

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF VICTIMS IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN PALANGKA RAYA CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine legal protection for the mental health of sexual violence victims in Palangka Raya City, with a focus on the effectiveness of regulations and the practices of law enforcement officers in the psychological recovery of victims. The study employs an empirical juridical method with a qualitative approach to gain a deep understanding of the forms of legal protection, inter-institutional coordination, and law enforcement strategies that support the mental health of victims. The results of the study indicate that although legal regulations are available, their implementation still faces significant obstacles. Specific findings include: limited capacity of law enforcement officers, suboptimal inter-institutional coordination, and psychological services that have yet to be sustained. Law enforcement officers respond through direct psychological assistance, cross-agency coordination, and the establishment of special units for handling victims. Further analysis emphasizes that the formal legal approach has not fully accommodated the mental health needs of victims, making the integration of legal protection and psychosocial services crucial. These findings affirm the need for strengthening an integrated victim protection system and enhancing the capacity of law enforcement officers in handling mental health aspects. Academically, this study contributes to the development of theory and practice in the legal protection of sexual violence victims, particularly in mid-sized cities in Indonesia. The practical implications include references for policymakers, law enforcement officers, and social service practitioners in designing more effective, evidence-based interventions oriented toward the psychological recovery of victims.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a form of crime that not only causes physical impacts but also inflicts deep and prolonged psychological trauma on victims. The trend of increasing sexual violence cases in Indonesia, including in Palangka

Raya City as the capital of Central Kalimantan Province, indicates a systemic failure in social and legal protection for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Data from the Palangka Raya Police indicates a year-on-year increase in cases, signaling the weakness of prevention mechanisms and risk mitigation. Psychological impacts such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation affirm the urgency of more comprehensive intervention (Hayati et al., 2024).

Based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA, 2024), throughout 2024 there were 4,862 cases of sexual violence against children and women across Indonesia. Meanwhile, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) recorded 3,750 cases of sexual violence involving adult female and child victims. At the local level, Palangka Raya City is one of the areas with a high number of cases in Central Kalimantan, with 43 recorded cases of violence against women and children in 2025, 29 cases in 2024, and 41 cases in 2023 (UPTD Protection of Women and Children Palangka Raya, 2025). This data reinforces the urgency of more comprehensive legal and psychosocial intervention.

Legal protection for victims of sexual violence should not only focus on physical aspects but also encompass the mental health of victims (Widyasari et al., 2021). Given that psychological impacts are often more severe and longer-lasting than physical impacts (Mansur & Dikdik, 2005), the inability of the system to address psychological trauma can have wide-ranging consequences for the victim's ability to socialize, work, and carry out daily activities (Ardianti, 2022; Wiweka et al., 2024). Although Indonesia already has regulations related to victim protection, including Law No. 31 of 2014 on the Protection of Witnesses and Victims, Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection, and Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence, their implementation in the field still faces various obstacles. In Palangka Raya City, the handling of victims' mental health has not been optimal, influenced by limited resources, a shortage of professional personnel, social stigma, and inter-institutional coordination that has yet to be maximized. This condition demands in-depth research to evaluate the effectiveness of legal protection as well as the mental health of victims at the local level.

In previous research on legal protection for victims of sexual violence, the main focus has remained on the legal aspects alone, such as the general forms of legal protection for victims of sexual violence crimes normatively and implementatively in various regions that assess existing regulations and the obstacles to their implementation by law enforcement officials or related institutions (Ahmad, 2025; Putri & Situmeang, 2025; Syah et al., 2025). However, these studies rarely explore the mental health dimension as an integral part of legal protection for victims, particularly in the context of implementation at the city level. S. U. Wahyuni et al. (2023) and Hutagalung & Budiarto (2025) emphasize the provision of medical services, compensation, or legal assistance without examining how the legal system or law enforcement directly guarantees the psychological recovery of victims through legal mechanisms and trauma-informed care services. Meanwhile, research that raises the urgency of mental health protection for victims within the criminal justice system is beginning to be discussed, but it remains general at the national level and has not yet been focused on local areas such as Palangka Raya City. Therefore, this research presents novelty by combining the perspective of positive law with the fulfillment of mental health protection for sexual violence victims at the local level, analyzing the extent to which legal norms and practices in Palangka Raya City genuinely provide comprehensive psychosocial guarantees after the formal legal phase which is an aspect that has not been extensively studied in detail in the legal literature on sexual violence in Indonesia.

Previous studies have largely emphasized normative and implementative legal aspects, such as forms of legal protection and obstacles to their implementation, as well as the provision of medical services, compensation, or legal assistance. However, the mental health dimension of victims is rarely explored as an integral part of legal protection, particularly at the city level. This creates an important gap that demands research examining the combination of positive law compliance and psychosocial protection for sexual violence victims at the local level, so that the effectiveness of legal protection is measured not only in formal legal terms, but also in psychological terms.

Based on the background that has been described, the formulation of the problem in this study is: How is the legal protection for the mental health of victims in sexual violence in Palangka Raya City? What are the efforts made by the Palangka Raya Police in providing legal protection for the mental health of victims in the crime of sexual violence in Palangka Raya City?

METHODS

This study uses an empirical juridical research method with a qualitative approach. Empirical juridical research is legal research that uses primary data as the main data (Raharjo, 2014), namely data obtained directly from the community as the first source through field research (Soekanto & Mamudji, 2015). This study not only examines the applicable legal norms but also looks at the facts in the field, especially related to legal protection of the mental health of victims of sexual violence in Palangka Raya City.

The research data sources consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with law enforcement officers of Palangka Raya City Police, particularly from the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA), psychologists, social workers, and staff of the UPTD PPA who handle sexual violence victims. Secondary data were obtained from legal documents, such as Law Number 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes (UU TPKS), regional government regulations, official reports, previous research, and scientific literature related to sexual violence and the mental health protection of victims.

This study involved informants from the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the Palangka Raya Police, psychologists, social workers, and staff of the UPTD PPA who handle sexual violence victims. Data triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings. This study was conducted in Palangka Raya City, with a focus on the PPA Unit of the Palangka Raya Police, the RPTC Trauma Center, and the UPTD PPA. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using content analysis based on thematic coding, with an initial stage of coding data according to main themes such as legal protection mechanisms, mental health interventions, and institutional efforts. This was followed by categorization and interpretation of data to identify patterns, consistencies, and gaps between legal norms and field practices.

Data collection was carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Interviews aimed to explore the experiences of law enforcement officers, psychologists, and relevant officials in providing legal protection and psychological support to victims. Observation was used to assess direct practices at the PPA Unit, the RPTC Trauma Center, as well as the reporting and examination procedures for sexual violence cases. Documentation studies were conducted to review the legal basis, standard operating procedures, official reports, and supporting literature, thereby enabling this research to perform normative analysis while simultaneously comparing it with findings in the field.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis methods, through several stages (Soeroso, 2016). First, data reduction, namely summarizing and selecting relevant data from interviews, observations, and documents. Second, data grouping, namely categorizing information based on main themes such as legal protection mechanisms, mental health interventions, and institutional efforts. Third, data interpretation and triangulation, namely comparing information from various sources to identify patterns, consistencies, and gaps between legal norms and their implementation in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal Protection of Victims' Mental Health in Sexual Violence in Palangka Raya City

Legal protection for victims of sexual violence does not only encompass physical aspects and judicial processes, but also the mental health of victims. Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (TPKS) guarantees victims' rights to psychological assistance, legal counsel, and confidentiality of identity. Although Indonesian law has normatively recognized the psychological protection of victims as part of human rights, its implementation raises a critical question: to what extent are law enforcement officers and related institutions able to ensure that psychological assistance takes place effectively, rather than merely as a legal formality (Arief, 2011).

The city of Palangka Raya as one of the large cities in Indonesia, the implementation of victim mental protection is beginning to be realized through cross-sector cooperation. The local government and related agencies have provided complaint and assistance services. According to Linae Victoria Aden, Head of the Central Kalimantan Provincial P3A Office, victims' access to report is increasingly facilitated by the proactive hotline, website, and Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA), so that more and

more victims dare to come forward and report. This is important because many cases of sexual violence are like an iceberg phenomenon which means the courage to report indicates that the victim begins to believe in protection. The Palangka Raya City PPA UPTD itself has been formed under the Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office (DPPKBPPPA). The institution provides integrated services for women and children victims of violence, including psychological counseling, legal assistance, and referrals to health services when needed.

The mental health condition of victims of sexual violence in Palangka Raya is generally concerning. Victims can experience deep trauma, fear, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. According to psychologists and child protection practitioners, the psychological impact on victims can be seen from behavioral changes such as withdrawal, anxiety easily, sleep disturbances, and decreased confidence (Muladi & Arief, 2015). Therefore, long-term psychological therapy and assistance are needed so that the victim's psychiatric condition can recover. A companion (such as a clinical psychologist or trauma counselor) is usually involved from the beginning. In many cases, as soon as a report is made, the victim will be directed to seek counseling or trauma healing to stabilize their emotions. For example, the local Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office may connect the victim with a partner psychologist for regular counseling sessions, play therapy (for children), or other psychosocial support.

Palangka Raya has provided mental rehabilitation programs through the RPTC and UPTD PPA, which offer psychological counseling services, activity therapy, and spiritual assistance. Although these facilities are important, criticism has emerged regarding the accessibility and quality of services: the number of professional psychologists remains limited, while social stigma can restrict victims from utilizing services optimally. This indicates that although policies and institutions are already in place, their effectiveness still depends on inter-institutional coordination and the readiness of human resources.

Regarding confidentiality and protection of victims from social stigma, officials and companions in Palangka Raya try to maintain the privacy of victims as best as possible. The identities of victims, especially minors, are not made public. The police and local media generally use initials for the names of victims and perpetrators in immoral cases as a form of protection. Ipda Fina Rosalina, S.Tr.K., Head of the PPA Office of the Palangka Raya Police stated that *"We prioritize the safety of the victim, including by ensuring that the examination process is carried out in a child-friendly room and involves psychologist companions."*

This is in line with the victim's right to identity confidentiality guaranteed by law. In addition, the victim also receives protection from external pressure. If there is an attempt to intimidate the perpetrator or other parties (for example, threats to make the victim retract the report), the victim can apply for protection to the police or the Witness and Victim Protection Institute (LPSK). During the legal process in Palangka Raya, the police worked with the accompanying unit to ensure that the victim did not get pressured, both through strict escort in the trial and the facilitation of a safe place if needed. In fact, some victims are temporarily placed in safe houses or RPTCs to keep them away from environments that could potentially create stress or stigma during the course of the case.

With the support of a strong legal umbrella and the existence of support institutions, the mental protection of victims in Palangka Raya is starting to show positive steps. Coordination between law enforcement officials and accompanying agencies is running in an effort to provide comprehensive protection (Muhadar & Thamrin, 2009). For example, in handling the recent child abuse case, the Palangka Raya Police through the Sabangau Police directly coordinated with the PPA Unit and psychologists to provide psychological assistance and medical examinations for the victim from the early stages of the investigation. This kind of cross-sectoral approach ensures that in addition to the legal process against the perpetrator, the psychological needs of the victim are not neglected.

Nevertheless, there are a number of challenges on the ground. First, the limited number of psychologists or trauma counselors in the regions is an obstacle in reaching all victims. Ideally, each victim will get a special companion, but the availability of professional human resources in Palangka Raya still needs to be improved. Second, social stigma and a culture of silence can prevent victims from coming out. Some victims are reluctant to tell details or follow up counseling because of shame, fear of blame, or family pressure. Counselors often have to convince the victim that what happened is not the victim's disgrace and that seeking help is the right step. Third, coordination across agencies still needs to be improved. Although the police, DP3A, psychologists, and other institutions have cooperated,

sometimes communication and referral flows can be hampered by bureaucracy. For example, the procedure of referring the victim to a safe house or psychological services takes time and administration, even though the victim needs quick handling. Efforts to overcome this include by developing an integrated standard operating procedure (SOP) between agencies and accelerating the bureaucracy of victim services.

Overall, legal protection for victims' mental health in Palangka Raya has been recognized in regulations and has begun to be implemented in the form of psychological assistance, identity confidentiality, rehabilitation services, and cross-sector cooperation. Legal frameworks such as the Sexual Violence Crime Law are a strong foothold so that law enforcement and local governments are obliged to pay attention to the psychological aspects of victims, not solely focus on punishment for the perpetrators (Nurbayani & Wahyuni, 2023). The reality in Palangka Raya is reflected in the handling of cases of sexual violence that always involves PPA Units and psychosocial companions to prioritize the recovery of victims. By continuing to improve coordination and adding supporting resources, it is hoped that the mental protection of victims in the future will be more optimal.

To provide a clearer analytical perspective, Table 1 compares the mental health protection of sexual violence victims in Palangka Raya with theory and previous research. This comparison highlights the extent to which local implementation aligns with or differs from the existing literature, as well as its implications for victim-centered protection.

Table 1. Analysis of Mental Health Protection for Sexual Violence Victims in Palangka Raya and Comparison with Theory/Research

Protection Aspect	Findings in Palangka Raya	Previous Research Findings	Analysis
Reporting & Service Access	Victims can report via hotline, website, or directly to UPTD PPA. Reporting is accompanied by officers or psychologists from the outset.	The TPKS Law strengthens victims' rights to reporting and psychological assistance (Sari et al., 2023)	Palangka Raya is aligned with victim-centered justice, but the capacity of psychologists needs to be improved to reach all victims.
Psychological Assistance	Psychologists and trauma counselors accompany victims; children receive play therapy; victims are directed to the RPTC for mental and social rehabilitation.	Research by Hairi & Latifah (2023) shows that victims who do not receive trauma counseling have a higher risk of PTSD and difficulties in social reintegration; recovery occurs more quickly when psychological assistance is consistently available.	Services are already integrated, but the number of professional personnel remains limited; additional human resources are needed so that every victim receives initial and ongoing assistance.
Identity Protection	Victims' identities are kept confidential; examinations are conducted in child-friendly rooms; media use initials for both victims and perpetrators.	Arief (2011) disclosure of victims' identities increases the risk of social stigma, family pressure, and the likelihood of victims refusing the legal process; Priambada (2025) emphasizes that identity protection enhances victims' sense of security and psychological recovery.	Local practices are consistent with theory; strengthening the psychological and social protection of victims.
Legal Process & Justice	Police reject mediation attempts; all reports are processed in accordance with the TPKS Law; internal SOPs for inter-	A case study by Kristanto et al. (2025) shows that victims who feel the legal process is firm and without compromise have greater trust in the legal system and	Consistent law enforcement increases victims' trust and supports mental recovery.

Protection Aspect	Findings in Palangka Raya	Previous Research Findings	Analysis
Cross-Sector Collaboration	agency coordination are implemented.	exhibit lower levels of trauma compared to victims who face out-of-court compromises.	Cross-sector collaboration is effective; reinforcing the victim-centered approach principle and victims' psychological recovery.
	Police collaborate with DP3A, psychologists, and NGOs; internal PPA training is conducted to improve skills in handling victims.	P. S. Wahyuni & Pratama (2025) affirms that a multidisciplinary approach accelerates victims' emotional stabilization and reduces the risk of re-traumatization during the legal process.	
Implementation Challenges	1) Limited number of psychologists and trauma counselors	Hairi & Latifah (2023) stated that Limited human resources cause some victims not to receive initial assistance. Cultural pressure and complex bureaucracy hinder the legal process and add to victims' stress. Other research: Social stigma causes victims to fear reporting or attending counseling (Sinaga, 2022)	Requires strengthening of human resources, integrated SOPs, and public education to reduce stigma and accelerate victim services so that mental recovery is more optimal.
	2) Social stigma, culture of silence 3) Bureaucratic obstacles in referring victims to psychological services or safe houses		

The findings in Palangka Raya indicate that mental health protection for sexual violence victims has reflected the principles of victim-centered protection as recommended in the literature. Easy access to reporting and psychological assistance from the outset aligns with Sari et al. (2023), who emphasize that early intervention increases victims' courage to report and reduces the risk of prolonged trauma. Identity protection and firm legal processes are consistent with the findings of Arief (2011) and Kristanto et al. (2025), which state that legal security and justice strengthen victims' sense of safety and support psychological recovery. Cross-sector collaboration among police, DP3A, psychologists, and NGOs reinforces the findings of P. S. Wahyuni & Pratama (2025) regarding the importance of a multidisciplinary approach for victims' emotional stabilization. Nevertheless, the limited number of professional personnel, bureaucratic obstacles, and social stigma remain significant constraints, consistent with the reports of Hairi & Latifah (2024) and Sinaga (2022), making efforts to strengthen human resource capacity, cross-sector coordination, and public education important steps toward optimizing victims' mental recovery.

Efforts Made by the Palangka Raya Police in Providing Legal Protection for the Mental Health of Victims in Sexual Violence in Palangka Raya City

The Palangka Raya Police have a central role in law enforcement of sexual violence cases, as well as being responsible for ensuring that victims receive protection during the process. Police procedures in handling reports of sexual violence crimes in Palangka Raya start from receiving complaints at SPKT (Integrated Police Service Center) or the nearest police station, related to this matter Kompol Ronny M. Nababan, S.H., S.I.K., Head of Criminal Investigation of the Palangka Raya Police said that his party does not tolerate any peace efforts. *"We do not tolerate peaceful attempts in cases of sexual violence. We will process every report, no matter who the perpetrator is."*

The report was immediately followed up with quick steps: officers secured the perpetrator (if the reported person had been identified), collected evidence, and conducted a *visum et repertum* (forensic medical examination) for the victim. Furthermore, the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA) of the Police Satreskrim will take over the investigation of the case. The PPA unit has a special investigator (usually a female police officer or trained officer) who is tasked with handling cases involving women and children, including sexual violence, with a victim-friendly approach. According to Iptu Ahmad Taufiq, Sabangau Police Chief of the Palangka Raya Police, after the report came in, the follow-up examination was immediately delegated to the PPA Unit to ensure that the investigation process ran

according to the necessary procedures and sensitivity. This includes the involvement of professionals for non-legal aspects: “the party coordinates with the PPA Unit to provide psychological assistance and medical examinations for victims”. The statement shows that from the early stages, the Palangka Raya Police has included attention to the mental health of the victim as part of the handling procedure.

In the investigation process, the mental health aspect of the victim is indeed a concern for law enforcement officials in Palangka Raya. PPA Unit investigators tried to apply interview techniques that did not make the victim more traumatized. For example, victims (especially children) are usually questioned in a special examination room that is comfortable and private, often equipped with child-friendly facilities. The presence of companions such as psychologists, social workers, or trusted family members is also allowed during the examination, according to the needs of the victim, to provide a sense of emotional security. PPA investigating police officers will try to build the victim’s trust, ask questions with empathy, and avoid blaming the victim. These efforts are in line with the National Police’s program to realize humanist law enforcement. In fact, the Palangka Raya Police emphasized training to its members on handling gender-based violence cases and the treatment of children in the face of the law. With improved knowledge and skills, the police are expected to be more empathetic and responsive to the needs of victims. This means that investigators are equipped with skills to be able to dig up information without causing additional psychological pressure on the victim (Santoso, 2017).

The Palangka Raya Police also collaborate with psychologists and companion institutions in dealing with victims of sexual violence. This cooperation is seen in several ways: first, formal coordination with related agencies/institutions. The police routinely coordinate with the P3A Service (through the UPTD PPA) and institutions such as P2TP2A or women’s companion NGOs to provide experts. For example, in cases of violence against children, the Police immediately collaborated with a psychologist from DP3A or trauma center to accompany the victim during the examination and therapy afterwards. Second, internal psychological assistance. The PPA Police Unit has officers (police) who have received basic counseling training so that they can provide psychological first aid to the victim shortly after the incident was reported. For example, Ipda M. Hafiz Ramadhan (Criminal Investigation Unit of the Police) said when handling a case of threats on social media: “*We are still conducting the investigation process. While we will provide psychological treatment for victims, this is a priority in psychological recovery,*” he said.

This priority shows the commitment of the National Police in Palangka Raya to not only pursue legal evidence, but also to ensure that the mental condition of the victim is restored as the legal process progresses. Third, the Police facilitate service referrals. If the victim needs follow-up assistance, the police will direct them to counseling services at UPTD PPA, clinical psychologists at Bhayangkara hospital or RSUD, or to RPTC for more intensive rehabilitation. During the investigation and investigation process, the Palangka Raya Police provided several forms of legal protection to the victim. This coverage includes:

Physical protection and safety

The police can provide security if the victim is threatened by the perpetrator (e.g. the perpetrator tries to intimidate the victim or his family). In certain cases, if the risk is high, the victim will be placed in a temporary safe location with guard, or facilitated a request for protection to LPSK. The situation of the scene and the victim’s environment are also monitored to be conducive during the legal process.

Procedural protection

The police guarantee that cases are processed according to the law without discrimination. The victim is not complicated in giving information and has the right to be accompanied by a legal advisor. As conveyed by the Head of Criminal Investigation of the Palangka Raya Police, Kompol Ronny M. Nababan, with the new TPKS Law, every case of sexual violence must be processed by law and there should be no peaceful efforts outside the law, even if the perpetrator is the victim’s family. This firm attitude protects victims from pressure to reconcile which often causes its own mental burden.

Maintain the confidentiality and dignity of the victim

PPA investigators arranged for the victim’s identity to be kept secret in the case file and news reports. The victim is also protected from questions or treatment that corners it. The authorities are trying to create an atmosphere of examination that respects the dignity of the victim as a wounded human being, not just the object of the case. The

Palangka Raya Police took special measures to prevent further trauma to the victim during the examination process. Among them, trying to keep the number of examinations or interviews with the victim as low as possible (only what is necessary) so that the victim does not have to repeatedly repeat his traumatic story (Kurnia et al., 2022). Then, if the victim's testimony is sufficient, as much as possible the victim is not directly confronted with the suspect except in court (even that is usually through certain mechanisms such as closed hearings, especially for children). In addition, officers use simple and empathetic language when communicating with victims. The Police also involve female police officers (Polwan) in the PPA Unit as the spearhead of interaction with female or child victims, so that victims feel more comfortable. These steps are in line with the spirit of the Precision Police which emphasizes a humanist approach. Even on various occasions, the leadership of the Palangka Raya Police affirmed their commitment to providing friendly and fast service to victims. *"Every child has the right to protection. We ensure that the handling is carried out quickly, appropriately, and in favor of the victim,"* said Iptu Ahmad Taufiq regarding the principle of handling cases in his area. The statement affirmed the police's efforts to minimize the suffering of victims during the legal process with the speed of handling and pro-victim attitude.

Undoubtedly, obstacles in the field are also faced by the Palangka Raya Police in providing mental protection for victims. One of them is the condition of the victim which is sometimes very traumatized so that it is difficult to provide information. Investigators should be patient and may delay detailed examinations until the victim is stable, which could slow down the investigation process. In addition, the Police face a shortage of accompanying experts within the police – not all units have permanent psychologists, so they have to wait for coordination with other agencies. Cultural factors are also an obstacle; There are still cases where the victim's family is reluctant to continue the case because they are worried that the family's "disgrace" will be revealed, so the police must take a persuasive approach so that the best interests of the victim are prioritized. However, the Police are trying to overcome this obstacle with synergy and consistent law enforcement (Waluyo, 2022). With the Sexual Violence Crime Law as a handhold, the authorities have a strong basis to convince families that legal processes must be carried out for the sake of justice for the victims.

From the perspective of the Palangka Raya Police, the effectiveness of Law No. 12 of 2022 (TPKS Law) in protecting victims psychologically is felt to be quite significant. The Sexual Assault Crimes Act provides a clear framework for police to act pro-victim. Kompol Ronny M. Nababan as the Head of the Police Criminal Investigation revealed that even before the Sexual Violence Crime Law, his party had handled many cases of sexual violence, but with the existence of the Sexual Violence Crime Law, victim protection is stronger because the perpetrators are ensured to be processed by law without a peaceful gap outside the court. This rule helps the psychological recovery of the victim because the victim feels that the state is there to provide justice, so they are no longer afraid that their case will be "taken lightly" or lost in the middle of the road. In addition, the Sexual Violence Crime Law requires assistance for victims, which is implemented by the Police through coordination with psychologists. However, the police also realize that this law needs to be supported by the resources and awareness of all parties. The affirmation from the Police that victim protection cannot only be imposed on law enforcement officials. Ipda Erna Yulianti, S.H., Kaur Bin Ops Satreskrim Palangka Raya Police, emphasized that the support of various parties is very necessary: *"Cases of violence against women and children require a quick response, proper handling, and the support of various parties so that the victim is truly protected"*. This means that the ideal synergy between the Police, the government (DP3A/Dinsos), psychologists, families, and the wider community must continue to be built.

Optimizing the mental protection of victims needs to be done, the Palangka Raya Police continue to increase cross-agency cooperation. Efforts made include: conducting an MoU with the P3A Office or NGOs related to victim assistance, holding joint training between police investigators and psychologists/social workers on trauma management, and establishing a regular coordination forum for the evaluation of cases of violence against women and children. Thus, it is hoped that each case will be handled comprehensively. Ideally, each victim will receive psychological assistance from the beginning of the report to the post-trial without interruption, and law enforcement will receive the input of psychologists at every stage (for example, when they have to question the victim internally). The Police also continue to promote education to the public about the importance of reporting and not blaming the victim (victim blaming). The hope is that the victim's social environment can support his psychological healing,

instead of giving stigma. Internally, the commitment of Palangka Raya Police members to be humane and care for victims has become a work culture. Various innovations in the Police's public services (such as the "Police, Friends of Women and Children" program or socialization to schools) are expected to help prevent violence and build victims' confidence that they will be protected.

From the preceding discussion, the Palangka Raya Police is trying to ensure that legal protection for the mental health of victims is carried out in line with the law enforcement process. Starting from handling reports, empathetic investigations, psychological assistance, to maintaining the safety and confidentiality of victims, all are integral parts of the Police's efforts. Although there are still obstacles, their commitment is clear: upholding the law while rehabilitating victims. This is in line with the mandate of the Sexual Violence Crime Law and the community's expectations that victims of sexual violence in Palangka Raya not only get legal justice, but also be able to rise psychologically in their daily lives.

This research indicates that the efforts of the Palangka Raya Police in providing legal protection to sexual violence victims do not focus solely on law enforcement aspects but also pay attention to the mental health of victims throughout the legal process. A legal system that is responsive to sexual violence victims must include effective protection mechanisms so that victims are protected from re-victimization and ongoing psychological impacts (Priambada, 2025). From a victimological perspective, legal protection for sexual violence victims must guarantee the psychological and social rights of victims in the judicial process to reduce trauma and social stigma experienced. Although regulations such as Law Number 12 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes already exist, there are still challenges in its implementation, including psychological barriers faced by victims such as severe trauma and social stigma that can worsen victims' mental condition if not handled sensitively and comprehensively at every stage of the legal process.

Furthermore, P. S. Wahyuni & Pratama (2025) state that practical legal protection by investigators in the context of sexual violence also encompasses the provision of psychological counseling services for victims through cooperation with integrated service institutions for women and children. This is consistent with the part of your research that describes the role of the Women and Children Service Unit (PPA) in coordinating with professional psychologists and providing initial trauma assistance to victims in order to minimize the direct psychological impact after an incident is reported. This journal demonstrates that a multidisciplinary approach between investigators and social support services is important in helping mental recovery while also providing a sense of security for victims during the legal process.

In the context of the PPA, it also reinforces the findings of this research that investigators play an active role in maintaining the safety and dignity of victims during the investigation process (Risal, 2022). This includes providing safe spaces, psychological consultation, and social rehabilitation services for child victims who experience pressure or threats from perpetrators. Such efforts not only improve the quality of legal protection but also support the psychosocial aspects of victims, which often become a critical element in long-term recovery after experiencing sexual violence.

From the perspective of the national legal framework, the enactment of the UU TPKS provides a stronger and more formal legal foundation for law enforcement officers to process sexual violence cases without compromise (Kristanto et al., 2025). However, the existence of law alone is insufficient if not accompanied by investigator training capable of applying the four pillars of victim protection, which include physical safety, psychological support, the right to information, and respect for the dignity of victims (Sinaga, 2022). This reinforces the importance of the commitment of officers such as that demonstrated by the Palangka Raya Police in integrating a humanistic approach into their operational procedures. Thus, although this research underlines challenges such as the limited number of psychologists in the police force and cultural pressures that hinder reporting, the legal protection approach that incorporates psychological aspects reflects the progressive efforts of law enforcement officers in minimizing trauma and optimizing the mental recovery of victims throughout the legal process.

CONCLUSION

Empirical juridically, the protection of the mental health of victims of sexual violence in Palangka Raya City has been guaranteed through Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence and related regulations. Its implementation can be seen in the involvement of agencies such as DP3A/UPTD PPA, the police, and social services in providing psychological assistance, counseling, and maintaining the confidentiality of the victim's identity. Victims in Palangka Raya have the right to psychological assistance during the legal process, and in practice, many cases show that the victim is accompanied by a psychologist since the investigation. In addition, facilities such as RPTC and trauma healing programs have been made available to support the mental recovery of victims. Existing constraints (limited expertise, social stigma, etc.) still need to be addressed, but the cross-sectoral synergy that is beginning to take shape shows a serious effort to protect victims' mental health as part of their rights. In Palangka Raya City, legal protection for victims of sexual violence not only focuses on punishing the perpetrator, but also on the psychological recovery of the victim so that they can continue to live better.

The Palangka Raya Police through the PPA Unit and related ranks have taken various concrete steps to protect victims as a whole. The procedure for handling sexual violence cases is designed to be victim-friendly, starting from receiving reports to investigations accompanied by psychologists. The police ensure that the victim gets a safe examination environment and does not add to the trauma, for example by involving trained police officers and limiting the victim's contact with the perpetrator. During the legal process, the Police coordinate with psychologists/companions from DP3A or other agencies to provide counseling to the victim. This commitment is reflected in the statement of Police officials who prioritize the psychological recovery of victims as the investigation progresses. The police also strictly enforce the Sexual Violence Crime Act including all reports of sexual violence are processed by law without exception so that victims feel safe and supported by the justice system. Preventive efforts such as trauma training of personnel, anti-violence socialization, and collaboration with victim service agencies continue to be intensified to strengthen this protection. Despite facing challenges, the Palangka Raya Police showed a proactive role as a humane law enforcer: not only pursuing legal justice, but also caring about the mental recovery of victims so that the justice provided is complete (comprehensive).

Theoretically, these findings indicate that the protection of sexual violence victims must be holistic, integrating the legal rights and mental health of victims while emphasizing the importance of psychological assistance from the outset of the legal process; from a policy standpoint, this underscores the need to strengthen cross-sector capacity through increasing the number of psychologists, trauma healing facilities, operational guidelines for victim assistance, reduction of social stigma, and expansion of prevention efforts through anti-violence socialization and personnel training; while the further research agenda encompasses evaluation of the effectiveness of trauma healing programs and psychological assistance, comparative studies across regions, analysis of victims' perceptions of services, and assessment of inter-agency synergy in realizing comprehensive and sustainable victim protection.

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