, not only from Southeast Asian countries but also from China, South Korea, and Japan. Indonesia is among the countries that contribute a significant number of victims. The Indonesian government itself stated that between 2020 and 2025, there were 10,000 online scam cases involving Indonesian citizens in several countries, and 1,500 of them were victims of human trafficking. Judo Nugraha, then Director of Indonesian Citizen Protection, stated that the number of human trafficking victims reached tens of thousands: "Since 2020, a total of more than 10,000 online scam cases have occurred, initially only in Cambodia, and have spread to nine other countries. In total, we have recorded cases of Indonesian citizens involved in online scams in 10 countries," (Detik News, 2025).

The Indonesian government also continues to strive to repatriate citizens caught in human trafficking syndicates and online fraud networks (Tribrata News, 2026). The large number of Indonesians trapped in human trafficking networks is inseparable from the lack of adequate employment opportunities within the country. The victims' profiles show that most were young individuals who had recently graduated from university, and in several cases, even those who already held master's degrees were still vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking. These findings underscore the need to reconceptualise anti-trafficking strategies through a human security lens that integrates technological, legal, and socio-economic dimensions. This study concludes that human trafficking in Southeast Asia has evolved into a highly complex and adaptive form of transnational crime, driven by international syndicates that strategically exploit advances in information and communication technology to recruit and control victims across borders. Indonesian victims are predominantly young adults, often recent university graduates, who rely heavily on social media and digital job platforms for employment opportunities. This digital dependency has been systematically manipulated by traffickers through fraudulent recruitment schemes disguised as legitimate overseas work.

The findings further demonstrate a direct nexus between online gambling operations, online fraud, and human trafficking. An examination of court decisions and official reports compiled by the Indonesian National Police and the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center reveals that Indonesian nationals who initially departed abroad in search of employment were subsequently coerced into working as operators in online gambling and scam networks. In several documented cases, victims were confined to semi-autonomous zones with minimal state oversight, where they operated under intimidation, surveillance, and restricted mobility. Limited access to external communication significantly constrained their ability to seek assistance from Indonesian diplomatic missions or other protective institutions. This concentration of scam compounds in loosely governed areas has been reflected in international assessments, including reporting and threat analyses by INTERPOL, which have identified parts of Southeast Asia as emerging hubs for large-scale online fraud and trafficking-related exploitation.

Indonesia's experience in repatriating its citizens from countries associated with online scam and gambling operations confirms persistent structural obstacles in case handling and cross-border enforcement. Despite the existence of regional frameworks such as the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP), ASEAN has yet to function effectively as a coordinated enforcement mechanism. In practice, bilateral cooperation among individual member states has often proven more operationally effective than multilateral coordination at the regional level. At the technical level, ASEANAPOL has played a comparatively more functional role in facilitating law enforcement communication and victim rescue operations. Collectively, these findings highlight the gap between normative regional commitments and operational realities, underscoring the need for stronger legal harmonization, institutional coordination, and regional resilience mechanisms to address digitally mediated trafficking networks.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study that has been conducted by utilizing qualitative methods with a case study approach, utilizing field data in the form of in-depth interviews with stakeholders from diplomatic elements and law enforcement officers who know the mobility of Indonesian migrant workers and Indonesian society in general both in Indonesia and abroad, supported by secondary data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Indonesian National Police, the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center, and the Ministry of Manpower, this study concludes that the transformation of society affects the way they interact, this is evident from the strong penetration of social media by human trafficking perpetrators which has an impact on the high number of victims from regions in Indonesia with diverse educational backgrounds and ages. Digital platforms have transformed into a space to advertise job opportunities, which are actually traps that end in human trafficking.

Second, human trafficking syndicates exploit the ease of mobility provided by the ASEAN visa-free system and the relaxed border management practices in some ASEAN countries, creating a space for systematic exploitation by these perpetrators. For some countries, the flow of foreign investment through the Foreign Direct Investment scheme overrides sovereignty and full control over their territories, resulting in the emergence and proliferation of illegal practices by organized crime groups operating across borders. States tend to react when crime cases increase dramatically. Third, the issue of human trafficking linked to online gambling and fraud indicates a serious phenomenon that deserves the attention of ASEAN leaders. This phenomenon stems from ASEAN's inability to consolidate its members to achieve its strategic goals. While ASEAN has a normative commitment to combat human trafficking through ACTIP, this has not been accompanied by a shared commitment by member states to implement it in parallel due to the continued adherence to the principle of non-intervention.

Ultimately, Indonesia's experience demonstrates that law enforcement for human trafficking cases requires detailed mapping, from recruitment and the network of actors involved, administrative processes, the movement of victims from one point to another, and repatriation efforts to return them to their home countries. Indonesia's ability to curb the trend of human trafficking cases stems from its readiness to coordinate national efforts involving relevant ministries and institutions across the law enforcement spectrum. While regional efforts to combat human trafficking have been effective in some cases due to bilateral commitments between countries and cooperation under the umbrella of law enforcement organizations such as ASEANAPOL, which Indonesia frequently utilizes, ASEAN needs to take progressive steps in building an institutional design that allows for flexibility for law enforcement agencies to exchange intelligence and conduct joint operations to combat cross-border crimes under ASEAN coordination.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to thank the Graduate School of Sustainable Development, University of Indonesia, for providing financial assistance to make this research possible. He also expresses his appreciation to the Indonesian Ministries and Institutions that facilitated interviews during the field research.

REFERENCES

- ACT, A. (2025). How ASEAN is progressing in monitoring and reporting for more informed responses to trafficking. <https://www.aseanact.org/story/bwp-merl-workshop/>
- AW (2023). Personal Interview in the office of the Criminal Investigation Directorate of the Indonesian National Police, Jakarta, October 2023.
- Aliansi Jurnal Independen. (2024). Peningkatan Drastis Kasus Penipuan Online dan Perdagangan Orang di Asia Tenggara: Tantangan Penegakan Hukum dan Perlindungan Korban. In Aliansi Jurnal Independen. <https://www.aji.or.id/informasi/peningkatan-drastis-kasus-penipuan-online-dan-perdagangan-orang-di-asia-tenggara>
- ASEAN Secretariat. (2023). ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Work Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023-2028. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Adopted-ASEAN-Multi-Sectoral-Work-Plan-Against-TIP-2023-2028-as-of-08-21-23.pdf>
- Azis, A. A., & Azhari, M. I. (2025). Illegal Online Gambling in Indonesia: Assessing State Securitization and Its Effectiveness. *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, 14(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jhi.v14i1.27827>
- Binder, E. (2022). Getting out of traffic: Applying white collar investigative tactics to increase detection of sex trafficking cases. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1973-)*, 112(3), 631–664. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48668663>
- Bigio, J., & Vogelstein, R. B. (2021). Understanding human trafficking. In *Ending Human Trafficking in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 3–9). Council on Foreign Relations. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep32745.6>
- Blanton, R. G., Blanton, S. L., & Peksen, D. (2020). Confronting human trafficking: The role of state capacity. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 37(4), 471–589. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894218789875>
- Boerman, T., & Golob, A. (2020). Gangs and Modern-Day Slavery in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala: A Non-Traditional Model of Human Trafficking. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 7(3), 241–257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2020.1719343>
- Brysk, A. (2009). Beyond Framing and Shaming: Human Trafficking, Human Security and Human Rights. *Journal of Human Security*, 5(3), 8–21. <https://doi.org/10.3316/JHS0503008>
- Chamie, J. (2015). Human trafficking: A serious challenge to humanity. In *Great Decisions* (pp. 77–88). Foreign Policy Association. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44214796>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, And Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Darmosumarto, S. (2025). Informasi terkini dari Kamboja: Diplomasi perlindungan WNI di Kamboja. Detiknews, "Kemlu: Sejak 2020 Total 10 Ribu WNI Terlibat Online Scam, 1.500 Korban TPPO" <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8169803/kemlu-sejak-2020-total-10-ribu-wni-terlibat-online-scam-1-500-korban-tppo>
- Feingold, D. A. (2005). Human Trafficking. *Slate Group, LLC*, 150, 26–32. <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/30048506>
- Ginting, Z. C., & Ginting, B. (2023). Faktor Penyebab Meningkatnya Pelaku Judi Online pada Pelajar di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 (Studi Kasus di Kelurahan Mangga). *SOSMANIORA: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 2(1), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.55123/sosmaniora.v2i1.1717>
- Hynes, P., Skeels, A., Durán, L., & Lyons, E. (2025). Understanding the human trafficking of children and young people. In *Human Trafficking of Children and Young People: A Framework for Creating Stable and Positive Futures* (1st, First Edition ed., pp. 1–24). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.24963760.6>
- International Crisis Group. (2023). Transnational Crime and Geopolitical Contestation along the Mekong. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/332-transnational-crime-and-geopolitical-contestation-mekong>.
- IOM. (2023). IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific situation analysis on trafficking in persons for the Purpose of forced criminality in Southeast Asia. https://roasiapacific.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1671/files/documents/2023-03/IOM_Southeast_Asia_Trafficking_for_Forced_Criminality_Update_March_2023.pdf
- IOM UN Migration. (2025). IOM Indonesia - 2024 Year in Review. <https://indonesia.iom.int/resources/iom->

- indonesia-2024-year-review
- International Organization for Migration (IOM) Indonesia. (2023). Tinjauan hukum implementasi Undang-Undang No. 21 Tahun 2007 tentang pemberantasan tindak pidana perdagangan orang (UU PTPPO) di Indonesia. https://indonesia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11491/files/documents/2023-09/2023.07.25-online-pub-layout-iom-final_indonesia-1.pdf
- Interpol. (2023). Interpol issues global warning on human trafficking-fueled fraud. <https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2023/Interpol-issues-global-warning-on-human-trafficking-fueled-fraud>.
- Jadidah, I. T., Lestari, U. M., Smanah Fatiha, K. A., Riyani, R., Neli, & Wulandari, C. A. (2023). Analisis maraknya judi online di Masyarakat. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya Indonesia*, 1(1), 20–27. <https://doi.org/10.61476/8xv gdb22>
- Klingebiel, S., Mark Duffield, Necla Tschirgi, Clibe Robinson, Jakkie Cilliers, & Ann Fitz-Gerald. (2006). *New Interfaces between Security and Development: Changing Concepts and Approaches*. Bonn: Dt. Inst. für Entwicklungspolitik. <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=2419373>
- Komdigi. (2025). Sebanyak 1,3 juta konten judi diblokir; Komdigi–BPK perkuat tata kelola ruang digital. <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/siaran-pers/detail/sebanyak-13-juta-konten-judi-diblokir-komdigi-bpk-perkuat-tata-kelola-ruang-digital>
- Kementerian Luar Negeri. (2025). Laporan Kinerja Direktorat Perlindungan WNI Tahun 2024. 2025. https://kemlu.go.id/files/repositori/65397/174071018667c1212ae1402_LKJ_Dit_PWNI_2024.pdf
- Kreidenweis, A., & Hudson, N. F. (2015). *More Than a Crime: Human Trafficking as Human (In) Security*. Oxford University Press, 16(1), 67–85. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44218769>
- Leon, A. D. (2024). Cutting Losses: Southeast Asia’s Crackdown on Online Gambling. <https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/cutting-losses-southeast-asias-crackdown-online-gambling>.
- Liu, W., & Hemrajani, A. (2025). Can Malaysia nudge ASEAN beyond non-interference to tackle the scam crisis in Myanmar? <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/can-malaysia-nudge-asean-beyond-non-interference-tackle-scam-crisis-myanmar>.
- Luo, J. J. (2023) “The Grey Zone of Chinese Capital: Online Gambling in Cambodia’s Sihanoukville,” Vol. 45(No. 3), pp. 414–41. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/917142>
- AM. (2025). Personal Interview, Jakarta, May 2025.
- Mas’oed, M. (1990). *Ilmu Hubungan Internasional: Disiplin dan Metodologi*. Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial.
- Miles, M. B. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage Publications.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia. (2025). Perlindungan WNI. <https://peduliwni.kemlu.go.id/beranda.html>
- Nurchahyo, Endon (2024). Personal Interview in Bangkok, Thailand, September 2024.
- Olumba, E. (2025). *Human Trafficking in South Africa*. By Philip Frankel. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2023 [Review of Human Trafficking in South Africa, by P. Frankel]. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 18(1), 209–212. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48821625>
- Humas POLRI. (2026). Kapolri launching Direktorat PPA-PPO di 11 Polda dan 22 Polres, Perkuat Pelayanan hingga Perlindungan Kelompok Rentan. <https://humas.polri.go.id/news/detail/2253470-kapolri-launching-direktorat-ppa-ppo-di-11-polda-dan-22-polres-perkuat-pelayanan-hingga-perlindungan-kelompok-rentan>
- Pusiknas Polri. (2024). Ratusan Orang Jadi Korban Perdagangan Manusia. https://pusiknas.polri.go.id/detail_artikel/ratusan_orang_jadi_korban_perdagangan_manusi
- Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan. (2024). Penilaian risiko tindak pidana pencucian uang dan pendanaan terorisme yang berasal dari tindak pidana perdagangan orang, tindak pidana penyelundupan migran dan tindak pidana penyelundupan tenaga kerja. <https://www.ppatk.go.id/publikasi/read/215/penilaian-risiko-tindak-pidana-pencucian-uang-dan-pendanaan-terorisme-yang-berasal-dari-tindak-pidana-perdagangan-orang-tindak-pidana-penyelundupan-migran-dan-tindak-pidana-penyelundupan-tenaga-kerja-tahun-2023.html>
- Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Barat. (2025). Top 5 Negara Tujuan Pekerja Migran Indonesia. <https://ltsapmi.jabarprov.go.id/postingan/top-5-negara-tujuan-pekerja-migran-indonesia-691bd1f1741e3bdd7bba6f8>
- Presidential Regulation No.49/2023. <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/258462/perpres-no-49-tahun-2023>
- Srikanth, D. (2014). Non-traditional security threats in the 21st century: A review. *International Journal of Jurnal Ilmu Kepolisian*

- Development and Conflict, 4(1), 60–68.
<https://sapatgramcollegeonline.co.in/attendance/classnotes/files/1589355387.pdf>
- Supratama, R., Elsera, M., & Solina, E. (2022). Fenomena judi online Higgs Domino di kalangan mahasiswa pada masa pandemi Covid-19 di Kota Tanjungpinang. *Ganaya : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 5(3), 297–311. <https://doi.org/10.37329/ganaya.v5i3.1933>
- Tadjbakhsh, S., & Chenoy, A. M. (2007). *Human Security: Concepts and Implications*. Taylor and Francis.
- Thompson, P. S., McCoy, E. F., Hussemann, J., Adams, W., White, K., & Taylor, R. (2022). Recommendations for Practitioners Engaged in Antitrafficking Task Forces: An Evaluation of the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Forces to Combat Human Trafficking. Urban Institute. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep67086>
- Tumangger, D. S. R., & Yusuf, H. (2025). Analisis Kriminologis Terhadap Perkembangan Perjudian Online Di Indonesia. *Integrative Perspectives of Social and Science Journal*, 2(2), 2725–2734. <https://money.kompas.com/read/2024/07/25/161300726/menkominfo--perputaran-uang-judi-online-bisa-capai-rp->
- Tribrata News. (2025). Bareskrim ungkap jaringan judol internasional. <https://tribratanews.polri.go.id/blog/hukum-4/bareskrim-ungkap-jaringan-judol-internasional-84495>
- Tribrata News. (2026). Kemlu upayakan percepatan pemulangan Ribuan WNI Terdampak Operasi Online Scam di Kamboja. <https://tribratanews.polri.go.id/blog/nasional-3/kemlu-upayakan-percepatan-pemulangan-ribuan-wni-terdampak-operasi-online-scam-di-kamboja-99119#:~:text=Sementara%2C%20ada%20hampir%20seribuan%20WNI,dengan%20otoritas%20setempat%2C%20ucap%20Heni.>
- UNODC. (2023). Casinos, cyber fraud, and trafficking in persons for forced criminality in Southeast Asia.
- United Nations. (2019). Human trafficking cases hit a 13-year record high, a new UN report shows. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1031552>
- Yahya, A. N., & Krisiandi. (2020). Migrant Care: 8 Perempuan WNI Diduga Jadi Korban Perdagangan Orang di Malaysia. *Kompas*. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/01/21/22581481/migrant-care-8-perempuan-wni-diduga-jadi-korban-perdagangan-orang-di?page=all>
- Yousaf, F. N. (2018). Forced Migration, Human Trafficking, and Human Security. *Current Sociology*, 66(2), 209–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392117736309>