

## Territorial Operations Strategy of Korem 131/Santiago in Securing the Sangihe and Talaud Islands to Support National Sovereignty

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### ABSTRACT

The border areas of Sangihe Islands Regency and Talaud Islands Regency hold strategic importance as they are directly adjacent to the Philippines and located along maritime routes vulnerable to sovereignty violations.. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Territorial Operation strategy of Korem 131/Santiago, The research employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach through interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the implementation of the strategy has been carried out through integrated development of geographic, demographic, and social aspects, supported by territorial patrols and intensive social communication. However, operational effectiveness remains affected by archipelagic geographical constraints, limited personnel relative to the vast area of responsibility, inadequate maritime transportation facilities, and uneven communication systems. Interagency coordination has also not been fully integrated into a unified operational system. In conclusion, the implemented strategy is relevant and adaptive to the characteristics of the region but requires further optimization through enhanced personnel capacity, modernization of maritime surveillance facilities, integration of territorial information systems, increased budgetary support, and strengthened intersectoral synergy to ensure sustainable national sovereignty.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia's national defense is implemented through a total defense system that positions all components of the nation as integral elements in safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the context of border areas, this approach becomes highly relevant as emerging threats are no longer purely conventional, but multidimensional and increasingly asymmetric in character. The maritime border region between Indonesia and the Philippines, particularly around the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, represents a strategic area confronted with such complex threats. Its geographical proximity to the southern Philippines renders the region vulnerable to illegal fishing, smuggling, territorial violations, and the potential infiltration of transnational armed groups (Niode et al., 2021; Kurniawan & Nugroho, 2021).

Empirically, illegal fishing constitutes the dominant threat in this area. Studies indicate that the majority of vessels engaged in illegal fishing originate from the Philippines and exploit weak surveillance across the border waters (Amiruddin et al., 2023). Such activities not only inflict economic losses upon the state but also undermine territorial control and sovereign authority within Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone. Furthermore, the archipelagic and dispersed geographical character of the region, coupled with limited infrastructure and inadequate communication access, heightens vulnerability to transboundary crime and economic illicit activities (Waani et al., 2022).

From a contemporary security perspective, the threats in Sangihe–Talaud reflect the characteristics of non-traditional and hybrid threats that combine economic, social, and security dimensions (Hoffman, 2021). As a result, the state's response cannot rely solely upon maritime patrols, but requires the strengthening of land-based, territorially oriented defense. The concepts of total defense and societal resilience emphasize the importance of integrating military forces, local government, and communities in building territorial resilience (Wither, 2020; Jakobsen, 2022). In this regard, the territorial operations of the Indonesian Army serve a strategic function as instruments of prevention, early detection, and strengthening of border communities' loyalty to the state.

Korem 131/Santiago, as a territorial command unit under Kodam XIII/Merdeka, holds responsibility for territorial security in North Sulawesi, including the land security of outer islands such as Miangas and Marore. Its territorial operations encompass territorial development activities, social communication, and security functions conducted through village supervisory non-commissioned officers (Babinsa) and sub-district military commands (Koramil). However, in practice, constraints remain in the form of limited personnel, inadequate infrastructure, and the extensive geographical scope of supervision, resulting in a predominantly reactive security posture (Niode et al., 2021). This indicates a gap between the ideal integrated total defense framework and the sectoral nature of current security practices.

Conceptually, modern defense strategy requires synergy between the dimensions of ends, ways, and means in responding to multidomain threats (Echevarria, 2021). In the Sangihe–Talaud context, the "ends" of safeguarding national sovereignty must be achieved through the "ways" of integrated,

territorially based operations, supported by the "means" of strengthened personnel, logistics, and cross-sectoral support. Therefore, enhancing the territorial operations strategy of Korem 131/Santiago constitutes a key element in sustaining national sovereignty in the Indonesia–Philippines border region in a manner that is adaptive to evolving contemporary threats.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Hybrid Threat Theory

Hybrid threat theory explains the transformation of contemporary conflict from purely conventional military confrontation to multidimensional forms that combine military, economic, informational, cyber, and irregular tactics. According to Frank G. Hoffman (2021), hybrid threats blend conventional capabilities with irregular methods and non-military instruments to exploit state vulnerabilities across multiple domains simultaneously. This conceptualization highlights that adversaries may employ non-kinetic tools—such as economic coercion, cyber disruption, transnational crime, and disinformation—alongside limited military pressure to achieve strategic objectives without triggering full-scale war.

In the context of border regions, hybrid threat theory is particularly relevant because vulnerabilities often stem from weak governance, limited surveillance capacity, and socio-economic disparities. Such conditions enable illegal fishing, smuggling networks, and cross-border criminal activities to function as instruments that indirectly undermine sovereignty. Hybrid threats thus challenge traditional defense models that rely heavily on conventional force projection. Instead, they demand integrated responses combining military readiness, law enforcement coordination, and community resilience. Therefore, this theory provides an analytical foundation for strengthening territorially based operations to counter complex, non-traditional security challenges in strategically sensitive regions.

### 2. Total Defense and Societal Resilience Theory

The concept of total defense emphasizes the mobilization of all national resources—military and civilian—in safeguarding national sovereignty. Peter Viggo Jakobsen (2022) argues that total defense framework integrates armed forces, civil authorities, private sectors, and citizens to enhance societal resilience against both military and non-military threats. Unlike traditional defense doctrines that prioritize battlefield superiority, total defense underscores preparedness, coordination, and the ability of society to absorb and recover from disruptions.

Societal resilience is central to this theory. It refers to the capacity of communities to maintain functionality during crises, including natural disasters, economic shocks, or security disturbances. In geographically dispersed and strategically exposed areas, such as outer island territories, community engagement and civil-military cooperation become critical components of deterrence and early warning systems. Total defense therefore extends beyond force structure and equipment, encompassing education, communication

networks, infrastructure, and public awareness. By reinforcing cooperation between territorial military units and local communities, this theory supports a holistic approach to national defense that is adaptive, participatory, and sustainable in addressing multidomain threats.

### **3. Modern Military Strategy (Ends-Ways-Means Paradigm)**

Modern military strategy is commonly understood through the ends-ways-means paradigm, which emphasizes the alignment between strategic objectives (ends), operational methods (ways), and available resources (means). Antulio J. Echevarria II (2021) explains that strategic effectiveness depends on coherence among these three dimensions. If objectives exceed available capabilities, or if operational methods are poorly matched to the threat environment, a strategic imbalance occurs.

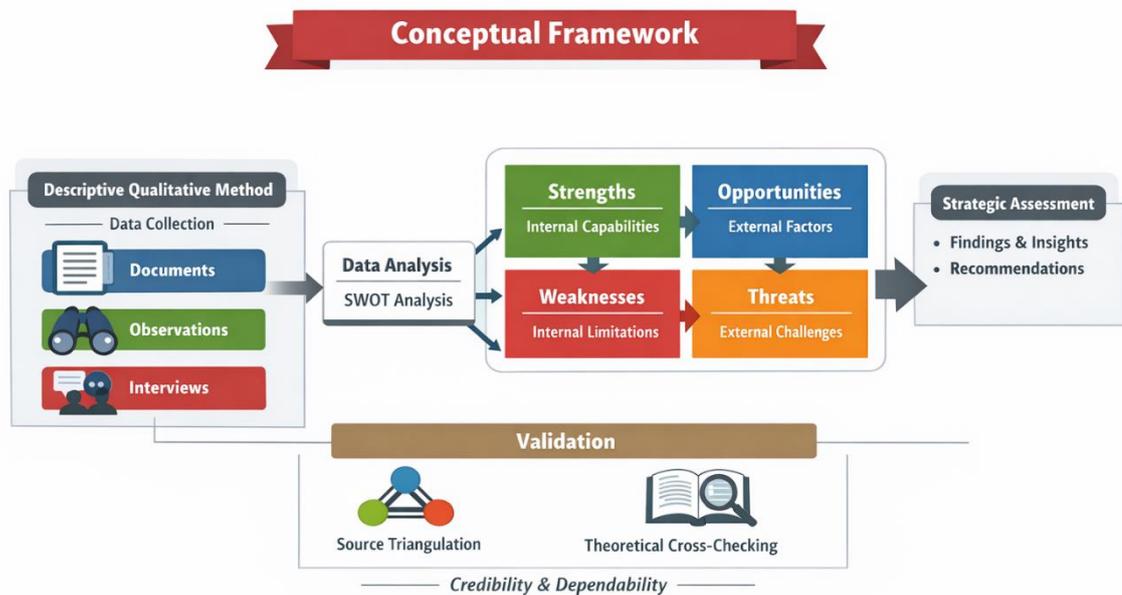
In contemporary security environments characterized by multidomain competition, the ends-ways-means framework provides a systematic tool for assessing defense posture. The “ends” relate to safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity; the “ways” involve integrated operations, deterrence measures, and territorial engagement; while the “means” include personnel strength, logistics, technology, and institutional coordination. Applying this paradigm ensures that defense strategies remain realistic and proportionate to actual threat conditions. Moreover, it allows policymakers to identify capability gaps and prioritize resource allocation. As such, the ends-ways-means model remains highly relevant in designing territorially oriented defense strategies that must respond to hybrid and non-traditional threats in border regions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method combined with a SWOT analysis framework. A qualitative descriptive approach aims to systematically describe and interpret social phenomena within their natural context, focusing on meaning, processes, and contextual understanding rather than numerical measurement. According to John W. Creswell (2014), qualitative research seeks to explore complex issues by collecting detailed data through documents, observations, and interviews, allowing researchers to construct an in-depth understanding of institutional practices and strategic environments. In defense and strategic studies, qualitative description is particularly suitable for analyzing organizational roles, operational constraints, and contextual security dynamics.

The SWOT framework—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—is utilized as an analytical tool to evaluate both internal and external strategic factors. Jay M. Bryson (2018) explains that SWOT analysis supports strategic planning by identifying internal capabilities (strengths and weaknesses) and examining environmental conditions (opportunities and threats) that influence organizational effectiveness. In this study, strengths and weaknesses refer to internal aspects such as personnel readiness, infrastructure, and coordination mechanisms, while opportunities and threats relate to external conditions including geopolitical dynamics, cross-border crime, and regional cooperation frameworks.

Data collection relies on document analysis, policy review, and relevant academic literature published after 2020 to ensure contextual relevance. The analytical process involves data reduction, thematic categorisation, and strategic mapping into a SWOT matrix. To ensure validity, the study applies triangulation of sources and theoretical cross-checking, as recommended in qualitative research standards (Creswell, 2014). Credibility is enhanced through consistency between empirical findings and established strategic theories, while analytical transparency ensures dependability. Through this approach, the research produces a systematic and contextually grounded strategic assessment.



## RESEARCH RESULT

### The Implementation Conditions of the Territorial Operations Strategy of Korem 131/Santiago in Securing the Sangihe and Talaud Islands

The security of Indonesia's border areas, particularly in the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, represents a concrete implementation of an integrated, adaptive, and sustainable national defense strategy. Geographically, these islands are dispersed, located in open and dynamic maritime zones, and directly adjacent to the southern Philippines. Such conditions make them vulnerable to cross-border threats, including infiltration, smuggling, illegal fishing, and socio-economic disturbances. In the contemporary security environment, these threats reflect hybrid and non-traditional characteristics that combine economic, criminal, and security dimensions (Hoffman, 2021). Consequently, the response requires not only conventional military presence but also a comprehensive territorial defense approach aligned with the total defense framework and societal resilience (Jakobsen, 2022).

The territorial operations conducted by Korem 131/Santiago demonstrate a layered and information-based defense strategy. The establishment of military

posts in outer islands, routine land and sea patrols, and community-based social intelligence networks form the core elements of implementation. This approach integrates military, social, and political instruments, reflecting the principle that national security extends beyond purely military measures. The presence of Indonesian Army (TNI AD) personnel in strategic villages and coastal zones reinforces state legitimacy while strengthening deterrence against potential foreign penetration.

A tiered command system operates through Kodim (District Military Command), Koramil (Sub-district Military Command), and Babinsa (Village Supervisory Non-Commissioned Officers). Babinsa functions as frontline territorial sensors who gather social intelligence and maintain daily contact with local communities. Koramil coordinates and processes information, while Kodim formulates strategic responses. This hierarchical but flexible system ensures rapid information flow and operational decision-making. The integration between these units enhances the Early Warning System (EWS) capacity, enabling swift responses to emerging threats. According to contemporary strategic theory, effective defense requires coherence between strategic objectives, operational methods, and available resources—commonly conceptualized as ends, ways, and means (Echevarria, 2021). In this context, the “ends” are sovereignty and regional stability; the “ways” include adaptive patrols and inter-agency coordination; and the “means” includes personnel, logistics, infrastructure, and technological support.

Community participation plays a central role in the operational framework. Local fishermen, village leaders, and residents actively report suspicious maritime and land activities, creating a community-based security mechanism. This reflects the principle that resilience and defense effectiveness increase when society participates in surveillance and early detection (Jakobsen, 2022). Empirical operational data indicates that a majority of illegal activities are detected before escalation due to this collaborative system. Such integration of civil-military relations strengthens territorial control while fostering collective awareness of sovereignty.

The Pamputer (Outer Island Security) concept further reinforces border security implementation. Outer islands serve as strategic determinants of Indonesia's maritime baselines and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Joint task forces consisting of TNI AD and TNI AL (Navy) personnel conduct permanent monitoring, sea patrols, and infrastructure protection. This integration illustrates the practical application of border management principles, in which borders are treated not merely as geographic lines but as multidimensional political and security spaces. Without structured coordination, border areas risk becoming fragmented and reactive. Inter-agency collaboration with the Navy, Police, and local government reduces institutional gaps and ensures comprehensive surveillance.

Adaptive patrol patterns represent another key component of the strategy. Land patrols concentrate on vulnerable coastal villages, while sea patrols monitor cross-border routes and high-risk maritime corridors. The use of radar systems, drones, digital monitoring platforms, and integrated communications

systems significantly enhances surveillance accuracy and operational efficiency. Technological integration does not replace territorial officers but strengthens their detection and coordination capabilities. Modern security challenges require multidomain awareness, particularly in maritime border regions where illegal fishing and smuggling are prevalent hybrid activities (Hoffman, 2021).

From a national security perspective, the operation emphasizes the protection of citizens, infrastructure, and strategic resources. Layered security coverage ensures that both frontline border zones and hinterland communities remain secure. The combination of military presence, technological modernization, and community engagement produces a holistic defense model. Operational evaluations show improved detection speed, high responsiveness to reported threats, and enhanced deterrence against illegal infiltration. Such outcomes demonstrate the strategic balance between ends, ways, and means as outlined in modern military strategy (Echevarria, 2021).

Furthermore, inter-sectoral integration strengthens governance effectiveness in border areas. Cooperation between military units, law enforcement agencies, and regional authorities ensures coordinated policy implementation and rapid response mechanisms. This approach reflects the broader total defense and societal resilience paradigm, which emphasizes that national defense is a shared responsibility between state institutions and society (Jakobsen, 2022).

In conclusion, the implementation of Korem 131/Santiago's territorial operations strategy in Sangihe and Talaud illustrates an adaptive and integrated defense model. By combining layered patrols, community-based security, technological innovation, and inter-agency coordination, the strategy enhances early detection, prevents illegal infiltration, and reinforces Indonesia's de facto sovereignty in its outer islands. The empirical results confirm that contemporary defense theories – hybrid threat response, total defense and resilience, and ends-ways-means strategic alignment – can be effectively translated into operational practice in complex border environments.

### **Constraints in the Implementation of Territorial Operations in Sangihe-Talaud**

The implementation of the Territorial Operations of Korem 131/Santiago in the Sangihe-Talaud border region faces multidimensional constraints stemming from geographical, personnel, logistical, communication, and inter-agency coordination factors. Geographically, Sangihe-Talaud consists of dispersed islands separated by open seas with strong currents and rapidly changing weather conditions. These characteristics significantly complicate troop mobility, sea patrol scheduling, and logistical distribution. Compared to mainland operations, island-based territorial security requires higher operational flexibility and maritime dependency, increasing vulnerability to delays and resource shortages. In contemporary security studies, such complex environments often amplify hybrid and non-traditional threats, especially in maritime border zones (Hoffman, 2021).

The wide territorial coverage combined with limited personnel presents another major challenge. The number of Indonesian Army personnel assigned to

supervise numerous islands and coastal villages remains disproportionate to the operational demands. Uneven personnel distribution risks surveillance gaps, while high workloads may reduce operational endurance. To mitigate this, Korem 131/Santiago applies structured personnel rotation and risk-based task prioritization within its tiered command system—Babinsa at the village level, Koramil at sub-district level, and Kodim at district level. This hierarchical structure strengthens the territorial Early Warning System (EWS) by ensuring information flows vertically and efficiently. The strategic balancing of objectives, operational methods, and available resources reflects the ends–ways–means framework of modern military strategy (Echevarria, 2021). However, resource limitations continue to affect optimal territorial coverage.

Logistical constraints further complicate operations. The irregular availability of maritime transport, limited docking facilities, and extreme weather conditions disrupt supply chains to outer islands such as Miangas and Marore. The distribution of food supplies, communications equipment, and patrol resources must be carefully calculated to ensure operational sustainability. In border security management, effective control over resource flows is fundamental to maintaining territorial authority (Jakobsen, 2022). While improved planning has reduced supply delays, logistical vulnerability remains a structural challenge inherent to archipelagic border environments.

Communication infrastructure also poses difficulties. Several smaller islands experience unstable network coverage or communication “blank spots,” making traditional radio communication essential. Although digital monitoring systems, coastal radar, and drone surveillance have been integrated to improve maritime domain awareness, technological deployment does not fully eliminate geographical limitations. Instead, it complements the human intelligence network built through Babinsa and community participation. Community-Based Security (CBS) principles are particularly relevant in this context, as local residents—especially fishermen and community leaders—serve as social sensors reporting suspicious cross-border activities (Jakobsen, 2022). Nevertheless, technological and communication gaps may delay rapid response, especially in remote maritime zones.

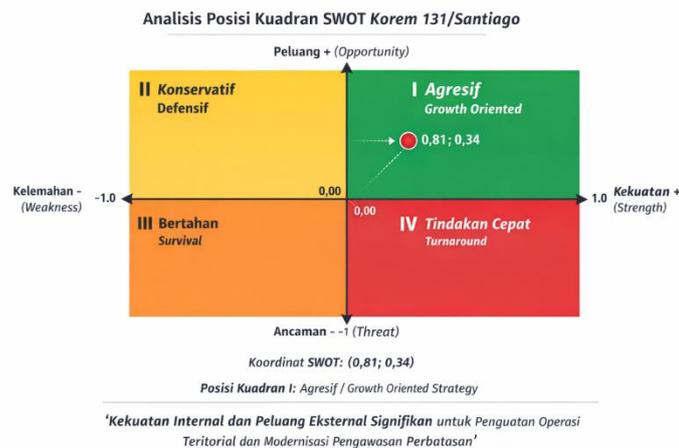
Inter-agency coordination represents another operational constraint. Differences in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) among the Indonesian Army (TNI AD), Navy (TNI AL), Police, and local government can slow joint responses during emergencies. Although routine coordination forums and joint patrol planning mechanisms have been established, procedural harmonization remains an ongoing need. Contemporary security governance emphasizes that effective border protection depends on institutional alignment and integrated information exchange (Hoffman, 2021). Without synchronized policies and real-time coordination, surveillance efforts risk becoming fragmented and reactive.

Despite these constraints, the integrated territorial approach demonstrates relative effectiveness. Operational evaluations indicate improved detection rates and increased responsiveness in priority areas. However, effectiveness remains uneven across the entire maritime domain due to structural geography and resource limitations. The Sangihe–Talaud case illustrates that border defense in

archipelagic regions adaptive demands, data-driven, and collaborative strategies. Ultimately, while the application of hybrid threat response, total defense resilience, and ends-ways-means strategic alignment provides a solid theoretical foundation (Echevarria, 2021; Jakobsen, 2022; Hoffman, 2021), operational sustainability depends on continued modernisation, personnel strengthening, logistical strengthening, and deeper inter-agency integration.

### Optimization Strategies of Korem 131/Santiago in Strengthening Border Security in Sangihe-Talaud

Figure 4.1 SWOT Quadrant



Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2026

### SO Strategy (Strength-Opportunity) (Leveraging internal strengths to capture external opportunities)

Based on the SWOT analysis of the territorial operations strengthening of Korem 131/Santiago, an Operational Strategy (SO) was developed to maximize the internal strengths of personnel and the command structure to seize external opportunities. This strategy is aimed at strengthening regional integration, increasing cross-agency synergy, utilizing modern technology, and strengthening the role of the community in border surveillance to support state sovereignty in an adaptive and sustainable manner. The alternative SO strategies that can be implemented are as follows:

#### Alternative 1 - SO (Strength-Opportunity) Strategy

1. Optimizing the Babinsa network and territorial posts for the integration of modern technology-based early detection (S1, O3).
2. Strengthening the Korem-Kodim-Koramil command structure to increase cross-agency synergy and regional government coordination forums (S2, O2).
3. Maximize personnel experience in HR training and specialization development in the field of intelligence and logistics (S3, O7).
4. Increase the closeness of Babinsa with the community to strengthen local participation in regional security (S4, O4).

5. Territorial posts on the outermost islands are used as monitoring and early warning centers based on field data (S5, O10).
6. Use personnel discipline and loyalty to support the implementation of the border strengthening center program (S8, O1).
7. Internal synergy for modernization of border transportation and communication facilities (S6, O9).
8. Expanding internal and external integration for collaboration with defense and private industry (S10, O8).
9. Optimization of territorial development to support infrastructure development on border islands (S7, O6).
10. Adaptive human resources are directed at utilizing digital monitoring systems and drones for monitoring wide sea areas (S9, O3).

The weighting results indicate that Komcad's structural and normative strengths outweigh its internal weaknesses. Externally, the available strategic opportunities outweigh the threats faced. Therefore, the most appropriate policy direction is to implement a *Strength-Opportunity (SO)* strategy with an expansive, integrative, and progressive approach to strengthening regional preparedness based on total defense.

The optimization strategies implemented by Korem 131/Santiago in securing Sangihe and Talaud Islands represent a practical manifestation of Indonesia's total defense system in maritime border areas. Situated along the Indonesia-Philippines maritime boundary, this region requires a multidimensional and adaptive security approach. Contemporary security challenges – ranging from illegal fishing and smuggling to potential cross-border infiltration – reflect the hybrid and complex nature of modern threats (Hoffman, 2021). As a result, territorial operations must integrate military readiness, societal resilience, interagency coordination, and technological modernisation.

The SO (Strength-Opportunity) strategies adopted by Korem 131/Santiago are aligned with the *Ends-Ways-Means* strategic framework, where the ends involve safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity; the ways include territorial operations, early warning systems, and multi-stakeholder collaboration; and the means consist of personnel, logistics, digital systems, and community participation (Echevarria, 2021). This strategic coherence ensures that operational activities remain purpose-driven, methodologically structured, and resource-supported.

One of the primary optimization measures involves strengthening the Babinsa (village supervisory non-commissioned officers) network and territorial posts through digital integration. With more than 1,200 Babinsa personnel deployed across 52 Koramil units and 45 active territorial posts, Korem 131/Santiago has incorporated digital monitoring systems and drone surveillance to enhance early detection capabilities. This approach reflects the logic of territorial early warning systems, in which frontline personnel function as socio-military sensors connecting communities with higher command

structures. Early detection enhances deterrence and reduces response time, supporting layered defense mechanisms consistent with total defense concepts (Jakobsen, 2022).

Command structure reinforcement constitutes another key strategy. The hierarchical integration of Korem–Kodim–Koramil facilitates structured coordination with the Navy, Police, and regional government institutions. Regular coordination forums and cross-agency standard operating procedures enhance interoperability. In contemporary security governance, effective interagency cooperation is essential for managing multidomain threats and reducing bureaucratic fragmentation (Hoffman, 2021). By institutionalizing routine coordination and digital communication platforms, Korem 131/Santiago improves response speed and operational synchronization in both land and maritime domains.

Human resource development is also prioritized. Approximately 120 personnel have undergone advanced training in intelligence and logistics over the past two years. This capacity-building effort aligns with the principle that modern military effectiveness depends on adaptive learning and professionalization rather than numerical superiority alone (Echevarria, 2021). The integration of satellite communication devices, patrol vessels, and digital analysis tools further enhances operational competence. In strategic terms, improved human capital strengthens the “means” component, thereby reinforcing the credibility of deterrence and territorial control.

Community-Based Security (CBS) constitutes a central pillar of operational optimization. More than 60 villages actively participate in local security programs coordinated by Babinsa. Community involvement enhances information flow and strengthens societal resilience—an essential element of total defense frameworks (Jakobsen, 2022). Empirical data show that a significant proportion of suspicious maritime activity reports originate from local residents, demonstrating the effectiveness of participatory security mechanisms. This approach not only improves situational awareness but also fosters trust between the armed forces and local communities, reinforcing national legitimacy in peripheral regions.

Technological modernization further strengthens territorial monitoring. The procurement of additional patrol vessels, satellite radios, drones, and digital command systems enhances mobility and real-time coordination. Drone surveillance extends maritime monitoring coverage up to 30 nautical miles, supporting naval intervention when necessary. The incorporation of predictive analytics and AI-based systems—planned for long-term implementation—demonstrates forward-looking adaptation to hybrid maritime threats. Such technological integration reflects broader trends in defense innovation and military transformation (Hoffman, 2021).

Infrastructure development complements operational measures. Renovation of territorial posts, small ports, and logistical facilities improves mobility and supply chain reliability. Efficient logistics management is crucial in archipelagic environments where distance and weather conditions affect operational continuity. Strengthened infrastructure not only enhances patrol

endurance but also supports civilian connectivity, thereby linking defense functions with regional development objectives. This integrated approach aligns with the concept of societal resilience, where security and development mutually reinforce stability (Jakobsen, 2022).

Operational Military Operations Other Than War (OMSP) and territorial development programs (Binter) also contribute significantly to strengthening sovereignty. Activities such as infrastructure construction, disaster assistance, agricultural support, and social communication (Komsos) deepen civil–military relations. These initiatives illustrate that border security is not confined to kinetic defense but encompasses socio-economic stabilization and public engagement. By maintaining strong community ties, Korem 131/Santiago strengthens its intelligence network and builds durable trust, enhancing deterrence indirectly through legitimacy.

The strategic roadmap structured around short-, medium-, and long-term phases ensures sustainability. Short-term initiatives focus on pilot projects—drone deployment, digital monitoring, and interagency SOP harmonization. Medium-term efforts emphasize scalability, capacity enhancement, and system integration. Long-term objectives aim at full interoperability, AI-driven predictive monitoring, and comprehensive defense network integration. This phased approach reflects strategic planning cycles that adapt resources to evolving threat landscapes (Echevarria, 2021).

Overall, the optimization measures demonstrate a holistic and layered defense architecture. By integrating personnel discipline, technological innovation, community participation, command interoperability, and infrastructure enhancement, Korem 131/Santiago establishes a deterrent posture in Sangihe–Talaud. The approach exemplifies how territorial defense in maritime border regions requires synergy between military capability and societal resilience. As hybrid and non-traditional threats continue to evolve, adaptive strategies rooted in integrated governance and technological advancement remain essential (Hoffman, 2021; Jakobsen, 2022).

In conclusion, the ten SO strategies represent an innovative, multi-level operational model for maritime border defense. The combination of early warning systems, interagency coordination, human capital development, and community -based security strengthens sovereignty in Indonesia's northern maritime frontier. Rather than relying solely on force projection, Korem 131/Santiago demonstrates that effective border security is achieved through collaboration, adaptability, and sustainable institutional development—reflecting contemporary principles of national defense and strategic management.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of the Territorial Operations Strategy of Korem 131/Santiago in securing the Sangihe and Talaud Islands has generally been effective and aligned with the Indonesian Army's territorial development doctrine. The strategy has been carried out through territorial patrols, social communication, community resilience development, and

coordination with local government and security institutions. The approach of civil–military unity has strengthened early detection of potential threats such as border violations, smuggling, and other cross-border illegal activities, contributing to relatively stable security conditions in the Indonesia–Philippines maritime border area.

However, the implementation has not yet reached optimal capacity. Structural constraints persist, including the archipelagic geographical setting, limited territorial personnel compared to the vast operational area, restricted logistical and maritime transport support, uneven infrastructure, and unstable communication systems in remote islands. In addition, inter-agency coordination mechanisms are not yet fully integrated into a unified operational system, occasionally resulting in sectoral responses. Despite these challenges, strong community participation has significantly supported early warning and territorial monitoring. Overall, the strategy is effective but requires further capacity enhancement, technological modernization, and integrated coordination to adapt to evolving border threats.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) should strengthen territorial force posture in outer island regions by increasing personnel numbers, enhancing territorial training, and modernizing surveillance and maritime monitoring systems. Greater interoperability among services and integration of digital territorial information systems are also recommended.

Kodam XIII/Merdeka and Korem 131/Santiago should be optimistic about archipelagic-based territorial management by improving Babinsa capacity in border intelligence and community empowerment, while formalizing cross-sector coordination mechanisms for faster and more integrated responses.

Local governments in Sangihe and Talaud should align regional development programs with national defense policies by strengthening infrastructure, coastal welfare, and local economic resilience.

The Ministry of Defense and central government should prioritize policy and budgetary support for maritime surveillance technology, satellite monitoring, and soldier welfare in outer islands.

Finally, border communities and law enforcement agencies should enhance collaboration in maintaining environmental security and reporting cross-border violations, reinforcing the total defense system through active civic participation.

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