

# Strengthening Maritime Security Governance in Indonesia: A Policy Transformation of Bakamla toward the Indonesia Coast Guard Model

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## Abstract:

Indonesia's maritime domain faces increasingly complex security threats, particularly amid the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region marked by the rise of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, smuggling, and jurisdictional violations. These challenges are compounded by institutional fragmentation in maritime law enforcement, where overlapping mandates among multiple agencies have resulted in weak coordination, task duplication, and a fragile Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) framework. This study analyzes the policy transformation needs of the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) toward adopting the Indonesia Coast Guard model as a strategic approach to strengthen national maritime security governance. Using a qualitative document analysis, the study examines key legal instruments namely Law No. 32/2014, Law No. 17/2008, and Government Regulation No. 13/2022 that serve as Bakamla's operational foundations. A comparative analysis of maritime security practices in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore is also conducted to identify relevant lessons. Findings indicate that Bakamla already possesses a strategic mandate for coordination, patrol, and information integration; however, implementation remains constrained by limited interagency integration, inadequate resources, and institutional resistance. The study concludes that transforming Bakamla into a single-agency, multi-task institution is essential to address authority fragmentation and enhance maritime law enforcement effectiveness. Institutional reform can be achieved through regulatory consolidation, establishment of a unified command, development of an Integrated Maritime Information Center (IMIC), and clarification of roles at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Implementing the Indonesia Coast Guard model is expected to enhance cross-sectoral integration and strengthen Indonesia's capacity to respond to contemporary maritime threats.

**Keywords:** Bakamla, maritime security governance, Indonesia Coast Guard, Maritime Domain Awareness, institutional transformation

## 1. Introduction:

Amid the intensifying Indo-Pacific security dynamics, Indonesia's maritime space faces increasingly structured and transnational threats (Marliani, 2024; Arif et al., 2024). Over

the past decade, for instance, cases of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing within Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone have escalated, alongside smuggling, piracy, and cross-border crimes committed by both state and non-

state actors (Chapsos & Hamilton, 2019; Sartika Saimima et al., 2022). Indonesia's position as the world's largest archipelagic state and one of the busiest global shipping routes amplifies its exposure to such threats (Aritonang et al., 2025), underscoring the urgency of establishing an integrated and adaptive maritime security governance framework.

While Indonesia's vast maritime space offers significant economic and geopolitical opportunities, it also increases exposure to transnational risks (Aritonang et al., 2025). The Oceans and the Law of the Sea report identifies at least seven major maritime threats, including terrorism, human trafficking, drug smuggling, territorial violations, and marine environmental degradation (Sosnowski et al., 2024). Yet, national understanding of the maritime domain remains limited, as the country's MDA capability suffers from weak information systems, fragmented interagency coordination, and limited human and technological resources (Bueger, 2017; Perera, 2021). Consequently, Indonesia's capacity to detect, deter, and respond to maritime threats is far from optimal.

Institutional fragmentation further undermines maritime law enforcement. Multiple agencies such as the Navy (TNI AL), Sea and Coast Guard Unit (KPLP), and several ministerial bodies share overlapping mandates (Laksmana, 2022; Afriansyah et al., 2024). This results in duplicated authority, sectoral egos, and reduced enforcement efficiency. The establishment of Bakamla under Law No. 32/2014 was intended to enhance coordination and lead maritime safety and security patrols, yet institutional resistance and implementation gaps persist (Afriansyah et al., 2024). The transition from a multi-agency, multi-task system to a single-agency, multi-task framework remains incomplete due to insufficient systemic integration, legal alignment, and cross-agency resource allocation.

Conceptual shifts in maritime security emphasizing non-traditional threats reinforce the need for institutional reform. Modern maritime governance extends beyond defense to include

socio-economic and environmental dimensions. This necessitates a civilian maritime authority capable of law enforcement, rescue, and preventive operations (Aswani, 2022; Pandey, 2023). Countries such as the United States, India, and Malaysia have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Indonesia Coast Guard model in addressing non-traditional threats through integrated and efficient governance (Fita, 2025). Indonesia can derive key lessons from these models in restructuring Bakamla's role and authority.

Government Regulation No. 13/2022 marks an important step, confirming Bakamla's mandate to formulate national maritime security policies and coordinate patrol implementation. However, challenges remain in trust-building, information integration, and command-control mechanisms (Kurniaty et al., 2021; Afriansyah et al., 2024). Therefore, Bakamla's transformation toward the Indonesia Coast Guard model represents a strategic imperative to reinforce Indonesia's maritime security governance.

## 2. Methods:

This study employs a qualitative document analysis approach to examine policy dynamics and institutional structures shaping Indonesia's maritime security governance. The analysis focuses on legal instruments forming Bakamla's operational basis Law No. 32/2014 on Marine Affairs, Law No. 17/2008 on Shipping, and Government Regulation No. 13/2022 on Maritime Security, Safety, and Law Enforcement. The study identifies institutional mandates, operational authorities, and the transition process from a multi-agency to a single-agency model. A comparative desk study of maritime governance in the United States, India, and Malaysia provides insights into best practices in institutional integration, command-control mechanisms, and enforcement effectiveness. All data were analyzed thematically through identification, categorization, and interpretation to derive conceptual and practical implications for strengthening Bakamla's role as a unified and adaptive maritime security institution.

### 3. Results & Discussion:

#### 3.1 Fragmented Maritime Law Enforcement Governance in Indonesia

Maritime law enforcement in Indonesia exhibits a fragmented governance structure. Operational authority is dispersed among several institutions, including the Indonesian Navy (TNI AL), Marine Police (Polair/Polairud), the Indonesia Coast Guard Unit (KPLP) under the Ministry of Transportation, the Directorate General of Marine and Fisheries Resources Surveillance (KKP/PSDKP), Customs, and the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla). The findings indicate that at least thirteen agencies possess legal mandates related to maritime security, six of which operate their own patrol fleets. This institutional overlap leads to duplicated authority, repetitive inspections, and difficulties in determining a clear chain of command in the field.

Differences in legal frameworks also result in variations in standard operating procedures, logistics systems, and command structures. Preventive measures, law enforcement, and early-warning systems are not always coordinated under a unified command structure; in fact, the early warning function is legally assigned solely to Bakamla. Consequently, this situation weakens integration and undermines unity of effort in responding to maritime incidents.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the divergence of functions, mandates, and operational jurisdictions among agencies. Several scholars have identified similar trends, emphasizing that institutional fragmentation significantly reduces the effectiveness of maritime law enforcement, as weak cross-agency coordination hampers decision-making and limits efficient resource utilization (Dirhamsyah et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2024). In the Indonesian context, recent policy research identifies overlapping mandates and the absence of a single leading authority as major factors that slow the implementation of maritime security policies (Prissandi et al., 2023).

This fragmented governance structure directly undermines the state's ability to develop a comprehensive Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) framework, ultimately diminishing the effectiveness of detection and response to maritime threats.

#### 3.2 Key Challenges in Maritime Security

The study identifies three major obstacles in the development of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in Indonesia. First, the capacity for data collection and processing remains limited. The existing monitoring systems have not yet fully integrated information from various sources, resulting in uneven situational awareness across different maritime jurisdictions. Second, coordination among stakeholders has not been fully optimized. Differences in institutional mandates and organizational structures disrupt communication flows, particularly in information sharing and response coordination during maritime incidents. Third, resource limitations continue to affect operational capability, particularly in terms of infrastructure, technological support, and human resources. These constraints create data-sharing gaps and increase the risk of operational errors at sea, including incidents of blue-on-blue engagement.

These findings align with recent empirical studies emphasizing that strengthening MDA, ensuring effective multi-actor coordination, and enhancing resource adequacy are critical prerequisites for improving maritime law enforcement effectiveness. The synergy among patrol elements, the integration of surveillance technologies, and the establishment of a clear operational framework have been proven to enhance the detection, prevention, and response to maritime threats such as smuggling, piracy, and illegal fishing (Magalhães et al., 2023; Okafor-Yarwood et al., 2024). Policy analyses conducted after the enactment of Government Regulation No. 13 of 2022 further support these conclusions, highlighting the importance of integrated information systems, cross-agency coordination mechanisms, and investment in both technical and institutional capacities.

The limitations of MDA underscore the urgent need for institutional strengthening one that not only facilitates coordination among multiple maritime actors but also establishes a clear line of authority in law enforcement. This serves as the basis for reassessing the institutional position and role of the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) within the national maritime security architecture.

### 3.3 Rationale for the Transformation of Bakamla

From a regulatory standpoint, Law No. 32 of 2014 on Marine Affairs and Government Regulation No. 13 of 2022 position the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) as a strategic institution within the country's maritime security governance framework. Its mandate includes the formulation of national policies on maritime security and safety, the harmonization of patrol implementation, the conduct of hot pursuit operations, and the integration of maritime security and safety information systems. This legal framework underscores Bakamla's role as a cross-sectoral coordinating and operational body. The transformation toward the Indonesia Coast Guard model thus becomes highly relevant, as it would clarify Bakamla's position as a civilian authority in maritime law enforcement while minimizing the overlapping jurisdictions that have long arisen from institutional fragmentation.

International comparisons offer valuable insights into the advantages of the Indonesia Coast Guard model. The United States Coast Guard (USCG), for instance, combines law enforcement, navigational safety, and maritime service functions within a single, well-defined command structure and consistent interagency coordination mechanisms. This model has become increasingly pertinent for Indo-Pacific nations facing a wide range of evolving maritime threats (Twrdy et al., 2014). Similarly, countries such as Australia, South Korea, China, and Singapore have adopted comparable frameworks emphasizing institutional integration, clearly delineated roles, and cross-sectoral synergy factors proven to enhance the

effectiveness of maritime security management (Bulandari, 2025).

The Japan Coast Guard (JCG) provides another noteworthy example, explicitly separating defense functions from law enforcement. This distinction ensures that non-military maritime enforcement mandates are clearly structured and legally defined (Kotani, 2015). The JCG's institutional framework is supported by legal provisions affirming its civilian character, with a focus on patrol operations, law enforcement, rescue missions, and marine environmental protection. This separation of functions has been widely recognized as an effective institutional practice, particularly for preventing conflict escalation and ensuring transparency in maritime operations (Zhang, 2025). However, recent studies also highlight the need to strengthen the JCG's capacity in addressing issues such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, especially in border and "gray zone" areas that remain prone to disputes (Pajon, 2017).

These lessons are highly relevant for Indonesia in reinforcing Bakamla's institutional role. The strategic transformation toward the Indonesia Coast Guard model holds significant potential to clarify Bakamla's mandate, enhance cross-agency coordination, and establish a civilian maritime institution capable of conducting law enforcement professionally and in an integrated manner. To achieve this transformation, well-structured operational and institutional measures are required. The following recommendations summarize the strategic steps that can be undertaken to strengthen Bakamla's role within Indonesia's national maritime security governance framework.

### 3.4 Proposed Transformation Measures

#### a. Regulatory Consolidation

Consolidating the currently dispersed functions and mandates of maritime law enforcement agencies is essential to ensure legal clarity and establish a unified policy direction (single policy voice). Government Regulation No. 13 of 2022 provides an initial foundation by

affirming Bakamla's role in policy formulation and patrol coordination. However, derivative regulations remain necessary to harmonize standard operating procedures, enforcement protocols, and jurisdictional divisions based on operational domains. Such harmonization is expected to reduce overlapping mandates and clarify the legal and operational flow of maritime law enforcement activities.

#### b. Unified Maritime Law Enforcement Command

A unified command model is considered crucial to eliminate duplication of duties, accelerate decision-making processes, and simplify command chains at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The study identifies Bakamla as a single-agency multi-task institution responsible for synchronizing patrol operations and early warning systems. The experience of the United States Coast Guard demonstrates that mechanisms such as joint committees, integrated exercises, and interagency liaison placements can significantly enhance preparedness and operational effectiveness in joint missions. Similar mechanisms could be gradually adopted to support the consolidation of Bakamla's functions within Indonesia's maritime security structure.

#### c. Establishment of an Integrated Maritime Information Center (IMIC)

In accordance with the mandate of Government Regulation No. 13 of 2022, a centralized and integrated maritime information center managed by Bakamla is urgently needed to consolidate diverse data sources, including Automatic Identification System (AIS), Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), Search and Rescue (SAR) operations, meteorological oceanographic and hydrographic data, maritime intelligence, and public reporting. This integration aims to create a comprehensive common operating picture of the maritime domain, reduce information fragmentation, and expedite enforcement targeting and decision-making. International studies indicate that strengthening MDA nodes and fusion centers significantly enhances patrol effectiveness and risk-based resource deployment (USCG;

GAO, 2024). These efforts could serve as a foundation for improving Indonesia's maritime information systems and operational responsiveness across its jurisdictional waters.

#### d. Clear Division Across Strategic Operational Tactical Levels

The findings highlight the need for a clear delineation of roles across different operational levels. At the strategic level, the government formulates national policies and sets maritime security priorities. The operational level focuses on planning and managing integrated, cross-agency maritime operations, while the tactical level concerns the direct execution of enforcement actions at sea. This hierarchical separation aligns with governance literature in transportation, fisheries, and anti-IUU studies, all of which emphasize the importance of clear command structures and evidence-based implementation to improve law enforcement efficiency. Establishing this clarity of structure is expected to minimize operational overlap and foster more effective coordination among agencies.

Collectively, these proposed transformation measures underscore that strengthening Bakamla's institutional role requires regulatory consolidation, unified command, integrated information management, and a well-defined distribution of authority across levels. For effective implementation, a phased roadmap is necessary encompassing institutional adjustments, human resource and technological capacity development, clear financing mechanisms, and robust performance monitoring and evaluation systems.

### 5. Conclusion

This study affirms that Indonesia's maritime security governance remains constrained by fragmented authority and weak Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), resulting in suboptimal cross-actor coordination, information integration, and law enforcement effectiveness. Although Law No. 32 of 2014 and Government Regulation No. 13 of 2022 have established a

legal foundation for the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) to serve as the coordinating body for national maritime security, implementation continues to be hindered by overlapping mandates, unclear chains of command, and limited institutional resources.

Comparative insights from the Indonesia Coast Guard models of other countries demonstrate that strengthening Bakamla through regulatory consolidation, the establishment of a unified command structure, the development of an Integrated Maritime Information Center (IMIC), and the clarification of roles across strategic, operational, and tactical levels constitutes a strategic pathway toward enhancing Indonesia's maritime law enforcement effectiveness and improving national responsiveness to evolving maritime threats.

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