

The Resolution of Criminal Acts Sexual Violence Against Children in the Jurisdiction of The Police Resort Pekanbaru City

Sari Wulan Dari¹, Dessy Artina², Syaifullah Ardianto Yophi³

¹ Magister of Law, University of Riau, Indonesia, Indonesia: swd0697@gmail.com

² Magister of Law, University of Riau, Indonesia, Indonesia

³ Magister of Law, University of Riau, Indonesia, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The Indonesian government has made significant efforts to address sexual violence through legislative measures, including Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection and Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Justice System. These laws aim to safeguard children and ensure strict punishment for offenders. The article aims to examine the critical issue of violence against children in Indonesia, with a particular focus on sexual violence and the legal and community responses to it. It outlines the implementation of restorative justice by the Pekanbaru City Police since 2022, emphasizing the need for both preventive and repressive measures to combat child sexual violence. The text highlights the challenges victims face in reporting incidents, including stigma and distrust in the legal system, and calls for enhanced public awareness and education on sexual violence prevention. It discusses the role of the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) in supporting victims and ensuring their dignity during investigations. The article notes a concerning rise in reported cases of sexual violence against children in Pekanbaru, from 10 cases in 2020 to 28 in 2023. It stresses the importance of systemic reforms, improved victim support, and the effective implementation of legal protections, including the Sexual Violence Elimination Law. The result shows that it advocates for comprehensive strategies involving law enforcement, social services, and community engagement to protect children and address the pervasive issue of sexual violence.

Cite this paper

Dari, S. W., Artina, D., & Yophi, S. A. (2025). The Resolution of Criminal Acts Sexual Violence Against Children in the Jurisdiction of The Police Resort Pekanbaru City. Widya Yuridika: Jurnal Hukum, 8(3).

MANUSCRIPT INFO

Manuscript History:

Received:

March 4, 2025

Accepted:

October 31, 2025

Corresponding Author:

Sari Wulan Dari,
swd0697@gmail.com

Keywords:

Children Protection, Law Enforcement, Sexual Violence



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Layout Version:

v.7.2024

PRELIMINARY

Sexual violence in Indonesia has shown a troubling increase in recent years, with women and children being the primary victims. These crimes occur across various demographics, affecting minors, adolescents, and adult women alike. Among the most grievous forms of sexual violence is rape, which not only violates the physical body but also deeply infringes upon the fundamental human rights of the victim. Recognizing the devastating impact of such crimes, the Indonesian government has implemented numerous legal frameworks to regulate and punish offenders, including provisions in the Indonesian

Criminal Code (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana or KUHP).¹

The concept of "criminal act" under the Criminal Code is derived from the Dutch term *Strafbaar Feit*, often translated as a punishable offense or crime. According to prominent legal theorist Simons, a criminal act constitutes human behavior that violates existing laws and is attributable to the perpetrator as a culpable act. Sexual violence, encompassing crimes ranging from harassment to physical assault, exemplifies such offenses, leaving victims with profound physical and psychological trauma.²

Sexual harassment, though prevalent in Indonesian society, remains underreported due to deeply rooted societal stigma and fears of tarnished reputations. Victims, particularly women, often face a societal double burden—enduring the trauma of the crime while fearing judgment or *ostracization from their communities*.³ This pervasive culture of silence not only impedes justice but also allows perpetrators to escape accountability, perpetuating the cycle of violence. Even in cases where no physical harm is inflicted, the mental and emotional repercussions for victims are substantial, often resulting in prolonged anxiety, depression, and loss of a sense of security.⁴

Among the groups most vulnerable to sexual violence are children. Under Indonesian law, specifically Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, a child is defined as an individual under the age of 18, including those still in the womb.⁵ Sexual violence against children includes acts of sexual exploitation, coercion into sexual activities, or any form of contact with a child's body for non-medical purposes. Perpetrators often manipulate children through threats, deception, or violence, exploiting their vulnerability and dependence.

In the city of Pekanbaru, Riau Province, the prevalence of sexual violence against children has reached alarming levels. Police data reveal a marked increase in reported cases, rising from 10 incidents in 2020 to 28 cases by 2023, following the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ This trend highlights the intersection of economic hardship, social instability, and inadequate parental oversight as key contributing factors. Most victims come from low-income families, where economic deprivation often limits parental ability to provide consistent supervision. Additionally, external factors such as unsafe social environments and predatory behaviors further exacerbate the risks faced by children.

The Indonesian government has made significant efforts to address sexual violence through legislative measures, including Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection and Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Justice System. These laws aim to safeguard children and ensure strict punishment for offenders. However, challenges persist in their implementation. Many cases of sexual violence go unreported due to victims' fear of social backlash, compounded by the difficulty of gathering evidence, particularly in cases involving young children who may struggle to articulate their experiences.⁷

Indonesia has also ratified several international conventions, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which obligates member states to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse. However, the gap between *das sollen* (normative ideals) and *das sein* (practical enforcement) continues to hinder effective protection. This gap underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms and

¹ Eki Sirojul Baehaqi, (2022). *Keturtsertaan Dalam Tindak Pidana*, *An-Nahdliyyah: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 1 (1). 1-10

² Sumy H. Purwanti. (2021). *Kekerasan seksual pada perempuan: solusi integratif dari forensik klinik*. Jakarta: Rayyana Komunikasindo, 9

³ Nunuk Sulisrudatin, (2018). Kasus Bullying Dalam Kalangan Pelajar (Suatu Tinjauan Kriminologi), *Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum Dirgantara* 5 (2). 1-13

⁴ Ratri Novita Erdianti, (2020). *Hukum Perlindungan Anak Di Indonesia*, Malang:UMMPress, 104

⁵ Article 1, Paragraph (1) UU Nomor 35 Tahun 2014.

⁶ Azlin Atika Putri, Siti Fadillah, and Yesi Novita Sari, (2023). Sosialisasi Keselamatan Dan Keamanan Anak Usia Dini Di TK Luhuring Budi, *JPPKh Lectura: Jurnal Pengabdian Pendidikan Khusus* 1 (2), 33-39.

⁷ Emilda Firdaus, (2017). Perlindungan Terhadap Anak Dari Kekerasan Menurut Budaya Melayu Di Provinsi Riau, *Riau Law Journal* 1 (1), 46-60.

a multi-stakeholder approach to safeguarding children.⁸

The impact of sexual violence extends far beyond immediate physical harm. Victims, particularly children, often suffer long-term psychological damage, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and a pervasive loss of trust in others. These effects can disrupt their education, social relationships, and overall development, potentially leading to adverse outcomes in adulthood. Most incidents of sexual violence against children occur in environments that should be safe, such as homes, schools, or community spaces, where perpetrators often exploit the trust of victims or their families.

The role of families, communities, and the government is pivotal in addressing this issue. Parents, as primary caregivers, must ensure a safe environment for their children by maintaining vigilance and open communication. Community organizations and educational institutions also play a critical role in fostering awareness and equipping children with the knowledge and tools to identify and report inappropriate behaviour.

From a legal perspective, the government must strengthen mechanisms for reporting and investigating sexual violence cases. This includes establishing victim-friendly reporting systems, ensuring confidentiality, and providing psychological and legal assistance to survivors. Article 28B of the 1945 Constitution explicitly guarantees the right of every child to live, grow, and develop in a safe environment, free from violence and discrimination. However, the realization of these constitutional guarantees requires a concerted effort to bridge the gap between legal provisions and their practical enforcement.⁹

Preventive measures are equally important in reducing the prevalence of sexual violence against children. Public education campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the risks and consequences of sexual violence can empower communities to take proactive steps.¹⁰ Law enforcement agencies, schools, and community leaders must collaborate to create safe spaces where children can thrive without fear. Stricter penalties for offenders, coupled with community-based rehabilitation programs, can serve as both a deterrent and a means of addressing the root causes of such crimes.¹¹

Based on the background outlined by the author regarding the urgency of effective prevention and handling of sexual violence against children in the city of Pekanbaru, the legal issues to be discussed in greater depth are as follows: How is the resolution of criminal acts of sexual violence against children carried out within the jurisdiction of the Pekanbaru Police Resort. Additionally, what measures are being implemented to address and mitigate criminal acts of sexual violence against children in the jurisdiction of the Pekanbaru Police Resort

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the issue of sexual violence against children in Indonesia, particularly in Pekanbaru. The research focuses on the implementation of restorative justice by the Pekanbaru City Police since 2022, assessing both preventive and repressive measures in addressing child sexual violence.

A normative-empirical approach is used to analyze legal frameworks and real-world implementation.¹² The normative aspect examines relevant laws and regulations, such as the

⁸ Piatur Pangaribuan, (2019). *Penyelesaian Perkara Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Melalui Mediasi Penal Oleh Penyidik Pada Satuan Reserse Kriminal Polres Balikpapan*, *Jurnal Projudice* 1 (1), 83–99.

⁹ Salma Fitria Hidayati and Intan Asyikin Rantikasari, (2023). *Perlindungan Hak Anak Menurut Hukum Dan Perundang-Undangan*, *Prosiding Lokakarya Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini IAIN Ponorogo* 3 (1), 127–33.

¹⁰ Prianter Jaya Hairi and Marfuatul Latifah, (2024). *Implementasi Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2022 Tentang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual (Implementation of Law Number 12 of 2022 on Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence)*, *Negara Hukum: Membangun Hukum Untuk Keadilan Dan Kesejahteraan*, 14 (2). 163–80.

¹¹ S H Ismantoro Dwi Yuwono, (2018). *Penerapan Hukum Dalam Kasus Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak* Jakarta: Media Pressindo, 21

¹² Imam Jalaludin Rifa'i, et.al. (2023). *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum*. Banten: Sada Kurnia Pustaka.

Sexual Violence Elimination Law and Indonesian child protection policies. The empirical aspect involves field observations and interviews to understand law enforcement practices, victim experiences, and community responses to sexual violence cases.

The data collection methods in this study consist of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is gathered through interviews with law enforcement officers, social workers, and victims to assess the implementation of restorative justice and the challenges faced in reporting and prosecution. Additionally, observations are conducted at the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) to evaluate the support system provided to victims and the procedural adherence in investigations. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from legal documents and policies, including national laws, government regulations, and institutional guidelines on sexual violence and child protection. Furthermore, statistical reports and previous studies on sexual violence cases, recidivism rates, and the effectiveness of restorative justice in Indonesia are analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

The study employs a qualitative content analysis to interpret legal texts, interview transcripts, and observational findings.¹³ The data is systematically categorized to identify key themes, trends, and challenges in the legal and social handling of child sexual violence. Triangulation is applied by cross-referencing legal documents, interview responses, and statistical data to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. By integrating legal analysis with empirical observations, this research provides a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of restorative justice and the broader systemic efforts needed to combat sexual violence against children in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The increasing cases of sexual violence against children within the jurisdiction of Pekanbaru City Police have created a highly alarming situation.¹⁴ Children who are victims of sexual violence not only experience discomfort and a sense of threat but also suffer deep trauma from the psychological and physical wounds inflicted upon them. These traumas often persist and affect their development and well-being in the future. Addressing this trauma is not easy; it requires appropriate and effective countermeasures and involves various stakeholders, including families, the community, and the government.¹⁵

In an interview with a child victim, identified as "J," they revealed, "I often think about it, but I don't know what to think, because I'm afraid and traumatized, but then it just goes away on its own." This statement shows the deep psychological impact experienced by the victim, emphasizing the need for continuous intervention and support to help them recover and continue their lives in a better condition.

In a conversation with another victim, "G," when asked about their current condition, they mentioned that the memories of the sexual abuse were not easy to erase. "I'm fine, but I often daydream, recalling everything that happened." As a result, the child has trouble focusing. *"Sometimes I can focus, sometimes I can't, because I keep thinking about it."* G's experience indicates that trauma from sexual violence can affect the concentration and daily activities of the victim, highlighting the need for comprehensive and sustained handling from various parties to support the recovery process.

As stipulated in Article 64 paragraph (3) of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, there are several essential steps

¹³ Mahlil Adriaman, et.al. (2024). *Pengantar Metode Penelitian Ilmu Hukum*. Agam: Yayasan Tri Edukasi Ilmiah, 137

¹⁴ Riau Online. (2023, November 26). Miris, Masih Banyak Anak di Pekanbaru jadi Korban Kekerasan Seksual. Retrieved on February 04, 2025. From <https://www.riauonline.co.id/kota-pekanbaru/read/2023/11/26/miris-masih-banyak-anak-di-pekanbaru-jadi-korban-kekerasan-seksual>

¹⁵ Fitriah Hayati & Fidiawati, L. (2025). Sharia-based collaborative counseling model to prevent child sexual abuse and violence. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 7(5), 236-246.

that must be taken to protect children from sexual violence. These include rehabilitation efforts to restore the psychological and physical condition of the child; protection efforts, such as media restrictions to safeguard the privacy and security of the child; ensuring safety for victims and witnesses to prevent further intimidation; and providing access to necessary information for the recovery and legal protection process.¹⁶

Based on an interview with the Head of the Women and Children Protection Unit (Kanit PPA), Mr. Alwi, efforts to counteract cases of child abuse can be carried out by optimizing two key police functions: preventive and repressive functions. "In dealing with sexual crimes against children, preventive and repressive efforts from the government are necessary. For instance, preventive efforts should include the formation of a national-level institution to accommodate children who are victims of sexual crimes," he said.

The preventive function focuses on prevention, where the police have an obligation to protect the state and other institutions, maintain public order, and protect citizens and their properties. In this regard, preventing actions that may become criminal offenses and other activities that threaten public safety and order is the top priority.

On the other hand, the repressive function refers to the police's duty to investigate criminal cases, arrest offenders, and refer them for investigation and prosecution. By maximizing both functions, it is hoped that efforts to combat child sexual violence can be more effective and provide better protection for children.

Efforts to counteract crimes through the repressive function always involve the application of strict sanctions, in the form of criminal penalties. The imposition of these sanctions aims not only to deter the perpetrator but also to protect society and prevent the recurrence of similar crimes in the future. The purpose of criminal punishment is, of course, adjusted with the combined penalty theory, which considers the human rights of the perpetrator during their sentence. By doing so, the legal enforcement process is expected to provide justice for victims and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of the perpetrator into society after serving their sentence.

The Head of Criminal Investigation Unit (Kanit Reskrim), Iptu Emir Maharto Bustarosa, explained that, in general, the efforts to combat sexual violence against children have been as follows: Handling each case must comply with the applicable legal rules, such as Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, and the criminal punishment the perpetrator receives through trial or out-of-court processes if the case involves a child. If the Pekanbaru Police receive a report of a sexual violence crime, they will conduct investigations in accordance with the relevant legal provisions, such as Law No. 6 of 2019 on Criminal Investigations. Additionally, the Pekanbaru Police provide protection for witnesses and victims of sexual violence against children.

The Pekanbaru Police also provide psychological services to assist children and alleviate the trauma experienced by child victims of sexual violence. Every case is handled maximally, without discrimination, meaning there is no bias in case handling. If a case attracts public attention, the Pekanbaru Police handle the matter professionally and proportionally. Public attention cases are those that gain significant media attention, such as viral cases. With these measures, the Pekanbaru Police are committed to providing optimal protection and handling of child sexual violence cases.

As an alternative resolution, the restorative justice approach can be applied as both a repressive and preventive measure. Restorative justice focuses on restoring the victim, the perpetrator, and the community impacted by the crime. In the context of child sexual violence, restorative justice may involve a dialogue between the victim and the perpetrator, facilitated by a trained mediator, with the goal of understanding the impact of the crime, promoting the responsibility of the perpetrator, and finding solutions to repair the harm

¹⁶ Sekar Gandhawangi. (2021, December 16). Pastikan Rehabilitasi Anak Korban Kekerasan Seksual Tuntas. Retrieved on February 04, 2025. From <https://www.kompas.id/baca/kesehatan/2021/12/16/pastikan-rehabilitasi-anak-korban-kekerasan-seksual-tuntas>

caused. This approach emphasizes not only the imposition of sanctions but also recovery and reconciliation, providing the victim with a chance to obtain justice and enabling the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions and work to rectify the wrong.

In its implementation, the restorative justice process, as conveyed by Kanit Reskrim Iptu Emir Maharto Bustarosa, can be applied to children within the jurisdiction of Pekanbaru Police if it meets the formal requirements as stipulated in the National Police Circular Letter No. 8/VII/2018 on the Application of Restorative Justice in Criminal Case Resolution. The requirements include:

1. There must be a letter of reconciliation agreed upon by both the complainant and the respondent.
2. The letter of reconciliation must be acknowledged by the superior of the investigator.
3. A report of the examination must include the parties involved post-restorative justice settlement.
4. Those agreeing to restorative justice may submit a special case resolution recommendation.
5. The perpetrator must agree to take responsibility for compensation.
6. Restorative justice can be applied as long as it does not involve crimes that cause harm to individuals (general crimes).

If these formal conditions are met, the case resolution can proceed through restorative justice with the following process: The investigator receives the reconciliation request from both parties (complainant and respondent), which is signed on a stamp duty. The request is then submitted to the investigator's superior for approval. Once approved by the superior (Head of Criminal Investigation, Pekanbaru Police), a date is set for the signing of the reconciliation agreement. A conference is then held to produce a settlement agreement signed by all parties involved.

The investigator prepares a memo for the investigator supervisor regarding the request for a special case resolution to halt the investigation. This special case resolution involves the complainant and/or their family, the respondent and/or their family, and representatives of the community leaders designated by the investigator. Afterward, the investigator completes the administrative documentation for the special case resolution and reports the outcome.

Finally, the Investigator issues a Letter of Instruction to Terminate Investigation and a Letter of Termination of Investigation based on restorative justice. The case is then recorded in the new B-19 register as a case resolved through restorative justice.

Based on an interview with Mrs. Rossa Linda Hutabarat – Staff of the Women and Children Protection Unit at Pekanbaru City Police, restorative justice for child sexual violence cases began to be implemented in 2022. In that year, seven cases were resolved through restorative justice. By 2023, two cases were successfully resolved.

By integrating restorative justice into the countermeasures for child sexual violence, it is hoped that a more holistic and humane resolution process can be established. This not only strengthens the recovery efforts for the victims but also encourages the perpetrator to take greater responsibility and contribute positively to society after going through the legal process.¹⁷

Besides maximizing repressive actions, it is also crucial to maximize preventive actions. According to A. Qirom Samsudin M., preventive actions are those taken before a crime occurs. He argues that prevention is more effective than recovery, as it produces better results. By proactively implementing preventive measures, the risk of crime can be minimized, and the community can live in greater safety. Pekanbaru City Police, in their

¹⁷ Judah Oudshoorn, J., Amstutz, L. S., & Jackett, M. (2015). *The little book of restorative justice for sexual abuse: Hope through trauma*. USA: Simon and Schuster, 33

efforts to prevent child sexual violence, have undertaken several preventive actions, including:

1. Improving surveillance and administration systems to prevent deviations.
2. Increasing legal outreach in collaboration with relevant institutions to the general public.
3. Increasing the number of police personnel.
4. Enhancing professionalism by strengthening the moral integrity of law enforcement officers.

As part of their preventive efforts, the Pekanbaru City Police also took concrete actions during the Covid-19 pandemic through the implementation of 10 actions under the BERJARAK Movement (Together, Protect Our Families). One of the main focuses was the fulfillment of the specific needs of women and children, implemented through the provision of age-appropriate support and addressing the unique needs of women. This movement aims to ensure fair, non-discriminatory, and stigma-free protection for vulnerable groups, such as children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Through a comprehensive and integrated approach, Pekanbaru City Police collaborate with ministries, agencies, and local governments responsible for the Protection of Women and Children (PPA) throughout Indonesia. This strategy is designed to respond to the emergency phase of the pandemic in a coordinated manner, focusing on protecting vulnerable groups from violence, exploitation, and neglect.

The implementation of this movement not only emphasizes the importance of legal protection but also raises public awareness about the need for collective efforts to protect women and children from increasing threats during times of crisis. By prioritizing the specific needs of vulnerable groups, the movement seeks to reduce instances of child sexual violence and ensure that children's rights to safety, protection, and dignity are upheld.

Sexual violence against children remains a significant and underreported issue, often likened to an iceberg where many cases are hidden. Victims and their families are frequently reluctant to report such incidents due to the fear of social stigma and the lack of trust in the legal system's ability to protect them. This erosion of trust in the justice system is often due to the failure to provide adequate protection as mandated by law. A key concern, as expressed by the guardian of a child victim, F, in an interview, reflects a deep-seated disbelief in the legal process. F shared their frustration, stating, "I feel that reporting sexual violence against children is a futile act. Many legal efforts fail, and there is no guarantee that the perpetrator will receive the punishment they deserve. I have no faith in the legal process."

The fear of social shame and the lack of faith in legal protection often prevent victims and their families from reporting these crimes. Many victims believe that coming forward will only lead to further suffering, with no guarantee that the perpetrator will face justice or that they themselves will be protected from potential retaliation and intimidation. Thus, it is crucial to rebuild public trust in the legal system through consistent law enforcement, genuine protection for victims, and greater transparency.¹⁸

To address these concerns, it is essential to raise public awareness and increase education about the importance of reporting sexual violence, as well as the availability of protection mechanisms for victims. This socialization process helps individuals understand legal norms, values, and community standards that promote the safety and well-being of children. In the legal context, socialization involves informing the public about laws and regulations so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities, ensuring that the legal system is understood and accessible, even in remote areas.

In addition to legal reforms, it is important to provide psychological and emotional support to victims and their families to encourage them to report incidents and navigate the legal process. This support could include counseling services, witness protection, and legal assistance. By creating a supportive and safe environment for victims, it is hoped that more

¹⁸ Thathit Manon Andini, (2019). Identifikasi Kejadian Kekerasan Pada Anak Di Kota Malang, *Jurnal Perempuan Dan Anak* 2, (1), 13–28.

cases of sexual violence against children will be reported and handled effectively, thereby deterring perpetrators and preventing similar incidents in the future.

However, the emotional scars left by sexual violence are deep and long-lasting. As shared by one victim, the traumatic experience fundamentally altered their life, leading to constant fear, trust issues, nightmares, and flashbacks that affected their sleep and daily life. The victim expressed, "The experience of sexual violence when I was a child truly destroyed my life. Since then, I've felt like a different person. The fear and mistrust of others haunt me constantly. I often have nightmares and flashbacks that make it difficult to sleep peacefully. These memories never go away, and every time I try to forget, the images come rushing back." The victim also described how their relationships with family and friends were impacted, feeling isolated and misunderstood, which further exacerbated the trauma.

To prevent sexual violence, early education on sexual violence prevention is vital. Providing sexual education counseling in elementary schools is a key preventive measure. Such programs help children understand boundaries, recognize dangerous situations, and learn to protect themselves. Despite the benefits, challenges exist, particularly in under-resourced areas where schools may lack trained professionals or educational materials.

Effective implementation of such programs depends heavily on the competence and readiness of educators and counselors. In remote areas, many schools may lack the resources to provide adequate sexual education, highlighting the need for training and curriculum development tailored to local needs. Additionally, approaches like client-centered counseling, which focus on the needs of the child, are essential for preventing grooming behaviors. However, this approach requires a supportive environment built on trust, which may be difficult to achieve in certain cultural contexts where discussing sexual issues remains taboo.

Furthermore, educational media and online platforms can be valuable tools in raising awareness about sexual violence prevention. However, access to technology can be limited, particularly in rural areas, making it essential to explore alternative means of delivering education in a way that reaches a wider audience. Simple, accessible materials and innovative methods of communication are needed to ensure the effectiveness of these preventive programs.

The importance of supporting victims throughout the legal process cannot be overstated. Adequate facilities and trained personnel are essential for investigating sexual violence cases effectively. The police must have access to specialized training in handling child victims of sexual violence, including techniques for child-friendly interrogations and evidence collection. Without such training, the risk of further traumatizing victims is high, potentially compromising the investigation and the victim's trust in the legal system.

In Pekanbaru, the Police Department has been working on improving the handling of sexual violence cases against children by increasing awareness and providing specialized training for officers. The establishment of specialized units dedicated to child sexual violence cases is crucial for streamlining and improving the investigation process. However, these units must be adequately staffed and resourced to be effective.

Additionally, collaboration between law enforcement and social services, such as the Department of Social Affairs and the Integrated Service Center for Women and Children (P2TP2A), needs to be strengthened to ensure comprehensive case management. Despite improvements, challenges remain in providing timely access to services such as counseling and rehabilitation, especially in areas with limited infrastructure.

A robust and efficient referral system is essential to ensure that victims receive the appropriate support services, including psychological counseling and legal aid. However, these services must be fast, effective, and tailored to the specific needs of the victims to prevent them from falling through the cracks. Close coordination between law enforcement and relevant agencies will play a crucial role in achieving this goal.

One significant challenge is the limited number of trained personnel within law enforcement agencies, especially in handling complex cases involving child victims of sexual

violence. Many officers may lack the necessary skills to understand the psychological trauma of child victims, so continued professional development is vital. Specialized units within the police force can enhance the response to child sexual abuse, but they must be well-resourced to ensure effective functioning.

In addition to improvements in law enforcement, the implementation of strong laws and policies is crucial to addressing sexual violence. Recent local legislative efforts, such as the enactment of the Regional Regulation on Women and Children Protection, reflect an increased commitment to providing stronger protection for victims. However, the effectiveness of these regulations depends on their enforcement and the allocation of sufficient resources to implement them.

Raising public awareness about the importance of reporting sexual violence is another critical step in improving the response to such cases. Campaigns involving community leaders, celebrities, and influencers can help shift public perceptions and encourage individuals to report incidents. Social media and traditional media outlets play a vital role in disseminating information and fostering a culture of accountability.

Furthermore, improving infrastructure, such as increasing the number of police officers specializing in sexual violence cases and providing specialized facilities for child victims, will strengthen the investigation process. The provision of advanced forensic tools and a centralized data management system is also necessary to facilitate efficient case handling and coordination across agencies.

Efforts to enhance collaboration between law enforcement and related institutions, including social services and non-governmental organizations, are essential for creating a comprehensive approach to child sexual abuse. Regular communication forums between stakeholders can foster information-sharing and the development of best practices for case management.

While substantial progress has been made in addressing sexual violence against children in Pekanbaru, challenges remain. Some cases remain unresolved due to a lack of evidence, difficulty in finding witnesses, and the complexities of legal procedures. These obstacles highlight the need for continued collaboration, especially in evidence collection, victim support, and public awareness campaigns. Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement, improving victim protection systems, and expanding access to legal and psychological support services are critical for ensuring the successful resolution of these cases.

Ultimately, the success of efforts to combat sexual violence against children depends on a comprehensive and collaborative approach that involves law enforcement, the judiciary, social services, and the broader community. By improving legal processes, enhancing victim support, and increasing public awareness, it is possible to create a safer and more just environment for children, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable and that victims receive the help they need to heal and rebuild their lives.

DISCUSSION

Children, being among the most vulnerable members of society, are often subjected to sexual violence, a form of exploitation that brutally violates their fundamental rights, their safety, and their very dignity.¹⁹ Despite the protection guaranteed by constitutional safeguards such as Article 28B (2) and Article 28D (1) of Indonesia's 1945 Constitution, which unequivocally protects children from all forms of violence, abuse, and discrimination, cases of sexual violence against minors continue to be disturbingly frequent, both in urban and rural areas. These constitutional guarantees emphasize the critical importance of protecting children from harm, ensuring they can grow and develop in an environment free from violence, and enabling them to enjoy a dignified, safe, and fulfilling life.

¹⁹ Sabda Tuliah, (2018). Kajian Motif Pelaku Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Melalui Modus Operandi Di Lingkungan Keluarga, *Ejournal Sosiati-Sosiologi* 6 (2), 1–17

Sexual violence against children encompasses a wide range of harmful acts, including not only direct sexual assault but also various forms of exploitation, such as grooming, trafficking, and sexual abuse for commercial purposes.²⁰ These crimes undermine the child's dignity, autonomy, and sense of safety. The legal system recognizes the severity of these offenses by categorizing them under serious crimes that demand significant penalties. Indonesian law, including the 2002 Child Protection Law (No. 23/2002) and the 2016 Law on Child Protection (No. 17/2016), takes an increasingly stringent approach to punishing perpetrators and protecting children's rights. Under these legal frameworks, sexual violence is punishable by heavy sentences, and any act that harms a child's well-being, especially within family or institutional contexts, is treated with the utmost seriousness.

In Pekanbaru, Riau, this issue has become a growing concern. Data from the local police department reveals an alarming rise in cases of sexual violence against minors. According to records from the Pekanbaru Police Department, 10 cases of sexual violence against children were reported in 2021, with this number rising to 20 cases in 2023. Over the three years from 2021 to 2023, a total of 55 cases were documented, of which 33 were officially processed under P-21 status—indicating that these cases had completed their investigations and were ready for prosecution. This surge in cases reflects not only an increase in violence but also the broader societal challenge of ensuring that all reported cases are properly handled. These figures demonstrate a gap between the actual incidence of such crimes and the system's capacity to respond effectively, both in terms of legal action and victim support. Furthermore, the data shows that while the number of reported cases continues to climb, the available resources and support for victims have not kept pace with this alarming rise.

Dr. Chairani, the Head of the Department of Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, and Community Empowerment in Pekanbaru, has voiced grave concern about the situation. She emphasized that children, who represent the nation's future, must be protected from any form of harm, particularly from sexual violence. Allowing children to fall prey to such heinous acts not only damages their future but also undermines the broader stability and well-being of the nation. These crimes have far-reaching consequences that affect the mental health, educational opportunities, and social development of the children involved, and in many cases, the emotional scars can last for a lifetime.

In response to these concerns, Indonesia's legal framework offers strong protection for children, providing for strict punishments for perpetrators, as well as support systems for victims. The Juvenile Justice System Law (Law No. 11 of 2012) lays out specific provisions to protect child victims, mandating that they receive rehabilitation and access to legal, medical, and psychological support.²¹ This includes counseling, religious guidance, and education to help them recover from the trauma. The law also ensures that child victims are provided with legal assistance, helping them navigate the judicial system without being further victimized by it. Meanwhile, more recent amendments and laws, such as Law No. 17 of 2016, have further strengthened penalties for those found guilty of sexual violence, with even more severe penalties for crimes committed by those in positions of trust, such as family members or caregivers.

The role of law enforcement agencies in combating sexual violence against children is also paramount. In Pekanbaru, the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the local police is tasked with investigating these cases and providing victims with the necessary care and protection. The PPA unit works in close coordination with other national bodies, such as the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) and the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), to ensure a comprehensive response to both the criminal elements of these cases and the psychological and emotional needs of victims. These agencies ensure that

²⁰ Raden Muhammad Arvy Ilyasa, (2021). Legal and Victimological Perspective on Sexual Violence against Children Cases in Indonesia, *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education* 3 (3), 281–300.

²¹ M H Darmini, (2021). Peran Pemerintah Dalam Upaya Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak: Peran Pemerintah Dalam Upaya Pencegahan Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak, *QAWWAM* 15 (1), 45–68.

victims are treated with dignity and respect throughout the investigative process, and they provide them with safe spaces to share their experiences without fear of further harm.

Moreover, the Indonesian legal system places particular emphasis on protecting the identity and privacy of child victims. During investigations, every effort is made to prevent any exposure of the victim's identity, which is crucial in ensuring that the child does not experience further trauma or humiliation.²² Police officers involved in the investigation of these sensitive cases are specially trained to deal with children in a manner that minimizes the possibility of re-victimization. According to Alwi, the head of the IDIK VI Unit at the Pekanbaru Police, the confidentiality of victims is strictly maintained to protect their safety and privacy throughout the legal process. This approach is fundamental in reducing the additional emotional burdens that these children might face during an already difficult time.

Beyond legal proceedings and victim support, rehabilitation remains a critical component in addressing the long-term effects of sexual violence. Specialized medical and psychological care is essential to help victims recover from the trauma they have endured. Children who have been sexually assaulted often experience a range of emotional and behavioral difficulties, which can hinder their ability to integrate back into society.²³ Psychological counseling is a key element of the rehabilitation process, helping the child regain their sense of security, self-worth, and hope for the future. Additionally, victims may also be provided with safe housing during the investigation process, especially if returning to their home environment would put them at risk of further harm.

The government has made efforts to involve communities in combating sexual violence against children, recognizing that protecting children is not just the responsibility of the state but of society as a whole. Communities are encouraged to stay vigilant and report any suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities. The UPTD PPA, which is dedicated to protecting women and children, has become a crucial part of this reporting network, allowing individuals to report crimes in a confidential manner if they are concerned about their safety. This public engagement is vital in creating an environment where child abuse is not tolerated and where intervention can occur as early as possible.²⁴

One of the greatest challenges faced by law enforcement and society is when the perpetrator is someone close to the victim, such as a parent, family member, or guardian. In these cases, there is often a delicate balance to strike between ensuring justice for the child and protecting them from further emotional harm. Law enforcement agencies have to carefully navigate these situations to ensure that the perpetrator is held accountable while considering the child's mental and emotional recovery. For cases involving adults, the law mandates strong penalties, but in situations where the perpetrator is a minor, alternative measures such as mediation or rehabilitation may be pursued, depending on the circumstances.

CLOSING

Sexual violence refers to any act targeting someone's sexuality or sexual organs without consent, involving force or threats, and unfortunately, minors are often the victims. The number of cases continues to rise annually, according to the Pekanbaru City Police. Children, as victims, require adequate legal protection to ensure the seriousness of law enforcement in addressing these crimes, as outlined in Article 69A of Law No. 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Justice System. The process begins with receiving a report from the victim, their family, or witnesses, which is fundamental for police action. Once the report is received, the PPA Unit ensures the case will be investigated and relevant evidence collected.

²² Alvin Ferdiansya & Asep Suherman. (2024). Perlindungan Anak Dalam Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak. *Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Kebijakan Publik*, 2(1), 329-336.

²³ Vivian N. Dewi., Sitaresmi, M. N., & Dewi, F. S. T. (2021). What forms of media do we need for preventing child sexual abuse? A qualitative study in Yogyakarta Special Region, Indonesia. *Journal of child sexual abuse*, 30(5), 511-523.

²⁴ Ismantoro D. Yuwono. *Op.cit.* 17

To address child sexual violence, the police can maximize their two main functions: preventive and repressive. The preventive function focuses on prevention, where police protect the state, maintain order, and safeguard public safety, prioritizing the prevention of potential crimes. The repressive function involves investigating crimes, apprehending perpetrators, and prosecuting them. In addition to police efforts, the community's role is vital. Without public awareness and cooperation in reporting sexual crimes, particularly against children, the police would struggle to identify and apprehend offenders.

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