Soedirman Law Review

Vol. 7 Issue 4, November 2025
E-ISSN 2716-408X
DOI: 10.20884/1.slr.2025.7.4.16128

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Safe Houses as Instruments of Witness and Victim Protection: Effectiveness and Implementation Challenges

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Submit: 25 September 2025	Revised: 23 December 2025	Accepted: 24 December 2025

Abstract
Witness and victim protection constitutes a fundamental pillar of a fair and effective criminal justice system, particularly in contexts where intimidation, retaliation, and psychological pressure threaten the integrity of legal proceedings. In Indonesia, the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban - LPSK) implements safe houses as a form of physical and non-physical protection, yet questions remain regarding their practical effectiveness and sustainability. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of safe houses in protecting witnesses and victims and to identify the principal challenges faced by LPSK in implementing this protection mechanism. The research adopts a socio-legal methodology with an empirical juridical approach, combining qualitative interviews, indirect observation, and document analysis of relevant legislation and institutional reports. The findings demonstrate that LPSK safe houses are generally effective in fulfilling their protective objectives, particularly through strict security standards, confidentiality, legal assistance, and psychological and psychosocial support. However, the study also reveals significant implementation challenges, especially related to institutional workload, budget constraints, and cultural tensions arising from restrictive security measures such as limitations on personal communication devices. These restrictions, while legally justified, often negatively affect the psychological well-being and compliance of protected individuals and in some cases lead to early termination of protection. In conclusion, safe houses remain a vital instrument in witness and victim protection in Indonesia, but their effectiveness depends on balancing security imperatives with psychosocial needs. This study recommends adaptive protection policies and more innovative institutional strategies to enhance long-term effectiveness without compromising security.

Keywords: Effectiveness; Safe Houses; Witness and Victim Protection.

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Introduction

Crime and violence are ongoing social phenomena in various parts of the world, including Indonesia. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik - BPS), crime rates in Indonesia in 2023 have fluctuated significantly. In 2023, the BPS reported a total of 584,991 criminal incidents, with a crime rate of 214 per 100,000 people.[1] The high rates of crime and violence in Indonesia indicate the need for serious attention from the government, law enforcement, and society to create a safer environment. Crime and violence are closely connected to the existence of victims, where an increase in crime rates often corresponds with the rise in the number of victims directly impacted by these criminal acts. The definition of victim in the broad sense according to Stanciu, is

[1] Badan Pusat Statistik, 'Statistik Kriminal 2024', *BPS*, 2024 <https://www.bps.go.id>.

he who suffer unjustly.[2] The consequences of crime are not limited to physical or material losses but also extend to long-term psychological trauma for victims. Criminal victims often feel isolated and lose their sense of security, which can affect their social interactions and lead to long-term impacts on mental health.[3]

The Witness and Victim Protection Agency *(Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban - LPSK)* is an institution established in Indonesia to provide legal and physical protection to witnesses and victims involved in criminal justice processes. The LPSK was formed based on Law No. 13 of 2006 on the Protection of Witnesses and Victims, later amended by Law No. 31 of 2014 concerning on the Protection of Witnesses and Victims. The physical protection provided by LPSK includes personal security, relocation, and the provision of temporary safe housing. Angkasa that explains legal protection is a right owned and given to every legal subject based on applicable law and regulation.[4] With this protection, it is hoped that witnesses and victims will feel safer and more confident in providing the necessary testimony during the legal process.

LPSK offers physical protection programs such as safe houses which includes personal security at the area, monitoring of security and potential threats, and through the use of surveillance devices like CCTV., LPSK is the only agency authorized to manage safe houses as part of the witness and victim protection program.[5] Inside safe houses, they can live securely, far from the threat of perpetrators, while receiving psychological support and rehabilitation needed for their recovery. Therefore, safe houses represent a strategic solution in efforts to protect witnesses and victims in Indonesia. According to the 2023 LPSK Annual Report, the number of individuals receiving physical protection from the Protection and Security Bureau (Biro PHSK) increased significantly over the three years from 2021 to 2023. Compared to 2021, this service grew by nearly 40%, from 255 to 353 protected individuals. However, the implementation of physical protection, such as safe houses, personal security, and security monitoring, has not yet reached its full potential. For example, in the first semester of 2023, only 318 individuals received physical protection out of 6,245 protected persons. One of the main challenges has been the limited number of LPSK security personnel,[6] as the

[2] V. V Stanciu, 'Victim-Producing Civilizations and Situtations', in *Victim and Society Part I* (Washington DC: Visage.Inc, 1976).
[3] Brendan Lantz and Marin R. Wenger, 'Anti-Asian Xenophobia, Hate Crime Victimization, and Fear of Victimization During the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38.1–2 (2023), NP1088–1116 <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221086651>.
[4] Angkasa Angkasa, *Viktimologi* (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 2020).
[5] Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban (LPSK), *Laporan Tahunan 2023: Perlindungan Saksi Dan Korban Dalam Pusaran Kejahatan Digital*, 2023.
[6] Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban (LPSK), *Laporan Tahunan 2023: Perlindungan Saksi Dan Korban Dalam Pusaran Kejahatan Digital*.

number of protected persons continues to grow, the shortage of LPSK security staff poses a serious challenge in maintaining optimal protection levels.

Several studies have been conducted to review the existence of safe houses in Indonesia. First, Ashady and Hasan said that the existence of safe houses is not evenly distributed in all regions in Indonesia.[7] Second, Al-Fayed et al, that a safe home increases the victim's gratitude because he consciously remembers the positive things that happened in his life.[8] Third, Tielung et al, that a safe home to be said to be ideal requires three requirements, namely location and security requirements, infrastructure requirements and physical facilities, and service requirements.[9] The difference between this article and the three is that it reviews in detail the effectiveness of safe houses organized by LPSK. The contribution of this research is to describe the picture of safe houses organized by developing countries that generally still face technical and funding problems.

Research Problems

1. How effective are safe houses in protecting witnesses and victims from physical and non-physical threats?
2. What challenges does the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) face in implementing the safe house program?

Research Method

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of safe houses in protecting witnesses and victims, as well as to identify the challenges faced in their implementation within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK). This research does not only examine the legal norms that regulate the protection system but also observes how these norms are applied and experienced in real situations. To achieve this purpose, the research employs a socio-legal approach combined with an empirical juridical method. This interdisciplinary approach bridges legal science and social science, allowing the researcher to see law as a behavioral system that interacts with society. By using a qualitative descriptive specification, the

[7] Suheflihusnaini Ashady and Abd Hasan, 'Kebijakan Rumah Aman Bagi Anak Korban Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga', *Jurnal Fundamental Justice*, 2.1 (2021), 39–54 <https://doi.org/10.30812/fundamental.v2i1.1295>.
[8] Muhammad Al-Fayed and others, 'Penerapan Gratitude Journal Untuk Meningkatkan Kebersyukuran ABH Di Rumah Aman UPTD PPA Kota Makassar', *PENGABDI*, 2.2 (2021), 223–32 <https://doi.org/10.26858/pengabdi.v2i2.25159>.
[9] Frangky Tielung, Nurliah Nurdin, and Neneng Sri, 'Collaborative Governance Penanganan Bagi Korban Kekerasan Perempuan Dan Anak Melalui Rumah Aman Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak', *Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Pemerintahan Daerah*, 15.2 (2023), 250–64 <https://doi.org/10.33701/jiapd.v15i2.3780>.

study aims to present an in-depth and comprehensive picture of the implementation of safe houses as a form of protection for witnesses and victims, describing their characteristics and challenges in a detailed narrative.

The primary data in this study were obtained through interviews and observations conducted at LPSK, specifically within the Witness and Victim Rights Fulfillment Bureau. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, meaning they were intentionally chosen based on their expertise, authority, and involvement in safe house operations. The informants consisted of officials and staff who directly handle the implementation and management of witness and victim protection. Interviews were carried out in both structured and unstructured formats. Structured interviews used predetermined questions to maintain consistency, while unstructured interviews allowed for open-ended discussions to explore deeper insights. In addition to interviews, indirect observation was conducted to understand how the safe house program operates in practice, focusing on the daily activities and procedures implemented by LPSK without direct participation from the researcher.

Secondary data were collected through a literature study that involved examining various written sources related to the research topic. These included statutory regulations governing witness and victim protection, institutional documents from LPSK such as internal reports and operational guidelines, as well as academic references from legal and social science literature. The researcher obtained these data through systematic library research and document review to ensure the collected information aligns with the study's focus and supports the interpretation of primary data.

The collected data were then analyzed using a qualitative method consisting of several stages. The first stage, data reduction, involved selecting and simplifying relevant data from interviews, observations, and literature to focus on information related to the effectiveness and challenges of safe houses. The next stage, data display, organized the reduced data into coherent narratives and visual formats such as tables or charts to identify emerging themes. Data classification followed, grouping similar findings into categories such as effectiveness, operational procedures, and implementation challenges. Finally, the data were presented and interpreted in a narrative form to connect empirical findings with theoretical and legal frameworks, allowing the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of safe houses in fulfilling their protective function for witnesses and victims.

Discussion

1. The Effectiveness of Safe Houses in Protecting the Witnesses and Victims from Physical and Non-Physical Threats

Angkasa et al. explains that legal effectiveness is the harmonization between the main intention of a legal norm and its implementation in reality.[10] Referring to the results of the research, according to LPSK, providing protection to witnesses and/or victims through safe houses is said to be quite effective despite several challenges during the process. This is because the purpose of the establishment of Law No. 13 of 2014 concerning Witness and Victim Protection, which is also specifically regulated in LPSK Regulation No. 4 of 2023 concerning Safe House Management, has been achieved.

LPSK is an institution formed based on Law No. 13 of 2006 concerning the Protection of Witnesses and Victims (Law No. 13 of 2006) to handle the provision of protection and assistance to witnesses and victims of criminal acts, both physical and non-physical. LPSK has a role in providing protection and assistance to witnesses and victims during all stages of the criminal justice process, facilitating recovery efforts for victims of criminal acts, and collaborating with various related agencies. One of the assistances provided by LPSK is the placement of witnesses or victims in safe houses. The basis for LPSK to provide this assistance is in Law No. 5 paragraph (1) where witnesses and victims have the right to get temporary and/or new residences. In carrying out the safe house program, LPSK is guided by LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023 related to Safe House Management.

The procedure for applying for safe home protection is the same as any other protection application. This is regulated in LPSK Regulation No.1 of 2024 concerning Service Standards in the LPSK Environment. To get protection, witnesses and victims can apply for protection to LPSK, whose procedures are already listed in LPSK Regulation No. 1 of 2024 concerning Service Standards in the LPSK Environment. In order to achieve effective protection, safe houses must meet security, safety, and health standards. According on the results of the interview with Rianto Wicaksono, the Expert of the Bureau of Witness and Victim Rights Fulfilment at LPSK, LPSK has met the standards in the criteria for a good safe house and in accordance with its regulations. The informant explained that LPSK manages two types of safe houses that are selected based on the threat level and location availability. The first type is a permanent safe house which is an asset owned by LPSK itself, while the second type is a mobile safe house, which is a rental

[10] Angkasa Angkasa, Rili Windiasih, and Ogiandhafiz Juanda, 'Efektivitas Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual Sebagai Hukum Positif Dalam Perspektif Viktimologi', *Jurnal Usm Law Review*, 4.1 (2021), 117–45 <https://doi.org/10.26623/julr.v4i1.2696>.

house. This flexibility allows LPSK to adapt to situations in areas that do not yet have permanent safe houses.

LPSK's safe house program has been considered quite effective, despite facing several challenges in its implementation. This effectiveness is measured based on five factors that affect the effectiveness of the law by Soerjono Soekanto, namely the law itself, the law enforcement, the supporting facilities, the community, and the culture.[11]

a. The Law Itself

In this case, all existing regulations are considered as strength because of the hierarchical and comprehensive legal framework, from the 1945 Constitution to LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023, which regulates in detail all aspects of safe house operations. The existing rules are not ambiguous or overlapping, and have become the basis for the protection of witnesses and victims by LPSK well and oriented towards creating a sense of security for the protected. This shows that the legal basis for safe houses does not exist only at one level, but is arranged in stages, from the highest and most general to the lowest and specific.

b. Law Enforcement

This is considered effective because LPSK is an independent institution with trained personnel, including members of the National Police, who have formally regulated roles and duties. Currently, in LPSK, there is an Operation Control (BKO) from the Police which takes part in tightening the protection of the protected. The challenge to this factor lies not in the lack of personnel, but in the high workload due to the increasing demand for protection.

In the context of LPSK safe houses, this factor refers to LPSK as the implementing institution, as well as its personnel who are in charge of providing protection. LPSK is an independent institution and has specific authority to manage safe houses, which is a strong basis for its operations. The informant explained that LPSK has special personnel who are trained to be safe house devices, including members of the National Police who are assigned, housekeepers, and selectively selected drivers. The role of this personnel is also formally regulated, where the Security and Escort Task Force (members of the National Police) have specific duties in security and escort, as well as the Safe House Management and other LPSK employees have responsibilities in daily management and the provision of support.

[11] Soerjono Soekanto, *Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Penegakan Hukum* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2007).

c. The Supporting Facilities

In safe houses, providing adequate resources directly contributes to the effectiveness of protection. LPSK manages various types of safe houses, including permanent ones (owned by LPSK) and mobile ones (such as rented houses or apartments), with the choice based on the threat level and availability in a specific area. In LPSK, not everyone, including their leaders, knows which safe house is placed. Knowledge about safe houses is limited only to the relevant LPSK leaders and the protected protection officers.[12]

The facilities and infrastructure of the safe house include various security features that must meet specific requirements, such as CCTV equipment, handy-talkies, firearms, and other necessary equipment. The house also has 24-hour access and exit doors, lighting tailored to needs, and fire extinguishers. These standards are fully supported by LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023, Article 6, paragraphs (2) and (3), which explicitly regulate security standards (confidential nature, surveillance cameras, metal detection devices) and safety standards (locations safe from disasters, secret transportation and evacuation routes, and protection from physical and psychological threats). Additionally, safe houses must meet standards for decent basic facilities, such as rooms and good sanitation, and must comply with health standards.

Based on the results of the study, it is known that the criteria for the location of safe houses are designed very carefully. A safe home environment should be closed as much as possible, have a fence, and not be in an environment that is too complex so that its existence is not known to outsiders. In addition, the location must also have close access to vital facilities such as the nearest police station, hospitals, and even protected activity venues, with the aim of minimizing time on the road that has the potential to pose risks. This location standard is officially regulated in LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023 Article 6 paragraphs (2) and (3), which emphasizes security and safety standards, including the nature of confidentiality, the existence of surveillance cameras, and secret transportation routes.

In addition to the location criteria, LPSK also ensures the fulfilment of facilities and personnel. Every safe home must meet proper basic facilities, such as adequate rooms and bathrooms, as well as its sanitation. Health aspects are also an important consideration, where safe houses are required

[12] Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban (LPSK), 'Safe House', *LPSK*, 2021 <https://www.lpsk.go.id/publikasi/clracohjm001hrbsbut3mwzha>.

to meet health protocol standards and healthy home criteria according to LPSK Regulations. For its operational equipment, LPSK assigns members of the National Police who have been specially trained as security personnel. These personnel are supported by housekeepers who help with daily needs such as food, as well as drivers on duty with vehicles that have been prepared. The availability of these minimal devices, along with facility and location standards, indicates that LPSK has met the criteria set for comprehensive safe house management. Based on this information, it can be concluded that in terms of facilities and infrastructure, the LPSK safe house program has met the required criteria. This is consistent with statements from informants and aligns with formal regulations, namely LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023 concerning Safe House Management.

d. The Community

According to the theory of Soerjono Soekanto, the success of a legal program is heavily influenced by community factors, which include the attitudes, behaviour, and compliance of the individuals involved. In the context of LPSK's safe house program, this factor is represented by witnesses and victims. The program's effectiveness depends significantly on their willingness to both apply for protection and adhere to the established rules. Research indicates that there is a growing awareness among witnesses and victims regarding the need for protection. This is evidenced by a substantial increase in the number of applications submitted to LPSK, signalling a rise in public trust and an expectation for the fulfilment of their right to justice. Based on the 2024 LPSK Annual Report, protection applications to LPSK will increase from 7,645 applications (2023) to 10,217 in 2024. This figure has increased by 34% compared to 2023 of 7,645 applications.[13]

Crucially, the psychological well-being and stability of the protected individuals are essential for their cooperation. A psychologically supportive environment helps to reduce trauma and anxiety, enabling victims to provide clear and consistent testimony in legal processes. This stable mental state not only encourages them to follow legal procedures but also strengthens their trust in the overall justice system. LPSK recognizes this and actively provides psychological support and a safe space to ensure that protected individuals feel secure and are willing to cooperate throughout their time in the protection program. Furthermore, increased legal awareness helps to motivate victims to take an active role in the legal process, demonstrating a

[13] Ananda Nararya, 'Laporan Tahunan LPSK Tahun 2024', *LPSK*, 2025 <https://www.lpsk.go.id/publikasi/cmbrbu7em0008dfrebq8tt59w>.

positive feedback loop between institutional support and community engagement

e. The Culture

In the context of the effectiveness of safe houses, this key cultural factor manifests itself in the form of public and internal trust of institutions. Based on research, one of the factors supporting the success of protection through safe houses is the high level of public trust. People who don't know where to turn for refuge end up choosing LPSK, which is a key driver of the implementation of safe houses programs. This public trust can be evidenced by the high number of protection applications submitted to LPSK. According to LPSK's 2024 Annual Report, protection applications increased from 7,645 in 2023 to 10,217 in 2024, which is an increase of 34%. This data shows that LPSK has a growing level of trust in the eyes of the public as an institution tasked with protecting witnesses and victims.

In addition to public trust, the culture of maintaining confidentiality within the institution is also a priority. This principle of confidentiality is stated in LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023. Not all parties in LPSK know the location of the safe house. This knowledge is limited to the relevant LPSK leadership and assigned protection officers. Therefore, it can be concluded that both high public trust and a culture of confidentiality that is maintained are two important pillars that ensure that LPSK's safe house program can run optimally.

2. The Challenges Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) Faced in Implementing Safe House Program

The challenges that affect LPSK in implementing protection in the form of safe houses are divided into several components of the legal system. Based on the analysis conducted, the challenges faced by LPSK in implementing the safe house program refer to the broader dynamics of the legal system itself. As stated by Lawrence M. Friedman, law is inseparably linked to the social, cultural, and political environment in which it takes shape.[14] These challenges that affect LPSK will be analyzed using 3 (three) components in legal system theory by Lawrence. M. Friedman as quoted by Winarno Yudho and Heri Tjandrasari, namely:[15]

[14] Mustafa 'Afifi Ab. Halim and Shabrina Zata Amni, 'Legal System in the Perspectives of H.L.A Hart and Lawrence M. Friedman', *Peradaban Journal of Law and Society*, 2.1 (2023), 51–61 <https://doi.org/10.59001/pjls.v2i1.83>.
[15] Winarno Yudho and Heri Tjandrasari, 'The Effectiveness of Law in Society', *Journal of Law and Development*, 17.1 (2017).

a. Legal Structure, "The Institution themselves, the form they take, the processes that they perform. Structure includes the number and type of courts; presence or absence of federalism or pluralism, division of powers between judges, legislatorts, governors, kings, juries, adminsitrative officers; modes of procedure in various institutions;..."

b. Legal Substance, "... the output side of the legal system. These are the laws themselves, the rules, doctrines, statutes, and decrees, to extent they are actually used by the rulers and the rules; and, in addition, all other rules and decisions which govern, whatever their formal status."

c. Legal Culture, "... the values and attitudes which bind the system together, and which determine the place of the legal system in the culture of the society as a whole."

The three components of the legal system greatly determine the work or operation of a legal system. This means that a discussion related to the effectiveness of the law must pay attention to the three components above. Based on the three components above, it can be analyzed, as follows:

a. Legal Structure

Legal Structure refers to the institutional framework, organization, personnel, and procedures responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the law. Based on the results of the research, LPSK experienced challenges in the aspect of its legal Structure in implementing the safe house program. The main challenge arises from the high workload of personnel. Although LPSK stated that its human resources were not lacking, the informant mentioned that the workload felt heavy when many people were protected and needed security or assistance in various places at the same time. Based on the 2024 LPSK Annual Report, protection applications to LPSK increased from 7,645 applications (2023) to 10,217 in 2024. This figure has increased by 34% compared to 2023 of 7,645 applications. Although this indicates that there is an increase in public trust, on the other hand this is a challenge for LPSK personnel because the higher the number of applications, the more the number of protected will be and the workload of personnel will be heavier as well. The presence of a sufficient and well-trained number of legal officers is also very important. The role of

legal protection institutions shows that the more officers involved in the protection system, the more optimal the services provided to crime victims.[16]

In addition, limited financial resources and infrastructure are also challenges to the legal structure. The informant stated that the budget needed to secure safe houses is very large, and the budget limitations of LPSK which are relatively small compared to other institutions/ministries are obstacles for the LPSK structure to support its operations optimally. In the study, the informant said that the protection was directly proportional to the costs incurred. Therefore, LPSK must also be selective. This is because the protection provided by this protection reaches thousands, so budgeting must be done accurately and the budget must be divided as fairly as possible.

Originally, the budget allocation for the 2025 Fiscal Year (FY), LPSK received a ceiling of IDR 229,919,355,000.00. This ceiling is allocated to implement two programs, namely the Protection and Fulfillment of Witness and Victim Rights Program with an allocation of IDR 128,077,372,000.00 and the Management Support Program with an allocation of IDR 101,841,983,000.00. Furthermore, LPSK was affected by the efficiency of ministries/institutions spending for FY 2025 of IDR 144,500,000,000.00 or 62.84 percent, so that LPSK's effective budget became IDR 85,419,355,000.00.99.[17] This budget cut of 62.84% is a large reduction from the initial allocation. For instance, according to Christianto Riyadi, the positive and significant impact of budget allocation on performance shows that increased financial resources allow Itwasum Polri (Inspektorat Pengawasan Umum Polri) to carry out broader and more effective supervisory duties.[18] Consistent growth in budget allocation reflects the organization's prioritization of its functions, resulting in measurable enhancements in performance indicators.100 It is also applicable to LPSK. The amount of budget allocation have a direct impact on LPSK's ability to implement its programs, including the Protection and Fulfillment of Witness and Victim Rights Program.

b. Legal Substance

[16] Ahmadin Ahmadin and others, 'Perlindungan Hukum Kekerasan Seksual Terhadap Anak Oleh Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi Dan Korban (LPSK)', *Jurnal Hukum Indonesia*, 3.2 (2024), 49–57 <https://doi.org/10.58344/jhi.v3i2.708>.
[17] Nararya.
[18] Christianto Riyadi and Yohanes Ferry Cahaya, 'The Effect of Budget Allocation and Budget Realization on The Performance of The Inspectorate of General Supervision (Itwasum) of The Indonesian National Police (Polri)', *Dinasti International Journal of Management Science*, 6.4 (2025), 1056–62 <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijms.v6i4.4395>.

The substance component of the law, as explained by Lawrence M. Friedman, includes the content of the regulations, norms, and legal doctrine itself. The analysis in the previous section related to Legal Factors Itself from Soerjono Soekanto has concluded that the legal framework that regulates LPSK safe houses (Constitution, UU, LPSK Regulations) is tiered and comprehensive, and does not pose obstacles in terms of clarity or completeness of the law. The informant also did not state that there were any obstacles that came directly from the substance or formulation of the applicable laws or operational regulations.

Although the legal framework governing LPSK and safe house management is tiered and comprehensive, the existing regulations are not exempt from challenges in other components. Evaluation of the implementation of these rules also needs to be carried out, focusing on their practical application. The informant did not directly indicate any ambiguity or weakness in the legal substance governing safe house management. However, the very strength and clarity of these regulations in prioritizing security aspects (for example, through restrictions on the use of communication devices) can create an implementation dilemma at the cultural level, triggering a feeling of being 'imprisoned' in protected individuals and even prompting them to terminate protection early.

LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023 concerning Safe House Management details various operational aspects. However, in the context of evolving crime dynamics and protection needs, it is important to consider mechanisms for periodic review of this regulation's substance. Although the current substance is considered strong, periodic evaluation can ensure that the regulations remain relevant and adaptive to new challenges, especially those related to balancing physical security and the psychological well-being of protected individuals.

The legal substance also explicitly regulates various forms of non-physical protection, such as psychological assistance, transportation cost assistance, business capital or business development, and scholarships for continuing education. This demonstrates the regulatory commitment to not only provide physical protection but also to holistically restore the lives of protected individuals. However, challenges that arise (for example, boredom due to mobile phone bans), though not weaknesses of the substance itself, can hinder the effectiveness of the psychological support already stipulated. Therefore, a more creative implementation of this non-physical protection substance is crucial to address unforeseen cultural challenges. Although

LPSK Regulation Number 4 of 2023 Article 14 paragraph (2) explicitly regulates the securing of communication devices, it needs to be examined whether there is room for flexibility in its implementation, in accordance with the threat level of individual protected persons. For instance, for cases with a lower threat level or at certain stages of protection, it may be possible to allow limited and supervised access to communication. This does not mean changing the substance of the rule, but rather exploring more nuanced interpretations and applications to minimize negative psychological impacts without compromising core security.

c. Legal Culture

The cultural component, within Lawrence M. Friedman's theory, refers to the values and attitudes that bind the legal system together and determine its place in the culture of society as a whole. In the context of LPSK's safe houses, this primary cultural factor is manifested in the form of public and institutional internal trust. The informant stated that there is no negative stigma associated with the existence of safe houses or their occupants, as LPSK strictly maintains location confidentiality and limits interaction between protected individuals and local residents. This strong culture of confidentiality, even within LPSK where not all personnel know the location of safe houses, becomes a crucial foundation for the acceptance and continued operation of safe houses in society, fostering a perception of security and privacy

The significant increase in protection applications to LPSK, rising by 34% from 7,645 in 2023 to 10,217 in 2024, clearly indicates a growing level of public trust in LPSK as a witness and victim protection agency. According to Hasto, the chairman of LPSK in 2021, stated that the increasement of protection application towards LPSK indicated that the institution is trusted by the society.[19] This shows that the community is beginning to understand and utilize available protection rights, reflecting a cultural shift towards greater legal awareness and willingness to participate in the justice process with a guarantee of security. This trust is a vital cultural asset for LPSK's effectiveness.

However, on the other hand, the biggest cultural challenge faced by LPSK stems from the clash between operational security needs and the digital culture and modern psychology of protected individuals. The prohibition of

[19] Ardito Ramadhan and Krisiandi Krisiandi, 'LPSK Terima 3.027 Aduan Pada 2021, Terbanyak Sepanjang 13 Tahun Berdiri', *Kompas.Com*, 2022 <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/02/14/11495301/lpsk-terima-3027-aduan-pada-2021- terbanyak-sepanjang-13-tahun-berdiri>.

personal communication device use, while essential for maintaining security and preventing information leakage, often triggers a feeling of being 'imprisoned' for protected individuals and even becomes the main reason they request early termination of protection. This reflects a significant cultural clash between LPSK's values of prioritizing isolation for security, and the values of modern life that emphasize instant connectivity and access to information.

One side of the culture that clashes is the culture of modern life that prioritizes digital connectivity. In this era, personal communication tools, particularly mobile phones, have become essential instruments for social interaction, information access, entertainment, and even work. This dependence has shaped cultural values in which constant access to cyberspace becomes a basic need for individuals. On the other hand, there is an LPSK operational culture in the management of safe houses that prioritizes security and confidentiality. To prevent the leakage of location information and protect against real threats, LPSK implements an isolation policy, one of which is through the prohibition of the use of personal communication devices.

The clash occurs when the values of personal connectivity that have been firmly attached to the protected self as part of modern life, are confronted with an absolute policy of isolation in a safe house. For the sheltered, the revocation of access to mobile phones is not only a loss of a means of communication, but also a loss of their window to the outside world, sources of entertainment, and channels of social interaction. This condition triggers feelings of 'incarceration', extreme boredom, and ultimately, prompts some sheltered to request an early end to protection. This culture clash has serious implications for the effectiveness of safe housing programs, particularly in the aspects of non-physical protection and protected compliance. Although LPSK provides a variety of activities and psychological support, this clash of cultural values can reduce the effectiveness of such support. The need for strong connectivity in modern culture is often more dominant than the benefits of alternative activities, making it difficult for sheltered to fully adapt to a restrictive environment. This directly affects the psychological stability of the protected and becomes a cultural obstacle in retaining them in the protection program until the legal process is completed.

According to Friedman's framework, this conflict illustrates how broader societal values, such as digital dependence, can come into conflict

with legal institutional practices like safe house isolation. This friction may influence how protected individuals view the legal system within their own cultural context. The psychological impact of this isolation, such as chronic boredom and potential increases in stress or anxiety, can fundamentally erode the compliance and willingness of protected individuals to remain in the program. From the informant's statement which said that the protected individuals still choose to leave early indicates that LPSK's efforts in providing alternative activities and psychological support, though important, have not yet fully succeeded in bridging the gap between physical security needs and the deep psychosocial/cultural needs in this digital era. Therefore, more innovative, and personalized strategies in psychosocial approaches are needed to help protected individuals cope with the transition and adaptation to the restrictive environment of safe houses, while maintaining the integrity of the protection program.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of safe houses in protecting the witnesses and victims in LPSK has been said to be quite effective. This is because the purpose of safe houses, as stipulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 31 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 13 of 2006 concerning the Protection of Witnesses and Victims, has been achieved. This is implemented through comprehensive physical protection, including strict security protocols and the provision of a confidential residence, as well as extensive non-physical protection, such as legal assistance, psychological support, and psychosocial-economic aid for protected individuals.

In implementing the safe house program, LPSK faces several significant challenges. While the legal substance (regulations and norms) is comprehensive and very strength in prioritizing security, particularly regarding restrictions on personal communication devices, create an implementation dilemma. This cultural friction impacts the psychological well-being and and compliance of protected individuals, often leading them to prematurely terminate their protection despite LPSK's efforts in providing alternative activities and psychological supports.

Suggestion

LPSK is encouraged to develop more innovative and efficient financial management strategies to optimize its existing budget, especially considering the increasing demand for protection. This could involve prioritizing fund allocation for cases with the highest threat levels and exploring potential partnerships with

non-governmental organizations or international bodies for additional financial support. This is crucial, considering that financial support is directly related to the fulfilment of the right to protection for witnesses and victims of criminal acts as an integral part of a fair criminal justice system.

LPSK is expected to evaluate the restrictions on the use of personal communication devices within safe houses, while still prioritizing caution and security. A policy alternative that may be considered is the provision of limited and supervised communication facilities, such as the use of mobile phones facilitated by officers or access to communication through LPSK-owned devices, in order to maintain the psychological stability of the protected individuals without compromising security aspects.

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