

Juridical Analysis of Corruption Crimes in Transportation Infrastructure: A Case Study of Bribery in the Kuala Tanjung Railway Project, North Sumatra

Muhammad Buzjany Dzikry, Henry Aspan, Mhd. Azhali Siregar

Abstract

The development of transportation infrastructure has become a government priority in promoting economic growth and interregional connectivity. During the New Order era, freedom of association experienced setbacks due to government policies that tended to favor business interests [1]. However, the bribery case in the railway project leading to Kuala Tanjung Port, North Sumatra, demonstrates that vulnerabilities to corrupt practices in government procurement of goods and services still persist. This study aims to analyze the legal regulation of bribery offenses in transportation infrastructure projects under the Anti-Corruption Law and to examine the criminal liability of the perpetrators based on positive law in Indonesia. The research method used is normative legal research with statutory, conceptual, and case approaches. The results of the study indicate that bribery offenses have been clearly regulated under Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001, particularly Articles 5, 11, and 12. Criminal liability may be imposed on both individuals and corporations, with intentionality serving as the basis of proof. This study confirms that Indonesian positive law has provided adequate legal instruments; however, the effectiveness of law enforcement and the integrity of state officials remain major challenges. Therefore, strengthening supervision and ensuring the consistent application of criminal sanctions are necessary to prevent corruption offenses in transportation infrastructure projects.

Keywords: Corruption, bribery offenses, transportation infrastructure, Kuala Tanjung railway project, criminal liability, law enforcement.

Muhammad Buzjany Dzikry¹

¹Law, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia
e-mail: 9i.m.buzjany.dzikry@gmail.com¹

Henry Aspan², Mhd Azhali Siregar³

^{2,3}Law, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia
e-mail: henryaspan@yahoo.com², azhalisiregar@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id³

2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICIE/index>

Introduction

The development of transportation infrastructure is one of the government's main priorities in encouraging economic growth, equitable development, and improving connectivity between regions. One of the strategic projects that plays an important role in supporting industrial areas and international ports is the railway construction project leading to Kuala Tanjung Port in North Sumatra. This project was designed to facilitate the distribution of logistics to and from industrial areas and ports, thereby enhancing national economic competitiveness. However, amidst the urgency and large investment value of the project, corrupt practices have instead undermined the objectives of infrastructure development. The revelation of the bribery case in the Kuala Tanjung railway project indicates that the transportation infrastructure sector remains vulnerable to abuse of authority and bribery practices in the procurement of goods and services. The involvement of public officials and private parties in the bribery scheme not only caused financial losses to the state but also reduced public trust in the integrity of the implementation of national strategic projects.

Indonesia is a state based on the rule of law, which is obligated to protect the welfare of its citizens from threats that endanger society in order to create harmony in social life. Therefore, strong authorities are needed as law enforcers and mediators within society to protect weaker members of the community and maintain justice for all parties[2]. Juridically, bribery offenses in infrastructure projects constitute a form of corruption crime regulated under Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes[3]. The law explicitly prohibits acts of giving or receiving bribes related to official positions, including within the procurement process of government projects. Although regulations have been established, the reality shows that law enforcement against corruption offenders in the infrastructure sector still faces various challenges, including issues of proof, the effectiveness of sanctions, and sustainable preventive measures.

The bribery case in the Kuala Tanjung railway project is interesting to study because it involves a national strategic project with high economic value and direct implications for public interests. In addition, this case illustrates the pattern of relationships between public officials and business actors in project procurement, which has the potential to create conflicts of interest and collusive practices. Therefore, a comprehensive study is required to assess how the elements of corruption offenses in the case were fulfilled and how criminal liability was imposed on the perpetrators based on the positive law applicable in Indonesia.

Based on the foregoing explanation, this research aims to conduct a juridical analysis of corruption crimes in the Kuala Tanjung railway project, particularly regarding bribery practices in transportation infrastructure procurement. This analysis is expected to contribute academically to the development of criminal law studies, while also serving as an evaluative reference for the government and law enforcement agencies in strengthening prevention systems and law enforcement against corruption crimes in the infrastructure sector.

Literature Review

Bribery is one form of corruption regulated under Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes. Bribery occurs when a person gives or promises something to a public official or state administrator in order to influence actions related to their position. In transportation infrastructure projects, bribery practices often occur in the procurement process of government goods and services, the determination of tender winners, and the implementation of projects.

A criminal offense is an act prohibited by law and subject to criminal sanctions for anyone who violates it. In the context of corruption, the elements of intent and abuse of authority constitute the primary basis for criminal liability. In addition to individuals, corporations may also be held criminally liable if the offense is committed for the benefit of the company.

Government procurement projects should, in principle, be carried out based on the principles of transparency, accountability, efficiency, and fair competition, as regulated in the

Presidential Regulation concerning Government Procurement of Goods and Services. However, bribery practices cause the procurement process to become non-objective and potentially result in state financial losses as well as a decline in the quality of infrastructure development.

Theoretically, law enforcement against corruption crimes aims to create a deterrent effect and maintain public trust in the government. Therefore, strict supervision, the integrity of state officials, and consistent law enforcement are necessary to prevent corruption in transportation infrastructure projects, including the Kuala Tanjung railway project.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is normative legal research or doctrinal research, namely research conducted by examining legal norms contained in statutory regulations, court decisions, and legal doctrines related to corruption crimes[4]. This study focuses on a juridical analysis of bribery offenses in the Kuala Tanjung railway project based on the positive law applicable in Indonesia without conducting field research. The approaches used include the statutory approach, case approach, and conceptual approach[5].

The statutory approach is carried out by examining various regulations related to corruption crimes, particularly Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes, the Indonesian Criminal Code, as well as regulations concerning government procurement of goods and services. The case approach is conducted by analyzing court decisions related to the bribery case in the Kuala Tanjung railway project in order to understand the application of legal norms, judicial considerations, and the fulfillment of the elements of corruption crimes. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is used to understand legal concepts developed in doctrines and legal literature, such as the concepts of criminal offenses, criminal liability, bribery, abuse of authority, and the objectives of punishment.

The legal materials used in this study consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes, the Indonesian Criminal Code, and court decisions related to the bribery case in the Kuala Tanjung railway project. Secondary legal materials consist of legal textbooks, scientific journals, articles, and opinions of legal scholars discussing corruption crimes, bribery, and government procurement of goods and services[6]. Tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, legal encyclopedias, and other supporting materials that provide explanations of legal terms and concepts used in the study.

The collection of legal materials was conducted through library research by tracing, inventorying, and reviewing various relevant legal sources. Furthermore, the legal materials were analyzed qualitatively and normatively through stages of identifying and classifying legal norms, interpreting statutory provisions, applying legal norms to the bribery case in the Kuala Tanjung railway project, and drawing legal conclusions based on the results of the analysis. This research is descriptive-analytical in nature, meaning that it systematically describes legal provisions regarding corruption crimes in the form of bribery and analyzes their application in the Kuala Tanjung railway project case.

Result

A. Legal Regulation of Bribery Offenses in Transportation Infrastructure Projects under the Anti-Corruption Law

As a branch of public law, criminal law holds significant importance within the legal discourse in Indonesia. This is because criminal law contains rules determining acts that are prohibited, accompanied by threats of punishment (suffering), and stipulates the conditions under which criminal sanctions may be imposed. The public nature of criminal law results in the consequence that criminal law is national in scope[7]. Thus, Indonesian criminal law applies throughout the entire territory of Indonesia. Bribery offenses in transportation infrastructure

projects constitute a form of corruption that has major impacts on governance and national development. Infrastructure projects such as the construction of railway lines, ports, toll roads, and airports generally utilize large amounts of state funds, making them highly vulnerable to corrupt practices, particularly bribery. In the Kuala Tanjung railway project, bribery practices demonstrated the abuse of authority by both public officials and private parties in the procurement and implementation processes of the project.

Juridically, bribery offenses are regulated under Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes (Anti-Corruption Law/UU Tipikor). This law was enacted to eradicate corruption, which is considered an extraordinary crime because it causes losses to state finances and hampers national development. Under the Anti-Corruption Law, regulations concerning bribery encompass both the giver and the recipient of bribes.

Article 5 paragraph (1) letters a and b of the Anti-Corruption Law stipulate that any person who gives or promises something to a civil servant or state administrator in order to influence them to perform or refrain from performing an act contrary to their duties may be subject to criminal sanctions[8]. This provision demonstrates that private parties who provide bribes in government projects may also be held criminally liable.

Furthermore, Articles 11 and 12 of the Anti-Corruption Law regulate civil servants or state administrators who receive gifts or promises related to their position and authority[9]. One advantage of the common law system is that its concept of participation is relatively simple and easy to apply in judicial practice, particularly in corruption cases. The theory of participation in common law emphasizes two important elements: *actus reus* (the physical act) and *mens rea* (the mental state). In the context of participation in corruption, *actus reus* includes all forms of actions that facilitate or assist corruption, whether actively or passively[10]. In transportation infrastructure projects, bribery practices generally occur in the determination of tender winners, budget disbursement, project supervision, and the granting of certain administrative conveniences. Therefore, these provisions are highly relevant in prosecuting public officials who abuse their authority for personal or group interests.

The Anti-Corruption Law also regulates gratuities under Articles 12B and 12C. Gratification refers to gifts in a broad sense, such as money, goods, facilities, travel tickets, or other forms of benefits received by public officials. In infrastructure projects, gratuities are often provided by contractors or business partners in order to obtain certain advantages in project implementation. If such gratification is related to the recipient's position and contradicts their obligations, it may be categorized as a corruption offense.

In addition to being regulated under the Anti-Corruption Law, bribery offenses are also related to provisions in the Indonesian Criminal Code. However, in law enforcement practice, law enforcement authorities more frequently apply the Anti-Corruption Law because it provides heavier criminal sanctions and functions as *lex specialis* in relation to the Criminal Code. The Anti-Corruption Law also grants broader authority to law enforcement institutions, particularly the Corruption Eradication Commission, in handling corruption cases.

Bribery practices in transportation infrastructure projects also contradict the principles governing government procurement of goods and services, which emphasize transparency, efficiency, fair competition, justice, and accountability[11]. Bribery causes procurement processes to no longer be based on the quality and capability of companies, but instead influenced by personal interests and illegal transactions. As a result, development projects are vulnerable to declining quality, budget inefficiency, and delays in implementation.

From the perspective of state administrative law, bribery also violates the general principles of good governance, such as professionalism, transparency, and accountability. Abuse of office by public officials may reduce public trust in the government and undermine the principles of good governance.

Indonesia has also ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption through Law Number 7 of 2006 as a form of commitment to combating corruption[12]. Through this

ratification, Indonesia is obligated to strengthen systems for the prevention and eradication of corruption, including within the infrastructure procurement sector. Thus, the legal regulation of bribery offenses in transportation infrastructure projects has actually been comprehensively regulated under the Anti-Corruption Law, the Indonesian Criminal Code, and government procurement regulations. However, bribery practices continue to occur frequently, including in the Kuala Tanjung railway project. This indicates that the primary issue lies not only in the legal regulations themselves, but also in weak supervision, the low integrity of public officials, and the suboptimal enforcement of laws against corruption offenses.

B. Criminal Liability of the Perpetrators of Bribery Offenses in the Kuala Tanjung Railway Project According to the Applicable Laws and Regulations

Legal discovery in the Indonesian judicial system is an active process carried out by judges to discover, explore, and interpret legal norms when dealing with cases that are not clearly regulated by legislation or when there is a legal vacuum[13]. Criminal liability in bribery offenses related to the Kuala Tanjung railway project must be analyzed based on the general principles of criminal law, namely the existence of an unlawful act, the element of fault, and the capacity of the perpetrator to be held responsible[14]. In criminal law, a person may only be punished if it is proven that they committed an act prohibited by law and possessed fault regarding that act. Therefore, in bribery cases involving transportation infrastructure projects, criminal liability is imposed not only on public officials as recipients of bribes, but also on private parties as providers of bribes and other parties who assist in the commission of the offense.

In the Kuala Tanjung railway project, bribery practices generally relate to the procurement process of government goods and services, the determination of tender winners, the implementation of project contracts, and project supervision. Bribes are given for the purpose of obtaining certain advantages, such as winning projects, accelerating budget disbursement, avoiding supervision, or obtaining special treatment from officials with authority. Such acts clearly contradict the principles of transparency, accountability, and fair competition in government procurement projects.

Based on Article 5 paragraph (1) letters a and b of Law Number 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law Number 20 of 2001 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes (Anti-Corruption Law/UU Tipikor), any person who gives or promises something to a civil servant or state administrator in order to influence them to perform or refrain from performing an act within their office contrary to their obligations may be subject to criminal sanctions[15]. This provision confirms that bribers, including contractors, consultants, or private companies involved in the Kuala Tanjung railway project, may be held criminally liable as perpetrators of corruption offenses.

In addition to the providers of bribes, public officials who receive bribes may also be held criminally liable. Article 11 of the Anti-Corruption Law stipulates that civil servants or state administrators who receive gifts or promises due to powers or authority related to their position may be punished. Meanwhile, Article 12 letters a and b of the Anti-Corruption Law more specifically regulate the acceptance of bribes by public officials to perform acts contrary to their duties. In the Kuala Tanjung railway project, officials receiving bribes may include individuals who possess authority in procurement processes, project supervision, or other administrative decision-making processes.

Criminal liability in bribery offenses may also be imposed on parties who participate in or assist the commission of the offense. In criminal law, the concept of participation refers to the involvement of several persons in a criminal act. Participation may take the form of the principal offender, a person ordering the commission of the offense, joint perpetrators, or persons assisting in the commission of the offense. Therefore, if other parties assist in facilitating bribe payments, act as intermediaries, or design mechanisms for transferring money to certain officials, those parties may also be held criminally liable in accordance with the provisions of the Indonesian Criminal Code and the Anti-Corruption Law.

Normatively, criminal liability in corruption offenses is not limited to individuals but may also be imposed on corporations. The Anti-Corruption Law provides for corporate criminal liability when corruption offenses are committed by or on behalf of corporations. In the context of the Kuala Tanjung railway project, if bribes were provided based on policies of directors, company management, or as part of a corporate strategy to obtain government projects, the corporation itself may be held criminally liable.

Corporate criminal liability represents a development in modern criminal law aimed at creating a deterrent effect against business entities that benefit from corrupt practices. In practice, sanctions against corporations may include fines, confiscation of profits derived from criminal acts, revocation of business licenses, and prohibitions on participating in government projects for a specified period. Thus, the law punishes not only individual perpetrators but also business entities that benefit from bribery offenses.

In addition to the element of unlawful conduct, criminal liability must also consider the element of fault. In bribery offenses, intent constitutes the main factor because both the giving and receiving of bribes are generally carried out consciously and deliberately. The giver of the bribe understands that the payment is intended to influence the decisions of public officials, while the recipient understands that the gift or money received is related to their office and authority. Therefore, if the element of intent can be proven, the perpetrator may be held criminally liable without the need to prove direct financial losses to the state.

In the practice of enforcing corruption laws, proof of intent is often supported by evidence such as electronic communications, transaction documents, recorded communications, witness testimony, and sting operations conducted by law enforcement authorities. Through such evidence, law enforcement officials may demonstrate the relationship between the giving of money or gifts and the actions of public officials related to specific projects.

Criminal liability in the bribery case involving the Kuala Tanjung railway project is also related to the application of criminal sanctions regulated under the Anti-Corruption Law. Such sanctions include imprisonment, fines, and additional penalties. Additional penalties may include compensation payments, confiscation of assets derived from corruption offenses, revocation of certain rights, or closure of companies. The application of additional penalties aims to recover state losses and prevent perpetrators from enjoying the proceeds of corruption.

The strict application of criminal sanctions in bribery offenses serves an important purpose, namely creating a deterrent effect and preventing the recurrence of corruption practices in infrastructure projects. Corruption in the transportation sector is highly dangerous because it may affect the quality of development and public safety. If projects are awarded to incompetent parties due to bribery practices, the quality of infrastructure development may decline and potentially result in major losses for both the state and society.

Furthermore, criminal liability is also related to the principle of equality before the law[16]. Every person involved in bribery offenses, whether public officials, private parties, or corporations, must be processed fairly in accordance with applicable legal provisions. Firm and non-discriminatory law enforcement is essential to maintaining public trust in the criminal justice system and in Indonesia's efforts to eradicate corruption.

From the perspective of state administrative law, public officials who receive bribes may also be subject to administrative sanctions in addition to criminal sanctions[17]. Such sanctions may include dismissal from office, revocation of certain official rights, or disciplinary punishment in accordance with civil service regulations. This demonstrates that bribery offenses affect not only criminal liability but also the position and status of perpetrators within government institutions.

Indonesia has also strengthened its anti-corruption system through the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption through Law Number 7 of 2006. The convention encourages states to expand criminal liability for corruption perpetrators, including corporations and parties involved in money laundering derived from corruption. In practice, money laundering offenses may be committed not only by individuals but also by corporations.

Indonesia, as a developing country, places significant emphasis on economic growth through the private sector dominated by corporations. Rapid technological development has also influenced money laundering crimes, considering that corporate money laundering enables corporations to generate substantial wealth with relative ease[18]. Therefore, combating bribery in infrastructure projects is not only part of Indonesia's national legal policy but also part of its international commitment to fighting corruption.

Thus, based on the applicable laws and regulations, criminal liability in bribery offenses related to the Kuala Tanjung railway project may be imposed on bribers, recipients of bribes, parties assisting in the commission of the offense, and corporations benefiting from such practices. This regulation demonstrates that Indonesian positive law has provided a sufficiently strong normative basis to prosecute all parties involved in bribery practices within transportation infrastructure projects. However, the effectiveness of such criminal liability still depends on the integrity of law enforcement officials, the quality of evidence, and the consistency of law enforcement in combating corruption in the national development sector.

Conclusion

1. Bribery offenses in transportation infrastructure projects, including the Kuala Tanjung railway project, constitute a form of corruption that has been clearly and comprehensively regulated under the Anti-Corruption Law (UU Tipikor) and supported by provisions in the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). Normatively, these legal regulations encompass both the acts of giving and receiving bribes and are designed to maintain the integrity of state administration and ensure the implementation of transparent, fair, and accountable procurement of goods and services.

Nevertheless, the continued occurrence of bribery practices indicates that the main problem does not lie in the lack of regulations, but rather in weak law enforcement implementation and the low integrity of state officials. Therefore, in addition to firm law enforcement, stronger supervision, greater transparency, and moral commitment from all parties involved are necessary so that the objectives of eradicating corruption in infrastructure projects may be achieved effectively.

2. Criminal liability in bribery offenses related to the Kuala Tanjung railway project is based on the fulfillment of the elements of an unlawful act, fault, and the perpetrator's capacity to be held responsible. This liability is imposed not only on public officials as recipients of bribes, but also on private parties as providers of bribes, in accordance with the provisions of the Anti-Corruption Law (UU Tipikor). In addition, the law also allows for corporate criminal liability when the offense is committed in the name of or for the benefit of a corporation. In practice, the element of intent constitutes the main factor in proving the offense, so that perpetrators may be punished without the need to wait for actual state financial losses to occur.

Thus, the legal system in Indonesia has firmly and comprehensively regulated criminal liability in bribery cases involving infrastructure projects, including liability for both individuals and corporations, and is complemented by criminal sanctions aimed at creating a deterrent effect and preventing the recurrence of corruption offenses.

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