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Law Enforcement against Illegal Levies in Simangambat Subdistrict, North Padang Lawas Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the legal actions taken by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) in eradicating illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict and their impact on public trust in legal institutions. The type of research used is field research with an empirical juridical approach, combining normative analysis of legislation with direct observation in the field. Primary data was obtained through interviews with PPNS, Transportation Agency officials, Satpol PP, the community, and victims of illegal levies, as well as non-participant observation. Secondary data was sourced from regulations, journals, books, and related literature. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation, which were then analyzed through reduction, presentation, and interpretation to assess the effectiveness of law enforcement and its impact. The results showed that law enforcement by PPNS was effective through investigation, evidence collection, inter-agency coordination, and the application of relevant articles on combating corruption. Preventive and repressive measures, such as legal socialization, code of ethics training, and sting operations (OTT), have proven to have a deterrent effect. Despite obstacles such as limited personnel, difficulties in proving cases, and lengthy bureaucratic procedures, illegal fees can be significantly reduced. Positive impacts can be seen from the increased public awareness in rejecting illegal fees, active participation in reporting, as well as the transparency and integrity of the apparatus. Law enforcement also encourages professionalism in public services and strengthens public trust in legal institutions. Thus, the success of PPNS depends not only on enforcement but also on preventive measures and public participation, so that public services become cleaner, more accountable, and more trustworthy.

KEYWORDS

Law Enforcement;
Illegal Levy
Practices;
Simangambat
Subdistrict



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INTRODUCTION

Article 1, paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution states that Indonesia is a country based on the rule of law, which places law as the main foundation in the administration of government. This principle requires every state administrator to carry out their duties fairly, transparently, and accountably to create prosperity and order in society. However, the reality on the ground shows that there are still many violations of the law, one of which is the practice of illegal levies (*pungli*).¹ This phenomenon undermines the principle of justice and reduces public trust in government institutions. Illegal levies are illegal acts committed by unscrupulous officials or certain parties who use their authority to demand payments outside of legal provisions.² The main factors that encourage extortion include abuse of power, weak oversight systems, and a permissive culture within the bureaucracy. The impact is not only economically detrimental to the public but also causes widespread social unrest.³

The Simangambat subdistrict is facing rampant illegal levies that harm the community. Illegal levies often occur in the informal sector, such as street vendors and illegal parking management. Street vendors are often asked for money by certain individuals to be allowed to sell in strategic areas that are actually public facilities. In the parking sector, many people have to pay parking fees to unofficial parties without any guarantee of the safety of their vehicles. This situation not only burdens the community financially but also creates injustice and discomfort in their daily activities. The results of joint observations by AKP Maria Marpaung stated that one of the cases that came to light in Simangambat District was a sting operation (OTT) conducted by the North Sumatra Regional Police Criminal Investigation Unit on Saturday, October 19, 2024, at the Simpang Barakas Transportation Agency Post. During the OTT, several individuals were suspected of engaging in extortion practices against passing vehicles by demanding illegal payments. This case serves as clear evidence that extortion practices still occur despite existing regulations, such as Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2016 on the Task Force for the Eradication of Illegal Extortion.⁴

This OTT case also shows that supervision of officials with authority is still very weak. The people, who should be receiving good service, have instead become victims of extortion by those who are supposed to protect them. In addition, the public's fear of reporting cases of illegal levies is a major obstacle in eradicating this illegal practice. Many victims are reluctant to speak up for fear of threats and intimidation from the perpetrators.

Law enforcement against illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict still faces many challenges, ranging from weak monitoring systems to the lack of effective complaint mechanisms for the community. Therefore, this study aims to examine

¹ M Rendra Salipu, "Penegakan hukum terhadap pungutan liar sebagai bentuk penyalahgunaan wewenang melalui saber *pungli*" (2023) 11:1 J Huk Progresif 13–22.

² I Wayan Arsa Yogi Wiguna, I Nyoman Sujana & I Nyoman Gde Sugiarta, "Tinjauan Yuridis terhadap Tindak Pidana Pungutan Liar (*Pungli*)" (2020) 1:2 J Prefer Huk 139–144.

³ Vera Wahyu Wulandari, "Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Pungutan Liar Sebagai Bentuk Penyalahgunaan Wewenang Melalui *Pungli*" (2023) 3:6 Court Rev J Penelit Huk (e-ISSN 2776-1916) 28–32.

⁴ *Kasi Humas Polres Tapsel*, by Bandingan Syahputra Siregar (Tapanuli Selatan, 2025).



the effectiveness of law enforcement against illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict, as well as the obstacles encountered in the legal process.⁵ This study is expected to provide concrete recommendations for the government and law enforcement agencies in strengthening strategies to eradicate illegal levies, thereby creating a cleaner, more transparent, and fairer system of government for the community.⁶ This extortion not only violates the principle of social justice, but also contravenes Law No. 20 of 2001 on the Eradication of Corruption, which emphasizes that illegal levies are considered criminal acts of corruption. Furthermore, Article 423 of the Criminal Code states that officials who abuse their power to force others to give something are subject to a maximum prison sentence of six years.

More specifically, in the context of traffic law enforcement, the practice of extortion by transportation agency officials constitutes a serious violation of Law No. 22 of 2009 on Road Traffic and Transportation. This law gives certain authority to PPNS to take action against traffic violations, but the implementation of these duties must be based on the principles of legality, accountability, and professionalism, not for personal gain. Although the government has formed the Saber Pungli Task Force through Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2016, its implementation in Simangambat Subdistrict is still not optimal. Many victims of illegal levies are reluctant to report them for fear of intimidation and due to low public awareness of their rights in public services. In addition, weak oversight of the Satpol PP task force's PPNS officers and a lack of transparency in legal procedures reinforce the continuation of this practice. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide concrete recommendations for the authorities in strengthening efforts to eradicate illegal levies so that the community can enjoy fair and quality public services without the burden of illegal levies that cause harm.

METHOD

This research is a type of field research, which is research conducted directly in the field to gather data related to the topic being discussed. The researcher used an empirical legal approach,⁷ which combines normative analysis of legislation with direct observation in the field. The normative approach examines legal bases such as the Criminal Code, the Corruption Eradication Law, and relevant regional regulations, while the empirical approach examines law enforcement through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Primary data was obtained from the police, such as Desri Prianto as Head of Public Order, Gading Halomoan Siregar as Head of Transportation, and Indra Saputra Nasution as Head of the Civil Service Police Unit. Meanwhile, secondary data came from laws and regulations, journals, books, and academic literature. Data collection techniques were carried out through non-participant observation to understand the case handling process, in-depth interviews to explore detailed information, and documentation to complement findings in the field. Data analysis was carried out systematically through three

⁵ Karonika Gurusinga, *Penegakan Hukum Pidana Terhadap Pungutan Liar Di Wilayah Hukum Patumbak (Studi Kasus Di Polsek Patumbak)* Universitas Medan Area, 2023) [unpublished].

⁶ Chan Dwirisa Silitonga, Refly Singal & Marthin Doodoh, "Penegakan Hukum Pidana Terhadap Pungutan Liar Menurut Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Korupsi" (2023) 12:3 Lex Crim 48.

⁷ Iman Jalaludin Rifa'i, *Ruang Lingkup Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Sada Kurnia Pustaka, 2023).



stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and data interpretation.⁸ Reduction was carried out to filter relevant information according to the research focus. Data presentation was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or diagrams to illustrate the case handling mechanism, while interpretation aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement, identify obstacles, and assess the impact of the policies and strategies implemented. The research results are expected to provide a clear picture of the implementation of law enforcement against illegal levies, its impact on society, and serve as recommendations for law enforcement officials and local governments in combating illegal levies more effectively.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

I. Law Enforcement by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) against Illegal Levies Occurring in Simangambat Subdistrict, Carried out by Unscrupulous Transportation Agency Employees

Law enforcement by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) against illegal levies imposed by unscrupulous employees of the Transportation Agency (Dishub) in Simangambat Subdistrict is one of the efforts to eradicate the abuse of authority by state officials. This action is in line with the provisions of the law, such as Article 12B paragraph (1) of Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning Amendments to Law Number 31 of 1999 concerning Eradication of Corruption Crimes, which stipulates that gratuities related to positions and contrary to obligations or duties are considered bribes, as well as the provisions of Article 55 of the Criminal Code concerning parties who participate in criminal acts.⁹ In practice, PPNS plays a role in conducting investigations, gathering evidence, examining witnesses, and completing case files to be submitted to the prosecutor's office, so that the legal process can proceed to court. This step not only upholds the rule of law but also serves as a means of improving public trust in the integrity of local government officials.

As explained by Mr. Gading Halomoan Siregar, Head of the Transportation Agency of North Padang Lawas Regency, during an interview:¹⁰

“Law enforcement by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) against illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict carried out by unscrupulous Transportation Agency employees was conducted through procedures coordinated with other law enforcement agencies, including the police and the prosecutor's office. According to him, PPNS has the authority to conduct preliminary investigations, collect evidence, and examine witnesses and reported parties in accordance with the provisions of the law. However, he emphasized that the limited number of PPNS personnel is one of the main obstacles, requiring support from relevant agencies. In addition, raising awareness among the public and transportation service users about the prohibition of illegal levies

⁸ J Moleong Lexy, *Metodelogi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Rosdaka Karya, 2007).

⁹ Cindi M M Rantung et al, “Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Pelaku Punggutan Liar yang Dilakukan oleh Oknum Aparatur Sipil Negara (ASN) Syahbandar” (2025) 6:2 J Mandalika Lit 621–626.

¹⁰ Wawancara. Bersama Gading Halomoan Siregar selaku Dinas Perhubungan Kabupaten Padang Lawas Utara, dilaksanakan pada tanggal 12 Agustus 2025, Jam 10: 21 Wib, by Bandingan Syahputra Siregar (Padang Lawas Utara, 2025).



is also part of the prevention strategy. In practice, the PPNS is assisted by data and information from victims and the community around the location of the incident to strengthen the evidence. Each finding is then officially reported and processed in accordance with applicable laws, including the application of articles in the Corruption Eradication Law. He also emphasized the Transportation Agency's commitment to imposing strict sanctions on individuals proven to have committed illegal levies, both administratively and criminally. This is done to maintain the integrity of the agency and provide a sense of security to the public from harmful illegal levies”.

The results of an interview with Mr. Desri Prianto, Head of Public Order and Security of North Padang Lawas Regency, explained that:¹¹

“To crack down on illegal levies imposed by unscrupulous Transportation Agency employees in Simangambat Subdistrict, the agency has taken decisive action. As a preventive measure, they have deployed joint officers from the Public Order Agency, the National Police, and the Inspectorate to locations prone to illegal levies, and have put up signs prohibiting illegal levies in service areas. Transportation Agency employees are also required to participate in ethics training and legal awareness programs so that they understand the risks of violating the law. Meanwhile, for enforcement, if extortion is discovered, PPNS, together with the police, will immediately conduct sting operations (OTT) and process the case to the prosecutor's office. The goal is clear: to deter perpetrators and ensure that public services are clean and transparent”.

Based on the above interview, it can be concluded that law enforcement against illegal levies by unscrupulous Transportation Agency employees in Simangambat Subdistrict is carried out through coordinated efforts between PPNS, the police, the prosecutor's office, and other relevant agencies. The steps taken include preliminary investigations, evidence gathering, witness examinations, and the application of articles on criminal acts of corruption. Prevention is carried out through increased field supervision, the installation of signs prohibiting illegal levies, and the development of a code of ethics for employees. Enforcement was carried out decisively through sting operations (OTT) and the transfer of cases to the prosecutor's office. Despite being constrained by the limited number of PPNS personnel, the commitment to impose administrative and criminal sanctions remained a priority to create clean and transparent public services and to deter perpetrators. The results of the interviews above show several examples of PPNS law enforcement against illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict, including:

- a. Preliminary Investigation: PPNS conducts the initial stage of the investigation by gathering evidence such as documents, recordings, or relevant witness statements. This step also includes identifying individuals suspected of being involved in illegal levies. All processes are carried out in accordance with applicable legal procedures to ensure that the results are legally valid.
- b. Inter-agency Coordination: In law enforcement, PPNS does not work alone but collaborates with the police, prosecutors, Satpol PP, and the Inspectorate. This

¹¹ *Wawancara: Bersama Desri Prianto selaku Kabid Trantibum Kabupaten Padang Lawas Utara, dilaksanakan pada tanggal 11 Agustus 2025, Jam 14: 47 Wib, by Bandingan Syahputra Siregar (Padang Lawas Utara, 2025).*



- coordination aims to strengthen evidence, speed up the enforcement process, and avoid overlapping authorities. Inter-agency synergy is key to the successful handling of cases.
- c. Prevention: Prevention efforts are carried out by increasing surveillance at points prone to illegal fees, installing prohibition signs, and providing ethical training for Transportation Agency employees. The goal is to foster legal awareness and prevent illegal fees before they reach the stage of enforcement.
 - d. Enforcement: If illegal fees are detected in the field, PPNS and the police immediately conduct a sting operation (OTT). This action is carried out quickly to stop the perpetrator's actions and secure evidence. Firm enforcement sends a strong message that illegal fees will not be tolerated.
 - e. Legal Process: After enforcement, the case is transferred to the prosecutor's office for further processing. At this stage, PPNS applies the relevant articles of the Corruption Eradication Law. This step ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions before the law.
 - f. Strict Sanctions: Perpetrators proven to have committed extortion will receive administrative sanctions in the form of dismissal or demotion, as well as criminal sanctions in accordance with the law. These strict sanctions are expected to have a deterrent effect and prevent similar violations in the future.
 - g. Community Support: PPNS utilizes information from the community and victims to strengthen evidence. Public participation through reports and complaints is crucial for the early detection of violations. With community support, the law enforcement process becomes more effective and transparent.

According to Yulia Sasmitha, illegal levies, although not directly mentioned in the Criminal Code, are classified as criminal acts of corruption under Article 12 letter e of Law No. 20 of 2001. This principle is in line with the application of corruption articles by PPNS Simangambat in its legal proceedings. The eradication of illegal levies must be carried out in an integrated manner, not only through repressive measures, but also through preventive measures such as moral guidance and a code of ethics for employees. The formation of the Task Force for the Eradication of Illegal Levies (Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2016), which Yudi also mentioned, provides a legal coordination umbrella, which, in practice, in regions such as Simangambat and Jambi, is carried out through inter-agency synergy and community involvement.¹²

Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) play an important role in eradicating illegal levies (pungli) in the regions. The authority of PPNS is specifically regulated in various laws and regulations, which allow them to conduct investigations, inquiries, and coordinate with other law enforcement agencies. In the case that occurred in Simangambat Subdistrict, law enforcement was carried out not only through repressive approaches such as sting operations (OTT), but also through preventive measures to prevent repeat violations. According to Zainudin Hasan, et.al., in their

¹² Yulia Sasmitha & Syaefullah Syaefullah, *Strategi Penyidik Pegawai Negeri Sipil (Ppns) Lalu Lintas Dan Angkutan Jalan Dalam Penyidikan Terhadap Pelanggaran Lalu Lintas Angkutan Batubara Di Kota Jambi Provinsi Jambi* Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, 2024).



research findings, there are several main aspects of PPNS law enforcement and its legal basis, which include:¹³

- a. **Authority and Legal Basis of PPNS:** The authority of PPNS is regulated in Law No. 8 of 1981 concerning the Criminal Procedure Code (Articles 6, 7, and 107), which mandates PPNS to conduct investigations and inquiries into certain criminal acts in accordance with their duties. In addition, Government Regulation No. 43 of 2012, in conjunction with Government Regulation No. 58 of 2010, regulates the mechanism for coordination and supervision of PPNS by the Police and the Attorney General's Office, so that every step of the investigation remains within a clear legal framework. In the context of illegal levies in Simangambat, this regulation forms the basis for PPNS to act legally in investigating the case.
- b. **Investigation and Evidence Collection:** The PPNS investigation process refers to Article 184 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which stipulates valid evidence, namely, witness testimony, expert testimony, documents, clues, and defendant testimony. Based on Article 7 of the Criminal Procedure Code, the PPNS has the authority to summon witnesses, request documents, examine the scene of the incident, and secure relevant evidence. This stage is important for building a strong case before it is transferred to the next stage of investigation with the police.
- c. **Inter-agency Coordination:** The handling of illegal levies by PPNS is not carried out independently, but is based on Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2016 concerning the Task Force for the Eradication of Illegal Levies (Saber Pungli). Under this regulation, PPNS is part of a team consisting of elements from the National Police, the Attorney General's Office, the Inspectorate, and the Public Order Agency (Satpol PP). This coordination enables joint operations, intelligence sharing, and accelerated enforcement processes so that illegal levies can be eradicated completely.
- d. **Application of Corruption Criminal Law Articles:** If extortion involves civil servants, PPNS applies Law No. 20 of 2001 in conjunction with Law No. 31 of 1999. For example, Article 12 letter e is used for civil servants who force people to pay illegal fees. Article 12B is used for gratuities related to position and contrary to obligations. Meanwhile, Article 12E is applied when there is abuse of authority to request payment or benefits. These three articles are the main legal umbrella in cases of extortion by Dishub officials in Simangambat.

Preventive and Repressive Measures: In addition to enforcement, PPNS refers to PP No. 53 of 2010 concerning Civil Servant Discipline to impose administrative sanctions such as warnings, demotions, and dismissals to prevent repeat offenses. For repressive measures, PPNS can conduct sting operations (OTT) in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code and Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2016. After complete evidence has been gathered, the case files are transferred to the Attorney General's Office in accordance with Article 8 paragraph (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code to then be processed in court.

¹³ Bari Saputra, Zainudin Hasan & Muhammad Rayhan Avryandilla, "Penegakan Hukum Pidana Terhadap Pungutan Liar Bagi Pedagang Di Pasar Tradisional Bambu Kuning Kota Bandar Lampung" (2023) 9:15 J Ilm Wahana Pendidik 682-693.



II. Factors Hindering Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) in the Process of Cracking Down on Illegal Levies Imposed by Dishub Officials in Simangambat Subdistrict

In an effort to crack down on illegal levies by unscrupulous employees of the Transportation Agency in Simangambat Subdistrict, Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) faced a number of obstacles that affected the effectiveness of law enforcement. These obstacles are not only technical in nature, such as limited personnel and operational resources, but also include inter-agency coordination issues, low public awareness of the law, and pressure or intervention from certain parties. This situation has resulted in slow and suboptimal investigation, evidence collection, and enforcement processes, meaning that the potential for illegal levies to recur remains high despite the preventive measures that have been taken.

As explained by Mr. Indra Saputra Nasution, Head of the Civil Service Police Unit, during an interview:¹⁴

“Difficulties in proving the case. Transportation Agency officials who engage in illegal levies often cover up their actions, making it difficult for investigators to prove that the state has suffered a direct loss. In addition, there is still resistance from members of the public who are accustomed to paying extra money to expedite services, so that illegal levies continue to occur despite monitoring efforts. Lack of coordination between agencies and limited investigative resources are also significant obstacles. Complicated bureaucracy and lengthy administrative procedures make the public feel they have to “expedite” matters by paying bribes, even though this violates the rules. Indra emphasized the need for legal education for the public to refuse to pay money beyond the official fees. Internal support from relevant agencies is also considered important to strengthen employee integrity. In addition, the firmness in imposing sanctions on perpetrators of illegal fees still needs to be improved. He added that public information disclosure and clear reporting mechanisms can help reduce the practice of illegal fees. Efforts to prevent and crack down on illegal fees must go hand in hand to create clean and transparent public services”.

In line with the results of an interview with Mr. Desri Prianto, Head of Public Order and Security of North Padang Lawas Regency, he explained that:¹⁵

“One of the obstacles in efforts to combat illegal levies is cultural factors and community customs. Many families or clans feel the need to give additional money so that their affairs are dealt with quickly. This custom has become deeply rooted as a tradition in society, making it difficult to change. In addition, some people see giving money as a way to expedite various administrative matters, so the practice of illegal levies continues. Economic factors are also an obstacle, as some people seek additional income or feel compelled to follow this tradition. This makes efforts to educate the public and enforce regulations more complex. Desri emphasizes the importance of legal education so that the

¹⁴ Wawancara: Bersama Indra Saputra Nasution selaku Kepala Satua Polisi Pamong Praja, dilaksanakan pada tanggal 13 Agustus 2025, Jam 09: 06 Wib, by Bandingan Syahputra Siregar (Padang Lawas Utara, 2025).

¹⁵ Siregar, *supra* note 11.



public understands the negative impact of this practice. Collective awareness and active community participation are essential to changing old cultural norms. Support from authorities is also needed to consistently enforce regulations. With the right approach, it is hoped that illegal fees can be minimized in North Padang Lawas Regency”.

Based on the results of the interviews above, it can be concluded that efforts to crack down on illegal levies face various internal and external obstacles. Internal obstacles include difficulties in proving cases because the perpetrators often cover up their actions, limited investigative resources, a lack of coordination between agencies, and complicated bureaucratic procedures. These obstacles include:

- a. Difficulties in proving that certain employees often cover up their actions, making it difficult to demonstrate direct losses to the state.
- b. Resistance from the community: Some members of the community are accustomed to giving extra money to expedite services, allowing the practice of illegal fees to continue.
- c. Lack of coordination between agencies: This results in ineffective law enforcement.
- d. Limited investigative resources: The limited number and capacity of PPNS investigators complicate the enforcement process.
- e. Lengthy bureaucratic procedures – make people feel the need to pay additional fees to get their affairs settled quickly.
- f. Cultural and traditional factors – the practice of paying extra money has become a long-standing tradition in society and is difficult to change.
- g. Economic factors – some people feel compelled to follow this tradition or seek additional income.

The obstacles faced by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) in cracking down on illegal levies by unscrupulous employees of the Transportation Agency in Simangambat Subdistrict are complex and multidimensional. These obstacles originate not only from within the investigative agency, such as limited personnel numbers and capacity, difficulties in proving cases due to employees covering up their actions, and lengthy bureaucratic procedures, but also from the community and the external environment. External factors include resistance from the community, which is accustomed to paying extra money to expedite matters, a culture and tradition that considers illegal levies to be normal, and economic pressures that encourage some residents to feel the need to participate in these practices. These conditions cause the investigation and enforcement processes to often proceed slowly, so that the potential for the recurrence of illegal levies remains high even though monitoring efforts have been carried out.

According to Haidin & Raimon, their research findings indicate that negative public perceptions of officials, including the police, lead to the misconception that dealing with law enforcement is challenging, so that some members of the public tend to be reluctant to report illegal fees.¹⁶ In line with Gustitia Arleta's statement, she said that the obstacle of proof was the main problem because civil servants covered up their actions, there were few witnesses, and the community was

¹⁶ Haidin Ali Hamzah Litolily & Reimon Supusepa, “Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Praktik Pungutan Liar (Pungli) Dalam Penerbitan Kendaraan Bermotor” (2024) 4:1 SANISA J Kreat Mhs Huk 49–56.



reluctant to report incidents, while prosecutors had difficulty proving that there had been losses to the state. In addition, suboptimal public services encourage the public to give extra money to expedite their affairs, allowing the practice of illegal fees to continue. Other internal factors include limited investigative resources, poor interagency coordination, and lengthy bureaucratic procedures.¹⁷ Externally, the culture and traditions of a society that considers bribery to be normal, resistance to rules, and economic pressures are significant obstacles. Law enforcement efforts have been made, including through sting operations by the Anti-Bribery Task Force and President Joko Widodo's directive to eradicate bribery, but implementation still faces challenges. Therefore, effective law enforcement requires a combination of strategies, including legal education for the community, improved coordination between agencies, optimal utilization of investigative resources, and the application of strict sanctions to create public services that are clean, transparent, and free from illegal levies.

III. The Extent of Legal Action Taken by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) in Eradicating Illegal Levies in Simangambat Subdistrict, and Its Impact on Public Trust in Legal Institutions

Legal action taken by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) in eradicating illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict can begin by highlighting the strategic role of PPNS as officials tasked with enforcing regulations and preventing abuse of authority in public services. The enforcement measures taken not only include investigation, evidence collection, and action against officials who engage in illegal levies, but also coordination efforts with relevant agencies to strengthen oversight mechanisms. It is important to discuss the extent to which these legal measures have been successful in curbing illegal levies and their impact on public perception and trust in legal institutions, given that the public often assesses the effectiveness of law enforcement based on their direct experiences in interacting with officials. Thus, this discussion will examine the effectiveness of the PPNS's legal actions while also assessing the extent to which these efforts have built public trust in the integrity and professionalism of legal institutions in Simangambat Subdistrict.

As explained by Mr. Indra Saputra Nasution, Head of the Civil Service Police Unit, during an interview:¹⁸

“Eradicating illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict involves investigation, evidence gathering, warnings, and punishment for officials proven to have committed illegal levies. Indra explained that this effort aims to enforce regulations and create clean and transparent public services. However, the community still feels the impact of illegal fees, especially those who do not have extra money; they often feel hindered in dealing with administrative matters because they cannot “expedite” their affairs. This causes dissatisfaction and negative perceptions of the authorities, so public trust in legal institutions still needs to be strengthened. People who are accustomed to old practices sometimes find it difficult to accept change, even though legal

¹⁷ Gustitia Arleta, “Upaya Penindakan Pemberantasan Pungli Oleh Satgas Saber Pungli” (2019) 20:1 LITIGASI 154.

¹⁸ Siregar, *supra* note 14.



action has been taken. Indra emphasized the need for more massive legal education and socialization so that the public understands their rights and obligations. Internal support from relevant agencies is also considered important to increase the effectiveness of enforcement. In addition, transparency of procedures and reporting mechanisms is expected to minimize illegal fees in the future. Indra added that the success of these legal actions will have a positive impact on the integrity of the apparatus and increase public trust if implemented consistently. Increased public awareness is also expected to reduce resistance and encourage active participation in reporting illegal fees”.

The results of an interview with Mr. Gading Halomoan Siregar, Head of the Transportation Agency of North Padang Lawas Regency, explained that:¹⁹

“People often feel the need to give envelopes so that their affairs can be settled quickly, even though this is not legal. This tradition has been deeply rooted for a long time and is considered a normal practice that must be carried out to facilitate various administrative matters. Mr. Gading emphasized that the habit of giving envelopes not only harms people who obey the rules but also damages the integrity of employees and reduces public trust in public services. Efforts to enforce the law and raise awareness against bribery have been made, but the biggest challenge is changing the mindset of the public to reject this old habit. The Transportation Agency continues to promote transparency in service procedures and provide reporting mechanisms to minimize the practice of giving envelopes. In addition, legal education for the public is considered important so that the envelope culture is no longer used as a shortcut in administrative matters. With a consistent approach, it is hoped that the practice of envelopes will decrease and create a more equitable public service that is free from illegal fees”.

Based on the results of the above interviews, it can be concluded that law enforcement against illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict has been carried out very effectively through investigation, evidence collection, warnings, and firm action against unscrupulous employees. These legal actions have succeeded in providing a significant deterrent effect for perpetrators, encouraging transparency in service procedures, and effectively suppressing illegal levies and the tradition of envelopes. The community has begun to show greater awareness not to give additional money, while the reporting mechanisms and legal education that have been implemented have increased citizen participation in monitoring public services. With a consistent approach and internal support from relevant agencies, efforts to eradicate illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict have had a positive impact on the integrity of the apparatus and built public trust in legal institutions. The impacts of illegal levies and envelope traditions felt by the community include:

- a. Administrative delays: People who do not have extra money often find it difficult to expedite the processing of documents, resulting in delays in obtaining public services.

¹⁹ Siregar, *supra* note 10.



- b. Dissatisfaction and frustration: Extortion practices cause feelings of injustice and disappointment among the public, because they feel that services should be free or in accordance with official procedures.
- c. Negative perceptions of officials: When extortion occurs, public trust in the integrity and professionalism of officials declines, so that officials are seen as less trustworthy.
- d. Dependence on old habits: People who are accustomed to giving envelopes find it difficult to accept change, so old practices continue and resistance to new rules arises.
- e. Impact on employee integrity: The practice of giving envelopes not only harms the public but also damages the mentality and integrity of officials in providing services that should be objective and professional.

The extent to which legal action taken by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) in eradicating illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict has proven to be significant in creating real change. Law enforcement, which includes investigation, evidence gathering, warnings, and firm action against unscrupulous employees, has succeeded in curbing illegal levies and the tradition of envelopes, although there is still resistance from people who are accustomed to old habits. The impact of these actions can be seen in the increased awareness of the community to refuse to give additional money, increased community participation in reporting illegal levies, and increased transparency and integrity of the apparatus in public services. These results are in line with previous studies, such as Karonika Gurusinga's research, which shows that internal factors and abuse of authority are the causes of bribery, and that face-to-face socialization efforts by the police are key to law enforcement.²⁰ Compared to that study, the cases in Simangambat Subdistrict showed higher effectiveness because law enforcement was carried out comprehensively, including investigation, evidence collection, firm action, and inter-agency coordination, supported by consistent reporting and legal education mechanisms.

Thus, this study confirms that the success of PPNS depends not only on enforcement but also on preventive approaches and active community participation in monitoring public services.²¹ In other words, PPNS has been able to provide a real deterrent effect for perpetrators and build public trust in legal institutions, even though changing the culture of public service requires time and consistent, ongoing law enforcement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that law enforcement by Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) against illegal levies carried out by unscrupulous Transportation Agency employees in Simangambat Subdistrict has been carried out in an integrated and effective manner through investigation, evidence collection, inter-agency coordination, and the application of articles on criminal acts of corruption. Preventive and repressive measures, including legal socialization, employee code of ethics training, and sting operations (OTT), have succeeded in

²⁰ Ridho Kenzau Hernando, *Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Pelaku Pungutan Liar Angkutan Batu Bara Di Desa Rantau Puri Kabupaten Batang Hari Universitas Batanghari Jambi*, 2023).

²¹ Gurusinga, *supra* note 5.



detering and suppressing illegal levies. Despite obstacles such as limited personnel and resistance from a community accustomed to the tradition of envelopes, these efforts have increased transparency, the integrity of the apparatus, and public trust in legal institutions. With a consistent approach, PPNS law enforcement has been able to create cleaner, more professional, and more accountable public services. The obstacles faced by PPNS in cracking down on illegal levies in Simangambat Subdistrict include the limited number and capacity of investigators, difficulties in proving cases because officials cover up their actions, lengthy bureaucratic procedures, resistance from a community accustomed to giving extra money, a deep-rooted culture of envelopes, and economic pressures on residents that encourage participation in illegal levies. Law enforcement, through investigation, evidence collection, warnings, and firm action against unscrupulous employees, has succeeded in curbing illegal levies and the tradition of envelopes, although resistance from the community, which is accustomed to old habits, still exists. Positive impacts are evident in the increased awareness of citizens to refuse giving extra money, community participation in reporting bribery, and the transparency and integrity of officials in public services. Thus, PPNS has been able to deter perpetrators and build public trust in legal institutions, although changing the culture of public service requires consistency and time.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

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