

Border Communities Influence in General Border Committee (GBC) Malaysia-Indonesia (Malindo) / Gbc Malindo: Analysis of Malaysia-Indonesia Land Border Management

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Abstract

General Border Committee (GBC) Malaysia-Indonesia (Malindo) / GBC Malindo is a main framework in the management of the Malaysia-Indonesia border between Malaysia and Indonesia through security cooperation. Various factors are considered in the management implemented, including those related to border communities. This article will analyse how border communities influence the effectiveness of GBC Malindo in managing the Malaysia-Indonesia land border. The study was carried out using qualitative and analytical methods by referring to primary and secondary documents such as official reports, academic journals, and online news as well as through interviews with relevant senior Government officials from both countries. Analysis found that border communities are greatly affects the GBC Malindo effectiveness when they are heavily involved in illegal trade activities through illegal routes due to factors of need (obtaining daily necessities) and economic profit (improve life via smuggling). This brought difficulties in border control and enforcement by GBC Malindo at the boundaries.

Keyword: GBC Malindo; security cooperation; border communities' influence; effectiveness; Malaysia-Indonesia land border.

Introduction

Malaysia-Indonesia land border is managed by the General Border Committee (GBC) Malaysia-Indonesia (Malindo) / GBC Malindo. This framework originates from the Security Arrangement (SA) 1972, signed on April 6, 1972 and updated on December 3, 1984 (SA 1984). SA1972 and SA1984 outlined the need for GBC Malindo establishment to handle security cooperation in carrying out joint operations to overcome security threats along the border of the two countries. GBC Malindo is jointly chaired by the Minister of Defense from both countries and members appointed by their respective Governments. Under GBC Malindo, there is a High Level Committee (HLC) Malindo which is jointly chaired by the Commander of the Malaysian Armed Forces and the Commander of the Indonesian National Army as well as other members appointed by the respective Co-Chairmen of GBC Malindo. The HLC Malindo is the highest committee, where issues will be highlighted within this framework, before they are proposed for approval by the GBC Malindo.

The other committees are (i) Coordinated Operations Control Committee (COCC) which carries out border control and enforcement activities; (ii) Joint Training Committee (JKLB) for the implementation of capacity building between Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI); (iii) Joint Police Cooperation Committee (JPCC) for cooperation related to the prevention of Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) between Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) and Indonesian National Police (POLRI); and (iv) the Malaysia-Indonesia Socio-Economic Development Committee (SOSEK Malindo Committee) to coordinate socio-economic programs and activities implemented by related agencies in an effort to improve the socio-economic status of residents in border areas.

The Malaysia-Indonesia land border is currently facing various transnational threats such as invasion by Illegal Immigrants (PATI) and smuggling of goods and people. Due to that, this security cooperation has been established between the countries of Malaysia and Indonesia through the GBC Malindo framework. The threats faced are mostly carried out and triggered by the border community. This led to the approach and strategy highlighted by GBC Malindo involved non-military actors namely border communities.

The border community cannot flee from GBC Malindo management as they live on the border land. Thus, it is certain that all development, management, control and enforcement that is implemented will take into account the pros and cons that can have implications for the border community. The border community indeed a factor that determines the effectiveness of GBC Malindo. The ability to implement an activity set by GBC Malindo is very relevant to this border community.

This article begins by analyzing the extent to which border community factors affect the effectiveness of GBC Malindo, especially from an economic aspect. It is important to understand the border communities of the two countries influence in shaping the identity on the border. A border is a physical barrier that separates two countries in terms of cultural identity, race and also social interaction among communities on border. Among the general public, borders are usually understood in the context of national borders. However, the fact is that boundaries also exist in human daily life. In fact, in some areas the border is seen to be very blurred because of the close relationship between the residents on the border of the two countries not to mention that they share the same social identity.

Although the national border is a shadow or dividing line between two countries, the fact is that communities at the border cannot be separated due to family and social relationships. Even border communities have the same ethnicity in terms of language, race, and social status, the communities have different citizenship statuses. Therefore, socio-cultural similarities then lead to the creation of traditional social and economic relations between them which in turn become the basic capital for mutually beneficial interactions.

The border communities contribution in improving security at the border is currently seen as very lacking, not to mention the tendency of the community on the Kalimantan side to cross the border illegally to perform social and economic activities. Indeed, communities on the border have a certain influence that is formed through social identity (race, culture, ideology, family) and this social identity expands beyond the political boundaries of the two countries. These communities react to existing border security issues and their role in improving border security.

Therefore, the researcher will divide this article into three parts, the first part on the border communities influence in border management at the international level, the second part on the border communities influence at the Malaysia-Indonesia land border and the last part is an analysis to what extent the border communities influence the effectiveness of GBC Malindo in economic aspects.

Research Methodology

Primary data collection methods will be made through structured interview sessions and document analysis. The advantage of these two methods is that the researcher will be directly involved with the respondents to get feedback and explore issues and challenges. An interview session will be conducted with respondents under GBC Malindo and senior officials from related agencies namely Ministry of Home Affairs of Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as Ministry of Defense Malaysia, to enable a fair analysis by exploring issues and problems in border management of both countries. The method of document analysis is through the analysis of official government documents which will comply subject to the

Official Secrets Act 1972. Secondary data will be obtained through the collection of information online and library research from journals, articles, and books, to support the hypothesis presented.

The Border Communities Influence In Border Management At The International Level

The role of community in border security management cannot be denied and is very important to ensure that all planning program and activities implemented by the government whether unilaterally or bilaterally receive support and involvement from the border community. Cross-border activities carried out by the border community are indeed frequent due to family relationship factors and obtaining daily needs. The government needs to balance the border community's security and welfare needs by increasing their involvement, as well as NGOs and private sector in border security programs and activities of both countries.

Although the Government only carries out its responsibility in ensuring safe borders, it is also necessary to consider the communities acceptance that have certain sensitivities based on the policies implemented perception. The border communities or societies are likely to have been accustomed and comfortable with cross-border activities carried out long before the existence of political borders in both countries even though the Government considers it a crime. This situation prompts the government to act flexibly in the implementation of any policies to strengthen border security so that the border communities influence can be well managed. Wimmer (2013) and Barrick (2015) [1,2] stated that the border community is an actor at border, in addition to the Government, where they also need to be highlighted due to their abilities in causing the conflicts and threats at the border which risk border formation.

Many previous studies have touched on the border community influence in border security policies set by the political elite. Among them, Hataley and Leuprecht (2018) [3] in their study entitled 'Determinants of Cross-Border Cooperation' have studied the determination of border cooperation, especially in the context of community involvement at the border. By using the border in the cities of Narva, Estonia and Ivangorod, Russia as a case study, he has explored the local community involvement (level of analysis) on how they form cooperation considering values, culture, family relationships and needs at the border. The study results found that cooperation at the border includes economic, political, and social fields including formal and informal trade issues as well as border development, politics involving roles, policies and strategies highlighted by leaders who lead border security and social comprised the involvement of border communities and social integration.

In the meantime, Turkey had to modify their approach and policy to be in line with the requirements of FRONTEX which uses EUROSUR as a system that integrates high technology (radar, satellite, UAV's, cameras) in border control. The influence of these external actors has changed Turkey's border control strategy from coordinated border management (at one point having five separate agencies) to integrated border management (Integrated Border Management Bureau - IBMB). However, the Turkish government's actions have sparked debate among communities and society. The people's views and interests are not included in the formation of border security policies and questions arise about the people's rights when the border management structure is handed over to other institutions [4].

The incident of 9/11 has made US have bad prejudice against other countries, especially when it comes to countries that have terrorists' network. In the border security context, it has damaged any form of US security cooperation with other countries. Sokolsky and Lagasse (2009) [4] have analyzed Canada's reaction to the US's decisive action in curbing terrorist activities after the 9/11 incident. It was found that Canada welcomes the campaign sponsored by the US, the 'War on Terror', where they have a 'Smart Border Agreement' to improve border security cooperation, especially the establishment of an Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET), which is a joint border control activity. However, this approach has met with resistance from communities on the border. The state governments on both sides are relatively poor and the border population is politically weak. Local communities on both sides are divided and demoralized because they are not sure how to communicate with the government for being heard. US-Mexico border control is effective, but there is no room for engagement between the government and community institutions to determine priorities at the border [6].

The need for policy makers to involve the community role in implementing any approach at the border needs to be studied critically [7]. Governments led by political elites need to balance the security and economic needs at the border. Border security cooperation implemented by countries at the international and regional levels is seen to have same purpose and goal, which is to share resources and expertise in ensuring the security of the national border. However, there are also challenges and weaknesses in border security cooperation, including local communities [8].

Overall, the border community plays an important role in ensuring the management of a country's border security. It enduringly presented border communities influence and role played in shaping their identity is either influenced by 'transnational border identity' or 'national border identity'.

The Border Communities Influence on The Malaysia-Indonesia Land Border

The border formation between Malaysia and Indonesia has an impact on the people national and cultural identity at the two bordering countries. With the borders formation, social life in border communities is not only limited to interactions with the community within the country but also involves interactions and social bonds that cross the borders of the two countries (Karulus & Suadik, 2010). Such activities, which were previously considered legal, are now labeled as smuggling and further pose an existential security threat to both countries. The political developments that take place in both countries do not actually have an impact on the social development among the communities at the border and more highlight the aspect of equality ('same'ness or 'we'ness) that occurs in the border area. This due to border community is more bound by activities that provide profit to the residents on both sides.

In principle, the relationship between the border residents is friendly, where the residents of this border area live their daily lives in a calm, easy and happy state [9]. Due to this closeness, it is able to create positive and negative aspects. If seen from a positive point of view, this friendship unites two countries where various aspects can be shared to guarantee the harmony and safety of the population as well as stability from an economic aspect. However, if viewed from a negative angle, this social

relationship can facilitate illegal activities that carried out by perpetrator as well as cooperate and agree to hide and protect these activities.

The low economic status of border communities

The economic status of border communities is still low and vulnerable to the involvement of cross-border crime, especially smuggling. Malaysia and Indonesia border towns are often in remote areas and associated with backwardness and low-income of poor residents. The concept of development in border areas is more traditional, which is based on defense and security and not on economic development. Development in border areas needs to be developed and maintained towards a high-income economic status with the aim of removing it from the trap of backward and poor economies. It also helps balancing development between villages and towns or suburbs.

Malaysia and Indonesia are neighboring countries and share a land border involving Sabah-West Kalimantan and Sarawak-North/East Kalimantan. This adjacent land border has caused the border residents dependence on daily necessities from both countries. Smuggling at the Malaysia-Indonesia land border occurs due to the dependence on Malaysian goods by the Indonesian community and due to the proximity factor. For example, the narrow boundary line on Sebatik Island and broad ethnic border creates space for informal economic activities to continue. This flatters a problem for the government, especially Malaysia, to identify illegal economic practices activities [10].

It is aware that the lower sales price of controlled goods in Malaysia and easy supply are the main factors that influence the increase in demand from the border countries people. In fact, the geographical position such as the short demarcation distance between the two countries and the existence of many rat lanes have made it easier to smuggle subsidized controlled goods. The need to obtain easier and cheaper necessities in towns near the border causes border communities in Indonesia to be more attracted to cross border acquire those needs. Gek Hsia and Gusni (2020) [11] stated that goods in Malaysia are cheaper and easily available. There is informal cross-border trade between Sabah-Sarawak and Kalimantan where the smuggling of goods in the border area is a phenomenon that continues to date. Smuggling activities commonly involve subsidized goods such as daily necessities including cooking oil, onions, fresh chicken, coconuts, and petroleum products such as gas and petrol which regularly occur at the Malaysia-Indonesia border.

On top of that, the border community has a low economic status due to their involvement in cross-border crime activities. Among them functioning as patrons to bring in Indonesians work in Malaysia, looking for job opportunities in Malaysia due to lucrative payments, having kinship ties with Malaysians, buying daily or business necessities in view of the fact that the store location closer to their homes and much cheaper prices compares to Indonesia, carrying out criminal activities such as vehicle theft, robbery and being a middleman for smugglers either from Malaysia or Indonesia. When illegal immigration is rampant it will have an impact on the socioeconomics of the community at the border.

Border areas need to be developed and preserved towards a high-income economic status to address the issue of people's poverty [12]. Border security measures have a negative impact on people's income and businesses in Semporna and Tawau, Sabah [13]. The need to get easier and cheaper necessities in

towns near the border causes border communities in Indonesia to be more attracted to cross the border earn those needs. It also led Malaysia and Indonesia to take joint steps in develop the land border area between the two countries with economic development projects, where both parties agreed to establish a joint action committee for this purpose. Malaysia is the largest foreign investor in Indonesia, and the government has targeted an investment value of US\$25 billion (about RM112 billion) by 2020.¹

However, border security measures have a negative impact on people's income and businesses, for instance at the Semporna and Tawau, Sabah border [13]. This encourages border communities to undertake cross-border crime activities for their survival. They also felt that the legal path is rigid and difficult, compared to the illegal path, which is easier, and some are profitable, in consequence of them crossing the border at most to acquire cheaper daily necessities in neighboring countries.

Border communities' involvement in Cross Border Crime activities due to economic and cultural factors

In Malaysia, most cross-border crime act is driven by trade and family history which allowed them to carried out the crime and cross border due to strong family network with the neighboring countries. Gek Hsia and Gusni (2020) [11] stating that smuggling involving communities issue at the border still occurs widely due to the history of trade, family bonding, feelings of belonging, culture and geography. Accordingly by the border enforcement agencies perception of both countries, that the activity of smuggling basic necessities is a border community culture that should not be prevented for survival and viewed as not a criminal offence.

According to Abd. Hair et al. (2013) [14] in his study on informal cross-border trade in Serikin, Bau District, Sarawak found that border communities at Entikong and Serikin are more motivated to carry out cross-border trade activities as the main economic source. A study by Sarjono (2018) [15] states that the Malaysia and Indonesia dependence on goods at the border, has created informal or illegal economic activities. Moreover, there are many social and economic problems at the border due to family history and socio-cultural border communities trade which being perceive as normal and not a crime. This caused by the lack of awareness in the border community relating to security issues that need to be emphasized.

The Indonesian side finds it difficult to control their border communities due to the large population and they also have to turn a blind eye to the cross-border activities carried out by the border communities due to insufficient staff in monitoring and controlling, led in assuming they only cross border to buy daily necessities and visiting family where most of them marry Malaysians. The Indonesian border community who crossing Malaysia border through the rat road happened since ancient times and present a culture to date. It is burdensome for the Indonesian Government to control the large number of Indonesian people and cause the act of turn a blind eye and perceived it as normal part of life and no security issue for the border communities survival.²

To date, there are no specific statistics on the border communities involvement in cross-border crime. However, there are many reports issued by the security agencies from both countries related to success in arrests and enforcement actions at the Malaysia-Indonesia land border. For example, in 2020, the General Operations Team (PGA) of the Sarawak Brigade managed to arrest a total of 26 illegal immigrants who tried to enter Sarawak through the rat road on the Sarawak-Kalimantan border. The arrested illegal immigrants are Indonesian citizens who do not have any valid work permits or travel documents. The PGA Sarawak Brigade continues to carry out operations aggressively to track down henchmen or those who conspire and involved in smuggling and trafficking of illegal immigrants at the Sarawak-Kalimantan border (Abdullah, 2020) [16]. Through Ops Benteng by the MAF, a total of 497 illegal immigrants and 28 ground coordinator have been detained, since the beginning of January 2020 throughout Sarawak [17].

PGA Sarawak also succeeded in defeating active syndicate in illegal immigrants smuggling into Sarawak known as the 'Adi Tailo Gang'. This group has trafficking syndicates network from Indonesia known as 'Kumpulan Feri Yeni'. Indonesian citizen who are the main suspect or mastermind was successfully arrested in an operation carried out by Op Benteng Covid members team from the Sarawak PGA Brigade Headquarters. In the operation, the team also arrested ground coordinator consist of four local citizens and one Indonesian citizen, as well as 16 illegal immigrants (eight men and eight women). Op Benteng Covid members team of the Sarawak PGA Brigade Headquarters then followed three local vehicles suspected of carrying illegal immigrants from Biawak, Lundu to Sibul, Tatau and Bintulu using private vehicles.³

In December 2020, PGA arrested an Indonesian citizen who was carrying 3kg of syabu drug worth RM536,288, which can accommodate 60,000 drug addicts and as many as 19,516 ecstasy pills on the hillside road of Sungai Paoh, Serian, Sarawak that leads to the border Indonesia [18]. In June of the same year, MAF has successfully seized the controlled goods smuggling at the Sarawak Kalimantan border including four trucks, a four-wheel drive vehicle, an excavator and controlled goods such as eggs, vegetables, fertilizer and plywood, estimated to be worth almost RM400, 000.⁴

Then in 2021, a total of 572 illegal immigrants were detected attempt to enter Sarawak through the Sarawak-Indonesia border lanes on the first six months. During the same period, a total of 45 local and foreign traffickers were also successfully arrested under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Migraine Smuggling Act (ANTISOM) 2007.⁵ In 2022, a total of nine illegal immigrants were arrested, while six more were deported in Op Awas and Op Keris Parang. This operation by the 13th Regiment of the Royal Malay Soldiers (13 RAMD) is to curb the illegal immigrants entry who have infiltrated the Southern border of Sarawak.⁶ Table below shows some successful arrests cases by security agencies in border control.

¹ *Bernama*. (2017).

² Nur Syahrizal & Triadi Maharso. (2022, August 7). *Interview*. GBC Malindo Secretariat (Indonesia). Kemendagri, Indonesia.

³ *Utusan Borneo Online*. (2021).

⁴ *The Malaya Post*. (2020).

⁵ *Utusan Borneo Online*. (2021).

⁶ *Astro Awani*. (2022).

Table of cross-border crime cases that were successfully arrests at Malaysia-Indonesia land border.

No.	Cross-Border Crime Location	Cross-Border Crime Activities
1.	Sabah-East/North Kalimantan border.	A local Malaysian man who acts as ground coordinator that brought in illegal immigrants was arrested along with 7 Indonesian illegal immigrants at the Petron Gas Station, Batu 3, Tawau, Sabah. All the illegal immigrants were detected during the Quick Response Team (QRF) patrolling Joint Op Benteng.
2.	The border of Kandoangan Village, North Kalimantan, Indonesia, and Kilometer 11, Kalabakan, Sabah.	This is one of rat roads area that actively used by land traffickers to bring Indonesian illegal immigrants into Malaysia. Tactics used via transferred 10 to 15 groups of people that will be 'greeted' by ground coordinator from the four-wheel drive at the Malaysian border. The authorities found many rat routes or staging points along the 200 km from Tawau to Kalabakan.
3.	The border of Tebedu, Sarawak and Entikong, Kalimantan.	A total of 27 Indonesian illegal immigrants along with four local citizens were arrested by the 10th Battalion of the Royal Ranger Regiment (10 RRD) to smuggle subsidized goods including rice, onions, and cooking oil worth RM169,154.65. It involved 20 male and seven female illegal immigrants along with three local males and one female after they were found to be carrying out smuggling goods activities to Indonesia from Malaysia through illegal routes.
Source: Researchers adaptation from Zarina Abdullah (2020), Fauzie Sarjono et al. (2020) and Suraidah Roslan (2021).		

All the incidents stated above are performed by the border communities who act as invaders and smugglers. Those who are not among the invaders and smugglers also play a role by providing cooperation and protection to these invaders and smugglers. In most cases, they hide intruders and smugglers in their homes as transit and help them store the smuggled goods. This tragedies restricts the initiatives implemented by the Governments of both countries as well as the widespread invasion of illegal immigrants which can impact border communities socio-economics at the border. That does not include criminal activities carried out by the illegal immigrants who are capable of taking over certain economic activities in the border area [19].

Better socio-economic infrastructure on the Malaysian side

Malaysia places development as one of the approaches and strategies in curbing security threats at the border. This can be seen when the country was facing the communist threat in 1970s and 1980s, then introduced the concept of security and development programs (KESBAN) which combines security and development in the national security policy. This includes infrastructure development involving the construction of roads to facilitate security personnel in controlling the border. This benefit also felt by the community at the border when other facilities such as health clinics and education (schools) were developed for the community use. A different situation occurs in Indonesia where the government did not pay attention on border development until Jokowi ruled as President in 2014. Nevertheless, the border infrastructure development is seen improving with the upgrading of National Cross Border Post (PLBN) and highway network to support the development of new capital city in East Kalimantan.

Even so, infrastructure facilities that involve socio-economics are still better in Malaysia compare to Indonesia and this situation has encouraged the Indonesian community to obtain certain facilities, especially involving daily needs, health facilities and shortening their travel time. In addition, many economic activities at the border are monopolized by Indonesian communities who enter to perform business. Study by Abd. Hair et al. (2013) [14] stated that many Indonesian communities act

business in the Pasar Serikin market. The forms of cross-border trade/purchasing are daily necessities namely batik cloth, *telekung*, curtains, handicrafts from forest products, herbs and side dishes such as *petai* from the villagers' hamlets. Furthermore, there is also rattan furniture sold openly at much cheaper price than Kuching City. The traders persistence to perform business in Serikin especially from West Kalimantan is due to poor living conditions, the weekends availability to act business, small capital, obtainable supplies to sell, and support from friends and family.

The bordering countries is an important area for both sides of the country. Nowadays, it has become more important as a community meeting point, a zone for bilateral cooperation and a passageway for various legal and illegal activities. Therefore, communities in border areas between countries usually have and establish more frequent and close relationships. This situation occurs since they share similarities in terms of ancestry, language, and culture. The proximity factor also affects the close relationship that has been forged in addition to the existence of the communication system infrastructure that has been developed by the governments of the two countries. The community settlement area on Sarawak, Malaysia and West Kalimantan, Indonesia border is located far from both countries state capital that causes the residents to be more closer [9].

The existence of illegal routes or rat lanes on the border of two countries, especially Sarawak-West Kalimantan, is often used by both sides, whether local people or Indonesian citizen who live at the border. The lack of legal entry points and the distance factor cause the border communities use the rat lanes to get necessities and visit relatives. Both countries prepared border communities with flexibility by providing them the use of cross-border passes through the Border Cross Agreement (BCA) for relatives visit purposes and purchase essential goods within 5km of the border line.

Analysis Of Border Communities Influence In Gbc Malindo Effectiveness On The Economic Aspects

Socio-economic status improvement through SOSEK Malindo

In understanding the communities influence on the Malaysia-Indonesia land border, there is evidence on the community involvement in cross-border crime that occurs at the two bordering countries. Those crimes attributable from family relationships, low living standards led to engagement in smuggling activities, better infrastructure in Malaysia that shortened the travel time and the cheaper price of Malaysia goods compared to Indonesia. The situation at the border between Malaysia and Indonesia is different from the aspect of community well-being. For example, access to education for Indonesian border residents at Sebatik and Nunukan islands (North Kalimantan), which borders Tawau, Sabah, is limited and requires assistance from the government to improve the border residents quality of life.

GBC Malindo which initially focused on security has evolved towards economic and social development as an agenda to enable it remain relevant. It can be implemented by developing

Malaysia's border region so that it can generate prosperity for border residents throughout the states of Sabah and Sarawak as well as some in the Peninsular, by creating a balanced security and economic environment. The establishment of SOSEK Malindo through the improvement of SA1984 proves that GBC Malindo sees the importance of social and economic aspects, especially those involving communities on the border that shall be improved.

Programs and activities implemented in SOSEK Malindo

There are basically three (3) areas that SOSEK Malindo pays attention to, namely social and cultural, economic, trade and communication, as well as security and border management. The establishment of SOSEK Malindo witnessed the great role of the State/Province in an extensive manner through the structures created at that level. The land border involves Sarawak-Kalbar and Sabah-Kaltara. Many programs and activities have been implemented since its establishment in 1984 that contribute to the communities socio-economic development at the Malaysia-Indonesia land border. Among the programs and activities are as shown in the following Table:

Table of programs and activities that have been implemented in SOSEK Malindo.

No.	Programs & Activities	Contribution to the community
1.	Recognition of the official route between Sarawak and West Kalimantan for public transport.	Both countries recognize the official route involving Kuching-Biawak-Aruk-Sambas-Singkawan with tax exemption facilities for public vehicles that cross the border.
2.	Cooperation between the Sabah State Department of Agriculture and the KALTARA Agriculture Department for the import and export of rice and halal chicken.	This cooperation will improve the import and export process of those goods that pass through this two bordering countries and further meet the local community needs.
3.	Infectious disease control activities involving humans and animals.	A concerted effort by relevant agencies specifically for health workers in curbing the threat of Avian Influenza and malaria in West Kalimantan and Sarawak. Among them are vaccination and quarantine matters by the TNI and MAF.
4.	Trade Normalization in Entikong, Badau and Aruk as Export and Import Gateways.	The normalization of trade at the entrance involve the development of infrastructure and cross-border trade facilities including the standardization of vehicle insurance rates that pass through the entrance.
5.	Hill cutting in the Entikong -Tebedu border area.	The hill cutting allows the entry and exit route at Immigration, Customs, Quarantine, and Security (ICQS)/PLBN Entikong-Tebedu to speed up the cross-border process.
6.	Kapal Sei/Sungai Nyamuk River-Tawau Lane/Route reactivation.	Ferry facilities to facilitate cross-border movement, especially among communities.
7.	Opening of Labang - Bantul Cross Border Post.	The opening of new entry point will facilitate immigration and trade between the two countries as previously the community had to go through immigration posts which far from the border.
8.	Infectious diseases notification among Indonesian workers in Malaysia.	Cross-border facilities for Indonesian workers suffering from infectious diseases and seeking treatment which have been facilitated by Malaysia either.

Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on SOSEK Malindo Minutes of Meetings (2015-2021)

Improvement of Border Crossing Agreement (BCA) and Border Trade Agreement (BTA) in facilitating the border communities cross-border movement

In 1967, activities and issues related to cross-border trade involving both countries often occurred in Tawau and Sebatik Island that bring both countries signed a Cross-Border Agreement comprise of Basic Arrangement on Border Crossing, as well as Economic and Trade Relations. On August 24, 1970,

both countries again signed the Agreement on Border Trade and Agreement which referred as Border Trade Agreement (BTA) and Border Crossing in 1984 that known as Border Crossing Agreement (BCA). Both agreement is the legal foundation and guidance for both countries in regulating trade/economy at the border [20].

Cross-border movement by communities at the border is frequent, especially involving social and trade activities, whether legal (gazetted entrance) or illegal (rat road). Wide borders and weak enforcement cause difficult for both countries to control. Hence, among mechanisms used by both countries to facilitate cross-border movement by communities is through the BCA and BTA. However, it needs to be improved from time to time based on changing threats and current socio-economic needs. On top of that, SOSEK Malindo became the main platform between the two countries to discuss and negotiate the

suggested improvements as it involves national security and sovereignty.

Through SOSEK Malindo, the need to improve the BCA and BTA has become a priority for both countries, especially to facilitate communities movement and improve cross-border trade activities at the Malaysia-Indonesia land border. The issue of improving BCA and BTA has often been raised and become the main agenda in GBC Malindo meetings over the past few years as shown in the following Table:

Table of BCA and BTA Review Agenda in SOSEK Malindo.

No.	Meeting/Session	Agenda/Meeting Decision
1.	The 33th SOSEK Malindo Committee Meeting in Batam, Indonesia on December 14-15, 2015.	The implementation of traditional cross-border trade on the Sarawak-West Kalimantan border remains based on the provisions of the BTA 1970 because the improvements to the BTA have not been finalized by both countries.
2.	The 34th SOSEK Malindo Committee Meeting in Terengganu, Malaysia on November 28, to December 1, 2016.	Both countries agreed that the review of BCA and BTA be discussed in the Joint Secretariat (SEKBER) Meeting on 2017.
3.	The 13th Joint Secretariat of SOSEK Malindo Committee Meeting in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia on February 28, to March 3, 2017.	The meeting decided to review the Agreement between Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia Government on BCA 1967 accelerated by the related agencies.
4.	The 36th SOSEK Malindo Committee Meeting in Penang, Malaysia on November 21-24, 2018.	The Indonesian side urged that the issue of the entry and exit route of the two countries be finalized in the BCA review.
5.	35th Sarawak-Kalbar Technical Team Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia on August 1, 2019.	Trade normalization at Entikong-Tebudu cannot be implemented and subject to the BCA and BTA review considered the principle of complementary and win-win situation.
6.	The 37th SOSEK Malindo Committee Meeting in Bandung, Indonesia on October 9-11, 2019.	SOSEK Malindo agreed that the proposed reopening of the Serudong (Malaysia) - Sei Manggaris (Indonesia) entrance be included in the BCA and BTA review discussion.

Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on SOSEK Malindo Minutes of Meetings (2015-2021)

Community involvement and role is still low in SOSEK Malindo

The government cannot overlook the community's role in border security, especially their involvement in government programs and activities either directly or indirectly. Abdul Ali et al. (2019) [21] stated that the role and involvement of Sabah community at Sabah-Kaltim border can be directly categorized into two main forms, namely, civil society and paramilitary forces. Cross-border crime such as human trafficking exists due to the lack of people knowledge at border on this issue. Lack of awareness also occurs due to attitudes and perceptions among border communities who felt that cross-border activities are non-criminal, in addition to their culture which considers smuggling as a source of income.

On Malaysian side, the Government has implemented various initiatives to curb the crime, including increasing the border communities involvement by encourage them to perform as the Government eyes and ears, to conveyers illegal activities information that occur such as invasion and smuggling. For example, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) has established the

Malaysian Volunteer Department (RELA) at the border, where the first phase implemented was at the Sarawak border, where training is provided by the Department of Internal Security and Public Order (KDNKA). These people will carry out patrol and secrecy duties. MOHA also establish a National Border Control System (NBCS) to apply the use of technology at the border, that will be implement at all borders and outside the entry gates. For instance the use of drones can reduce practicality. For this purpose, there should be basic hardware available. The use of high-tech CCTV can also reduce staff utilization and others.⁷

According to Hamzah Bin Ishak, Deputy Director General of National Security, there is an effort carried out by the MAF for military personnel to improve their communication with the public to disclose information related to the operational area and to increase border communities awareness preventing them from involvement in smuggling and jointly defend the country. MINDEF also cooperates with their Indonesian counterpart and compromise with Indonesian views. Eventhough there are many MINDEF/MAF posts at the border to date, but there are still many Indonesians who cross border entering Malaysia.

⁷ Shamsul Bahari, S. F. (2023, January 17). *Interview*. Deputy Secretary II, Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Putrajaya.

However, the country does not point the finger/blame solely at the Indonesian side but still urged for their cooperation in solving this matters.⁸

On the Indonesian side, Nur Syahrizal stated that if the Indonesian Government can manage this border communities well, it can motivate their willingness to cooperate with the government in improving security at the border. Currently, there is an effort from the government to enhance the community role, particularly in smuggling reporting and invasion activities as well as enhancing activities and awareness programs.⁹ However, the lack of financial allocation and the absence of suitable platform for community has caused the program and activities not to achieve the expected objectives.

Meanwhile, at GBC Malindo level, both countries see the need to involve communities in their programs and activities as an outreach and engagement at the border. In addition for being

able to show the commitment from both countries in improving border security, the community role can be expanded as eyes and ears to the government in convey information on smuggling and invasion to the security personnel who control the border. Among the programs under GBC Malindo implemented with the border community are "Pure Soul Program", under the Ground Training Planning Team (TPLB) which has been implemented since 1997. When the joint training is completed, MAF and TNI continue programs with residents helping them build roads in the village area, cleaning the village area and provide medical examination assistance.

Nevertheless, community involvement in GBC Malindo programs and activities still seen as low, especially through SOSEK Malindo. Throughout 2015-2021, there are only three (3) SOSEK Malindo programs and activities that involve the community indirectly as shown in Table below:

Table of Community Involvement in SOSEK Malindo Programs and Activities.

No.	SOSEK Malindo Programs and Activities	Community Engagement
1.	Meeting between the Governors in the provinces of West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and North Kalimantan with the Chief Ministers of Sabah and Sarawak.	There is involvement of local communities and government officials at provinces/states.
2.	Grand launching of ICQS/PLBN Lubuk Antu-Badau.	The grand launching was carried out in 2019 by the Governor of West Kalimantan and Chief Minister of Sarawak in the presence of local community.
3.	The organization of the 'Tour de Malindo' program	Involving 150 participation from Sarawak and West Kalimantan in cycling activities to explore the land border of the two countries.

Source: Prepared by the Researchers based on SOSEK Malindo Minutes of Meetings (2015-2021)

Therefore, both countries need to formulate a strategy by increasing programs and activities that involve border communities, especially in SOSEK Malindo. Through SOSEK Malindo, the state and provincial governments can play a greater role as they are closer to the border communities and more understand their problems and needs in order to improve the socio-economic aspects at the border. Although there are many programs and activities implemented by SOSEK Malindo, the border communities involvement are still minimal compared to the number of communities at Malaysia-Indonesia land border. Simultaneously, the government needs to build a close relationship with border community to gain their trust on government's commitment which can led in improving border security as a whole.

Conclusion

Overall, the analysis found that the border communities were involved in collaborating with smuggling syndicates and trafficking of people and goods, where they also violated the border rules by committing border incursions and smuggling prohibited goods. This stems from family history and socio-culture trade, as well as the believe that illegal activities across the border are normal and not a crime. It also driven by the need to get daily necessities and relatives visit. This issue presents a challenge in the management of Malaysia-Indonesia land border by the GBC Malindo framework. Challenges also exist due to

the fact that these cross-border activities allowed by the security personnel placed at bordering countries on the impulse to get rewards from the border communities who involved in cross-border crime activities, despite having perception that the activities are for their survival and not considered as an offense. It can be seen that there is the lack of awareness towards the dangers and risks for breaking the law by border communities and officials. This create difficulty for GBC Malindo to manage the border effectively and damage the GBC Malindo credibility. With that, it is concluded that the border community greatly affects the GBC Malindo effectiveness, especially due to the factors of need and economic profit.

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⁸ Sulaiman, S. (2023, January 25). *Interview*. Deputy Under Secretary (Policy and International Relations), Policy and Strategic Planning Division, Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), Kuala Lumpur.

⁹ Nur Syahrizal & Triadi Maharso. (2022, August 7). *Interview*. GBC Malindo Secretariat (Indonesia). Kemendagri, Indonesia.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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