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The Principle of Presumption of Innocence: Ensuring Suspect Rights During the Investigation Process

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the implementation of the suspect's rights as a manifestation of the presumption of innocence at the investigation level. To identify the obstacles to implementing the suspect's rights during the examination process at the investigative level. The type of research used is a normative research type, based on the results of the research conducted, in the implementation of the suspect's rights in the examination process regardless of whether it is proven or not, the suspect is still protected by various rights protections including the right to be examined immediately, the right to provide information freely or in a very simple sense during the examination there is no pressure or physical violence during the examination, but there is still one right that is not by the suspect's rights regulated in the Criminal Procedure Code, namely the suspect does not receive legal assistance. In the implementation of rights, there are several obstacles, suspect's including unprofessionalism of investigators in conducting investigations, the behavior and actions of law enforcement officers due to the suspect's ignorance or lack of understanding of the rights that should be obtained as a suspect, and suspects who do not understand the importance of legal assistance, dishonesty and transparency of suspects in the integration process (examination), and uncooperative suspects usually act passively and are silent.

Keywords: Innocence; Investigation; Right.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country of law. This has been firmly stated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, specifically Article 1, paragraph 3, which emphasizes that Indonesia is a country of law. Which means that the organization of the state is not based on power alone. The ideals of the state, as formulated by the founders, are rooted in the concept of "Indonesia is a country of law" (Puspito and Masyhar, 2023), which means that in the relationship between law and power, power is subject to law. Lasswell says that thereby ensures the key to political stability in society. (Lasswell, 2017).

In a state, law is the main pillar in moving the joints of social life, the nation, and the state. One of the main characteristics, based on Nonet, Selznick, and Kagan, of a country of law lies in the tendency to assess actions taken by society and the basis of legal regulations. (Nonet et.al., 2025) In the life of society, it is impossible to rule out the possibility that no crime will be committed. These crimes have been regulated and are called criminal acts, including gambling, robbery, theft, murder, rape and many more. (Gusmarani and Zulyadi, 2025).

As expressed by Sudargo Gautama, a state of law ideally guarantees that every individual has equal standing in the eyes of the law and is free to exercise basic rights. (Gautama and Hornick, 2022). The concept of a state of law itself emerged as a response to the long history of human struggle to free themselves from absolute power. Thus, a state of law limits the power of the ruler and ensures a balance between the rights and obligations of both the state and the individual.

In handling these criminal acts, one of the institutions authorized to deal with them is the Police. In the Criminal Procedure Code (hereinafter referred to as the Criminal Procedure Code), the police are given the authority to conduct investigations. (Siregar, 2024). The investigation process is carried out on anyone suspected of having committed a criminal act that has occurred, to find the perpetrator, or is called a suspect. The definition of a suspect according to Article 1, point 14 of the Criminal Procedure Code is a person who, due to his actions or circumstances, based on preliminary evidence, is reasonably suspected of being the perpetrator of a crime. (Saragih, 2018).

To find out whether someone suspected of committing a crime is proven or not is not an easy thing. This must begin with an examination process to find and collect evidence. In proving that a person is suspected of having committed a crime by the Police as law enforcers, they must continue to pay attention to the suspect's rights. (Suwarno and Wahyuningsih, 2020).

The recognition of the principle of presumption of innocence in criminal procedure law in Indonesia has two main objectives, namely:

- a. To provide protection and guarantees for someone accused of committing a crime during the case examination process, so that their basic rights are not violated. (Amaravathi and Mishra, 2021).
- b. To guide officers to limit their actions in conducting examinations, considering that the person being examined is a human being with equal dignity and status to the officer conducting the examination.

Therefore, the principle of presumption of innocence is closely related to the criminal justice process, which begins from the arrest of the suspect to the judge's decision stating his guilt. (Basoeky, 2022). This principle is a norm that regulates how law enforcement officers must treat suspects or defendants as if they were innocent, or in other words, the principle of presumption of innocence functions as a guideline (work rules) for law enforcement in treating suspects or defendants by ignoring the assumption of their guilt.

In Indonesia, respect for human rights is reflected in the 1945 Constitution, specifically in Article 28D paragraph (1), which reads: "Everyone has the right to recognition, guarantee, protection, and certainty of fair law and equal treatment before the law".

There is also an implicit provision in Article 66 of Law Number 8 of 1981 concerning the Criminal Procedure Code, point 3 letter c, which firmly states the principle of the presumption of innocence, namely:

"Everyone who is suspected, arrested, detained, charged, and/or brought before a court of law must be presumed innocent until there is a court decision stating their quilt and obtaining permanent legal force".

In Article 1, point 1 of the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), it is stated that investigators are officials of the Republic of Indonesia National Police who have the authority to conduct investigations. Furthermore, Article 17 of PP No. 58 of 2010 concerning amendments to PP No. 27 of 1983 concerning the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code regulates investigations, which read:

"Investigations according to special provisions of criminal procedures as referred to in certain laws are carried out by investigators, prosecutors, and other authorized investigative officials based on laws and regulations."

It can be concluded that an investigation is a process to reveal or determine crimes committed by someone. (Lee, 2020).

The main purpose of the criminal case examination process is to find the material truth in order to determine whether a suspect or defendant is guilty, so that the fairest possible verdict can be given. Even though someone is suspected of committing a crime based on initial evidence, during the examination at the investigation and trial levels, their human rights must be respected. (Dobrianska et.al., 2024). They have the right to defend themselves, provide information freely without pressure, violence, or torture, by the protection of human rights for suspects and defendants.

However, in carrying out the investigation process, the authorities or related agencies must prioritize the rights of the suspect, considering that Indonesia is a country of law, as stated in the 1945 Constitution. (Amri et.al., 2024). This shows that Indonesia is a democratic country that prioritizes human rights in all matters, including the investigation process of a suspect.

In Indonesia, there is often injustice against suspects or people who have not been found guilty, because they receive inhumane treatment, such as violence or coercion during the interrogation process. (Prawira, 2025). To uphold justice, this is not only the task of the government and law enforcement officers, but also the task of the entire community. Therefore, good cooperation is needed between the government, law enforcement officers, and the community in maintaining and ensuring that the rights of each individual are respected.

The existence of a number of suspect rights in the Criminal Procedure Code does not necessarily guarantee the implementation of these rights optimally. If there is a

deviation from the procedure by the investigator, questions arise regarding the legal consequences that will arise. Can a case be dropped just because of a procedural error, even though in substance there is sufficient evidence to declare the suspect guilty?

This research seeks to provide valuable insights to law enforcement officers and the general public, particularly the police, regarding the proper procedures for conducting investigations as prescribed by the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP). By adhering to these established legal frameworks, the investigation process can be conducted without infringing upon the rights of suspects. Furthermore, this study aims to address public concerns and alleviate fears surrounding the conduct of law enforcement during investigations, thereby reducing societal trauma associated with such processes. Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute to the restoration and enhancement of the public image of law enforcement institutions by promoting practices that are both lawful and respectful of human rights.

2. Research Methods

This research employs a normative juridical approach, focusing on an in-depth analysis of legal norms, both those explicitly stated in legislation and those implied within legal doctrines. (Negara, 2023). The primary objective is to construct a comprehensive understanding of the legal framework governing the issue under investigation. The study adopts a descriptive nature, aiming to provide a detailed and profound depiction of phenomena observed in the field. Bevond merely describing occurrences, it seeks to explore the factors influencing these phenomena and to offer insights into the relationships between the involved variables. A qualitative approach is utilized, emphasizing descriptive and in-depth analysis of the subject matter. This method allows for the exploration of subjective data, such as individual perceptions, experiences, and viewpoints, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods. Data collection relies significantly on Google search engines as a key tool for accessing relevant and up-to-date information. (Ugur, 2020). This approach enables broad access to diverse sources, including mass media reports, journalistic articles, academic research published in journals, research reports, and other credible platforms.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Implementation of the Rights of Suspects as a Manifestation of the Principle of the Presumption of Innocence in the Examination Process at the Investigation Level

The noble values of Pancasila, such as social justice and humanity, are the basis for the state in providing legal protection to all citizens. Thus, the state ensures that every individual has the same rights to obtain fair and equal legal protection. (Lubis, 2023) The concept of Human Rights has developed for a long time, rooted in the understanding that every human being has the same and inseparable dignity. Recognition of this dignity is the foundation for the struggle for independence, justice, and world peace.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights requires that the protection of human rights not only be a statement, but also be realized in the form of national law. Countries in the world must make laws that specifically regulate and protect human rights. The principle of the presumption of innocence is like a red thread that binds the entire legal process of a person from the time they are suspected of committing a crime until a final court decision is made. (Azwar and Ablisar, 2022). This means that everyone is considered innocent until there is strong evidence to the contrary, whether when questioned by the police, charged by a prosecutor, or tried by a judge.

The concept of the presumption of innocence is a manifestation of the function of criminal justice, which is tasked with overcoming violence or acts of revenge carried out by an institution authorized by the state. (Peters, 2018) Therefore, any violation of rights committed by a person must be resolved based on applicable legal procedures.

The presumption of innocence contains a deep meaning as the main principle in protecting the rights of citizens through fair legal channels, known as due process of law. This principle includes several important things, including protection from arbitrary actions carried out by state officials, determining whether someone is guilty or not can only be done by the court, holding trials that are open to the public without being kept secret, and providing an opportunity for suspects and defendants to defend themselves fully. (Oktavia et.al., 2020)

The process of examining criminal cases basically aims to explore the material truth to ensure that the legal decisions taken are fair and objective. The basic principle in this process is respect for human rights, including the rights of suspects/defendants to defend themselves freely and without pressure. Some of the defendant's rights in the criminal examination process are explained in the following table:

Table 1. The defendant's rights in the criminal examination process

LEGAL REFERENCES	SOUND OF VERSES
Article 50 paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code	The suspect has the right to be immediately examined by the investigator and then submitted to the public prosecutor; the suspect has the right to have his case immediately submitted to the court by the public prosecutor; the accused has the right to be immediately tried by the court.
Article 51 paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code	The suspect has the right to be informed in a language he understands regarding what he is accused of when the examination begins; the accused has the right to be informed in a language he understands regarding what he is accused of.
Article 52 of the Criminal Procedure Code	In examinations at the investigation and trial levels, suspects or defendants have the right to provide information freely to investigators or judges.
Article 53 paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code	In examinations at the investigation and trial levels, suspects or defendants have the right to receive assistance from an interpreter under the provisions of Article 117, and if the suspect or defendant is deaf or mute, the provisions of Article 178 apply.
Article 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code	For defense, suspects or defendants have the right to receive legal assistance from one or more legal counselors during each level of

	examination, by the procedures stipulated in this law.
Article 55 of the Criminal Procedure Code	Suspects or defendants have the right to choose the legal counsel of their choice.
Article 56 paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code	If a suspect or defendant is charged or suspected of committing a crime that can be punished with the death penalty or a sentence of 15 years or more, or for those who are unable and are charged with a sentence of 5 years or more, and do not have legal counsel, the authorized official at each level of examination is required to appoint legal counsel for them. The appointed legal counsel will provide free legal assistance.
Article 57 paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code	Suspects or defendants who are detained have the right to contact their legal counsel by the provisions of the law. Suspects or defendants who are foreign nationals who are detained also have the right to contact and speak with representatives of their country regarding the case process they are facing.
Article 58 of the Criminal Procedure Code	A suspect or defendant who is detained has the right to contact or receive visits from his/her doctor for health reasons, whether related to the case or for other purposes.
Article 59 of the Criminal Procedure Code	A suspect or defendant who is detained has the right to be informed of his/her detention by an authorized official at all levels of examination in the trial process, and to be informed to his/her family or other people who live in the same house, or people who can help him/her to obtain legal assistance or a guarantee for a suspension of detention.
Article 60 of the Criminal Procedure Code	A suspect or defendant has the right to contact and receive visits from parties who have family or other relationships to obtain guarantees for a suspension of detention or to obtain legal assistance.
Article 61 of the Criminal Procedure Code	A suspect or defendant has the right to contact or receive visits from family or other parties for work or family reasons that are not directly related to the case he/she is facing.
Article 62 paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of the Criminal Procedure Code	Suspects or defendants have the right to send and receive letters from their legal counsel or family at any time as needed, and these letters may not be examined by investigators, public prosecutors, judges, or state prison officials, unless there is sufficient reason to suspect that the letter is being misused. If a letter is examined, this must be notified to the suspect or defendant and returned after being stamped "Has Been Reviewed".
Article 63 of the Criminal Procedure Code	Suspects or defendants have the right to receive visits from clergy.
Article 64 of the Criminal Procedure Code	The defendant has the right to be tried in a court hearing that is open to the public.
Article 65 of the Criminal Procedure Code	The suspect or defendant has the right to seek and submit witnesses or experts to provide information that is in his or her favor.
Article 66 of the Criminal Procedure Code	The suspect or defendant is not burdened with the obligation to prove his or her innocence.

The implementation of the rights of suspects as a manifestation of the principle of the presumption of innocence during the investigation process is a fundamental aspect of ensuring justice and fairness in legal proceedings. The Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) provides a comprehensive framework for safeguarding these rights. Article 50 outlines the suspect's entitlement to prompt examination by investigators, timely prosecution by public prosecutors, and expeditious trial proceedings. Article 51 ensures that suspects are informed, in a language they understand, about the charges against them. The statement indicates that an accused individual has the right to be informed, in a language they understand, about the charges brought against them. (Conley et.al., 219). This principle ensures that the accused is fully aware of the allegations they are facing, enabling them to adequately prepare their defense. It reflects a fundamental aspect of fairness and transparency in legal proceedings, safeguarding the rights of the accused and ensuring that they are not disadvantaged due to language barriers or a lack of clarity in communication. (O'Nyangeri et.al., 2024). This right is a cornerstone of due process and is essential for upholding justice in any legal system.

Article 52 guarantees the freedom of suspects or defendants to provide statements during investigations or trials. Articles 53 through 56 emphasize the right to legal assistance, including access to interpreters and the appointment of legal counsel for those unable to afford representation, particularly in cases involving severe penalties. Article 57 extends these rights to include communication with legal representatives and, for foreign nationals, access to consular officials. Articles 58 through 63 address additional protections, such as the right to medical care, notification of detention to family members, communication with relatives or legal counsel, and receiving visits from clergy or others for personal or professional reasons. Article 64 ensures the right to a public trial, while Article 65 allows suspects or defendants to present witnesses or experts in their defense. Lastly, Article 66 upholds the principle that the burden of proof does not rest on the suspect or defendant to establish their innocence. Collectively, these provisions underscore Indonesia's commitment to upholding the presumption of innocence and protecting the rights of individuals throughout the criminal justice process. (Arifin et.al., 2024).

3.2. Compliance Requirements for Suspects and Defendants in Legal Proceedings

According to the Indonesian Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), a suspect or defendant not only enjoys certain rights but also bears responsibilities that must be adhered to by the law. These obligations include, but are not limited to, the following: under Article 22(3) KUHAP, suspects or defendants under city arrest are required to report themselves at specified times; Articles 22(2) and 22(3) mandate those under house or city arrest to obtain permission from the relevant authority before leaving their designated area. (Buzescu, 2024). Article 31 obliges suspects or defendants granted suspension of detention to comply with specific conditions, such as mandatory reporting or restrictions on travel. Article 72 and its explanation require suspects or defendants to retain copies of case documents for their defense. Articles 79 and 81 stipulate that suspects or defendants must provide reasons when filing requests regarding the legality of an arrest or detention, as well as claims for compensation or rehabilitation. Articles 112 and 113 obligate suspects or defendants to appear when lawfully summoned unless there are valid reasons for absence. Article 154(4) requires

defendants to attend court sessions on scheduled dates, with provisions for forced attendance under Article 154(6) if necessary. While not explicitly stated as an obligation, Article 182 necessitates that defendants or their legal counsel present a defense. (Amalia et.al., 2024).

Additionally, suspects or defendants must respect courtroom decorum and comply with procedural rules. Article 22(1) imposes an obligation to pay court fees as determined in the criminal judgment. Although not strictly mandatory, Article 237 logically implies that defendants filing appeals should submit an appeal memorandum. Article 248(1) requires those seeking cassation to file a cassation memorandum within 14 days of their application and submit it to the court clerk. (Hamzah and Suratman, 2015). Lastly, Article 264(1) mandates that defendants requesting judicial review (peninjauan kembali) clearly state the grounds for their application. (Deniardi et.al., 2023). These provisions collectively underscore the legal duties imposed on suspects and defendants within the framework of KUHAP. (Novianti and Tamrin, 2024).

With the inclusion of the rights and obligations of suspects in the criminal examination process regulated in the Criminal Procedure Code, the Criminal Procedure Code becomes a legal umbrella that provides protection and guidelines for suspects at every stage of the examination. With clear regulations on these rights and obligations, the Criminal Procedure Code not only protects suspects from potential abuse of authority but also provides guidelines for law enforcement officers in carrying out their duties legally and fairly. As a legal basis that regulates all aspects of the criminal process, the Criminal Procedure Code ensures that the rights of suspects are respected, while their obligations are also accommodated.

The examination of suspects by the police at the investigation stage is often in the spotlight, especially in the public perception that this process is vulnerable to violations of the suspect's rights. In some cases, there are concerns that suspects do not receive the protection they should under applicable legal provisions.

The results of the author's analysis conclude that public perceptions regarding violations of suspects' rights in the examination process are not fully supported by empirical data. The results of the study show that investigators have carried out their duties by established procedures, including in terms of providing suspects with the opportunity to be examined immediately

Although the Criminal Procedure Code expressly regulates the suspect's right to legal assistance, in practice, there are still many cases where this right is not fulfilled. The reason often put forward is the investigator's desire to speed up the examination process. However, this action is a violation of the basic principles of criminal justice, namely the presumption of innocence, and violates the provisions of Article 114 and Article 56 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

3.3. Challenges for Investigators in the Implementation of Suspects' Rights in the Examination Process at the Investigation Level

As previously explained, in the implementation of legislation, various problems often arise, both caused by unclear rules and by less than optimal implementation of laws, especially by law enforcement officers. According to Tsani's research, this also occurs

in the implementation of the rights of suspects during the investigation process, which, in addition to being influenced by the factors mentioned, is also caused by obstacles or constraints faced during the investigation process. (Tsani, 2024). These obstacles can come from both the investigators themselves and the suspects, resulting in the implementation of the suspect's rights not being able to run properly.

Legal protection for suspects in the national criminal law system is regulated in Chapter VI of the Criminal Procedure Code. One of the rights guaranteed is the right to be informed, in a language that is understood, about what is suspected or charged against them. (Ruslan, 2021). However, in practice, violations of the suspect's rights often occur. The provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code are often ignored and poorly understood by the police as law enforcers. This is evidenced by the many cases of wrongful arrest and harsh treatment during the investigation process that are often revealed in the media. (Rahmawati and Dermawan, 2023). These incidents show that the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code have not been properly understood and implemented by the police.

Even though there is initial evidence that supports the accusation, the suspect's human rights must still be respected, especially since there has been no judge's decision declaring the suspect guilty. The purpose of providing legal protection to suspects is to respect their human rights, provide legal certainty, and avoid arbitrary and unfair treatment. The crisis in enforcing the human rights of suspects has long been felt in Indonesia, especially related to the many cases that have not been processed and detention that is too long. This occurs because existing legal regulations have not been implemented optimally, and these regulations have not been well accepted sociologically in society. In addition, the suspect's uncooperative attitude also worsens the process, so that investigators are forced to take harsh action that results in the deprivation of the suspect's rights. (Kassin et.al., 2025) Another factor that influences the less-than-optimal enforcement of suspects' rights is the low level of professionalism of investigators in carrying out their duties.



Figure 1. Several things make it difficult to provide legal protection in criminal case investigations

During the New Order era, the consolidation of power relied heavily on three dominant pillars: capitalism, bureaucracy, and the military. (Berger, 1997) This period was

characterized by a state structure and social order that were heavily influenced by authoritative control, with violence adopted as a political instrument to maintain national stability. Such an approach permeated the legal system, including practices within law enforcement agencies, particularly the Police force (Polri), which was granted the authority to use coercive measures. (Susilowati and Frans, 2024).

This institutionalized culture of violence fostered a militaristic character among law enforcement officers. Investigative processes during this era were frequently marred by acts of violence and torture aimed at extracting confessions or information from suspects, often bypassing proper legal procedures. These practices not only undermined the rule of law but also perpetuated human rights violations, including in politically sensitive cases. As agents of the state, the Police are entrusted with the responsibility of upholding, respecting, and protecting human rights. (Curley et.al., 2019). However, their frequent reliance on violent methods during investigations to expedite evidence collection reflects a deviation from their legal and ethical obligations. This legacy of militaristic tendencies continues to cast a shadow over the integrity of law enforcement practices in Indonesia.

The weakness in sensitivity towards human rights within Indonesia's criminal law framework, particularly in the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), remains a significant concern. The state bears the obligation to protect every individual from torture and degrading treatment, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution and Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights. Furthermore, Indonesia has demonstrated its commitment to international human rights standards by ratifying the Convention Against Torture through Law No. 5 of 1998. Despite these legal safeguards, the practical implementation of human rights protections in criminal procedure law remains inadequate. (Hu and Hong, 2024). KUHAP was designed to limit state power over individuals and ensure the protection of their rights. However, in practice, the rights of state officials are often prioritized over the rights of suspects or defendants, undermining the fundamental principles of justice and equality before the law.

Suspects often exhibit uncooperative or passive behavior during investigations, which can manifest through dishonest or evasive statements. (Khozooei, 2020). This tendency may stem from several factors, including fear of threats or retaliation from other parties involved in the case, or the influence of external pressure that deters the suspect from providing truthful testimony. Additionally, some suspects may deliberately attempt to mislead investigators by fabricating information or withholding key details, hoping to deflect responsibility and avoid being identified as the perpetrator of the crime in question. (Baker-Eck, 2022). Such behavior poses significant challenges to law enforcement efforts and underscores the necessity of employing effective investigative techniques to uncover the truth.

The optimization of oversight mechanisms and the enhancement of professionalism among law enforcement officers are critical to upholding justice effectively. Inefficiencies in the development of supervisory systems and inadequate control by relevant institutions remain significant challenges. Law enforcement personnel must be equipped with a high level of dedication and unwavering commitment to the principles of justice. Furthermore, the mindset and ethical standards of investigators warrant serious attention, as there are still tendencies to treat individuals differently based on their economic status, position, or occupation. Such biases reflect a lack of empathy

and fundamental human values that are essential in the fair and impartial administration of justice. (Negowetti, 2014). Addressing these issues requires systemic reforms, rigorous training programs, and a reinforced culture of accountability to ensure that justice is not only pursued but also perceived as equitable by all members of society.

4. Conclusion

Indonesia's constitutional commitment to being a state of law, as articulated in Article 1(3) of the 1945 Constitution, emphasizes the primacy of legal principles, including the presumption of innocence, to uphold justice and human rights. While the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) provides robust safeguards for suspects—such as access to legal counsel and protection against coercion—systemic shortcomings, including investigator unprofessionalism, militaristic cultural legacies, and inadequate human rights sensitivity, continue to undermine these protections. External pressures, such as uncooperative suspects and societal expectations, further complicate adherence to fair trial standards. Despite these challenges, investigative procedures generally align with established legal frameworks, though gaps remain in implementation. To bridge these gaps, Indonesia must strengthen legal oversight mechanisms, enhance the training of law enforcement personnel, and foster a culture of accountability that respects human dignity and reinforces equality before the law. Such reforms are essential for ensuring justice, restoring public trust, and fully realizing the rule of law.

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