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Resolution of illegal electricity current additions: A study at PLN (state electricity company) Banda Aceh

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Abstract
Illegal electricity tampering remains a serious issue in the electricity sector as it causes losses to PT PLN, disrupts the stability of the electricity distribution system, and endangers public safety. This research aims to examine the mechanisms for resolving cases of illegal electricity connections and the implementation of law enforcement against offenders at PT PLN UP3 Banda Aceh. This research uses an empirical legal method with a sociological-juridical approach. Data were obtained through interviews, observations, documentation studies, and literature reviews, which were then analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. The research results show that the resolution of electricity current addition cases is carried out through administrative and criminal mechanisms. Administrative resolution begins with an inspection by the Electricity Usage Regulation Officers (P2TL) to identify violations of electricity usage. Violations are classified into P1 (power limit violations), P2 (manipulation of electrical measuring devices), P3 (a combination of P1 and P2), and P4 (illegal use of electricity by non-PLN customers). For P1, P2, and P3 violations, PLN imposes administrative sanctions in the form of follow-up bills, compensation payments, temporary disconnection of electricity, and dismantling of installations. Meanwhile, violations that meet the elements of a criminal offense based on Law Number 30 of 2009 concerning electricity, specifically P4 violations or those causing significant losses and disrupting the electricity network, are resolved through the criminal justice process. This study concludes that administrative resolution is more dominantly applied, while criminal law enforcement is used for serious violations to achieve legal certainty, recovery of losses, orderly use of electrical power, and a deterrent effect on the perpetrators.

Keywords: Increase in electric current, electricity theft, law enforcement, P2TL, PLN

Introduction

Electricity is a fundamental need in modern society because it plays a strategic role in supporting various sectors, including the economy, social aspects, education, and health. The availability of adequate electrical energy is one of the important factors in supporting community activities and driving national development. In the context of Indonesia, the provision of electricity is not only seen as a means to support community activities but also as part of the state's responsibility to achieve general welfare as mandated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. To carry out this responsibility, the government assigns State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN), namely PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara (Persero) or PT PLN, as the main organizer in the management and provision of electricity on a national scale [1].

As a vital basic necessity, electricity has become an inseparable element of various aspects of life, whether in households, industries, offices, or public services. The public's dependence on a stable, reliable, and safe electricity supply is increasing along with technological advancements and economic activities. Therefore, the management and distribution of electrical power in Indonesia are largely under the responsibility of the state through PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara (Persero), or PLN, which is the business entity authorized to provide electrical services to the public [2].

In order to ensure the orderly implementation of electricity supply, Law Number 30 of 2009 on Electricity has explicitly regulated various forms of violations along with their sanctions. The provision of Article 51, paragraph (3) states that any person who unlawfully alters the results of electricity measurement, damages, or modifies electrical installations that disrupt the supply of electricity may be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of 7 (seven) years and a fine of up to Rp2,500,000,000.00 (two billion five hundred million rupiah) [3]. This regulation demonstrates the lawmakers' commitment to protecting the national electricity system from various forms of manipulation and sabotage that could disrupt public interests and endanger public safety.

Although legal provisions have set quite severe sanctions, empirical reality shows that there is still a gap between the applicable legal norms and the practices occurring in society. Article 51 paragraph (3) of Law Number 30 of 2009 explicitly threatens perpetrators of electrical installation manipulation with a prison sentence of up to 7 (seven) years and a maximum fine of Rp2.5 billion [4]. However, the practice of illegally increasing electrical power or current is still often found. Such actions can be categorized as unlawful acts that not only result in financial losses for the state through PT PLN but also have the potential to cause broader impacts, such as fire risks, public safety disturbances, and damage to electrical infrastructure, including transformers and electricity distribution networks.

The issue of illegal electricity connections remains one of the serious challenges in the operational area of PLN UP3 Banda Aceh Besar. Violations of electricity usage are classified into several categories, namely P1, which relates to manipulation or increase of MCB (Miniature Circuit

Breaker) capacity; P2, which involves actions affecting the electricity consumption measurement system; P3, which is a combination of P1 and P2 violations; and P4, which is committed by parties who are not PLN customers but utilize the electricity supply illegally. Various forms of these violations not only cause economic losses for PLN but also have the potential to disrupt the stability of the electrical grid system, create excessive loads on transformers, and increase the risk of damage to electrical equipment.

Based on data from PLN UP3 Banda Aceh Besar, the number of electricity usage violations during the 2020–2025 period remains relatively high and shows a fluctuating trend with significant increases in certain years. Recorded were 879 cases in 2020, 865 cases in 2021, 955 cases in 2022, 1,143 cases in 2023, 906 cases in 2024, and an increase to 1,290 cases in 2025. The high number of violations indicates that the misuse of electrical power remains an issue that requires serious attention in the management of electricity supply. This condition emphasizes the importance of strengthening oversight mechanisms, increasing public legal awareness, and implementing effective and consistent law enforcement against violators. Thus, the study on law enforcement against the crime of electricity theft becomes relevant and important to conduct in order to support the realization of a safe, orderly, just, and sustainable electricity system.

Research Method

This research uses an empirical legal research method with a sociological juridical approach [6]. The research was conducted directly in the field to examine the application of law in handling the crime of illegal electricity supply addition at PT PLN UP3 Banda Aceh. Additionally, the research also employs a case study approach to obtain a factual picture of the mechanisms for handling violations, the obstacles faced, and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

The research data consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained through interviews with electricity customers, the community, PLN employees, and officers of the Electricity Usage Control (P2TL). Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained through literature studies that include regulations, books, scientific journals, research results, and other documents relevant to the research object [7].

Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observations, documentation studies, and library research. Next, the data obtained is analyzed descriptively and qualitatively, which involves systematically outlining and interpreting the data to gain a thorough understanding of law enforcement against the crime of electricity current addition in the PLN UP3 Banda Aceh area [8].

Results and Discussions

The resolution of cases related to the addition of electrical current can basically be pursued through two mechanisms, namely administrative resolution and resolution through criminal proceedings. The initial stage of handling the case is carried out by PT PLN through the Electricity Usage Regulation (P2TL) activities. In its implementation, the officers conduct inspections of the kWh meter, miniature circuit breaker (MCB), electrical installations, security seals, and the compliance of electricity usage by customers. If the inspection results indicate a violation, the officers will prepare an inspection report, secure the evidence related to the violation, and calculate the extent of the losses incurred due to the illegal use of electricity.

Based on the inspection results conducted by the P2TL team, violations of electricity usage are classified into four categories. Violation P1 is a violation related to the electrical power limit, such as the use of an MCB with a capacity exceeding the power specified in the customer agreement. Violation P2 relates to the manipulation of the electricity meter (kWh meter) so that the actual electricity consumption is not accurately recorded. Meanwhile, violation P3 is a combination of violations P1 and P2, namely the use of electrical power exceeding the regulations along with manipulation of the electricity meter, resulting in greater losses. The P4 violation is committed by parties who are not registered as official PLN customers but unlawfully take or use electricity directly from the PLN distribution network [9].

For violations that fall into the P1, P2, and P3 categories, PT PLN (Persero) generally applies an administrative resolution mechanism. The forms of sanctions imposed include the imposition of follow-up bills, the obligation to pay compensation, temporary disconnection of electricity, and even the dismantling of electrical connections if the customer fails to fulfill the established obligations. The amount of the follow-up bill is calculated based on the type of violation committed, the estimated unrecorded electrical energy due to the violation, and the costs required for the recovery of the electrical installation. In addition, customers who disagree with the inspection results are entitled to file an objection with the P2TL team to obtain a re-examination of the findings or the calculated losses that have been determined.

If the actions taken meet the elements of a criminal offense as regulated in Law Number 30 of 2009 concerning electricity, specifically violations that cause significant losses or disrupt the electricity distribution system, then the resolution can proceed through the criminal justice mechanism. In the process, PT PLN reports the perpetrator to law enforcement authorities for investigation and prosecution. Next, the investigators collect evidence, examine witnesses and suspects, and calculate the resulting losses. After the case file is declared complete, the case is handed over to the public prosecutor for further processing in court [10].

Based on the research findings, the resolution of electricity load addition cases in the working area of PLN UP3 Banda Aceh is generally carried out more through administrative mechanisms, especially through the imposition of follow-up bills and the restoration of electrical installations. However, for serious violations, particularly P4 violations or actions that cause significant losses and endanger the electrical system and network, resolution is carried out through criminal law mechanisms. The implementation of these two mechanisms aims to recover the losses suffered by PT PLN (Persero), maintain order and compliance in the use of electrical power, provide a deterrent effect to violators, and ensure legal certainty in the use of electrical power by the community.

Conclusion

The resolution of electricity theft or current augmentation is carried out thru two mechanisms, namely the administrative mechanism and the criminal mechanism, adjusted according

to the level and characteristics of the violation committed. In the initial stage, PT PLN conducts inspections of customer electricity usage thru the Electricity Usage Regulation (P2TL) activities to identify violations, such as manipulation of electricity meters, usage exceeding contract capacity, or illegal electricity connections. For the violations found, PLN can impose administrative sanctions in the form of additional bills and the obligation to pay compensation. Meanwhile, if the act meets the elements of a criminal offense as regulated in Law Number 30 of 2009 concerning Electricity, its resolution will be carried out thru the criminal justice mechanism. The application of these two mechanisms aims to maintain order in the use of electrical power, recover the resulting losses, provide a deterrent effect to the perpetrators, and ensure the realization of legal certainty in the implementation of the electricity sector.

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