

Effectiveness of Law Enforcement for Election Crimes In the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City

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Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of election criminal law enforcement in the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City. Election crimes threaten election integrity, public trust, and democratic legitimacy. Therefore, its enforcement needs to be judged not only by the number of cases that reach the courts, but also by the quality of institutional procedures. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of law enforcement of election crimes and identify the factors that influence them. This study uses a juridical-empirical method with a socio-legal approach. Primary data was obtained through interviews with Bawaslu, the Police, the Prosecutor's Office, and related informants, while secondary data was obtained from laws and regulations, election supervision reports, and academic literature. The findings of the study show that law enforcement of election crimes in Gorontalo City has been carried out through the formal mechanism of Bawaslu and the Integrated Law Enforcement Center or Gakkumdu Center. However, its effectiveness is still influenced by the constraints of proof, the fulfillment of formal and material requirements, the limitation of institutional authority, the short deadline for handling cases, inter-institutional coordination, and the legal culture of the community. This study concludes that the enforcement of election criminal law in the upcoming elections requires strengthening preventive supervision, legal education to the public, participatory supervision, witness protection, and more effective coordination of the Gakkumdu Center.

Keywords: Election crimes; law enforcement; legislative elections; Bawaslu; Gakkumdu Center; legal effectiveness

1. Introduction

General elections are the main instrument in a democratic country because through this mechanism the people's sovereignty is translated into the process of establishing legitimate state power. In a democratic country of law, elections are not only interpreted as a periodic procedure to elect public officials, but also as a constitutional means to ensure that the government gains legitimacy from the will of the people. This legitimacy can only be built if the election is held based on the principles of direct, public, free, secret, honest, and fair. This principle is an ethical and legal basis for the implementation of democratic elections, because it guarantees voter freedom, equality of political rights, and honesty of the electoral process. The literature on election integrity emphasizes that the quality of elections greatly determines the level of trust of citizens in political institutions, because flawed elections will result in a crisis of legitimacy even though they have formally met the procedures¹ for implementation. In this context, elections must be seen as a series of legal and political

¹ Marlene Mauk, "Electoral Integrity Matters: How Electoral Process Conditions the Relationship between Political Losing and Political Trust," *Quality & Quantity* 56 (2022): 1709–28, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-020-01050-1>.

processes that demand compliance with norms, the professionalism of organizers, and the effectiveness of supervision and law enforcement.²

Legislative elections have a strategic significance because they are the main mechanism to form the people's political representation in representative institutions. Through legislative elections, citizens elect members of the House of Representatives, the Regional Representative Council, and the Regional House of Representatives who have legislative, budget, and supervisory functions. Thus, the quality of legislative elections has a direct effect on the quality of political representation and the direction of public policy, both at the national and regional levels. In a local democratic system, legislative elections are also an important arena to measure the connection between the aspirations of the community and the capacity of representative institutions in responding to regional interests. Therefore, the integrity of elections at the local level should not be seen as a mere administrative issue, but as part of the foundation of national democracy. Studies on electoral politics in Indonesia show that local competition is often influenced by patronage, clientelism, and money politics, making the supervision and enforcement of election laws an urgent need³. However, the ideals of elections as an instrument of democracy are often faced with various forms of election violations and crimes. Election crimes are a serious threat to democracy because they can undermine electoral justice, disrupt the equality of election participants, lower public trust, and obscure the true will of voters. Forms of election crimes can be in the form of money politics, campaign violations, voter intimidation, abuse of state positions or facilities, vote manipulation, disenfranchisement, and acts of obstructing campaign activities. Money politics, for example, not only harms voter freedom, but also reinforces a culture of transactional politics that turns citizens' votes into a political commodity⁴. Similarly, electoral intimidation and violence can limit political participation and deter voters from making choices freely⁵. Therefore, the enforcement of election criminal law must be directed to maintain the purity of the people's vote and ensure that election results are born from a fair process⁶. Therefore, the enforcement of election criminal law must be directed to maintain the purity of the people's vote and ensure that the election results are born from a fair process.

Within the framework of Indonesian law, the handling of election crimes is regulated through Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. The law establishes a special mechanism through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center or Gakkumdu Center involving the General Election Supervisory Agency, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office. Bawaslu acts as the starting door in receiving reports or finding suspected violations, the Police carry

² Ali Umar Harahap et al., "Legal Framework for Resolving Election Violations in Indonesia: Towards Electoral Justice," *Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies* 10, no. 2 (2025): 379–414, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijcls.v10i2.24541>.

³ Daniel M Butler and Jeffrey J Harden, "Can Institutional Reform Protect Election Certification?," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 708, no. 1 (2023): 257–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162241233131>.

⁴ Muhammad Junaidi, "Tindak Pidana Pemilu dan Pilkada oleh Sentra Penegakan Hukum Terpadu," *Jurnal Ins Constituentum* 5, no. 2 (2020): 220–234.

⁵ Sarah Birch, Ursula Daxecker, and Kristine Höglund, "Electoral Violence: An Introduction," *Journal of Peace Research* 57, no. 1 (2020): 3–14, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319889657>.

⁶ Birch, Daxecker, and Höglund. 3-14

out the investigation and investigation function, while the Prosecutor's Office carries out the prosecution function. The character of handling election crimes is different from general criminal cases because it is limited by strict deadlines and requires the fulfillment of formal, material, and evidence elements in a short period of time.⁷ This condition causes the effectiveness of election law enforcement to depend heavily on the common understanding between institutions, the quality of coordination, the adequacy of evidence, and the courage of the community in reporting violations.⁸ Gorontalo City is an important context to examine this issue because in the 2024 Legislative Election there are a number of reports and findings of alleged violations that show the complexity of election criminal law enforcement at the local level. Based on the initial data in the research proposal, there were 8 reports or findings of alleged election violations in Gorontalo City. The alleged violations include obstruction of campaign activities, destruction of campaign props, use of campaign attributes that are not in accordance with the provisions, alleged loss of voting rights, and allegations of money politics in the form of giving or promising to give money to campaign participants⁹. Of the total reports, only some met the elements of election crimes and continued until the court decision, while others were stopped or not registered because they did not meet the formal requirements, material requirements, or criminal elements. This phenomenon shows that the main problem of election law enforcement lies not only in the existence or absence of violations, but also in the ability of the legal system to prove, process, and resolve alleged violations effectively.

This complexity is increasingly seen when reports of alleged election violations must go through an initial review process by Bawaslu before being forwarded to the next stage. In practice, reports that are socially perceived as violations cannot necessarily be qualified as election crimes if they are not supported by sufficient evidence or do not meet the legal elements specified in the law. Previous studies on the handling of election crimes in Gorontalo showed that evidentiary barriers, limited personnel, absence of witnesses, and weak public legal awareness were factors that affected the effectiveness of law enforcement by Gakkumdu¹⁰. Similar findings also emerged in a study of the Gakkumdu Center which emphasized that differences in perceptions between Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office can hinder the sustainability of cases to the investigation or prosecution stage.¹¹ This shows that election criminal law enforcement is a process that is not only normative, but also influenced by institutional structures, legal culture, and local political dynamics.

⁷ Darmawati, Mulyadi Alrianto Tajuddin, and Firman Hadi, "Law Enforcement Problems in Handling 2019 General Election Crimes by Gakkumdu," *SASI* 28, no. 3 (2022): 482–91, <https://doi.org/10.47268/sasi.v28i3.1030>.

⁸ Bakhrul Amal, "Kewenangan Mengadili Oleh Bawaslu Atas Sengketa Proses Pemilu Yang Diatur Dalam Peraturan Komisi Pemilihan Umum," *Masalah-Masalah Hukum* 48, no. 3 (2019): 306–11, <https://doi.org/10.14710/mmh.48.3.2019.306-311>.

⁹ Bawaslu Kota Gorontalo, "Laporan Rekapitulasi Dan Data Penanganan Pelanggaran Pemilu Kota Gorontalo 2024," 2024.

¹⁰ Darmawati, Tajuddin, and Hadi, "Law Enforcement Problems in Handling 2019 General Election Crimes by Gakkumdu." 482-491

¹¹ Muhammad Junaidi, "Tindak Pidana Pemilu Dan Pilkada Oleh Sentra Penegakan Hukum Terpadu," *Jurnal Ius Constituendum* 5, no. 2 (2020): 220–34.

Thus, the effectiveness of election criminal law enforcement is not enough to be measured by the number of cases that end in court decisions. The size is too narrow because it does not describe the entire process of handling violations. Effectiveness must be seen more comprehensively, starting from the mechanism for receiving reports, initial studies, meeting formal and material requirements, quality of evidence, coordination between apparatus in the Gakkumdu Center, to the level of participation and compliance with community law. From the perspective of legal effectiveness, the success of law enforcement is influenced by the substance of the law, the structure of the law, the means and facilities, the society, and the culture of the law¹². If one of these elements does not run optimally, then law enforcement can become procedural and less able to provide a preventive effect on election violations.

Based on this description, there is an important research gap to be studied, namely there is not enough explanation of how the effectiveness of law enforcement for the 2024 legislative election in Gorontalo City is assessed from the institutional process and the socio-legal factors that affect it. This research not only places court decisions as the main indicator, but also analyzes the process of handling reports, proof, coordination of Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office in the Gakkumdu Center, as well as the legal culture of the community. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of law enforcement of election crimes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City and identify the factors that influence it. Scientifically, this research is expected to enrich the study of election law, especially regarding the relationship between the effectiveness of the law, the enforcement of election crimes, and the integrity of local democracy.

2. Method

This research uses the juridical-empirical method or *socio-legal research*, which is an approach that not only places law as a written norm, but also as a social practice that works in society¹³. This approach is relevant because the research does not stop at the normative review of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, but also assesses how these norms are applied in the enforcement of election crimes in Gorontalo City¹⁴. This study uses three approaches, namely *the statutory approach*, *the case approach*, and *the factual approach*. *The statutory approach* is used to examine the legal basis of election crimes and the authority of law enforcement agencies. *The case approach* is used to examine reports or findings of alleged violations of the 2024 legislative election. Meanwhile, *the factual approach* is used to read the institutional and social reality in the practice of handling cases. The three approaches are directed to assess the effectiveness of election criminal law enforcement and the factors that

¹² Harahap et al., "Legal Framework for Resolving Election Violations in Indonesia: Towards Electoral Justice." 379-414

¹³ Afif Noor, "Socio-Legal Research: Integration of Normative and Empirical Juridical Research in Legal Research," *Jurnal Ilmiah Dunia Hukum* 7, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.56444/jidh.v7i2.3154>.

¹⁴ Aristo Marisi Adiputra Pangaribuan, "Metode Wawancara Dalam Penelitian Hukum Doktrinal Dan Sosio-Legal," *Undang: Jurnal Hukum* 6, no. 2 (2023): 351–83, <https://doi.org/10.22437/ujh.6.2.351-383>.

affect it¹⁵. The location of this research is in Gorontalo City, especially at the Gorontalo City General Election Supervisory Agency Office.

The selection of this location is based on the relevance of Gorontalo City as an area that has data on alleged election crimes in the 2024 Legislative General Election. This research also involved data from elements of the Integrated Law Enforcement Center, namely Bawaslu, the Police, and the Gorontalo City Prosecutor's Office. The involvement of these elements is important because the handling of election crimes is not only under the authority of Bawaslu, but also requires coordination with law enforcement officials. Thus, this location is appropriate for assessing the effectiveness of election law enforcement at the local level. Data collection in this study was carried out through interviews, observations, and document studies. The interviews were used to obtain direct information from elements of Bawaslu, the Police, the Prosecutor's Office, and related informants regarding the practice of handling alleged election crimes. This technique is important in socio-legal law research because it is able to capture the experiences, perceptions, and considerations of legal actors in the implementation of norms¹⁶. Observations were carried out to understand the institutional context and factual dynamics of election law enforcement in Gorontalo City. Meanwhile, the study of documents is directed at the study of Law Number 7 of 2017, Bawaslu reports, event minutes, and relevant academic literature. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively by linking field facts, theories of legal effectiveness, theories of law enforcement, as well as theories of political behavior and legal compliance¹⁷. This approach allows research to assess law not only as a normative text, but also as a social practice in society.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Legal Framework for Enforcement of Election Crimes

The enforcement of election crimes in Indonesia has the main legal basis in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. This law not only regulates the stages of holding elections, but also contains norms of prohibition and criminal threats against acts that can damage the integrity of elections. Election crimes basically include any act that is prohibited by election law and threatened with criminal sanctions, whether committed by election participants, organizers, state apparatus, or the public. The arrangement shows that elections are not solely a political process, but also a legal process that must be maintained through clear, fast, and fair law enforcement mechanisms¹⁸.

Criminal provisions in Law Number 7 of 2017 contain various forms of prohibition, including money politics, vote manipulation, campaign violations, use of state facilities for the benefit of election participants, intimidation of voters, and acts of preventing a person from exercising their right to vote or carrying out campaign activities. For these acts, the law provides criminal threats in the form of imprisonment and/or fines. The existence of this

¹⁵ Lidwina Inge Nurtjahyo, "A Sociolegal Perspective to Legal Research in the Digital Field: A Methodological Proposition," *The Indonesian Journal of Socio-Legal Studies* 1, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.54828/ijsls.2021v1n1.4>.

¹⁶ Pangaribuan, "Metode Wawancara Dalam Penelitian Hukum Doktrinal Dan Sosio-Legal."

¹⁷ Noor, "Socio-Legal Research: Integration of Normative and Empirical Juridical Research in Legal Research."

¹⁸ Khairul Fahmi, "Sistem Penanganan Tindak Pidana Pemilu," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 12, no. 2 (2016): 264–83, <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1224>.

criminal sanction has two main functions, namely as a repressive instrument to crack down on violations that have occurred and as a preventive instrument to prevent election participants and other parties from committing actions that injure the principles of elections that are direct, public, free, secret, honest, and fair¹⁹. The mechanism for handling election crimes in Indonesia is different from ordinary criminal cases because it is carried out through the Integrated Law Enforcement Center or the Gakkumdu Center. The Gakkumdu Center is a coordination forum between the General Election Supervisory Agency, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office. In this mechanism, Bawaslu acts as the starting door in receiving reports or finding alleged election violations. After the report or findings are received, Bawaslu conducts a preliminary study to assess the fulfillment of formal and material requirements as well as alleged criminal elements. If these elements are considered met, the case is then discussed together in the Gakkumdu Center to determine the feasibility of the case to proceed to the next legal process.²⁰

The police have a role in the investigation and investigation stage after an alleged violation is considered to meet the elements of election crimes. At this stage, investigators assess the adequacy of evidence, examine witnesses, and compile case files in accordance with the provisions of criminal procedure law and election law. Meanwhile, the Prosecutor's Office plays a role in the prosecution stage if the results of the investigation are eligible to be handed over to the court. The division of roles shows that the Gakkumdu Center is not a new institution that replaces the authority of law enforcement institutions, but a coordinating forum to equalize perceptions and accelerate the handling of election cases.²¹

The special character of election crimes lies in the strict handling deadline and the need for fast proof. In contrast to general criminal cases which have a relatively longer time frame, election criminal cases must be resolved in a limited time because they are directly related to the ongoing election stages. Therefore, the effectiveness of law enforcement for election crimes is highly determined by the clarity of norms, the professionalism of the apparatus, the adequacy of evidence, and coordination between institutions in the Gakkumdu Center. If one of these elements does not run optimally, then the handling of the case has the potential to stop at an early stage even though socially an act has been perceived as an election violation²².

3.2. Forms of Election Crimes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City

The alleged form of election crimes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City shows that electoral violations do not only appear in the form of money politics, but also in actions that interfere with campaign freedom, damage campaign facilities, and potentially eliminate citizens' voting rights. In the context of election law, these actions need to be understood as threats to election integrity because they can affect equality between election participants, voter freedom, and the legitimacy of election results. The study of election

¹⁹ Harahap et al., "Legal Framework for Resolving Election Violations in Indonesia: Towards Electoral Justice."

²⁰ Junaidi, "Tindak Pidana Pemilu Dan Pilkada Oleh Sentra Penegakan Hukum Terpadu."

²¹ Darmawati, Tajuddin, and Hadi, "Law Enforcement Problems in Handling 2019 General Election Crimes by Gakkumdu."

²² Amal, "Kewenangan Mengadili Oleh Bawaslu Atas Sengketa Proses Pemilu Yang Diatur Dalam Peraturan Komisi Pemilihan Umum."h. 306-311

integrity confirms that electoral malpractice can occur at various stages, both before the vote, during the campaign, and after the vote, so election supervision must be placed as an important instrument in maintaining the quality of democracy.²³

Based on the data in the research proposal, there are 8 reports or findings of alleged election violations in Gorontalo City in the 2024 Legislative Election. The alleged violations include two reports on acts of obstructing campaign activities, one report on the destruction of campaign props, one finding related to the use of attributes other than the identity of election participants who carried out the campaign, one report on alleged disenfranchisement of voting rights, and three reports related to alleged money politics in the form of giving or promising to give money to parties involved in campaign activities. The data can be seen in the following table.

Table I. Data on Election Crime Reports and Handling in Gorontalo City

No.	Types of Alleged Violations	Handling Results	Follow-up Description
1	Alleged election crimes about obstructing campaign activities	Report meets criminal requirements	Report meets criminal requirements
2	Alleged election crimes about obstructing campaign activities	Report meets election criminal requirements	Proven and has been decided by the Gorontalo District Court
3	Alleged destruction of campaign props	The report does not meet the elements of election crimes	Stopped
4	Alleged use of attributes other than the identity of election participants who carried out the campaign	Findings do not meet the elements of criminal acts	Stopped
5	Alleged election crimes regarding the disenfranchisement of voters	The report does not meet the criminal element	Stopped
6	Alleged election violations in the form of promising practices or giving money to parties involved in campaign activities	Reports are not eligible	Unregistered

²³ Mudiayati Rahmatunnisa, "Menyoal Tantangan Bawaslu Dalam Mewujudkan Integritas Pemilu Dan Pemilihan 2024," *Jurnal Keadilan Pemilu* 5, no. 2 (2024): 118–28, <https://doi.org/10.55108/jkp.v5i2.494>.

7	Alleged giving or promise of giving money to campaign participants	The report does not meet the formal requirements but meets the material requirements	Followed up with initial information tracing
8	Alleged election crimes related to the act of promising or handing over money to campaign participants	Reports don't meet the requirements	Unregistered

The table shows that only two reports met the criminal requirements and continued until the court decision, namely the report on alleged obstruction of campaign activities. Meanwhile, the other six reports or findings did not proceed to full criminal proceedings because they did not meet the formal requirements, material requirements, or elements of criminal acts. This pattern shows that not all acts that are socially perceived as election violations can be directly qualified as election crimes. In election criminal law, proof is a central aspect because the report must meet the elements of the act, the subject of the law, the evidence, the time of the incident, and the relationship of the act to the stages of the election. The alleged politics of money is one of the most complex categories. Money politics often takes place in a closed social space, involving the relationships of candidates, campaign teams, intermediaries, and voters, so the process of proving it is not always easy.²⁴ Studies on *vote buying* in Indonesia show that giving money or goods to voters often works through personal networks and political brokers, making it difficult to prove it without strong witnesses, documentation, or direct evidence²⁵.

In addition, the practice of money politics is also often considered commonplace in local political culture, so people do not always see it as a criminal act that must be reported.²⁶ Campaign obstruction and destruction of campaign props are also important to analyze because they relate to the freedom of election participants to convey programs and mobilize political support legitimately. Blocking campaigns can limit the rights of election participants and disrupt the equality of electoral competition. Meanwhile, the destruction of campaign props can damage access to political information for voters. From the perspective of electoral violence, actions that hinder the political activities of election participants can be part of the practice of intimidation or interference with the democratic process if done deliberately and systematically.²⁷

²⁴ Eki Sirojul Baehaqi and Epa, "Implikasi Hukum Bagi Penerima Dalam Pelanggaran Tindak Pidana Politik Uang Pada Pemilihan Kepala Daerah," *Jurnal Keadilan Pemilu* 5, no. 2 (2024): 161–75, <https://doi.org/10.55108/jkp.v5i2.487>.

²⁵ Edward Aspinall et al., "Vote Buying in Indonesia: Candidate Strategies, Market Logic and Effectiveness," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 17, no. 1 (2017): 1–27, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jea.2016.31>.

²⁶ Jeffrey A Winters, "Electoral Dynamics in Indonesia: Money Politics, Patronage and Clientelism at the Grassroots," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 52, no. 3 (2016): 405–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918.2016.1236653>.

²⁷ Birch, Daxecker, and Höglund, "Electoral Violence: An Introduction." h.3-14

Thus, Gorontalo City data shows that the forms of alleged election crimes in the 2024 Legislative Election are quite diverse, but the sustainability of their handling is highly dependent on the fulfillment of legal elements and the strength of evidence. This condition confirms that the effectiveness of election criminal law enforcement is not only determined by the number of reports, but also by the quality of reports, the adequacy of evidence, the courage of whistleblowers and witnesses, and the ability of supervisory and law enforcement agencies to construct cases appropriately. In this context, the handling of a report that is stopped or not registered does not necessarily indicate the absence of violations, but can reflect the limitations of the evidence and the strict standards of election criminal law.

3.3. Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Election Crime Enforcement

The structural factors of law enforcement officers are related to the role of Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office in the Integrated Law Enforcement Center. Bawaslu acts as the starting door in receiving reports and findings, conducting initial investigations, and assessing whether formal requirements, material requirements, and criminal elements are met before a case is discussed together in the Gakkumdu Center. The police are authorized to conduct investigations and investigations after the case is considered to meet the elements of election crimes, while the Prosecutor's Office carries out the prosecution function. The effectiveness of this structure relies heavily on coordination, commonality of perception, and speed of decision-making.

In the practice of the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City, the results of interviews with elements of the Police show that coordination between Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office is going quite well. Reports that are considered to have criminal indications can be discussed immediately, and Bawaslu is also quick to respond to the need for proof, including by presenting experts who are relevant to election cases. The informant from the Police also emphasized that there were no coordination obstacles or external pressure that affected the independence of the investigation. However, the short deadline for handling election cases, especially the 14-day period, is seen as a big challenge because the authorities have to work quickly in assessing reports, collecting evidence, and determining the continuation of the case.

The findings are in line with the statement of elements of the Gorontalo City Prosecutor's Office who explained that in handling election cases, the Prosecutor's Office sat together with Bawaslu and the Police in one forum at the Gakkumdu Center. Each institution has its own capacity and authority, but the discussion of cases is carried out jointly to ensure that the alleged violations really meet the construction of election crimes. Meanwhile, the results of the interview with the Chairman of the Gorontalo City Bawaslu show that Bawaslu has a very strategic position because it is the initial door for receiving public reports, tracing findings, and the link between election supervision and the criminal law enforcement process. However, not all reports can be forwarded to criminal cases because each report must go through formal and material verification, the adequacy of evidence, and discussions with elements of Gakkumdu. Therefore, differences in assessment

of whether or not the criminal element is met can cause the case to stop at the discussion stage and not proceed to the investigation²⁸.

3.4. Strengthening Election Law Enforcement in the Upcoming Elections

Strengthening law enforcement of election crimes in the upcoming elections requires a comprehensive approach. The approach should incorporate institutional reforms, improved procedures, and prevention strategies. In the context of Gorontalo City, the 2024 Legislative Election provides the main lesson that the enforcement of election crimes cannot only depend on criminal prosecution. Prosecution is still needed to provide a deterrent effect. However, the effectiveness of election law enforcement also depends on the capacity of electoral institutions to prevent violations, detect early indications of election crimes, process reports quickly, and build public trust in reporting mechanisms.²⁹

First, the Integrated Law Enforcement Center or Gakkumdu Center must strengthen coordination through clearer operational standards, joint case mapping, and routine technical coordination between Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office. The strict deadline in election crime cases requires the three institutions to build a common legal understanding before a case enters the formal handling process. This is important because differences in interpretation of the criminal element in an election violation can hinder the case from proceeding to the investigation or prosecution stage. Institutional strengthening also needs to include a digital-based case management system to improve documentation, evidence tracking, and inter-agency communication.

Second, Bawaslu must increase its capacity in conducting an initial review of the report. Bawaslu serves as the starting door in receiving reports and findings. Therefore, Bawaslu's ability to verify formal and material requirements determines whether an alleged violation can be processed as an election crime. Bawaslu needs to obtain stronger technical training in legal analysis, evidence assessment, witness examination, and campaign supervision. Strengthening Bawaslu is also important because public participation in election supervision cannot replace institutional competence. On the contrary, community participation and institutional competence must support each other.³⁰

Third, law enforcement officials need to improve the evidentiary mechanism, especially in money politics cases. Money politics and transactional politics are often carried out through informal networks, intermediaries, and social relations. This condition makes proving money politics difficult to do through ordinary proof methods. Future reforms need to consider clearer evidentiary standards, better witness protection, and legal protections for whistleblowers. Without protections for whistleblowers and witnesses, citizens may be reluctant to report violations for fear of social pressure, political retaliation, or threats to personal safety.

Fourth, election law enforcement agencies need to integrate law enforcement with preventive measures, civic education, and participatory supervision. Public legal awareness is very important because many election crimes, especially money politics, continue to occur

²⁸ Wawancara pak agus laingo humas bawaslu kota gorontalo tanggal 05 februari 2026

²⁹ Wawancara dengan pak agus laingo kota gorontalo pada tanggal 05 februari 2026

³⁰ Wawancara dengan pak agus laingo Humas bawaslu kota gorontalo pada tanggal 05 februari 2026

not only because of weak law enforcement, but also because of a permissive political culture. Participatory supervision can expand the reach of Bawaslu, especially in local areas that have limited formal supervision capacity. Political literacy programs, anti-money politics villages, citizens' forums, and youth-based election monitoring can transform citizens from passive voters to active guardians of election integrity.³¹

Thus, strengthening law enforcement of election crimes in the upcoming elections must combine repressive and preventive strategies. Criminal enforcement should be supported by stronger institutional coordination, better initial assessments, more effective evidence collection, witness protection, campaign supervision, public education, and participatory supervision. Such an integrated approach is important to build a legal culture that rejects electoral fraud and supports democratic elections with integrity.³²

Thus, strengthening law enforcement of election crimes in the upcoming elections must combine repressive and preventive strategies. Criminal enforcement needs to be supported by stronger institutional coordination, more accurate initial assessments, more effective evidence collection, protection of whistleblowers and witnesses, more optimal campaign supervision, public education, and participatory supervision. This integrated approach is important to build a legal culture that rejects electoral fraud and supports the implementation of democratic elections with integrity.³³

The results of interviews with elements of the Gorontalo City Police show that the role of the police in handling election crimes in the 2024 Legislative Election is to follow up on cases after there is a recommendation from Bawaslu through the Gakkumdu Center mechanism. The police cannot immediately make a police report without going through a discussion and recommendation process from Bawaslu. In practice, the police receive cases that have been "searched" in the Gakkumdu Center and then follow up on them according to the authority of investigation and investigation. The police informant also explained that coordination with Bawaslu and the Prosecutor's Office went well because the three institutions worked in one team, namely Bawaslu, the Police, and the Public Prosecutor. In the 2024 Legislative Election, cases that continue until the verdict has permanent legal force include those related to campaign obstruction and destruction of campaign props. According to the informant, law enforcement of election crimes has been effective, although the role of the police is highly dependent on the initial recommendations from Bawaslu.³⁴

Information from elements of the Gorontalo City Prosecutor's Office strengthened the findings. The Prosecutor's Office explained that the handling of election cases was carried out through the Gakkumdu Center forum which brought together Bawaslu, the Police, and the Prosecutor's Office in one working mechanism. In the forum, each institution performs its functions according to its capacity, but the process of discussing matters is done together to equalize perceptions. The coordinating function of the Gakkumdu Center is important because election crimes have a very short handling time limit when compared to general

³¹ Wawancara dengan pak agus laingo Humas bawaslu kota gorontalo pada tanggal 05 februari 2026

³² Wawancara dengan Pak wiwin tui kasi intel kejari kota gorontalo pada tanggal 10 maret 2026

³³ Wawancara dengan pak junaidi kasubmit 2 polres kota gorontalo pada tanggal 04 maret 2026

³⁴ Wawancara dengan pak junaidi kasubmit 2 polres kota gorontalo pada tanggal 04 maret 2026

crimes. Therefore, when there is information about alleged unlawful acts in the election, Bawaslu must immediately coordinate it with the Police and the Prosecutor's Office so that decisions on the feasibility of cases can be made quickly and with one vote.³⁵

Meanwhile, the results of the interview with the Gorontalo City Bawaslu show that the effectiveness of law enforcement of election crimes still faces challenges in the aspect of proving criminal elements as stipulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. Many alleged violations are visibly problematic, but when tested juridically they are not strong enough to qualify as election crimes. These obstacles are related to the limitations of witnesses, evidence, and the difficulty of connecting the reported events with criminal elements that must be proven. Bawaslu considers that election law enforcement has been running procedurally because handling mechanisms are available and coordination between institutions has been formed. However, its substantive effectiveness still needs to be strengthened because there are narrow processing deadlines, complicated evidence, and possible differences in interpretation between law enforcement officials.³⁶

Based on these three informations, strengthening the enforcement of election crimes in the upcoming elections must be directed to several main aspects. Bawaslu needs to be strengthened in conducting initial studies, formal and material verification, and the preparation of case construction. The Police and the Prosecutor's Office need to be more intensively involved in equalizing legal perceptions from the early stages of discussion at the Gakkumdu Center. In addition, the protection of whistleblowers and witnesses needs to be increased so that the public is not afraid to report alleged violations. Thus, the effectiveness of law enforcement depends not only on the success of bringing cases to court, but also on the ability of electoral institutions and law enforcement officials to build stronger prevention, proof, and coordination systems.³⁷

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the enforcement of election crimes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Gorontalo City has been carried out through formal mechanisms regulated in the election law, especially through Bawaslu and the Integrated Law Enforcement Center or Gakkumdu Center. The handling of reports and findings shows that the institutional framework for election criminal law enforcement has functioned procedurally, by placing Bawaslu as the starting door, the Police in the investigation and investigation stage, and the Prosecutor's Office in the prosecution stage. However, the effectiveness of law enforcement cannot be judged only from the number of cases that arrive at court decisions with permanent legal force. Its effectiveness must also be seen from the quality of the initial study, the adequacy of evidence, inter-institutional coordination, and community participation.

The findings of the study show that the effectiveness of law enforcement for election crimes in Gorontalo City is influenced by several factors, namely the fulfillment of formal and material requirements, the difficulty of proving criminal elements, the limitations of the

³⁵ Wawancara dengan pak agus laingo humas bawaslu kota gorontalo 05 februari 2026

³⁵ Wawancara dengan Pak wiwin tui kasi intel kejari kota gorontalo pada tanggal 10 maret 2026

³⁶ Wawancara dengan pak agus laingo humas Bawaslu Kota Gorontalo pada tanggal 05 februari 2026

³⁷ Wawancara dengan pak wiwin tui (kasi intel kejari kota gorontalo pada tanggal 10 maret 2026

authority of each institution, the shortness of the time limit for handling cases, and the legal culture of the community. Practically, weak evidence, witness reluctance, and transactional political practices can hinder alleged violations from being processed as election crimes. Academically, this research contributes to the study of the effectiveness of law and electoral justice at the local level. Practically, this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening preventive supervision, election law education to the public, participatory supervision, witness protection, and coordination of the Gakkumdu Center in the next election.

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