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**I Made Adnyana**  
Doctor of Law Study Program,  
Faculty of Law, Udayana  
University, Bali, Indonesia

**Ida Bagus Wyasa Putra**  
Faculty of Law, Udayana  
University, Bali, Indonesia

**Ni Ketut Supasti Dharmawan**  
Faculty of Law, Udayana  
University, Bali, Indonesia

**I Ketut Sudantra**  
Faculty of Law, Udayana  
University, Bali, Indonesia

**Correspondence Author:**  
**I Made Adnyana**  
Doctor of Law Study Program,  
Faculty of Law, Udayana  
University, Bali, Indonesia

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## Legal accountability of news sourced from citizen journalism and social media

**I Made Adnyana, Ida Bagus Wyasa Putra, Ni Ketut Supasti Dharmawan  
and I Ketut Sudantra**

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### Abstract

Citizen journalism and social media have become primary sources of information in the digital era. However, information disseminated through these platforms is often unverified, posing risks of misinformation or hoaxes. This article examines the legal accountability for news sourced from citizen journalism and social media, focusing on both individuals who initially spread the information and the mass media that cite it. Using a normative legal approach, this study analyzes relevant regulations, such as the Press Law, the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), and the Criminal Code (KUHP). The findings indicate that legal accountability in this context can be categorized into three aspects: criminal, civil, and administrative liability, considering the principles of fault liability, strict liability, and vicarious liability. Mass media that publish news from citizen journalism or social media without verification may face criminal, civil, or administrative sanctions. Additionally, individuals who initially spread false or hoax news may be legally prosecuted under the UU ITE and KUHP. Doxing, as a form of privacy violation, also carries serious legal implications and may be subject to sanctions under the UU ITE and KUHP.

**Keywords:** Citizen journalism, social media, doxing, hoax, legal accountability, journalism ethics

### 1. Introduction

The development of information technology has brought significant changes to the field of journalism. One notable change is the emergence of citizen journalism and social media as platforms for widely disseminating information to the public. Citizen journalism, translated from "citizen journalism," is known by various terms such as grassroots journalism, network journalism, civic journalism, and participatory journalism<sup>[1]</sup>. Pepih Nugraha, a senior Indonesian journalist, prefers the term "participatory journalism" over "citizen journalism," arguing that not everyone who spreads information can be considered a journalist<sup>[2]</sup>. Nevertheless, these terms reflect the participation of citizens in disseminating information through various media, particularly those using the internet.

The emergence of citizen journalism is often cited as a reaction to conventional journalism, which is perceived to have neglected its duty to represent the interests of its readers and, to some extent, has become merely a tool for profit-making<sup>[3]</sup>. A widely held opinion is that citizen journalism has surfaced due to the declining public trust in news reporting by professional mass media or mainstream journalism<sup>[4]</sup>. With the rise of citizen journalism, reporting on events is no longer limited to journalists or reporters working for mass media; instead, any individual can now take part in the process<sup>[5]</sup>.

On the other hand, the emergence of citizen journalism is also recognized as an expression of every individual's right to convey opinions and information, in line with the fundamental principles of human rights. This right is stipulated in Article 19 of the International Covenant

<sup>1</sup> Melissa Wall, *Citizen Journalism: Valuable, Useless, or Dangerous?* (Idebate Press, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Pepih Nugraha, *Citizen Journalism: Pemahaman Dan Pengalaman* (Kompas, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Moch Kurniawan, 'Jurnalisme Warga Di Indonesia, Prospek Dan Tantangannya', *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia*, 11.2 (2007), pp. 71–78, doi:10.7454/mssh.v11i2.115.

<sup>4</sup> Melati Budi Srikandi, 'Citizen Journalism Sebagai Implementasi Dari Participatory Media Culture Di Era Konvergensi Media', *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi UHO: Jurnal Penelitian Kajian Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Informasi*, 8.1 (2023), pp. 35–48.

<sup>5</sup> Srikandi.

on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which affirms that freedom of expression can be exercised within the framework of the law and specific limitations. These restrictions are intended to respect the rights and reputations of others and to maintain national security and public order<sup>[6]</sup>.

In Indonesia, freedom of expression is specifically regulated in the second amendment of Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD NRI 1945). Citizen journalism is considered part of the broader category of citizens who have the right to express opinions and disseminate information. In this regard, recognizing journalism and press freedom as human rights serves to highlight their distinct moral significance. Another way to reinforce this significance is by prioritizing journalistic freedom as a high-level societal goal or by establishing it as a "non-human-rights" legal right, the violation of which carries severe penalties. However, if journalism is regarded as a human right, it inherently holds a unique moral importance<sup>[7]</sup>.

Citizen journalism is not merely about the freedom to seek and convey information as part of human rights. It also enables the general public to move beyond being mere recipients of information to actively serving as news reporters and contributors to the dissemination of information. The rise of citizen journalism as an alternative source of information has also extended to social media platforms<sup>[8]</sup>, which continue to grow with globalization, including applications like X (Formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. However, a major issue is that news sourced from these platforms often contains inaccurate, misleading, or even false information (Hoaxes). On the other hand, considering the relevance of viral content and current trends, many news reports originating from citizen journalism and social media are later cited and used as sources by mainstream media, both in print and online. Additionally, there has been an increasing phenomenon of doxing—the act of exposing, spreading, or disclosing someone's personal information without their consent. This often happens when a news story breaks, leading to the release of additional information about the background or private details of individuals involved in the news. This practice can create new legal issues, especially when the information sourced from citizen journalism and social media turns out to be false, intentionally fabricated to spread hate, or when private information is published without the consent of the social media account owner. The key legal question that arises is: What are the legal responsibilities concerning news published by mass media that originates from citizen journalism or social media?

## 2. Methods

This study employs a normative legal research method with

a statute approach and a conceptual approach. Normative legal research is used to analyze legal norms governing the accountability of news sourced from citizen journalism and social media. The research relies on secondary data, consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include relevant regulations, such as Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press, Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) and its amendments, as well as other relevant regulations. Secondary legal materials consist of books, journals, scholarly articles, and expert opinions discussing citizen journalism and social media. Meanwhile, tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other supporting documents for analysis in this study.

Data collection is conducted through library research, which involves gathering and analyzing various legal regulations, academic documents, and related literature to understand the concept of legal responsibility in news reporting based on information from citizen journalism and social media. The analysis of legal materials is carried out using hermeneutic or interpretative methods, a process that transforms ignorance into understanding. Legal interpretation is applied to analyze existing laws and regulations related to the legal accountability of news sourced from citizen journalism and social media.

Additionally, a case study analysis method is used to examine past legal cases involving the dissemination of news originating from citizen journalism and social media, providing insight into the legal implications arising from such cases. This study employs multiple approaches, namely the statute approach, conceptual approach, and case approach. The statute approach is used to analyze the legal framework governing citizen journalism and social media. The conceptual approach explores legal concepts related to responsibility in disseminating news through digital media. Meanwhile, the case approach involves identifying and analyzing legal cases related to news dissemination by citizen journalists.

## 3. Results and Discussions

### 3.1. The Concept of Legal Accountability

Legal accountability is a concept in law that explains how an individual or entity can be held responsible for actions or conduct that violate legal provisions. The purpose of legal accountability is to impose sanctions, provide restitution, or compensate the injured party for violations of applicable legal norms. The concept of accountability originates from various legal scholars and schools of thought. Several key figures have contributed to the development of this concept. Hans Kelsen (1881-1973), an Austrian legal scholar who developed the Pure Theory of Law, stated that an individual is accountable for a sanction when their actions contradict legal commands. Legal directives link sanctions to an individual's actions based on their consequences for others<sup>[9]</sup>. Thus, legal accountability is a consequence of violating legal norms established by a country's legal system.

Gustav Radbruch (1878-1949) emphasized that law must fulfill three fundamental values: justice, legal certainty, and

<sup>6</sup> Cokorda Gede Wirasatya Pradana, I Nyoman Putu Budiarta, and I Wayan Arthanaya, 'Kedudukan Hukum Citizen Journalism (Jurnalis Warga Negara) Dalam Penyampaian Berita Kepada Masyarakat', *Jurnal Preferensi Hukum*, 3.2 (2022), pp. 229–34.

<sup>7</sup> Rowan Cruft, 'Journalism and Press Freedom as Human Rights', *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 39.3 (2022), pp. 359–76.

<sup>8</sup> According to the Cambridge online dictionary (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>), social media refers to websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information, opinions, images, videos, etc., on the internet, especially social networking websites.

<sup>9</sup> Hans Kelsen, *Teori Umum Tentang Hukum Dan Negara* (Nusa Media, 2011).

utility.<sup>10</sup> In the context of legal accountability, a person is responsible if their actions violate the law and contradict principles of justice. John Austin (1790-1859) argued that law is a command issued by a sovereign authority, and anyone who violates the law must be held accountable according to established rules. Whether a person obeys the law out of fear, respect, or coercion is irrelevant-the key point is that they comply with legal regulations<sup>[11]</sup>.

Roscoe Pound (1870-1964) developed the concept of sociological jurisprudence, which highlights that law should function to maintain social balance<sup>[12]</sup>. In the context of legal accountability, he emphasized that the law must consider the social impact of an action, and liability should be imposed based on its benefits to society. Paul Scholten (1875-1946) introduced the concept of unlawful acts (Onrechtmatige daad), which forms the basis of civil liability in many countries, including Indonesia through Article 1365 of the Civil Code. He stressed that legal accountability must consider the element of fault liability and its impact on the injured party.

### 3.2. News Cases Sourced from Citizen Journalism, Social Media, and “Doxing”

Issues related to mass media reporting news sourced from citizen journalism and social media frequently occur. The first case involves the spread of hoax news regarding riots in Papua. Through social media and citizen journalism, old videos and photos from other countries were falsely claimed to depict recent events. Several online media outlets immediately reported this information without verification, causing public unrest. As a response, the government, through the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominformasi), temporarily restricted internet access to curb the spread of false news. Meanwhile, several individuals responsible for spreading the hoax were legally sanctioned under the UU ITE (Electronic Information and Transactions Law) for hate speech based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA)<sup>[13]</sup>.

The second case is the 2018 "Aftershock Tsunami in Palu" hoax<sup>[14]</sup>. After an earthquake and tsunami struck Palu, citizen journalism reports on social media falsely claimed that an even larger tsunami would follow. This information stemmed from public panic and was not sourced from official agencies such as the Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (BMKG). Some online media outlets disseminated this unverified information, leading to widespread panic and unnecessary mass evacuations. As a result, individuals who spread the hoax on social media were arrested and charged under Article 14 of Law No. 1 of 1946 concerning the dissemination of false news.

Issues arising from mass media reports sourced from social media also occurred in 2023 with the misidentification of a "doctor involved in terrorism." A Twitter/X account accused a doctor of being part of a terrorist group and spread his personal photo. Several online media outlets immediately cited the accusation without verification, leading to the doctor becoming a victim of online harassment. After it was revealed that the accusation was false, the victim filed a defamation case under Article 27, Paragraph 3 of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). Although some media outlets later deleted the news and issued apologies, the victim's reputation had already been tarnished.

A similar issue occurred in 2020 with the "Child Kidnapping" hoax. A video circulated in WhatsApp and Facebook groups showing a man being beaten by a mob under accusations of being a child kidnapper. Online media outlets contributed to spreading the news without verification, despite the fact that the man was actually a person with mental disorders (ODGJ) who was innocent. The police later clarified that no kidnapping had taken place and that the incident was purely a misunderstanding. Those responsible for spreading the hoax were arrested and charged under Article 28, Paragraph (1) of the UU ITE for disseminating false news that caused public unrest<sup>[15]</sup>.

Another pressing issue in mass media reporting today is doxing. The phenomenon of doxing in media reporting can occur in various forms. One form is the publication of full identities in sensitive cases, where the media discloses the full name, photo, and address of individuals involved in legal cases or scandals before a final legal decision has been made. This can have severe consequences, especially if the reported individual is later found to be innocent.

Additionally, doxing can occur through the leakage of personal information from social media, where media outlets obtain and disseminate someone's private data from platforms like Facebook or Twitter without consent. This practice often puts individuals at risk, particularly if the disclosed information leads to online harassment or other threats.

Doxing can also happen when media outlets quote unverified information from netizens. In some cases, internet users engage in doxing against individuals they deem guilty of an issue, and media outlets adopt this information without ethical consideration, further exacerbating the impact on the victims. A common example involves government officials suspected of corruption, where their personal information is widely spread on social media and later reported by the media without proper verification.

Another form of doxing in news reporting is targeted attacks on activists or journalists, often by media outlets with vested interests. Anti-corruption activists, investigative journalists, or opposition figures are frequently targeted through doxing, where their home addresses, phone numbers, or other personal details are exposed to intimidate or damage their reputations. This practice not only harms the individuals involved but also poses a serious threat to freedom of expression and press independence.

<sup>10</sup> Bernard L Tanya, Yoan Nursari Simanjuntak, and Markus Y Hage, 'Teori Hukum, Strategi Tertib Manusia Lintas Ruang Dan Generasi' (Genta publishing, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Tanya, Simanjuntak, and Hage.

<sup>12</sup> Tanya, Simanjuntak, and Hage.

<sup>13</sup> Wilda Hayatun Nufus, 'Komnas HAM Sebut Kerusuhan Wamena Bukan Cuma Soal Hoax Penculikan Anak', DetikNews, 2023 <<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6659901/komnas-ham-sebut-kerusuhan-wamena-bukan-cuma-soal-hoax-penculikan-anak>>.

<sup>14</sup> Tim Cek Fakta, 'Hoaks, Informasi Gempa 8.1 M Dan Tsunami Susulan Di Palu', Kompas.Com, 2018 <<https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2018/10/01/10301757/hoaks-informasi-gempa-81-m-dan-tsunami-susulan-di-palu>>.

<sup>15</sup> Hestiana Dharmastuti, 'Nasib Orang Gila Korban Hoax Culik Anak: Dihajar Dan Tewas Dihakimi', DetikNews, 2017 <<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3451233/nasib-orang-gila-korban-hoax-culik-anak-dihajar-dan-tewas-dihakimi>>.

Cases of doxing in mass media have occurred in various situations, such as the case of Baiq Nuril in 2018<sup>[16]</sup>. As a teacher in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), she became a victim of verbal harassment by her school principal and recorded the conversation as evidence. After the case went viral, many media outlets disclosed her full identity, including her address, leading to immense social pressure. A similar incident happened in 2023 when a university student who gained viral attention for challenging a lecturer was subjected to doxing by the media. His full identity and academic history were published, making him a target of online harassment and causing severe mental distress. These cases demonstrate how doxing in media reporting can negatively impact victims both psychologically and socially.

### 3.3. Legal Liability for News Sourced from Citizen Journalism, Social Media, and Doxing

To discuss the legal liability of mass media news sourced from citizen journalism and social media, several legal theories can be considered. First, Liability Theory by Paul Scholten and John Austin provides a framework for determining responsibility when legal violations occur due to the dissemination of news from citizen journalism and social media. This theory differentiates between criminal, civil, and administrative liability in cases where news reporting harms specific individuals or groups. Additionally, it incorporates the concept of strict liability (liability without fault) for widely spread hoaxes, even if there was no malicious intent.

Second, Positive Law Theory, as proposed by Hans Kelsen and John Austin, suggests that mass media and individuals spreading news must adhere to existing legal frameworks, such as the Press Law, Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), and the Criminal Code (KUHP). Within this context, law serves as an instrument to maintain order and provide legal certainty in information dissemination. Moreover, this theory emphasizes the principle of legal certainty in enforcing sanctions against journalistic violations, ensuring that any actions contradicting legal norms face consequences according to the applicable regulations. Thus, the existence of positive law provides a strong foundation for regulating and supervising journalism practices to ensure they align with established legal provisions.

Third, the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press, introduced by Robert Maynard Hutchins<sup>[17]</sup>, highlights that mass media is not only legally accountable but also bears a social responsibility to present truthful, accurate, and non-misleading news. This theory emphasizes that press freedom must be balanced with the duty to provide information that benefits society and serves the public interest. Therefore, media should not merely pursue sensationalism or economic interests but should also function as an educational tool and a social watchdog.

When applied to citizen journalism and social media, this theory becomes even more relevant due to the vast amount

of unverified information circulating online. As a result, journalistic ethics become a crucial aspect of reporting, including principles of accuracy, fairness, and independence. Additionally, the Press Council's role as a supervisory body is essential in ensuring journalistic standards are upheld, particularly in handling news sourced from citizen journalism and social media. With proper oversight and clear guidelines, journalism practices can remain responsible and contribute positively to society.

In cases where mass media reports news sourced from citizen journalism and social media, Legal Liability Theory can be used to determine responsibility. The media must ensure they verify information before publishing, as they can be held criminally, civilly, or administratively liable if misinformation occurs. This theory also highlights that even if media outlets merely cite news from citizen journalism or social media, they still have an obligation to verify its accuracy before publication. Therefore, regulations and verification mechanisms must be strengthened to prevent the spread of false information.

If mass media publishes news from citizen journalism or social media, but the information turns out to be false or misleading, their legal responsibility can be assessed from several aspects. First, from the perspective of mass media outlets that publish the news, liability is based on fault liability (Liability based on fault), which states that a party can only be held legally accountable if proven to have made a mistake. This principle is found in the Indonesian Civil Code (KUHPerdata), particularly Articles 1365, 1366, and 1367. In the context of news dissemination, an individual or entity is only liable if proven to have been negligent or at fault in spreading misinformation. For instance, if mass media outlets fail to verify news from citizen journalism or social media and the information turns out to be a hoax, they may be considered negligent and held accountable for the error. This is also in violation of Article 5 of the Press Law, which mandates that media provide accurate and balanced news.

If media outlets do not verify news before publishing, they can be held legally responsible. They may be prosecuted for violating Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press, particularly regarding their obligation to verify information before publication. Additionally, they may face sanctions under Article 28(1) of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) if the news falls under the category of a hoax that harms the public. Even if there is no intent to commit a crime, media outlets can still be held accountable.

This aligns with the principle of strict liability, where a violation does not require proof of intent or fault, but only proof that the act occurred<sup>[18]</sup>. This means that mass media can be held responsible for publishing misleading information from citizen journalism or social media, even if they did not intend to spread false information. Under Article 28(1) of the UU ITE, the spread of misleading information can be sanctioned even if the media outlet was not the first to disseminate the news. Mass media can still be held accountable, even in the absence of intent or deliberate wrongdoing. This liability principle is generally applied in cases where misinformation has a significant negative impact on individuals or society, such as causing public panic or severely damaging a person's reputation.

<sup>16</sup> CNN Indonesia, 'Kronologi Kasus Baiq Nuril, Bermula Dari Percakapan', CNN Indonesia, 2018 <<https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20181114133306-12-346485/kronologi-kasus-baiq-nuril-bermula-dari-percakapan-telepon>>.

<sup>17</sup> Susanto Edy and Mohammad Taufik Makaraodan Hamid Syamsudin, 'Hukum Pers Di Indonesia', Rineka Cipta, Jakarta, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Barda Nawawi Arief, *Perbandingan Hukum Pidana* (Rajawali Pers, 2014).

Legal responsibility can also be considered from the perspective of citizen journalists or social media users who initially spread false information. If the misleading news originated from an individual posting it on social media or a citizen journalism platform, that individual may be subject to Articles 27, 28, or 45 of the UU ITE if proven to have spread false information that harms others. If there is evidence of intentional misinformation, the individual may face criminal sanctions.

The third aspect concerns the right of reply and the right to correction. According to the Journalistic Code of Ethics, mass media that publishes false or misleading information is obligated to provide the affected parties with the right of reply and the right to correction. In this regard, the Press Council can act as a mediator in resolving disputes related to erroneous reporting. Legally, the mass media remains responsible for the news it publishes, even if the initial source comes from citizen journalism or social media. If an individual who initially spreads the news does so with malicious intent or deliberately disseminates a hoax, they can also be held legally accountable. This aligns with the concept of vicarious liability, where an entity can be held responsible for actions performed by another person within the scope of its authority.

Vicarious liability is a form of criminal responsibility imposed on a person for an offense committed by another party<sup>[19]</sup>. This concept applies when someone, even without directly committing a wrongdoing, is still held liable for the actions of another person. In other words, an individual or entity can be held accountable for the acts or mistakes of others. For example, if a journalist working for a media company spreads hoax news originating from citizen journalism or social media, the media company may also be held liable. This highlights the importance of strict editorial mechanisms within media organizations to verify news before publication. The rationale is that if a journalist fails to adhere to journalistic standards and causes harm to another party, the media company can also face sanctions or legal claims. The implementation of this principle is expected to encourage mass media to enforce strict editorial standards and ensure that journalists comply with ethical journalism codes.

Legal responsibility refers to the obligations of mass media, journalists, and related parties in ensuring that published news complies with the law and does not harm others. This responsibility may be criminal, civil, or administrative, depending on the type of violation. In the Indonesian legal system, press accountability is regulated through various laws that govern both media freedom and responsibility in providing information. Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press (Press Law) emphasizes that the press has the freedom to report on events but must ensure that the news is accurate and balanced. Article 5 of the Press Law mandates that media outlets must publish truthful information that does not harm the public. Additionally, Law No. 19 of 2016 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE), specifically Articles 27-29, prohibits the dissemination of hoaxes, defamation, and hate speech through digital platforms.

Aside from the Press Law and UU ITE, media liability is also regulated under the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP). Articles 310-311 of the KUHP stipulate that defamation

resulting from inaccurate news can lead to legal sanctions. In addition to legal regulations, the Journalistic Code of Ethics (KEJ) issued by the Press Council serves as a guideline for journalists in carrying out their duties. Journalists are required to verify facts before publishing news to ensure that the information presented aligns with truth and fairness principles. If a journalist violates ethical standards, the Press Council has the authority to impose moral or administrative sanctions on the responsible media or journalist.

Media liability can be categorized into three main types: criminal liability, civil liability, and administrative liability. Criminal liability applies when the media spreads false or defamatory news. According to Article 28(1) of the UU ITE, individuals involved in the dissemination of hoaxes face a maximum prison sentence of six years and/or a fine of IDR 1 billion. If the news contains hate speech or incites ethnic, religious, racial, or inter-group tensions (SARA), the perpetrator can be prosecuted under Article 45A(2) of the UU ITE, which carries the same penalty. A well-known example is a defamation case via online media, where a journalist was charged under the UU ITE for publishing misleading news about a government official.

Civil liability applies when news reporting causes harm to a particular party, such as damaging someone's reputation or harming a business's financial interests. According to Article 1365 of the Indonesian Civil Code (KUHPdata), any party that commits an unlawful act that causes harm to others is obligated to provide compensation. An example is when a company sues a media outlet for inaccurate reporting, leading to financial losses and resulting in a multimillion-rupiah lawsuit against the media organization. Administrative liability involves sanctions imposed by regulatory bodies like the Press Council for journalistic violations. If a media outlet violates journalistic ethics, it can face penalties such as warnings, suspension, or revocation of press licenses. By implementing strict regulations, ethical journalism, and legal accountability, it is expected that mass media can maintain credibility, protect the public interest, and prevent misinformation from harming individuals or society.

In cases where news publications use data sources obtained through doxing, mass media can be held accountable. Online news platforms, which technically differ from conventional news media, can make doxing more likely to occur. Some contributing factors include displaying journalists' names on article pages or the presence of interactive spaces within news portals, such as comment sections or dedicated forums, allowing readers to freely express their opinions. These opinions may also include negative comments such as harassment or threats<sup>[20]</sup>. Considering that doxing poses a threat to an individual's right to privacy, especially with the rapid advancement of information technology and the swift dissemination of data on the internet, personal information becomes highly vulnerable to misuse. Therefore, doxing falls under the realm of human rights and must be regulated and protected

<sup>19</sup> Arief.

<sup>20</sup> Darin Rania Balqis and Zainuddin Muda Z Monggilo, 'Doxing Sebagai Ancaman Baru Jurnalis Online: Menelusuri Kasus Doxing Jurnalis Liputan6. Com', *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 14.2 (2023), pp. 133-44, doi:10.31294/jkom.v14i2.15651.

by the state <sup>[21]</sup>.

Regarding mass media found guilty of doxing, whether intentionally or unintentionally, they may be subject to legal sanctions under various Indonesian regulations, including the Press Law, the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), and the Criminal Code (KUHP). Under Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press, the media is obligated to present accurate, balanced, and good-faith information, as stipulated in Article 5, Paragraphs (1) and (2). If a violation results in harm to another party, the media can be fined up to IDR 500 million, in accordance with Article 18, Paragraph (2). Additionally, doxing victims have the right to request a correction and the right of reply, requiring the media to either rectify or remove the harmful information.

Meanwhile, Law No. 19 of 2016 on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) provides protection of personal data and establishes penalties for violations. Under Article 26, Paragraphs (1) and (2), the unauthorized dissemination of personal data can be prosecuted, and victims have the right to seek legal restitution. If doxing results in damages, the perpetrator may face criminal charges. Furthermore, Article 32, Paragraphs (1) and (2) states that accessing or distributing personal information without authorization can result in up to 10 years in prison or fines of up to IDR 5 billion. If doxing involves defamation or slander, Article 45, Paragraph (3) imposes a maximum sentence of 4 years in prison or a fine of up to IDR 750 million.

Additionally, the Criminal Code (KUHP) also regulates sanctions for doxing, particularly when it is committed with the intent of defamation. Under Articles 310 and 311 of the KUHP, offenders may face up to 9 months in prison or fines. If doxing is conducted with elements of threats or coercion, Article 335 of the KUHP prescribes a maximum prison sentence of 1 year.

Doxing remains illegal, even when committed against a criminal suspect. This is due to several legal principles, primarily the right to privacy, which is protected under Article 26 of the UU ITE. This article states that a person's personal data may not be used without their consent, except as required by law. Additionally, only law enforcement authorities—such as the police, prosecutors, and courts—have the legal authority to disclose the identity of a suspect through official procedures. If an individual or media outlet engages in doxing without authorization, the act remains a legal violation.

Doxing also risks triggering trial by social media, where the public judges an individual before a formal legal decision is made. This phenomenon can encourage vigilante justice, which contradicts the presumption of innocence principle. Moreover, the unverified spread of personal information can have negative consequences, not only for the alleged perpetrator but also for their family members, who may not be involved in the crime.

However, under certain circumstances, the identity of a perpetrator may be legally disclosed if it is announced by authorities, such as during police press conferences or after a final court decision (Eintracht). Additionally, if there is a legitimate public interest, such as in cases involving fugitives or sexual predators, identity disclosure may be

justified based on clear legal grounds. Nonetheless, such disclosures must adhere to strict limitations to prevent misuse or harmful consequences for the individuals involved.

#### 4. Conclusion

Citizen journalism and social media have become increasingly influential alternative sources of information. However, they also pose a high risk of spreading unverified news, hoaxes, and misleading information that can harm individuals or society. Legal liability for news originating from citizen journalism and social media can be categorized into three main forms: criminal, civil, and administrative liability. Mass media that disseminate unverified news may be subject to sanctions under the Press Law, the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), and the Criminal Code (KUHP).

From a legal liability perspective, the spread of news from citizen journalism, social media, and doxing involves several relevant concepts: Fault Liability: Media or individuals can be held accountable only if they are proven negligent or at fault in spreading news that harms others. Strict Liability: Media can still be held accountable even if they have no malicious intent in spreading false information. Vicarious Liability: Media companies can be held responsible for their journalists' errors in disseminating inaccurate news.

Strengthening oversight, public education, and adherence to journalistic codes of ethics must ensure that press freedom aligns with legal and social responsibility in delivering accurate and balanced information.

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