



Reframing Human Trafficking: Indonesia's Diplomacy in Tackling Chinese Mail-Order Bride Cases

Membingkai Ulang Perdagangan Manusia: Diplomasi Indonesia dalam Menangani Kasus Pengantin Post Order Tiongkok

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of Chinese mail-order brides in Indonesia gained prominence in the 1980s and resurfaced in 2017, particularly affecting regions like West Kalimantan. This research aims to examine Indonesia's diplomatic strategies in addressing Chinese mail-order brides as human trafficking cases (TPPO) from 2018 to 2021, focusing on engagements between the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Government. Theoretical frameworks of diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy, and human security provide the analytical lens for this study. The study employs a qualitative research method, leveraging a comprehensive literature review of official documents, academic sources, and credible news articles. The research findings reveal that poverty, limited education, parental influence, and scarce employment opportunities contribute to the prevalence of mail-order brides. Additionally, cultural perceptions and aspirations for an improved life exacerbate the issue. The Indonesian government, through bilateral diplomacy, has made significant efforts, such as negotiating victim repatriation and enhancing law enforcement collaborations with China. Notable successes include framing mail-order bride cases as TPPO, which facilitated victim repatriation. NGOs like the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union (SBMI) have played essential roles in advocacy and preventive measures. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as differing cultural perspectives between Indonesia and China and regulatory inconsistencies. Governmental complicity and inadequate documentation have further complicated diplomatic resolutions. The research highlights that Indonesia's strategic reframing of mail-order bride cases as human trafficking crimes enhances international cooperation and offers policy innovation for addressing human rights violations.

Keywords: diplomacy, mail-order brides, humanitarian, resolution, human trafficking

ABSTRACT

Fenomena pengantin pesanan pos Tionghoa di Indonesia menjadi terkenal pada tahun 1980-an dan muncul kembali pada tahun 2017, terutama mempengaruhi daerah seperti Kalimantan Barat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi diplomatik Indonesia dalam menangani pengantin pesanan pos Tiongkok sebagai kasus perdagangan manusia (TPPO) dari tahun 2018 hingga 2021, dengan fokus pada keterlibatan antara Menteri Luar Negeri Indonesia dan Pemerintah Tiongkok. Kerangka teoritis diplomasi, diplomasi kemanusiaan, dan keamanan manusia memberikan lensa analitis untuk penelitian ini. Studi ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif,

memanfaatkan tinjauan literatur yang komprehensif dari dokumen resmi, sumber akademik, dan artikel berita yang kredibel. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa kemiskinan, pendidikan yang terbatas, pengaruh orang tua, dan kesempatan kerja yang langka berkontribusi pada prevalensi pengantin pesanan melalui pos. Selain itu, persepsi budaya dan aspirasi untuk kehidupan yang lebih baik memperburuk masalah ini. Pemerintah Indonesia, melalui diplomasi bilateral, telah melakukan upaya yang signifikan, seperti menegosiasikan pemulangan korban dan meningkatkan kolaborasi penegakan hukum dengan Tiongkok. Keberhasilan penting termasuk membingkai kasus pengantin pesanan pos sebagai TPPO, yang memfasilitasi pemulangan korban. LSM seperti Serikat Pekerja Migran Indonesia (SBMI) telah memainkan peran penting dalam advokasi dan tindakan pencegahan. Terlepas dari upaya ini, tantangan tetap ada, seperti perbedaan perspektif budaya antara Indonesia dan Tiongkok dan inkonsistensi peraturan. Keterlibatan pemerintah dan dokumentasi yang tidak memadai semakin memperumit resolusi diplomatik. Penelitian ini menyoroti bahwa pembingkai strategis Indonesia terhadap kasus pengantin pesanan pos sebagai kejahatan perdagangan manusia meningkatkan kerja sama internasional dan menawarkan inovasi kebijakan untuk mengatasi pelanggaran hak asasi manusia.

Kata kunci: *diplomasi, pengantin pesanan pos, kemanusiaan, resolusi, perdagangan manusia*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of mail-order brides began to gain recognition in Indonesia in the 1980s, particularly during a wave of migration from South Asia to Southeast Asia (CNN, 2018). This issue resurfaced in 2017, with initial cases detected in the province of West Kalimantan, specifically in the Singkawang and Sambas areas. These areas became focal points for “middlemen” seeking potential mail-order brides. Over time, the operations of these agents expanded to other provinces, including North Kalimantan, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, West Java, East Java, and Southeast Sulawesi (Lessy, 2006).

According to the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI), data from 2019 revealed that 22 women were identified as victims of human trafficking under the guise of mail-order brides; 18 were successfully repatriated, while two remained at the Consulate General in Shanghai and another two stayed with their husbands. During the same year, the Indonesian Embassy in Beijing advocated for 42 victims, repatriating 36 of them. The year 2019 marked the highest number of mail-order bride-related human trafficking cases. The Indonesian government has urged China to take action against individuals involved in these trafficking cases.

The Central Statistics Agency reported that as of March 2019, West Kalimantan had the highest poverty rate on the island, with 269,000 people (approximately 7.37%) living below the poverty line, defined as per capita expenditure of less than IDR 269,000 per month (BBC, 2020). This economic vulnerability is a contributing factor to the prevalence of mail-order brides. SBMI data from April 2019 showed that 13 women from West Kalimantan had become trafficking victims (BBC, 2019).

Addressing cases of mail-order brides involving Indonesian citizens, particularly from Singkawang, presents challenges due to several underlying factors. Financial hardship and cultural norms contribute significantly to the persistence of this practice. The transnational nature of these marriages, often involving Indonesian brides and Chinese men, has roots in longstanding Chinese

community traditions in Singkawang. Positive anecdotes from previous brides and narratives promoted by agents or brokers sustain this practice in Indonesian society.

The central question of this research is: How has the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs' diplomatic engagement with the Chinese Ambassador, particularly in reframing the issue of mail-order brides as Trafficking in Persons (TPPO), influenced the effectiveness of Indonesia's strategies in addressing human trafficking between 2018 and 2021 within the broader framework of diplomacy and human security?

This study contributes a novel analysis of Indonesia's diplomatic strategies, including the innovative reframing of mail-order bride cases as TPPO. By examining bilateral efforts between Indonesia and China, this research enhances the understanding of transnational trafficking and offers practical solutions rooted in sustained diplomacy and international cooperation.

The significance of this research lies in its comprehensive examination of Indonesia's diplomatic initiatives addressing mail-order brides as a form of human trafficking. This approach situates the issue within the contexts of human rights and international law, underscoring the importance of policy innovation. Shifting the perspective to view mail-order brides through the lens of TPPO enables more effective responses and strengthens the global commitment to combating human trafficking.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of mail-order brides, particularly involving Indonesian women marrying Chinese men, has garnered significant scholarly attention in recent years. This literature review synthesizes various studies that explore the complexities surrounding this issue, including the roles of state responsibility, diplomatic actions, victim repatriation, and the socio-cultural challenges faced by these women.

Yoteni (2021) emphasizes the critical role of the state in combating trafficking practices associated with mail-order brides. Their research highlights that state intervention is necessary to eliminate these practices, which often exploit vulnerable women seeking better opportunities abroad. This aligns with the findings of Puspita Ayu Afiyah (2020), who argues that state representatives abroad play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges posed by mail-order bride systems. She posits that diplomatic actions are essential for protecting the rights of these women and ensuring their safety in foreign countries.

Furthermore, Olivia Oktaviani (2021) discusses the potential for Indonesia to repatriate victims of mail-order bride trafficking and establish cooperative agreements with China to address this issue. Her study indicates that such collaborations could facilitate the safe return of women who find themselves in precarious situations after entering into these marriages. This perspective is echoed by Miranti Kusama Astari (2019), who examines the Chinese government's efforts to combat bride trafficking, particularly in light of demographic challenges stemming from the One Child Policy, which has led to a gender imbalance and increased demand for foreign brides (Yoteni, 2021).

Zoellner (2009) provides a qualitative exploration of the experiences of Indonesian women who marry Chinese men through mail-order services. Her findings reveal that these women often encounter significant cultural and linguistic barriers, which complicate their integration into Chinese society. This is further supported by Baviera (2016), who examines the broader context of human trafficking involving Indonesian women, highlighting the role of brokers and the myriad challenges these women face in navigating their new environments.

The commodification of marriage through mail-order bride services raises critical ethical concerns. Kim (2010) discusses the dual narratives surrounding mail-order brides, portraying them

either as victims of exploitation or as opportunistic individuals seeking economic stability. This dichotomy complicates the understanding of agency among these women, as many are driven by socio-economic factors that compel them to seek marriage abroad (Kim, 2010). Similarly, the work of Valk (2021) emphasizes the importance of understanding the human capital these women possess and how it influences their experiences in foreign countries (Valk, 2021).

The intersection of gender, migration, and economic necessity is a recurring theme in the literature. Lu (2005) notes that the mail-order bride phenomenon is often linked to broader patterns of female labor migration, where women seek better economic prospects through marriage. This perspective is crucial for understanding the motivations behind these marriages and the systemic issues that perpetuate such practices.

Moreover, the implications of bride trafficking extend beyond individual experiences to encompass broader societal issues. Deda et al. (2022) argue that bride trafficking is a manifestation of human trafficking, which requires comprehensive policy responses to address the root causes and protect vulnerable populations (Deda et al., 2022). This aligns with the findings of (Lessy, 2006), who critiques the commodification of marriage in the context of mail-order brides, suggesting that it can lead to exploitation and abuse (Lessy, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks are employed in this research, encompassing diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy, and human security. Each concept contributes uniquely to the comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's diplomatic approach to the issue of mail-order brides to China. The multifaceted nature of these frameworks provides a robust lens for understanding Indonesia's strategies and responses.

The concept of diplomacy, while multifaceted, centers on the management and conduct of international relations. According to Satow's *Diplomatic Practice*, as edited by Sir Ivor Roberts (2017), diplomacy is defined as "the process of managing and conducting international relations through negotiation and representation, with the aim of promoting and protecting the interests of a country, its citizens, and its enterprises. It involves cultivating good relations with other countries, negotiating treaties, agreements, and other legal instruments, and settling disputes through peaceful means" (Roberts, 2017).

This definition underscores the importance of negotiation, peaceful dispute resolution, and the representation of national interests on a global stage (Roberts, 2017). Berridge (2015) adds that diplomacy "is the application of tact, persuasion, communication, and compromise—the tools of negotiation—to achieve peaceful solutions to problems between states, including those that may ultimately require the use of force" (Berridge, 2015, p. 2). This view highlights the essential skills and techniques inherent in diplomatic practice, acknowledging that while diplomacy ideally seeks peaceful resolutions, it may coexist with scenarios necessitating force (Berridge, 2015). These definitions collectively illustrate the complexity of diplomatic engagement, including its forms such as bilateral, multilateral, and summit diplomacy (Roberts, 2017; Berridge, 2015).

In addition, the concept of multi-track diplomacy expands on traditional state-centric diplomacy by incorporating various actors beyond government officials. Diamond (1996) defines multi-track diplomacy as "the coordinated actions of a diverse group of people, both official and unofficial, working to address and resolve conflicts and to promote social change" (Diamond, 1996, p. 21). This approach posits that non-state actors, such as civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), play a significant role in diplomatic processes. The participation of these actors introduces new perspectives and resources that complement traditional state-led diplomacy, thereby fostering more

comprehensive and sustainable solutions (Diamond, 1996). This perspective is essential in addressing complex international challenges that require collaborative efforts from multiple stakeholders.

Meanwhile, humanitarian diplomacy is particularly relevant to this study due to its focus on protecting and advocating for vulnerable populations. Humanitarian diplomacy can be defined as “persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles” (Afsa, 2016). This form of diplomacy integrates advocacy, negotiation, and communication to mobilize public and governmental support for humanitarian operations (Pease & McBride, 2020). The goal is to ensure that the protection of human rights is prioritized, particularly for populations at risk, such as victims of human trafficking. Humanitarian diplomacy involves various actors, including governments, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector, who collectively work to create partnerships and frameworks that respond to humanitarian needs (Pease & McBride, 2020).

Other concept that applied to this study is human security which has gained increasing attention due to its holistic approach to addressing threats that extend beyond traditional military concerns. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994), human security encompasses a wide range of issues, including economic stability, health, environmental protection, and personal safety (Mansbach & Rhodes, 2008). Human security shifts the focus from state-centric security to individual well-being and emphasizes that threats such as poverty, disease, and violence require integrated approaches for effective management (Hermawan, 2007). Alkire (2003) further explains that human security seeks to safeguard human life and values from potential harm, advocating for proactive measures to address emerging threats before they materialize.

UNDP (1994) divides human security into several components:

1. Economic security: Ensuring income stability and access to basic needs.
2. Food security: Guaranteeing physical and economic access to sufficient food.
3. Health security: Protection against diseases and unhealthy lifestyles.
4. Environmental security: Safeguarding against environmental degradation and natural disasters.
5. Personal security: Protection against violence, whether state-led or non-state-led.
6. Community security: Protection from ethnic or religious violence.
7. Political security: Ensuring the rights of citizens within a system that upholds human rights (Mansbach & Rhodes, 2008).

This comprehensive framework allows for an analysis of human security as it applies to vulnerable groups, such as victims of human trafficking. The human security approach emphasizes the interconnected nature of security, development, and human rights, and advocates for policies that protect individuals from chronic and systemic threats (Alkire, 2003).

In this research, the integration of diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy, and human security provides an approach to analyzing Indonesia’s diplomatic strategies concerning the issue of mail-order brides to China. By utilizing these conceptual frameworks, the research captures the strategic, humanitarian, and security dimensions, offering a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia’s policy actions and diplomatic engagements.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach to examine Indonesia’s diplomatic efforts in addressing human trafficking, specifically cases involving mail-order brides to China. As Lamont (2015) notes, qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the perspectives of those being studied, capturing the richness and complexity inherent in these situations. This methodology is especially effective for exploring nuanced and under-researched areas (Lamont, 2015; Bryman, 2012).

The data collection method employed in this study is a comprehensive literature review. Secondary data sources include official documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, academic books, peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, and credible online resources (Creswell, 2018; Bowen, 2009). Utilizing a diverse range of sources allows for a holistic understanding of the research topic and ensures data triangulation (Flick, 2014). The qualitative analysis applied in this study follows an iterative and inductive process, as described by Creswell (2018). This approach involves systematically collecting, organizing, and coding data to identify patterns and emergent themes (Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Poverty has been identified as a fundamental driver behind the prevalence of mail-order bride cases in Singkawang. The high poverty rates in West Kalimantan, where Singkawang is located, exacerbate the economic vulnerabilities that push women into situations where they become susceptible to exploitation (Lessy, 2006). The economic hardships faced by many women in this region limit their opportunities, making them more likely to consider mail-order marriage as a means of securing financial stability. This aligns with findings by Hapsari and Hartono (2018), who argue that poverty is a significant factor in human trafficking.

Educational attainment also plays a critical role in shaping the vulnerability of potential victims. Women with lower levels of education are more prone to exploitation, as they often lack the skills and knowledge needed to secure stable employment (Yulianti et al., 2013). The connection between low education levels and increased vulnerability to human trafficking is well-documented in studies by UNESCO (2015), which emphasize that limited educational opportunities result in dependency on risky and unregulated marriage arrangements as economic solutions.

Parental influence is another significant aspect that perpetuates the practice of mail-order brides. In many cases, parents encourage their daughters to marry early to reduce the financial burden on the family. This cultural norm is exploited by brokers who present appealing yet deceptive opportunities for marriage (Lessy, 2006). Setiawan (2016) discusses how familial pressure can serve as an entry point for trafficking, framing marriage as a solution to economic difficulties.

The scarcity of employment opportunities in rural areas further compounds the problem. Women in regions like Singkawang often have limited access to jobs that provide sustainable income. This reality forces many women to either assist in family agricultural activities or remain unemployed, thereby increasing their susceptibility to exploitation (Mujioni, 2019). Additionally, cultural perceptions play a role in maintaining these practices. In Singkawang, the ethnic Chinese community often views marriage as a way to reinforce ties with their ancestral homeland, making cross-border marriages more socially acceptable (Yulianti et al., 2013). Anderson and Miller (2020) further support this by suggesting that shared cultural heritage influences transnational marriage patterns.

The aspiration for a better life also contributes to the issue, with many women perceiving marriage to foreign men as a pathway to improved social and economic status. The prospect of marrying a man from abroad, who is often seen as financially secure and socially prestigious, becomes a powerful motivator. This aligns with the UNODC (2019) report, which highlights how promises of a better future are frequently used by traffickers to lure victims.

Governmental complicity and inadequate regulation present significant challenges in addressing mail-order bride cases. Corruption and the involvement of some officials in facilitating fraudulent documentation, such as falsified birth certificates and altered marriage permits, enable these practices to persist (Lessy, 2006). The systemic weaknesses within local governance are reflected in Setiawan's (2016) findings, which illustrate how such collusion allows human trafficking to continue.

The Indonesian government's response has included various diplomatic and legal measures to combat the issue. Bilateral diplomacy, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has sought to protect Indonesian citizens and foster cooperation with Chinese authorities to repatriate victims and strengthen law enforcement against traffickers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi's initiatives have highlighted the need for thorough vetting of marriage documentation and collaborative legal action (Liputan6, 2019).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union (SBMI) play a crucial role in these efforts through Track Two diplomacy. These NGOs complement state efforts by advocating for policy changes and providing on-the-ground support for victims (Mujjoni, 2019). This collaborative approach enhances the overall efficacy of diplomatic interventions.

Preventative measures have also been implemented, including educational outreach programs aimed at raising awareness among the public. The Directorate of Indonesian Citizens Protection and Consular Affairs has initiated campaigns in collaboration with local media and schools in Singkawang to disseminate information on the dangers of mail-order bride practices (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). Media partnerships, such as those with Pontianak TV and Radio Sonora FM, have further contributed to public education and awareness.

Judicial proceedings have been an essential part of addressing human trafficking. Notably, trials in Sanggau District Court, such as case number 28/Pid.Sus/2020/PN Sag, have prosecuted traffickers involved in mail-order bride cases (SBMI, 2020). The enforcement of Law No. 6 of 2011 on Immigration has strengthened efforts to prevent trafficking by regulating the issuance of travel documents and monitoring the movement of potential victims.

The handling of mail-order bride cases involving Indonesian citizens has seen mixed success, with an estimated resolution rate of approximately 50% annually. This achievement highlights the persistent efforts by the Indonesian government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in protecting citizens entangled in mail-order bride cases. Between 2015 and 2019, the Directorate of Protection of Indonesian Citizens and Legal Entities Abroad (PWNI and BHI) managed to resolve 90 cases, facilitating the safe return of the victims to Indonesia (Asmara, 2021).

Table 1. Number of cases of mail-order brides handled and cases completed in 2015-2019 in Indonesia

Year	Handled Cases	Resolved Cases
2015	2	1
2016	33	31
2017	12	9
2018	26	13
2019	42	36
2020	-	-
2021	-	-
Total	115	90

Source: Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) and the author

However, data from 2020 and 2021 regarding mail-order bride cases handled by the Directorate of PWNI and BHI remain unavailable due to the diversion of government resources toward managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Originating in Wuhan, China, the pandemic led to strict travel restrictions by

various countries, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, which further complicated diplomatic efforts (Asmara, 2021).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta and the Directorate General of Immigration, made substantial progress in addressing these cases, notably in 2019. Diplomatic engagements between Indonesia and China were pivotal, as Indonesia successfully advocated for recognition of mail-order bride cases as instances of human trafficking, thereby facilitating the repatriation of victims. This alignment in perspective marked a significant milestone in bilateral cooperation (Liputan6, 2019).

The Chinese government's agreement to cooperate with Indonesia included measures such as law enforcement to apprehend agents operating within both countries. The Indonesian Embassy in Beijing played an active role in liaising with authorities in Henan and Hubei provinces, resulting in the arrest of key facilitators and agents involved in these human trafficking networks. However, such detentions had to align with local legal protocols (Liputan6, 2019). Furthermore, the embassy initiated a policy whereby visa extensions for Indonesian citizens required direct submission to the Indonesian Embassy, enhancing monitoring and data collection for citizens residing in China.

One critical challenge in addressing mail-order bride cases was the use of falsified documents, including forged identification cards (KTP), family cards (KK), and marriage certificates. The existence of fraudulent documentation placed these cases firmly within the realm of human trafficking, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO Committee of Experts' standards for identifying forced labor include physical violence, document falsification, threats, fraud, wage withholding, and the retention of identity documents (Liputan6, 2019). These indicators were evident in many mail-order bride cases, underscoring their classification as human trafficking.

Prior to 2019, governmental actions to address mail-order bride cases were limited. It was not until numerous reports surfaced those authorities recognized the indications of trafficking within these cases. The Singkawang region of West Kalimantan, in particular, faced a surprising surge in mail-order bride incidents, revealing underlying social and cultural factors, especially within communities of Chinese descent. The Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) highlighted these issues, noting that socio-cultural biases contributed to the proliferation of such practices (Oktaviani, 2021).

In response to the rise in reported cases, Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spearheaded direct efforts to break the chain of mail-order bride cases, notably in 2019. However, significant obstacles remain, particularly concerning the legal validity of marriage documents. Indonesia views these cases as severe instances of human trafficking involving coercion and exploitation, while China often perceives them as private family matters, making state intervention challenging (Oktaviani, 2021). These differing legal and cultural perspectives continue to pose hurdles in achieving comprehensive resolutions.

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of mail-order bride cases is significantly influenced by the lack of moral integrity and empathy among government officials responsible for processing marriage documentation. In West Kalimantan, agents or brokers involved in arranged marriages often maintain close relationships with these officials to expedite the processing of inter-country marriage documents, such as visas, birth certificates, and marriage certificates. Despite these documents receiving official approval, they are frequently falsified, such as altering young victims' ages to meet legal marriage requirements in Indonesia. This mail-order bride phenomenon has severe repercussions for the victims, who often endure physical trauma and inhumane treatment from husbands and their families, including deprivation of food, forced labor, continuous administration of fertility drugs, and exposure to violence.

Additionally, these victims face social stigmatization and shame due to their experiences. Indonesia's diplomatic efforts to address mail-order bride cases focus on establishing a shared understanding that these cases constitute human trafficking crimes (TPPO). Non-state actors, such as the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI), have also facilitated more effective prevention and response measures. Indonesia's diplomatic engagement with China, particularly in response to the surge in reports in 2019, demonstrates a commitment to protecting its citizens both domestically and internationally, resulting in a reduction in victim numbers. However, Indonesia's diplomatic initiatives have encountered numerous challenges. Externally, a key obstacle is the differing perspectives between Indonesia and China regarding the nature of mail-order bride cases, as convincing the Chinese government that these cases involve human trafficking rather than mere domestic disputes has proven challenging. Government policies also hinder the diplomatic process due to insufficient evidence, a lack of witnesses, and inadequate documentation in both Indonesia and China, complicating diplomatic negotiations even as the number of reported cases rose in 2019 compared to 2018. Limited internet access imposed by local authorities further hampers the Indonesian citizen service portal's functionality for both representatives abroad and citizens in China, compounded by low digital literacy among Indonesian citizens, which limits data for preventing and assisting victims of mail-order bride cases.

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