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## Socio-Legal Approaches To Combat Fake News (Hoax) On Social Media Pertaining Covid-19 In Batam City (A Case Study Of The Virginia Ship)

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**Abstract:** In 2020, a hoax was disseminated through social media in Batam City, claiming that the captain of the Virginia Ship had contracted Covid-19. This hoax immediately caused significant concern among the residents of Batam City, as the ship was anchored in their city. This study aims to identify the strategies employed by the Regional Police of Riau Islands Province to combat hoaxes, specifically focusing on the case of the Virginia Ship. To achieve this objective, socio-legal research was conducted, which involved in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders from the Regional Police of Riau Islands Province. Additionally, secondary data collected through library research was utilized. All data was qualitatively analyzed. The findings of the study indicate that the enforcement of laws against hoaxes on social media pertaining to COVID-19 in Batam City has been effective. This success can be attributed to the establishment of a Cyber Crime Investigation Satellite Office situated at the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police headquarters.

**Keyword:** Hoax, Social Media, COVID-19, Virginia Ship, Batam City.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of life worldwide, causing concerns among the population. However, if we observe the initial emergence of the Covid-19 virus, it was anticipated through various efforts, including government announcements, although the implementation of these measures was not strictly followed by the public. Furthermore, some people believed that the presence and spread of the Covid-19 virus would not rapidly expand to other countries based on the situation in the country where the outbreak originated. False news or hoaxes regarding the tropical climate and its impact on the spread of the virus, as well as claims about natural remedies and herbal

medicines that could prevent or cure Covid-19, influenced people's perceptions. As a result, some individuals did not consider the pandemic as a serious health threat.

Another concern arose when quarantine measures were implemented for individuals who had travelled outside their local areas, especially those who had been to regions identified by the government as infected zones. This caused worries among the population, and within a relatively short period, the presence of the virus was no longer taken lightly. This led to the implementation of health protocols such as social distancing, which had immediate effects on social activities and the national economy.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the geographical location of Batam City, which is strategically positioned on international shipping routes, it shares direct borders with Singapore and Malaysia to the north, Lingga Regency to the south, Bintan Regency and Tanjungpinang City to the east, and Karimun Regency to the west. The total area of Batam City is approximately 4,580 square kilometers, with 23% (1,034 square kilometers) being land and 77% (3,545 square kilometers) consisting of numerous islands. Some of these islands are small and situated at the forefront, directly bordering Singapore and Malaysia.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, a news article caused public anxiety and turmoil due to the spread of false information, commonly known as hoaxes, through social media in Batam City. The hoax claimed that the captain of the Virginia ship had tested positive for Covid-19. This hoax immediately sparked concern and unease among the residents of Batam at that time. The police, specifically the Riau Islands Regional Police (POLDA KEPRI), swiftly responded to the hoax by taking quick action to apprehend the perpetrator and bring them to justice according to the applicable law. POLDA KEPRI, as one of the law enforcement agencies, demonstrated speed and responsiveness in handling the hoax case, as reported on detik.com in the article titled "Riau Islands Regional Police Arrest Hoax Spreader of 'Captain of the Virginia Ship Tests Positive for Corona'.<sup>3</sup>

Hoaxes are considered criminal acts may be regulated under the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE).<sup>4</sup> This law is not a specific form of criminal law and does not directly imply criminal consequences, it primarily regulates the processing of information in electronic transactions on a national scale. The objective is to ensure that information technology development can be carried out optimally, evenly, and reaches all segments of society. Currently, we often hear or come across distressing information that spreads rapidly through the internet, only to find out later that the information is false (hoaxes). There are positive laws in society that regulate the criminalization of hoax dissemination in Indonesia, such as Article 14 and 15 of Law No. 1 of 1946 on Criminal Law Regulations, as well as Law No. 19 of 2016 on Amendments to Law No. 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions, particularly Article 28 point (1) in conjunction with Article 45 (A). An example related to the spread of hoaxes and the subsequent concern and panic in society is the case of the news report claiming the 'Captain of the Virginia Ship Tests Positive for Corona'.

On the other hand, what lessons can be learned from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that has affected the world regarding the implementation of democracy in

<sup>1</sup> Toar Palilingan, "Aspek Hukum Dalam Penanganan Wabah Covid-19," Manado Post, 2020, <https://manadopost.jawapos.com/opini/20/04/2020/aspek-hukum-dalam-dalam-penanganan-wabah-covid-19/>.

<sup>2</sup> Badan Perencanaan dan Penelitian Pengembangan Pembangunan Daerah Pemerintah Kota Batam, "Gambaran Umum Kota Batam 2019," Badan Perencanaan dan Penelitian Pengembangan Pembangunan Daerah Pemerintah Kota Batam, 2019, <https://bapelitbangda.batam.go.id/arsip/1223>.

<sup>3</sup> Agus Siswanto Siagian, "Polda Kepri Tangkap Penyebar Hoax 'Nakhoda Kapal Virginia Positif Corona,'" detiknews, 2020, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4942593/polda-kepri-tangkap-penyebar-hoax-nakhoda-kapal-virginia-positif-corona>.

<sup>4</sup> Na Raisa Monica, "Upaya Kepolisian Dalam Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Penyebaran Hoax," *Jurnal Poenale* 5, no. 2 (2018): 13.

Indonesia, especially in the organization and management of the state and the nation, which generally receives relatively little balanced attention from academics? Therefore, based on the background, there are several questions as follows:

1. How is the enforcement of the law against the criminal act of spreading false news (hoaxes) on social media regarding Covid-19 reporting in Batam City?
2. What solutions and strategies are implemented in law enforcement efforts to combat the criminal act of spreading false news (hoaxes) on social media regarding Covid-19 reporting in Batam City?

Furthermore, to obtain objectivity in the findings of this study, the research also utilizes the analytical framework of the Law Effectiveness Theory by Soerjono Soekanto, which states that the effectiveness of a law is influenced by the law itself, law enforcement officials, infrastructure and facilities, the community, and cultural factors. The law or legislation is not effective if it is characterized by unclear legal provisions, inconsistent law enforcement agencies, and lack of support from the society for the implementation of the law. When the law is implemented properly, it can be said that the law is effective.<sup>5</sup>

## METHOD

This research is aimed at analyzing and addressing the formulated problems using a Juridical Sociological approach. Juridical Sociological research is a legal research method that utilizes secondary data as its initial data, which is then followed by primary data or field data. It examines the application of a legal regulation and seeks to find correlations between various phenomena or variables. The data collection methods used in this research consist of document studies, observations, and interviews.<sup>6</sup>

Since this research utilizes the Juridical Sociological method, both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data is obtained from interviews and observations, while secondary data is obtained from primary and secondary legal materials.<sup>7</sup> Primary legal materials are the Criminal Code, Law No. 1 of 1946 concerning Criminal Law Regulations, as well as Law No. 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions. Secondary legal materials are article journals, books, and other relevant resources to support the primary legal materials.<sup>8</sup> The data is analyzed qualitatively using a juridical descriptive approach.<sup>9</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Enforcement of the Law Against the Criminal Act of Spreading False News (Hoaxes) on Social Media regarding Covid-19 Reporting in Batam City

The implementation of law enforcement against the criminal act of spreading false news (hoaxes) on social media regarding Covid-19 reporting in Batam City falls under the jurisdiction of the Riau Islands Regional Police (Polda Kepri), therefore, the findings below are all based on the interviews with relevant anonymous stakeholders in the Riau Islands Regional Police (*Polda Kepri*) to retain their independency and privacy. This study adopts the Effectiveness of Law Theory of Soerjono Soekanto which stipulates that there are five factors

<sup>5</sup> Salim H. Sidik and Erlies Septiana Nurbani, *Penerapan Teori Hukum Pada Penelitian Disertasi Dan Tesis* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Amiruddin and Zainal Asikin, *Pengantar Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Soerjono Soekanto, *Pengantar Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1986).

<sup>8</sup> Rina Shahriyani Shahrullah and Henry Hadinata Cokro, "Penegakan Hukum Bagi Pedagang Usaha Mikro, Kecil Dan Menengah Terhadap Para Pelaku Usaha Monopoli," *Journal of Law and Policy Transformation* 5, no. 2 (December 10, 2020): 113–27, <https://doi.org/10.37253/jlpt.v5i2.1391>.

<sup>9</sup> Juni Netti Mardiani and Nabil, "Sociology of Law Perspectives in Reviewing the Effective Social Control for Social Medias," *Journal of Law and Policy Transformation* 7, no. 1 (2022): 1–8, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.37253/jlpt.v7i1.6728>.

that need to be fulfilled as criteria <sup>12</sup> to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of a law. These factors are as follows:

1. Legal factors, which include legislation and regulations.
2. Law enforcer factors which involve the individuals or entities responsible for creating and applying the law.
3. Infrastructure or facilities factors, which are used to <sup>9</sup> support law enforcement.
4. Community factor, which represents the environment in which the law is implemented and applied.
5. Cultural factors, which encompass the creative, intellectual, and emotional aspects of human interaction and behavior in society.

Based on the Law Effectiveness Theory by Soerjono Soekanto, it can be analyzed as follows:

1. **Legal Factors** that influence law enforcement against the criminal act of spreading false news (hoaxes) on social media regarding Covid-19 reporting in Batam City within the jurisdiction of the Riau Islands Region. <sup>38</sup> Police include Law No. 2/2002 concerning the police, which <sup>32</sup> defines and establishes the Indonesian National Police as a state apparatus responsible for maintaining security, public order, law enforcement, protection, service, and upholding human rights. <sup>3</sup>
  - a. The Sub-Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crimes (Dittipidsiber) under the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus), <sup>27</sup> which has the authority to investigate specific crimes related to social media, and the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE) of Indonesia, which provides the legal framework for addressing cybercrimes. These laws and regulations serve as the basis for law enforcement against the criminal act of spreading false news (hoaxes) on social media regarding Covid-19 reporting in Batam City, and are implemented by the competent authorities in accordance <sup>2</sup> with the applicable legal provisions.
  - b. Circular Letter Number: KAPOLRI Letter Number: SE/2/11/2021 regarding the Ethical Cultural Awareness to Realize a Clean, Healthy, and Productive Digital Space in Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> This circular letter contains instructions to all levels of the police force, particularly in the criminal investigation scope, especially within the realm of social <sup>13</sup> media in the digital space, to prioritize Restorative Justice as an initial effort in <sup>19</sup> solving criminal cases at the investigation level.
  - c. National Police Regulation Number 6 of 2019 concerning Criminal Investigation is the basis for investigators in the administration and management of criminal investigations. It emphasizes the dynamics and developments in law enforcement, particularly in Criminal Procedure Law, which has <sup>20</sup> undergone significant changes in procedural rules due to the issuance of a decision by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia. This decision has implications for the implementation and process of criminal investigations conducted by the Indonesian National Police, <sup>3</sup> specifically the Riau Islands Regional Police, including the Sub-Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crimes (Dittipidsiber) under the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus).
  - d. The Indonesian Criminal <sup>7</sup> Code (KUHP) and Law No. 1 of 1946 on Criminal Legal Regulations, as well as Law No. 19 of 2016 on Amendments to Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions,<sup>11</sup> are references and provide the legal basis

<sup>10</sup> Yoffi Apriyadi, "Kebijakan Hukum Pidana Dalam Penanggulangan Tindak Pidana Penyiaran Berita Bohong dan Keonaran Di Kalangan Masyarakat Melalui Media Sosial" (Universitas Sriwijaya, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Nur Aisyah Siddiq, "Penegakan Hukum Pidana Dalam Penanggulangan Berita Palsu (Hoax) Menurut Undang-Undang No. 11 Tahun 2008 Yang Telah Dirubah Menjadi Undang-Undang No. 19 Tahun 2016 tentang Informasi Dan Transaksi Elektronik," *Lex Et Societatis* 5, no. 10 (2017): 26–32, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35796/les.v5i10.18485>.

- for the Riau Islands Regional Police, specifically the Sub-Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crimes (Dittipidsiber) under the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus). These regulations govern material criminal acts in Indonesia that cause harm to others and establish legal principles that must be enforced.
2. **Law Enforcer Factors** that influence law enforcement regarding the criminal act of spreading false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam, which falls within the jurisdiction of the Riau Islands Regional Police (Polda Kepri), particularly in terms of the authority in law enforcement, are within the capacity of the Sub-Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crimes (Dittipidsiber) under the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus). This constitutes a specialized team of investigators within the Indonesian National Police, in line with the regulation issued by the National Police Chief (Kapolri) No. 22 of 2010 dated September 28, 2010, which specifies the structure and working procedures at the Regional Police level. Therefore, the main tasks to be carried out by the Ditreskrimsus team have been established. The quantity and quality of personnel, especially investigators and assistant investigators, in terms of human resources, have been sufficient. Therefore, it is mandatory for each member of the investigative team and assistant investigators to possess specific skills in their respective duties through education, training, and specialized courses conducted by the Indonesian National Police (Polri).
  3. **Facilities and Infrastructure Factors** that influence law enforcement regarding the criminal act of spreading false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam by the Sub-Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crimes (Dittipidsiber) under the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus) are as follows:
    - a. The Indonesian National Police (Polri) is responsible for law enforcement in the province of Riau Islands. The Riau Islands Regional Police is classified as a Type A regional police, led by a two-star ranking officer (Inspector General of Police). Ditreskrimsus (Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation) is an executing element at the regional police level under the Regional Police Chief (Kapolda). Based on the Organizational Structure and Work Procedures (OTK), it can be classified as a regional police level (as a Type A regional police).
    - b. In 2015, the Riau Islands Regional Police officially established and signed a cooperation agreement with Australia in the field of Cyber Crime Investigation Satellite Office. The Cyber Crime Investigation Satellite Office is located within the premises of the Riau Islands Regional Police and is equipped with various advanced equipment. The purpose is to expedite the handling of cross-border cases. Personnel at the Forensic Laboratory Center (Puslabfor) of the Sub-Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crimes (Dittipidsiber) under the Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation (Ditreskrimsus) specialized in the field of Physics and Computer Forensics (Bidfisikomfor). They are certified in Digital Forensics and responsible for examining electronic evidence (digital evidence) and processing electronic documents as law enforcement officers in handling cybercrime cases within their jurisdiction.
  4. **Community Factors** that influence law enforcement regarding the criminal act of spreading false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam can be described as follows:
    - a. The community within the jurisdiction of the Riau Islands Regional Police, located in the outermost region of Indonesia and directly bordering several foreign countries, can be considered dynamic and technologically advanced. They have embraced the use of social media supported by advanced communication devices. Similar to other progressive cities, the use of social media has become a perceived necessity and one of the primary needs.

b. The dependency on social media has also changed people's behavior in socializing with others in the virtual world of the internet. The need for information has become undeniable, but the need for accurate information obtained through social media has not been accompanied by a strong desire to filter and understand its truthfulness. As a result, people often read and immediately share information without verifying its accuracy, leading to widespread dissemination of hoaxes that can trigger division and unrest.

5. **Cultural Factors** that influence law enforcement against the spread of false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam City is particularly driven by the habits or lifestyles of the people in Batam City in the present era, which make social media a primary necessity for obtaining information, sharing information widely and globally using technology devices supported by internet facilities with unlimited capabilities. The desire to know about information on social media has become a necessity, but it is not accompanied by the ability of individuals or members of the community to filter and select the information found on social media networks, whose accuracy is unknown. The need for public understanding in filtering the truthfulness of information obtained on social media is highly expected, so that it becomes a habit and an ethical culture in using social media as intelligent members of society. However, not all individuals who use social media in Batam City share information without first seeking its truthfulness. There are some segments of the community that are intelligent and cultured in using social media, but they are few and influenced by the individual's level of education. In this case, Polda Kepri (Kepulauan Riau Regional Police) during the period from 2020 to 2021 has dealt with several issues related to false information (hoaxes) regarding COVID-19 news on digital social media. The following are the hoaxes that have been handled by Polda Kepri during the pandemic period related to COVID-19 news:

a. The Sub-Directorate V of Ditkrimsus (Directorate of Special Criminal Investigation) of Polda Kepulauan Riau successfully apprehended a man with the initials H, who was suspected of spreading and sharing false information (hoaxes). The suspect uploaded an information on Sunday, March 8, 2021, on his Facebook account, which contained a sentence that could cause unrest and anxiety in the community: 'NAKHODA CMA CGM VIRGINIA TERINFEKSI VIRUS CORONA Tanjung Priuk' (The captain of CMA CGM VIRGINIA is infected with the coronavirus in Tanjung Priuk). The suspect also shared this sentence in a Facebook group called Info Loker Pelaut (Seafarers Job Info). The suspect, who worked as a crew member (ABK), was arrested in the Nongsa area of Batam and taken into custody by the Sub-Directorate V of Ditkrimsus Polda Kepulauan Riau for questioning. It is suspected that the suspect violated the provisions according to Article 28 paragraph 2, Article 45A paragraph 2, and Article 28 paragraph 2 of the Indonesian Law Number 19 of 2016 on Amendments to Law No. 11/2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law), with a minimum sentence of 5 years in prison. After realizing that the upload was a hoax, Ditkrimsus quickly formed a team to track, pursue, and apprehend the perpetrator of the false news spread to prevent unrest within the jurisdiction of Polda Kepri. The police confiscated a mobile phone used to spread the hoax news from the suspect and also found a Facebook account named H Pairin, which was used by the perpetrator. Furthermore, Polda Kepri seized the suspect's identification card and SIM card as evidence to process the suspect's actions as part of law enforcement within the jurisdiction of Polda Kepri.

b. The Sub-Directorate V of Ditkrimsus Polda Kepulauan Riau successfully apprehended a housewife residing in Batam City who was suspected of posting content on Facebook in February 2021. The content was in the form of a video containing audiovisual footage of a man recording himself and commenting on the current COVID-19 situation. The content violated several provisions in the Indonesian Criminal Code



(KUHP), including hate speech and false information (hoaxes). The content was then shared by the suspect, who is currently a suspect in the dissemination of hate speech and false information (hoaxes) related to COVID-19 news on Facebook. The content received many comments and shares, causing unrest. The Sub-Directorate V of Ditkrimsus Polda Kepri conducted the arrest, examination, and a series of investigations, and designated the woman as a suspect to be held accountable for her actions. Initially, the suspect was detained for 10 days, but later, the detention was suspended.

### **The Solutions and Strategies Implemented in Law Enforcement to Combat the Dissemination of False Information (Hoaxes) on Social Media regarding COVID-19 News in Batam City**

The Virtual Police, implemented by the Indonesian National Police (Mabes Polri) and initiated by the Chief of Police, General Listyo Sigit Prabowo, is a digital unit aimed at responding to and addressing the issue. This initiative was based on President Joko Widodo's directive, emphasizing that the police should exercise caution in applying the provisions of the ITE Law (Information and Electronic Transactions Law) and take preventive measures. In the case of Polda Kepri (Kepulauan Riau Regional Police), they focus on conducting cyber patrols in the digital space within their jurisdiction.

The cyber patrols conducted by Polda Kepri involve monitoring digital postings that are suspected to potentially involve criminal acts. They prioritize restorative justice by contacting the individuals or accounts that share information on social media platforms. The initial step taken is to provide warnings through social media, SMS, messenger, and other means, before resorting to legal instruments as a last resort, which involves repressive law enforcement as a form of maintaining social order.

However, if the admonishment is not well-received and the individual does not respond positively, the legal process can proceed, and the case can be brought to court. However, no detention is carried out for perpetrators/suspects who have apologized and shown remorse for their actions. Before referring the case files to the prosecutor's office, there is always room for mediation as part of restorative justice. In addition to these stages, the police handling the case provide recommendations for reopening mediation during the prosecution stage before submitting the case files to the prosecutor.

Based on the Law Effectiveness Theory by Soerjono Soekanto, it can be analyzed as follows:

1. **Legal Factors:** the solutions and strategies implemented in law enforcement to combat the dissemination of false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam City can be explained through the following legal regulations: Law No. 2/2002 concerning the police, Circular Letter Number KAPOLRI Number: SE/2/11/2021 on Ethical Cultural Awareness to Create a Clean, Healthy, and Productive Digital Space in Indonesia, National Police Chief Regulation Number 6 of 2019 on Criminal Investigation, Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) and Law No. 1 of 1946 on Criminal Legal Regulations and Law No. 19 of 2016 on Amendments to Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions. These regulations serve as references and the basis for the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police (Polda Kepri), specifically the Sub Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crime (Dittipidsiber) within the Directorate of Special Crime Investigation (Ditreskrimsus). These regulations govern criminal acts in Indonesia that materially harm others and establish legal norms that must be enforced.
2. **Law Enforcer Fact:** the Sub Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crime (Dittipidsiber) within the Directorate of Special Crime Investigation (Ditreskrimsus) of the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police (Polda Kepri) continuously carries out investigations related to any acts that indicate or constitute criminal offenses committed through social

networks, in accordance with the legal regulations mentioned earlier. In addition, solutions provided by Sub Directorate V of Dittipidsiber Reskrimsus include consistently requiring all members and personnel to enhance their personal capabilities through continuous education and relevant training to improve the quality of each investigator. They also conduct cyber patrols in the digital space within the jurisdiction of the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police. These patrols involve monitoring digital postings suspected of potential criminal acts as an initial step in law enforcement and maintaining social order by directly using warnings to the account owners.

3. **Facilities and Infrastructure Factors** in combating the dissemination of false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam City by the Sub Directorate V of the Directorate of Cyber Crime (Dittipidsiber) within the Directorate of Special Crime Investigation (Ditreskrimsus) are primarily supported by the Cyber Crime Investigation Satellite Office located at the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police headquarters. The office is equipped with various types of state-of-the-art equipment and a Forensic Laboratory (*labfor*) responsible for examining electronic evidence (digital evidence). The presence of these advanced facilities helps to suppress various criminal activities within the jurisdiction of the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police, including cybercrimes that span across national borders on a global scale. Additionally, the availability of well-equipped buildings and official transportation enables a swift response.
4. **Community Factors** in combating the dissemination of false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam City involve conducting awareness campaigns regarding the development of legal regulations through social networks using engaging videos and easily understandable graphics. These awareness campaigns serve as educational initiatives and provide guidance and restrictions within the digital space. The aim is to promote a well-behaved and cultured community in their online activities.

**Cultural Factors** in combating the dissemination of false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam City are addressed through the aforementioned awareness campaigns, which serve as preventive measures. The objective is to cultivate an orderly and ethical community in Batam City, specifically in their digital activities. It is expected that these efforts will contribute to creating a cultured society that is aware of the impact of social media and adheres to applicable legal boundaries and limitations.

## CONCLUSION

The enforcement of the law against the dissemination of false information (hoaxes) on social media regarding COVID-19 news in Batam City has been carried out effectively, adhering to the provisions and legal regulations in place. In implementing law enforcement, the focus is on restorative justice, where legal measures, especially criminal sanctions, are considered as a last resort or *ultimum remedium* against the perpetrators of spreading hoax news related to COVID-19 in Batam City.

The factors influencing law enforcement regarding false information related to COVID-19 in Batam City are the community and cultural factors, which are closely related and interconnected as triggers for violations that cause unrest in the wider community, especially among the perpetrators who lack understanding in the use of social media to share news or information without verifying its accuracy and factual basis before posting it on social media. This often results in clashes with the law, especially since issues or news about COVID-19 are still highly relevant to the public.

The primary solutions and strategies to support law enforcement include the establishment of a Cyber Crime Investigation Satellite Office located at the Kepulauan Riau Regional Police headquarters. This office is equipped with various state-of-the-art equipment, including a Forensic Laboratory (*labfor*) responsible for examining electronic evidence

(digital evidence). The presence of these advanced facilities helps to deter criminal actions related to the digital space within the jurisdiction of the Regional Police of Riau Islands Province.

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