

Article Title

**Strategies to Prevent and Reform Violence by Police Officers through a Criminological Approach in the South Sulawesi Regional Police**

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How to cite:

Marikar, M., Thalib, H., Rahman, A. & Abbas, I. (2025). Strategies to Prevent and Reform Violence by Police Officers through a Criminological Approach in the South Sulawesi Regional Police. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum*, 28(2), 179-190.

## ABSTRACT

This study examines criminological strategies to prevent and reform police violence within the South Sulawesi Regional Police. Using qualitative empirical data from interviews and official records, the study finds that police violence occurs in physical, armed, and verbal forms, driven by individual stress, situational pressures, organizational culture, and weak institutional control. The findings demonstrate that disciplinary or repressive measures alone are insufficient to ensure lasting behavioral change. Effective prevention and reform require an integrated, layered approach combining primary prevention (ethical and human rights training, selective recruitment), secondary prevention (early detection, psychological assessment, mentoring, and supervision), and tertiary prevention (rehabilitation and behavioral reorientation), reinforced by accountable legal mechanisms, community participation, and psychological interventions. Integrating penal and non-penal approaches within a criminological framework provides a more sustainable model for fostering professional, humanistic policing and restoring public trust in a democratic rule-of-law state.

**Keywords:** Police Violence; Criminological Approach; Violence Prevention; Police Reform

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## INTRODUCTION

The police, as a law enforcement institution, hold a strategic mandate in maintaining public order, security, and the protection of human rights within society. Public trust in the police constitutes a fundamental asset for the effectiveness of law enforcement and social stability (Indarti, 2022). However, this trust may erode when acts of violence are committed by police officers. The phenomenon of police violence not only harms victims on an individual level but also damages the institutional image collectively. Therefore, efforts to prevent and reform police violence constitute a crucial agenda in legal and democratic development.

Violence committed by police officers carries multidimensional implications that extend beyond the scope of criminal law alone. Such actions generate psychological trauma, a sense of injustice, and public distrust in legal processes. In the long term, police violence has the potential to trigger social conflict and delegitimize state authority (Maulana, Sardi & Abdillah, 2025). This condition demonstrates that police violence is not merely an individual violation but a structural problem requiring systemic intervention. A purely repressive approach is insufficient to address this complexity.

Data from the Personnel Records Section (Catpers) of Jeneponto Police for the 2023–2024 period indicate several disciplinary violations directly related to police violence. Among the recorded violations were cases of physical violence, armed violence, and verbal violence committed by police personnel. These data illustrate that police violence does not manifest in a single form but appears in various forms of deviant behavior. The diversity of these forms necessitates a comprehensive and

multidisciplinary analytical approach. Consequently, prevention and reform must be designed holistically.

Cases of physical violence in the form of assaults against civilians reflect weak emotional control and professionalism among police officers in carrying out their duties. Such acts demonstrate a failure to internalize ethical values and respect for human dignity. Although administrative sanctions have been imposed, their effectiveness in preventing recurrence remains questionable. Administrative punishment often fails to address the root causes of deviant behavior. Therefore, strategies oriented toward long-term behavioral change are required.

Cases of armed violence involving the improper use of firearms pose serious risks to public safety. The use of firearms by police officers must adhere to the principles of legality, proportionality, and prudence (Andes, 2025). Violations of firearm use procedures indicate weak compliance with operational standards. This condition reveals gaps in training systems and internal supervision. Without comprehensive reform, the risk of armed violence will continue to overshadow police–community relations.

Verbal violence perpetrated by police officers through intimidation or harsh language is often considered trivial, yet it has significant psychological impacts. Verbal violence can generate fear, distress, and discomfort within the community. Such practices reflect a communication culture that has not yet fully embraced humanistic values within the police institution. Verbal violence may also serve as a gateway to more serious conflict escalation. Therefore, this form of violence warrants serious attention in reform strategies.

Overall, these three forms of violence demonstrate that the issue of police violence cannot be simplified as mere disciplinary misconduct. Dominant administrative approaches do not necessarily produce deterrent effects or sustainable behavioral change. This situation underscores the need to formulate prevention and reform strategies grounded in scientific understanding of deviant behavior. A criminological approach is relevant for analyzing the individual, organizational, and structural factors underlying police violence. Accordingly, policies formulated on this basis may be more precisely targeted.

From a criminological perspective, police violence is viewed as the result of interactions between individual factors, situational pressures, and organizational culture. Work-related stress, task burdens, and internal socialization patterns may influence officers' aggressive tendencies (Rachman & Niasa, 2020). Moreover, an organizational culture that tolerates violence may reinforce deviant behavior. Criminological analysis enables early identification of risk factors. This approach forms the foundation for developing more effective preventive strategies.

Primary prevention constitutes the most fundamental initial step in preventing violence by police officers. This form of prevention focuses on shaping values, attitudes, and behavior before violations occur. Selective recruitment, ethical training, and mental development serve as key instruments in primary prevention. A work environment that supports mental health and professionalism is also a critical factor. Thus, the potential for violence can be reduced from the earliest stages of police formation.

The development of an organizational culture that rejects violence as a means of problem-solving is an integral component of primary prevention. Police institutions are expected to prioritize persuasive, dialogical, and justice-oriented approaches in performing their duties (Adinata, *et al*, 2025). A humanistic organizational culture strengthens officers' self-control in conflict situations. Furthermore, the internalization of human rights values must serve as the foundation of police professionalism. Achieving this requires consistent and sustained institutional commitment.

Secondary prevention is directed at identifying and managing officers who are at high risk of engaging in violence. Not all officers respond to work pressures in the same manner, making early detection of deviant behavior essential. Psychological evaluations, intensive supervision, and mentoring serve as key instruments in secondary prevention. Interventions at this stage aim to prevent the escalation of aggressive behavior into actual violence. This approach reflects a risk-based control strategy.

Interventions within secondary prevention are not merely corrective but also supportive in nature. Psychological counseling, emotional regulation training, and job rotation can assist officers in managing occupational stress. This approach places officers' psychological well-being as a core component of prevention strategies. With adequate support, the potential for aggressive behavior can be minimized. Secondary prevention thus functions as a bridge between primary prevention and the handling of violations.

Tertiary prevention focuses on police officers who have already committed acts of violence. This approach emphasizes rehabilitation, re-education, and behavioral recovery. Rehabilitation is viewed not merely as punishment but as a process of learning and transformation. Through counseling, retraining, and mentoring, officers are guided to understand the consequences of their actions. This strategy aims to prevent recurrence and restore professional integrity.

Legal and policy approaches continue to play an important role in preventing and reforming police violence. Discipline enforcement, internal investigations, and proportional sanctions serve as instruments of accountability. Transparent and fair legal mechanisms are required to prevent impunity. However, regulatory effectiveness

depends heavily on consistent implementation and supervision. Therefore, legal approaches must operate in conjunction with non-penal strategies.

Social and community-based approaches are essential for rebuilding public trust in the police. Community involvement through dialogue forums, participatory complaint mechanisms, and social activities strengthens external social control (Taufik, & BN, 2024). The public is positioned not merely as service recipients but as partners in supervising police behavior. Harmonious relations between police and communities can reduce conflict potential. This approach aligns with the principles of community policing.

Psychological and rehabilitation approaches contribute significantly to reducing violent behavior among police officers (Akiel, *et al*, 2025). Counseling, behavioral therapy, and emotional regulation training assist officers in managing stress and aggression. This approach positions mental health as a core aspect of professionalism. With adequate psychological support, officers are better equipped to act rationally and ethically. This approach also enhances the quality of public service delivery.

Continuous evaluation is a key determinant of success for all prevention and reform strategies. Without systematic evaluation, policy effectiveness is difficult to measure objectively (Agusnawati, *et al*, 2024). Evaluation enables strategic adjustments in response to operational dynamics and field requirements. Furthermore, evaluation strengthens institutional accountability. Thus, reform efforts can proceed in an adaptive and sustainable manner.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it can be concluded that violence committed by police officers constitutes a complex issue requiring a multidimensional approach. Prevention and reform strategies must integrate criminological, legal, psychological, and social dimensions. Penal and non-penal approaches should be applied in a balanced manner. This integrated strategy is expected to prevent violence while simultaneously reforming police behavior. Ultimately, the primary objective is to build a police institution that is professional, humanistic, and trusted by the public.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an empirical criminological research design, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of strategies for preventing and reforming violence committed by police officers within the South Sulawesi Regional Police (Polda Sulawesi Selatan). This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to explore meanings, behavioral patterns, as well as the structural and cultural dynamics underlying police violence. The research data consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, including internal oversight officials, human resource development officers, police psychologists, officers who have participated in coaching or rehabilitation programs, and community leaders involved in police–community

partnership initiatives. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected through documentary research, including personnel records (Catpers), Professional and Security Division (Propam) data, internal police regulations, and relevant scholarly literature on violence prevention and criminal policy.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, limited observation, and the review of official documents in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive–interpretative qualitative analysis, through the stages of data reduction, data display, and thematic conclusion drawing. To ensure data validity, this study applied **source and method triangulation** by comparing interview results, documentary evidence, and field findings. The analytical results were then interpreted using criminological and criminal policy perspectives to formulate strategic recommendations that are preventive, corrective, and oriented toward institutional reform within the police organization.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Strategies to Prevent and Reform Violence by Police Officers through a Criminological Approach in the South Sulawesi Regional Police**

Efforts to prevent and reform acts of violence committed by police officers constitute a strategic agenda for maintaining the legitimacy of the police institution within society. Police violence not only causes direct suffering to victims but also creates social wounds that have broad implications for declining public trust (Ramadhan & Nurrohman, 2025). From the perspective of a democratic rule-of-law state, the police are required to exercise their authority in a professional, proportional, and accountable manner. The coercive powers possessed by police officers must always be constrained by law and human rights principles. Therefore, strategies for addressing police violence cannot rely solely on repressive approaches (Hafendi, & Silalahi, 2024).

A criminological approach is relevant because it views police violence as a social phenomenon influenced by individual, organizational, and structural factors. Violence does not arise in a vacuum but rather as the result of interactions between work-related pressures, organizational culture, and weak institutional control. This perspective positions police officers not merely as perpetrators, but also as subjects operating within a particular system. Consequently, the solutions proposed must be systemic and sustainable. This approach is consistent with modern criminal policy theories that emphasize a balance between penal and non-penal measures.

Based on personnel (Catpers) and Professional and Security Division (Propam) data from the Jenepono Police Resort for the 2023–2024 period, several disciplinary violations directly related to police violence were identified. The data indicate the occurrence of physical violence, armed violence, and verbal violence. These three forms of violence reflect variations in deviant behavior with distinct characteristics and

impacts. The findings confirm that police violence is a multidimensional phenomenon. Therefore, policy responses cannot be applied in a simplistic or uniform manner.

Cases of physical violence in the form of assaults against civilians indicate weak emotional control among police officers in the performance of their duties. Physical violence often emerges in conflict situations that are handled impulsively. From a criminological perspective, this condition is associated with work-related stress, heavy workloads, and inadequate conflict resolution skills. Although administrative sanctions serve a corrective function, they are not sufficient on their own. Without continuous guidance and supervision, such sanctions risk failing to produce optimal deterrent effects.

Cases of armed violence involving the use of firearms that do not comply with established procedures pose serious risks to public safety. Firearms are coercive instruments with a high level of danger, and their use must adhere strictly to principles of legality and proportionality. Procedural violations reflect weak compliance with operational standards. This condition reveals gaps in training and internal supervision systems. Without systemic improvements, the risk of armed violence will continue to overshadow police–community relations.

Verbal violence in the form of intimidation or harsh language is often underestimated, yet it has significant psychological impacts (Koller & Darida, 2020). Verbal abuse can create fear, psychological pressure, and a loss of security within the community. In the long term, such practices damage the image of the police institution. Verbal violence can also serve as an entry point for the escalation of broader conflicts. Therefore, verbal violence must be positioned as a serious issue in police reform efforts.

These three forms of violence demonstrate that police violence cannot be understood merely as individual misconduct. A predominantly disciplinary approach risks being merely symbolic in nature. From a criminological perspective, deviant behavior among police officers results from the interaction of individual, situational, and structural factors. Accordingly, prevention and reform strategies must be designed in a layered manner. Penal and non-penal approaches need to be integrated in a balanced way.

### **Primary Prevention**

Primary prevention constitutes the main foundation for preventing violence by police officers. This approach focuses on shaping values, attitudes, and behavior before violations occur. In the policing context, primary prevention is implemented through selective recruitment, ethical education, human rights training, and mental development programs. The objective is to form police officers who are professional and humanistic. Thus, the potential for violence can be suppressed from the earliest stages.

Research findings indicate that ethics and professionalism training is mandatory for police personnel. This training combines theoretical instruction with practical exercises through real-case simulations. The simulations are designed to train ethical decision-making under high-pressure situations. This approach enables deeper internalization of values. Consequently, training does not stop at the cognitive level alone.

Ethics training also emphasizes an understanding of human rights and non-violent communication. Simulated interactions with the community serve as an important means of developing officers' social sensitivity. This approach aligns with the principles of community policing, which emphasize police–community partnerships (Soares, Barbosa, & Matos, 2018). Officers are trained to resolve conflicts persuasively and dialogically. This demonstrates the strategic role of primary prevention in building a humanistic organizational culture.

Strengthening professional integrity is also pursued through a reward and punishment system. Recognition for exemplary officers and sanctions for ethical violations create a balance between motivation and control. This system encourages internalized compliance rather than mere obedience driven by fear of sanctions. As a result, integrity becomes part of organizational culture. This approach strengthens the moral legitimacy of the police institution.

However, primary prevention faces serious challenges, including resistance from senior personnel and limited resources. Some officers still perceive the use of force as a more practically effective approach. Operational workload pressures also limit opportunities for continuous training. This condition highlights the gap between ideal values and field practice. Therefore, primary prevention requires consistent institutional commitment.

### **Secondary Prevention**

Secondary prevention is directed at identifying officers who are at risk of committing violence. Not all officers experience work-related pressure in the same way. Early detection thus becomes a strategic step. Secondary prevention emphasizes supervision, psychological assessment, and targeted interventions. This strategy is selective and risk-based.

The identification of at-risk officers is conducted through internal reports, disciplinary records, and supervisory observation. Routine psychological assessments are used to evaluate stress levels and aggressiveness. Officers with high-risk indicators are placed under special supervision. This approach reflects the principle of early intervention in criminology. Accordingly, violence can be prevented before it occurs.

Secondary prevention interventions include psychological counseling, mentoring, and task rotation. Counseling helps officers manage emotions and work-related stress.

Mentoring provides support based on senior officers' experience. Task rotation reduces pressure concentrated in specific units.

Periodic evaluations are conducted through field observations and supervisory reports. The results indicate a decrease in aggressive tendencies among officers participating in intervention programs. However, intervention effectiveness depends heavily on individual awareness. Leadership support is a decisive success factor. Thus, secondary prevention must be implemented consistently.

### **Tertiary Prevention**

Tertiary prevention focuses on officers who have already committed acts of violence. This approach emphasizes rehabilitation and re-coaching. Rehabilitation is viewed as a learning process rather than mere punishment. Programs include counseling, emotional control training, and intensive mentoring. The goal is to prevent recurrence of violence (Cherney, 2024).

Research findings show that rehabilitation programs improve officers' self-control and ethical awareness. Post-program evaluations demonstrate low rates of repeated violence. These findings confirm the effectiveness of rehabilitative approaches. Tertiary prevention contributes significantly to internal police reform. This approach emphasizes long-term behavioral change.

### **Integrated Legal, Social, and Psychological Approaches**

The legal approach serves to maintain accountability and prevent impunity. Internal law enforcement mechanisms are implemented in a tiered manner. Where criminal elements are found, cases are referred to the general judiciary. This process reflects the principle of due process of law. Thus, law functions as the foundation of institutional legitimacy.

The social and community approach emphasizes public involvement as partners in oversight. Dialogue forums and complaint mechanisms strengthen external social control. This approach aligns with the principles of democratic policing. Public trust is built through transparency and participation. Consequently, police–community relations can be improved (Dlamini, 2025).

The psychological approach complements reform strategies by placing officers' mental health as a core aspect of professionalism. Counseling and stress management reduce aggressive behavior (Hofer & Savell, 2021). This approach is both preventive and rehabilitative. Police reform thus addresses not only regulations but also human factors. As a result, reform strategies become more comprehensive.

As a synthesis of the foregoing discussion, strategies for preventing and reforming police violence in the South Sulawesi Regional Police can be summarized in the following table.

**Table 1. Synthesis of Strategies for Preventing and Reforming Violence by Police Officers**

<b>Strategic Focus</b>	<b>Forms of Activity</b>	<b>Field Findings</b>	<b>Criminological Analysis</b>
Primary Prevention	Ethics and human rights training, selective recruitment	Routine training and case simulations	Formation of moral awareness from an early stage
Secondary Prevention	Early detection, mentoring, psychological assessment	Supervision of high-risk units	Risk-based behavioral control
Tertiary Prevention	Rehabilitation and re-coaching	Counseling and retraining of offenders	Long-term behavioral reform
Law & Policy	Disciplinary and criminal enforcement	Propam to criminal justice process	Accountability and prevention of impunity
Social & Community	Dialogue forums, community policing	Active public participation	Restoration of public trust
Psychological	Counseling and stress management	Reduced officer aggressiveness	Strengthening professional capacity

Table 1 demonstrates that strategies for preventing and reforming violence by police officers are not independent, but rather interconnected within an integrated criminal policy framework. Each strategy, from primary prevention to psychological approaches, reveals a causal relationship between value formation, risk control, behavioral rehabilitation, and legal accountability enforcement. The integration of penal and non-penal approaches reflected in the table confirms that police violence cannot be addressed solely through disciplinary or criminal sanctions. A criminological approach enables policy orientation toward layered prevention targeting individuals, organizations, and social relations simultaneously.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the overall discussion, it can be concluded that violence committed by police officers within the South Sulawesi Regional Police constitutes a complex problem arising from the interaction of individual factors, situational pressures, and organizational structures, and therefore cannot be effectively addressed through repressive or disciplinary approaches alone. A criminological approach demonstrates that effective prevention and reform strategies must be implemented in a layered and integrated manner through primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, reinforced by accountable law enforcement, community participation, and psychological interventions oriented toward long-term behavioral change. Accordingly, it is recommended that the police institution strengthen its institutional commitment to ethics and human rights development, risk-based supervision, and sustainable

rehabilitation of personnel, accompanied by improvements in leadership quality and openness to external oversight mechanisms. The integration of penal and non-penal approaches should be adopted as an internal criminal policy framework so that violence prevention does not remain merely symbolic but produces substantive changes in organizational culture. Through the consistent and sustained implementation of these strategies, police reform is expected to foster professional, humane officers and restore public trust within the framework of a democratic rule-of-law state.

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