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## INVISIBLE CRIME: A CRIME THAT IS NOT DETECTED IN THE FORMAL LEGAL SYSTEM

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### Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of invisible crime, or crimes that go undetected in Indonesia's formal legal system. Crimes that are never reported, uninvestigated, or never reach the judicial process create a significant gap between real crime and officially recorded crime. This phenomenon is also known as the dark figure of crime, which is the difference between the number of crimes that actually occur and those recorded in official crime statistics. The study uses a normative-juridical method with conceptual, legislative, and comparative approaches. The results show that invisible crime is caused by various structural factors, including: weaknesses in the reporting system, social stigma against victims, complexity of evidence, limited capacity of law enforcement officers, and criminalization policies that are not adaptive to social developments. There are at least five main categories of invisible crime in Indonesia: sexual crimes and gender-based violence; corporate and white-collar crimes; cybercrimes; environmental crimes; and crimes within asymmetric power relations. This study recommends systemic reforms that include strengthening technology-based reporting mechanisms, expanding the definition of crimes and evidence in criminal procedure law, strengthening witness and victim protection, and a paradigm shift toward a victim-centered approach as a key pillar of effective law enforcement.

**Keywords:** Invisible Crime; Dark Figure of Crime; Formal Legal System; Law Enforcement; Criminology.

### Introduction

The criminal justice system in modern states rests on the fundamental assumption that every violation of the law will be detected, reported, handled, and ultimately resolved through authorized judicial mechanisms. It is on this assumption that the entire architecture of the criminal justice system, from the establishment of criminalization norms and the empowerment of law enforcement officers to the administration of justice, is built and operated. However, empirical reality shows that this fundamental assumption is far from the truth in practice. A large number of crimes occurring in society never enter the formal legal system; they are not reported to the police, investigated, prosecuted, and never reach the courts. This phenomenon is known in criminology as invisible crime, or undetected crimes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Topo Santoso dan Eva Achjani Zulfa, *Kriminologi* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2023), hlm. 89; Romli Atmasasmita, *Teori dan Kapita Selekta Kriminologi* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2022), hlm. 44.

The concept of invisible crime is closely related to what criminologists call the "dark figure of crime," the difference between the number of crimes actually committed and those officially recorded in crime statistics. Official crime statistics published by law enforcement agencies are only a partial representation of the reality of crime in society. Criminological studies in various countries consistently show that the "dark figure" of crime is far greater than reported crime, and in some crime categories, unreported crime can be eight to ten times higher than recorded crime. In Indonesia, this situation is exacerbated by various intertwined and mutually reinforcing structural, cultural, and institutional factors.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to understand that invisible crime is not merely a criminological issue relevant only to academics. It is a fundamental legal issue because it directly undermines the capacity of the criminal justice system to fulfill its objectives. Criminal law, in its primary function, aims to protect the legal interests of individuals and society from attacks and disturbances, and to uphold legal order by imposing sanctions on violators. Both of these functions are completely paralyzed when crimes never enter the system. Thus, invisible crime is not simply a matter of ineffective law enforcement, but rather a fundamental failure of the criminal justice system to achieve its objectives.<sup>3</sup>

From a dogmatic perspective on criminal law, every crime inherently contains elements that must be legally proven before a person can be convicted. However, this proof can only occur if the crime first enters the criminal justice system. This process begins with a report or complaint, continues with an investigation and inquiry, then prosecution, and ends with a trial and verdict. When a crime is never reported or is not successfully identified as a crime, the entire chain of criminal law mechanisms becomes irrelevant to the incident, and the perpetrator escapes legal accountability. The victim is left without the legal protection to which they are entitled, and the perpetrator receives implicit confirmation that their actions are safe to repeat.<sup>4</sup>

The problem of invisible crime is not unique to developing countries. Data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows that even in countries with relatively advanced legal systems, unreported crime rates remain

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<sup>2</sup>Nursyawal Sembiring, "Dark Figure of Crime dalam Perspektif Kriminologi Kontemporer," *Jurnal Hukum dan Peradilan* 12, No. 2 (2023): 189–192; Yesmil Anwar dan Adang, *Kriminologi* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2023), hlm. 133–145.

<sup>3</sup>Rasiwan, Iwan. "Penegakan Hukum Pidana di Indonesia." *AMU Press* (2025): 1-267. <https://ejournal.amertamedia.co.id/index.php/press/article/view/601>

<sup>4</sup>Satjipto Rahardjo, *Penegakan Hukum: Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologis* (Yogyakarta: Genta Publishing, 2023), hlm. 87–101; Mardjono Reksodiputro, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana* (Jakarta: Pusat Pelayanan Keadilan dan Pengabdian Hukum UI, 2022), hlm. 45–62.

high, particularly for certain crime categories such as sexual violence, domestic violence, corporate crime, and cybercrime. The difference between developed and developing countries is not the presence or absence of invisible crime, but rather the extent of its presence and the capacity of the legal system to reduce it. Countries with strong institutional capacity, high levels of public trust in the legal system, and diverse and accessible reporting mechanisms tend to be successful in significantly reducing the dark figure of crime.<sup>5</sup>

In Indonesia, this problem has more complex dimensions given the vast geographical area, cultural diversity that influences perceptions of crime, limited capacity of law enforcement officers, and suboptimal crime reporting mechanisms. Law Number 1 of 2023 concerning the Criminal Code (New Criminal Code) has indeed brought significant reforms to the criminalization framework, including the addition of various new acts as crimes and adjustments to international law developments. However, implementation challenges remain a major obstacle to reducing invisible crime. Substantive reform of criminal law without strengthening institutional capacity, inclusive reporting mechanisms, and changes in legal culture will result in norms that are beautiful on paper but ineffective in practice.<sup>6</sup>

From the literature review conducted in this study, it appears that academic studies of criminal law in Indonesia have focused more on substantive legal norms such as the elements of a crime, sentencing theory, and criminalization policies, as well as on the judicial process and the rights of the accused. The fundamental question of why most crimes never enter the legal system, and how this can be addressed systemically, has not received adequate attention in Indonesian academic legal literature. Yet, without understanding and addressing the phenomenon of invisible crime, all efforts at criminal law reform will remain limited in their impact, as they only touch the surface of a much deeper and broader problem.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the description above, this study formulates two main problems: first, what are the categories of criminal acts that are most vulnerable to becoming invisible crimes in the Indonesian formal legal system and what are the structural

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<sup>5</sup>Barda Nawawi Arief, *Kebijakan Hukum Pidana: Perkembangan Penyusunan Konsep KUHP Baru* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media, 2022), hlm. 120–145; Ali Zaidan, *Menuju Pembaruan Hukum Pidana* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2023), hlm. 33–56.

<sup>6</sup>Nugraha, Roby Satya, et al. "The Transformation of Indonesia's Criminal Law System: Comprehensive Comparison between the Old and New Penal Codes." *Reformasi Hukum* 29.1 (2025): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.46257/jrh.v29i1.1169>

<sup>7</sup>Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2023), hlm. 35–47; Achmad Ali, *Menguak Teori Hukum (Legal Theory) dan Teori Peradilan (Judicialprudence)* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2022), hlm. 201–230.

factors that cause this; and second, how can formal legal system reform be carried out systematically and comprehensively to minimize invisible crimes and strengthen protection for victims who have so far been hidden from the reach of the law. This study is designed to contribute to the development of criminal law science in Indonesia, especially in an aspect that has so far received less attention: the effectiveness of the criminal law system in detecting and processing all crimes that actually occur in society.<sup>8</sup>

## Methods

This research is normative legal research that examines legal principles, legal doctrines, and positive legal norms related to invisible crime in Indonesia's formal legal system. Normative legal research was chosen because the issues studied are conceptual and related to the legal system, not empirical facts on the ground.<sup>9</sup> The approaches used in this research include: first, a statute approach that examines various relevant laws and regulations; second, a conceptual approach that examines the views of legal experts and doctrines in criminal law and criminology; and third, a comparative approach that compares Indonesia's legal framework with other countries in handling invisible crime.<sup>10</sup>

The legal materials used are divided into three categories. First, primary legal materials, namely various laws and regulations in force in Indonesia, including: the Criminal Code (Law No. 1 of 2023), the Criminal Procedure Code (Law No. 8 of 1981), Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence, and various other sectoral laws. Second, secondary legal materials consist of legal literature, scientific journals, research results, and relevant policy documents. Third, tertiary legal materials consist of legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference sources that provide explanations of technical terms.<sup>11</sup> The legal material collection technique was conducted through library research, which included searching for legal material from various academic sources, official government documents, international agency reports, and national and international scientific journal

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<sup>8</sup>Soerjono Soekanto dan Sri Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif: Suatu Tinjauan Singkat* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2022), hlm. 13–14; Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*, hlm. 55–57.

<sup>9</sup>Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum*, hlm. 133–181; Johnny Ibrahim, *Teori dan Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif* (Malang: Bayumedia Publishing, 2022), hlm. 300–325.

<sup>10</sup>Amiruddin dan Zainal Asikin, *Pengantar Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2022), hlm. 118–120; Soerjono Soekanto dan Sri Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif*, hlm. 33–37.

<sup>11</sup>Philipus M. Hadjon dan Tatiek Sri Djatmiati, *Argumentasi Hukum* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2023), hlm. 22–30.

databases. The analysis process employed qualitative analysis methods by interpreting, describing, and systematizing the collected legal material to address the research problem.<sup>12</sup> The analysis is conducted deductively, starting with general principles of criminal law and criminology and then applying them to the specific problem of invisible crime in Indonesia. Critical thinking is also applied through a gap analysis between ideal legal norms (*das sollen*) and the reality of their application (*das sein*) in the context of addressing invisible crime.

## Discussion

### Categories and Factors Causing Invisible Crime in Indonesia's Formal Legal System

The concept of invisible crime in criminology refers to all behavior that is substantively criminal but, for various reasons, is never included in official crime statistics and never processed through the criminal justice system. This term needs to be distinguished from victimless crime, although there is conceptual overlap between the two. Invisible crime does not mean there are no victims; on the contrary, many invisible crimes have real and suffering victims, but they are hidden from the view and reach of the legal system. This invisibility of crime stems not from the absence of victims, but from various structural, cultural, and individual barriers that prevent these crimes from entering the formal legal system.<sup>13</sup>

The most influential theory in understanding invisible crime is the dark figure of crime theory, first conceptualized systematically by Edwin Sutherland in his work on white-collar crime. Sutherland argued that the legal definition of crime is inherently selective and reflects social class bias, so that crimes committed by corporations and the social elite are far more likely to escape punishment than street crimes generally committed by the lower classes. Sutherland's argument opened a critical perspective on the selectivity of the criminal justice system, and its relevance to invisible crime remains strong today, even more relevant in the era of increasingly sophisticated corporate and financial crime.<sup>14</sup>

In the development of contemporary criminology, the concept of invisible crime has been expanded to encompass various categories of crime that are

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<sup>12</sup>Johnny Ibrahim, *Teori dan Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif*, hlm. 310–315; Amiruddin dan Zainal Asikin, *Pengantar Metode Penelitian Hukum*, hlm. 166–170.

<sup>13</sup>Topo Santoso dan Eva Achjani Zulfa, *Kriminologi*, hlm. 90–92; Edwin M. Schur, *Crimes Without Victims: Deviant Behavior and Public Policy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 2021), hlm. 12–19.

<sup>14</sup>Amalia, Mia, et al. "Hukum Pidana Indonesia Dalam Perspektif KUHP Baru." *AMU Press* (2025): 1-213. <https://ejournal.amertamedia.co.id/index.php/press/article/view/582>

systematically hidden from the formal legal system. Green criminology identifies environmental crime as one of the most widespread invisible crimes yet least addressed by the criminal justice system. Similarly, feminist criminology identifies gender-based violence as a form of invisible crime that has historically been overlooked by a legal system dominated by a patriarchal perspective. Each of these branches of critical criminology makes important contributions to broadening our understanding of previously hidden dimensions of invisible crime.<sup>15</sup>

Normatively, in the context of Indonesian criminal law, the applicable framework is actually quite comprehensive in defining various acts as crimes. The New Criminal Code (Law No. 1 of 2023) has even expanded the scope of criminalization compared to the old colonial legacy Criminal Code. However, the existence of norms in legislation does not automatically guarantee that crimes covered by those norms will be detected and prosecuted. There is a significant gap between the formal criminalization of an act and the legal system's ability to actually detect, report, investigate, and prosecute such acts. This gap between norms and reality is the root of the problem of invisible crime in Indonesia.<sup>16</sup>

Sexual crimes and gender-based violence are the most widely studied categories of invisible crimes in criminology and legal literature. Although the New Criminal Code (Law No. 1 of 2023) and Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (TPKS Law) have expanded the definition and significantly strengthened protection mechanisms, the fact remains that the number of reported sexual crimes in Indonesia remains very low compared to estimates of actual incidence.<sup>17</sup> The National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) has recorded alarming data: only about 1 in 10 cases of sexual violence are reported to the authorities, suggesting that roughly 90 percent of sexual violence cases in Indonesia never reach the formal legal system. The TPKS Law itself, while a significant step forward in the normative framework, still faces various implementation challenges that limit its effectiveness in encouraging reporting and prosecution.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Michael J. Lynch dan Paul Stretesky, "Green Criminology in the United States," dalam *Issues in Green Criminology*, diedit oleh P. Beirne dan N. South (London: Routledge, 2023), hlm. 7–33; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2022), hlm. 255–280.

<sup>16</sup>Barda Nawawi Arief, *Kebijakan Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 125; Eddy O.S. Hiarij, *Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 68–75.

<sup>17</sup>Komnas Perempuan, *Catatan Tahunan Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan 2023* (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2023), hlm. 15–22.

<sup>18</sup>Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2022 tentang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual, Pasal 1 angka 1 dan Pasal 5–13.

From a victimology perspective, victims of sexual violence face a series of multi-layered barriers to reporting. Psychological barriers such as shame, trauma, and fear of stigmatization are often the first and most difficult to overcome. Social barriers, such as pressure from family and community to resolve the issue internally or to protect the family's reputation, add to the burden. Institutional barriers, such as the lack of victim-friendly examination rooms in police departments, the scarcity of female officers trained in handling sexual violence cases, and legal procedures that are often perceived as additional humiliation for victims, complete this troubling picture.<sup>19</sup>

The main factors in the low reporting of sexual crimes include: (1) social stigma that imposes shame on the victim, not the perpetrator, a condition known in sociological literature as victim blaming; (2) the perpetrator-victim relationship, which is often a known person or even a family member, which creates significant emotional and social barriers to the reporting process; (3) victims' lack of confidence that reporting will result in justice based on their actual experiences or perceptions of a legal system that is not in favor of victims; (4) the risk of revictimization in the legal process, where victims must repeatedly recount their traumatic experiences; and (5) economic barriers to accessing the legal system, including transportation costs, legal representation costs, and forensic medical examination costs. These conditions create a cycle of impunity in which perpetrators of sexual violence repeatedly commit their crimes without ever facing commensurate legal consequences.<sup>20</sup>

Corporate crime and white-collar crime are invisible categories of crime whose financial impact is far greater than that of conventional crime, yet their prosecution and conviction rates are disproportionately low. Edwin Sutherland, who first conceptualized white-collar crime, pointed out that the financial losses from corporate crime are significantly unequal to those from street crime, yet the legal system resources allocated to addressing both are inversely proportional. These crimes include corporate fraud, capital market manipulation, large-scale tax

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<sup>19</sup>Bambang Waluyo, *Viktimologi: Perlindungan Hukum terhadap Korban Kejahatan* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2023), hlm. 66–80.

<sup>20</sup>Nurisman, Eko. "Risalah tantangan penegakan hukum tindak pidana kekerasan seksual pasca lahirnya Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2022." *Jurnal Pembangunan Hukum Indonesia* 4.2 (2022): 170–196. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jphi.v4i2.170-196>

evasion, financial statement fraud, and various forms of corporate corruption involving powerful actors.<sup>21</sup>

Difficulties in establishing evidence are a major obstacle in handling corporate crime. Unlike conventional crimes that leave relatively clear physical traces, corporate crimes are often packaged in seemingly legitimate business transactions, layered corporate structures that obscure accountability, and legal documents designed to protect the perpetrators. The perpetrators' financial capacity to hire the best lawyers, fabricate evidence, and exploit procedural loopholes in criminal procedure law creates a significant asymmetry between the perpetrators and the public prosecutor.<sup>22</sup>

In Indonesia, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) noted that private sector corruption and corporate crime remain blind spots in the law enforcement system. The Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK) report in 2023 revealed that suspicious financial transactions indicating money laundering still far exceed the handling capacity of law enforcement agencies. This situation indicates that the majority of corporate financial crimes in Indonesia remain invisible crimes that are never legally addressed.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, there are cultural dimensions that exacerbate this situation. The patronage relationship between the business world and law enforcement officials, the culture of "grease payments" or gratuities that has become ingrained in various interactions between the private sector and public officials, and the weak protection of whistleblowers who report corporate crimes to the authorities, create an ecosystem where corporate crimes can occur relatively safely from the reach of the law. The absence of effective protection for internal whistleblowers is a significant factor in allowing corporate crimes to remain undetected.<sup>24</sup>

Cybercrime is a category of invisible crime that has grown rapidly in line with the digitalization of social and economic life. Although the ITE Law (Law No. 11 of 2008 as amended by Law No. 19 of 2016) and various related regulations have criminalized various acts in cyberspace, Indonesia's formal legal system still lags

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<sup>21</sup>Shodiq, Muhammad Jafar. "Dinamika Kejahatan Korporasi di Pasar Keuangan Indonesia: Analisis Kasus dan Implikasinya terhadap Ekonomi Negara." *Pahlawan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan-Sosial-Budaya* 21.2 (2025): 217-225. <https://doi.org/10.57216/pah.v2i12.5>

<sup>22</sup>Edi Setiadi dan Rena Yulia, *Hukum Pidana Ekonomi* (Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2022), hlm. 112-130.

<sup>23</sup>Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK), *Laporan Tahunan 2023* (Jakarta: KPK, 2023), hlm. 34-45.

<sup>24</sup>PPATK, *Laporan Tahunan Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan 2023* (Jakarta: PPATK, 2023), hlm. 19-28.

far behind in effectively detecting, investigating, and prosecuting cybercrime.<sup>25</sup> Cybercrime is invisible due to several inherent characteristics that distinguish it from conventional crime: its cross-jurisdictional nature makes it difficult to establish investigative authority; the anonymity that can easily be created by perpetrators makes identification difficult; the speed of transactions that far exceeds the capacity of conventional investigations allows perpetrators to cover their tracks before an investigation begins; and the lack of digital literacy among law enforcement officials responsible for handling cybercrime reports. Many victims of cybercrime, especially online fraud, digital asset embezzlement, and privacy violations, do not report it because they do not know where and how to report it, or because they are not confident that their reports will be taken seriously.<sup>26</sup>

Environmental crimes are a form of invisible crime whose impacts are collective and often only fully felt in the long term, making it difficult to directly link them to specific criminal acts. Forest burning, hazardous and toxic waste disposal (B3), illegal exploitation of natural resources, and industrial pollution are crimes that are formally prohibited and subject to criminal sanctions in various laws and regulations, but in practice, they are rarely prosecuted, resulting in punishment commensurate with the damage caused.<sup>27</sup>

Factors that make environmental crime a highly persistent invisible crime include: the complexity of proving causality between the perpetrator's actions and environmental impacts, which often requires multidisciplinary technical expertise; the fragmentation of regulatory authority between various ministries and institutions, which creates oversight gaps exploited by perpetrators; and the unequal power relations between large corporations with resources and political influence, law enforcement officials, and affected local communities. Furthermore, the orientation toward economic growth that still dominates Indonesian development policy often creates implicit pressure on officials to be less aggressive in prosecuting environmental violations by economic actors deemed crucial to growth.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Edivya, Maria Ferba, et al. "Kebijakan Hukum Pidana Dalam Penanganan Kejahatan Siber." *Arus Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora* 5.3 (2025): 4680-4685. <https://doi.org/10.57250/ajsh.v5i3.1993>

<sup>26</sup>Adrianus Meliala, "Kejahatan Siber dan Keterbatasan Sistem Hukum Formal Indonesia," *Jurnal Kriminologi Indonesia* 18, No. 1 (2022): 55-72.

<sup>27</sup>Michael J. Lynch dan Paul Stretesky, "Green Criminology in the United States," hlm. 15-20; Barda Nawawi Arief, *Kebijakan Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 144-148.

<sup>28</sup>Darwan Prinst, *Hukum Anak Indonesia* (Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti, 2023), hlm. 88-104; Bambang Waluyo, *Viktimologi*, hlm. 100-118.

Crimes within asymmetric power relations encompass various forms of exploitation that occur within the context of a relationship where there is a significant imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. Labor crimes, including modern slavery, human trafficking, and the exploitation of migrant workers, crimes against children, the exploitation of the elderly, and various forms of abuse of a dominant position by service providers over service recipients, all fall into this category. Victims often do not report because of economic dependence that makes them unable to imagine life without the relationship, fear of potentially devastating retaliation, lack of recognition that what they have experienced is a crime due to the normalization of violence within the relationship, or lack of access to safe and responsive reporting mechanisms.<sup>29</sup>

In the individual-victim dimension, the most influential factor is low trust in the legal system, which is the result of the accumulation of various negative experiences, both experienced directly and learned through others or the media, in interactions with law enforcement institutions. Public opinion surveys in Indonesia consistently show that public trust in law enforcement institutions, the police, the prosecutor's office, and the courts, remains relatively low, although there is significant variation across demographic groups and geographic regions.<sup>30</sup>

When victims do not believe that reporting will result in justice, and even fear that the legal process will worsen their situation, either through re-victimization during the investigation, the risk of retaliation from the perpetrator, or the prohibitive time and financial costs, the decision not to report becomes a rational choice from the victim's utilitarian perspective. This condition reflects the failure of the legal system to build trust in law enforcement institutions, the social capital necessary to encourage reporting.<sup>31</sup>

Institutionally, the capacity of Indonesia's criminal justice system faces serious and multi-layered challenges. The ratio of law enforcement personnel to population remains low, particularly in remote areas where access to the nearest police station can take hours. Limited budgets, facilities, technology, and technical expertise available to law enforcement officers limit their ability to detect and

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<sup>29</sup>Yesmil Anwar dan Adang, *Kriminologi*, hlm. 166–179; Topo Santoso dan Eva Achjani Zulfa, *Kriminologi*, hlm. 105–112.

<sup>30</sup>Satjipto Rahardjo, *Penegakan Hukum: Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologis*, hlm. 90–95; Mardjono Reksodiputro, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana*, hlm. 50–57.

<sup>31</sup>Hijriani, Adinda Nurriksia, and Nandang Sambas. "INTEGRITAS APARAT PENEGAK HUKUM DAN KEPERCAYAAN PUBLIK: ANALISIS SOSIOLOGI HUKUM DI INDONESIA." *JOSH: Journal of Sharia* 5.01 (2026): 120–132. <https://doi.org/10.55352/josh.v5i01.2641>

address various forms of invisible crime that require specialized expertise, such as cybercrime, financial crime, and environmental crime.<sup>32</sup>

Excessive workloads, which in many cases far exceed available capacity, also create de facto selectivity in case handling. Officers under pressure to resolve a large number of cases within a certain timeframe tend to prioritize cases that are easier to prove and resolve, leaving complex, invisible crimes requiring intensive investigations underserved. An organizational culture that measures law enforcement performance based on the number of cases resolved, regardless of their complexity or significance, contributes to this worsening situation.<sup>33</sup>

In the normative-legal dimension, there are three main interrelated issues. First, the existence of criminalization gaps, where behavior that actually harms society significantly is not yet or is not covered by existing definitions of criminal acts, especially for new forms of crime that develop along with social and technological changes. Second, the high standard of proof required in Indonesian criminal law, especially for crimes that leave no clear physical traces, results in many cases not being prosecuted even though the act is substantively proven. Third, the incoherence between various sectoral regulations creates a jurisdictional vacuum that perpetrators can exploit to avoid legal accountability.<sup>34</sup>

The issue of evidentiary standards deserves special attention. The Criminal Procedure Code currently adopts a negative evidentiary system based on the judge's conviction supported by at least two valid pieces of evidence. The list of valid evidence in the Criminal Procedure Code—witness testimony, expert testimony, letters, clues, and the defendant's statement—while not necessarily limiting in jurisprudential practice, still tends to be oriented toward conventional physical evidence. For crimes that are invisible due to a lack of physical evidence, such as psychological violence, trust-based financial exploitation, or gradual environmental crimes, this evidentiary standard presents a significant structural obstacle.<sup>35</sup>

In the socio-cultural dimension, social norms in Indonesian society often create very strong barriers to reporting crimes, especially those that occur in

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<sup>32</sup>Pudi Rahardi, *Hukum Kepolisian: Kemandirian Profesionalisme dan Reformasi Polri* (Surabaya: Laksbang Grafika, 2023), hlm. 133–155.

<sup>33</sup>Indriyanto Seno Adji, *Humanisme dan Pembaruan Penegakan Hukum* (Jakarta: Kompas, 2022), hlm. 45–67.

<sup>34</sup>Eddy O.S. Hiariej, *Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 78–90; Chairul Huda, *Dari Tiada Pidana Tanpa Kesalahan Menuju Kepada Tiada Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Tanpa Kesalahan* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2022), hlm. 55–70.

<sup>35</sup>Andi Hamzah, *Hukum Acara Pidana Indonesia, Edisi Ketiga* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2022), hlm. 244–270.

private spaces and within close social relationships. The principle of deliberation and consensus, a noble value of Indonesian culture, although very valuable in the context of civil dispute resolution, can be misused as a mechanism to 'resolve' serious crimes informally, which in reality often means forcing victims to 'forgive' the perpetrators without obtaining true justice.<sup>36</sup>

The strong culture of shame in many communities in Indonesia, which sociologically functions as an informal social control mechanism, in the context of invisible crime actually has a counterproductive effect: instead of embarrassing perpetrators and preventing crimes, this culture of shame is often internalized by victims—especially victims of sexual crimes—and thus becomes a very strong barrier to reporting. The concept of family shame, which is closely related to this culture of shame, is also often explicitly used by perpetrators or their family members to prevent victims from reporting their crimes to the authorities.<sup>37</sup>

### **Formal Legal System Reform as a Response to Invisible Crime**

Efforts to minimize invisible crime require comprehensive and coordinated reform, from the normative level (legal formation) to the operational level (law enforcement). Partial reforms that only address one aspect without considering its systemic interrelationships with other aspects will result in limited and unsustainable change. The necessary normative reforms encompass several fundamental aspects of Indonesia's criminal law framework that require simultaneous and coordinated improvement.<sup>38</sup>

Expanding and adjusting the definition of criminal offenses in a responsive and empirically evidence-based manner. Although the New Criminal Code (Law No. 1 of 2023) has introduced significant reforms, including the criminalization of various new forms of sexual violence, the recognition of crimes against human dignity, and various adjustments to developments in international law, there are still several gaps in the criminalization process that need to be filled. A criminalization process that is continuously responsive to developments in the modus operandi of crime is essential, particularly in the digital, environmental, and financial spheres.<sup>39</sup> However, the expansion of criminalization must be carried

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<sup>36</sup>Achmad Ali, *Menguak Teori Hukum (Legal Theory) dan Teori Peradilan (Judicialprudence)*, hlm. 222–235.

<sup>37</sup>Satjipto Rahardjo, *Penegakan Hukum: Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologis*, hlm. 96–104.

<sup>38</sup>Ali Zaidan, *Menuju Pembaruan Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 60–78; Barda Nawawi Arief, *Kebijakan Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 148–165.

<sup>39</sup>Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2023 tentang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, Penjelasan Umum dan Pasal 1–5.

out by considering not only the interests of law enforcement, but also the legal system's ability to effectively detect and process these new types of crimes. Criminalization that is not accompanied by strengthening detection and enforcement capacity will only widen the gap between norms and reality, ultimately increasing the number of invisible crimes. In other words, criminalization and strengthening law enforcement capacity must go hand in hand and be planned in an integrated manner.<sup>40</sup>

Revision of the standards of proof and evidence recognized in criminal procedure law. The current Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP) (Law No. 8 of 1981), which is more than four decades old, needs fundamental revision to adapt to the realities of contemporary crime. Expanding the categories of valid evidence—including digital evidence with clear forensic standards, electronic recordings, metadata analysis, testimony from forensic experts in psychology and psychiatry, statistical evidence in certain cases, and behavioral pattern analysis—is essential to enable effective prosecution of various forms of invisible crime that leave no conventional physical evidence.<sup>41</sup>

Strengthening comprehensive and effective witness and victim protection mechanisms. The Witness and Victim Protection Law (Law No. 13 of 2006 as amended by Law No. 31 of 2014) has provided a fairly adequate protection framework in normative terms, but its implementation is still far from optimal. The main obstacles to implementation include: limited budget for the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), uneven service coverage across Indonesia, and a lack of public awareness of their rights as witnesses and victims.<sup>42</sup>

Comprehensive reform of the crime reporting system. Reliance on the traditional reporting mechanism of going to the police station in person, which for many is an intimidating, time-consuming, and uncertain experience, poses a significant barrier for many victims, particularly victims of sexual crimes, cybercrime, and crimes committed by influential individuals. It is necessary to develop a reporting system that is diverse, easily accessible from various geographic locations, secure from retaliation, and responsive in its follow-up.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Barda Nawawi Arief, *Kebijakan Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 155–165; Eddy O.S. Hiariej, *Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 92–100.

<sup>41</sup>Andi Hamzah, *Hukum Acara Pidana Indonesia*, hlm. 255–265; Lilik Mulyadi, *Kompilasi Hukum Pidana dalam Perspektif Teoritis dan Praktek Peradilan* (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 2022), hlm. 188–210.

<sup>42</sup>Undang-Undang Nomor 8 Tahun 1981 tentang Hukum Acara Pidana, Pasal 183–189.

<sup>43</sup>Yudhopratomo, Angga Wisnu, and Muhamad Bahrul Ulum. "Aplikasi Pelaporan Informasi Masyarakat Terkini Wilayah Hukum Polresta Tangerang Berbasis Android." *Jurnal Pepadun* 5.2 (2024): 195–204. <https://doi.org/10.23960/pepadun.v5i2.218>

Developing an integrated, secure digital reporting platform that guarantees anonymity when necessary is a crucial investment. Experience in countries such as the UK's Crime Stoppers system and various Scandinavian countries' integrated online reporting platforms demonstrates that diversifying reporting channels can significantly increase reporting rates, particularly for crimes that are often considered invisible crimes. However, digitalization of reporting systems must be accompanied by measures that ensure accessibility for those who lack access to or the ability to use digital technology.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond normative reform, eradicating invisible crime requires profound transformation at the institutional level and at the capacity of law enforcement. The necessary institutional reforms encompass human resources, technology, and governance of law enforcement institutions, all three of which must be addressed simultaneously to achieve significant and sustainable change.<sup>45</sup>

In terms of human resources, law enforcement officers need to be equipped with the specialized skills necessary to handle various types of invisible crimes, which require high technical competence and a sensitive approach. The establishment of specialized units within the police and prosecutor's office focused on cybercrime, financial crime, environmental crime, and crimes against women and children is an urgent step. These units must have access to ongoing training, modern equipment, and close collaboration with experts outside law enforcement, including those from academia, the private sector, and civil society organizations.<sup>46</sup>

The use of technology in the detection and investigation of invisible crimes also needs to be a strategic priority. Big data analytics, artificial intelligence, digital forensics, and financial transaction tracking technology are tools that have proven effective in various countries for detecting unreported crime patterns and identifying previously undetected criminal networks. A strong investment in law enforcement technology infrastructure, coupled with the development of regulations that enable the effective use of such technology while still protecting

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<sup>44</sup>Adrianus Meliala, "Kejahatan Siber dan Keterbatasan Sistem Hukum Formal Indonesia," hlm. 65–70.

<sup>45</sup>Situmeang, Sahat Maruli Tua, and Krusitha Meilan. "Evolusi kejahatan dan pidana: Tantangan dalam penegakan hukum dan penologi modern: The evolution of crime and punishment: Challenges in law enforcement and modern penology." *Res Nullius Law Journal* 7.2 (2025): 87–97. <https://doi.org/10.34010/rnlj.v7i2.15913>

<sup>46</sup>Pudi Rahardi, Hukum Kepolisian, hlm. 158–180; Indriyanto Seno Adji, Humanisme dan Pembaruan Penegakan Hukum, hlm. 70–88.

citizens' fundamental rights, is a prerequisite for an effective response to invisible crimes in the digital age.<sup>47</sup>

Governance reform of law enforcement institutions is also needed to address internal factors that contribute to invisible crime. Bribery, collusion between law enforcement and perpetrators, abuse of authority in case handling, and a corps culture that hinders internal accountability are factors that directly exacerbate invisible crime by creating public distrust in the legal system and sometimes by actively obstructing the processing of victims' reports.<sup>48</sup>

Strengthening effective internal and external oversight systems, establishing firm and consistent sanctions against ethical and legal violations by law enforcement officers, and reforming recruitment and promotion systems to ensure the integrity and competence of law enforcement officers are essential components of institutional reform. Experience with police reform in various countries demonstrates that strong institutional accountability is a prerequisite for restoring public trust, which in turn is the foundation for increasing crime reporting rates.<sup>49</sup>

One of the most important paradigm shifts needed to address invisible crime is the transition from an offender-centered approach to a victim-centered approach throughout the criminal justice system. Historically, Indonesian criminal law, like criminal law in many countries, has focused more on the rights of suspects and defendants than on the rights of victims. While protecting the rights of suspects and defendants is an essential component of a well-functioning rule of law, the absence of an adequate balance with the protection of victims' rights has created a system perceived as biased toward victims, thus discouraging reporting.<sup>50</sup>

A victim-centered approach requires that victims' interests—recovery, protection, meaningful participation in the legal process, and access to effective justice—become central and explicit considerations at every stage of the design and operation of the criminal justice system. In the context of invisible crime, this paradigm shift concretely means: (1) reporting procedures that are victim-friendly, gender-sensitive, and accessible to vulnerable groups; (2) investigations that are sensitive to victims' experiences of trauma and that do not increase the burden of

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<sup>47</sup>Yudi Kristiana, *Menuju Kejaksaan Progresif: Studi tentang Penyelidikan, Penyidikan, dan Penuntutan Tindak Pidana Korupsi* (Yogyakarta: LSHK, 2023), hlm. 80–105.

<sup>48</sup>Pudi Rahardi, *Hukum Kepolisian*, hlm. 160–172; Agus Raharjo, *Cybercrime*, hlm. 88–110.

<sup>49</sup>DM, M. Yusuf, et al. "REFORMASI PERUBAHAN PIDANA MENJADI TUNTUTAN DEMOKRASI PENEGAKAN HUKUMAN." *Collegium Studiosum Journal* 8.2 (2025): 485–497. <https://doi.org/10.56301/csj.v8i2.2007>

<sup>50</sup>Adrianus Meliala, "Kejahatan Siber dan Keterbatasan Sistem Hukum Formal Indonesia," hlm. 68–72.

trauma through demeaning questions or procedures; (3) integrated legal and social assistance mechanisms that are available from the reporting stage; (4) effective and timely compensation and restitution; and (5) a system of ongoing victim support throughout the legal process and after the process.<sup>51</sup>

Restorative justice also offers a complementary approach that has the potential to reduce invisible crime in certain categories. By providing an alternative to conventional justice processes, which victims often perceive as prohibitively high barriers, restorative justice can encourage more favorable resolutions for victims while preventing perpetrator impunity. Well-designed restorative justice mechanisms can provide victims with what conventional justice often cannot: recognition, apology, reparation, and active participation in determining the response to the crimes they have experienced.<sup>52</sup> However, the application of restorative justice must be carried out with great care and strong safeguards to prevent solutions that harm victims through social pressure or exploit the existing power imbalance between perpetrator and victim. The experience of various countries in implementing restorative justice for cases of domestic violence and sexual crimes shows that without adequate safeguards, these mechanisms can become tools used by perpetrators to obtain informal forgiveness without facing the legal consequences.<sup>53</sup>

The formal legal system alone is insufficient to address invisible crime. A broader ecosystem involving civil society, the media, academia, and the private sector is needed to build collective capacity to detect, report, and address crimes that have traditionally remained hidden. Civil society organizations play a critical and irreplaceable role: bridging victims with a legal system that often feels unfamiliar and intimidating, providing legal assistance and support to victims who cannot afford it, advocating for policy reforms based on field experience, and monitoring the legal system's performance in addressing various categories of invisible crime.<sup>54</sup>

Information and communication technology opens up significant new opportunities for tackling invisible crime that were previously unavailable. Secure and encrypted digital reporting platforms can dramatically reduce technical and psychological barriers to reporting crimes, especially for victims who live far from

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<sup>51</sup>Satjipto Rahardjo, *Penegakan Hukum: Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologis*, hlm. 105–115; Indriyanto Seno Adji, *Humanisme dan Pembaruan Penegakan Hukum*, hlm. 90–107.

<sup>52</sup>Mardjono Reksodiputro, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana*, hlm. 78–90.

<sup>53</sup>Bambang Waluyo, *Viktimologi*, hlm. 140–158; Albert J. Reiss Jr. dan Jeffrey A. Roth (eds.), *Understanding and Preventing Violence*, hlm. 100–118.

<sup>54</sup>Lawrence W. Sherman, "The Influence of Criminology on Criminal Law," hlm. 30–45.

the nearest police station or who fear being identified if they report in person. Analysis of social media and public big data can help detect patterns of unreported crime and identify areas or groups requiring priority intervention.<sup>55</sup>

Legal education for the general public is an essential component in addressing invisible crime, which often receives little attention in policy discussions. Many victims do not report it not solely because they distrust the legal system or because of access barriers, but also because they do not realize that what they experience constitutes a crime under applicable law. The normalization of violence in some social contexts, such as dating violence, violence against informal workers, or economic exploitation of the elderly within families, prevents victims from recognizing their experiences as crimes worthy of reporting. Effective, contextualized public education campaigns that specifically reach vulnerable groups are a crucial investment in narrowing the dark figure of crime.<sup>56</sup>

Inter-institutional coordination is an often overlooked yet crucial factor in addressing invisible crimes. Most categories of invisible crimes fall at the intersection of various institutional jurisdictions, so no single institution feels fully responsible for handling them comprehensively. Environmental crimes, for example, involve the authority of the police, the prosecutor's office, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, local governments, and various other sectoral oversight agencies. The absence of an effective and clear coordination mechanism causes these invisible crimes to fall through the cracks of authority, with no single institution taking full responsibility for addressing them.<sup>57</sup>

The development of effective interagency coordination mechanisms that clearly define who is responsible for various aspects of addressing various types of invisible crimes and that provide a platform for information sharing and coordination of actions is no less crucial than the normative and institutional reforms mentioned above. Without effective coordination, various reform initiatives undertaken in isolation by individual agencies will have a far more limited impact than they could have.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Bambang Waluyo, *Viktimologi*, hlm. 160–180; Undang-Undang Nomor 13 Tahun 2006, Pasal 5–8.

<sup>56</sup>Muladi, *Lembaga Pidana Bersyarat* (Bandung: Alumni, 2022), hlm. 44–65.

<sup>57</sup>Barda Nawawi Arief, *Kebijakan Hukum Pidana*, hlm. 168–178.

<sup>58</sup>Satjipto Rahardjo, *Penegakan Hukum: Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologis*, hlm. 118–130; Mardjono Reksodiputro, *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana*, hlm. 92–105.

## Conclusion

*Invisible crime* represents a fundamental structural challenge to Indonesia's formal legal system. The gap between actual crimes and those officially recorded, known as the "dark figure of crime," is a clear indicator of the legal system's ineffectiveness in protecting all members of society. The most significant categories of invisible crime in Indonesia include: sexual crimes and gender-based violence, corporate and white-collar crimes, cybercrimes, environmental crimes, and crimes within asymmetrical power relations. The factors causing invisible crime are multidimensional, encompassing the individual-victim dimension (low trust in the legal system, social stigma), the institutional dimension (limited capacity and expertise of officials), the normative-legal dimension (criminalization loopholes, non-adaptive standards of proof), and the socio-cultural dimension (communal norms that hinder reporting). No single factor exclusively explains the phenomenon of invisible crime; the interaction between these four dimensions creates a structure that reproduces invisible crime systemically and mutually reinforces it. Addressing invisible crime cannot rely solely on the formal legal system. It requires an ecosystem involving civil society, technology, the media, and the private sector as strategic partners in detecting, reporting, and addressing crimes that have long been hidden. Legal education for the general public and strengthening inter-institutional coordination mechanisms are equally important components for the success of efforts to address invisible crime comprehensively.

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