Art of Reading Signs: Police Intelligence and Early Detection Strategy for Election Threat Management

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Abstract

This study examines the performance of Intelligence and Security Unit of Pare-pare Police Resort in anticipating potential security threats during the 2024 Regional Elections using the early detection strategy in order to figure out the effectiveness of the strategy and its suitability with applicable provisions. Utilising both normative and empirical approach, this study analyses the laws and regulations using field observations. The findings of this research shows that the Intelligence and Security Unit has implemented a comprehensive strategy following applicable laws and regulations but it still faces challenges in the digital era. Increasing the capacity of big data analysis, social media monitoring, and information-sharing mechanisms among institutions are needed to anticipate security disturbances in the future election. This strategy has the potential to be a model for other regions in Indonesia, although it still requires continuous improvement and adaptation of technology.

Keywords*: early detection, election security, police intelligence

INTRODUCTION

General Election is the essential aspect in realizing people's sovereignty in Indonesia that is carried out directly, publicly, freely, discreetly, honestly, and fairly once in every five years. As a democratic country, Indonesia routinely organises Elections to elect a President and Vice President, members of the Regional Representative Council , House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as Provincial and Regional House of Representatives (Siagian, 2022).

However, in its implementation, it is important to recognise the vulnerabilities of election to the disturbances that can hinder or even thwart the smoothness of the election process. These vulnerabilities can appear in the forms of manipulation of voters' data, the spread of false information or hoaxes, money politics, and pressure on voters that can damage the integrity of the election (Duty & Ware, 2024). In addition, security challenges are also a serious concern, including threats of violence or intimidation that can disrupt order during the election.

Social conflict triggered by sensitive issues, such as the discrimination against ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup during the elections is the tactic that exploits the differences in the community for political gain (Kasim & Heridah, 2020). This practice is oftentimes used by some political candidates during their campaigns that encourage voters to vote them by weighting on the candidate's ethnicity or

religious background, rather than their quality as the people's representative and their goals. For example, spreading messages that prohibit voting for leaders from a particular religion or ethnic group, or spreading negative rumours about candidates from the minority groups. This tactic can also involve the use of certain religious or cultural symbols to attract support or trigger anti-group sentiment.

The impact of this discriminatory act is very damaging as it can divide the society, divert attention from substantial issues, and ultimately threaten the integrity of the democratic process itself. This phenomenon can trigger horizontal conflicts, worsen social polarization, and damage long-term community cohesion. The use of discrimination against ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup narratives not only distracts attention from substantive issues but also creates political and social inequality. As the results, voter participation from minority groups may decrease, thereby reducing the representation and legitimacy of election results. Ultimately, the discriminatory act has the potential to produce leaders who tend to prioritize the interests of certain groups, rather than society as a whole, thus hampering development and shared progress.

Efforts such as early detection and warning are needed to fight these threats to realize the national goals of protecting the entire Indonesian nation and maintaining the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia as mandated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution (Wangsajaya, 2023). This is increasingly important considering the complexity and dynamic of development of strategic environmental situations and conditions are getting higher (Heri, 2019).

The General Election Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia has published an Election Vulnerability Index for the 2024 Election which reveals some regions are categorized as very vulnerable. One of which is Pare-pare city in South Sulawesi that stands at the 5th position in the list of the most vulnerable districts/cities, particularly on the issue of the neutrality of the Civil Apparatus. This ranking highlights the vulnerabilities in organising the election in Pare-pare city that require serious attention and anticipatory steps. The related stakeholders need to take strategic steps to ensure the neutrality of Civil Apparatus and maintain the integrity of the election process, so that it can take place fairly and transparently.

Several factors that are of concern in Pare-pare City's local election include its position as a transit city which geographical conditions bordering several districts and the characteristics of its heterogeneous society. In addition, there are also issues such as land reclamation disputes, potential discrimination-based conflicts, the spread of fake news and hate speech on social media, as well as the presence of former terrorist convicts who are vulnerable to radicalism (Asriyani et al., 2021).

In order to anticipate these potential disturbances, the optimal efforts are required from the Police Security Intelligence to detect them (Asba et al., 2022). The Police Security Intelligence as an integral part of the organic function of the Indonesian National Police has the task of carrying out intelligence activities and operations, including investigations, security, and deployment in the security sector to support the implementation of the duties of the Indonesian National Police (Renggong & Madiong, 2021).

This study aims to analyse the strategies implemented by the Pare-pare Municipal Police Intelligence and Security Unit in conducting early detection of potential security disturbances before and during the 2024 Regional Election in the Pare-pare City area by using a normative legal research method to examine regulatory aspects related to the role of intelligence and security in maintaining election security (Irwansyah, 2020) (Syarif et al., 2024). This approach is hoped to provide a deeper understanding on the effectiveness of early detection strategy and how this mechanism can be adjusted to the dynamics of the existing threats that continue to develop during the election period (Juliardi et al., 2023).

The empirical research method is also deployed to explore factual data in the field related to the implementation of the early detection strategy by the Pare-pare Municipal Police Intelligence and Security Unit. By combining both normative and empirical research methods, a comprehensive picture hopefully could be obtained to map the vulnerabilities of Pare-pare city in organising its local election and the effectiveness of the early detection strategy implemented by the Pare-pare Municipal Police Intelligence and Security Unit.

Moreover, the results of this study are expected to assist related stakeholders in making a better security plan, and also increasing the knowledge about security and the implementation of elections in Indonesia, which may improve the security of democratic process of people's sovereignty, as well as provide new ideas for the experts and related stakeholders in the field of security and election implementation.

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need to create a conducive environment for the implementation of elections, amidst increasingly complex challenges. This research not only provides academic contributions, but also practical contributions in efforts to maintain stability, security, and public order which are important foundations for national development and public trust in the democratic process. Although strategies are available, research on the adaptation of these strategies to digital threats is still limited, which is what this research aims to answer.

DISCUSSION

The early detection strategy is a comprehensive and well-organized approach, in line with Law No. 17 of 2011 concerning State Intelligence. This strategy is implemented by the Pare-pare Municipal Police Intelligence and Security Unit in the 2024 Regional Election that covers key aspects, such as investigation, security, and information gathering to ensure a comprehensive coverage of potential security threats.

However, the rapid development of the information system, technology, and digital world appears to be the existing issues for the Police Intelligence and Unit in conducting early detection of security threats in the election. Modern threats such as fake news, election fraud, and identity issues require more flexible handling methods and the use of the latest technology. It is important for the officers in-charged to improve their competence in analysing the big data to be able to face these challenges well.

In addition, it is necessary to establish a proper way of sharing information among the security team, election supervisors, and election organizers. This can be done by setting a joint cooperation where the related stakeholders agree on the types of information that is allowed to be shared, the means to share the information, and the security measures need to be taken, or their contingency plan. This type of integrated and secure information system will be very helpful in implementing the early detection strategy.

Furthermore, a joint team consisting of the security team members, election supervisors, and election organizers may also improve the ability to detect and handle threats. These steps, are not only intended to secure the election in Pare-pare city, but can also be an example for other regions in Indonesia to create a safer and more orderly election throughout the country.

In carrying out its duties, the Pare-pare Municipal Police Security team follows a set of rules issued by the Chief of the Indonesian National Police. The early detection process is mandated to be conducted through collecting information from various sources, processing and analysing information to find signs of threats, and submitting the results of the analysis in the form of a complete report to the leadership. This process is required to ensure that every potential threat can be recognized and handled promptly.

The results of the information analysis will be systematically distributed to the related working units in order to put the preventive actions or necessary interventions in place timely. This distribution process is carefully managed by assessing the urgency and relevance of information in each working unit to allocate the resources effectively and efficiently. With this approach, the Intelligence and Security Unit can increase the preparedness and responsiveness in dealing with various potential security threats to the election process, so that the election can take place in a safe and conducive atmosphere.

However, it is still necessary to improve the information sharing means among the related stakeholder in the election to ensure the rapid exchange of critical information and the emerging threats can be tackled immediately. Establishing clearer rules and using technology to share data securely can greatly improve the ability to detect and address issues early. Additionally, using sophisticated data analysis methods and tools to monitor social media can provide a better understanding of potential security issues. This will allow teams to take a pre-emptive action before issues become more serious.

By continuously refining these processes and integrating technological advancements, the Pare-pare Police Intelligence and Security Unit can become a benchmark for election security practices. One of the concrete steps taken in preparation for the 2024 Regional Election is to check the readiness of personnel as reported on July 8, 2024. Pare-pare Municipal Police Chief, AKBP Arman Muis, reported that he has checked the condition and readiness of the personnels at the Pare-pare Municipal Police Headquarters. On that occasion, the Police Chief emphasized the importance of preventing disturbances to public order, maintaining neutrality, and taking humanistic and persuasive actions. This approach is in line with the principles in Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, especially regarding the protection of citizens' political rights in elections.

Early detection efforts are also carried out through collecting information from establishing communication with community leaders and sub-district governments. The purpose of this step is to invite the community to participate in maintaining a conducive security and social order situation. In addition, the Police Security Intelligence Unit carries out mapping of potential vulnerabilities in the Pare-pare city area, following the main duties and functions of Police Security Intelligence as regulated in the Regulation of the Chief of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 of 2010 concerning the Organizational Structure and Work Procedures of Organizational Units at the Regional Police Level.

This structured and collaborative approach is designed to ensure that the election takes place safely, peacefully, and following the principles of democracy and human rights. These efforts are not only aimed to protect the physical integrity of the election process, but also to strengthen the public trust in the democratic system, thereby creating a conducive environment for inclusive and fair political participation. Cross-sector coordination is one of the main strategies implemented by the Pare-pare Municipal Police. This is reflected in the discussion forum held in Pare-pare on March 5, 2024, where various stakeholders, such as General Election Supervisory Agency, General Election Commission, and local governments met, shared information, and formulated joint anticipatory steps.

The Intelligence and Security Unit of the Pare-pare Municipal Police conducted an in-depth analysis of the information obtained to produce accurate intelligence reports that are submitted to the leadership as a consideration in making policies related to election security, as mandated by the Regulation of the Chief of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2006 concerning the Principles of the Implementation of the Regional Police as a Basic Operational Unit and Regulation of the Chief of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2006 concerning the Principalities of the Implementation of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia Sector as an Operational Spearhead.

The Pare-pare Municipal Police Security Intelligence is also committed to implementing the principles of good governance, including transparency, and accountability in carrying out their duties. This commitment is reflected in efforts to build public trust through a humanistic and persuasive approach, as emphasized by the Pare-pare Police Chief in his instructions to all personnel. With this approach, it is hoped that the relationship between the police and the community can be better established so that a conducive and safe environment is created. The National Police Security Intelligence has shown success in handling Civil Apparatus's non-neutrality during the regional elections through various efforts. Although the details of the case were not published in detail to maintain the confidentiality of the operation, Police Security Intelligence succeeded in carrying out early detection, monitoring social media, and covert operations to uncover violations (2024). Close coordination with General Election Supervisory Agency and Civil Apparatus was also carried out to handle the case effectively. In addition to repressive actions, Police Security Intelligence also focuses on preventive efforts through education and socialization. This success is not only in taking action but also in

prevention, which contributes significantly to maintaining the integrity of the regional elections and the neutrality of Civil Apparatus.

Cooperation with various parties such as election supervisors, election organizers, and local governments is also a key strategy to ensure election security. They share information and make joint plans to anticipate problems. This cooperation not only increases readiness but also makes the public more confident in the election process.

The early detection strategy implemented by Police Security Intelligence of Pare-pare Resort Police also takes into account the rapid development of information technology. Pare-pare Police Chief emphasized the importance of the Police officers to master the information technology. This is in line with the need to increase the capacity of Police Security Intelligence personnel in big data and social media analysis, considering the increasingly complex development of threats in the digital era. Mastery of this technology is very important to detect and respond to threats effectively and efficiently.

Pare-pare Police Intelligence Unit is trying to improve its effectiveness by implementing good governance principles and utilizing the latest technology. The goal is to strengthen the ability to detect and handle threats early, as well as create a safer environment. However, there are still challenges in implementing this strategy, especially because of the increasingly diverse threats such as security issues, fake news, election fraud, and identity issues.

To address this, it is important to create clear Standard Operating Procedures for the Intelligence Unit team. These Standard Operating Procedures will help them identify and handle threats more effectively. In addition, it is also necessary to improve the team's ability to analyse big data and monitor social media, given the ever-evolving digital threats.

Using clear Standard Operating Procedures and improved technological capabilities, it is expected that Pare-pare Police Intelligence Unit can be better at detecting and handling threats. This method of working will not only ensure security during the election but can also be an example for improving security in other areas. Implementing this model in various places can create a safer environment overall. With a proactive and data-based approach, the Intelligence Unit can be more effective in preventing problems before they become big. This can also increase public trust in Pare-pare Police Intelligence Unit because they can feel more secure and faster problem handling.

Overall, the early detection strategy implemented by Pare-pare Police Intelligence Unit shows a serious effort in anticipating potential security disturbances in the 2024 Regional Election. An approach that prioritizes prevention, cross-sector coordination, and in-depth analysis is the right step according to applicable provisions. However, continuous evaluation and improvement are needed to deal with the dynamics of threats that continue to develop ahead of and during the Regional Election.

The strategy implemented by Pare-pare Police Intelligence Unit follows the principles set out in State Intelligence Law, Regulation of the National Police Chief on the Principles of the Implementation of the Regional Police as a Basic Operational Unit, and Regulation of the National Police Chief on the Principles of the Implementation of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia Sector as the Operational Spearhead. This can be seen from the results of an in-depth analysis of the strategy.

However, there are still opportunities to improve the effectiveness of this strategy, especially in the use of information technology. The use of technology for big data analysis and social media monitoring can still be improved. One way that can be considered is the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning in the intelligence analysis process. This method has been implemented by several developed countries and has been proven to increase accuracy and speed in detecting threats earlier. Some countries that have adopted AI technology in their police force include:

1. The United Kingdom, which uses AI for predictive crime mapping and video analysis.

2. The United States, where several police departments are using AI to predict crimes and identify potential suspects.

3. The European Union is implementing a project using AI to detect organised crimes.

By adopting similar technology, Pare-pare Police Intelligence Unit has the potential to further enhance its early detection capabilities, as has been done by these countries. In addition, strengthening the capacity of Police Security Intelligence personnel in digital literacy and cyber analysis needs to be a top priority, considering the increasingly complex threats in the digital space that can affect the dynamics of elections. With the increasing use of information technology in various aspects of life, the ability to analyse digital data effectively is very important. Therefore, training and skills development in this area need to be intensified. These steps are expected to increase the effectiveness of early detection strategies and ensure the security and smooth running of elections. By utilizing advanced technology and increasing personnel capacity, it is expected that potential threats can be identified and handled more quickly so that the integrity and smooth running of the election process are maintained.

Going forward, it is critical to improve the effective information exchange mechanism between Police Security Intelligence, General Election Supervisory Agency, and General Election Commission, as mandated by the Election Law. This collaboration must maintain the confidentiality of sensitive intelligence information while strengthening the early warning and detection system to address potential security threats during the 2024 Regional Election in Pare-pare City. A strong legal framework, perhaps through a Joint Regulation between the Chief of Police, the Head of General Election Supervisory Agency, and the Head of General Election Commission is critical to support this development. The regulation must clearly define the types of information that can be exchanged, the exchange procedures, and the mechanisms to ensure information security.

Furthermore, creating a unified information system for real-time data sharing among these agencies is essential, with a strong focus on data security and privacy. Implementing blockchain technology can be a viable solution to ensure the integrity and security of exchanged data, as it offers benefits such as immutability and transparency. In addition, forming a joint team consisting of personnel from Police Security Intelligence, General Election Supervisory Agency, and General Election Commission to collaboratively analyse potential threats can significantly increase the effectiveness of early detection efforts. This initiative aims not only to strengthen the early detection system in Pare-pare City but also to become a best practice model for other regions in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Pare-pare Police Intelligence and Security Unit has implemented a comprehensive approach and is following applicable provisions, including State Intelligence Law and National Police Regulations of the Republic of Indonesia. This strategy includes information collection and analysis, cross-sector coordination, and personnel readiness checks. However, it is necessary to increase the capacity of personnel in big data and social media analysis, as well as develop a more effective information exchange mechanism between Police Security Intelligence, General Election Supervisory Agency, and General Election Commission. Continuous improvement and adaptation to technological advances are essential to ensure the security and smooth running of elections in Pare-pare City and other regions in Indonesia.

SUGGESTION

Based on the research results, it is recommended that stakeholders in election security develop a more integrated and technology-based early detection system. Prioritizing the application of big data analysis and artificial intelligence (AI) in monitoring social media and identifying threats is important. The formation of a joint cross-agency team consisting of Police Security Intelligence, General Election Supervisory Agency, and General Election Commission personnel for collaborative threat analysis can increase the effectiveness of early detection. Initiating joint regulations between institutions for the exchange of intelligence information is needed to strengthen the legal framework for coordination. Continuous capacity-building programs in digital literacy and cyber analysis are essential to anticipate threats that continue to develop in the digital space.

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