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Testing the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement and Analyzing Obstacles in Document Forgery Investigations: A Critical Study at the Gorontalo Police Resort

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of law enforcement and identify obstacles in investigating document forgery cases at the Gorontalo Police Resort. The research method used is juridical empirical with a qualitative approach, combining literature study on regulations and empirical data through interviews and case documentation. The results show that the effectiveness of law enforcement is still not optimal, reflected in the low case resolution rate compared to the number of incoming reports. The main obstacles include the limited number and competence of investigators, lack of forensic laboratory facilities, and high administrative burdens. Additionally, external factors such as low public legal awareness, witness reluctance, and poor coordination among law enforcement agencies slow down the investigation process. Improvement efforts focus on enhancing human resource capacity, strengthening coordination, legal education for the public, and utilizing technology in the investigation process. This study recommends the need for cross-sector synergy and strengthening monitoring systems to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement against document forgery crimes at the local level.

Keywords: Document Forgery; Law Enforcement; Investigation.

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Introduction

Starting from the reality that Indonesia is a law-based country, as emphasized in Article 1, paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, law is positioned as the primary



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pillar in creating order, justice, and protection of the rights of every citizen. Law is not only a regulatory tool but also an instrument for protecting human interests, including in the face of increasingly complex crimes in the digital era. One form of crime that is becoming more widespread and challenging law enforcement today is document forgery (Nugraha, Retnaningrum, and Nugroho, n.d.). This phenomenon is becoming more concerning with technological advancements that make document manipulation easier, ranging from false identities, important letters, to forged signatures, which lead to wide-ranging financial losses, damaged reputations, and even the loss of public trust in state institutions.

Document forgery is a serious criminal act regulated explicitly in the Criminal Code (KUHP) and specific regulations such as the Population Administration Law, with severe penalties for offenders (Muharam 2024). However, law enforcement against this crime is not straightforward. The investigation, prosecution, and judicial process require solid coordination, strong evidence, as well as the integrity and professionalism of law enforcement officials. Data from the Gorontalo Police Resort shows that from 2020 to mid-2024, of the nine document forgery cases reported, only four were successfully resolved, while five others remained stalled in the investigation phase. This fact raises a critical question: why is the handling of document forgery cases slow, even seemingly stagnant, despite clear regulations and criminal penalties?

Upon further analysis, the issues with the effectiveness of law enforcement against document forgery in Gorontalo are not only rooted in normative aspects but also in structural, cultural, and technical factors. Structurally, the limitations in the number of investigators, high workloads, and inadequate facilities are tangible barriers in the investigative process. Investigators often have to handle multiple cases simultaneously, which causes a lack of focus and depth in investigating document forgery cases. Furthermore, the investigation process, which ideally should be completed within a certain time frame, often takes longer because document forgery cases are difficult to prove. Physical evidence is often limited, witnesses are reluctant to provide testimony, and perpetrators often use sophisticated methods that complicate disclosure. It is also common for suspects' testimonies to be confusing or



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misleading, requiring investigators to work extra hard to uncover the actual legal facts.

Culturally, the low legal awareness in society presents a unique challenge. Many people do not understand the importance of document authenticity and the negative impacts of forgery, leading to reluctance to report or testify in legal processes. In some cases, the public is even afraid or unwilling to get involved for fear of threats or pressure from the perpetrators. A permissive culture towards administrative violations is still commonly encountered, where document forgery is viewed as a "shortcut" to overcome bureaucratic obstacles or gain economic advantages (Saputra 2025). This phenomenon shows that law enforcement cannot stand alone without strong legal culture and active public participation.

Another important external factor is the coordination among law enforcement agencies. A lack of communication and synergy between police investigators and public prosecutors often causes case files to be returned because they are deemed incomplete, delaying the legal process. Additionally, budget constraints for investigative costs, especially for cases that require special expertise like forensic document examinations, pose a serious challenge (Husna and Susila 2022). In some cases, delays in laboratory results or expert examinations slow down the investigation process, preventing cases from reaching the prosecution stage promptly.

From a regulatory perspective, despite clear rules and strict penalties, implementation on the ground still faces challenges. Effective law enforcement requires not only good regulations but also solid institutional structures, competent human resources, and functional monitoring and evaluation systems. Without this, law will only become a "paper tiger," unable to provide a deterrent effect for perpetrators or real protection for victims. Empirical studies also show that in document forgery cases, jurisdictional overlap, lack of standardized technical guidelines, and weak internal oversight of the investigation process often occur (Ahmad, Mokorimban, and Sepang, n.d.).

In the context of the Gorontalo Police Resort, these challenges are felt firsthand. The lack of personnel and facilities, high workloads, and insufficient



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technical training for document forgery investigations are key factors hindering effective law enforcement. Furthermore, external factors such as low public legal awareness, reluctance of witnesses to provide testimony, and the social and economic pressures faced by investigators also affect police performance. Equally important, the slow bureaucratic culture and lack of responsiveness to technological advancements serve as further obstacles in addressing increasingly sophisticated document forgery crimes.

The impact of ineffective law enforcement against document forgery is vast. Beyond financial and reputational losses, the proliferation of document forgery also has the potential to lead to derivative crimes such as fraud, corruption, and cybercrime. Society loses trust in state institutions, administrative processes become unreliable, and ultimately, the goal of a legal state to create justice and public order is jeopardized. Therefore, effective and efficient law enforcement against document forgery is not just a normative demand but also an urgent necessity to maintain the integrity of the legal system and public trust (Nahhan and Salenda 2021).

Improvement efforts must be comprehensive and sustainable. First, there needs to be a strengthening of the capacity and professionalism of law enforcement officials through technical training, increasing the number of personnel, and providing adequate facilities and infrastructure. Second, improvements in the coordination system between law enforcement agencies, at the investigation, prosecution, and judicial levels, are needed so that the legal process can proceed more quickly, transparently, and accountably. Third, legal education for the public must be promoted massively to increase legal awareness and optimize public participation in law enforcement. Fourth, internal and external oversight of the investigation process must be strengthened to prevent abuse of authority, collusion, or corruption that can undermine public trust (Gara Sawo, S.M. Kadja, and A. Kian 2023).

In addition, both local and central governments must provide sufficient budget support for investigative operations, particularly for cases that require special expertise and forensic laboratory examinations. The development of information technology and the digitalization of administrative processes must be accompanied by strengthening document security systems and enhancing investigators'



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capabilities in detecting and uncovering increasingly sophisticated forgery methods. It is also essential to update regulations to keep pace with technological advancements, ensuring that the law remains relevant and capable of addressing modern criminal challenges.

Testing the effectiveness of law enforcement and unraveling the obstacles in investigating document forgery cases at the Gorontalo Police Resort is not just an academic endeavor, but a moral call to improve the legal system to achieve substantive justice. Every case that stagnates is a real portrait of the challenges that must be addressed together, by law enforcement officials, policymakers, and society at large. Effective law enforcement will provide a sense of security, justice, and legal certainty for all citizens, while also forming the foundation for creating a just, prosperous, and civilized society, as envisioned in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Therefore, this research is expected to make a real contribution in formulating strategies and policy recommendations to strengthen law enforcement against document forgery crimes, particularly in Gorontalo, and generally across Indonesia, in order to achieve a legal supremacy that is just and dignified.

Method

The research method used in this study is a juridical-empirical approach with a qualitative approach (Irwansyah 2020). The juridical-empirical method was chosen to comprehensively examine the effectiveness of law enforcement and identify the obstacles encountered in investigating document forgery cases at the Gorontalo Police Resort, both from a normative aspect and from field practices. Primary data is obtained through in-depth interviews with investigators, police officers, and relevant parties directly involved in handling cases, as well as direct observation of the ongoing investigation process. Additionally, secondary data is gathered from documentary studies, such as laws and regulations, police reports, court decisions, and relevant legal literature. Data analysis is performed in a descriptive-analytical manner, by comparing normative provisions in the Criminal Code (KUHP) and specific regulations with the reality of their implementation in the field, in order to identify inhibiting factors and propose practical solutions. This method is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of law enforcement effectiveness and the obstacles



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encountered, while also offering relevant recommendations for improving the legal enforcement system in the future.

The Effectiveness of Law Enforcement against Document Forgery Crimes in the Gorontalo Resort Police

The effectiveness of law enforcement against document forgery crimes at the Gorontalo Police Resort is a reflection of the real dynamics and challenges faced by law enforcement officers in maintaining integrity and justice in an increasingly complex society. Document forgery, as a crime that continues to evolve with technological advancements, has become a serious threat to the legal and social order in Indonesia, including in Gorontalo. In this context, the effectiveness of law enforcement is not only measured by the number of cases resolved but also by how the legal process proceeds, how justice is upheld, and how public trust in law enforcement institutions is maintained.

Based on data obtained from the Gorontalo Police Resort, from 2020 to mid-2024, nine document forgery cases were reported, but only four cases were successfully resolved, while five others are still under investigation. This figure highlights significant challenges in efforts to achieve optimal law enforcement and reflects various obstacles faced by police officers in carrying out their duties.

Upon further examination, the effectiveness of law enforcement is greatly influenced by a number of internal and external factors that are interrelated. From an internal perspective, the success of law enforcement is highly dependent on the quality of human resources, internal coordination, and the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Competent and professional police officers are the front line in the investigation and prosecution of document forgery cases. However, in practice, it is often found that the number of available investigators is disproportionate to the workload they must bear (Siregar and Respationo 2024). Each investigator is required to handle a variety of cases simultaneously, ranging from theft, assault, to document forgery, which divides the focus and depth of investigation in any one case. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of supporting facilities, such as forensic document laboratories, digital analysis software, and advanced document



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authenticity detection tools. Without adequate technological support, investigators must work extra hard to collect evidence and prove that a document forgery crime has occurred, which is often carried out using increasingly complex and difficult-to-detect methods.

Additionally, the effectiveness of law enforcement is heavily influenced by the internal coordination system within the police. Good coordination between related units, such as criminal investigations, intelligence, and forensic laboratories, is crucial to ensure the investigation process runs smoothly and efficiently. However, in practice, overlapping duties, miscommunication, or even sectoral egos often hinder the smooth legal process. Delays in handling cases are also frequently caused by lengthy and convoluted bureaucratic procedures, slowing down the investigation process and preventing cases from quickly advancing to the prosecution stage. This undoubtedly impacts public trust in the police, who are often perceived as slow or unresponsive in handling public reports (Rizki 2025).

Externally, the challenges faced by law enforcement officers are no less severe. Document forgery crimes often involve perpetrators who possess high technological knowledge and skills, making the methods they use increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect. Perpetrators can easily forge signatures, stamps, or even create counterfeit documents that are nearly indistinguishable from the originals. In some cases, document forgery also involves organized syndicates with extensive networks, both at the local and national levels (Rayhan Afief Arfarizky, David Hizkia Situmorang, and Sumriyah Sumriyah 2023). This complicates the police's ability to fully uncover cases, as it requires inter-regional and even inter-agency cooperation.

Moreover, low public legal awareness is a barrier to law enforcement efforts. Many citizens still perceive document forgery as a minor offense or simply a "shortcut" to overcoming administrative obstacles. It is also common for victims or witnesses to be reluctant to report or provide testimony due to fear of threats or pressure from the perpetrators. This permissive culture toward legal violations forces police officers to work extra hard to build trust and public participation in the law enforcement process. In fact, successful investigation and prosecution heavily depend on reports, evidence, and testimonies from the public (Wijaya, Eddy, and Lubis 2025).



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The effectiveness of law enforcement is also highly influenced by support from other institutions, such as the public prosecutor's office and the courts. Ineffective coordination between the police and prosecutors often leads to case files being returned due to incomplete documentation, causing the legal process to drag on. Furthermore, budget constraints for investigative financing, especially for cases requiring specialized expertise like forensic document examinations, pose serious obstacles (Sari, Widowaty, and Suryono 2021). In some cases, delays in laboratory results or expert examinations result in the investigation process being stalled and preventing cases from moving to the prosecution stage.

From a regulatory perspective, although there are clear rules and strict sanctions, implementation in the field still faces challenges. Effective law enforcement requires not only good regulations but also a solid institutional structure, competent human resources, and functioning monitoring and evaluation systems. Without these, the law will only become a "paper tiger" that fails to provide a deterrent effect for perpetrators or real protection for victims. Empirical studies also show that in document forgery cases, jurisdictional overlaps, lack of standardized technical guidelines, and weak internal oversight of the investigation process are frequent occurrences (Yahya, n.d.).

At the Gorontalo Police Resort, these challenges are clearly felt. The lack of personnel and facilities, high workloads, and insufficient technical training for document forgery investigations are major factors that hinder law enforcement effectiveness. External factors such as low public legal awareness, witness reluctance to provide testimony, and the social and economic pressures faced by investigators also influence police performance. Equally important, the slow bureaucratic culture and lack of responsiveness to technological developments also pose an obstacle in handling increasingly sophisticated document forgery crimes.

The impact of ineffective law enforcement against document forgery crimes is vast. In addition to financial and reputational losses, the rise of document forgery also has the potential to lead to derivative crimes such as fraud, corruption, and cybercrime. Society loses trust in state institutions, administrative processes become unreliable, and ultimately, the goal of the legal state to create justice and public order



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is threatened. Therefore, effective and efficient law enforcement against document forgery is not just a normative demand but also an urgent need to maintain the integrity of the legal system and public trust.

Improvement efforts must be comprehensive and sustainable. First, there needs to be a strengthening of the capacity and professionalism of law enforcement officers through technical training, an increase in the number of personnel, and the provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure. Second, the coordination system between law enforcement agencies, at the investigation, prosecution, and judicial levels, needs to be reformed to ensure a faster, more transparent, and accountable legal process. Third, mass legal education must be promoted to raise legal awareness and optimize public participation in law enforcement. Fourth, internal and external oversight of the investigation process must be strengthened to prevent the abuse of power, collusion, or corruption that could undermine public trust (Ramadhani and Kartika 2022).

In addition, local and central governments need to provide adequate budget support for investigative operations, especially for cases requiring specialized expertise and forensic laboratory examinations. The development of information technology and the digitization of administrative processes must be accompanied by strengthening document security systems and enhancing investigators' capabilities to detect and uncover increasingly sophisticated forgery methods. Equally important, there is a need for regulatory updates to keep pace with technological developments, ensuring that the law remains relevant and capable of addressing modern criminal challenges.

From a more humanistic perspective, the effectiveness of law enforcement is not only about technical and procedural aspects but also about substantive justice for victims and society at large. Every victim of document forgery is entitled to maximum legal protection, a transparent investigation process, and real justice in court decisions. Law enforcement officers must be able to establish good communication with victims, provide adequate assistance, and ensure that the victims' rights are respected throughout the legal process. Furthermore, law enforcement officers must also build public trust through professional, responsive, and integral service. Public



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trust is the key to creating an effective and just law enforcement system (Rachman, Diwirya, and Kartadinata 2022).

Ultimately, the effectiveness of law enforcement against document forgery crimes at the Gorontalo Police Resort is a reflection of the overall quality of the legal system. Effective law enforcement will provide safety, justice, and legal certainty for all citizens, while serving as the foundation for creating a just, prosperous, and civilized society, as envisioned in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Therefore, improving the effectiveness of law enforcement must be a shared priority, by law enforcement officials, policymakers, and the public. Only with solid cooperation, strong commitment, and continuous innovation can law enforcement in Indonesia, particularly in Gorontalo, run optimally and provide real benefits for all layers of society.

Challenges in Investigating Document Forgery Cases

The investigation of document forgery cases at the Gorontalo Police Resort serves as a real example of the complexities and challenges faced by law enforcement officers in the modern era, where social dynamics, technological advancements, and human resource limitations intertwine to create significant barriers. The main obstacles in investigating document forgery cases can be categorized into two major aspects: internal obstacles originating from within the police institution itself and external obstacles arising from the community environment and the broader legal system.

From an internal perspective, the shortage of investigators is a fundamental problem that criminal investigation units in regions often face. Each investigator is tasked with handling not only one type of case but must divide their time and energy to handle a variety of cases, ranging from theft, assault, to document forgery, which requires special attention. As a result, the handling of document forgery cases is often delayed or even neglected because it has to share priority with other cases that are considered more urgent or easier to resolve (Sijabat et al. 2024).

Moreover, the lack of specialized technical training in forensic document analysis becomes a significant obstacle in proving forgery. Document forgery is not



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an ordinary crime that can be uncovered only through witness testimonies or confessions from suspects. Special expertise is required to analyze the authenticity of signatures, stamps, paper, ink, and other elements that are the objects of forgery (Rahman and Razak, n.d.). Unfortunately, in many areas, including Gorontalo, technical training in forensic document analysis remains minimal. Investigators often have to learn independently or rely on field experience, without sufficient formal training. As a result, the process of proving forgery becomes slow and inaccurate, potentially weakening the investigator's position in the prosecution process in court. The lack of forensic laboratory facilities also exacerbates the situation. To conduct laboratory tests, investigators must send evidence to forensic laboratories in major cities such as Makassar or Jakarta, which incurs time and costs. This process not only slows down the investigation but also opens the possibility of evidence being lost, documents being damaged, or even losing the trail of the perpetrators.

The high administrative burden is also a challenge. Investigators are faced with piles of files, reports, and documents that must be processed, verified, and systematically arranged for investigation and reporting purposes. Amid human resource limitations, this administrative burden often drains the investigators' time and energy, leaving less time for field investigations or forensic analysis. The numerous other cases that investigators have to handle also result in document forgery cases not receiving optimal attention. In such situations, investigators often have to prioritize, with cases deemed easier or quicker to resolve being handled first, while complex document forgery cases that require more time are often postponed (Ray Cita, Arifai, and Kamaruddin 2024).

From an external perspective, low public legal awareness is also a significant challenge. Many citizens do not understand the importance of document authenticity and the harmful impacts of forgery, which leads to reluctance to report or testify in legal processes. It is also common for the public to fear or be unwilling to get involved due to concerns about threats or pressure from the perpetrators. A permissive culture towards administrative violations is still prevalent, where document forgery is seen as a "shortcut" to overcome bureaucratic obstacles or gain economic advantages. This phenomenon indicates that law enforcement cannot stand alone without strong legal culture and active public participation. Witness reluctance to provide testimony is



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one of the primary obstacles in the investigation process. Many witnesses feel afraid, uncomfortable, or even threatened when having to testify before investigators or in court (Hasrul, Nawi, and Abbas 2022). In some cases, the perpetrators of document forgery are influential or powerful individuals in the community, making witnesses feel unsafe to speak the truth. Pressure or intimidation from perpetrators to victims and witnesses also often occurs, both directly and indirectly. Physical threats, psychological pressure, or even material inducements are tools used by perpetrators to silence witnesses or obstruct the investigation process.

Ineffective coordination between the police, prosecutors, and relevant agencies is another major obstacle in investigating document forgery cases. In many cases, case files are sent back and forth between the police and prosecutors due to being considered incomplete or not meeting formal and material requirements (Sahari 2023). This process not only prolongs the case resolution but also causes frustration among investigators and victims. The lack of communication and synergy between law enforcement agencies means that the information needed to complete case files is often delayed or not available. On the other hand, government agencies responsible for issuing documents, such as the Population and Civil Registration Office, are often slow to respond to requests for document verification or clarification from the police. The long and convoluted bureaucratic process, coupled with the lack of a digital data system, makes the document verification process slow and prone to errors.

Another important obstacle is the limited budget for investigative financing. Document forgery cases often require additional costs for laboratory examinations, transportation, and field operations. In situations with limited budgets, investigators have to be frugal and often rely on personal funds or assistance from external sources to complete the investigation process. This is, of course, not ideal and can lead to ethical issues or even abuse of power. Furthermore, weak internal oversight of the investigation process also creates gaps for non-compliant practices. In some cases, prolonged or non-transparent investigations open the door for informal negotiations outside the law, where perpetrators attempt to "resolve" the case informally with law enforcement officers.



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The impact of these obstacles is profoundly felt by victims and the wider community. Many victims of document forgery feel hopeless because their cases remain unresolved, the perpetrators are not immediately apprehended, or the legal process moves very slowly. Public sense of justice is tarnished, and trust in law enforcement institutions diminishes. Victims often suffer significant financial losses, losing their rights to land, identity, or access to public services because their original documents have been forged or duplicated by the perpetrators. In the long term, the widespread cases of document forgery that are poorly handled can have a domino effect, leading to an increase in derivative crimes such as fraud, corruption, and cybercrime, as well as a decline in the credibility of the national administrative system (Djanggih, Mappaselleng, and Permana, n.d.).

From a humanistic perspective, the obstacles in investigating document forgery cases are not just technical and procedural but also related to substantive justice and the protection of victims' rights. Every victim is entitled to a swift, transparent, and fair legal process, along with adequate assistance from law enforcement. Investigators must be able to establish good communication with victims and witnesses, provide safety and protection from threats, and ensure that victims' rights are respected throughout the legal process. Additionally, law enforcement officers must also build public trust through professional, responsive, and integrated service. Public trust is the foundation for creating an effective and just law enforcement system (Azzahro and Setianingsih 2023).

Improvement efforts must be comprehensive and sustainable. First, strengthening the capacity and professionalism of law enforcement officers through technical training, increasing personnel, and providing adequate facilities and infrastructure is crucial. Special training in forensic document analysis, digital technology for document analysis, and the development of electronic reporting systems can enhance the effectiveness of investigations. Second, there is a need for reforms in the coordination system between law enforcement agencies at the investigation, prosecution, and judicial levels to ensure faster, more transparent, and accountable legal processes. Third, mass legal education must be promoted to increase legal awareness and optimize public participation in law enforcement. Fourth, internal and external oversight of the investigation process must be



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strengthened to prevent abuses of power, collusion, or corruption that could undermine public trust.

Moreover, both local and central governments need to provide adequate budget support for investigative operations, especially for cases requiring specialized expertise and forensic laboratory examinations. The development of information technology and the digitization of administrative processes must be accompanied by strengthening document security systems and enhancing investigators' capabilities to detect and uncover increasingly sophisticated forgery methods. It is also important to update regulations to keep pace with technological advancements, ensuring that the law remains relevant and able to address modern crime challenges.

Overall, the obstacles in investigating document forgery cases at the Gorontalo Police Resort reflect systemic challenges faced by law enforcement throughout Indonesia. Effective handling requires cross-sector cooperation, strong commitment, and continuous innovation. By addressing these obstacles, it is hoped that the investigation process can become more effective and efficient, leading to real justice and legal protection for victims. Only through joint efforts can law enforcement in Indonesia function optimally and provide real benefits for all layers of society.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of law enforcement against document forgery crimes at the Gorontalo Police Resort still faces quite complex challenges, both from internal and external aspects. Internally, the limitations in the number of investigators, the lack of specialized training in forensic document analysis, and the scarcity of laboratory facilities are major obstacles that slow down the investigation process and case resolution. The high administrative burden and the numerous other cases that must be handled also cause document forgery cases to often be delayed and not prioritized.

Externally, low public legal awareness, reluctance of witnesses to testify, and pressure or intimidation from perpetrators to victims and witnesses further hinder the law enforcement process. Ineffective coordination between the police, prosecutors, and relevant agencies also results in case files being sent back and forth, extending the case resolution time.



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Nevertheless, continuous efforts for improvement are being made through enhancing personnel capacity, strengthening coordination systems, providing legal education to the public, and developing technology and digitalization of administration. Effective law enforcement against document forgery requires not only clear regulations but also commitment, integrity, and cooperation from all parties. By addressing these challenges comprehensively, it is hoped that the investigation process will become more efficient and fair, ensuring that public trust in law enforcement institutions is maintained, and the legal state's goal of creating justice and order can be achieved.

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