

EVALUATION OF POLICY AND RESOLUTION STRATEGIES IN THE BANGKA ISLANDS

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Abstract

Illegal tin mining activities in the Bangka Islands have shifted from merely an economic or environmental issue to a serious challenge for Indonesia's national security, triggering both horizontal and vertical social conflicts that threaten regional stability. This study aims to: (1) analyze the authority of local governments in addressing illegal mining as a form of policy evaluation; (2) identify the implications of the conflicts and the resolution efforts undertaken; and (3) evaluate these measures to support national security. Using an Exploratory Descriptive Qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies in key illegal mining areas in Bangka Regency and Central Bangka Regency. The conflict resolution framework (Susskind, 1994) and the concept of National Security (Slawotsky, 2024) serve as analytical lenses to bridge the gap between the normative framework of Law Number 7 of 2012 on Social Conflict Management and field realities. The expected outcome is the formulation of conflict resolution strategies that are applicable, transparent, participatory, and grounded in ecological justice in order to restore effective state control and strengthen national security stability.

Keywords: *Illegal Mining, Resolution Strategies, Bangka Archipelago.*

INTRODUCTION

Current national security issues have become quite crucial because they involve diverse actors, technological dynamics, and the widespread dissemination of fake news (Mağat & Parlak, 2025). In a civilian context, national security refers to the protection of a country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the well-being of its citizens from internal and external threats. The energy and mining sector is an integral part of the nation's industrial development and a center for public welfare, making the security of this infrastructure essential for economic stability and national security (Enokie, 2025). Indonesia, as the world's 3rd largest tin producer, has its main mining location in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province, which contributes 90% of the national tin production. Although this tin potential brings positive impacts, mining activities—especially those that are illegal and unlicensed—have led to various complex problems. Illegal mining activities that proceed without strict regulation and supervision have caused serious environmental damage (Segui et al., 2023), as well as material losses and fatalities.

In addition to environmental damage, illegal mining also frequently causes conflicts of interest, disputes among community groups, and labor exploitation. The accumulation of these tensions can escalate into social unrest that disrupts public order and threatens security stability in a broader scope. Thus, the issue of illegal tin mining in the Bangka Islands has become a serious challenge to Indonesia's national security. Normatively, social conflicts resulting from illegal tin mining should be handled through three stages in accordance with Law Number 7 of 2012 concerning the Handling of Social Conflict: prevention, cessation, and post-conflict recovery. However, effective conflict resolution demands an informal, participatory, and collaborative approach involving multiple parties (Susskind, 1994). The author found that very little research has specifically examined conflict resolution related to illegal tin mining in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province, indicating a gap in the study of national social resilience. Therefore, this research is important to bridge the complex reality of local social conflict with national legal provisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review synthesizes various in-depth studies and relevant theoretical frameworks to map the dynamics of illegal tin mining conflicts within the spectrum of national security. Broadly, literature regarding illegal

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mining often becomes trapped in a dichotomy between ecological damage and economic loss. Studies by Wulandari et al. (2022) and Adi et al. (2024) comprehensively detail the massive environmental degradation in the Bangka Archipelago, ranging from soil physicochemical damage to the destruction of seagrass ecosystems. However, these studies exhibit a weakness in analyzing how this ecological damage transforms into social conflict triggers that threaten regional stability. This research fills that gap by linking environmental damage as a non-traditional security threat (Kitler, 2021). In the security dimension, the paradigm shift in national security from a militaristic focus toward civilian and human security serves as the primary foundation. Slawotsky (2024) and Wu (2025) emphasize that in an era of great power rivalry, the protection of strategic assets and domestic law enforcement are prerequisites for sovereignty. Controversies emerge within the literature regarding the extent to which the state should intervene; some scholars advocate for a rigid legal approach (Putri et al., 2024), while others see the need for legal protection for the investment climate and the community (Sanjaya, 2023). This debate highlights an inconsistency between top-down regulations and the reality of local communities' economic dependence on illegal mining.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study combines the Susskind Conflict Resolution model (1994) with the normative mandate of Law Number 7 of 2012. Previous literature on conflict resolution, as presented by Saaida (2023) and Qasaye (2023), often remains at a general theoretical level without application to natural resource conflicts involving complex "backing" networks. The study by Kozińska & Górnjak-Zimroz (2021) provides technical insights into detecting illegal mining but fails to provide managerial solutions for the conflicts it generates. It is here that this research offers a new contribution by evaluating the authority of Local Governments, which is often "paralyzed" following the revision of the Mining Law—an area that remains sparsely explored within the context of social conflict resolution. In conclusion, there is a clear gap in current literature, where the handling of illegal mining is often viewed partially as a mere law enforcement issue. Few studies have specifically evaluated the actions of local governments in Bangka through an integrative lens of social conflict prevention and national security strengthening. This research aims to address this gap by proposing conflict resolution strategies that are not only repressive but also participatory and grounded in ecological justice. This is crucial to ensure that efforts to restore state control over natural resources align with the long-term strengthening of national security stability..

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to provide a comprehensive and in-depth account of the conflict dynamics arising from illegal tin mining activities. The research was conducted in the Bangka Islands, Bangka Belitung Islands Province, specifically focusing on areas central to illegal tin mining activities, such as Bangka Regency and Central Bangka Regency. Subjects were selected using the purposive sampling method, including illegal tin miners, security forces personnel, local government officials, as well as community leaders and traditional elders. The data collection techniques utilized were interviews, field observation, and documentation study (local regulations, government reports, and media archives).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Local Government Authority in Handling Illegal Tin Mining

The authority of the Local Government (Pemda) in handling conflicts originating from the mining sector, particularly post-revision of the Mineral and Coal Law (UU Minerba), is currently in a dilemmatic position that directly affects National Security stability at the local level. Ideally, based on the mandate of Law No. 7 of 2012, the Local Government bears the primary responsibility in the Social Conflict Prevention phase. This includes mapping potential conflicts, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and formulating policies based on local wisdom. However, the reality indicates the presence of structural conflicts of authority. The withdrawal of mining licensing authority, including upstream supervision, to the central government has created a control vacuum for the Local Government over activities that directly impact their region. An analysis by Haryadi et al. (2023) highlights how the "ecological idealism" of the Local Government to protect the environment and social community often clashes with the legal reality. This reality places the Pemda merely as the party bearing the negative impacts (environmental damage, social instability) without possessing the full authority to revoke permits or comprehensively regulate the mining spatial planning. This policy gap triggers an ad-hoc and reactive response from the Local Government. Field findings indicate that the Local Government in the Bangka Islands tends to focus on short-term responsive policies, such as sudden crackdowns and the formation of joint task forces, rather than implementing systematic and sustainable prevention strategies. The Local Government's authority in conflict prevention is blunted by three key factors:

1. Limited Fiscal Resources: Local Governments often lack adequate budgets and human resources to implement long-term programs for community empowerment, mining law education, and the preparation of viable alternative post-mining livelihoods.

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2. Crisis of Legitimacy and State Control: The absence of control over the legality of the mining itself (which rests with the Central Government) leads the community to perceive any enforcement action by the Local Government as inconsistent or half-hearted. This situation creates a narrative of a crisis in legitimacy and state control (Zulqarnain & Riza, 2024), which opens space for illegal actors and "backing" to operate.
3. Local Politics and the Illegal Economy: Illegal mining networks are often integrated with the local economic structure and, in some cases, the political structure. When the Local Government is only capable of physical crackdowns without offering viable alternative livelihood solutions for thousands of small-scale miners, it merely relocates the conflict and postpones escalation, rather than resolving it. Consequently, the threat to regional security stability is constantly repeated and cyclical.

Thus, the initial evaluation suggests that the Local Government has acted within the framework of Law No. 7/2012 in the Cessation phase, but has structurally failed in the Prevention phase due to the misalignment between authority and responsibility.

Implications of the Conflict and Forms of Resolution Undertaken

The conflicts resulting from illegal tin mining in the Bangka Islands have expanded beyond mere environmental issues to become a complex threat spanning the dimension of Non-Traditional Security (Kitler, 2021). The main implications identified, aside from the state losses in tax revenue, include:

1. Ecological Security Implications (Environmental)

Illegal tin mining activities, both onshore and offshore, cause massive ecosystem damage. Data shows that illegal mining has destroyed marine ecosystems, coral reefs, and seagrass beds (Adi et al., 2024), as well as altering the physicochemical properties of the soil, rendering it infertile for agriculture (Wulandari et al., 2022). This damage is an environmental threat with direct implications for Food Security and Health Security locally, due to water contamination and the loss of marine biological resources (Gurisha et al., 2024). When the environment that sustains the community is destroyed, it triggers forced migration and intense competition over remaining resources, fueling social conflict.

2. Social Instability Implications (Communal)

Social instability arises from various layers. Horizontally, disputes occur among community groups: between miners (who may be migrants) and local communities dependent on the fisheries or tourism sectors; or between small-scale miners and groups possessing political/apparatus backing. Vertically, tension arises between the community and the security apparatus/state. Kozińska & Górnak-Zimroz (2021) indicate that illegal activities, due to their clandestine nature, often involve strong protective networks, creating public distrust in law enforcement. This exacerbates the issue of Social Resilience in the Bangka region.

3. Forms of Resolution Undertaken and Evaluation of Effectiveness

The dominant form of conflict resolution in Bangka is the Conflict Cessation approach (Law 7/2012), implemented through repressive law enforcement, the seizure of heavy equipment, and arrests. While this approach is important, its evaluation indicates a failure to achieve sustainable solutions because:

- a) The solutions provided never address the root causes, namely the high global tin market demand that triggers high prices, structural poverty, and lack of access to promising formal employment (Qasaye, 2023). As long as the illegal economic incentive remains greater, repression merely becomes an operational cost to be borne by the miners.
- b) Resolution efforts rarely employ the Participatory Conflict Resolution model (Susskind, 1994). This model emphasizes the need for interest-based negotiation among all parties (miners, Local Government, traditional leaders, legal companies, activists). The absence of a transparent and inclusive dialogue forum leads miners to feel ignored, and the Local Government to be suspected. However, sustainable conflict resolution demands a process that satisfies all stakeholders (Saaida, 2023).

Evaluation of Handling Measures in Support of National Security

Referring to the concept of National Security (Slawotsky, 2024), the effectiveness of handling illegal tin mining in Bangka must be evaluated based on its capacity to protect resource sovereignty, guarantee public welfare, and enforce domestic law. A comprehensive evaluation indicates that current handling measures are suboptimal and, in fact, counterproductive in the long term with respect to supporting National Security. The persistence of illegal mining activities involving organized actors and networks demonstrates that the state has not yet been fully capable of controlling its own resources, a fundamental prerequisite for sovereignty and National Security (Wu, 2025; Putri

et al., 2024). This weakness exposes non-military defense and security vulnerabilities. National Security is not solely about military strength; it is also about strengthening domestic institutions and fair law enforcement. The failure to prosecute the backers or larger illegal networks, and instead only prosecuting small-scale miners, erodes public trust and creates an unending cycle of conflict. The main weak point is the failure of the Local Government and security apparatus to integrate the three pillars of social conflict management (Prevention, Cessation, and Recovery) in a holistic and structured manner.

Discussion

The analysis reveals a critical disconnect in the governance of illegal tin mining, rooted in the structural conflict between the Local Government's (Pemda) responsibility for conflict prevention and impact management (mandated by Law No. 7/2012) and its lack of upstream authority over licensing and supervision, which rests with the Central Government post-revision of the Mineral and Coal Law. This policy gap compels the Pemda to adopt reactive, ad-hoc Conflict Cessation measures (crackdowns) while structurally failing in Prevention, exacerbated by limited fiscal resources and a resultant crisis of legitimacy. The persistence of illegal activities, often integrated into the local economic structure, poses a complex Non-Traditional Security threat by causing massive ecological damage, which undermines Food and Health Security, and communal instability through horizontal and vertical disputes. Crucially, the reliance on repressive Cessation methods fails because it does not address the root causes (poverty, global demand) or employ Participatory Conflict Resolution models, leading to a perpetual cycle of conflict. Consequently, the current handling measures are deemed suboptimal and counterproductive to long-term National Security, as they demonstrate the state's failure to control resources and erode public trust by only prosecuting small-scale miners instead of the organized networks.

CONCLUSION

The problem of illegal tin mining is a National Security issue because it threatens the entire spectrum of non-military security—environmental, economic, and social. The solution must be complex and integrated, aligning with the view that modern National Security problems require inter-actor collaboration (Kitler, 2021). By adopting a Comprehensive Resolution Strategy based on dialogue, ecological justice, and thorough law enforcement, the case of illegal tin mining can be transformed from a persistent internal threat into an opportunity to strengthen mining governance that is transparent, accountable, and sustainable.

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