



The Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Undocumented Cross-Border Movements at the Motaain Border Post, East Nusa Tenggara

Tumpak Gultom*

Faculty of Law, Universitas Dirgantara Marsekal Suryadarma, Jakarta, Indonesia

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.47134/ijlj.v3i3.5644>

*Correspondence: Tumpak Gultom

Email: tumpak18gultom@gmail.com

Received: 22-02-2026

Accepted: 22-03-2026

Published: 22-04-2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract: Law enforcement in border areas plays a vital role in safeguarding state sovereignty and maintaining territorial security. However, its implementation is often constrained by structural and contextual challenges, including difficult geographical access, limited infrastructure and operational facilities, and complex socio-cultural dynamics within border communities. These conditions contribute to persistent issues in controlling undocumented cross-border movements. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of law enforcement against undocumented border crossers at the Motaain Border Post, situated on the boundary between East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. The research employs a normative juridical approach, complemented by empirical legal analysis through statutory and conceptual perspectives. Data were collected from primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources and analyzed using qualitative methods. The findings reveal that law enforcement at the Motaain Integrated Border Post demonstrates a relatively adequate level of effectiveness in managing undocumented crossings. Nonetheless, several critical challenges remain, particularly those related to geographical constraints, limited institutional capacity, and suboptimal administrative coordination among relevant agencies. These issues hinder the optimal implementation of border control measures. In conclusion, while current law enforcement practices have achieved moderate effectiveness, significant improvements are necessary to enhance overall performance. Strengthening institutional capacity, integrating advanced surveillance technologies, improving administrative coordination, and developing early warning systems are recommended as strategic measures to optimize border law enforcement in this region.

Keywords: Border Security; Law Enforcement; Motaain Border Post; State Sovereignty; Undocumented Cross-Border Movement

Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic state with a strategic geopolitical position that directly borders several countries in the Southeast Asian and Pacific regions. Geographically, Indonesia shares land borders with Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste, while its maritime boundaries extend to several other neighboring states within the regional maritime domain. This geographical configuration positions border areas as strategic spaces that are not only related to territorial sovereignty but also intertwined with social, economic, security, and cross-border community interactions. From the perspective of international

law, jurisdictional boundaries represent demarcation lines that separate sovereign rights and state authority as regulated under both national legislation and international legal frameworks (Wiradipradja, 2009).

In practice, the management of border regions often encounters complex challenges. These include unresolved boundary delimitations, territorial disputes, illegal cross-border activities, smuggling, human trafficking, and disparities in development between central regions and peripheral border areas. Previous studies indicate that border regions are highly vulnerable to transnational activities due to limited monitoring capacity and the high mobility of cross-border communities (Afandi et al., 2022). Consequently, border management requires a comprehensive policy approach that integrates not only a security-oriented perspective but also a welfare-oriented framework aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of border communities.

Normatively, the concept of Indonesia's territorial domain is regulated under Law Number 43 of 2008 concerning State Territory, which stipulates that the territory of the Republic of Indonesia encompasses land areas, inland waters, archipelagic waters, territorial seas, the seabed and subsoil beneath them, as well as the airspace above, including all natural resources contained therein. This provision reflects that state sovereignty possesses an integrated territorial dimension comprising land, sea, and airspace as an inseparable political entity. Within this framework, monitoring and regulating cross-border activities becomes an essential component of safeguarding national territorial integrity.

As part of its border management strategy, the Indonesian government has developed Cross-Border Posts, commonly known as Pos Lintas Batas Negara (PLBN), which function as official gateways for the movement of people and goods between countries. These facilities operate through an integrated service system involving Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, and Security (CIQS) authorities. One strategically significant facility is the PLBN Motaain located in Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, which serves as a primary crossing point between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Previous research has demonstrated that the presence of PLBN facilities plays a crucial role in regulating cross-border mobility while also controlling illegal immigration activities in border regions (Gunu et al., 2023).

Despite the implementation of various policies and infrastructure improvements, legal violations continue to occur in border areas, particularly in the form of undocumented cross-border movements through unofficial routes commonly referred to as "illegal crossing paths." This phenomenon is influenced by several factors, including challenging geographical conditions, limited surveillance facilities, and long-standing socio-cultural ties among border communities who have historically maintained cross-border interactions. Research on border dynamics suggests that cross-border mobility is often driven by economic factors, kinship relations, and the social needs of local communities (Kareth, 2022). From a national defense perspective, the protection of border areas constitutes an integral element of the national defense system. This principle is explicitly emphasized in Law Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense, which states that national defense aims to safeguard state sovereignty, maintain the territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia,

and protect the entire nation from various forms of threats. Accordingly, the effectiveness of law enforcement in border regions plays a critical role in ensuring that the protection of national sovereignty can be implemented effectively.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of law enforcement against undocumented cross-border movements at the Motaain Cross-Border Post in East Nusa Tenggara. Furthermore, the research seeks to identify the main challenges encountered in implementing law enforcement in border areas and to formulate strategic measures to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring and controlling cross-border activities. This study is expected to contribute to the academic development of border law studies while also providing policy recommendations for strengthening Indonesia's border governance in a more integrated and sustainable manner.

Methodology

Legal research constitutes a systematic process aimed at identifying legal rules, legal principles, and legal doctrines in order to address specific legal issues. In this thesis, the research methodology encompasses several components as described below.

Type of Research

This study employs normative juridical legal research supported by empirical legal research. As the primary approach used in this study, normative juridical research often referred to as doctrinal legal research focuses on examining the structure and development of positive law through logical legal reasoning. In legal scholarship, dogmatic legal science examines, maintains, and develops the framework of positive law through logical constructions commonly referred to as doctrinal or normative legal analysis. Doctrinal legal research aims to provide a systematic exposition of legal rules governing a particular field of law, analyze the relationships among different legal norms, clarify complex aspects of legal provisions, and potentially predict the future development of certain legal regulations. This type of research is fundamentally library-based research, emphasizing the analysis of primary legal materials and secondary legal materials.

Research Approach

In conducting this research, several legal approaches are employed, namely the statutory approach, case approach, and conceptual approach. The statutory approach involves examining laws and regulations related to the enforcement of legal measures against undocumented cross-border travelers at the Motaain Border Post in East Nusa Tenggara. This approach enables the researcher to analyze the consistency, hierarchy, and applicability of relevant legal norms governing border control and immigration enforcement. The case approach is used to examine relevant cases and practical legal applications related to border violations and undocumented cross-border activities. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is utilized to analyze legal concepts, doctrines, and theoretical perspectives that underpin the legal framework governing border security and law enforcement.

Types of Research Data

The type of data used in this study is **secondary data**. Secondary data plays a crucial role in legal research because the quality and credibility of research findings largely depend on the reliability of the data sources used. Therefore, the selection of data sources becomes an important consideration in determining the data collection methods.

Techniques for Collecting Legal Materials

The techniques used to collect legal materials in this study include the following methods:

1. Library Research

Library research is conducted to obtain secondary data through document studies or literature reviews. According to Abdul Rahman Sholeh, library research refers to a research method that obtains data and information by utilizing available facilities in libraries, such as books, journals, documents, and historical records. This research method involves collecting legal materials consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources relevant to the research object. The majority of the data used in this study is secondary data obtained from library resources.

2. Field Research

Empirical legal research, often referred to as field research, is a type of research oriented toward collecting empirical data directly from the field. In this context, the researcher conducted direct observations and data collection at the research location to obtain relevant information.

This study qualifies as empirical research because it describes and analyzes in detail the conditions or phenomena related to the research object. The researcher develops conceptual interpretations while simultaneously gathering factual information from the field.

Sources of Legal Materials

The secondary data used in this study were obtained from the following legal material sources:

Primary Legal Materials

Primary legal materials refer to authoritative legal sources that possess binding legal authority and serve as the main references in legal research. The primary legal materials used in this study include:

- a. The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia
- b. Law Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense
- c. Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces
- d. Law Number 6 of 2011 concerning Immigration
- e. Law Number 63 of 2024 concerning the Third Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2011 on Immigration
- f. Law Number 3 of 2025 concerning Amendments to Law Number 34 of 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces

- g. Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022 on Job Creation as Law

Secondary Legal Materials

Secondary legal materials consist of materials that provide explanations of primary legal sources, such as research findings, implementing regulations, academic publications, and scholarly books that serve as references in analyzing the research problem.

Tertiary Legal Materials

Tertiary legal materials are sources that provide guidance or clarification regarding primary and secondary legal materials. These include sources such as the Indonesian Dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), legal dictionaries, academic journals, and relevant websites.

Data Analysis Technique

The method used in this research is qualitative analysis. This method involves systematically organizing and connecting the collected data with the legal issues under examination while referring to relevant legal provisions and regulations. The analysis also considers the hierarchy of laws and regulations to ensure legal certainty and consistency in interpretation. Data analysis in this study is conducted using a qualitative approach, which constitutes a crucial stage in answering the research questions. After obtaining secondary data and empirical findings such as statements from respondents in written or oral form as well as observable behavior the data are analyzed using secondary and tertiary sources. The data are then systematically organized to facilitate the analytical process. Finally, conclusions are drawn using a deductive reasoning approach, whereby general legal principles and regulations are applied to specific research findings in order to answer the legal issues examined in this study.

Result and Discussion

The Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Undocumented Border Crossers at the Motaain Border Post from East Nusa Tenggara and from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to East Nusa Tenggara

1. Physical Geographical Conditions and Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Motaain Border Area

a. Geographical Conditions of the Motaain Border Region

The Motaain Integrated Border Post (Pos Lintas Batas Negara/PLBN) is located in Silawan Village, East Tasifeto District, Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, and directly borders Bobonaro District (Batugade) in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Geographically, this area is situated on Timor Island, which is divided into two national jurisdictions, namely Indonesia (West Timor) and Timor-Leste (East Timor).

The land boundary between Indonesia and Timor-Leste stretches approximately 268 kilometers and consists of two main segments, namely the Motaain–Memo segment and the Motamasin–Salele segment. The geographical conditions of this region are predominantly characterized by hilly terrain, dry land, and relatively open savanna landscapes. These characteristics allow the emergence of informal crossing routes, often referred to as “unofficial paths,” around the national borderline.

Strategically, the Motaain Border Post serves as the primary land gateway connecting Kupang and Dili. This post functions as a central node for the mobility of people and goods while simultaneously representing the implementation of state sovereignty through immigration and customs supervision. Data from the Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan indicate a significant increase in the movement of people and goods through the Motaain Border Post in recent years.

The open and extensive geographical conditions have a direct impact on the effectiveness of border supervision. Security measures are not only conducted at the formal border post facilities but must also extend to surrounding border areas beyond the official perimeter, which are physically difficult to monitor continuously.



Figure 1. Motaain, the Border Between Indonesia and Timor-Leste

b. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Border Communities

The communities in the Motaain border area are predominantly composed of the Timorese ethnic group (Atoni/Pah Meto), who share similar cultural traditions, language, and customary systems with communities in Batugade, Timor-Leste. Anthropologically, national borders do not entirely sever long-standing social and kinship relations that have developed over generations (Hartati et al., 2022).

This phenomenon is known in border studies as cross-border kinship, referring to familial relationships that continue to exist across national boundaries despite administrative separation (Pala & Zamili, 2023). Many families were divided following the establishment of the state of Timor-Leste in 2002, yet they continue to maintain intensive social interactions.

Within this context, cross-border mobility is often perceived by local communities as a normal social activity rather than an administrative violation. This situation presents particular challenges for immigration law enforcement. The Motaain Integrated Border Post (PLBN Motaain) is one of the busiest border crossing points in eastern Indonesia. Community mobility across the border includes (Indonesia, 2026):

1. Family visits
2. Traditional trade
3. Religious activities
4. Access to education and healthcare
5. Distribution of basic necessities

According to BNPP reports, the number of cross-border travelers at PLBN Motaain shows a significant increase each year. This high level of mobility indicates that border areas function not only as security zones but also as dynamic spaces of socio-economic interaction.

From a sociology of law perspective, administrative violations such as undocumented crossings are often influenced by the economic needs of local communities. Research on cross-border trade between Indonesia and Timor-Leste indicates the existence of informal trading practices driven by differences in commodity prices and available economic opportunities (Ratnaduhita et al., 2025).

The Motaain border community demonstrates characteristics of borderland identity, referring to a social identity that is not solely tied to formal citizenship but also shaped by shared Timorese cultural heritage that transcends national boundaries. Border studies explain that communities in border regions tend to develop dual identities influenced by historical experiences, cultural traditions, and economic relations.

This identity frequently conflicts with modern administrative legal systems that rely on formal documentation such as passports and visas. As a result, some members of the community continue to cross the border informally through unofficial routes. Demographically, the border region is inhabited by various tribes and ethnic groups that maintain cross-border kinship ties. Many villages are located very close to the national boundary line, making cross-border activities part of everyday life.

Communities in the border regions between Indonesia and Timor-Leste largely depend on subsistence agriculture, livestock farming, and forest resources to meet their daily needs. Economic conditions in these areas are generally low, characterized by high levels of poverty and limited access to basic infrastructure such as education, healthcare, and transportation. Most residents are small-scale farmers who rely on agricultural production primarily for self-consumption, with only a small surplus available for sale in local markets. Limited access to markets and agricultural storage facilities often prevents them from improving their economic conditions.

Inadequate transportation infrastructure also represents a major challenge to population mobility and the distribution of goods. Damaged roads and insufficient bridges exacerbate these conditions, particularly during the rainy season. Cross-border kinship relations play a significant role in the social dynamics of border communities, as many families remain separated by national boundaries. These relationships are sometimes exploited by individuals involved in border violations, who use kinship ties as justification for illegal activities such as smuggling and human trafficking.

The border between Indonesia and Timor-Leste extends across various regions with diverse geographical characteristics. The border encompasses areas with complex topography, making border surveillance a significant challenge. Along the border, several official border crossing points connect the two countries, including:

1. PLBN Motaain in Belu Regency, which serves as the main gateway
2. PLBN Motamasin in Malaka Regency, serving the southern region
3. PLBN Wini in North Central Timor Regency, serving the northern region

These border areas are inhabited by various ethnic groups with cross-border kinship ties, making cross-border mobility an integral part of daily life. Local communities primarily rely on subsistence agriculture, livestock farming, and forest resources, with generally low economic conditions. Infrastructure in these areas remains limited. Damaged roads and inadequate bridges, particularly during the rainy season, further hinder population mobility and the distribution of goods. Cross-border kinship relations are sometimes exploited by perpetrators of border violations to conduct illegal activities such as smuggling and human trafficking.

c. Socio-Demographic Implications for Law Enforcement

Based on the description above, the socio-demographic characteristics of the Motaain border area have direct implications for the effectiveness of law enforcement, including:

1. High levels of cross-border social and economic mobility
2. Strong customary and kinship relationships across national boundaries
3. Differences in perception between formal legal norms and local social norms
4. Economic development disparities in border regions

Therefore, law enforcement against undocumented border crossers cannot rely solely on a repressive or security-oriented approach (security approach). Instead, it must also incorporate a prosperity approach and a more adaptive socio-cultural approach that considers the social realities of border communities.

2. Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Undocumented Border Crossers at PLBN Motaain

a. Legal Basis and Policy Framework of Law Enforcement

Within the Indonesian legal system, the authority to conduct inspections and enforce regulations against undocumented border crossers is based on a series of statutory regulations. These legal provisions serve as the normative foundation for authorities in carrying out supervisory, preventive, and enforcement functions against individuals entering or leaving the territory of Indonesia.

1. Law Number 63 of 2024 concerning the Third Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2011 on Immigration

Law Number 63 of 2024 concerning the Third Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2011 on Immigration constitutes the principal legal framework governing all aspects of immigration, including the obligation of every person to possess valid travel documents and visas when entering or leaving Indonesian territory. These provisions apply to both Indonesian citizens and foreign nationals visiting Indonesia. The Immigration Law stipulates that immigration inspections must be conducted by Immigration Officers at Immigration Checkpoints (Tempat Pemeriksaan Imigrasi/TPI), such as PLBN Motaain. These inspections include the verification of passports, visas, and other official documents that determine the legality of entry into or exit from the country.

Article 113 of the Immigration Law explicitly regulates sanctions for any person who intentionally enters or leaves the territory of Indonesia without undergoing inspection by Immigration Officers at an Immigration Checkpoint. The sanctions include:

- a. Imprisonment for a maximum of one (1) year; and/or
- b. A maximum fine of IDR 100,000,000 (one hundred million rupiah).

These provisions aim to create a deterrent effect for illegal crossers attempting to pass through the border without official procedures, while also reinforcing the authority of the government in safeguarding territorial sovereignty.

In addition to criminal sanctions, the Immigration Law also grants authority to Immigration Officers to impose administrative measures against foreign nationals who violate immigration regulations. Article 75 explains several forms of Immigration Administrative Actions, including:

- a. Restriction of residence permits
- b. Modification or cancellation of residence permits
- c. Entry prohibition (blacklisting)
- d. Deportation or removal from the territory of Indonesia

These administrative measures represent a legal response without necessarily entering the criminal justice domain, particularly in cases of undocumented border crossing that are not motivated by serious criminal intent but rather by lack of awareness or long-standing cross-border social practices. The Immigration Law emphasizes that such administrative actions are necessary to maintain state administrative order while providing legal certainty regarding the status of foreign nationals within Indonesian territory.

2. Government Regulation Number 40 of 2023 concerning the Fourth Amendment to Government Regulation Number 31 of 2013 on the Implementing Regulation of Law Number 6 of 2011 on Immigration

The Immigration Law is further elaborated through Government Regulation Number 40 of 2023 concerning the Fourth Amendment to Government Regulation Number 31 of 2013, which provides the implementing provisions of Law Number 6 of 2011 on Immigration. This regulation functions as a technical guideline explaining procedures for immigration inspections, entry and exit mechanisms, as well as enforcement and preventive measures. Government Regulation Number 40 of 2023 regulates obligations related to:

- a. Document inspection at Immigration Checkpoints
- b. Procedures for monitoring foreign nationals
- c. Detailed provisions concerning visas, entry stamps, and residence permits
- d. Administrative and criminal sanctions for specific violations

This regulation has undergone several revisions to adapt to global developments and evolving legal needs, including strengthening supervisory functions in border areas.

3. Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 9 of 2024 concerning Procedures for Immigration Inspection of Persons Entering or Leaving the Territory of Indonesia

Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 9 of 2024 specifically regulates the procedures for immigration inspections of individuals entering or leaving Indonesian territory through Immigration Checkpoints, including PLBN such as Motaain.

This ministerial regulation provides operational guidelines for Immigration Officers in:

- a. Determining procedures for passport and visa verification
 - b. Establishing inspection categories based on traveler classification
 - c. Implementing refusal of entry mechanisms
 - d. Handling undocumented border crossers
4. Law Number 43 of 2008 on State Territory

In addition to the Immigration Law, Law Number 43 of 2008 on State Territory also serves as a legal basis for the management of border areas and the demarcation of Indonesia's jurisdiction from other states. This law affirms state sovereignty over land, maritime, and airspace territories, including border regions. This legislation forms the legal basis for protecting national jurisdiction against cross-border activities. Consequently, any violation of territorial boundaries that threatens national order may be subject to sanctions in accordance with applicable legal provisions.

b. Mechanism for the Implementation of Law Enforcement at PLBN Motaain

The operationalization of law enforcement against undocumented border crossers at PLBN Motaain is implemented through an integrated inspection

mechanism known as CIQS (Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, Security), in which each institution performs inspection functions according to its respective authority: customs inspection of goods, immigration document verification, health and quarantine checks, and security monitoring of travelers.

This integrated inspection system aims to close administrative loopholes that may be exploited by illegal crossers attempting to enter Indonesian territory without valid documentation (Hasan, 2025).

In practice, the inspection process at PLBN Motaain begins with the pre-screening of documents and goods by immigration and customs officers, followed by health inspections when necessary, as well as security monitoring throughout the service area. This process aligns with the concept of coordinated border management in modern border governance, where multiple agencies work synergistically to minimize risks of legal violations and threats to national security.

However, empirical reports indicate several weaknesses in the implementation of this mechanism in the field, particularly concerning:

1. Limited facilities and human resources at PLBN, which result in document inspections not being optimally conducted at all crossing points, thereby creating opportunities for illegal crossers to pass undetected.
2. High mobility of local communities and travelers from Timor-Leste, which creates operational pressure for CIQS officers and may lead to longer inspection times or reduced accuracy during peak crossing periods.
3. Cross-sectoral coordination that is not yet fully integrated, for example between immigration authorities, the police, and regional government intelligence units, which often operate sectorally without a strong integrated data reference system (Antaranews.com, 2025).

In strategic border studies, the strength of surveillance systems such as CIQS (Customs, Immigration, Quarantine, Security) is largely determined by capacity building of personnel, modernization of surveillance technology, and effective cross-sector coordination. Recent studies indicate that although the CIQS mechanism represents an important step in border law enforcement, its effectiveness is significantly influenced by the government's ability to address structural challenges such as limited facilities, insufficient data integration, and the social dynamics of local communities.

c. **Mechanism for Law Enforcement Through Indonesia–Timor-Leste Cooperation**

Since the independence of Timor-Leste in 2002, Indonesia and Timor-Leste have established bilateral cooperation agreements to address border-related issues, including illegal crossing borders. These agreements include strengthening border surveillance, clarifying territorial boundaries, and enhancing security cooperation. Both countries have conducted various joint operations to address illegal border crossings. These operations involve joint patrols, the establishment of monitoring posts at vulnerable points, and joint training exercises between Indonesian and Timor-Leste security forces.

The objective of these operations is to prevent and address cases of human smuggling, drug trafficking, and other illegal activities occurring along the shared border. In addressing illegal border crossings, Indonesia and Timor-Leste have also launched several cooperative projects. These projects include the development of border infrastructure such as roads, border checkpoints, and supporting facilities.

Both countries have also sought to improve the capacity and professional skills of security personnel through intensive training and cooperation with international organizations, including initiatives aimed at strengthening the economic empowerment of border communities in order to reduce incentives for illegal activities.

Post-independence cooperation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste has placed border management as a major priority in maintaining regional stability and security. In addition to addressing illegal border crossings, a crucial aspect of border cooperation involves the establishment and management of border markers. These border markers serve not only as physical indicators determining territorial boundaries but also play an essential role in preventing conflicts and illegal activities along the border.

Through a series of bilateral agreements, Indonesia and Timor-Leste have strengthened border supervision by ensuring that the boundaries separating the two states are clearly defined and recognized by both parties. The establishment of border markers represents a fundamental step in strengthening border cooperation. Since Timor-Leste's independence, both countries have cooperated in the delimitation and demarcation of border lines. This process involves field measurements, mapping activities, and the installation of accurate boundary markers along the border line. In the early stages, several discrepancies created tensions; however, through dialogue and intensive negotiations, most of these issues have been successfully resolved.

Clearly established and mutually recognized border markers significantly strengthen border surveillance. With accurate markers in place, security forces from both countries can more easily identify vulnerable border points and monitor illegal activities such as smuggling and unauthorized crossings.

In addition, Indonesia and Timor-Leste have implemented effective border dispute settlement mechanisms. When border markers shift or become damaged due to natural factors or human activities, both countries can promptly conduct verification and repairs through bilateral cooperation. This collaboration ensures that the border remains clearly defined and internationally recognized.

Border markers have also become a focus of border infrastructure development projects. In addition to constructing checkpoints and roads, Indonesia and Timor-Leste have collaborated to strengthen border markers by installing more durable markers equipped with monitoring technology. These efforts aim to prevent illegal alterations of boundary markers and minimize illegal activities around border areas. Overall, cooperation in the establishment and management of border markers constitutes a key component of Indonesia and Timor-Leste's efforts to address illegal

crossing borders and improve border security. Both countries remain committed to maintaining border clarity and stability through continuous and innovative cooperation.

Strategic Measures to Improve the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Against Undocumented Border Crossers at the Motaain Border Post from East Nusa Tenggara and from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to East Nusa Tenggara

Law enforcement in border areas is not solely related to administrative or criminal actions, but also encompasses integrative strategic efforts involving various state institutions and civil society actors. The effectiveness of law enforcement at the Motaain Integrated Border Post (PLBN Motaain) against undocumented border crossers is determined by the government's capacity to implement appropriate and contextual strategic measures while considering social dynamics, cultural characteristics, and the legal complexities prevailing in border zones.

Strengthening the Institutional Structure and Capacity of Border Law Enforcement Agencies

a. Increasing Personnel Strength and Training

One of the primary strategic measures is increasing both the number and quality of personnel assigned to PLBN Motaain. This includes specialized training for immigration officers, customs officials, police officers, and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) in several key areas, namely:

1. proper and rapid procedures for document verification;
2. identification techniques for detecting forged signatures or illegal documents;
3. handling conflict situations involving undocumented crossers (Uly et al., 2023).

Such training aligns with the principle of human resource competence as one of the determining factors of effective law enforcement as proposed by Soerjono Soekanto, particularly concerning the role of law enforcers and the availability of supporting infrastructure. Intensive training is essential to ensure that every officer adheres to uniform Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) when addressing cases involving undocumented border crossers, thereby preventing administrative errors that could create loopholes for violations.

b. Modernization of Border Surveillance Technology

Modern surveillance technology plays a crucial role in improving the effectiveness of law enforcement. In the Motaain border region, technological strengthening strategies include:

1. the deployment of CCTV systems and perimeter sensors along border routes to monitor movement in areas vulnerable to illegal crossings;
2. the integration of immigration biometric systems to detect individuals entering with forged documents or repeatedly attempting unauthorized entry;

3. the implementation of integrated databases among relevant institutions (Immigration, Customs, POLRI, and TNI) to allow real-time access and analysis of violation-related information.

Research on border management indicates that strengthening surveillance technology is a key element in developing an effective and responsive border control system capable of addressing challenges posed by illegal border crossers (Setiawan et al., 2020).

Improvement of Administrative Procedures and Policies at Immigration Checkpoints (TPI)

a. Revision and Harmonization of Inspection Procedures

Immigration inspections at checkpoints such as PLBN Motaain must adhere to clear and consistently implemented procedural standards. Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 9 of 2024 regulates the technical procedures for immigration inspections, including the handling of undocumented border crossers. However, in practice, these procedures must continue to be strengthened through:

1. standardization of cross-border document verification procedures;
2. adjustment of inspection workflows to minimize technical errors;
3. updating operational guidelines in response to evolving cross-border mobility patterns.

Improving these procedures is crucial because certain violations often occur due to administrative negligence in the field, such as incomplete or insufficiently thorough document inspections.

b. Development of an Early Warning System and Risk Profiling Mechanism

An early warning system can assist authorities in anticipating patterns of illegal crossings based on data trends. By implementing risk profiling mechanisms, officers can more rapidly determine which travelers require further inspection and which may proceed through standard procedures. The application of big data technology and profiling algorithms has been adopted in many modern immigration offices as part of efficient and effective monitoring strategies.

Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation Between Indonesia and Timor-Leste

The effectiveness of law enforcement in border areas cannot be separated from the bilateral relationship with neighboring countries, particularly Timor-Leste. Strong cooperation can reduce gaps that enable illegal crossings due to differences in procedures and regulations between the two states.

a. Joint Border Committee Forum

Indonesia and Timor-Leste, through the Joint Border Committee forum, have established cooperative mechanisms to resolve cross-border issues, including undocumented crossings, harmonization of immigration procedures, and strengthening border crossing posts (Tambunan et al., 2023). This forum functions as a coordination

platform involving institutions from both countries to collectively address technical and administrative challenges.

b. Harmonization of Immigration Data and Information Systems

Bilateral cooperation also includes the integration of immigration data between the two countries so that individuals who repeatedly attempt to bypass inspections can be detected more quickly. This data exchange system is essential to:

1. identify repeat crossers;
2. ensure that individuals denied entry in one country cannot enter the other without proper inspection;
3. reduce administrative loopholes caused by differing procedural standards.

Studies indicate that cross-national integration of information systems constitutes a key strategic step in addressing illegal border crossing issues worldwide.

Socio-Cultural Approaches and Community Education in Border Areas

a. Legal Socialization and Immigration Awareness Programs

The relatively low level of public understanding among border communities regarding immigration regulations constitutes one of the main causes of undocumented crossings. Therefore, educational approaches represent a strategic component in improving the effectiveness of law enforcement. Legal awareness programs are conducted periodically and involve:

1. local governments (regencies/municipalities);
2. security forces;
3. community organizations;
4. traditional leaders and community figures.

These initiatives aim to provide communities with a clear understanding of the legal consequences of illegal border crossing and the importance of complying with legitimate documentation procedures.

b. Economic Empowerment and Legal Mobility Alternatives

In practice, many undocumented crossings occur due to economic motivations, such as informal trade or long-standing social mobility between communities across the border. Sociological studies on border regions indicate that traditional patterns of social mobility do not always align with modern administrative legal systems (Sari & Fernandes, 2024).

Economic empowerment initiatives, such as micro-enterprise programs and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in border regions, can reduce dependence on illegal border crossings for economic purposes. Such approaches not only strengthen legal compliance but also contribute to improving the welfare of border communities.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that, while law enforcement against undocumented border crossings at PLBN Motaain has demonstrated measurable progress, its effectiveness

remains contingent upon addressing structural and contextual constraints inherent to border governance. The persistence of unofficial crossing routes, porous geographical conditions, and strong cross-border kinship ties underscores the need for a more adaptive and community-sensitive enforcement model. These results imply that a solely regulatory approach is insufficient; instead, a multidimensional strategy integrating legal robustness with institutional strengthening, technological innovation, and socio-cultural engagement is essential. Practically, this entails enhancing inter-agency coordination within the CIQS framework, investing in digitalized surveillance and data integration systems, and expanding community-based legal awareness programs to foster voluntary compliance. Additionally, strengthening bilateral mechanisms with Timor-Leste—particularly through interoperable immigration information systems and joint monitoring initiatives—emerges as a critical factor in sustaining enforcement outcomes. Future research should explore the long-term effectiveness of technology-driven border management systems, assess the impact of community engagement strategies on compliance behavior, and examine comparative models of integrated border governance in similar socio-geographical contexts to generate more scalable and context-responsive policy recommendations.

References

- Afandi, F. G., Yoesgiantoro, D., & Prakoso, L. Y. (2022). Analisis Kesiapan Indonesia Dalam Menghadapi Strategi Dinamika Lingkungan di Kawasan Perairan Natuna Utara. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31316/jk.v6i1.2839>
- Antaranews.com. (2025, February 14). *Kemenkopolkham Soroti Tiga Isu Utama di Perbatasan RI-Timor Leste*. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/5054869/kemenkopolkham-soroti-tiga-isu-utama-di-perbatasan-ri-timor-leste>
- Gunu, G. M. V., Nurigiyanti, T., Amini, D. S., & Subandi, Y. (2023). Peran Pos Lintas Batas Negara Motamasin Dalam Mengatasi Imigrasi Ilegal di Wilayah Perbatasan RI-RDTL. *Sosmaniora*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55123/sosmaniora.v2i1.1695>
- Hartati, A. Y., Martin, A., & Soares, M. P. R. (2022). Penguatan Strategi Keamanan Manusia Di Perbatasan Mota Ain (Indonesia) Dengan Batugade (Timor Leste). *Kemudi: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 6(2), 98–110. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31629/kemudi.v6i02.3220>
- Hasan, R. (2025, February 14). *Cegah Kendaraan Ilegal, PLBN Motaain Bentuk Pos Pemeriksaan Terpadu di Perbatasan*. <https://www.majalahoutsiders.com/cegah-kendaraan-ilegal-plbn-motaain-bentuk-pos-pemeriksaan-terpadu-di-perbatasan/>
- Indonesia, B. N. P. P. R. (2026). *Peningkatan Signifikan Perlintasan Orang dan Barang di Kawasan Perbatasan: BNPP RI Catat Kinerja Positif di PLBN Motaain Sepanjang 2025*. Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan Republik Indonesia. <https://bnpp.go.id/berita/peningkatan-signifikan-perlintasan-orang-dan-barang-di->

kawasan-perbatasan-bnpp-ri-catat-kinerja-positif-di-plbn-motaain-sepanjang-2025

- Kareth, N. V. J. (2022). Penegakan Hukum Oleh Pos Lintas Batas Bagi Para Pelintas di Wilayah Perbatasan Papua dan Papua Nugini. *Jurnal Hukum Balobe*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47268/balobe.v2i1.848>
- Pala, A., & Zamili, M. (2023). Illegal Trading in the Cross-Border of Indonesia and Enclave Oecusse, Timor Leste. *Jurnal Masyarakat, Kebudayaan Dan Politik*, 36(2), 217–229. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.V36I22023.217-229>
- Ratnadhita, C., Puryanti, L., & Husain, S. B. (2025). Dinamika Permasalahan Masyarakat Perbatasan Indonesia-Timor Leste: Menyikapi Lintas Batas Negara. *JIPSK: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Suara Khatulistiwa*, 10(1), 16–28. <https://doi.org/10.33701/jipsk.v10i1.5268>
- Sari, N. L. I., & Fernandes, F. A. M. da C. (2024). Implementasi Hukum terhadap Lintas Batas Negara demi Menjalankan Tradisi Adat di Perbatasan Indonesia-Timor Leste. *Jurnal Pacta Sunt Servanda*, 5(2), 52–60. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpps.v5i2.5448>
- Setiawan, M. R., Mendrofa, E. L. A., & Pramana, G. M. A. (2020). Border Management: Challenges and Issues at The Border in Indonesia. *Customs Research and Application Journal*, 2(2), 84–104. <https://doi.org/10.31092/craj.v2i2.65>
- Tambunan, P. J. C., Mamentu, M., & Lengkong, J. P. (2023). Strategi Pemerintah Indonesia Dalam Mengatasi Pelintas Batas Ilegal di Perbatasan Indonesia-Timor Leste. *Politico: Jurnal Ilmu Politik*, 12(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.35797/jp.v12i1.45272>
- Uly, H., Harsono, G., Supriyatno, M., & Gultom, R. A. G. (2023). Strategi Pertahanan Negara Dalam Mengamankan Wilayah Perbatasan di Indonesia (Studi Kasus Perbatasan Indonesia-RDTL). *Jurnal Pendidikan*, 5(3), 7508–7521. <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i3.1543>
- Wiradipradja, E. S. (2009). Wilayah Udara Negara (State Air Territory) Ditinjau Dari Segi Hukum Internasional dan Nasional Indonesia. *Indonesia Journal of International Law*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol6.4.211>