

Evaluation and Impact of Military Policy on Human Rights in Conflict Areas



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ABSTRACT: Military policy plays a significant role in maintaining national stability and security, particularly in regions vulnerable to conflict. This research aims to evaluate military policies implemented in conflict areas and their impact on human rights (HR). The study utilizes a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design, collecting data through document analysis from various publications, including academic journals, research reports, and official government documents. The findings indicate that repressive military policies often lead to severe human rights violations, such as torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances, significantly harming civilian populations and exacerbating social tensions. For instance, in Aceh and Papua, military actions intended to suppress separatist movements have often resulted in a cycle of violence and distrust between the government and local communities. Therefore, it is crucial for policymakers to reassess military strategies to incorporate a more balanced approach that respects human rights, fostering dialogue and rehabilitation to promote long-term stability in conflict-affected regions.

KEYWORDS: military policy, human rights, conflict areas

INTRODUCTION

Military policy has a significant role in maintaining national stability and security, especially in areas prone to conflict (K. Putri & Triadi, 2023). In many countries, this policy not only serves as a mechanism to maintain state sovereignty, but also as a tool to maintain order and deal with internal and external threats. However, in the context of conflict areas, the implementation of military policies is often controversial, especially related to its impact on human rights (HAM). History records many cases in which military policies implemented in conflict zones have led to serious human rights violations, such as torture, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances. This raises questions about the extent to which military policy can be considered effective without violating internationally recognized human rights norms (Hamonangan et al., 2024).

Conflict areas are often places where military interests and human rights protection clash. On the one hand, the state has an obligation to protect its territorial integrity and maintain security stability from the threat of separatism, terrorism, or other forms of threat (Andante & Wirabrata, 2024). On the other hand, the country is also bound by international law and moral commitments to protect the basic rights of all its citizens, including those involved in conflict or those in conflict zones. One concrete example of the complex relationship between military policy and human rights can be seen in the many internal conflicts in developing countries. In some Asian, African, and Latin American countries, military policies implemented to crack down on separatist movements or non-state armed groups are often associated with human rights abuses. At the same time, these repressive military policies often have devastating long-term effects, such as the destruction of social infrastructure, prolonged poverty, and psychological trauma experienced by civilians in conflict zones.

In Indonesia, for example, military policy in handling conflicts in some regions, such as Aceh and Papua, has led to a long debate about the limits of the use of military force in maintaining national security. The conflict in Aceh between 1976 and 2005, before it was finally resolved through a peace treaty, shows how military policy can worsen the situation if not balanced with a human rights-respecting approach. Military policies in Aceh, which initially aimed to suppress the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), instead led to human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances. Meanwhile, in Papua, human rights violations related to military operations are still a relevant issue today, despite many military reform efforts (Gumelar & Nachrawi, 2022).

In the international context, the same situation also occurs in various countries that are experiencing internal conflicts or facing threats from non-state armed groups. In Myanmar, for example, military policies implemented by the government against

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armed ethnic groups often lead to widespread human rights violations. One of the most prominent examples is the Rohingya crisis, where military operations against this minority group in 2017 led to thousands of deaths and forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighboring countries. The military action was condemned by the international community as a form of ethnic cleansing, which clearly violates international law and human rights principles (Iqbal & et al., 2024).

Given the huge impact of military policies on human rights, evaluation of such policies is very important. This evaluation not only serves to assess the effectiveness of military policies in achieving their goals, but also to ensure that they do not compromise the basic rights of citizens. In the context of military policy evaluation, there are several aspects that need to be considered. First, the extent to which the policy is consistent with national and international laws governing human rights. Second, how the policy is implemented on the ground, especially in situations where individual rights tend to be ignored for national security reasons. Third, the long-term impact of military policies on communities in conflict areas, including their impact on social cohesion, trust in state institutions, and the psychological condition of civilians.

Military policy evaluations also need to consider the existence of other factors that also affect the implementation of these policies. For example, in some cases, repressive military policies are often triggered by political or economic pressure, both from within and outside the country (S. N. Putri et al., 2022). In addition, the role of non-state actors, such as multinational corporations or international organizations, can also influence how military policy is implemented in conflict areas. Therefore, military policy evaluations must be carried out comprehensively, taking into account all relevant factors and involving various parties, including the government, the military, human rights organizations, and civil society.

Against this background, this study aims to evaluate military policies implemented in conflict areas and their impact on human rights. The main focus of this study is to identify the extent to which military policies have contributed to human rights abuses in conflict areas and to provide recommendations on how such policies can be improved to be more in line with human rights principles. In conducting this evaluation, the research will use a qualitative approach with analysis of policy documents, human rights reports, and interviews with related parties. This research is expected to contribute to the development of a more balanced and responsive military policy to human rights, especially in areas prone to co

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to evaluate military policies and their impact on human rights in conflict areas. Data is collected through the analysis of documents from a variety of publications, including scientific journals, research reports, and publications from international organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, as well as official government or military policy documents, as well as through the analysis of policy documents and human rights reports from various international organizations. The research location is focused on areas of high-intensity conflict, both national and international, such as Aceh and Papua in Indonesia or Myanmar at the global level. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis methods, with steps of coding, categorization, and interpretation based on the main theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human Rights Violations Due to Repressive Military Policies

Military policies implemented in conflict areas often result in serious human rights violations. These policies, which are usually oriented towards the massive use of force, such as the imposition of martial law and large-scale military operations, often lead to violations of basic civil rights. For example, in Aceh before the 2005 peace agreement, military operations launched to suppress the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) led to many cases of high-profile human rights violations. Amnesty International's report notes that excessive military actions during the conflict not only created fear, but also spread widespread suffering among civilians. Cases of torture, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings have become commonplace, creating an atmosphere of prolonged uncertainty and anxiety in society (Salsabila, 2024).

In Papua, a similar situation has occurred, where the military's policy to deal with separatist movements has repeatedly drawn criticism from various human rights organizations. Reported violations include intimidation, torture, and extrajudicial killings committed by security forces. In this context, repressive actions taken by the military not only result in human rights violations, but also add to the wounds and trauma of people who are already in difficult situations (Asmara & Syahrin, 2019). Violence experienced by civilians not only damages the lives of individuals, but also destroys the social structure of society, exacerbates tensions between governments and citizens, and increases distrust of state institutions.

The human rights violations that occurred in Aceh and Papua demonstrate a violation of international human rights principles, which stipulate that military force must be used proportionately and must protect civilians in conflict situations (Kuhparuw et al., 2023). In many cases, repressive military policies not only violate human rights, but also create deeper social tensions, prolong conflicts, and undermine relations between governments and civilians in conflict zones. For example, acts of violence committed by security forces can trigger reactions from repressed groups, ultimately leading to a continuous cycle of violence. When people feel threatened and discriminated against, they tend to try to find ways to fight back, either through peaceful means or by violence, which in turn only worsens the situation.

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This shows that military approaches that do not pay attention to human rights are often counterproductive and can worsen the security situation in the region. Instead, a more inclusive and dialogue-based approach can create space for reconciliation and recovery. In this context, it is important for the government to consider alternatives to repressive military policies, such as conducting dialogue with conflicting groups, listening to people's complaints and needs, and creating rehabilitation programs to support the recovery of conflict-affected communities.

The Effectiveness of Military Policy in Achieving Security

Although military policy has the primary goal of maintaining national security and stability, research shows that repressive military approaches are often ineffective in achieving these goals. Instead, policies that emphasize military force and crackdowns often exacerbate existing conflict conditions and strengthen resistance movements among communities. In Papua, for example, harsh military actions and repressive measures against separatist movements have triggered a deep distrust of the central government (K. Putri & Triadi, 2023). This kind of policy not only creates tension, but also strengthens the narrative of separatism among local communities, where some separatist groups even use human rights abuses committed by the military as a propaganda tool to attract international sympathy and support. By taking advantage of the violent acts carried out by the security forces, this separatist group can arouse international empathy and gain greater support for their cause. In many cases, military policies that are not balanced with dialogue efforts or diplomacy approaches fail to achieve long-term security-related goals.

A study by Johan Galtung (1996) in Hamonangan et al. (2024) highlights the importance of creating conditions that support structural peace to achieve sustainable security. In this context, structural peace is a situation in which the rights of citizens are respected and injustices can be overcome, thus creating an environment conducive to the stability and well-being of society. In conflict-torn areas such as Syria and Yemen, a military policy dominated by violence and killings of civilians has only prolonged the armed conflict. This action not only worsens the already severe humanitarian situation, but also leads to the destruction of social and economic infrastructure in the region, thus creating a cycle of violence that is difficult to break.

Therefore, the effectiveness of military policy in maintaining security depends largely on how the policy is implemented. Approaches that rely solely on violence and repressive measures without being accompanied by respect for human rights and peaceful dialogue rarely succeed in creating long-term stability (Andante & Wirabrata, 2024). On the other hand, policies that prioritize dialogue and diplomacy, as well as involving community participation in the decision-making process, tend to be more effective in achieving sustainable security.

Examples of countries that have succeeded in creating stability through a more inclusive approach show the importance of a paradigm shift in security policy. These countries have adopted an approach that prioritizes addressing the root causes of conflict, strengthening civil institutions, and facilitating dialogue between warring groups. In this way, not only security is maintained, but also human rights and social justice are the main focus.

So with this, policymakers to reconsider the existing military strategy. Understanding that military power is not the only solution, but rather part of a more holistic approach to creating sustainable security. By engaging dialogue, diplomacy, and respect for human rights, countries can be more effective in achieving security goals and creating a stable and peaceful society.

Human Rights-Oriented Military Policy Reform

Military reforms that include human rights training for military personnel and the implementation of stronger accountability mechanisms can significantly reduce human rights violations on the ground (Gumelar & Nachrawi, 2022). An example of successful military reform can be seen in post-1998 Indonesia, where the military began to be involved in human rights training programs to reduce the negative impact of military operations on civilians. These efforts include providing training on the Geneva Conventions and principles of international human rights law to military personnel. In addition, reforms that strengthen accountability mechanisms through independent oversight agencies are also important to ensure that violations committed by military personnel are legally enforceable.

The reforms are also aligned with international human rights standards set out in instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions, which require states to protect civilians and ensure that the use of military force remains in accordance with the principles of international law. By implementing human rights-oriented reforms, the government and military can reduce tensions in conflict areas, prevent widespread human rights violations, and create more conducive conditions for peaceful settlements.

Military Policy Cases

Military policies implemented in various countries are often in the spotlight regarding their impact on human rights, especially in conflict areas. A striking example of a successful military policy can be found in Indonesia after the reforms in 1998. In an effort to respond to public demands for justice and transparency, Indonesia implemented significant military reforms (Iqbal & et al., 2024). One of the important steps in this reform is the introduction of a human rights training program for military personnel. The training aims to increase the understanding of military members about the importance of protecting civil rights. The results of this initiative are evident in Aceh, where military policy shifted from a repressive approach to a dialogue and reconciliation-based approach after the signing of a peace agreement in 2005. Reports from various human rights organizations show a significant

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decrease in the number of human rights violations after this policy was implemented, which has had a positive impact on social stability in the area.

On the other hand, examples of failed military policies can be seen, such as what happened in Myanmar. The military operation launched against the Rohingya community in Rakhine State in 2017 is clear evidence of how military policies that do not take into account civil rights can lead to serious human rights violations. In this operation, thousands of people were killed, many were raped, and hundreds of thousands were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh (Salsabila, 2024). The case underscores how dangerous a repressive military policy and disrespect for civil rights can be, which not only creates tensions between ethnic groups, but also causes a deep humanitarian crisis in the region.

Legal perspectives also play an important role in military policy evaluations. Military policy should be guided by international law, including the Geneva Conventions and globally recognized human rights principles. Therefore, in evaluating these policies, it is crucial to assess the extent to which the government or military is complying with applicable legal provisions. In Indonesia, for example, the existence of an independent institution tasked with supervising human rights violations by military personnel is a step forward in ensuring accountability. In addition, the state also needs to have a strong accountability mechanism to follow up on human rights violations committed by military personnel (Asmara & Syahrin, 2019). This mechanism should include transparent and independent courts, where members of the military who break the law can be tried fairly. A good example can be seen from the experiences of Argentina and Chile, where human rights violations during military regimes were prosecuted after the transition to democracy, showing that accountability is very likely to be enforced.

To improve existing military policy, several policy recommendations need to be considered, such as:

Governments must formulate policies that integrate human rights principles into their military strategies.

This process can involve consulting with human rights organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders to ensure that the policies implemented not only focus on security aspects but also protect citizens' rights.

Training for military personnel on human rights and international humanitarian law should be an integral part of military education programs.

Their awareness and understanding of the responsibility to safeguard civil rights will increase, and they will be equipped with the necessary skills to handle conflict situations without using excessive force. It is important for the government to establish a constructive dialogue with local communities to understand their needs and concerns regarding military policy. By involving the community in the decision-making process, the policies implemented will become more accommodating, which in turn can reduce the likelihood of human rights violations and create more sustainable stability in conflict areas.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been explained earlier, it shows that repressive military policies often lead to serious human rights violations in conflict areas. For example, military operations conducted in Aceh prior to the 2005 peace accord led to numerous cases of human rights violations, including torture and extrajudicial killings, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty in society. Similarly, in Papua, repressive actions against separatist movements exacerbated tensions between the government and the community, thus reinforcing the narrative of separatism and creating a sense of distrust of the government. This study confirms that the effectiveness of military policy in maintaining security is highly dependent on its implementation.

Approaches that rely solely on force without dialogue and respect for human rights are likely to be unsuccessful in creating long-term stability. In contrast, policies oriented towards dialogue and rehabilitation show greater potential to achieve sustainable security. Indonesia's example after the 1998 reform shows that human rights training programs for military personnel and strengthening accountability can reduce human rights violations and improve social stability. Human rights-oriented military policy reforms are important, given that policies that ignore civil rights can lead to humanitarian crises, as seen in Myanmar. Therefore, the government must formulate policies that integrate human rights principles, provide training to military personnel, and build dialogue with local communities to create more accommodating and sustainable policies. This is expected not only to maintain security but also to respect human rights, thereby creating better conditions for people in conflict areas.

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