



THE ROLE OF THE CORRUPTION ERADICATION COMMISSION (KPK) IN ADDRESSING CORRUPTION CRIMES IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This article examines the role of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in Indonesia by analyzing its establishment, institutional development, preventive functions, repressive enforcement role, coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and major contributions to anti-corruption governance. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a library research approach, the study relies on secondary sources, including laws and regulations, official institutional documents, journal articles, books, and credible media reports. The analysis is conducted from a normative-legal perspective to understand the KPK's position within Indonesia's criminal justice system and its broader role in strengthening accountability and public integrity. The findings show that the KPK was established through Law Number 30 of 2002 as an independent institution to address the limitations of conventional law enforcement agencies in handling corruption cases, especially those involving high-ranking officials and complex networks. Its preventive role is reflected in public education, integrity-building programs, corruption risk assessments, public service monitoring, and digital transparency initiatives. Meanwhile, its repressive role includes investigation, evidence collection, arrest, asset tracing, prosecution before the Corruption Court, and execution of court decisions. The KPK also plays an important coordinating and supervisory role in collaboration with the Indonesian National Police, the Attorney General's Office, financial supervisory bodies, internal auditors, and other anti-corruption stakeholders. In terms of achievement, the KPK has contributed to handling numerous corruption cases, recovering state financial losses, improving public trust, and encouraging bureaucratic reform. Overall, the KPK remains a strategic institution in Indonesia's anti-corruption framework, although its effectiveness continues to depend on institutional independence, legal support, and political commitment.



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INTRODUCTION

Corruption remains one of the most persistent and complex challenges affecting governance, public trust, and national development in Indonesia. As a systemic problem, corruption undermines the rule of law, distorts public policy, and weakens institutional credibility. It not only results in significant financial losses for the state but also exacerbates social inequality and hampers sustainable economic growth. Despite various legal and institutional reforms, corruption continues to evolve in both scale and sophistication, requiring comprehensive and adaptive countermeasures (Abd. Choliq, 2020).

In response to the widespread nature of corruption, Indonesia has taken significant steps to strengthen its legal and institutional framework. One of the most prominent efforts was the establishment of the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, or KPK), which was

formally instituted under Law Number 30 of 2002. The creation of the KPK reflects the recognition that conventional law enforcement agencies faced limitations in effectively addressing corruption cases, particularly those involving high-ranking officials and complex networks. As an independent body, the KPK was granted extensive authority, including investigation, prosecution, and prevention functions, making it a central actor in Indonesia's anti-corruption strategy.

The independence of the KPK is a crucial element in ensuring its effectiveness. Unlike other law enforcement institutions, the KPK operates with a degree of autonomy intended to minimize political interference and enhance accountability. Over the years, the KPK has demonstrated its capacity to handle high-profile corruption cases, contributing to increased public awareness and trust in anti-corruption efforts. However, its role has not been without challenges. Institutional resistance, legal revisions, and political dynamics have raised concerns regarding the sustainability of its independence and effectiveness. These developments highlight the importance of continuously evaluating the KPK's role within the broader legal and governance framework (Budiyanto, 2022).

Moreover, corruption in Indonesia is deeply rooted in structural, cultural, and institutional factors. Weak oversight mechanisms, lack of transparency, and entrenched patronage systems have created an environment conducive to corrupt practices. Therefore, addressing corruption requires not only strong law enforcement but also preventive measures, such as promoting transparency, strengthening public institutions, and fostering a culture of integrity. In this context, the KPK's preventive and educational roles are equally significant as its enforcement functions.

Given these considerations, this article aims to analyze the role of the Corruption Eradication Commission in combating corruption in Indonesia. It seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the KPK in carrying out its mandate, identify the challenges it faces, and assess its contribution to strengthening governance and accountability. The scope of this discussion includes an examination of the legal framework, institutional performance, and broader socio-political factors influencing anti-corruption efforts. By providing a comprehensive analysis, this study is expected to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving anti-corruption strategies and reinforcing institutional integrity in Indonesia.

METHOD

This article uses a qualitative descriptive method with a library research approach. The data used in this discussion are derived from secondary sources such as laws and regulations, official institutional information, journal articles, books, and credible media reports related to the establishment, functions, and performance of the KPK. The analysis is conducted through a normative-legal perspective to examine how the KPK is established, how it operates within Indonesia's criminal justice system, and how it contributes to corruption prevention and eradication. The collected information is then interpreted thematically based on the main discussion areas, namely institutional development, preventive and repressive roles, inter-agency coordination, and achievements. This method is appropriate because the topic focuses on legal-institutional analysis rather than field-based measurement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Establishment and Institutional Development of the KPK

The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) was established in response to the high level of corruption in Indonesia, which at the time was considered difficult to address effectively through the existing law enforcement institutions. Its creation was closely linked to the Reformasi era, when public demands for clean, transparent, and accountable governance became stronger. Before the KPK was formed, Indonesia had already enacted various legal instruments to combat corruption, but the results remained limited because many corruption cases involved high-ranking officials, power networks, and complex conflicts of interest. For this reason, the state saw the need to establish a special institution that was independent and equipped with broader authority to handle corruption crimes (Lanteng, 2024).

Legally, the KPK was established through Law Number 30 of 2002 as an independent state institution free from the influence of any political authority. Its establishment marked an important shift in Indonesia's anti-corruption system because the KPK was not only assigned enforcement functions, but also prevention, coordination, supervision, investigation, and prosecution. With this broad mandate,

the KPK was designed to complement and strengthen other law enforcement agencies that had previously been seen as insufficiently effective in addressing corruption comprehensively.

Over time, the KPK has undergone various institutional reforms that show its continued adaptation to national legal and political dynamics. Changes through new regulations, including legal revisions, have affected its position, structure, and internal governance. Nevertheless, its main purpose has remained the same: to strengthen anti-corruption efforts through an institution that is professional, effective, and highly committed to integrity. These developments also show that the KPK's existence cannot be separated from debates over independence, accountability, and its relationship with state power (Anwar, 2022).

In terms of organizational structure, the KPK is led by five commissioners who work collectively. Beneath them are several functional units responsible for prevention, education and public participation, enforcement, coordination and supervision, as well as administrative support and internal oversight. This structure shows that the KPK is not only an enforcement body but also an institution that combines preventive, educational, and repressive functions within an integrated framework.

Within Indonesia's criminal justice system, the KPK holds a highly strategic position. It was created to handle corruption cases that are difficult to resolve through ordinary mechanisms, especially cases involving public officials or powerful political networks. The KPK also plays a major role in promoting anti-corruption culture and strengthening public trust in the state. In this sense, the KPK is important not only as a law enforcement institution, but also as an instrument of governance reform and national integrity building.

The Preventive Role of the KPK

The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) plays a significant preventive role in reducing corruption in Indonesia by focusing not only on law enforcement but also on long-term corruption prevention strategies. One of its main efforts is public education through anti-corruption campaigns, which aim to build awareness among citizens, students, public servants, and other stakeholders about the dangers of corruption and the importance of integrity in daily life. In addition, the KPK strengthens integrity through various programs designed to promote ethical behavior, accountability, and a culture of honesty within government institutions and society. Another important preventive measure is the implementation of corruption risk assessments, which help identify vulnerable points in public institutions and administrative processes before corruption occurs (Arumastuti & Setyaningrum, 2023).

The KPK also monitors public services to ensure that procedures are transparent, efficient, and free from irregular practices. Beyond direct supervision, the KPK contributes to improving governance systems by encouraging better regulations, clearer procedures, and stronger institutional controls. In the era of technological advancement, the KPK increasingly supports digitalization and transparency initiatives as effective tools to reduce opportunities for corruption, minimize face-to-face interactions that may lead to abuse, and make public information more accessible. Through these combined efforts, the KPK positions prevention as a core strategy in building a cleaner, more accountable, and more trustworthy system of governance (Kurniyanta, 2022).

The Repressive Role of the KPK in Handling Corruption Crimes

The repressive role of the KPK in handling corruption crimes refers to its law enforcement function after corruption has occurred, with the main purpose of uncovering, proving, and bringing perpetrators to justice. In this role, the KPK acts as a specialized institution that handles corruption cases through a structured criminal process, beginning with investigation and inquiry. These two stages are essential because they allow the KPK to examine reports, identify suspects, and determine whether there is sufficient preliminary evidence to proceed with formal legal action (November- et al., 2024).

After the initial stage, the KPK focuses on evidence collection to strengthen the case. This includes gathering documents, financial records, witness statements, electronic data, and other forms of evidence that can demonstrate the existence of corruption offenses. Because corruption cases often involve complex transactions and hidden networks, evidence collection becomes a critical part of building a strong legal case. The KPK also has authority to conduct arrests and detention when there is enough legal basis, especially to prevent suspects from escaping, destroying evidence, or influencing witnesses.

Another important aspect of the KPK's repressive role is asset tracing and confiscation. Corruption is not only a criminal act but also a financial crime that often aims to generate unlawful gain. For that reason, the KPK attempts to track assets obtained from corruption, identify the flow of illicit funds, and confiscate property that is linked to the crime. This function is important because it helps recover state losses and removes the economic benefits enjoyed by offenders.

The KPK also plays a central role in prosecution before the Corruption Court. After the investigation is completed, the case is transferred for trial so that the suspect can be legally examined before a court with special jurisdiction over corruption cases. In this stage, the KPK acts as the prosecuting authority, presenting evidence, questioning witnesses, and arguing the case in order to secure a lawful conviction. This prosecutorial function distinguishes the KPK from many other institutions and reflects its comprehensive mandate in anti-corruption enforcement (November- et al., 2024).

Finally, the KPK is responsible for the execution of court decisions. Once a judge has issued a final verdict, the KPK ensures that the decision is implemented properly, including imprisonment, fines, asset recovery, and other legal sanctions. This execution stage is crucial because law enforcement would be incomplete if court rulings were not carried out effectively. Through investigation, evidence gathering, arrest, confiscation, prosecution, and execution, the KPK demonstrates its repressive role as a key institution in Indonesia's fight against corruption.

Coordination and Supervision of Other Law Enforcement Agencies

The KPK plays an important role in coordinating and supervising other law enforcement agencies to ensure that corruption handling in Indonesia is effective, consistent, and not fragmented. In practice, the KPK works with the Indonesian National Police and the Attorney General's Office to strengthen investigation and prosecution processes, especially in cases that involve complex financial schemes, public officials, or inter-institutional coordination. This cooperation is important because corruption cases often overlap with other criminal matters and require a clear division of authority so that legal processes do not conflict or duplicate one another.

The KPK also coordinates with financial supervisory institutions to detect irregularities in state finances, budgeting, procurement, and asset management. These institutions provide important information and audit findings that can help identify potential corruption risks at an early stage. Through this relationship, the KPK is able to use financial oversight data as an entry point for further investigation or preventive action. Collaboration with government internal auditors is equally important because internal audit bodies are often the first to identify administrative weaknesses, misuse of authority, or irregular transactions within ministries, regional governments, and state agencies (Oktavianto et al., 2019).

In addition to formal state institutions, the KPK also works with other anti-corruption stakeholders such as civil society organizations, academics, media institutions, and public watchdog groups. These actors contribute by reporting suspicious practices, supporting public education, and encouraging transparency in governance. Their involvement helps expand the reach of anti-corruption efforts beyond formal law enforcement and strengthens public participation in corruption prevention and detection.

The supervision mechanism carried out by the KPK is designed to ensure that corruption cases are handled properly, transparently, and according to legal standards. This supervision includes monitoring the progress of cases, reviewing the handling of public complaints, and evaluating whether other agencies are conducting investigations and prosecutions effectively. In certain situations, the KPK may also provide recommendations, coordinate joint handling, or take over cases when they meet the legal criteria for special handling. Through these mechanisms, the KPK does not operate in isolation but instead functions as a central coordinating institution within Indonesia's broader anti-corruption system.

Institutional collaboration is therefore a key part of the KPK's mandate. Corruption cannot be eradicated by one institution alone, especially in a system where financial administration, law enforcement, and public oversight are spread across multiple agencies. By building coordination and supervision networks, the KPK helps create a more integrated anti-corruption framework, reduces overlap between institutions, and strengthens the overall integrity of Indonesia's criminal justice and governance systems (Cendharana & Handriyotopo, 2023).

Achievements and Contributions of the KPK

The KPK's achievements and contributions can be seen in both its law enforcement performance and its broader impact on governance in Indonesia. One of its most visible achievements is the large number of corruption cases it has handled, especially cases involving public officials, legislators, regional heads, and bureaucratic actors. This shows that the KPK has been active not only in investigating ordinary corruption cases but also in targeting high-level corruption that is often difficult for ordinary institutions to resolve (Boas P. Panjaitan et al., 2022).

Another important indicator is conviction rate. In many corruption cases brought forward, the KPK has been widely regarded as having a strong prosecutorial record, which reflects the quality of its investigation, evidence collection, and case preparation. A strong conviction rate is significant because it demonstrates that the institution is able to build legally sound cases that can survive the judicial process. This also strengthens the deterrent effect of anti-corruption enforcement, since potential offenders may be more cautious when they see that corruption cases are likely to be proven in court.

The KPK has also contributed to the recovery of state financial losses through asset tracing, confiscation, and restitution-related legal processes. This contribution is important because corruption is not only about punishing offenders, but also about restoring public assets that have been unlawfully taken or misused. By helping recover state losses, the KPK supports fiscal discipline and reinforces the principle that corruption should not produce permanent private gain.

In the field of prevention, the KPK has played a role in improving the Corruption Prevention Index and promoting stronger governance standards across public institutions. Through monitoring, supervision, integrity-building programs, and system reforms, the KPK encourages ministries, local governments, and public agencies to improve transparency and reduce corruption risks. These preventive efforts show that the KPK's contribution is not limited to punishment, but extends to shaping cleaner administrative systems.

The KPK has also had a major influence on public trust and institutional credibility. At different periods, its actions against high-profile corruption cases have increased public confidence that corruption can be challenged through law. Even when the institution faces political pressure or controversy, its existence itself has remained symbolically important as a representation of anti-corruption commitment in the state. For many citizens, the KPK has become a benchmark for integrity and seriousness in public law enforcement (Pratama et al., 2023).

Finally, the KPK has contributed to bureaucratic reform by pushing public institutions to adopt clearer procedures, stronger oversight, and more transparent decision-making. Its presence has encouraged many agencies to improve procurement systems, internal controls, and public service standards. In this sense, the KPK's contribution goes beyond case handling, because it helps drive structural changes that are necessary for long-term corruption prevention and better governance.

CONCLUSION

The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) plays a central role in Indonesia's anti-corruption framework as an independent institution established to respond to the limitations of conventional law enforcement in handling corruption. Its establishment under Law Number 30 of 2002 marked an important institutional reform that expanded anti-corruption efforts beyond punishment alone to include prevention, coordination, supervision, investigation, and prosecution. Through this broad mandate, the KPK has become a strategic actor in Indonesia's criminal justice system and a symbol of the state's commitment to integrity and accountability. The discussion also shows that the KPK's role is not limited to repressive law enforcement. Its preventive functions, such as public education, integrity strengthening, corruption risk assessment, and digital transparency initiatives, demonstrate that corruption eradication requires structural and cultural change. At the same time, its repressive role in investigation, asset tracing, prosecution, and execution of court decisions reflects its function as a specialized enforcement body capable of handling complex corruption cases.

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