

## Transnational Terrorism Funding in the Context of State Crisis and Its Implications for Indonesia through a Case Study of Venezuela

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### ABSTRACT

Transnational terrorism financing plays a crucial role in sustaining and expanding terrorist networks, particularly in states experiencing economic, political, and institutional crises. Such crises weaken financial oversight, increase illicit economic activities, and reduce law enforcement effectiveness, creating opportunities for terrorist groups to mobilize funds through concealed channels. This study examines the dynamics of terrorism financing in crisis-affected states through a case study of Venezuela and analyzes its implications for Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach based on document analysis of legal frameworks and international reports, the findings reveal that terrorism financing is highly adaptive and closely linked to transnational organized crime. The study emphasizes the need for stronger financial supervision, interagency coordination, and international cooperation within a comprehensive national resilience strategy.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Terrorism financing is a strategic component that enables terrorist activities to continue and develop in various forms. The availability of funds is a determining factor in the planning, recruitment, training, logistics, propaganda, and execution of terrorist acts themselves (FATF, 2019). Terrorist financing does not only originate from illegal activities such as drug trafficking, money laundering, organized crime, and cybercrime, but can also exploit legal channels such as donations, charitable activities, and digital fundraising that are misused. This complexity makes terrorist financing a multidimensional threat that directly impacts the security, economic stability, and integrity of a country's financial system (Lemhannas RI, 2022).

The threat of terrorist financing is increasing in line with the strengthening transnational character of global terrorist networks (UN, 1999). Developments in information technology, digital payment systems, and international economic connectivity enable cross-border fund flows to take place quickly and be difficult to detect (IMF, 2021). These conditions increase the risk of misuse of formal and informal financial systems as a means of financing terrorist activities. This vulnerability requires countries to not only focus on prosecuting terrorists, but also to strengthen mechanisms to prevent the sources and flow of funding.

Indonesia views terrorist financing as a serious threat to national security and economic resilience (Republic of Indonesia, 2013). The state's response is manifested through the establishment of a legal framework that specifically regulates the prevention and eradication of criminal acts of terrorism financing. Law Number 9 of 2013 classifies terrorism financing as a separate criminal offense and provides a legal basis for law enforcement, asset freezing, and inter-agency cooperation (Republic of Indonesia, 2013). This legal framework is reinforced by the role of financial authorities, including Bank Indonesia and the Financial Services Authority, through the implementation of risk-based anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing systems in the payment system and financial services sector.

Indonesia's national commitment is also in line with its international obligations to combat terrorist financing. The ratification of the international convention on combating terrorist financing confirms that Indonesia is part of a global regime that places this issue as a shared responsibility of countries around the world (UN, 1999). This international legal framework emphasizes the importance of criminalizing terrorist financing, freezing and seizing assets, and international cooperation in information exchange and cross-jurisdictional law enforcement (UNSC, 2001). International standards developed in a global context also serve as a reference in strengthening national policies to keep pace with the dynamics of transnational threats (Kao, K., et.al, 2023).

The context of a state crisis presents additional challenges in efforts to prevent transnational terrorist financing (Lemhannas RI, 2022). Countries experiencing economic, political, and institutional crises tend to have weak oversight of economic activities and financial systems (Nanda.C., n.d. 2025). These conditions create space for the development of illegal economies and organized criminal networks that have the potential to be linked to terrorist

financing (JPBH, 2020). Prolonged crises can also weaken a country's capacity to enforce the law, control its territory, and monitor cross-border financial movements.

Venezuela is an example of a country experiencing a multidimensional crisis and has become the focus of international attention in the context of transnational crime and global security (BBC Indonesia, 2024). The prolonged economic crisis, political instability, and weak institutional governance have given rise to various allegations regarding the involvement of state and non-state actors in cross-border illegal economic activities (ICE, 2020). Allegations of links between drug networks, organized crime, and activities categorized as narco-terrorism show how a country's crisis can intersect with the dynamics of transnational terrorism financing (Detik, 2024). This situation makes Venezuela a relevant case study for understanding the relationship between a country's crisis and the threat of terrorism financing on a global scale.

The implications of these dynamics for Indonesia are important to examine in depth. The interconnectedness of the global financial system and the increasing mobility of cross-border funds open up the potential for illegal funds to flow in, which can be used to support terrorist activities (PPATK, 2023). Analysis of the case of Venezuela provides strategic lessons for Indonesia in strengthening its terrorism financing prevention system, improving the effectiveness of financial sector supervision, and strengthening international cooperation. This study is expected to contribute academically and practically to understanding transnational terrorism financing in the context of state crises and its implications for Indonesia's national security and resilience.

### ***Research Question***

Based on this background, the problems in this study focus on several main aspects, as follows:

1. What are the characteristics and dynamics of transnational terrorism financing in the context of countries experiencing economic and political crises?
2. What are the conditions of a country in crisis, as reflected in the case of Venezuela?
3. What are the implications of the dynamics of transnational terrorism financing on the terrorism financing prevention system in Indonesia?

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***Transnational Terrorism***

Transnational terrorism financing is understood as the process by which terrorist groups obtain, manage, and direct funds to support their activities across national borders. This theory places financing as a vital component of terrorism strategy, because without access to resources, terrorist groups cannot operate their networks, logistics, recruitment, or operational actions (Romaniuk & Kaunert, 2023). Experts also explain that modern terrorism financing does not only come from purely illegal activities, but often involves transnational organized crime networks that provide financial and logistical capabilities through drug trafficking, arms trafficking, smuggling, and money laundering

(Springer Nature, 2025). In a transnational context, this funding becomes more complex and often exploits loopholes in the international banking system and differences in regulations between countries.

### ***The Concept of State Crisis***

The concept of state crisis is used to explain when and how the internal conditions of a country become vulnerable to structural disruption. State crisis includes a decline in economic capacity, political instability, institutional weakness, and the collapse of the surveillance system, which ultimately weakens state control over financial flows and domestic security. According to studies on security and international relations, countries in crisis experience fundamental failures of government, allowing civil society and the informal economy to develop without strong controls (Buzan, 1998). This creates a “gray zone” environment, where non-state actors, including terrorist groups and criminal networks, can exploit institutional vacuums for their funding and operations.

### ***Non-Traditional Security Theory***

Non-traditional security is an approach that broadens the definition of security threats beyond the realm of interstate military affairs to include threats such as terrorism, transnational crime, and cross-border economic threats. In this study, security is seen as a condition that is threatened not only by war or military aggression, but also by socio-economic and criminal dynamics that transcend territorial boundaries (Buzan, 1998). This approach places transnational terrorism financing as a non-traditional threat because it does not rely on weapons or direct military confrontation, but targets economic stability, the credibility of the financial system, and the conceptual integrity of the state. The non-traditional security approach emphasizes the need for a holistic response that includes economic, legal, and diplomatic aspects, not just military or repressive measures.

### ***Transnational Organized Crime***

Transnational organized crime is a phenomenon in which criminal groups operate across national borders to pursue illegal profits. This theory explains the symbiotic relationship between terrorist groups and criminal networks, in which both parties exploit state weaknesses and economic opportunities from illegal activities such as drug smuggling, arms trafficking, and money laundering (Oxford University Press, 2025). Within this framework, terrorist groups not only utilize organized crime as a source of funding, but also use these networks as mechanisms for distribution, protection, and information, thereby strengthening the structure of the network, making it more flexible and difficult to dismantle through law enforcement approaches that focus solely on one type of crime.

### ***National Resilience and Financial Security***

National resilience is a concept that encompasses a country's capacity to deal with complex threats, both domestic and foreign, including economic and financial threats that affect national stability. In the context of terrorist financing, national resilience is not only viewed from a military or political perspective, but

also from the robustness of the financial system, regulatory oversight, and interagency coordination capabilities. This approach emphasizes that a transparent and well-regulated financial system is an important element in preventing the misuse of funds for terrorist activities. Weaknesses in regulation and supervision can open loopholes for illegal cash flows, thereby weakening national resilience to transnational threats.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a normative legal research method combined with conceptual analysis and case studies. This approach was chosen to understand transnational terrorism financing as a legal and security phenomenon closely related to legal norms, public policy, and the dynamics of international relations in the context of state crises. The type of research used is normative legal research with a focus on the study of legislation, international legal instruments, and institutional policies that regulate the prevention and eradication of terrorism financing. This normative analysis is complemented by a case study of Venezuela to see how state crisis conditions can create structural vulnerabilities that can potentially be exploited in transnational terrorism financing. Case studies are used as a contextual analysis tool to connect legal norms with empirical realities at the global level.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Transnational Terrorism Financing in the Context of State Crisis***

Transnational terrorism financing develops significantly in countries experiencing structural crises and weakening fundamental government functions. Countries that are unable to exercise effective control over the economy, security, and law enforcement tend to lose their capacity to monitor the movement of financial resources across their jurisdiction. This condition creates strategic space for non-state actors, including terrorist networks, to exploit institutional gaps in the state (Buzan, 1998).

State crises have a direct impact on the weakening of financial surveillance systems and an increase in informal economic activities that are beyond the reach of state regulation. Weak supervisory institutions and law enforcement agencies make it difficult to detect and trace illegal funds. This situation provides a strategic advantage for terrorist groups in accessing, managing, and transferring funds across borders through mechanisms that resemble legal economic transactions (Shelley, 2014).

Terrorist financing in the contemporary context no longer relies on a single source of funding, but operates through integrated transnational criminal networks. These networks include narcotics trafficking, arms smuggling, money laundering, and other transnational crimes that provide financial and logistical support to terrorist groups. This relationship demonstrates the convergence between terrorism and organized crime as part of the survival and adaptation strategies of armed non-state groups (Kaldor, 2012).

State crises accelerate the formation of transnational crime ecosystems by providing an environment that is permissive of illegal activities. Weak state control over territory and financial systems allows terrorist groups to operate flexibly and

makes them difficult to disrupt through conventional security approaches. In this context, terrorist financing functions not only as an operational tool, but also as a strategic instrument to maintain the existence and expand the influence of transnational terrorist networks (Kilcullen, 2009).

Transnational terrorism financing in the context of a state crisis can thus be understood as a form of asymmetric threat that exploits the structural weaknesses of the state. This threat is not directed through direct military confrontation, but rather through the exploitation of fragile economic and financial systems. The defense perspective views this phenomenon as a serious challenge to national security and regional stability that requires a comprehensive approach based on state resilience (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

### ***Venezuela as a Case Study of Crisis and Vulnerability to Terrorism Financing***

Venezuela is a clear example of how prolonged economic and political crises can create structural conditions that are vulnerable to exploitation by transnational terrorism financing networks. The Indonesia National Bureau of Economic Research reports that the collapse of the formal financial system and hyperinflation in Venezuela have led to economic peripheralization, where communities and economic actors have shifted to the informal and non-formal sectors due to the weakness of the national banking system. This shift has fundamentally reduced the state's ability to track financial flows and implement financial oversight standards, creating a huge loophole for illegal financial activities and funding that supports non-state groups.

Weak coordination between law enforcement agencies and a fragile institutional regime exacerbate the situation. A Mutual Evaluation by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) describes Venezuela as having serious structural deficiencies in its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing efforts, including a lack of information on adequate investigations and limitations in effective international cooperation. This inability reflects the state's low capacity to deal with financial crime, opening up opportunities for criminal networks and terrorist actors to exploit the weak system. In this context, Venezuela has also become a hub for criminal organizations that have been identified as transnational threats. A structure known as the Cartel de los Soles, which is believed to involve high-ranking military and government officials, has been prioritized by international authorities as a criminal and transnational organization involved in drug trafficking and money laundering and linked to broader security threats. This designation reflects how fragile institutional conditions and high levels of corruption can strengthen networks that serve a dual role as providers of illegal funding channels and as nodes in transnational crime and terror networks (Reuters, 2025; Financial Times, 2025).

The relationship between organized crime networks and terrorist financing is often symbiotic in crisis-stricken countries. In practice, criminal groups involved in drug trafficking, smuggling, or other illegal activities can provide access to financial resources used by terrorist groups. Unstable political conditions and weak state control expand the space for these non-state actors to operate, blurring the line between organized crime and terrorist financing (Rendon, M., et.al. 2019).

The crisis in Venezuela also shows how these conditions attract external intervention and international policy actions that link the issue of crime to broader security threats. Measures such as the designation of certain criminal groups as terrorist organizations by foreign governments indicate that the situation in Venezuela is now seen not only as a domestic crisis, but as a regional security issue related to terrorist financing and transnational crime (Reuters, 2025; Financial Times, 2025).

### *Implications for Indonesia in Preventing Terrorism Financing*

Transnational terrorism financing, as seen in the case of Venezuela, has significant strategic implications for Indonesia, particularly in the context of preventing and eradicating illegal cash flows that could support cross-border terrorist activities. Indonesia, as a country with an open financial system and high global connectivity, is not entirely immune to the spillover effects of terrorism financing due to capital flows, cross-border transactions, and developments in financial technology that facilitate the movement of funds (UU No. 9 of 2013). The prevention of terrorism financing in Indonesia is carried out through a specific legal framework, namely UU No. 9 of 2013 concerning the Prevention and Eradication of Terrorism Financing Crimes. This law comprehensively regulates preventive and repressive measures against terrorism financing, including the criminalization of the provision of funds, the monitoring of financial transactions, the reporting of suspicious activities, and mechanisms for freezing or blocking assets related to terrorism financing activities. These provisions form a strong legal basis for law enforcement officials and supervisory agencies to act effectively in combating the flow of funds that support terrorism (UU No. 9 of 2013).

The national legal framework also encourages systematic inter-agency coordination between law enforcement agencies, financial services authorities, the central bank, and the Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK). This law opens up opportunities for national and international cooperation, including mutual legal assistance, extradition, and information exchange to identify and stop suspicious flows of funds that could flow to or from Indonesian jurisdiction. The role of international cooperation is important in anticipating the transnational and dynamic nature of terrorist financing threats (UU No. 9 of 2013).

Preventive efforts also include strengthening the supervision of the financial services sector through the principle of due diligence (know your customer) and the reporting of suspicious transactions by financial service providers. This mechanism is part of a paradigmatic strategy that combines security, economic, and financial governance approaches in identifying the risks of terrorism financing at an early stage. This approach is in line with global efforts to anticipate financial technology trends such as digital assets or cryptocurrencies that can be used to disguise illegal cash flows.

Lessons from Venezuela also show the importance of institutional resilience and economic stability as an integral part of prevention strategies. Indonesia needs to maintain the integrity of its financial system by improving the capacity, transparency, and effectiveness of financial supervisory institutions so that they are not easily exploited by criminal or terrorist networks. In addition, empowering

the community and the private sector to support early detection and reporting of suspicious transactions also contributes to national resilience against the threat of terrorist financing.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Transnational terrorism financing is a non-traditional security threat that develops in line with the weakening of state capacity to manage economic, political, and institutional stability. This study shows that state crises create structural conditions that make it easier for terrorist networks to exploit loopholes in the financial and law enforcement systems to support their activities. Terrorism financing in this context does not stand alone, but is integrated with other adaptive and cross-border transnational crimes. The case study of Venezuela shows that prolonged crises can turn countries into spaces that are vulnerable to terrorist financing activities. Weakened financial oversight, a rise in the illegal economy, and the low effectiveness of state institutions contribute to the formation of terrorist financing channels that are difficult to detect. These conditions confirm that terrorist financing is not only influenced by ideological factors, but also by the structural dynamics of the state and the global economic system. The implications for Indonesia show that the prevention of terrorism financing must be understood as part of a comprehensive national security strategy. Although Indonesia has a relatively strong regulatory and institutional framework, the openness of its financial system and global interactions still present potential vulnerabilities. Therefore, strengthening financial governance, improving inter-agency coordination, and international cooperation are key factors in preventing transnational terrorism financing. This study confirms that lessons learned from crisis-stricken countries such as Venezuela are relevant for Indonesia in strengthening its terrorism financing prevention policies. An integrated approach between security, economy, and institutional governance is necessary to address the increasingly complex and dynamic nature of terrorism financing threats at the global level.

### ***Recommendations***

Preventing transnational terrorist financing requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach, especially in the face of increasingly complex global dynamics. Based on the findings of this study, several strategic recommendations can be formulated to strengthen efforts to prevent terrorist financing in Indonesia.

1. Strengthening oversight of the national financial system needs to be continued by adapting to developments in terrorist financing methods. Increasing the capacity of supervisory agencies and law enforcement officials is important, particularly in detecting suspicious transactions involving cross-border activities, virtual assets, and the non-bank financial sector.
2. Improving coordination between national agencies is a strategic necessity in addressing the transnational nature of terrorist financing. Synergy between financial institutions, law enforcement agencies, and security institutions must be encouraged through clear and structured working mechanisms.

3. International cooperation needs to be optimized as part of the response to cross-border terrorist financing. Indonesia needs to strengthen its participation in international forums and mechanisms focused on preventing terrorist financing, especially in the exchange of financial and intelligence information. Strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation is important to anticipate the spillover effects from countries experiencing crises and with the potential to become centers of terrorism financing activities.
4. A preventive approach based on national resilience also needs attention. Strengthening economic stability, transparent governance, and improving public financial literacy can be important instruments in preventing the misuse of the financial system.

### **FURTHER STUDY**

Future research is encouraged to broaden the comparative scope by examining multiple crisis-affected states to identify patterns and variations in transnational terrorism financing mechanisms. Quantitative approaches incorporating financial intelligence data and risk assessment indicators may provide more measurable insights into the relationship between state fragility and illicit financial flows. In addition, interdisciplinary studies integrating security studies, international law, and political economy perspectives would enrich the analytical framework. Further research may also explore the effectiveness of regional cooperation frameworks in Southeast Asia to strengthen Indonesia's preventive strategies against evolving terrorism financing threats.

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