

Securitization Of Clandestine Drug Laboratories: The Role Of Interpol's National Central Bureau (Ncb) In Indonesia In Arresting Roman Nazarenko

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Abstrak

This study examines the securitisation process implemented by Indonesia's Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB) in the arrest of Roman Nazarenko, a fugitive identified as the mastermind behind clandestine drug laboratories. Distinct from previous studies that positioned narcotics as the primary existential threat, this research demonstrates that an individual, Nazarenko, can represent the core threat due to his transnational capacity to establish illicit drug manufacturing. Employing a qualitative approach with purposive sampling, data were collected through an in-depth interview with a key NCB official. They were analysed using the Miles and Huberman model (comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing). Applying Copenhagen School securitisation theory, the study finds that the NCB framed Nazarenko as a critical security threat by issuing an Interpol Red Notice, which functions as a concrete speech act. The effectiveness of this process is reflected in NCB Interpol Thailand's rapid arrest of Nazarenko at U-Tapao Rayong Airport, which evidences not only threat construction but also real-world audience acceptance and coordinated law enforcement action. By shifting the referent object of securitisation from substance to individual, this study elucidates how NCB Interpol Indonesia dynamically constructs, legitimises, and internationalises new security threats. The findings provide fresh insights into operational mechanisms and underscore the crucial role of international collaboration in combating transnational organised crime.

Keywords: Securitisation, Roman Nazarenko, NCB Interpol Indonesia, Red Notice, Clandestine Drug Laboratories.

Introduction

Security studies have long focused on narcotics substances as primary existential threats to national security. This research advances the analysis by highlighting an individual fugitive Roman Nazarenko as a new and urgent form of existential threat. Nazarenko's transnational mobility, technical skill, and ability to establish sophisticated drug labs in multiple countries elevate his profile as a security risk far surpassing that posed by mere substances. Security studies have long focused on narcotic substances as primary existential threats to national security. This research advances the analysis by highlighting the case of Roman Nazarenko as a new and urgent form of existential threat. Nazarenko's transnational mobility, technical skill, and ability to establish sophisticated drug labs in multiple countries elevate his profile as a security risk far surpassing that posed by mere substances.

Unlike earlier works centred on drugs, this study places the individual actor at the heart of the securitisation process. It explores how NCB Interpol Indonesia constructed and communicated the threat posed by Nazarenko, most notably through the formal issuance of an Interpol Red Notice. This Red Notice functions as both a legal instrument and a concrete "speech act" within the Copenhagen School framework, thereby mobilising international law enforcement responses. The prompt empirically validates the process, as the coordinated action of NCB Interpol Thailand exemplifies, with the arrest of Nazarenko at U-Tapao Rayong Airport, demonstrating audience acceptance and the operationalisation of the declared threat, thereby illustrating the theory of securitisation in action. The Copenhagen School's theory of securitisation is a relevant analytical tool for understanding how a physical laboratory can be positioned as an existential threat to the legitimacy of state law. In this case, NCB Interpol Indonesia acted as a securitisation actor that conveyed threats not only from the substance of the narcotics.

Several previous studies have explained the process of securitisation of narcotics issues as a form of non-traditional security threat. Restia Polii, in her article *Transnational Crime: The Indonesian Government's Process of Securitization of the Threat of Drug Trafficking*, asserts that the Indonesian government has made drug trafficking a threat to state sovereignty, with the state acting as the securitising actor and the Republic of Indonesia as the primary referent object that must be protected Restia Polii (2017). Another study by Alfonz Maulana Ramadhan et al. also highlights how the Indonesian government can respond to international drug trafficking through a securitisation approach. However, the focus of the study is more on national policy and human security aspects Ramadhan et al (2024) than on the institutional construction of threats as being studied by the researcher. Meanwhile, Rizky Julian Siahaan, in his research on narcotics smuggling in the waters of South Sumatra, shows that securitisation has been successfully implemented in some geographical regions with the

support of local actors Rizky Siahaan (2022). This research legitimises the important role of local or domestic actors in securitisation, but it does not mention specific physical objects, such as laboratories, as centres of threat. Finally, a study by Sylvester Ariantho on the ASEAN Drug Free initiative positions Indonesia within a regional cooperation framework that frames narcotics as a common threat Sylvester Ariantho (2017).

From all the studies presented above, it can be concluded that although previous studies have discussed the securitisation of narcotics issues from various perspectives, whether national, local, or regional, none have explicitly examined individuals as a symbol of existential threats. By foregrounding a fugitive as the referent object, this research offers original insights into securitisation theory, demonstrating how "speech acts" and international cooperation become crucial for addressing contemporary transnational organised crime. The following sections present the qualitative methodology used and illustrate, in turn, how NCB Interpol Indonesia constructed securitisation and how this led to the operational result of Nazarenko's apprehension.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with purposive sampling. The primary informant was a key official from NCB Interpol Indonesia, selected for their operational expertise and direct involvement in handling the Roman Nazarenko case and related securitisation processes. An in-depth, semi-structured interview was conducted in person at the NCB Interpol Indonesia office for approximately 45 minutes, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of research issues with the flexibility suitable for qualitative inquiry. Due to the classified nature of the Interpol Red Notice, the informant was unable to provide the original document but offered detailed verbal descriptions of its content. The researcher also confirmed and cross-verified key facts with open-source data and credible news reports. To enrich conceptual understanding, literature analyses were undertaken, including a systematic review of academic journals, international documents, and key works on the theory of securitisation, such as *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde.

Credibility and validity were enhanced by rigorous probing during the interview and triangulation between informant testimony, news sources, and academic literature related to law enforcement and securitisation. Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction filtering and focusing data relevant to the securitisation process, data display organising evidence in matrices and diagrams for the main elements of securitisation, and conclusion drawing/verification integrating empirical findings with the theoretical framework Sugiyono (2013). The analysis centred on five main elements: securitising actors, existential threats, referent objects, speech acts, and extraordinary measures Buzan et al (1988). Conclusions were drawn by mapping empirical data to these concepts, particularly how clandestine laboratories and specifically, Roman Nazarenko as an individual were constructed as non-traditional security threats.

Methodological limitations, such as restricted access to confidential documents and single-informant bias, are presented transparently. These were addressed through

methodological rigour, cross-verification, and detailed documentation. This methodology enables the study to be replicated in future cases with a similar design and context.

Identification of securitization by ncb interpol indonesia

According to the Copenhagen School's securitisation theory, an issue is elevated to an existential security threat when influential actors successfully frame it as vital to the state's survival and trigger extraordinary measures Buzan et al (1998). While previous research focuses primarily on narcotic substances as existential threats, this study uniquely advances the discussion by positioning the individual fugitive Roman Nazarenko as the central existential threat. Nazarenko's technical expertise and ability to establish sophisticated drug laboratories in multiple countries present a transnational risk that extends far beyond that previously captured by studies focused on drugs Polii, 2017; Siahaan, 2022; Ramadhan et al., (2024). NCB Interpol Indonesia served as the securitising actor, constructing Nazarenko's narrative as the key architect and coordinator of large-scale, technologically advanced clandestine drug production. Based on the interview with a senior NCB Interpol Indonesia official (AKP M. Hazaquan, personal interview, May 21, 2025), the securitisation process was implemented through inter-agency communication, "Police to Police" coordination, and crucially the issuance of INTERPOL Red Notice No. A-8191/7-2024 describes Nazarenko's leadership role in the "Hydra Syndicate" and the systemic threat he posed.

Unlike prior research, the analysis here frames the existential threat not merely in terms of illegal substance proliferation, but in Nazarenko's mobile, replicable operational model that exposes critical weaknesses in state jurisdiction and border control. Rather than focusing on harm to direct victims, the securitisation process placed legal sovereignty and the integrity of national law as the referent object under threat aligned with securitisation theory's emphasis on survival of the state as a political community Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde (1998). The empirical evidence for this framing is clear. According to open-source reporting TV One (2024), Nazarenko was the technical mastermind behind the labs in Bali, actively involved in infrastructure modification and remote organisation, utilising encrypted channels and the dark web. His escape to Thailand further internationalised the threat, transforming the local case into a cross-border challenge for law enforcement (Brigadier General Mukti Juharsa, National Police Criminal Investigation Unit; MetroTV, 2025).

The pivotal "speech act" in this process was the issuance of a Red Notice by NCB Interpol Indonesia, which not only elevated Nazarenko's profile as a threat to the rule of law in Indonesia but also demanded international action (Buzan et al., 1998). The acceptance and operationalisation of this "speech act" was empirically validated when NCB Interpol Thailand responded by locating and arresting Nazarenko at U-Tapao Rayong Airport demonstrating audience acceptance and a seamless transition from securitisation narrative to transnational enforcement (Tempo, 2025; personal interview, May 21, 2025). Within the framework of the Copenhagen School of securitisation, Roman Nazarenko is at the core of an existential threat because the laboratory he controls is not merely a place for the production of narcotics, but a hub of a system

involving transnational crime, money laundering, closed communication technology, and the digital black market. This case thus confirms the importance of the individual fugitive as the referent object and existential threat a novel finding in securitisation research. The role of NCB Interpol Indonesia as both initiator and legitimiser of the security narrative underscores the centrality of "speech acts" and audience responses in the materialisation of extraordinary measures. The successful cooperation between NCB Interpol Indonesia and NCB Interpol Thailand testifies to the power of securitisation, not only as a discourse but also as a driver of operational law enforcement in combating transnational organised crime.

The role of the ncb interpol indonesia in the handling of roman nazarenko

The arrest and transfer of Roman Nazarenko through the Police-to-Police (P-to-P) mechanism illustrates how extraordinary measures, as theorised by the Copenhagen School, are operationalised in practice. In this case, the Jakarta NCB acted as the primary securitising actor, responding to transnational crime by framing Nazarenko as an existential threat through the issuance of an INTERPOL Red Notice. Unlike prior research that interpreted narcotics substances as existential threats, this study demonstrates how the focal existential threat is embodied in the individual fugitive as a "moveable" threat capable of re-establishing clandestine labs and criminal networks across borders (personal interview, AKP M. Hazaquan, May 21, 2025).

The P-to-P mechanism, grounded in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Indonesian National Police and the Royal Thai Police (signed on August 21, 2023), served as a critical channel for rapid, cross-border law enforcement collaboration. Upon Nazarenko being designated in the INTERPOL Red Notice system, NCB Interpol Indonesia took strategic steps by requesting real-time tracking and monitoring of the fugitive via the Indonesian Police Attaché in Thailand, leveraging multilateral frameworks and intensive information exchange. The direct acceptance of Indonesia's securitisation speech act was evidenced by the swift and coordinated reaction of Thai law enforcement. According to Tempo (2025), Nazarenko was apprehended by Thai immigration authorities at U-Tapao Rayong Airport while attempting to flee, following the INTERPOL Red Notice issued at the request of NCB Interpol Indonesia. This operational outcome, confirmed in both official statements and field interviews, signifies the full "audience acceptance" postulated in the Copenhagen School's theoretical model: the threat narrative advanced by NCB Interpol Indonesia through the speech act Red Notice was concretely acknowledged and acted upon by NCB Interpol Thailand as the international audience.

Institutional confidentiality limited access to detailed coordination documents; however, publicly available information and verified operational chronologies confirm the practical realisation of extraordinary measures. This cross-border collaboration not only legitimised the securitisation process, but also demonstrated that the Red Notice

issued as a speech act is capable of catalysing international enforcement responses when the existential threat is articulated as a fugitive with broad transnational impact. In short, the NCB Interpol Indonesia strategic response to Roman Nazarenko validates the theoretical premise that individual actors can serve as referent objects and focal points of existential threat. The acceptance and joint action by the Royal Thai Police substantiate the argument that effective securitisation hinges on the international recognition and operationalisation of the speech act a critical insight and a novel contribution to the securitisation literature. A key limitation of this study is the inability to access classified INTERPOL documents directly, as well as the reliance on a single informant, which may restrict the empirical generalizability of the results. Methodological rigour and triangulation were employed to minimise bias; however, future research should investigate the reception of securitisation by broader law enforcement audiences, the impact of public perceptions, and the broader implications for state and global security governance.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate how Indonesia's Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB) operationalised the securitisation of clandestine drug laboratories by reframing the existential threat posed by substances as an individual actor: Roman Nazarenko. The research demonstrates that a single fugitive may constitute a cross-border, mobile threat capable of sustaining illicit networks and evading traditional law enforcement boundaries. Empirical analysis of the NCB Interpol Indonesia's responses, particularly through the issuance of an Interpol Red Notice as a speech act, shows how theoretical securitisation was successfully translated into international law enforcement action. The direct apprehension of Nazarenko in Thailand, following Indonesia's securitisation move, exemplifies the sequence from threat construction to audience acceptance and coordinated extraordinary measures as postulated by the Copenhagen School. A primary limitation of the research lies in restricted access to confidential documents and the use of a single informant; these were mitigated through in-depth qualitative triangulation. For further inquiry, future research is encouraged to investigate how recipient law enforcement agencies interpret and implement Red Notices in different national contexts, as well as how public perception interacts with official securitisation narratives in combating transnational crime. In conclusion, by highlighting the fugitive as the referent object and validating the process through cross-national operational outcomes, this study advances both theory and practice in the field of contemporary securitisation.

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