

## Analysis of the Role of Skouw PLBN in Handling Drugs Smuggling at The Indonesian Border Papua New Guinea

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### Abstract

*The using of short cut road also become a reason why this kind of crime still exist in the border of Indonesia – PNG. To overcome this issue, Indonesia established a post where cross nation between Indonesia – PNG called PLBN (Pos Batas Lintas Negara) which is located in Skouw, Jayapura. This research aims to analyze the role of PLBN Skouw in order to deal with drug smuggling that taking place in the border of Indonesia – PNG. This research is using qualitative method which is trying to looking for the answer by collecting the datas and filtering them to support the argument that already constructed. Besides, this research also applying National Security Theory, Border Security and Drug Trafficking Concept. Furthermore, this research shows that PLBN Skouw has the role to deal with drug smuggling issue in the border of Indonesia – PNG. The roles are as regulator, overseer and center of border mobility. However, the role as center of border mobility did not meet the expectation, meanwhile the role as regular and overseer were performed optimally enough.*

### Keywords

PLBN skouw; Indonesia; papua new guinea; drug smuggling



## I. Introduction

National security is an absolute thing that must be upheld by a country. According to Berkowitz (1965), national security is defined as the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats. (Eds. Berkowitz, 1965) The UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel Report (2004) identifies economic and social threats, transnational organized crime, as well as conflicts between countries, internal conflicts, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as global security threats. (Nasu, 2011)

This national security does not only cover one area, but also the entire territory of the country including those at the border. Border is understood as the side or outer edge of the surface of an area or region or country marked with a boundary line or dividing line under control or claimed as belonging to a country to be defended from the entry of people or goods. (OJO, 2011) United States Department of Defense (2017), that border security is to protect national borders from smuggling illegal weapons, illegal drugs, people smuggling and guarding the entry and exit of passers-by, for security, economic prosperity and national sovereignty. (Anggoro, 2003). The economic condition of the population is a condition that describes human life that has economic score (Shah et al, 2020). Economic growth is still an important goal in a country's economy, especially for developing countries like Indonesia (Magdalena and Subatman, 2020).

Border areas are often places where various transnational crimes take place, one example is drug smuggling. Indonesia is also experiencing the same problem. The Indonesia-PNG border is often a place where drug smuggling takes place. This drug

smuggling cannot be separated from the high poverty rate and poor infrastructure there which causes border communities to be forced to become involved in drug smuggling syndicates.

Papua Province, which is the closest province to PNG, is the most ideal place for smuggling. Drugs that enter Papua come from two sources, namely several major provinces in Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Surabaya and Makassar, and other sources from PNG. Drugs coming from this large province are generally smuggled by land and sea. Smuggling operations carried out to send drugs from the domestic province to Papua usually use cargo ships. It is easy for drugs to enter Papua because this region does not have the latest X-Ray drug detectors. (LIPI, 2019)

Meanwhile, drugs from PNG are usually carried out by boat or through the forest which is the border between Papua and PNG. Generally, this is done by sending 2 ships. The first ship is used to monitor whether there are officers guarding the border and if the situation is safe, the second ship containing drugs will enter the border. (LIPI, 2019).

**Table 1.** Drug Discovery Involving PNG Foreigners

No	Year	Amount	Foreigne	Indonesian	marijuana	methamphetamine
1	2016	39	4	45	29	10
2	2017	51	3	57	40	11
3	Jan s/d Okt 2018	99	15	105	90	9

Source: (Sinaga., 2019)

It can be seen that drug discovery cases involving PNG foreigners continue to rise, with marijuana and shabu being the most trafficked drug commodities. Therefore, seeing this phenomenon, the Indonesian government feels it is very necessary to improve border security by strengthening the PLBN (Trans-National Boundary Post) located on the Indonesia-PNG border, namely in Skouw. This study attempts to analyze the roles of the Skouw PLBN in dealing with drug smuggling cases on the border between Indonesia and PNG.

## II. Review of Literature

This research uses National Security Theory, Border Security and the Concept of Drug Trafficking.

### 2.1 National Security Theory

Steven J. Main in his writing entitled *Russia's New National Security Concept The Threat Defined*, argues that Russian scientists define national security as the security of a person, society and state from internal and external threats, security stability from the threat of destructive factors, therefore national security must also maintain or safeguard living conditions from such internal and external threats to ensure safety; overall progress of society and citizens. (Darmono, 2010)

In the 2005 Report of the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, to a greater degree freedom, added poverty, deadly infectious diseases, and environmental degradation to the list of security concerns arguing that these could have equally dire consequences. (Nasu, 2011).

## **2.2 Border Security**

Border security is a concept in the study of security in international relations. Border is understood as the side or outer edge of the surface of an area or region or country which is marked with a boundary line or dividing line under the control or claimed as belonging to a country to be defended from the entry of people or goods. First, the function of national defense becomes the military domain. Second, the function of state security is not the military domain which is the responsibility of border control and immigration control.(OJO, 2011)

## **2.3 Drug Trafficking**

Organized crime or also known as transnational crime is an organized group whose main purpose is to make money both legally and illegally by selling any merchandise that can provide profits with as little risk as possible. These activities include buying and selling of weapons, narcotics, violent crimes, extortion, money laundering, pornography, prostitution, computer crime, and ecology. (J. Marine, 2016)

One of the types of organized crime that is a challenge for ASEAN member countries is Indonesia. Crimes in the form of piracy, drug trafficking, smuggling and human trafficking, there are also leading criminal organizations in Asia, such as environmental security, deforestation, and illegal logging, and terrorism. Transnational crimes that are not uncommon to find are drug smuggling or drug trafficking. Drug smuggling is found in many border areas and has claimed many lives throughout the country. It is not surprising that even in the border areas of Indonesia, the practice of drug trafficking cannot be separated. Because of Indonesia's geographical proximity to the golden triangle. The golden triangle is an area located in Southeast Asia. This area consists of northern Thailand, western Laos, and eastern Myanmar. It is in this region that narcotics, heroin, and amphetamine are produced and distributed throughout the world. This business reaps multiple benefits. (Cipto, 2010)

## **III. Research Method**

This research is included in the type of qualitative research using descriptive methods. Then, this study also applies data collection techniques by utilizing primary data, secondary data and interviews. Meanwhile, for data processing using the steps of drawing conclusions and verification.

## **IV. Result and Discussion**

PLBN Skouw has 3 roles in handling drug smuggling at the Indonesia-PNG border, namely:

### **4.1 The Role of PLBN Skouw as regulator**

The role of PBLN Skouw as a regulator is evidenced by the issuance of rules for the use of passports and visas for every foreigner who enters the Papua region. The rules for the use of passports and visas were then tightened again in 2019 which was put in place to reduce illegal border crossers who had been a mode of drug smuggling. Based on the type, there are 3 types of border crossers passing by at the Skouw PLBN border, namely (1) traditional border crossers which refers to people entering Indonesian territory without using a passport or visa. These people can enter Papua by only reporting which will then

receive a KLB (Cross Border Card) letter. (2) Modern border crossers which refer to people who enter the border areas of each country using passports and visas. (Detik, 2021)

To obtain a visa, you can contact the Consulate General of Papua New Guinea, Jayapura. And, (3) illegal border crossers which refer to any person who enters the territory of each country without using a passport, visa or KLB. The role of PLBN Skouw as a regulator is intended to reduce the number of illegal border crossers who enter the Indonesian border without using the required permits. (Detik, 2021)

#### 4.2 The Role of PLBN Skouw as Supervisor

This role focuses on supervising the regulation of the use of passports and visas as a condition for entering the Indonesian border, where this supervision is also accompanied by punishment, namely deportation.

**Table 2.** Number of Deportations of Foreigners from Papua

Year	Amount Foreigner	Amount Nuginie Foreigner
2019	52	-
2020	116	99
2021	61	54

*Source: The Author's Results from Various Sources*

To reduce drug smuggling into Indonesian territory, deportation is one of the routes chosen for border crossers who do not have official documents. Based on the data that the author managed to collect, in 2019 alone there were 52 foreigners who entered Papua. There are no exact figures for the number of PNG foreigners, but based on Kompas.com, PNG foreigners are the most deported foreigners by the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights Papua. This fact was stated directly by Hermansyah Siregar as the Head of the Immigration Division of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in Papua. (Kompas, 2019) Meanwhile, 2020 was the year with the highest number of deportations involving 99 PNG foreigners. This number was later reduced to 54 people in 2021.

In addition to supervising by imposing sanctions in the form of deportation, PLBN Skouw through the Jayapura Customs and Excise also oversees the Indonesia-PNG border which includes 1 city and 12 regencies on the island of Papua which focuses not only on rat roads, but also sea borders. Jayapura Customs and Excise also utilizes the use of the internet to monitor any goods and services that enter Indonesian territory through the cyber patrol unit. The cyber patrol unit is used to track syndicates and the pattern of drug delivery using social media. (JPNN, 2021).

#### 4.3 The Role of the Skouw PLBN as a Center for Border Mobility

Apart from acting as a regulator and supervisor, Skouw PLBN also acts as a center for border mobility. As previously explained, one of the factors that causes the high rate of drug smuggling at the Indonesia-PNG border is poverty. Poverty at this border comes from the hilly border conditions making it difficult to cross. Due to terrain conditions like this, border accessibility is difficult to reach, facilities and infrastructure are difficult to develop so that infrastructure tends to be difficult.



Source: (BNPP, 2018)  
**Figure 1. PLBN Skouw Map**

PLBN Skouw is not only a place for identity checks and permits for every Indonesian citizen or foreigner who wants to cross the border, but also acts as a center for mobility for border communities. It can be seen in the image of the Skouw PLBN map above that it is equipped with various supporting facilities. Basically, PLBN has 2 zones, namely first, the Core Zone which includes the main building, inspection building, departures and arrivals, confiscation warehouse, weigh bridge and cross-border monument. The Core Zone is built on an area of 10.7 hectares. Second, the Core Sub Zone (Support Zone) which is built on an area of 12.20 hectares. The Core Sub Zone includes official residences for employees, guesthouses, multipurpose buildings, markets, mosques, churches, food courts and others. (PUPR, 2021) Not only that, the Indonesian government also issued Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 2021 concerning Acceleration of Economic Development in Border Areas where the Ministry of PUPR (Public Works and Public Housing) focuses on 3 PLBN in Indonesia, namely PLBN Aruk, PLBN Mota'ain and PLBN Skouw.

The projects obtained by the Skouw PLBN as regulated by Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2021 include the construction of a 2.4 km border primary irrigation channel in Koya Timur, the construction of a 30 km long Mosso - Keerom village axis road, the construction of a cage road in Enggros for 5 km. km, construction of SPAM (Drinking Water Supply System) in Muara Tami District, construction of the Youtefa bridge to speed up time to Jayapura – Skouw and others. (PUPR, 2021)

After determining the roles of the Skouw PLBN, the author will also analyze how these roles are in dealing with drug smuggling at the Indonesia-PNG border. The first role is as a regulator which refers to the efforts of PLBN Skouw to enforce a regulation with the aim of reducing the number of drug smuggling. The author then relates this role to the existence of stricter rules on the use of passports and visas to enter the borders of each country starting in 2019. Previously, passports and visas were indeed used as one of the conditions for entering borders, but the rules were not very strict. This is evidenced where the number of KLB users is far more than passports and visas.

The author considers that the role of the Skouw PLBN as a regulator emerged after the use of rat trails was widespread. This rat road used by illegal border crossers made the Skouw PLBN confused. Through unsupervised rat roads, most of them are in forest areas so that they are difficult to reach, making drug smuggling easy to do. Moreover, the use of this mouse path does not need to go through the Skouw PLBN guard post which has given permission to enter the border.

With the efforts to tighten the use of passports and visas, it is one solution that the author considers to be quite influential on drug smuggling activities. Plus, the Skouw PLBN officers not only tightened the rules for using passports and visas, but also started looking for rat trails that had been used by illegal border crossers. There are also many rat roads because there are 5 areas in Papua that are directly adjacent to PNG, namely Jayapura City, Keerom Regency, Bintang Mountains, Merauke and Boven Digoel Regency.

**Table 3.** Number of Indonesian Citizens/WNA Cross Borders Using Passports, Visas and KLB (2019)

WNI (Paspor & Visa)		WNA (Paspor & Visa)		WNI/WNA (KLB)	
Pergi	Pulang	Pergi	Pulang	Pergi	Pulang
2.095	2.120	6.660	6.076	2.998	3.003

*Source: (Papua, 2019)*

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the use of passports and visas has soared, which previously in 2012 – 2013 was only around hundreds of people, but in 2019 it became thousands of people (data taken from the period January September). And, the use of KLB has decreased quite drastically, even the number cannot match the total number of returning and departing foreigners to Indonesia. This means that the use of KLB is still being used, but the number is slowly starting to decrease. The author can conclude that the regulations to tighten the use of passports and visas have been successfully implemented to reduce the number of illegal border crossers who have been entering the border through rat routes.

The next role is as a supervisor. This is closely related to the role as a regulator. The author considers that this role appears to oversee the implementation of the rules for the use of passports and visas that have been set. As previously mentioned, one of the sanctions imposed for violations of passport and visa rules is deportation. And this applies even to a governor though.

Based on the results of the data, it was found that PNG foreigners are still the most foreigners who enter illegally into Indonesian territory. Rat road is still the way through which these illegal border crossers pass. The author will relate the role of the Skouw PLBN to the Covid-19 case that occurred in Papua. In fact, when the Covid-19 pandemic began to enter Indonesia in 2020, the Skouw PLBN was also the party affected by it. The border was forced to close on January 30, 2020, where until October there had been 7,337 positive cases. (Lantang., 2022) But in fact, even though the border is closed, the mouse path is still open. Several border officers who were aware of syndicates using rat roads as drug smuggling traffic began to guard every rat road which was allegedly illegal to enter Indonesia, one of which was by conducting raids. (Detik, 2019)

The head of the sub-sectoral police, Skouw Wutung, raided several illegal motorcycle taxis intending to enter Indonesia using the rat route. The officer also urges local residents not to use the rat road because it is illegal to walk. (Papua T. N., 2020) However, not all existing rat trails are illegal, PLBN Skouw also gave permission for

several rat road permits to be passed for reasons of the community's economy. The border officers went directly to monitor the rat's path by looking at the permits carried by the passers-by. To pass the rat road, every passerby must show a permit, be it a KLB, passport or visa. In addition, officers also check every piece of luggage. The only items that are allowed are basic necessities, areca nut and forest products. While what is prohibited is alcohol, marijuana and other illegal goods.

The third role is the role as a center for border mobility. This role refers to how the presence of the Skouw PLBN does not only act to reduce drug smuggling actions by monitoring traffic at the border, but also removes the root of the problem that is the reason for the emergence of drug smuggling crimes at the border, namely poverty. The Skouw PLBN was built with two zones, namely the Core Zone and the Core Sub Zone where the Core Zone refers to the main office while the Core Sub Zone includes mosques, churches, markets and food courts. According to the author, the presence of the Skouw PLBN is expected to facilitate the flow of human mobility which has been difficult to find in Indonesia's border areas, which tend to have difficult terrain and lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Skouw Market in buying and selling transactions using Rupiah and Kina currencies.

One proof of the smooth movement of people at the border comes from Skouw Market. According to data from Bank Indonesia representatives of the Papua Province (2018), Skouw Market is a place where Rp 3 billion of money is circulated every day. (BBC, 2020) The existence of this market also makes it easier for local people to obtain basic necessities. One of them comes from the people of Vanimo, PNG who often shop at Skouw rather than Port Moresby because Skouw is much closer to Vanimo. In addition, the prices of basic necessities offered by Skouw Market are much cheaper.

However, the role of Skouw PLBN as a center for border mobility also faces 3 problems, namely first, the increasingly tightened use of passports and visas has made it difficult for some PNG traders. According to traders, the existence of this regulation has also reduced traders and buyers from PNG drastically. With the decrease in people from PNG, the Kina currency is rare because there is no buying and selling with people from PNG. (Jubi, 2018) Second, The Covid-19 pandemic caused the border to be closed so that the market was empty of buyers until the appointed time. It was only on June 21, 2021, that the border finally reopened with strict prokes rules. Covid-19 causes the mobility of people at the border to seem dead even though the mouse path is still used, but the number of transactions at Skouw Market is not as much as on normal days. (Papua K. , 2020) The last, condition of some market stalls that are not maintained. Garbage is scattered everywhere, spit areca nut, and many stalls are abandoned because they are closed. These stalls are closed because there are no buyers, so traders lose money. (Papua K. , 2020)

## **V. Conclusion**

There are 3 roles performed by PLBN Skouw in dealing with drug smuggling cases that take place on the Indonesia-PNG border. The first role is as a regulator. This role refers to the efforts of PLBN Skouw to tighten the rules for the use of passports and visas due to the rise of illegal border crossers who go in and out through rats.

The second role is supervisor who refers to the supervision efforts carried out by PLBN Skouw on the implementation of the rules for using passports and visas. To carry out this supervision, PLBN Skouw applies a sanction in the form of deportation. The third role is the center of border mobility. It is known that poverty is the reason behind the

fertility rate of drug smuggling crimes at the border. So the presence of the Skouw PLBN is also a mobility center aimed at supporting the economy of border communities.

The author can conclude that the rules for using passports and visas have been carried out well. This is evidenced by the large number of passport and visa usage compared to the use of KLB in 2019. Meanwhile, the supervision of this regulation also shows good results. Officers manage to deport foreigners every year, with PNG foreigners being the most foreigners entering Papua.

However, different results were obtained from PLBN as a center for border mobility. Making PLBN Skouw as the economic center of the community is the right discourse because it aims to reduce poverty at the border so that the surrounding community is no longer involved in drug smuggling. However, its implementation is far from optimal. This is due to 3 things, namely the lack of visitors, the Covid-19 pandemic which causes borders to be closed and poor market management.

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