

# Globalism and capitalism international cooperation in protecting Indonesian workers from the threat of violence from other countries and negative impacts

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## ABSTRACT

Globalization has brought significant changes to Indonesia's labor dynamics, including increasing labor mobility abroad and the problem of low labor quality due to educational and employment access disparities. This research aims to explain Indonesia's policies for the protection of labor, as well as the forms of international cooperation carried out to protect Indonesian migrant workers. Using the concept of Labor Protection and the framework of International Labor Law (ILO), this study analyzes national regulations, migrant worker protection practices, and Indonesia's collaboration with international organizations (OIs). The results of the study show that the number of Indonesian migrant workers, which reaches around eight million, contributes greatly to the national economy but is still dominated by unskilled workers who are vulnerable to exploitation. The government has made protection efforts through Law No. 18 of 2017 and the policy of exemption of placement fees in certain sectors, although its implementation faces challenges in regional capacity and compliance with placement institutions. At the global level, cooperation through the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) between Indonesia and the ILO strengthens the protection of migrant workers through the development of fair industrial relations, expansion of social security, and improvement of the quality of decent work.

**Keywords:** Indonesian workforce; ILO; DWCP; Indonesian labor policy.

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is a process that connects countries through the intensification of the flow of information, capital, technology, and human mobility. This development encourages the creation of a free market, where economic boundaries between countries are increasingly open and global competition increases. In this context, countries are encouraged to adjust their economic policies to compete at the international level. Globalization has significantly impacted the structure, behavior, and policies of the Indonesian labor market (Siregar, 2024).

The opening of the free market as a consequence of globalization has led to increased economic activities such as industrial expansion, foreign investment, and expanding global production networks. This increasingly dynamic economic activity creates new demand for labor, both domestically and across countries. In this context, globalization indirectly opens up wider job opportunities for the Indonesian people. In line with this view, Ansori explained that with an increase in economic development activities, there will also be more job opportunities available, and the progress of community economic activities will be better (Maharani, 2024). Thus, the increasing interaction of the global economy not only gives rise to new dynamics in the labor market but also encourages the formation of a need for stronger protections for Indonesian workers to face risks and threats in an increasingly complex work environment.

In the context of Indonesia's employment, the increasing dynamics of the global economy have encouraged the flow of labor migration to various countries. Indonesian worker migration plays an important role in national development because it not only expands access to employment but also generates economic contributions through remittances and individual capacity building. As global citizens, Indonesian migrant workers are expected to contribute to progress and welfare at the national and global levels (Tjiptoherjanto, 1992). However, the reality on the ground shows that migration is not completely free of challenges. Indonesian labor migration can make a considerable contribution to the country's economic development, but on the other hand there are many problems faced (Sustyorini, 2010). This underscores the need for serious attention to the protection of migrant workers, given that they are in vulnerable positions in the ever-evolving global economic system. The problem faced by Indonesia in welcoming the era of globalization is the low quality and skill of its workforce resources (Ruhimat, 2006).

The increasing flow of globalization that opens up cross-border job opportunities has encouraged more Indonesian workers to migrate and work abroad. Recent data show that The Indonesian Ministry of Migrant Worker Protection (P2MI) placed 295,439 migrant workers abroad throughout 2024, including housemaids, caregivers, plantation workers, and construction workers (detikNews, 2024). However, this opportunity is also accompanied by several serious challenges, especially those related to the low quality of Indonesia's migrant workforce. The limited level of education and skills causes their competence to be low, thus affecting their performance and placing them in a position that is vulnerable to exploitation and violence. In this situation, the presence of the state is very important because The Government's protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers is a form of state concern for its citizens (Simamora, 2021).

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 The Concept of Labor Protection

Labor protection includes all efforts made by the state to ensure the fulfillment of workers' basic rights, create safe and humane working conditions, and prevent various forms of exploitation and violence. In the context of Indonesian migrant workers, protection has obtained a strong normative foundation through several national regulations. Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers is the main legal umbrella that regulates the rights, obligations, and protection mechanisms for migrant workers from pre-placement, working period, to post-placement periods. In addition, the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Number PER22/MEN/XIV/2008 concerning the Implementation of the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Workers Abroad strengthens the management of the placement of migrant workers and clarifies the responsibility of the government and related institutions in ensuring the safety and welfare of workers.

Within this legal framework, labor protection is positioned as a constitutional obligation of the state and an important instrument to ensure that Indonesian workers, especially migrant workers, can work safely, with dignity, and competitively.

## **2.2. International Labour Law (ILO)**

International labor law developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) is an important normative reference for protecting the rights of Indonesian migrant workers amidst global labor mobility. Through various conventions and recommendations, the ILO establishes international standards regarding fair working conditions, protection from exploitation, non-discrimination, and respect for human dignity in the workplace. In the context of migrant workers, instruments such as ILO Convention No. 97 on Migration for Work and Convention No. 143 on Abuses in Migration are fundamental references to ensure that the countries of origin, destination countries, and placement agencies are responsible for providing comprehensive protection. These ILO principles provide a universal framework that helps Indonesia strengthen national policies related to labor migration, including ensuring safe placement mechanisms, access to justice, and decent working conditions for Indonesian migrant workers. Thus, international labor law serves as a global moral standard and an important tool to harmonize the protection of Indonesian migrant workers at the international level.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Indonesia's Labor Problems**

The flow of Indonesian migrant workers continues to increase every year, and in 2024 alone, the number of migrant workers dispatched will reach more than two hundred thousand people. The large number shows that labor migration is an important strategy for Indonesia to take advantage of global economic opportunities. The contribution of migrant workers to the national economy is also significant, especially through remittances. Reporting from [Tempo \(2024\)](#), Minister of Migrant Worker Protection (P2MI) Mukhtarudin explained that remittances of migrant workers in 2024 will contribute 1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a figure that reflects the strategic role of migrant workers in supporting national economic resilience. However, Indonesia is still lagging behind countries such as the Philippines, which can maximize their migrant potential because it has a more structured education and workforce training system.

Although it has a positive impact, the fundamental problem faced by Indonesian migrant workers is the ability to compete which is still limited in the global job market. Most of Indonesia's migrant workers are still dominated by *hard labor*, which does not require high skills; therefore, the majority come from groups with low levels of education. This imbalance has a direct impact on the quality and bargaining power of workers, which, in turn, affects the type of work they access, the level of income, and the social protection they receive. This condition opens up space for vulnerability, ranging from work exploitation and contract violations to physical and psychological violence in the destination country.

This shows that the challenge of protecting Indonesia's migrant workforce lies not only in security and legal aspects but is also closely related to structural issues in the fields of education and competency development. To minimize the risk of exploitation, Indonesia must ensure that migrant workers have adequate skills and can adapt to the demands of an increasingly competitive international job market. On the other hand, the state is also required to strengthen a comprehensive protection ecosystem—from pre-departure training, employment diplomacy, to placement supervision. This effort to improve quality and competitiveness is key so that Indonesia's migrant workforce is not only seen as a provider of physical labor but also as competent and globally competitive human resources.

### 3.2 Indonesia's Efforts to Protect Indonesian Workers

Efforts to protect Indonesian workers depart from the fundamental principle that the state has full responsibility for ensuring the safety, rights, and welfare of every citizen working abroad. This commitment is affirmed through Law Number 18 of 2017 concerning the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, which regulates the obligations of the central and regional governments in providing comprehensive protection from pre-placement, the working period, to post-placement. This regulation is here to ensure that migrant workers not only get job opportunities but also have legal guarantees when facing risks in the destination country.

In line with that, the Indonesian government has developed various policies and programs designed to realize safe and fair migration. One of the Indonesian government's efforts to provide the best protection to prospective migrant workers (Indonesian workers) through various labor migration management policies and programs that aim to achieve safe and fair migration (Solechan, 2020). These efforts include improving information services, simplifying placement procedures, competency training, and strengthening bilateral cooperation with destination countries. This approach emphasizes that protection is not only reactive, but also preventive by increasing the readiness and capacity of prospective migrant workers before departure.

Historically, the state's commitment to protecting migrant workers has been realized through a variety of evolving legal tools. Throughout the history of Indonesian labor delivery until now, there have been several laws and regulations that have been issued by the labor government (Asyhadie, 2007). It is recorded in the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia, among others: (a) Regulation of the Minister of Manpower Number 04/MEN/1974, (b) Regulation of the Minister of Manpower Number PER.01/Men/1986, (c) Law Number 25 of 1997 concerning Manpower.

These regulations reflect a long process of building a labor protection system that is more responsive to global developments. However, the biggest challenge is not only to ensure the existence of a legal umbrella, but to ensure that its implementation runs effectively on the ground. Therefore, the state needs to continue to strengthen inter-agency coordination, carry out strict supervision of worker placements, and ensure access to legal aid and diplomatic protection for Indonesian migrant workers abroad.

### 3.3 International Cooperation in Protecting Indonesian Workers

International cooperation is a strategic instrument in strengthening the protection of Indonesian workers in the midst of global labor market dynamics. Indonesia realizes that the protection of migrant workers cannot be fully completed through domestic policies, because labor mobility involves countries of origin, destination countries, and international actors. In this context, synergy between the Indonesian government and international organizations, especially the International Labour Organization (ILO), is very important. The ILO as an agency under the United Nations provides international standards and technical support to ensure that every worker, including Indonesian migrant workers, obtains decent, non-discriminatory, and safe working conditions.

One form of strategic cooperation between Indonesia and the ILO is through *Decent Work Country Programme* (DWCP). The program serves as a key collaborative framework that aims to create productive jobs, strengthen harmonious industrial relations, and provide adequate social security for workers. The DWCP not only targets domestic workers, but also impacts migrant workers because of the principle of decent work (*decent work*) applies universally regardless of the work location. Through the DWCP, the ILO provides support in the form of policy formulation, government capacity building, training for workers, and strengthening regulations on the placement of migrant workers to be in line with international standards. Thus, the DWCP acts as a bridge between the ILO's global commitment and Indonesia's national interest to protect its citizens abroad.

The collaboration between Indonesia and the ILO through DWCP has contributed significantly to realizing a sense of security and comfort for Indonesian migrant workers. The ILO's technical support helps Indonesia improve its worker placement mechanisms, improve surveillance systems, and strengthen

social protections so that migrant workers are not only protected from physical risks, but also guaranteed their fundamental rights. In addition, this cooperation encourages the improvement of the quality of the workforce through skills training that is relevant to the needs of the global market, so that Indonesian migrant workers have higher competitiveness and are better protected from the risk of exploitation. Thus, the DWCP is not only a symbol of international commitment, but also a tangible instrument that strengthens Indonesia's national efforts in creating a safe, orderly, and dignified work migration ecosystem.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Globalization has brought major changes to Indonesia's labor dynamics through the opening of the free market, increased investment flows, and the development of international labor mobility. This condition not only expands employment opportunities for the Indonesian people, but also puts migrant workers in a strategic position in national economic development through remittance contributions. However, these benefits go hand in hand with various challenges, especially those related to the low quality and skills of some of Indonesia's migrant workers that make them vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination, and violence in the destination country.

In this context, the protection of migrant workers is the fundamental responsibility of the state. The Government of Indonesia has established a comprehensive legal framework, such as Law Number 18 of 2017, as well as various other regulations that are constantly updated from time to time. This effort shows that the state is not only obliged to provide a legal umbrella, but also to ensure its implementation runs effectively at all stages of labour migration, from pre-placement to post-placement. However, the complexity of the global labor problem demands adaptive policies and stronger protection mechanisms to address a wide range of evolving risks.

International cooperation plays an important role in strengthening these protection efforts, especially through collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO). Through *Decent Work Country Programme* (DWCP), Indonesia received technical support, updated protection standards, and institutional strengthening aimed at ensuring that all workers, including migrant workers, have the right to decent work and a safe working environment. This international framework assists Indonesia in improving the quality of migrant workers, improving their placement systems, and reducing their vulnerability to exploitation and structural violence in destination countries.

Overall, the protection of Indonesian workers in the era of globalization requires a balanced synergy between national policies, improving the quality of human resources, and strong international cooperation. Strengthening the competence of migrant workers, optimizing regulations, and expanding global partnerships must continue so that Indonesia is able to maximize the benefits of labor migration while minimizing the risks inherent in it. Thus, the existence of Indonesian migrant workers not only contributes economically to the country, but also reflects Indonesia's commitment to ensuring that every citizen can work safely, with dignity, and protection in the ever-evolving global economic system.

#### **Ethical Approval**

Not Applicable

#### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not Applicable

#### **Disclosure Statement**

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

#### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author for privacy.

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## Notes on Contributors

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Riky Ovaliansyah Harahap is affiliated with Universitas Bangka Belitung

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