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Strengthening of Legal Culture in Law Enforcement Against Illegal Logging Crime Towards Environmental Conservation Governance

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ABSTRACT

Illegal logging crimes in preserving environmental sustainability. This study aims to identify and examine who is liable as a perpetrator of illegal logging in Kuningan Regency. This research uses an empirical law approach with a descriptive analytical requirement. The stages of the research are carried out to collect primary, secondary and tertiary data through field research and review of books. Observation instruments and interviews were data collection techniques, which were then analyzed qualitatively. The research indicated that there are three legal factors affecting the accountability of legal rules against illegal logging under Law 18/2013 Articles 82 and 83, namely legal structure, substance and community legal culture. Data for 10 court-ruled cases from 2021 to 2026 show prison sentences of one month to one year and six months as well as fines totaling IDR 10 million to IDR 500 million. This is illicit logging which has been also governed in Law Number 18 of 2013, Articles 82 and 83 on Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction. This study suggests the need for law enforcement in Kuningan Regency to jointly conduct public education regarding the environmental impacts and strict sanctions for illegal logging so that legal culture and awareness increase.

Keywords: *Crime, Illegal Logging, Legal Accountability, Legal Culture.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Indonesia was not founded only on power (*Machtsstaat*), but rather on the rule of law (*Rechtstaats*) (Benseghir et al., 2025). An ideal state based on law in which every aspect of life of the state is to be governed by the rule of law, not politics or economics (Tambunan et al., 2025). Enforcement which is the icon of law must be more proactive to realize the values of a state based on law (Ul Akmal et al., 2023). This is where the business of law enforcement comes as a major concern, which in the midst of this nation chaos has to without doubt become our first and foremost priority for rectification (Karyudi & Firdausiah, 2024). According to Theory of Legal Sovereignty, the ultimate power in a state rests with the law, which binds off both government and citizenry (Gunawan et al., 2025). All officials must respect the law, and all citizens are equally responsible before it (Manurung et al., 2025).

Indonesia until now has a lot of forest area which is often referred to the lungs of the world, so Indonesia is an asset, because a large part of other countries do not have forest (Firdaus et al., 2023). Using statistics from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, currently Indonesia face's forest land by having an area of 125.76 hectares (Widi, 2023). which is equivalent to approximately 62.97% or almost 70% of the total landmass in Indonesia (Nasiah et al., 2025). Over time, this amount is certainly decreasing because needs are increasing in almost all sectors of the community so that non-forest areas that are used for development cannot accommodate every need anymore which makes forest areas vulnerable to conversion of their functions causing disruptions to air and water quality (Akhmaddhian & Hartiwiningsih, 2018). Community forest damage also occurs because they do not heed local wisdom (M. Arif et al., 2025). Everyone has a right to a healthy environment (Muthmainnah, 2020; Kartika et al., 2024). That good environmental ecosystem,

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even forests, is a part of the living environment and used as a human life support, should be preserved (Shabarudin & Thamrin, 2025). Environmental law, according to Dutch scholar Drupsteen, has elements of criminal law, and hence is called Criminal Environmental Law (*straafrechtelijk milieurecht*) (Anugrah et al., 2023; Putra & Gunarto, 2026). Environmental protection and management, as stipulated in Indonesia's Law No. 32/2009 (Article 1, Paragraph 2), are systematic and integrated efforts to preserve ecosystem functions and avoid pollution or damage. They are broad measures that includes planning, resource usage, command, maintenance, legislation supervision, and law enforcement (Moratama, 2025).

It is also the obligation of every individuals to be aware of the environment protection, in order to respect the rights of others in carrying out their lives (Muthmainnah, 2020; Calderón & Noelia, 2025). Article 33 Paragraph 3 of the Indonesian 1945 Constitution states that forests are a natural resource and belong to the state. The land, water and natural resources there are controlled by the state that it is intended for maximizing the welfare of the people (Faradina et al., 2023; Yusup Permana et al., 2025).

Controlled by the state does not mean that the state owns all the forests in Indonesia totally or wholly, but it includes authority to produce rules to smoothen forest area management and minimizing deviations from forest and from individuals (Anis et al., 2022). The main consideration in forests, as biological natural resources (Ulhusna & Basri, 2023) is the definition of forest itself has been clarified by Article 1 paragraph (2) of Law Number 41 of 1999 on Forestry, saying that: Forest is a unified and part of an ecosystem consisting of a section of land with biological natural resources dominated by trees in its growth in natural life union and cannot be separated from each other (Hadlian Rilo Prabowo, 2023; Agung & Sidik, 2025). Moreover, Article 1 Paragraph (1) of

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Law Number 18 of 2013 on Prevention of and Combating Forest Destruction ululates: A vast expanse of land which has biological bequest predominated by more trees in a natural group that cannot be released to every other is known as forest. Forest is one of interests ecosystem (Anis et al., 2022; Salman & Asmanto, 2024).

Forests are dubbed as the lungs of the world due to their strategic importance in relation to human life (Akhmaddhian et al., 2023; Twinsani, 2025). Forests aside from being the home of flora and fauna to maintain its diversity also serves as climate regulators for living things around it, maintains soil fertility, water storage, and provide myriad other benefits (Sirait, 2021). Consequently, findings show that forestry is one of the sectors whose role will have a great influence on national economic growth because it can create profits that generate income directly or indirectly by creating jobs towards sustainable development (Ulhusna & Basri, 2023), therefore, the various issues related to forestry are interesting research to study considering if something wrong happens in its management then the effect or impact will be significant enough about some aspects of life. One type of abnormality in forest utilization that is harmful to forests themselves is logging illegally, or more often referred to as illegal logging. No irresponsible action from some individual or corporation is to do illegal logging without permit by the authorized party (Fernando et al., 2025). Illegal logging is a special crime that frequently occurs in Indonesia, which includes the process of logging and transporting forest products without regard to existing legal regulations (Ulhusna & Basri, 2023). Indonesia has suffered major economic losses from deforestation activities involving illegal logging. And also, this will have adverse effect to the forest ecosystem, so the deforestation rate increases every year because until now illegal logging activities are still occurring and difficult to overcome (Maulana & Nanda, 2023).

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There are different kinds of Illegal Logging crime using a sophisticated modus operandi, which have cost the lives of forest itself and communities around the forest (Dakhi & Dohu Amajihono, 2023). Illegal logging activities today involve many parties and carried out in a systematic and organized manner. The usual parties in this illicit logging acts are laborers/loggers and financiers/*cukong* (Lukito, 2022). According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), *cukong* is a rich person who supplies fund or capital for another person's business or work (Cahyaningsih et al., 2024). For this reason, the *cukong* usually act as someone who will make purchases for felled wood, but in addition to that, they also usually also provide facilities in the form of logging tools and vehicles to meet the needs of transporting this illegally obtained wood (Lukito, 2022). How to regain all the damage caused to the environment, a number of methods has been done by the government and one among them is laws and regulations established in respect of forestry sector (Fernando et al., 2026). Specific regulations, in this case, the forestry sector, include Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction or the P3H Law. This ruling is always used to ensnare perpetrators of forest destruction, in general the article charged is Article 89 Paragraph (2) Letter a of Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, maximum criminal threat of 20 years of imprisonment (Anis et al., 2022), then efforts at law enforcement by enforcing existing regulations, especially Law Number 18 of 2013 on Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction as a legal instrument in giving sanctions to violators (Illegal Logging) (Hadlian Rilo Prabowo, 2023). The crime of Illegal Logging in the forest still occurs in Kuningan Regency which makes people around the forest feel uneasy. In early 2023, Illegal Logging activities were carried out in Ciwaru District where the type of wood was several blocks of Sonokeling wood which

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can be transported by the perpetrators from the protected forest. Based on information of the local BPD chairman, the wood theft in the middle of protected forest has been ongoing for about 3 years, and different efforts have been made such as to put up warning banners, but were taken off again, and directly reporting to the authorities does not make illegal loggers deterred. From this, it can be concluded that there has not been the enforcement of strict law on perpetrators so that illegal logging acts are still rampant in Kuningan Regency (R Aditya, 2023). Criminal law enforcement is effectively a state policy for regulating and limiting citizens, general public as well as law enforcement authorities in carrying out their duties mandated by of the law to obey the regulations set (Lukito, 2022). The Criminal Procedure Code regulates an optional integrated model of criminal justice in accordance with the legal authority respectively assigned to law enforcement organizations based on the notion of "functional differentiation" among law enforcers (Ubaidillah et al., 2025).

Even though this has been explicitly regulated in Article 12 letter k of Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, which basically prohibits anyone from receiving, buying, selling, accepting exchanges, accepting deposits and/or controlling forest products known to have originating from illegal logging (Ulhusna & Basri, 2023), in practice, however, there are still frequent illegal logging crimes carried out by individuals or legal entities (corporations) (Dakhi & Dohu Amajihono, 2023), which cause unrest in the community. Another of the foremost contributors to the prevalence of these illegal logging crimes in Indonesia is the weak law enforcement. Judicial authority sociologically occupied the top rank of social life, as an institution touching rights and responsibilities of a person as role holder (Nasli & Lubis, 2023). Some other factors that made the law enforcement

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in forestry sector still weak in Indonesia are, low criminal justice system, low level of public awareness and support to law enforcers, and lack of effective rules and regulations. Therefore, perpetrators of illegal logging repeatedly commit the violation without feeling discouraged (Turnip & Harianto, 2020).

The preliminary study of illegal logging includes: first, Criminal Law Enforcement in Overcoming Crimes of Illegal Logging Results Based on Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning Forest Prevention and Destruction, focuses on transport notes and certificates of ownership of processed teak wood from forest products that are not in line with their intended use according to laws and regulations (Prabowo, 2023); second, Legal Aspects of the Responsibility of Perpetrators of Illegal Logging Crimes: illegal logging crimes can be classified into several types of general crimes, including destruction, theft, document forgery, embezzlement, and receipt related to the elements of general Criminal Code, consisting of Millions of organizations well-placed to spearhead forest defense efforts and engage in policy negotiations (Situmorang & Zarzani, 2023); third, the problem of criminal law enforcement for environmental sustainability in the case of illegal logging has not been effectively addressed. In reality, what is going on is an active campaign against illegal loggers and the government extensively fighting it. The current laws and policies that cannot solve the problem, especially in environmental crimes; the development of technology followed by the improvement of quantity and quality; increasingly complex crimes, often worldwide, regionally or nationally harmful (Audina, 2018). This study is novel that it emphasizes the effect of illegal logging law enforcement on tightening forest management policy. Based on the theory and background of the problems described above, the author is interested in doing research in environmental law, especially forestry law. This study aims to describe the

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illegal logging regulation in Indonesia and law enforcement against illegal loggers in Kuningan Regency.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method in this study is an empirical legal approach with analytical descriptive form. This includes field research based on literature reviews that collects primary/secondary and even tertiary data through interviews and observations first and then later assessed qualitatively. Obviously, the major legal materials that were written as references are the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 1 of 1946 concerning Criminal Law Regulations, Law Number 8 of 1981 concerning Criminal Procedure, Law Number 41 of 1999 in respect with Forestry, Law Number 32 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management, Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction, and Regulation of the Chief of the Republic of Indonesia National Police Number 6 of 2019 concerning Criminal Investigation. This research was conducted in Kuningan Regency. Data were collected at Kuningan Resort Police, Kuningan District Prosecutor's Office, Kuningan District Court and Kuningan Class IIA Penitentiary.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Natural trees, including Forests, have important functions in maintaining a balance of nature (Hadlian Rilo Prabowo, 2023). Hence, to minimize the impacts of deforestation on forest and the environment, forest resource uses requires effective management (Permanasari et al., 2026). That is in line with Article 33 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution which reads: "The earth and water and the natural resources contained therein shall be controlled by the state and used for utmost benefit of the people" (Nurhasan & Bunyamin, 2025).

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Another way to put is thus, the wealth of Indonesia, the forestry sector included, should be sustained and used most optimally and sustainably in favor of the needs of not only generations today (Hadlian Rilo Prabowo, 2023).

Illegal logging is the type of destruction that arises from harvesting trees and timber without authority or permission, as well as violating rules for preserving the forest itself (Mariyam et al., 2023). Forest crime has profound, devastating effects as it destroys the ecosystem. Because forest has a role as a climate support and regulator of all living things around, forest destruction can give an impact on the broader environment (Kusworo & Arsil, 2024). In order to prevent illegal logging, the government enacted Law Number 18 of 2013 on Forest Destruction Prevention and Control (Cahyani & Anditya, 2024).

Despite the enactment of various environmental and forestry laws in place, which already include criminal sanctions, illegal logging crimes still remain rampant in Indonesia (Jaelani et al., 2022). Such a rise in environmental crimes suggests that the public is largely uninformed about the need to protect ecosystems. Illegal logging or impermissible forest management and utilization will add more impact and damage to the environment, including both forest and its surrounding areas (Daryanti et al., 2025). Illegal logging scandals still happen in Kuningan Regency. Data on illegal logging incidents received by the Kuningan Police from 2021 to 2023, were obtained directly from the Administrative and Secretarial Affairs (Urmintu) section of the Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Agency as follows:

Table 1Illegal Logging Crime Report 2021-2024

No	Case	Year	Amount	Information
1	Illegal Logging	2021	2 Police Reports	7 Solutions
2	Illegal Logging	2022	0 Police Reports	0 Completion
3	Illegal Logging	2023	1 Police Report	1. Solution

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4	Illegal Logging	2024	1 Police Report	1. Solution
5	Illegal Logging	2025	0 Police Reports	0 Completion
6	Illegal Logging	2026	1 Police Report	1. Solution
Amount		5 Cases and 10 Solutions		

Data source: Criminal Investigation Unit, Kuningan Police Resort

This section contains a table of criminal logging cases decided by the Kuningan District Court, obtained from the clerk office of Kuningan District Court as an addition to help elaborate on how Law Number 18 of 2013 on Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction applied in illegal logging located in Kuningan Regency:

Table 2Kuningan District Court Judge Handling Criminal Logging Cases (2021-2024)

No	Case Number	Article of Indictment	Defendant	Decision
1.	19/Pid.B/LH/2021 /PN.Kng dated April 6, 2021	Articles 83 and 12 of Law 18/2013 imposes criminal penalties for illegal logging, transportation, receipt and trade of forest products.	K bin C	The defendant was sentenced to eighteen months of imprisonment and fined IDR 500 million or three additional months.
2.	20/Pid.B/LH/2021 /PN.Kng dated April 6, 2021	Article 83 in conjunction with Article 12 of Law 18/2013 regulates criminal sanctions for	C bin M	The defendant was sentenced to eighteen months of imprisonment and fined IDR 500

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		illegal logging, transport, receipt, and trading forest products.		million or three additional months.
3.	21/Pid.B/LH/2021 /PN.Kng dated April 6, 2021	Articles 83 and 12 of Law 18/2013 prescribes severe criminal penalties for illegal logging, transporting, receiving, and trading forest products.	K bin T	The defendant was sentenced to eighteen months of imprisonment and fined IDR 500 million or three additional months.
4.	62/Pid.B/LH/2021 /PN.Kng dated July 23, 2021	Articles 83 and 12 of Law 18/2013 set forth strict criminal sanctions for illegal logging, transporting, receiving, and trading forest products.	O bin S	The defendant was punished for paying IDR 10 million and sent to prison for one year and two months. If fine was not paid, two months in prison would be imposed instead.
5.	70/Pid.B/LH/2021 /PN.Kng dated August 25, 2021	Articles 82 and 12 of Law 18/2013 provide harsh criminal sanctions for individuals harvesting trees	S bin S	The defendant was sentenced to one year and three months of imprisonment and subjected to a fine of IDR 500,000,000.

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		without right to harvest.		If not paid, the fine would be replaced with three months of imprisonment.
6.	71/Pid.B/LH/2021 /PN.Kng dated August 25, 2021	Articles 82 and 12 of Law 18/2013 threatens harsh criminal sanctions for harvesting trees without pursuance to law.	TP bin R	The defendant was sentenced to fine IDR 500,000,000 and imprisonment for one year and three months. The fine would be replaced by three months of imprisonment in case of default of payment.
7.	109/Pid.B/LH/202 1/PN.Kng dated October 21, 2021	Articles 83 and 12 of Law 18/2013 set forth strict criminal sanctions for illegal logging, transporting, receiving, and trading forest products.	EDS bin D	The defendant was sentenced to fine of IDR 500,000,000 with an imprisonment term of one year and six months. The fine would be replaced by three months of imprisonment in case of default of payment.
8.	110/Pid.B/LH/202 1/PN.Kng	Articles 83 and 12 of Law 18/2013	JJ bin O S	The defendant was sentenced to

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	dated October 21, 2021	imposes strict criminal sanctions for illegal logging, transporting, receiving, and trading forest products.		eighteen months of imprisonment and fine of IDR 500 million or three additional months.
9.	165/Pid.B/LH/2023/PN.Kng dated January 11, 2024	Article 83 and Article 12 of Law 18/2013, as amended by Law 6/2023 on Job Creation, in conjunction with Article 55(1) of the Criminal Code, criminalizes illegal forest destruction and punishes all parties who commit, order, or assist in the offense.	A bin H	The defendant was sentenced to fine of IDR 500,000,000 and one-year of imprisonment. Two months of imprisonment would be imposed in case of default of payment.
10.	59/Pid.Sus-LH/2026/PN.Kng dated July 2, 2026	Article 83 and Article 12 of Law 18/2013, as amended by Law 6/2023, and its supporting regulations,	U bin M NS bin K ES bin YH K bin M N bin K	Each of the defendants was sentenced to six months of imprisonment.

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		namely Article 55(1) of the Criminal Code, Article 20(c) of Law 1/2026, and Law 20/2025 on Criminal Procedure, under which those who would commit an illegal logging crime can be charged as perpetrators, accessories or instigators.		

Data source: Kuningan District Court

From the two tables above, namely the police report table and the Kuningan District Court verdict table, in 2022 there were also no illegal logging cases in Kuningan Regency, with 0 reports. Illegal logging crimes, however, persisted in the following year with one report resolved only by 2023. In addition, based on interviews with the Head of the Tipiter Unit of the Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Unit, in the research process there was one case of illegal logging that was handled an investigative team from the Kuningan Police Tipiter Unit.

Enforcement is essentially an endeavor to into effect positive law/written law, in order that it be consistent with what is wished (Listyani, 2024). Hans Kelsen's theory which states that legal effectiveness is closely related to the validity of law argues that legal norms binding mean against one another and the community must respect and implement it (Yusuf DM et al., 2023). Law

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enforcement is not a single entity, the process of law enforcement is influenced by several factors that influence the enforcement process. Crimes of illegal logging, especially in Kuningan Regency, still continue to occur and cannot guarantee that law enforcement is running effectively (Hairi, 2021).

The crime of illegal logging in Kuningan Regency certainly does not escape the influence of several factors. Discussing the rule of law enforcement certainly cannot be separated from concepts proposed by Lawrence M Friedman that legal system consists of three elements, namely Legal Structure , Legal Substance, and Legal Culture (Akhmaddhian et al., 2023). The description of the factors that influence law enforcement against law enforcement officials in Kuningan Regency has been proven through research at the Kuningan Police and Kuningan District Court is given below.

A. Legal Structure

The first part is the Structure of Legal System, which is the basic concept of law system from Lawrence M Friedman itself (Al Kautsar & Muhammad, 2022). Each of these institutions has its primary obligations and roles as part of the legal system (Kurniawan et al., 2026). The police and the judiciary are constituted as law enforcement institutions, including handling illegal logging crimes, by carrying out duties in accordance with the mandate of the law. As an institution of the state for public security and order, police are tasked with law enforcement duties which begins with investigations and inquiries. At the same time, the judiciary has a responsibility and authority to investigate cases in court and provide rulings on cases.

According to the results of an interview with the head of the Tipiter unit of the Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Unit, in carrying out duties and authorities in handling illegal logging crimes occurring in Kuningan Regency, investigators therein implement law enforcement that is procedural law (the

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process that will carry out investigative actions) by referring to the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), while using Police Chief Regulation Number 6 of 2019 concerning Criminal Investigations as supplementary regulation. The Unit personnel will conduct an investigation by going to the scene of the crime (TKP) in a crime scene investigation, seeing and determining whether illegal logging has occurred. If all conditions have been met, and an illegal logging crime has taken place, the case can be escalated to investigation stage.

The Unit's investigation had followed standard operating procedures and other formal operational directives established by higher ups of the unit. It aims to collect evidence and determine suspects involved in illegal logging for further detention. In line with this, a police investigation interpreted the illegal logging crime supervised by Kuningan Police's Tipidter head to employ forestry experts. The completed file was sent to public prosecutors. As soon as the investigation was complete, investigators then formally booked the suspect and evidence into the prosecutor's office for trial. The judge will then preside over cases that have proceeded to the trial stage. From the interview with one of the judges at Kuningan District Court, he said that in illegal logging cases, the judge may handle the case. This is because in the judicial institution there is a principle of *ius curia novit,* where judges are assumed to know all the laws so that in carrying out their duties, judges cannot refuse any case given to them, and they must conduct an examination until it is decided.

The quality of law enforcers also affects their own enforcement. Corrupt and ill-trained officers do many bad things, but ones best able to achieve these goals are those in whom confidence can be placed to enforce existing laws. Kuningan Police's Tipidter unit head said routine education and training programs were held routinely during an interview. This effort is intended to improve personnel integrity and the quality of human resources in a

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sustainable manner, specifically regarding professional abilities in the Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Unit. Besides education and training, Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Unit personnel frequently receive guidance or direct instructions (jukrah) from their superiors about how to deal with cases reported to the Kuningan Police.

Not only the police, but also the quality of the judiciary being law enforcement institution leads to how effective we make law enforcement. Judges, often called the "ballast in the judicial system", are supposed to be doing their oath and promise as judges (Zuhrah, 2023). A judge's integrity also assists in determining the fairness, independence, autonomy and professionalism of the judicial institution. In reference to interview with one of the Kuningan District Court judges, there is a program to improve the quality and integrity of judges as law enforcers, a program directly run by the Supreme Court related to competences for character development and integrity of judges. Moreover, the internal program of Kuningan District Court is implementing some Supreme Court regulations, as follows:

a. Regulation of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2016 on working hours, daily duties and sanctions for judges violating work discipline.
b. Regulation of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 of 2016 on direct superior duties to supervise, guide and evaluate the behavior and performance of their subordinates;
c. Regulation of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 2016 on guidelines for receivable, checks and follow-up on public complaints (whistleblowing system) regarding alleged violations in the judiciary environment.

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From the explanation above, the form of law enforcement/implementation of procedural law conducted by Kuningan Police and the Kuningan District Court as a legal power agency for illegal logging crimes has been carried out well in accordance with laws and regulations based on Criminal Procedure Code. In addition to that, the quality of law enforcement officers is guaranteed as well with several programs organized by the institution intended to improve integrity in some instances, and quality of its own law enforcement officers.

B. Legal Substance

Illegal logging is defined as a forest offense, which can be committed by illegal logging in the forest. The perpetrator does not possess a permit from the authorities that allows them to harvest forest timber products. on the other hand, the legal nature or material of illegal logging is governed in a special law outside the Criminal Code (KUHP), namely Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction (MNF Al Arif & Fauzi, 2025). In Article 1 paragraph (3) of the law, forest destruction is described as illegal logging activities or land use that violates government permits and official forest designations. In addition, Article 1 paragraph (4) of Law Number 18 of 2013, illegal logging is all activities in an organized way or by forest timber products illegally. Law Number 18 of 2013 is basically a revision of Law Number 41 of 1999 on Forestry. Even though the Forestry Law remains in force, since the enactment of Law Number 18 of 2013, this newer law has been used to prosecute illegal logging criminals nationally, including in Kuningan Regency.

As for the data of cases handled by the Kuningan District Court, refer to Table 2 and we can see that the provisions of Law Number 18 of 2013, which are most widely applied against illegal logging perpetrators is largely based on Article 82 paragraph (1), Article 83 paragraph (1) and paragraph (2). Based on

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Article 82 paragraph (1), anyone who cuts down trees in a forest area without a permit, or without a permit from an authorized official and/or does it illegally (Article 12 letters a, b, and c) will be sentenced to imprisonment for at least 1 year and maximum of 5 years, and a fine of at least IDR 500,000,000.00 and maximum of IDR 2,500,000,000.00.

According to Article 82 paragraph (1) of Law Number 18 of 2013, the crime is committed by an individual, which includes "intentional" in his actions of cutting down trees in forest area without prior permit from a competent authority who had issued permits for forest management and utilization. Next, in Article 83 paragraph (1), criminal acts of transporting or managing forest products without permission are penalized with imprisonment for a minimum of 1 year and maximum of 5 years and a fine at least IDR 500000000.00 up to IDR 2500000000.00 if: a) loading, unloading, transporting, controlling, or having felled products in a forest area; b) transporting/controlling/possessing wood forest products without a Certificate of Legality of Forest Products (SKSHH); or c) using wood forest products suspected derived from illegal logging.

On the other hand, Article 83 paragraph (2) of Law Number 18 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Forest Destruction imposes against those who in bad faith carry out timber handling without a license. To be precise, it penalizes anyone who inadvertently loads, unloads, transports and controls or possesses logging products from protected forests (Article 12 letter d), moves wood without a legal certificate (Article 12 letter e) or uses timber which is suspected to come from illegal logging operations (Article 12 letter h). Violation of this law could lead to a prison sentence of 8 months to 3 years in addition to a fine ranging from IDR 10,000,000.00 to IDR 1,000,000,000.00.

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The distinction between Article 83 paragraph (1) and Article 83 paragraph (2) is in the mind of the perpetrator are for those who act "Intentionally" and when someone acts with "Negligence." The illegal logger intends fully to engage in the activity and has a specific objective. They know full well that it is a crime against everyone yet they do it willingly and of their own volition—be it for personal gain or merely to survive. Whereas, in paragraph (2), the assurance of negligence is inflicted by lack of due diligence on the part of the offender. They carried out these actions without malevolent intent but rather negligence and did not fully understand that their behavior would eventually harm other people.

From these various laws, we can draw some interesting conclusions, with regard to Law Number 18 of 2013, during an interview with a judge at Kuningan District Court. Lawmakers introduce laws to resolve the specific crises of their day. At the time this law was passed, both smallholders and plantation estates were rapidly deforesting and converting land in Indonesia, because that enormous surge of illegal logging was the precise target for which the law had been push hard, to slow.

Technically, the law itself can now be considered out of date as far as how quickly the world moves—more than a decade after it was passed. Yet, the judge observed that it has survived with so many amendments to the legal framework. In reality, based on the findings in Kuningan Regency, law has performed quite well when measured against its basic intention. In fact, illegal logging cases have decreased markedly in the region, indicating that the threat of severe criminal sanctions, including lengthy prison terms and hefty fines, is doing what it was intended to do: stop illegal loggers in their tracks.

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C. Legal Culture

Legal culture characterizes the changing values and orientations of society which affect directly the implementation of legal system in practice (Wardhani et al., 2022; Quddus et al., 2024). According to the framework, in reference to Lawrence M. Friedman, there are two types of this culture: internal and external (Simamora, 2025). The notion of an internal legal culture, as its name implies, is concerned with members of an organization that serves a common function—judges, police officers and prosecutors—and embodies specific professional mentalities. While the outside of legal culture is more about society as a whole, attitudes and behaviors of the population towards the national legal system (Teddy Lesmana, 2021). According to Lawrence M. Friedman, legal culture is the most important one among the three components of a legal system, since it embodies a community's beliefs, values, attitudes and opinions towards law (Akhmaddhian et al., 2021). He says that the structure and content of legal text might stay static on paper but what starts everything moving is living legal culture. In the end, this culture describes when, why, and where people will actively use legal institutions and processes or when they instead seek out alternative avenues or refrain from pursuing action altogether (Teddy Lesmana, 2021).

If we see internal organizational culture, both Kuningan Police Resort and Kuningan District Court have proactively held training or partnership program in enforcing integrity. These initiatives seek to strengthen the capabilities, professionalism and effectiveness of their officers to ensure they enforce the law fairly. The data entering and categorized according to what is needed show a good internal legal culture of law enforcement in Kuningan Regency. As a result, these illegal logging crimes are preserved directly to the external legal culture or the mindset of the Kuningan community in general. The Head of the

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Tipiter (Specific Crimes) Unit of the Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Unit, confirms that law enforcement bottleneck is a real lack of legal awareness among local residents. Data on cases show that these incursions into the forest are purely economically motivated. For many offenders, the act of illegal logging is an economic decision, typically to make money or, at minimum, sufficient funds to earn a living from day to day.

Another member of judiciary in the Kuningan District Court seemed to echo this view, emphasizing that illegal logging in the region is "driven largely by local economic conditions." In the overwhelming majority of court-mandated cases, financial hardship was behind it. Criminals usually cut down trees and transport the wood just for selling it in order to survive. However, there are those who go beyond the profits and harvest trees for domestical use, like finding raw material to build their own dream houses. The ruling also pointed to a fundamental problem within the system: Much of the broader community has yet to understand how dire a toll of these crimes take on people and the environment.

In order to increase the legal awareness of the people of Kuningan Regency, it is necessary to hold environmental outreach. This is needed to educate the community and enable shared responsibility towards the forest ecosystem, which is essential for all adjacent life forms including human activities. An interview with the Head of the Tipiter Unit of the Kuningan Police Criminal Investigation Unit, *Bhayangkara Pembina Keamanan dan Ketertiban Masyarakat* (Bhabinkamtibma) Bhayangkara utilize police matrix to get closer by direct approach to the local people and also solve the law problems emerging in the region. In addition to these educational measures, authorities also take preventive actions such as joint patrols in areas of forests susceptible to illegal logging to proactively prevent the crime. Meanwhile, a judge at

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Kuningan District Court said the court itself was not organizing any outreach program or community awareness campaign focusing on illegal logging crimes.

"The Kuningan District Court cannot resolve this case by itself," said the source. What is really needed, then, is some kind of deep institutional cooperation among local law enforcement agencies (i.e., the Police, the Prosecutor's Office and the Correctional Institution), wherein citizens can be properly educated about the criminal justice system while being also raised to a higher legal awareness concerning environmental protection. When assessed using Friedman's three elements of the legal system (Legal Structure, Legal Substance, and Legal Culture), it can be clearly seen that the logical systemic component in Kuningan Regency is still its weakest link, which is the element of legal structure. As a result, despite campaigns to combat illegal logging, it is not yet entirely effective because the legal awareness of the community is still lacking. This state of affairs calls for continuous and strong public socialization campaigns to raise the residents' awareness about the harmful impact caused by illegal logging offenses, both on natural ecosystem affected and perpetrators.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, law enforcement efforts carried out by law enforcement officers for illegal logging in Kuningan Regency under Law No. 18 of 2013 have not been fully effective. Although legal structure (law enforcement institutions) and legal substance (statutory regulations) are in place, a weak legal structure and lack of general public awareness about environmental impacts as well as criminal penalties have severely bottlenecked the system. To this gap, it is highly recommended that local law enforcement departments create joint public socialization programs with academic institutions. By collaborating, they can create focused educational initiatives that help educate

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the community about the critical need to preserve forest ecosystems as well as outline how the criminal justice system works.

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