

## **THE URGENCY OF COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF MAINTAINING INDONESIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY**

**Gio Zaky Asadul Haq<sup>1\*</sup>, Bambang Widarto<sup>2</sup>, Diding Rahmat<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Marshal Suryadarma Aerospace University, East Jakarta, Indonesia

giozakyahaq@gmail.com<sup>1\*</sup>, danielhendrawan@unsurya.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, didingrahmat@unsurya.ac.id<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

National security is a fundamental prerequisite for upholding sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the safety of all Indonesians. In an increasingly complex global context, Indonesia faces various potential threats, both traditional threats such as military aggression and non-traditional threats such as terrorism, separatism, cyber threats, and natural disasters. Indonesia's strategic geographic location, as the world's largest archipelagic nation, demands a comprehensive, adaptive, and people-driven defense system. This study examines the urgency or necessity of implementing mandatory military service to safeguard Indonesia's national security and compares the implementation of mandatory military service in Thailand and South Korea as a policy reference for Indonesia. The results indicate that mandatory military service in Indonesia is highly urgent in increasing public preparedness, building strategic defense reserves, and fostering a spirit of national defense. However, its implementation requires a clear legal basis, thorough planning, and readiness of infrastructure and human resources. Thus, compulsory military service can be a strategic instrument to strengthen the overall defense system in accordance with Indonesia's geostrategic characteristics.

**Keywords:** Compulsory Military Service, National Security, National Defense

**INTRODUCTION**

The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) guarantees the safety, peace, and welfare of its citizens, society, and nation, the security of the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the sustainability of national development from all threats. Current developments in the strategic environment have created complex threats that impact national defense. This demands the nation's ability to effectively address these developments and changes. The government, as a stakeholder, desires a shift from traditional threats focused on military threats to multidimensional ones such as terrorism, radicalism, separatism, armed rebellion, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, natural resource theft, cyberattacks, drug trafficking, and other threats that could disrupt national interests (Suntana & Tresnawaty, 2021). Therefore, efforts to understand national security can no longer stand alone; national security should also be viewed as essential to various components of national and state life, particularly ideology, politics, economics, sociology, culture, defense, and security.

The National Security Bill is one of the stages of regulatory politics in order to create legal and legislative policies that are fully an effort to recognize national beliefs and goals in the context of national interests. Broadly speaking, this policy is a grand design: planning solutions to handle security threats that are multidimensional or systematic, comprehensive, comprehensive, fast, precise, complete, integrated, coordinated, and democratic, and avoiding the impression of being slow, late, fragmented, sectoral, and poorly coordinated (Djuyandi, 2016). The regulation of national security in the Indonesian legal system has a very great urgency. This is because national security is the main foundation for maintaining the stability, sovereignty, and sustainability of the state. National security encompasses both internal and external aspects, including threats to political, economic, social, and defense stability of the state.

Although there are many laws and guidelines that regulate the implementation of national security such as Law Number 6 of 1946 concerning the State of Danger which was later revoked by Law Number 74 of 1957. State of Danger, PP Number 16 of 1960 concerning Requests and Implementation of Military Assistance is also a technical law that was born after the Reformation such as Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Police, Law Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense, Law Number 15 of 2003 concerning Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism, Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the TNI, Law Number 24 of 2007 concerning Disaster Management, Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, Law Number 17 of 2011 concerning Intelligence and Law Number 7 of 2012 on Handling Social Conflict.

However, this law is still sectoral, overlapping, and operates independently. Sectoral egos are still strong. This situation has resulted in weak handling of a number of national security issues or threats. Therefore, in 2011, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, proposed the National Security Bill as the parent of the National Security Administration Law for the entire nation. However, in 2012, this National Security Bill received many pros and cons, so it was returned to the government in 2013. Due to the urgency of the National Security Law that supports the balance of protection and threats that await, this National Security Bill was again attempted to be included in the 2016 National Legislation Program. However, many issues and public fears remain, especially regarding the recurrence of human rights violations such as those experienced during the New Order era and other social conflicts, causing this National Security Bill to fail to be included in the 2016 National Legislation Program (Jacqueline et al., 2017).

The dynamics of strategic environmental developments always have an impact. This is a fundamental reason for the state to study and assess strategic environmental developments both globally, regionally, and nationally so that the state can formulate appropriate strategies and policies. Therefore, the Draft National Security Law (RUU Kamnas) emerged to optimize

efforts to overcome increasing threats. In addition, the National Security Law can also provide guarantees for the protection and certainty of the national security of the Indonesian nation. However, some parties disagree with the ratification of the National Security Law because it will return Indonesia to the New Order era that made its military very strong (Rifai, 2015). This is very necessary to eliminate and anticipate threats to the state that may arise, especially from the President as the executive leader. The National Security Law is projected to be a real national security grand design in maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia from all threats, both domestic and foreign. In addition, the National Security Law is proposed for the implementation of institutional functions or defense and security institutions in Indonesia to increase their synergy to realize genuine security in order to support the state system. The National Security Law aims to protect the interests of the community and regulate them so that they do not overlap with other laws and regulations and position the community as an important subject that plays a role in maintaining national security (Fealy, 2016).

Indonesia's National Resource Empowerment (PSDN) Law plans to implement mandatory military service. This has sparked debate among Indonesian citizens about the necessity of mandatory military service. On the one hand, Indonesia possesses substantial military power, while on the other, some believe efforts to strengthen it are necessary (Noor, 2020).

Military conscription, or conscription, has long been a defense policy instrument in many countries to ensure the availability of human resources ready for deployment in emergency situations. Countries such as South Korea, Singapore, and Israel implement compulsory military service to ensure every citizen has basic military skills and a sense of national defense. The concept of compulsory military service is considered to build national resilience by enhancing the preparedness of civilians as a defense reserve component.

Indonesia once had a mandatory military service regulation that paid attention to conscientious objectors and did not impose criminal sanctions. This was stated in Law No. 66 of 1958 concerning Military Service (the Military Service Law), which contained an article that exempted citizens from participating in military service based on their beliefs and recognized human rights. Article 10 of the Military Service Law stated that military service is not imposed on those in such a situation that if they were called up for military service, it would cause hardship to others who are their dependents. In addition, those who hold a religious or humanitarian position whose teachings do not allow it.

Historically, the need for a mandatory military service as mandated by the 1950 Provisional Constitution has been felt since 1951. At that time, Law No. 29 of 1954 concerning National Defense (the National Defense Law) was enacted as the basis for citizens' rights and obligations in national defense. To refine this concept, the Military Service Law was enacted in 1958 as the legal basis for mobilization in the form of compulsory military service (Nakir, 2017).

In Indonesia, the discourse on implementing compulsory military service continues to be met with both pros and cons. On the one hand, compulsory military service is seen as a way to foster discipline, nationalism, and readiness to defend the country among the younger generation. On the other hand, challenges arise in terms of regulations, budget, infrastructure, and public acceptance. Nevertheless, the urgency of strengthening defense through citizen participation cannot be ignored, especially amidst global uncertainty and the potential for asymmetric threats.

Therefore, research on the urgency of compulsory military service in maintaining Indonesia's national security is crucial to assess the extent to which this policy is relevant and necessary for implementation in Indonesia. This study is expected to contribute to the formulation of a more comprehensive and participatory national defense policy to ensure the

security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In this paper, the research method used by the author is the normative legal research method (Subagyo, 2004). Normative legal research or library legal research is legal research conducted by examining library materials or secondary data only. Normative legal research or library legal research includes research on legal principles and research on the level of vertical and horizontal synchronization (Soekanto, 2001). This means that existing problems are studied based on existing laws and regulations. Normative legal research uses normative case studies in the form of legal behavioral products, for example, reviewing laws. The main subject of study is law conceptualized as norms or rules that apply in society and become a reference for everyone's behavior. Therefore, normative legal research focuses on the inventory of positive law, legal principles and doctrines, legal discoveries in concrete cases, legal systematics, levels of synchronization, legal comparisons and legal history (Muhammad, 2004).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Urgency or Need for Implementing Compulsory Military Service to Maintain Indonesia's National Security**

National security is a fundamental prerequisite for upholding state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the survival of the Indonesian nation. In the context of increasingly complex and uncertain global and regional dynamics, developing a reliable defense force is a necessity. The implementation of a mandatory military conscription system for citizens can be seen as a strategic step to enhance national defense capacity comprehensively. The urgency of implementing mandatory military service in Indonesia is based on the need to confront various non-traditional, asymmetric threats, such as terrorism, radicalism, separatism, and cyber threats, all of which require a high level of structured national preparedness.

Furthermore, from a defense human resources perspective, Indonesia faces the challenge of a limited number of active military personnel, which is disproportionate to the vastness and geographical diversity of the Republic of Indonesia. Through a compulsory military service system, the country can build a reserve of trained personnel ready to be deployed in emergency situations or military contingencies, thereby strengthening the national defense posture in depth and in layers. This concept also aligns with the doctrine of Total People's Defense and Security (Hankamrata), which emphasizes the participation of all citizens as a national defense force. Thus, compulsory military service is a concrete manifestation of the implementation of Hankamrata, where the people are not only objects of protection but also active subjects in defending the nation.

Military service has been a hot topic for several years. Military service is an activity in which citizens are required to participate to maintain the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of a nation. In Indonesia, Law Number 66 of 1958 concerning Military Service (the Military Service Law) mandates military service for its citizens. Article 1(a) of the Military Service Law states that military service is an obligation for citizens to contribute their services to the armed forces.

Military service is imposed on Indonesian citizens who are at least 18 years old, in good health, and have not lost their right to serve in the armed forces due to a judge's decision. Those who participate in military service are called conscripts, and they are citizens who can be called up for military service. Some Indonesians agree that military service should be implemented entirely in Indonesia, but many disagree. They believe that military activities such as national defense are not mandatory but rather the duty of existing military personnel

in Indonesia, such as the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the police, state apparatus, and so on.

A conscription policy is a rule or regulation that requires citizens to undergo military training or join the armed forces for a specified period. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the country has a sufficiently strong defense force and can face potential threats or conflicts, both domestic and international (Cebul & Grewal, 2022). Conscription policies can be implemented in various ways, such as through regular recruitment, military reservations, or mandatory training programs. It is often considered a civic obligation for every citizen to participate in national defense efforts. The implementation of conscription policies can vary between countries and can impact various aspects of people's lives, including education, careers, and daily lifestyles. Some countries may adopt a formal conscription model and view it as an integral part of national identity and security, while others may allow alternative forms of service or consider voluntary options (Gaol & Triadi, 2023).

Active community involvement in the military has long been a part of Indonesian national life, even before the Republic of Indonesia was born and gained independence. This can be seen in the history of the conquests of small kingdoms during the Srivijaya and Majapahit Empires. During their conquests, the kings of Srivijaya and Majapahit actively involved the community in these conquests.

During the struggle against Dutch colonialism and its allies, the Indonesian people were actively involved in helping to secure independence. Likewise, when Indonesia gained independence and had its own military, the people continued to participate in defending that independence. This is evident in the history of the battle that took place in Surabaya on November 10, 1945, which is commemorated as Heroes' Day. This event demonstrates the willingness of the people to sacrifice their lives and bodies to defend the nation and state.

The guerrilla warfare waged by the Indonesian military and the people became a powerful weapon in fighting this new form of colonialism in Indonesia. Under the leadership of General Sudirman, the colonialists failed to control Indonesia through military invasion (Sahabuddin & Ramdani, 2019). This struggle would not have succeeded without the active, direct participation of the people on the battlefield.

The obligation to defend the nation philosophically embodies the social contract theory of state formation. This theory explains that the state was formed out of the citizens' desire to protect their rights and obligations in social, national, and state life. This aims to ensure harmonious, peaceful, and orderly relations between citizens. The state's presence within society aims to protect the rights and obligations of every citizen, preventing conflicts of interest between individuals within society.

According to social contract theory, the primary purpose of the state in society is to maintain harmony between the interests of each citizen. The state is concerned with ensuring that rights and obligations are implemented in accordance with its regulations. To ensure this, the state establishes rules known as laws or statutory regulations. The state's existence stems from the mutual agreement of its citizens. Therefore, the relationship between the state and its citizens is a reciprocal one, one that requires, complements, and supports each other.

One form of inseparable reciprocal relationship between the state and its citizens occurs in emergency situations such as war, where the number of National Army members is still insufficient to face the enemy on the battlefield and equipment and weaponry are still minimal.

In such a situation, the country desperately needs additional human resources with the basic skills of a soldier. These basic skills cannot be acquired directly by an individual; they must be trained and developed over a period of time. Therefore, military education, or compulsory military service, is necessary for all Indonesian citizens, especially males of a certain age.

The constitutional basis for the obligation to participate in national defense is regulated in Article 27 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This article expressly stipulates that every citizen has the right and obligation to participate in national defense efforts. This is further emphasized in Article 30 paragraph (1), which expressly stipulates that every citizen has the right and obligation to participate in national defense and security efforts. Furthermore, Article 30 paragraph (2) expressly stipulates that national defense and security efforts are implemented through a total people's defense and security system by the TNI and Polri as the main force and the people as the supporting force.

The explicit provisions in Article 27 paragraph (3) and Article 30 paragraph (1 and paragraph 2) indicate that there is an inherent obligation for every citizen without distinction of gender, race, culture and customs to carry out efforts to defend the country and to carry out efforts related to national defense and security. This obligation is required in order to maintain the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia

The operational basis for implementing national defense is regulated in:

1. Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, this can be seen from Article 68 which stipulates that "Every citizen is obliged to participate in efforts to defend the state in accordance with statutory provisions."
2. Law Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense, is specifically regulated explicitly in Article 9 which stipulates that every citizen has the right and obligation to participate in national defense efforts which are realized in the implementation of national defense.
3. Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces. The TNI Law specifically regulates the TNI as the Main Component (Komput) of National Defense.
4. Law Number 23 of 2019 concerning Management of National Resources for National Defense.

The National Resource Management (PSDN) Law for National Defense is a crucial legal instrument for national defense. It is an integral part of the National Defense Law and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) Law. Law No. 23 of 2019 comprises 87 articles. The PSDN Law for National Defense comprises 10 chapters covering four key areas: national defense, Reserve Components (Komcad), Supporting Components (Komduk), and mobilization and demobilization. In addition to these four core areas, the law also regulates funding and oversight of the implementation of national defense. The core sections of the PSDN Law for National Defense comprise 11 articles on National Defense, 35 articles on Reserve Components, 11 articles on Supporting Components, and 12 articles on mobilization and demobilization.

Mahfud explained that as citizens, we are required to have a sense of nationalism or a deep love for our homeland, so we must be ready to defend and sacrifice for its survival. Thus, there is a reciprocal achievement between the protection of rights granted by the state and the willingness to sacrifice for the survival of the nation and state, which is embodied in Article 27 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution concerning the obligation of citizens to defend the state (Mahfud MD, 2009).

According to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, military service is considered both a right and an obligation. As a right, military service represents the government's effort to provide the basics of civil defense that citizens can implement in emergency situations. Meanwhile, as an obligation, military service demonstrates the active participation of civilians in defending the nation when the country is in chaos or at war.

In response, Gunarta stated that there are three main reasons for implementing compulsory military service. First, to foster patriotism among the younger generation. Second, compulsory military service serves as a reserve component of national defense. According to the modern defense concept, the number of soldiers must be limited, highly

skilled, and professional. In this context, the army acts as a special force equipped with advanced technology. Third, compulsory military service is implemented during war, requiring large-scale troop mobilization. This is often done by the United States through the conscription system, as implemented during World War II by forming civilian troops. Conscription is not only regulated by the government but also voluntary by citizens. Civilian troops include citizens with permanent jobs, of legal age, and those planning to travel abroad (Gunarta, 2010).

The implementation of compulsory military service plays a crucial role in strengthening nationalism and building national character. With standardized military training, young people from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds can be united in a spirit of nationalism, discipline, loyalty, and love for their homeland. This is expected to foster a sense of national solidarity and serve as a bulwark against potential social disintegration and inter-community conflict. Drawing on the experiences of countries that have implemented compulsory military service, such as South Korea, Singapore, and Israel, this system is not only effective in enhancing military capabilities but also in developing responsible citizens who are prepared to face various threats.

Amidst the geopolitical situation in the Indo-Pacific region, which is rife with competition between major powers, Indonesia's strategic position demands a strong defense posture to safeguard sovereignty and enhance diplomatic capabilities. The implementation of compulsory military service will significantly enhance the ability to defend national sovereignty against external threats or intervention. Furthermore, compulsory military service will also help strengthen overall national resilience by fostering a sense of patriotism, self-reliance, and reducing the influence of radical thought that could threaten national unity.

However, the implementation of compulsory military service in Indonesia requires a measurable and mature design, taking into account various aspects such as a clear legal framework, preparedness of the state budget allocation, adequate training facilities, and public acceptance. The implementation of compulsory military service must also support the development of a professional and modern defense system, so that the primary goal of maintaining national security can be achieved effectively and sustainably. Thus, compulsory military service is not merely a genuine military tool, but rather part of a comprehensive defense strategy integrated with national development policies to ensure the integrity and sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

### **Comparison Of Compulsory Military Service Implementation in Thailand and South Korea as A Policy Reference for Indonesia**

The government intends to propose the implementation of compulsory military service to further foster a sense of national defense and character development in the nation's future generations. Several countries, including South Korea and Thailand, have implemented this compulsory military service program, which is primarily for men.

The legal basis for the implementation of compulsory military service is stated in the Draft Law on Reserve Components (Komcad). Komcad is a military reserve force, consisting of civilians who have received basic military education, prepared to support the military as the main component during times of war emergency (Makaarim, 2011). In peacetime, after receiving basic military training or after the war period, Komcad becomes an ordinary civilian. With the existence of the Komcad Bill which requires citizens of the country to participate in compulsory military service in terms of implementing national defense in the Indonesian Constitution, it has given rise to pros and cons in society. The pro side of the Komcad Bill explains that with this compulsory military service it will help the country's defense forces by involving citizens, especially civilians, as reserves because of Indonesia's strategic geographical position, giving rise to a sense of patriotism, nationalism, and

discipline in society, and the implementation of compulsory military service as a form of national defense as outlined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

The opposition to the implementation of compulsory military service in the Draft Law on Reserves and Reserves (Komcad) has generated criticism and issues. With a population of 270 million, Indonesia's finances are considered insufficient to fund a mandatory military service program that lasts an average of two years. If 20 percent of the total population participates in military service, it is estimated that more than 50 million citizens will be required to serve in the military annually. With such a large number, state finances cannot cover the substantial costs of compulsory military service. On the other hand, the government still faces difficulties in meeting the welfare of its citizens. In this regard, the mandatory military service program will significantly increase the Regional Budget (APBD) costs for providing facilities and infrastructure.

### **1. Implementation of Compulsory Military Service in Thailand**

The Royal Thai Army is the oldest and largest and has traditionally served as the kingdom's defense system. Its commander-in-chief and specialist military staff are based in central Bangkok and direct their troops in carrying out their missions. The army operates through four regional army commands. The First Army, headquartered in central Bangkok, is responsible for the western and central provinces and the capital. The army's forces are organized into seven infantry divisions, eight independent infantry battalions, two special forces training divisions, and a small air force unit, as well as one air defense artillery division. The army's primary mission is to defend the country against aggression by foreign ground forces during the years when invasion was considered impossible by both civilian and military leaders. The main First Army units, permanently stationed in the capital, often provide military backup for coups by senior military officers. At other times, they are used by the ruling military officers to prevent coup aspirations by factions.

The creation of a technically trained, professional military was a significant achievement of the modernization reforms implemented in the late 19th century. By the 1920s, the military had emerged as the most powerful government institution, encompassing many officers who had risen through training and skill. These officers played a crucial role in the overthrow of the absolute monarchy and the constitutional monarchy in 1932. The military included the army, navy, and air force, although the army remained dominant. All male citizens were required to register for the draft at age 18. Only a small minority were selected for the two-year mandatory military service beginning at age 21, and some of them were inducted into the army.<sup>42</sup> Since the early 21st century, the Royal Thai Army has been the largest unit in the country. The army has fought an insurgency in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, which are predominantly inhabited by Malay-speaking Muslims. The army has also faced attacks by guerrillas on the northern and western borders. The guerrillas are involved in the fight against the government in Myanmar by the Myanmar military, which sometimes also pursues rebels across the border. The army has played a dominant role in Thai politics, especially since the end of absolute monarchy by the King in 1932. Public protests were quite strong following the 1991 coup, which resulted in the resignation of the royal intervention by the government led by a general in 1992.

The Thai military has always been involved in politics, whether through coups or other means. In the past hundred years, there have been 19 coup attempts, 11 of which were successful, and three of which were considered to have overthrown or changed absolute monarchies to constitutional ones. Both coups aimed to preserve the burgeoning democracy, and therefore often referred to themselves as a powerful force. The military has influenced politics to both a small and large extent. When absolute monarchy ended

in 1985, coups occurred on average once every four years. Over the past century, coups have been attempted by ideological factions, and more recently, by horizontal military class factions. Initially, from 1912 to about 1950, most coups were ideological in nature. The first conflicts occurred between democrats and monarchists, and from 1950 to 1970, coups were led by vertical factions, primarily to promote the interests of military, political, and business members. Since the mid-1970s, numerous coups have been based on military academy classes. Military rule was further strengthened by Marshal Sarit's 1958 coup. The coup in 1958 had a distinctive characteristic, namely a combination of conservatism and capitalism.

Unlike most countries in the world, the military is more than just a provider of national defense. It is perceived by the public as a defender of the king and national pride. The military has played a strong role in Thailand's political order since 1932, namely security. Security has never been the primary task of the military, but rather the armed bureaucracy. The Thai military often avoids potentially dangerous situations, preferring instead to devote their energies to business and political professions. In business, they have engaged in smuggling, logging, and profiting from the country's natural resources. In politics, they claim the highest political positions because many prime ministers have military backgrounds. The Thai military uses a variety of strategies to build its power and influence, including:

- 1) The military presented itself as a central player in creating a modern state, as evidenced by the change of absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932.
- 2) Throughout the Cold War, the military represented itself as an institution involved in eradicating the communist threat, both externally and domestically.
- 3) The military formed a very strong alliance with the United States during the Vietnam era and was a recipient of aid and training.

Since the end of the overthrow and the change of power from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932, the fragility of representative institutions and public political apathy have resulted. The fragility of representative institutions and public political apathy have allowed the military to control state power. Over the past 60 years, the struggle for power between men in uniform and civilian politicians has been reflected in a series of ongoing military coups to control the country. The armed forces are not only concerned with national defense but also with dimensions within national security, including political stability. Through effective control of the state apparatus, especially the police and civil service. The military has also made political decisions, namely courses of political change that have not been determined by civilian politicians or political parties. In addition, the party system is further compared to institutions and the lack of support from the masses has resulted in a separation between democracy and permanent military rule.

Before the 1980s, Thailand's political process was typically controlled by a powerful elite derived from the military. However, the idea of parliamentary government was first enshrined in the 1930s constitution. Thailand has had universal suffrage since 1932, and the voting age is 18 and above. Although there is no law prohibiting women from participating in politics, few women stand for election to the legislature. The elected parliament began to exert influence over the political process in the 1980s, and since 1992, government power has been exercised through the National Assembly, except for a 15-month period in 2006–2007 when the military took over. The role of the military in Thailand's political process reflects a principle often stated by armed forces leaders that only a disciplined and well-organized military can maintain public order and protect the constitutional monarchy. This principle has been challenged both within and outside the legislature, which is developed and ratified by the elected National Assembly as the basis

for a diverse society. A diverse society, including military politicians and elected officials, often uses their power to advance personal interests rather than the interests of society as a whole. In 2006, the army had a particular reason to participate. Thaksin's party attempted to lead the army under his control. Old-time military officers and many subordinates came to resent this. The army seized the opportunity to gain redemption for the military's role in 1932, which had dramatically reduced their status. The army had long wanted to regain some of its role and had the opportunity to oust Prime Minister Thaksin. The middle class initially named Prime Minister Thaksin in 2001 as a leader to continue the modernizing reforms begun in the 1990s. Their support lasted only about four years. In 2005, they turned against him in a rather violent and highly emotional manner. The middle class had three fears: one: it is very dangerous for a country to be dominated by a large group with vested interests in the business of corruption. Second, they had to pay for Thaksin's populist policies through increased taxes amidst the economic turmoil. Third, Thaksin's formula was an alliance of money and the largest numbers that would make the middle class politically irrelevant (Jackson, 2006).

Thailand implements a selective military conscription system through a lottery mechanism. Male citizens aged 21 are required to register and participate in a national lottery. Those awarded a "red card" are required to undergo two years of military training, while those awarded a "black card" are exempt.

Main features:

- a. Semi-mandatory system with voluntary component (6 months).
- b. The aim is to maintain the number of reserve troops.
- c. Flexible to adjust to budget and personnel needs.
- d. Criticism: extortion practices, avoidance, and unfairness of the lottery system.

Thailand chose this model to avoid too large a fiscal burden while still having a trained reserve force.

## 2. Implementation of Compulsory Military Service in South Korea

The foundation of national defense in several countries is compulsory military service. This is because maintaining a nation's resilience requires individuals with military expertise, such as soldiers who are members of the military. From a legal perspective, military personnel have the same status as ordinary members of the public. This means that as citizens, military personnel are subject to all applicable legal provisions, including criminal law, civil law, criminal procedure, and civil procedure. Therefore, the role of the public is just as important as that of soldiers, but military personnel have greater obligations than ordinary citizens in matters related to national defense, although in essence, every citizen is obliged to participate in national defense. The importance of national defense has led the government to plan compulsory military service, considering that several countries, such as South Korea, the United States, Germany, and several other countries around the world, have implemented basic military education. The conscription system is a system that imposes military service obligations on its citizens by force.

For the purpose of national defense. All citizens of the age specified in the law must undergo a physical and mental examination and serve as soldiers for the country for a specified period. Generally, the military service system is divided into two: the compulsory military service system and the voluntary military service system (Toruan, 2019).

The South Korean government itself implements a compulsory military service system for national defense. Military service in South Korea has long been one of the most fundamental national defense systems in the country. On August 15, 1948, with the

establishment of the first legitimate government, South Korea established a policy requiring its citizens to serve as elements (soldiers) in national defense within the established Constitution. This can be seen in Article 2, point 39 of the Constitution, which states, "Male citizens of the Republic of Korea undertake military service in good faith as stipulated in the constitution and law." Those who register may not be discriminated against on the basis of race or skin color. Furthermore, citizens who have served a prison sentence of more than 6 years are not permitted to participate in military service and will be removed from the list (Susdarwono, 2020).

Military service in South Korea has been in existence for a long time and is one of the most fundamental national defense systems in the country. On August 15, 1948, with the establishment of the first legitimate government, South Korea established a policy requiring its citizens to serve as elements (soldiers) in national defense within the established Constitution (Samani & Hariyanto, 2014). The political system in the post-colonial period was still unstable. Amid the instability experienced by South Korea after colonization, in 1950 a civil war broke out between South Korea and North Korea that lasted for three years. In 1953, the war between South and North Korea was declared over. However, conflicts still frequently occur between the two countries. Negotiations are often held by both countries, but never end well. Therefore, both countries still consider each other a threat. Therefore, South Korea maintains its military service system as a means of defense and security for the country to this day. The Korean military recruitment system is a system that must be in place to accompany the security of the Korean people. This military recruitment system is a crucial fundamental element of the nation's constitution. The importance of implementing compulsory military service for the government can be seen in several positive functions for the state and its constituent elements, namely, increasing nationalism among conscripts and meeting the need for military strength, both in terms of quality and quantity (Basrie, 2019).

The Korean people possess distinctive characteristics: sincerity, sensitivity, and tenacity. Korean nationalism began to grow and develop during the Japanese Empire's colonization before World War II. While Korean nationalism has existed since the Joseon Dynasty, this nationalism was limited to uniting the Joseon people at that time. During the Japanese colonial period, Koreans received universal education, with all Koreans receiving equal access to education. This gave Koreans unique characteristics that distinguished them from their Japanese colonial masters. They developed a sense of freedom from Japanese colonialism. After gaining independence, Korean nationalism reached a peak, with some even reaching the point of supranationalism (Sebastian, 2018).

However, during the civil war in 1950, Korean nationalism declined. This increasingly intense Korean War also involved a war of ideologies, namely communist and democratic ideologies. Previously, the Korean people shared a common spirit to fight Japan, but when their perspectives changed due to the civil war, which resulted in the division of Korea into a communist North Korea and a democratic South Korea, this similarity gradually diminished. One function of the mandatory military service system initiated by the Korean government at that time was to foster nationalism in its participants. This system could be used to strengthen South Korean nationalism after the separation of Korea.

Indonesia does not face a direct military threat comparable to South Korea, but it does have strategic areas vulnerable to conflict and non-military threats (terrorism and disintegration). Through the National Civil Service Law, Indonesia established a voluntary Reserve Component.

Lessons from Thailand and South Korea:

- a. Thailand's flexible system is suitable for countries with limited budgets, but requires strict oversight to prevent corruption.
- b. South Korean-style discipline and nationalism can be adapted into non-military national defense programs.
- c. The Indonesian model should combine volunteerism with incentives (education, employment, benefits), without any element of strong coercion that could create resistance.
- d. The emphasis on character building, national awareness, and disaster/terror preparedness is an alternative model of compulsory military service that is more appropriate to the Indonesian context.

## CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of compulsory military service in Indonesia is a strategic necessity to strengthen the country's defense system and maintain national security as a whole. Indonesia faces various complex and multidimensional security challenges, including non-traditional threats such as terrorism, radicalism, separatism, and cyberattacks. To address these challenges, the country requires the readiness of qualified and trained defense human resources. Compulsory military service is a policy instrument that can strengthen national resilience, not only from a military perspective, but also in terms of social integration, national character formation, and strengthening patriotism. This system aligns with the doctrine of Total People's Defense and Security (Hankamrata), which places all citizens as part of the defense system. The experience of several countries that have successfully implemented compulsory military service systems demonstrates its effectiveness in establishing national military reserves and strengthening national social cohesion. However, the implementation of compulsory military service in Indonesia must be carried out in a gradual and measured manner, with a strong legal basis, adequate infrastructure, sufficient budgetary support, and a community outreach approach. Without thorough planning and implementation, this system risks generating resistance and inefficiencies in national defense development.

A comparison of the conscription systems in Thailand and South Korea shows a variety of models tailored to each country's strategic needs. Thailand is more flexible but prone to corruption, while South Korea is highly restrictive but imposes socio-economic burdens. Indonesia can learn from these lessons to build a defense system based on voluntary reserve components that is effective, fair, and compliant with human rights principles. This policy should focus on fostering a national defense character, preparedness, and social integration for an inclusive and sustainable national defense.

## REFERENCES

- Basrie, C. (2019). National defense: Implementation and development (elaboration of Article 30 of the 1945 Constitution). University of Indonesia (UI-Press).
- BKT Taruna UMA. (2025, Juli 12). Wajib militer untuk pertahanan negara. <https://bkataruna.uma.ac.id/wajib-militer-untuk-pertahanan-negara/>
- Cebul, M. D., & Grewal, S. (2022). Military conscription and nonviolent resistance. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(13), 2217–2249.
- Djuyandi, Y. (2016). The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in advocating the National Security Bill. *Jurnal Bina Praja: Journal of Domestic Governance in Indonesian*, 8(1), 163–173.
- Fealy, G. (2016). The politics of religious intolerance in Indonesia: Does the mainstream defeat extremism? In *Religion, law and intolerance in Indonesia* (hlm. 115–131). Routledge.

- Gaol, T. M. L., & Triadi, I. (2023). Compulsory military service in the context of national defense and the 1945 Constitution. *Journal of Civic Education and Philosophy*, 1(3).
- Global Security. (2025, Juli 12). Royal Thai Army. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military>
- Government Regulation Number 3 of 2021 concerning Implementing Regulations of Law Number 23 of 2019 concerning PSDN.
- Gunarta. (2010). Should the human resource reserve component have implications for military service? *Journal of Development Planning*, XVI(1).
- Jackson, G. (n.d.). Thailand and the 2006 coup. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- Jacqueline, V. E. L., Zakaria, Y., & Bedner, A. (2017). Lawmaking as a strategy for change: The new Village Law in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Asian Law and Society*, 4(2), 447–471.
- Law Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense.
- Law Number 23 of 2019 concerning Management of National Resources for National Defense (PSDN Law).
- Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI Law).
- Makaarim, A. M. (2011). The draft law on national defense reserve components: Legislative dilemmas and defense needs. *Dignitas Journal*, VII(1).
- Mahfud MD, M. (2009). *Constitution and law in controversial issues*. Rajawali Press.
- Muhammad, A. K. (2004). *Law and legal research*. PT Citra Aditya Bakti.
- Nakir, M. (2017). The legal politics of national defense in the perspective of national defense. *Legal Spirit*, 1(2).
- Noor, U. M. (2020). Perception of the implementation of compulsory military service to improve national defense education. *Widya Yuridika: Journal of Law*, 3(1), 61–70.
- Rifai, A. (2015). National security bill. *Wira*, 20–25.
- Sahabuddin, Z. A., & Ramdani, E. A. (2019). People's defense system after the enactment of the PSDN law for national defense. *Journal of Public Administration Research*, 6(1).
- Samani, M., & Hariyanto. (2014). *Character education*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sebastian, E. (2018). Enhancing the role of national defense human resources to face fourth generation warfare. *Journal of Defense & National Defense*.
- Soekanto, S. (2001). *Normative legal research: A brief review*. Rajawali Press.
- Soclyfe. (2025, Juli 12). Tidak ada wajib militer di Indonesia dana yang kurang jadi salah satu faktornya. <https://www.soclyfe.com/public/baca/tidak-ada-wajib-militer-di-indonesia-dana-yang-kurang-jadi-salah-satufaktornya>
- Subagyo. (2004). *Research methods in theory and practice*. Rineka Cipta.
- Suntana, I., & Tresnawaty, B. (2021). Multidimensional social crisis and religious violence in Southeast Asia: Regional strategic agenda, weak civil government, trinity crime, wealth inequality, and co-opted journalism. *Journal of Culture and Values in Indonesian Language Education*, 4(2), 1–13.
- Susdarwono, E. T. (2020). An analysis of compulsory military service and its relevance to the reserve components bill. *Khatulistiwa Law Review*.
- The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2025, Juli 12). Government and society in Thailand. <https://www.britannica.com>
- Toruan, G. T. (2019). Legal review of the Ministry of Defense's national defense policy from an Indonesian legal perspective. *Journal of Legal Essence*.
- Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. (2025, Juli 12). BAB II (Review of related literature). <https://repository.umy.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/21468/6.%20BAB%20II.pdf>