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Implementation of Special Correctional Telecommunication Services in Safeguarding Inmates' Communication Rights

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Original Article

Abstract

The fulfillment of inmates' communication rights is a fundamental aspect of human rights protection within Indonesia's correctional system under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections. This study examines the legal basis and implementation of the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasarakatan or Wartelsus) at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution. Using an empirical legal research design with a socio-legal approach, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and a review of relevant legal literature. The findings indicate that *Wartelsus* has been implemented in accordance with statutory regulations through standardized procedures, effective supervision, and equitable access policies, including complimentary communication vouchers for economically disadvantaged inmates. The study concludes that *Wartelsus* effectively safeguards inmates' communication rights while supporting rehabilitation, social reintegration, institutional security, and the broader protection of human rights within Indonesia's correctional system.

Keywords: *Communication Rights, Inmates, Correctional Telecommunications, Human Rights, Correctional Institutions*

Abstrak

Pemenuhan hak komunikasi warga binaan merupakan bagian dari perlindungan hak asasi manusia dalam sistem pemasyarakatan yang dijamin oleh Undang-Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 tentang Pemasyarakatan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis aspek yuridis pemenuhan hak komunikasi melalui layanan Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus (Wartelsus) di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas I Surabaya serta mengevaluasi implementasinya berdasarkan prinsip penghormatan terhadap martabat manusia, kepastian hukum, keadilan, dan kemanfaatan hukum. Penelitian menggunakan metode hukum empiris dengan pendekatan yuridis empiris melalui observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi, dan studi kepustakaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa layanan Wartelsus telah dilaksanakan sesuai ketentuan peraturan perundang-undangan melalui mekanisme pelayanan yang terstandar, pengawasan yang ketat, serta kebijakan nondiskriminatif berupa voucher gratis bagi warga binaan yang tidak mampu. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa Wartelsus merupakan instrumen efektif dalam menjamin hak komunikasi warga binaan sekaligus mendukung pembinaan, reintegrasi sosial, dan perlindungan hak asasi manusia tanpa mengurangi keamanan serta ketertiban lembaga pemasyarakatan.

Kata kunci: *Hak Komunikasi, Warga Binaan, Telekomunikasi, Hak Asasi Manusia*

1. INTRODUCTION

A state governed by the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*) recognizes law as the primary instrument for ensuring the protection of human rights, legal certainty, justice, and equality before the law. These principles apply equally to individuals serving criminal sentences in correctional institutions. Although incarceration lawfully restricts an individual's liberty, inmates remain holders of fundamental rights that must be respected, protected, and fulfilled by the state. This principle is reaffirmed in Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections, which reorients Indonesia's correctional system from a punitive model toward one centered on rehabilitation, personal development, and social reintegration grounded in respect for human dignity.

Among the fundamental rights guaranteed within the correctional system is the right to communicate with family members and other authorized individuals. This right constitutes not only an essential element of human rights protection but also a critical factor in supporting inmates' psychological well-being, strengthening family relationships, facilitating rehabilitation, and reducing the likelihood of recidivism. To safeguard this right, correctional institutions provide several communication facilities, including the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (*Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasarakatan* or *Wartelsus*). *Wartelsus* enables inmates to communicate with their families through a lawful, regulated, and supervised mechanism that preserves institutional security and public order while ensuring access to communication.

The Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution has implemented *Wartelsus* as part of its efforts to fulfill inmates' communication rights. Nevertheless, the implementation of legal norms does not always correspond to their practical realization (*das sollen* versus *das sein*). Various challenges—including inadequate infrastructure, limited human resources, and persistent prison overcrowding—may reduce the effectiveness of communication services. Moreover, existing scholarship has largely concentrated on rehabilitation programs, social reintegration, or the general fulfillment of inmates' rights. Research specifically examining *Wartelsus* as a legal instrument for protecting inmates' communication rights from the perspective of correctional law remains limited.

Scholarly attention to the protection of inmates' rights in Indonesia has increased following the enactment of Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections, which formally transformed the country's penal philosophy from a prison-oriented system to a correctional system. Under this new paradigm, criminal punishment is no longer primarily intended to impose retribution but rather to promote rehabilitation, personal development, and successful reintegration into society while ensuring respect for human rights. Within this framework, the right to communication occupies a strategic position because it enables inmates to maintain meaningful relationships with their

families, supports psychological stability, and contributes to the effectiveness of correctional programs.

Previous studies have primarily examined the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives. Hikmah and Ardhita found that rehabilitation programs at the Class IIA Jember Correctional Institution significantly enhanced inmates' preparedness for reintegration into society.¹ Similarly, Fitria et al. emphasized the importance of family support in reducing recidivism through social reintegration programs. However, neither study addressed communication rights as a fundamental legal entitlement that the state is obligated to guarantee throughout the period of incarceration.²

Other researchers have explored the broader implementation of inmates' rights. Iswandi concluded that Indonesia's correctional programs generally accommodate various inmate rights, including the right to communication. Nevertheless, communication rights were treated only as one element within the broader framework of inmates' rights, without a comprehensive examination of implementation mechanisms, the effectiveness of communication facilities, or their conformity with the principles of correctional law.³

Research on correctional governance and the implementation of inmates' rights also reveals a persistent gap between legal norms and institutional practice. Wahid et al. identified administrative obstacles affecting the implementation of inmates' assimilation rights,⁴ while Agung et al. and Ananda et al. focused primarily on normative and institutional dimensions of correctional governance.⁵ Meanwhile, Windri et al. highlighted prison overcrowding and inadequate facilities as major barriers to the effective fulfillment of inmates' rights,⁶ whereas Yustiana et al. evaluated correctional policy implementation from a broader institutional perspective. Despite these valuable

¹ Siti Dewi Hikmah and Zally Ardhita, "Efektivitas Program Pembinaan Dalam Proses Reintegrasi Sosial Narapidana Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan (Lapas) Kelas IIA Jember," *Formula: Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 2, no. 2 (2025): 96–111, <https://doi.org/10.56013/fml.v2i2.4481>.

² Tanisa Aziza Fitria et al., "Efektivitas Program Reintegrasi Sosial Narapidana Melalui Pembebasan Bersyarat (PB) Di Balai Pemasyarakatan Kelas II Amuntai," *Jurnal Kebijakan Publik* 2, no. 2 (2025): 1088–97.

³ Iswandi Iswandi, "Implementasi Pemenuhan Hak Warga Binaan Berdasarkan UU Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pemasyarakatan Di Lapas Kelas IIA Palopo" (Universitas Islam Negri, 2026), <https://repository.uinpalopo.ac.id/id/eprint/12236/>.

⁴ Nirfan Abdul Wahid et al., "Implementasi Pemenuhan Hak Asimilasi Bagi Warga Binaan Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas 1 Surabaya," *Al-Mikraj: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1557–66, <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v5i2.7219>.

⁵ Praja Ganda Agung et al., "Analisis Yuridis Terhadap Pelaksanaan Fungsi Pembinaan Dan Pengamanan Oleh Kantor Wilayah Direktorat Jenderal Pemasyarakatan Bengkulu," *Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 1 (2025): 280–84; Arsyanka Nhayla Ananda et al., "Analisis Normatif Hak-Hak Warga Binaan Dalam Sistem Pemasyarakatan Indonesia: Tinjauan Terhadap Undang-Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Dan Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum Pidana," *Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 1 (2025): 274–79.

⁶ Age Windri et al., "Tinjauan Yuridis Pemenuhan Hak Warga Binaan Narkotika Berdasarkan Undang – Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pemasyarakatan Dirumah Tahanan Negara Kelas IIB Kota Bengkulu," *Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 3 (2026): 625–31.

contributions, none of these studies specifically investigate Wartelsus as a legal mechanism for safeguarding inmates' communication rights.⁷

From the perspective of public service innovation, Kurniawan and Akbar identified the implementation of Wartelsus integrated with video-call technology as an innovative correctional service that enhances communication between inmates and their families while maintaining institutional security. Their findings indicate that the Wartelsus service at the Class IIA Bogor Correctional Institution effectively accommodates inmates' communication needs without undermining institutional order or security. However, the study primarily examined Wartelsus from the standpoint of public administration and service innovation, rather than evaluating its legal legitimacy as a mechanism for safeguarding inmates' communication rights under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections or within the broader framework of human rights protection.⁸

Previous studies have predominantly focused on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, the general fulfillment of inmates' rights, social reintegration, and innovation in correctional services. To date, no study has specifically examined Wartelsus as a legal instrument for protecting inmates' communication rights under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections using an empirical legal approach. Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of the legal basis, implementation, effectiveness, and practical challenges associated with Wartelsus as a mechanism for safeguarding inmates' communication rights from the perspectives of correctional law and human rights.

This study therefore aims to provide a comprehensive legal analysis of the fulfillment of inmates' communication rights through the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasarakatan or Wartelsus) at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution, with reference to Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections and its implementing regulations. In addition, the study evaluates the extent to which Wartelsus functions as an effective human rights protection mechanism within Indonesia's correctional system by assessing its implementation against the principles of respect for human dignity, legal certainty, justice, and public benefit.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an empirical legal research design using a socio-legal approach to examine the implementation of the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasarakatan or Wartelsus) as a mechanism for

⁷ Yustiana Yustiana et al., "Implikasi Hukum Atas Pelaksanaan Undang-Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pemasarakatan Terhadap Pemenuhan Hak Warga Binaan Khususnya Pembinaan Dan Asimilasi Pada Narapidana Dengan Kasus Narkotika Dan Over Capacity Di Rumah Tahanan Negara Kelas IIB Sen," *Legal Journal of Law* 2, no. 1 (2023): 91–105.

⁸ Andi Kurniawan and Fauzi Irnafa Akbar, "Pemanfaatan Layanan Wartel Khusus Warga Binaan Pemasarakatan Berbasis Video Call Pada Lembaga Pemasarakatan Kelas IIA Bogor," *Jurnal Hukum Respublica* 23, no. 1 (2023): 69–86, <https://doi.org/10.31849/respublica.v23i01.17171>.

safeguarding inmates' communication rights at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution. This approach integrates an examination of the applicable legal framework (law in books) with an analysis of its practical implementation (law in action), thereby enabling a comprehensive assessment of the extent to which Wartelsus complies with Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections and its implementing regulations.

This research adopted a descriptive-analytical design. The Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution was selected purposively as the research site because it has implemented the Wartelsus service as part of its correctional programs. Primary data were collected through direct observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews with correctional administrators, Wartelsus officers, and inmates, as well as document review. Secondary data were obtained through an extensive review of relevant literature, including statutory regulations, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and official government documents concerning corrections, human rights, and correctional administration.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, data were validated through source, methodological, and documentary triangulation. The analysis was guided by the theoretical perspectives of correctional law, human rights protection, and legal implementation to evaluate the effectiveness of Wartelsus in safeguarding inmates' communication rights while ensuring compliance with the principles of legality, legal certainty, justice, and the rehabilitative objectives of Indonesia's correctional system.

3. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Legal Aspects of Safeguarding Inmates' Communication Rights Through the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Wartelsus) at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution

The implementation of the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasyarakatan or Wartelsus) represents not only an innovation in correctional public services but also the fulfillment of the State's constitutional obligation to protect the fundamental rights of inmates during their incarceration. At the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution, the implementation of Wartelsus is supported by a well-defined legal framework. Normatively, inmates' communication rights are guaranteed under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections, which identifies respect for human dignity as one of the guiding principles of Indonesia's correctional system. Under this legal framework, imprisonment lawfully restricts only an individual's liberty of movement, while other fundamental rights—including the right to communicate with family members and other authorized persons—remain protected and must be fulfilled by the State. Consequently, the provision of Wartelsus should not be regarded as a discretionary institutional initiative but rather as the implementation of a statutory obligation expressly mandated by law.

Article 9 of Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections expressly guarantees inmates the right to receive social services, maintain family contact, and communicate with external parties in accordance with applicable legal provisions. From the perspective of administrative law, this provision confers legal authority upon correctional institutions to provide communication services as an integral component of public service delivery. Accordingly, Wartelsus functions not merely as an operational facility but as an administrative instrument established pursuant to statutory authority. The findings of this study demonstrate that the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution has exercised this authority by providing a lawful, structured, and closely supervised communication service that ensures inmates can exercise their communication rights while preserving institutional security.

The operation of Wartelsus follows standardized procedures established in the institution's operational guidelines. Inmates are required to complete administrative requirements, obtain prior authorization from correctional officers, communicate only with verified telephone numbers, and comply with predetermined time limits under direct staff supervision. These procedures illustrate an appropriate balance between safeguarding inmates' communication rights and maintaining institutional security and public order. In this regard, the State fulfills its obligation to protect communication rights while simultaneously preventing the misuse of communication facilities for activities that could threaten institutional security or interfere with the administration of justice.

Beyond its function as a communication facility, Wartelsus contributes significantly to inmates' psychological well-being and the achievement of correctional objectives. Maintaining regular communication with family members helps alleviate emotional stress, strengthens inmates' motivation to participate in rehabilitation programs, and reinforces social support throughout the period of incarceration. These outcomes are consistent with the rehabilitative philosophy underlying Indonesia's correctional system, which recognizes the family as a central element in the process of successful social reintegration. Consequently, the fulfillment of communication rights through Wartelsus encompasses both legal and sociological dimensions that collectively support the broader objectives of correctional administration.

The findings further demonstrate that the implementation of Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections has fundamentally transformed Indonesia's correctional paradigm. Under the previous prison-oriented system, the fulfillment of inmates' rights was often regarded as secondary to the execution of criminal sanctions. In contrast, the current correctional framework recognizes these rights as an integral component of correctional governance that the State is legally obligated to guarantee. Wartelsus provides a concrete example of how statutory norms are translated into institutional practice through rights-

based public services that simultaneously protect human rights and preserve institutional security.

Compared with the study by Hikmah and Ardhita, the present research adopts a distinct analytical perspective. Whereas Hikmah and Ardhita examined the effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation programs in facilitating inmates' social reintegration,⁹ this study focuses specifically on communication rights as a fundamental legal entitlement explicitly guaranteed under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections. Nevertheless, both studies converge on the conclusion that the success of correctional rehabilitation depends upon the effective protection of inmates' rights. Building on this perspective, the present study demonstrates that Wartelsus is not merely an administrative communication facility but a legally grounded instrument that plays a pivotal role in safeguarding inmates' communication rights while enhancing the effectiveness of rehabilitation and social reintegration within Indonesia's correctional system.

This study also extends the findings of Iswandi, who concluded that the implementation of inmates' rights in Indonesia has generally progressed well despite continuing institutional and operational constraints.¹⁰ However, whereas the previous study examined inmates' rights from a broad perspective, the present research specifically investigates the fulfillment of communication rights through the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasyarakatan or Wartelsus). Communication rights possess distinctive legal characteristics because their implementation requires rigorous supervisory mechanisms to balance the protection of inmates' rights with the security objectives of correctional institutions. Accordingly, the right to communicate should be understood not only as a component of human rights protection but also as an integral element of correctional governance that must be exercised within an appropriate security framework.

This study further complements the work of Wahid et al., which examined the implementation of inmates' assimilation rights at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution. Their findings revealed a discrepancy between statutory provisions and practical implementation due to administrative barriers and regulatory constraints.¹¹ In contrast, the present study demonstrates that communication rights exercised through Wartelsus have been implemented more effectively because they constitute fundamental rights that may be enjoyed by all inmates, subject to established security procedures. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of implementing inmates' rights depends

⁹ Hikmah and Ardhita, "Efektivitas Program Pembinaan Dalam Proses Reintegrasi Sosial Narapidana Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan (Lapas) Kelas IIA Jember."

¹⁰ Iswandi, "Implementasi Pemenuhan Hak Warga Binaan Berdasarkan UU Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pemasyarakatan Di Lapas Kelas IIA Palopo."

¹¹ Wahid et al., "Implementasi Pemenuhan Hak Asimilasi Bagi Warga Binaan Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas 1 Surabaya."

not only on the applicable legal framework but also on the nature of the rights themselves and the institutional mechanisms governing their implementation.

Moreover, this study expands upon the findings of Kurniawan and Akbar, who examined the implementation of video call-based Wartelsus services at the Class IIA Bogor Correctional Institution. While their research primarily focused on service quality and the technical challenges associated with communication technology,¹² the present study analyzes Wartelsus from the perspective of correctional law. Specifically, it demonstrates that the establishment of Wartelsus constitutes a direct legal consequence of the mandate set forth in Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections. Consequently, Wartelsus should be understood not merely as an innovation in public service delivery but as a statutory legal instrument designed to safeguard inmates' communication rights within Indonesia's correctional system.

The findings also support the argument that the effectiveness of legal implementation depends not only on the existence of statutory regulations but also on institutional capacity, the commitment of correctional personnel, and the availability of adequate supporting infrastructure.¹³ The Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution demonstrates the effective integration of these three elements through the provision of appropriate communication facilities, the establishment of standardized operational procedures, and continuous supervision by correctional officers. This institutional arrangement illustrates that legal norms can be translated into effective practice when supported by sound correctional governance and effective administrative management.¹⁴

The fulfillment of communication rights through Wartelsus also reflects the application of the principle of respect for human dignity, a fundamental value underlying modern human rights law.¹⁵ Communication should not be regarded as a privilege granted to inmates but rather as a fundamental right that remains inherent throughout the period of incarceration unless expressly restricted by a lawful judicial decision. Consequently, any limitation on communication rights must be based on legitimate legal grounds, satisfy the principle of proportionality, and pursue the legitimate objective of protecting institutional security. The Wartelsus model implemented at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution demonstrates that effective human rights protection

¹² Kurniawan and Akbar, "Pemanfaatan Layanan Wartel Khusus Warga Binaan Pemasyarakatan Berbasis Video Call Pada Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas IIA Bogor."

¹³ Griselda Okta Viani et al., "Etika Administrasi Kepegawaian Dan Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik: Analisis Profesionalisme ASN Pada Dinas ESDM Provinsi Kalimantan Tengah," *Jurnal Manajemen Kewirausahaan Dan Teknologi* 2, no. 4 (2025): 186–208, <https://doi.org/10.61132/jumaket.v2i4.1078>.

¹⁴ Ipan Nurhidayat, "Prinsip-Prinsip Good Governance Di Indonesia," *Journal Education and Government Wiyata* 1, no. 1 (2023): 40–52, <https://doi.org/10.71128/e-gov.v1i1.5>.

¹⁵ Nikolaus Knoepffler and Martin O'Malley, "Dignité Humaine: Principe Régulateur Et Valeur Absolue," *Droit, Santé et Société* 21, no. 3 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.54695/dss.21.03.2634>.

can coexist with institutional security through carefully designed and proportionate supervisory mechanisms.

The implementation of Wartelsus at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution is consistent with the principles of legality, legal certainty, proportionality, and public benefit embodied in Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections. Wartelsus functions not only as a communication facility but also as a legal mechanism that integrates the protection of human rights with the rehabilitative and social reintegration objectives of Indonesia's correctional system. The successful implementation of this service demonstrates that inmates' communication rights can be effectively protected without compromising institutional security. Accordingly, the fulfillment of communication rights should be recognized as a key indicator of the effectiveness of a modern correctional system committed to human rights protection, legal certainty, and the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates.

3.2. Implementation of the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Wartelsus) as an Instrument for Human Rights Protection

The implementation of the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Pemasyarakatan or Wartelsus) at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution has become an integral component of Indonesia's correctional system, which is founded on the protection and promotion of human rights. Unlike the conventional penal system, which primarily emphasizes the deprivation of liberty as a form of retribution, the contemporary correctional system recognizes inmates as legal subjects who continue to possess fundamental rights throughout their incarceration. Among these rights is the right to maintain communication with family members and other authorized individuals. Within this framework, Wartelsus functions as a state-administered mechanism that ensures the lawful restriction of personal liberty does not result in the deprivation of other fundamental rights. The findings indicate that the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution has effectively translated the mandate of Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections into an operational communication service that is accessible to all eligible inmates.

The Wartelsus service is operated through a partnership with PT Arjaya Pelindo, the provider of the telecommunications system. Although service delivery involves a private-sector partner, overall supervision remains under the authority of the Correctional Institution Security Unit (Kesatuan Pengamanan Lembaga Pemasyarakatan or KPLP). All communication activities are monitored through closed-circuit television (CCTV), administrative documentation, user identity verification, and the verification of authorized destination telephone numbers. Service operations are supported by five personnel with expertise in information technology and two administrative officers responsible for service management and oversight. Consequently, the implementation

of Wartelsus extends beyond the provision of communication facilities by integrating institutional security, administrative accountability, and risk management, all of which are essential characteristics of modern correctional public services.

The operational procedures governing Wartelsus fully reflect the principle of legal certainty. This is evidenced by clearly defined eligibility requirements, standardized service procedures, comprehensive administrative documentation, established service schedules, transparent pricing, and regular monitoring and evaluation. All inmates who satisfy the prescribed requirements are entitled to access the service each day between 6:15 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Western Indonesian Time (WIB) in accordance with established operational procedures. These standardized procedures provide legal protection for both inmates as service users and correctional personnel as service providers. Accordingly, the implementation of Wartelsus is based on objective operational standards rather than individual discretion, thereby reinforcing the principles of legality and the rule of law within correctional administration.

The voucher system adopted by the institution also demonstrates a commitment to substantive equality and non-discrimination. Although Wartelsus generally operates through a paid voucher system, with communication packages priced at Rp15,000 for 40 minutes and Rp30,000 for 80 minutes, the institution provides complimentary vouchers to inmates experiencing financial hardship. Each residential unit receives a designated allocation of vouchers, which are subsequently distributed according to established eligibility criteria. This policy illustrates that the principle of justice applied extends beyond formal equality to embrace substantive equality by providing proportionate support based on individual circumstances, thereby ensuring that all inmates have meaningful access to communication services regardless of their economic status.¹⁶ These findings provide empirical evidence of the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination, one of the fundamental principles underpinning Indonesia's correctional system under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections.

The implementation of Wartelsus likewise reflects the correctional system's commitment to respecting human dignity. The right to communicate is recognized not merely as an administrative service but as an essential expression of inmates' social identity and family relationships. Through regular communication, inmates are able to maintain meaningful emotional ties with their spouses, children, and other family members. Such communication contributes positively to inmates' psychological well-being by alleviating emotional distress during incarceration, enhancing motivation to participate in rehabilitation programs, and fostering confidence in their successful reintegration into society upon release. Accordingly, Wartelsus performs an important rehabilitative function that is fully consistent with the overarching objective of

¹⁶ Nadia Novitri Hasibuan et al., "Analisis Penalaran Hukum Petugas Pemasyarakatan Dalam Pemenuhan Hak Narapidana Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas IIA Binjai," *Judge: Jurnal Hukum* 6, no. 6 (2026): 1905–12, <https://doi.org/10.54209/judge.v6i06.2029>.

Indonesia's correctional system: to facilitate the development of responsible individuals who are prepared to reintegrate successfully into their communities.

The fulfillment of inmates' communication rights cannot be separated from the imperative of maintaining institutional security.¹⁷ In practice, the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution encountered a case in which an inmate allegedly misused the communication service to commit fraud against members of the public. In response, the central correctional authority temporarily suspended the service, followed by a comprehensive evaluation of Wartelsus at the institutional level. This incident demonstrates that the protection of human rights within the correctional system is not absolute. The State retains the authority to impose lawful and proportionate restrictions when necessary to safeguard institutional security, maintain public order, and prevent the abuse of legal rights. Measures such as CCTV surveillance, verification of authorized telephone numbers, administrative documentation, and direct supervision by correctional officers constitute legitimate restrictions because they satisfy the principles of legality, proportionality, and legitimate purpose.

The Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution also applies a disciplinary enforcement mechanism for violations related to the misuse of communication services. Depending on the severity of the violation, sanctions may include placement in a disciplinary cell based on an assessment conducted by the Correctional Institution Security Unit (*Kesatuan Pengamanan Lembaga Pemasyarakatan* or KPLP). These disciplinary measures are not intended as punitive retaliation but rather as regulatory mechanisms to preserve institutional order and ensure the effective functioning of the correctional system. Accordingly, the protection of human rights must be balanced with inmates' obligation to comply with applicable legal rules. The right to communication is therefore not an unrestricted entitlement; rather, it is a protected right whose exercise remains subject to legal accountability and the legitimate security interests of correctional institutions.

Compared with the study by Kurniawan and Akbar, the present research offers a broader legal perspective. While their study primarily examined the quality of video call-based Wartelsus services and the technical challenges associated with service delivery,¹⁸ this study demonstrates that Wartelsus possesses a broader legal significance as a statutory mechanism for safeguarding inmates' constitutional communication rights under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections. Accordingly, Wartelsus should be understood not only as a technological innovation in correctional public services but

¹⁷ Fajarina Budiarti et al., "Urgensi Kesadaran Digital Dalam Mewujudkan Ruang Aman Melalui Literasi Digital Dan Penerapan Proporsional Undang-Undang ITE," *Iuris Studia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum* 7, no. 1 (2026): 142–51, <https://doi.org/10.55357/is.v7i1.1166>.

¹⁸ Kurniawan and Akbar, "Pemanfaatan Layanan Wartel Khusus Warga Binaan Pemasyarakatan Berbasis Video Call Pada Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas IIA Bogor."

also as a legal instrument that operationalizes the protection of human rights within Indonesia's correctional system.

This study likewise extends the findings of Iswandi, who observed that the right to communication has generally been implemented within Indonesian correctional institutions despite continuing structural challenges.¹⁹ The present findings indicate that the effective protection of communication rights depends not only on the availability of communication facilities but also on the quality of institutional governance, effective oversight mechanisms, and affirmative policies that ensure equal access for economically disadvantaged inmates.²⁰ Consequently, the effectiveness of communication rights protection should be understood as the product of an integrated framework combining human rights protection, sound institutional management, and accountable supervision.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with those of Ananda et al., who argued that Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections incorporates the principles of proportionality, respect for human dignity, and the rule of law into Indonesia's correctional framework.²¹ The implementation of Wartelsus at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution provides empirical evidence that these principles are translated into practice through standardized, measurable, and accountable service procedures. This demonstrates that statutory norms do not remain confined to the conceptual realm (law in books) but are effectively realized in institutional practice (law in action).

The implementation of Wartelsus also reflects the State's positive obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill inmates' communication rights. Rather than merely refraining from unjustified interference, the State actively establishes the institutional facilities, administrative procedures, and regulatory mechanisms necessary to ensure the effective exercise of these rights. Beyond its legal function, Wartelsus generates substantial practical benefits by strengthening family relationships, supporting rehabilitation programs, facilitating successful social reintegration, and reducing potential security risks through lawful, supervised, and accountable communication.

The implementation of Wartelsus at the Class I Surabaya Correctional Institution demonstrates compliance with the four fundamental principles of a rule-of-law state: respect for human dignity, legal certainty, justice, and public benefit. This achievement is reflected in the existence of standardized service procedures, non-discriminatory access, affirmative measures for economically disadvantaged inmates, comprehensive supervisory mechanisms, and an effective disciplinary framework for addressing service

¹⁹ Iswandi, "Implementasi Pemenuhan Hak Warga Binaan Berdasarkan UU Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pemasyarakatan Di Lapas Kelas IIA Palopo."

²⁰ Hafidh Muhammad Firmansyah and Budi Priyatmono, "Pemenuhan Hak Ketenagakerjaan Narapidana Melalui Produksi Plastic Injection Moulding Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas IIA Cikarang," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* 3, no. 4 (2025): 5637–50, <https://doi.org/10.61104/alz.v3i4.2162>.

²¹ Ananda et al., "Analisis Normatif Hak-Hak Warga Binaan Dalam Sistem Pemasyarakatan Indonesia: Tinjauan Terhadap Undang-Undang Nomor 22 Tahun 2022 Dan Prinsip-Prinsip Hukum Pidana."

misuse. The findings further confirm that the protection of human rights within correctional institutions is not inherently incompatible with institutional security. Rather, these objectives can be harmonized through a system of correctional service governance that is grounded in the rule of law, characterized by accountability and proportionality, and directed toward the rehabilitative and social reintegration goals established under Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Special Correctional Telecommunications Service (Warung Telekomunikasi Khusus Masyarakat or Wartelsus) is supported by a robust legal framework and has been carried out in accordance with the principles of respect for human dignity, legal certainty, justice, public benefit, and the rehabilitative objectives of Indonesia's correctional system. Standardized service procedures, comprehensive supervisory mechanisms, and the provision of complimentary communication vouchers for economically disadvantaged inmates reflect the practical application of the principle of non-discrimination while maintaining institutional security. The findings further indicate that the protection of inmates' communication rights can be effectively reconciled with correctional security through accountable, transparent, and law-based governance.

This study contributes to the development of correctional law scholarship by advancing the understanding of the relationship between human rights protection and the provision of communication services for inmates. However, its findings are limited by the fact that the research was conducted within a single correctional institution, which may limit the broader generalizability of the results. Accordingly, the government should strengthen the national standardization of Wartelsus services, expand technology-based monitoring systems, and promote equitable access to communication services across correctional institutions. Future research should undertake comparative studies involving multiple correctional institutions throughout Indonesia to evaluate the effectiveness of Wartelsus implementation in supporting inmates' rehabilitation and successful social reintegration.

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