

The Role of Immigration Technical Staff For The Service and Protection of Indonesian Citizens at The Indonesian Consulate General In Johor Bahru

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of Immigration Technical Staff in providing services and protection for Indonesian citizens (WNI) within the jurisdiction of the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) in Johor Bahru. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach and case study method, this research analyzes various immigration services, including passport issuance, Travel Document in Lieu of Passport (SPLP), visas, dual citizenship affidavits, and citizenship renunciation documents. Additionally, it investigates the protective functions for problematic Indonesian nationals, such as those facing deportation, overstaying, neglect, and legal violations. The findings indicate that Immigration Technical Staff not only fulfill administrative duties but also act as state representatives in implementing protection diplomacy and strengthening both individual and national resilience. Within the theoretical framework of law, individual resilience, national resilience, and protection, the presence of Immigration Technical Staff is a tangible manifestation of the state's responsibility to its citizens abroad.

Keywords: *Immigration, Citizen Protection, Immigration Services*

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, the movement of people between countries has become increasingly intense and flexible (Papastergiadis, 2018; Wang & Wang, 2012). Technological advances and easy access to information have made cross-border migration a common phenomenon in modern life (Faist, 2016; Guo, 2021; Newell et al., 2016). This condition poses new challenges for the country, especially in providing protection to its citizens abroad. When Indonesian Citizens (WNI) settle or work abroad, they are directly outside the physical reach of state protection, so the role of Indonesian representatives, including immigration technical staff, becomes very strategic in maintaining their rights and security (Kartiko & Herlina, 2019).

The Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) Johor Bahru is one of the representatives of the Republic of Indonesia that has a high workload in providing services and protection to Indonesian citizens (Haumahu et al., 2023; Nabila, 2021; Rusli, 2022). Based on data, the number of Indonesian citizens in the accreditation area of the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru, which covers the states of Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang is estimated to reach more than 500,000 people. Most of them work in the informal sector such as factories, oil palm plantations, construction, and as housekeepers. The large number of Indonesian citizens in this region certainly requires the presence of a strong and responsive service and protection system (Drake, 2019; Pisani et al., 2017; Sparrow et al., 2020).

Immigration Technical Staff as part of the Indonesian representative has the main tasks in terms of immigration services, such as the issuance of passports, Travel Letters in Lieu of Passport (SPLP), affidavits of dual citizenship, and letters of rencharge of Indonesian citizenship. In addition, they also carry out supervisory functions, institutional relations, and reporting oriented to legal and social protection of Indonesian citizens (Amien, 2019). In the context of international law, the presence of this technical staff is an extension of the state in guaranteeing the basic rights of its citizens, including the right to identity and citizenship, as mandated in Law No. 6 of 2011 concerning Immigration and Law No. 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations.

From the perspective of individual resilience, fast, accurate, and humane immigration services are a concrete form of the state in strengthening the capacity of Indonesian citizens to survive and live a decent life in a foreign country. On the other hand, on a macro level, the state's ability to protect its citizens abroad shows the resilience of the country itself, where the integrity and sovereignty of the nation are maintained through the strengthening of protection systems outside national jurisdiction (Damayanti et al., 2023).

The issue of protection for Indonesian citizens is inseparable from the complexity of the problems they face, such as overstay, violation of employment contracts, unpaid salaries, physical violence, and mass deportations. This problem shows that the presence of immigration staff is not only administrative, but also a representation of the state in carrying out its protective function. As stated by Firlana H. Tando (2022), supervision and strengthening the immigration function of migrant workers is essential to reduce the risks of social vulnerability abroad.

In addition, immigration technical staff also play an important role in dealing with the implications of other countries' policies, such as the visit-free visa policy that is often abused by foreigners. The study by Utami and Rahmanto (2020) emphasizes the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation and strengthening human resources in dealing with rampant immigration and employment violations by foreigners in Indonesia. This is in line with the role of immigration in a cross-border context that demands synergy between national law and protection diplomacy.

With these various realities, this study aims to examine in depth the role of Immigration Technical Staff in providing immigration services and protection for Indonesian citizens in the work area of the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru. This research is important to assess the effectiveness of their work in the context of legal, social, and state resilience and to provide recommendations for improving the quality of protection of Indonesian citizens abroad.

METHOD

Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to explain complex social phenomena, especially in examining the role of Immigration Technical Staff in providing services and protection to Indonesian Citizens (WNI) abroad, especially in the work area of the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru. Qualitative descriptive research allows researchers to delve deeply into the substantive and facilitative tasks carried out by Immigration Technical Staff.

This type of research is a case study. The case study was conducted to analyze in depth the implementation of the duties of the Immigration Technical Staff in one representative area, namely the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru, by focusing attention on specific events, activities, programs, or groups in detail and thoroughly.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted at the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia (KJRI) Johor Bahru, Malaysia, which covers accreditation areas in four states, namely Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang. This region is one of the regions with the largest number of Indonesian citizens in Malaysia, with a population of more than 500,000 people.

The research time is adjusted to the period of task implementation and data collection by the Immigration Technical Staff, especially in 2022 to early 2023, which includes important programs such as RTK 2.0 passport services, SPLP, visas, affidavits, as well as deportation data and problematic Indonesian citizens that have been summarized in the final report of duties.

Data Collection Techniques

The data in this study was obtained through a documentation study of the official report of the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru, including the Final Memorandum of Duties, as well as other supporting documents such as the Decree of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the performance report of the immigration function. In addition, secondary data is obtained from academic journal sources, laws and regulations, and official media reports.

Data collection was carried out by: literature study to obtain theoretical and conceptual foundations from relevant scientific and regulatory journals, document analysis of immigration service operational data, including passport data, SPLP, affidavits, visas, relinquishment of citizenship, and deportation data and semi-structural interviews with relevant parties such as immigration officials at the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru, but these interview data are optional as the final report of duty already provides data that is quite detailed.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model interactive qualitative analysis method which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. First, the data is reduced by selecting important information that is relevant to the focus of the research. Second, the data is presented in the form of narratives and tables based on the type of immigration service. Third, conclusions are drawn inductively based on the pattern of findings that appear in the field.

This approach is expected to provide a complete and in-depth picture of how Immigration Technical Staff carry out their role in immigration services and the protection of Indonesian citizens, as well as the challenges faced in the context of foreign policy and legal protection in a wide work area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Passport Issuance for 2021 – 2023****Table 1. Passport Issuance for 2021 – 2023**

MONTH	YEAR 2021	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023
January	1,325	2,008	2,185
February	2,269	1,810	2,037
March	1,110	2,779	1,979
April	1,847	2,739	1,333
May	2,353	1,593	2,383
June	0	2,491	1,388
July	1,190	2,903	2,641
August	2,444	4,144	2,618
September	1,974	2,064	1,108
October	2,100	2,107	1,724
November	1,633	1,843	2,055
December	1,465	2,285	1,472
Total	19,710	28,766	22,920

Data shows that the dominance of passport services is carried out to replace expired expired periods, reflecting the high need for official documents from Indonesian citizens, most of whom are migrant workers in Malaysia. This high number is also in line with the policy of the RTK 2.0 program from the Government of Malaysia, which requires complete documents as a condition for the legalization of migrant worker status.

SPLP Services for 2021 – 2023**Table 2. SPLP Services for 2021 – 2023**

MONTH	YEAR 2021	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023
January	83	959	886
February	1,887	1,550	1,550
March	1,531	1,105	612
April	1,006	1,404	455
May	1,601	1,156	703
June	0	1,640	602
July	797	587	606
August	755	488	686
September	4,777	725	459
October	1,752	571	547
November	1,357	587	458
December	962	611	542
Total	16,408	11,383	8,106

The issuance of SPLP is one of the important protection instruments for undocumented Indonesian citizens, especially in cases of deportation, detention, or neglect. The high issuance

of SPLPs reflects the still great challenges in protecting safe administration and migration for Indonesian citizens in Malaysia.

Visa Services for 2021 – 2023

Table 3. Visa Services for 2021 – 2023

Month	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023
January	0	3	9
February	0	1	14
March	0	2	10
April	0	0	14
May	0	0	6
June	0	0	12
July	0	0	23
August	0	0	14
September	0	0	16
October	0	14	4
November	0	26	3
December	0	6	2
Total	0	52	127

The majority of visa applications are a type of socio-cultural visit, used by Indonesian families or business associates. This shows that the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru not only serves migrant workers, but also other social groups that need legal access to Indonesia, demanding that technical staff be meticulous in data validation to prevent the misuse of residence permits.

Protection of Problematic Indonesian Citizens

Table 4. Protection of Problematic Indonesian Citizens

Case	2016	2017	2018	2019
Unpaid salary	25	39	44	30
Displaced	113	94	101	24
No documents	238	440	168	93
Immigration violations	19	64	13	2
Total cases	719	859	643	339

The highest cases occurred in the unavailability of documents, followed by cases of neglect and unpaid salaries. This shows the high socio-economic vulnerability of Indonesian citizens, while emphasizing the importance of the presence of Immigration Technical Staff in document recovery, legal assistance, and collective deportation.

Affidavit and Citizenship Relinquishment Services 2021 – 2023

Table 5. Affidavit and Citizenship Relinquishment Services 2021 – 2023

MONTH	YEAR 2021	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023
January	5	31	28
February	6	30	30
March	3	28	27
April	10	72	21
May	0	31	11
June	0	33	13
July	0	30	22
August	2	28	25
September	9	10	11
October	17	31	16
November	23	35	28
December	37	31	16
Total	112	390	248

Immigration Technical Staff also plays a role in citizenship matters, such as the issuance of affidavits for children with dual citizenship and the renunciation of Indonesian citizenship. This service demands thoroughness and understanding of cross-border citizenship laws, as it concerns the legal status of children born of mixed marriages or permanent migration.

Based on the results above, it can be seen that the Immigration Technical Staff has a multifunctional role in providing immigration services as well as legal and social protection for Indonesian citizens in the work area of the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru. In the legal context, their presence represents the implementation of the state's constitutional mandate in protecting every citizen as stated in the 1945 Constitution and Law No. 6 of 2011 concerning Immigration (Kusnadi, 2021; Orlando, 2022).

From the perspective of individual resilience, the services provided by technical staff support the ability of Indonesian citizens to survive independently abroad through the provision of legal documents, legal education, and access to emergency assistance (Journal of Terrorism Studies, 2020). This shows how immigration services are able to strengthen the personal resilience of Indonesian citizens who are in vulnerable conditions.

Meanwhile, in terms of state resilience, the actions of technical staff contribute to the stability of bilateral diplomacy and maintain Indonesia's good name in the international arena. As stated by Martiana et al. (2023), national resilience is not only shaped by military power, but also by the state's ability to protect its citizens abroad consistently.

In the context of protection, immigration work carried out by technical staff is a concrete form of Duty of Care, which is the paradigm of state responsibility towards citizens outside domestic jurisdiction (Surwandono & Nugroho, 2023). The involvement of the digital diplomacy approach by the government also supports the effectiveness of protecting Indonesian citizens as explained by Dharossa & Rezasyah (2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the Immigration Technical Staff at the Indonesian Consulate General in Johor Bahru holds a vital and strategic position in delivering immigration services and ensuring the protection of Indonesian citizens (WNI) within their area of duty. Their service functions—ranging from the issuance of passports, SPLPs, visas, affidavits, to citizenship waiver letters—reflect the state's commitment to safeguarding the administrative and legal rights of its citizens abroad. Concurrently, their protection roles for vulnerable groups, including overstayers, victims of neglect, abuse, or deportation, exemplify the tangible presence of the state beyond its territorial jurisdiction. The study's findings indicate that these services are often challenged by limited personnel, high numbers of citizens requiring assistance, and the evolving immigration policies in Malaysia. Despite these challenges, Immigration Technical Staff have demonstrated the ability to fulfill their responsibilities through humanistic, diplomatic, and collaborative approaches with relevant stakeholders. Their role embodies not only technical and administrative functions but also elements of legal enforcement, protective diplomacy, and state resilience—positioning them as crucial actors in maintaining the dignity and presence of the Indonesian state abroad. To further enhance their effectiveness, it is imperative to strengthen institutional support, provide ongoing capacity building, and integrate digital systems into service delivery. This research contributes to the academic discourse and policy formulation regarding the strategic role of immigration in safeguarding citizens abroad and offers a foundation for the development of a more adaptive and sustainable foreign protection framework.

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