



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## The Role of Investigators in the Handling of Corruption Cases

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2026, 29(02), 1443-1449

Publication history: Received on 17 January 2026; revised on 25 February 2026; accepted on 27 February 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2026.29.2.0446>

### Abstract

Corruption is an extraordinary crime that has far-reaching impacts on economic and political stability as well as public trust in government. The main problem addressed in this study is the role of prosecutors' investigators in handling corruption cases and the factors that hinder the implementation of investigations, particularly in the Maluku region. This research aims to analyze the role, authority, and effectiveness of prosecutors' investigators in handling corruption cases and to identify the various obstacles encountered in investigative practice. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation conducted at the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office. Data were analyzed narratively using an inductive approach, with triangulation applied to ensure data validity. The findings indicate that prosecutors' investigators possess a strong legal basis to conduct corruption investigations in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations. The investigative process is carried out systematically, beginning with the issuance of an investigation warrant, notification of the commencement of investigation, examination of witnesses and experts, and the collection of evidence through searches, seizures, and detention when necessary. However, the effectiveness of investigations is still constrained by several factors, including the lengthy process of auditing state financial losses by relevant institutions, budget limitations, inadequate facilities and infrastructure, the geographical challenges of an archipelagic region, and uncooperative or fugitive suspects. In conclusion, the success of handling corruption cases is determined not only by the legal authority of investigators but also by the availability of resources, inter-institutional coordination, and the objective conditions of the working area.

**Keywords:** Prosecutors' Investigators; Corruption Crime; Investigation Process; Investigation Constraints; Law Enforcement

### 1. Introduction

Corruption in Indonesia has spread widely throughout society and shows an increasing trend over time. If left unchecked, the escalation of corruption can have serious consequences, not only for the national economy but also for the sustainability of the nation's political and social life as a whole (Umam et al., 2020). Corruption constitutes a violation of the social and economic rights of the public and is therefore classified as an extraordinary crime. Consequently, efforts to combat it cannot rely on conventional measures but require equally exceptional actions (Sarker et al., 2021). Moreover, corruption is often linked to various other crimes, particularly organized crimes such as terrorism, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, as well as economic crimes like money laundering. Thus, corruption represents an offense that causes severe harm to the state (Anagnostou & Doberstein, 2022; Zabyelina, 2023). On a large scale, corruption can drain state finances, hinder development resources, and even threaten political stability. Today, corruption has also crossed national borders and become transnational in nature, one example being foreign bribery, in which multinational corporations bribe officials in developing countries (Susilawati et al., 2025). Corruption is one of the greatest challenges that undermines and obstructs the efforts of many countries, especially developing nations, toward sustainable development and toward the promotion and strengthening of democratic institutions and values (Hoseah, 2014).

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Corruption remains a highly complex problem in Indonesia, significantly affecting governance, economic development, and public trust (Ismail et al., 2025). Corruption is a global issue that continues to pose a serious threat to public administration, from economic development to the realization of social justice. In Indonesia, the abuse of authority by state officials has become deeply entrenched and constitutes a major obstacle to sustainable development. Although various reform efforts and movements have been undertaken, corruption has continued to adapt and manifest in diverse forms and channels, often becoming embedded within political and bureaucratic structures. The history of corruption in Indonesia can be traced back to the Dutch colonial period, when the exploitation of natural resources and the population was a defining feature of colonial governance. This condition laid the foundation for a culture of corruption that persisted even after independence (Kroeze, 1900). Following the proclamation of independence in 1945, Indonesia faced major challenges in building the nation amid widespread poverty and underdevelopment. During the Guided Democracy period under President Sukarno (1945–1967), political instability and weak economic management further exacerbated corrupt practices within the government. In the New Order era under President Soeharto (1967–1998), corruption became institutionalized as part of the power structure. The government at that time was characterized by complex patronage networks, in which support for the regime was rewarded with economic and political benefits, creating a system that not only tolerated corruption but actively sustained it (Syifa, 2017).

Corruption is no longer viewed merely as an act that harms state finances or the national economy, but as conduct that violates the social and economic rights of the public, which form part of human rights (Poerwanto et al., 2023). Accordingly, there is a strong rational basis for classifying corruption as an extraordinary crime, meaning that efforts to eradicate it must also be carried out through extraordinary measures and legal instruments. Countries perceived as highly corrupt often simultaneously exhibit poor human rights records. For this reason, international institutions have assumed the existence of a negative feedback loop between these two social harms. Furthermore, corruption is no longer an issue confined to the local level but has developed into a transnational phenomenon affecting various societies and the global economy, thereby requiring international cooperation for its prevention and control (Peters, 2019). These extraordinary approaches have been incorporated into legislative policies in the form of special provisions that deviate from the general rules of criminal law, including in the areas of investigation and inquiry. The incidence of corruption in Indonesia has reached an alarming level. The element of illegality in corruption cases plays a crucial role in determining whether a criminal offense has occurred and who must be held accountable, whether in terms of official responsibility or individual responsibility. The consequence of individual responsibility is directly related to criminal liability (Julian & Widiowati, 2023). Several countries in the world, such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Iran, have been identified as jurisdictions where the death penalty for corruption offenders is still applied. As a result, the death penalty has been abolished in many other countries (Mispanyah, 2023).

The investigation of corruption offenses as extraordinary crimes is entrusted to three institutions, namely the Police, the Attorney General's Office, and the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). This delegation of authority is intended to accelerate anti-corruption efforts, as corruption not only causes financial and economic losses to the state but also undermines the foundations of national life and governance. Administratively, these three bodies operate independently, yet functionally they are expected to cooperate to optimize the handling of corruption cases. In practice, however, such collaboration has not been effective, as each institution remains constrained by sectoral attitudes and institutional interests. This situation is influenced by the absence of clear and harmonized regulations governing their respective authorities, resulting in inconsistent legal provisions. Consequently, overlapping powers arise due to differing interpretations among investigators, which ultimately hampers the effectiveness of the investigative process (Sukmareni et al., 2018). Corruption in Indonesia is a serious problem that has long hindered development and eroded public trust in the government. Although various criminal law enforcement measures, including imprisonment for corruption offenders, have been implemented for many years, a meaningful decline in corruption levels has yet to be achieved (Kurniawan, 2025). Corruption is closely associated with collusion and nepotism, widely known as KKN (Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism).

Corruption can be regarded as a serious threat to human security because it has penetrated various vital sectors, such as education, healthcare, the fulfillment of basic public needs, religious life, and other social services (Hassan, 2024). In bribery practices within the business world, both nationally and internationally, corruption has been shown to undermine the integrity of public officials. In pursuit of wealth, some officials are willing to violate applicable laws (Sarhan & Cowton, 2025). The disclosure of corruption cases often encounters difficulties because the perpetrators typically possess certain powers or authority, usually involve more than one individual, and act in an organized manner. From a criminological perspective, corruption is considered a complex crime that is difficult to address because it involves multiple actors and intersects with political, economic, and social dimensions (Hamid et al., 2023). Therefore, corruption is frequently categorized as a white-collar crime. Corruption offenses do not always directly cause losses to state finances or the national economy, as in cases of bribery. Nevertheless, such acts remain reprehensible because they involve abuse of power, discriminatory conduct for financial gain, betrayal of public trust, moral degradation of

officials, and dishonesty in competition. Given the complexity of corruption amid multidimensional crises and its tangible impacts, corruption can be classified as a national problem that must be addressed seriously through firm and targeted measures involving all elements of society, particularly the government and law enforcement agencies (Sihombing & Nuraeni, 2025).

Efforts to eradicate corruption through legal channels rely on the consistent enforcement of anti-corruption laws and related regulations that are repressive in nature. Law enforcement essentially involves all Indonesian citizens, but its implementation rests in the hands of authorized officials. In criminal cases, this authority is vested in the Police, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Courts. Police officers, prosecutors, and judges constitute the three pillars of law enforcement, each with distinct duties, powers, and responsibilities as stipulated by law. In carrying out their functions, these three elements form part of interconnected subsystems within the criminal justice system. Therefore, the role of prosecutors as investigators is highly significant in handling corruption offenses. It is expected that the presence of prosecutors will strengthen enforcement efforts so that corrupt practices, particularly in the Maluku region, can be reduced or even eliminated.

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## 2. Research Method

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative research, a method that transparently describes phenomena in accordance with real conditions in the field. As stated by Lim (2025), qualitative methods have developed as an important means of obtaining an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena. This approach aims to clarify misconceptions about the qualitative research process by providing comprehensive explanations and practical strategies for addressing its various dimensions. Unlike quantitative research, which emphasizes numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative approaches explore the richness of human experiences and perspectives, enabling researchers to capture context and subtle meanings that are often not reflected in numbers. Conducting qualitative research is not merely a matter of selecting a method, but a commitment to deeply examining social phenomena and understanding participants' subjective experiences. Research conducted at the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office enabled the researcher to obtain data relevant to the research objectives and to address the main problems examined in this study.

The techniques used to collect data in this research are as follows. (1) Observation, namely direct observation that allows the researcher to see and examine events firsthand, then record behaviors and occurrences as they actually happen in order to obtain proportional knowledge directly from the data collected. Through observation, the researcher can capture unspoken understandings, how theory is applied in practice, and the informants' perspectives that may not emerge through interviews (Xu & Storr, 2012). (2) Interviews, defined as conversations between two parties, namely the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who provides answers. One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher serves as the research instrument, because the data are generated through the researcher's interaction with participants. Data interpretation is guided by what the researcher sees or hears during these interactions. The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research, which entails personal involvement in the phenomenon and contributes to the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings (Muzari et al., 2022). Consequently, the researcher must thoroughly understand the research problem and the qualitative data collection techniques employed, as well as be able to grasp both explicit and implicit meanings from what is seen, heard, and experienced. (3) Documentation, which is one of the qualitative data collection methods used in research methodology. The documentation employed includes lesson plans prepared by teachers, reports of student activities assigned by teachers in the form of compiled portfolios, and other relevant sources, such as observation sheets from teachers collaborating in the research.

Triangulation is a method of validating data by comparing information obtained through different data collection techniques or various triangulation paradigms. Data confirmed through triangulation provide the researcher with confidence in their validity, thereby supporting reliable research conclusions. Data analysis in this study uses a conceptual induction approach that begins with empirical facts or information to build interpretations in the form of impressions, opinions, or theoretical perspectives derived from the data. The data obtained through the data collection instruments are analyzed narratively, a paradigm that involves gathering descriptions of events and organizing them into a coherent story using a structured narrative flow (Oranga & Matere, 2023).

### 3. Results and Discussion

Investigators. Article 1 point 1 of Law Number 16 of 2004 concerning the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Indonesia stipulates that "a prosecutor is a functional official authorized by this law to act as an investigator, public prosecutor, and executor of court decisions." In addition to the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the Police, the Prosecutor's Office is also granted authority to investigate corruption cases. The following are excerpts from interviews with investigators, who stated that:

*As an institution entrusted with the authority to investigate corruption offenses, the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office must remain optimistic in resolving corruption cases at the regional level (MG). As an investigator at the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office, corruption cases are not handled solely by the KPK; the Prosecutor's Office can also handle corruption cases. In particular, investigations of special crimes are conducted by prosecutors (DFM).*

Based on the interviews above, it can be concluded that the Prosecutor's Office, through its investigators, is authorized to handle corruption cases categorized as special crimes. Accordingly, prosecutorial investigators are granted the authority to conduct investigations into corruption offenses. Furthermore, in handling corruption crimes, the Prosecutor's Office must act in accordance with applicable laws and regulations in Indonesia. The following interview results with investigators indicate that:

*Certainly, the authority of prosecutorial investigators is not derived from the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP), although it also discusses investigators, but can be found in Law Number 30 of 2002 concerning the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), Article 44 paragraphs (4), (5), and so on (DFM). An investigator at the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office also stated that the legal basis lies in the law concerning the KPK and the law on the eradication of corruption offenses (YO).*

The legal basis for prosecutors' authority to investigate is contained in several statutes. According to the Head of the Execution and Examination Section:

*The legal basis for prosecutorial investigators includes: (1) Article 30 paragraph (1) letter d of Law Number 16 of 2004, (2) Article 39 of Law Number 31 of 1999, and (3) Article 44 paragraphs (4) and (5) and Article 50 paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) of Law Number 30 of 2002 concerning the KPK. In conducting investigations, coordination with external parties is carried out. Investigators at the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office stated that coordination exists with institutions such as the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK), regional governments, experts, the KPK, the Police, the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), and the courts. Investigators need to coordinate with relevant parties during the investigation process (MG).*

This coordination is important because it relates to information, data, or guidance that can support the investigation process. Another investigator explained that:

*The investigation process requires coordination with all parties, including government institutions, law enforcement agencies, academics, and the public, in order to facilitate access to information that supports the investigation. In corruption cases, coordination is not limited to a single institution but involves multiple agencies as well as community participation related to the case (DFM).*

Based on the findings under the first indicator, the investigation of corruption offenses by prosecutorial investigators is carried out under authority explicitly granted by law. This demonstrates that investigators at the High Prosecutor's Office possess a strong legal foundation and full legitimacy in conducting every stage of the investigation. Adiguna (2021) explains that Law Number 16 of 2004 concerning the Prosecutor's Office, particularly Article 30 paragraph (1) letter d, affirms the authority of the Prosecutor's Office to investigate certain crimes, including corruption. Regarding the second indicator on inhibiting factors, the research findings show that investigators at the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office have generally worked optimally in accordance with applicable regulations. Nevertheless, various obstacles still affect the smooth implementation of investigations. These challenges do not diminish investigators' commitment but rather constitute difficulties that must be addressed while adhering to the mandate of the law. Gunawan & Redi, (2024) state that the investigation process will be effective when all required elements are fulfilled and supported by strong official examination reports as the basis for evidence. Setiawan & Amrullah (2025) note that the main obstacles in handling corruption cases at the Prosecutor's Office generally include three aspects: limitations in human resources (including inquiry officers, investigators, and public prosecutors), limited budgets at each stage of case handling, and inadequate facilities and infrastructure to support investigative and prosecutorial activities. Wibowo (2017) adds that these limitations significantly affect investigators' performance, particularly in handling corruption cases in regional

areas. These findings are consistent with the study by Diar et al. (2025), which indicates that corruption in Indonesia and Malaysia can no longer be understood merely as individual misconduct but as the result of complex interactions among power structures, weaknesses in legal systems, and deeply rooted social cultures. As developing countries, both face the challenge of bureaucratic modernization that has not been matched by the internalization of integrity values. In Indonesia, corruption is closely linked to electoral politics, government procurement, and decentralization policies that create opportunities for abuse of authority. In Malaysia, practices of cronyism and economic patronage illustrate how political elites utilize legal and economic mechanisms to maintain dominance. The evolution of corruption from a simple legal violation into an institutionalized practice demonstrates that corruption has adapted and become embedded within political, bureaucratic, and business networks. Laws that should function as instruments of oversight often become entangled in systems that sustain corrupt practices. In Indonesia, overlapping regulations and weak law enforcement render anti-corruption efforts less effective and susceptible to politicization. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, although the legal framework is relatively more structured, issues of law enforcement independence and political transparency remain major challenges in combating corruption.

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#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research on the Existence of Investigators in the Process of Handling Corruption Crimes, it can be concluded that the role of investigators is crucial in determining the success of law enforcement against corruption, which is complex and systematic in nature. The investigation process of corruption offenses by investigators begins with the issuance of an Investigation Order (P-8), which grants authority to several prosecutors to conduct investigations into corruption cases. Subsequently, no later than seven days from the commencement of the investigation, investigators are required to submit a Notice of Commencement of Investigation (SPDP) to the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) as a form of coordination and oversight among law enforcement agencies. The next stages include summoning and examining witnesses, which are documented in Official Reports of Examination (BAP), summoning and examining expert witnesses with competence relevant to the subject matter of the case, and examining the suspect. In order to gather sufficient evidence, investigators may also carry out coercive measures such as searches and seizures of documents, letters, and other evidence related to corruption offenses. When necessary, investigators are authorized to arrest and detain suspects to prevent escape, destruction of evidence, or repetition of the crime. After the entire investigation process is declared complete, the case file is systematically compiled and submitted to the court for prosecution and trial proceedings. However, in practice, investigators face various inhibiting factors that can delay or even complicate the investigation process of corruption offenses. These obstacles include technical issues, such as the lengthy process of auditing state financial losses by the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) or the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), which constitutes an essential element in proving corruption cases. In addition, limited case-handling budgets, inadequate supporting facilities and infrastructure, and challenging geographical conditions also pose significant barriers, particularly in the Maluku region, which consists of numerous islands. Another important factor is the existence of suspects who flee or are uncooperative, thereby hindering the examination process and case resolution. Thus, it can be emphasized that the effectiveness of handling corruption offenses depends not only on the legal authority possessed by investigators, but also on the availability of resources, inter-agency coordination, and the objective conditions of the working area. These various constraints represent serious challenges for the Maluku High Prosecutor's Office in its efforts to realize swift, precise, and fair law enforcement against perpetrators of corruption crimes.

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