



Legal Protection of Workers' Wage Rights from the Perspective of Labor Law in Indonesia

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Keywords:

Labor Law; Legal Protection; Wage Rights.

Article history:

Submitted : 2026-08-04
Accepted : 2026-09-26
Available online : 2026-10-04

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the legal protection of workers' wage rights from the perspective of labor law in Indonesia and to examine its implementation in employment relations practices. The study addresses the forms of legal protection available to workers and the challenges affecting the fulfillment of wage rights. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of the relationship between wage protection norms, law enforcement mechanisms, and the effectiveness of protecting workers' wage rights following recent labor law reforms in Indonesia. This research employed a normative legal research method using statutory and conceptual approaches. Data were collected through a literature review of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials and analyzed qualitatively. The findings reveal that workers' wage rights are protected through both preventive and repressive legal mechanisms, including minimum wage policies, wage structures and scales, labor supervision, and industrial dispute resolution procedures. However, the effectiveness of such protection remains constrained by low employer compliance, limited labor inspection capacity, and insufficient worker awareness of legal rights. Therefore, strengthening labor supervision, enhancing legal awareness, and improving law enforcement mechanisms are necessary to optimize the protection of workers' wage rights. This study contributes to the development of labor law scholarship and provides policy recommendations for improving worker protection in Indonesia.

How to cited: Tuanaya, U., & Chariansyah, H. (2026). Legal Protection of Workers' Wage Rights from the Perspective of Labor Law in Indonesia. *Justice Voice*, 5(2), 305–317. <https://doi.org/10.37893/jv.v5i2.1523>

1. Introduction

Wages constitute a fundamental right of workers and play an essential role in ensuring the livelihood and welfare of workers and their families (Yuliana et al., 2026). In employment relationships, wages are not merely regarded as compensation for work performed but also as a form of protection of human dignity and worth. Therefore, the state has an obligation to ensure the fulfillment of wage rights through various labor regulations (Anggraini & Gunardi Lie, 2026; Apriliani et al., 2024). In Indonesia, legal protection of workers' wage rights is regulated

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under various laws and regulations, particularly Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, which was subsequently amended by Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of the Government Regulation in Lieu of Law on Job Creation as Law. These regulations affirm that every worker is entitled to a decent standard of living for humanity through wage policies covering minimum wages, wage structures and scales, overtime pay, and various other forms of wage protection.

Although legal protection regarding wages has been comprehensively regulated, various problems continue to arise in practice, including the payment of wages below the minimum standard, delayed wage payments, non-compliance with wage structure and scale requirements, and weak supervision of the implementation of wage provisions ([Iskandar & Edhi, 2023](#); [Wibowo, 2023](#)). Furthermore, amendments to labor regulations through the Job Creation policy have generated debate regarding the effectiveness of the protection of workers' rights, particularly in relation to wages. This situation indicates that the existence of legal norms alone has not been sufficient to guarantee the optimal fulfillment of workers' wage rights. Consequently, a more comprehensive examination is required regarding the forms of legal protection available and the effectiveness of their implementation within Indonesia's labor law system.

Previous studies on the legal protection of workers' wage rights have been widely conducted. Most of these studies focus on minimum wage policies, the implementation of wage systems following the enactment of the Job Creation Law, wage dispute resolution mechanisms, and the role of the government in labor supervision. The findings of earlier research indicate that wage protection constitutes an important instrument for promoting workers' welfare; however, its implementation continues to encounter various obstacles ([Saputra & Sarnawa, 2022](#)). Most existing studies concentrate on changes in wage regulations or the impact of minimum wage policies on industrial relations, while studies that specifically examine the legal protection of workers' wage rights from a comprehensive labor law perspective remain relatively limited ([Azizah et al., 2025](#); [Vergara, 2022](#)).

Based on the review of previous studies, a research gap can be identified in the insufficient discussion of the relationship between wage protection norms, law enforcement mechanisms, and the effectiveness of protecting workers' wage rights following changes in labor regulations. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its more comprehensive analysis of the legal protection of workers' wage rights by examining the normative aspects, the forms of protection provided under statutory regulations, and the challenges associated with their implementation in industrial relations practices in Indonesia. Accordingly, this study is expected to contribute to the development of labor law scholarship while also serving as a reference for efforts to strengthen the protection of workers' rights.

The issues examined in this study are: (1) what forms of legal protection are provided for workers' wage rights from the perspective of labor law in Indonesia, and (2) how effective the implementation of such legal protection is in ensuring the fulfillment of workers' wage rights. Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to analyze the forms of legal protection afforded to workers' wage rights under the prevailing labor laws and regulations in Indonesia and to examine the effectiveness of their implementation in employment relations practices. The findings of this study are expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the protection of workers' wage rights while also serving as a reference for the formulation of more equitable labor policies.

2. Methods

This study employs a normative legal research method using both a statutory approach and a conceptual approach. Normative legal research was selected because the study focuses on examining the legal norms governing the protection of workers' wage rights within Indonesia's labor law system. The statutory approach is used to analyze various regulations related to wages, while the conceptual approach is employed to understand the concepts of legal protection and workers' rights as developed within labor law doctrine. Through these two approaches, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the legal protection of workers' wage rights. Furthermore, the research aims to identify the extent to which the prevailing legal provisions are consistent with the principles of labor protection.

The research applies a descriptive-analytical method. The descriptive method is used to explain the various legal provisions governing workers' wage rights and the legal protection mechanisms provided by the state. Subsequently, the analytical method is employed to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of these regulations in protecting workers. The analysis focuses on the provisions contained in Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of the Government Regulation in Lieu of Law on Job Creation as Law, as well as other implementing regulations related to the wage system. Accordingly, this study not only describes the applicable legal norms but also evaluates their implementation within the context of worker protection.

The data collection technique employed in this study is library research. The study relies on secondary data consisting of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include laws and regulations governing labor and wage-related matters. Secondary legal materials are obtained from books, academic journals, research articles, seminar proceedings, and other scholarly works relevant to legal protection and labor law. Meanwhile, tertiary legal materials are derived from legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference sources that support an

understanding of the research subject. All data were collected through the processes of identifying, inventorying, and reviewing documents relevant to the research topic.

The data were analyzed using a qualitative analytical method. The collected data were selected, classified, and interpreted based on the research issues. The analysis was conducted by examining the relationship between the applicable legal provisions and the concept of workers' rights protection from the perspective of labor law. Subsequently, the findings were systematically organized to draw conclusions regarding the forms of legal protection of workers' wage rights and the effectiveness of their implementation in Indonesia. Through this qualitative analytical approach, the study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of legal efforts to protect workers' wage rights as well as the various challenges encountered in their implementation.

3. Results

3.1 The Legal Concept of Workers' Wage Rights in Indonesian Labor Law

Wages constitute one of the most important elements in an employment relationship because they represent the rights earned by workers as compensation for the work they have performed ([Andriany et al., 2025](#)). From the perspective of labor law, wages are not merely regarded as compensation for the labor and time contributed by workers to employers but also as an instrument for ensuring the livelihood and welfare of workers and their families. The existence of wages is one of the essential elements of an employment relationship, in addition to work and the employer's authority to give instructions. Therefore, the right to wages occupies a crucial position within the labor law system, as it is directly related to the fulfillment of workers' basic needs ([Mardianto, 2024](#)). The fulfillment of fair and adequate wage rights also serves as one of the indicators of the successful implementation of labor protection in a country.

From a juridical perspective, the definition of wages in Indonesia is regulated under Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, as amended by Law Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022 on Job Creation as Law. Under these provisions, wages are defined as workers' rights received and expressed in monetary form as compensation from employers or hiring entities to workers, determined and paid in accordance with an employment agreement, mutual agreement, or prevailing laws and regulations. This regulation demonstrates that the right to wages does not arise solely from the contractual relationship between workers and employers but also receives direct protection from the state through statutory regulations. Consequently, employers have a legal obligation to fulfill workers' wage rights in accordance with applicable

legal provisions. Such an obligation forms part of the employers' responsibility to establish fair and harmonious industrial relations.

The right to wages also has a strong constitutional foundation within the Indonesian legal system. Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia stipulates that every citizen has the right to work and to a decent livelihood worthy of human dignity. In addition, Article 28D paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution provides that every person has the right to work and to receive fair and proper remuneration and treatment in employment relations. These provisions demonstrate that the right to fair and adequate wages constitutes a constitutional right that must be guaranteed by the state. Accordingly, all wage-related policies and regulations should be oriented toward the protection of workers' rights and the achievement of social welfare. These constitutional guarantees serve as the basis for the enactment of various labor regulations governing the wage system in Indonesia (Nurokhmah et al., 2026; Petreski & Pehkonen, 2023).

In addition to being constitutionally protected, the right to wages is also recognized as a fundamental human right. The right to receive fair and adequate remuneration for work performed represents an important manifestation of respect for human dignity. In the labor context, the fulfillment of fair wage rights is an essential prerequisite for ensuring a prosperous and dignified life for workers. Therefore, the state is obligated to protect workers from various forms of wage-related rights violations, including the payment of wages below the minimum standard, delayed wage payments, and other actions detrimental to workers. Such protection is implemented through the enactment of regulations, labor supervision mechanisms, and the provision of industrial relations dispute settlement procedures.

The legal framework governing wages in Indonesia is derived not only from the 1945 Constitution and the Manpower Law but also from various implementing regulations. These regulations govern numerous aspects of wage administration, including minimum wages, wage structures and scales, overtime pay, and wage protection under specific circumstances. This comprehensive regulatory framework demonstrates the state's commitment to providing legal certainty for both workers and employers in the implementation of employment relations. Through the establishment of clear legal provisions, workers' rights to wages are expected to be protected more effectively, while the potential for violations can be minimized. Therefore, the concept and legal foundations of workers' wage rights constitute an important basis for understanding the forms of legal protection provided under Indonesian labor law.

3.2 Forms of Legal Protection of Workers' Wage Rights in Indonesia

Legal protection of workers' wage rights constitutes one of the forms of protection provided by the state to ensure the fulfillment of workers' economic rights within employment relationships ([Rafifah et al., 2025](#)). Under Indonesian labor law, such protection is implemented through various wage policies aimed at ensuring that workers receive an income that is adequate and consistent with human dignity. Law Number 6 of 2023 affirms that every worker is entitled to a decent standard of living, and accordingly, the government has established wage policies as an instrument to realize this right. These wage policies encompass minimum wages, wage structures and scales, overtime pay, wages for periods of absence from work under certain circumstances, methods and procedures for wage payment, as well as various other provisions relating to workers' wage rights.

One form of preventive legal protection is the establishment of minimum wages. Minimum wages function as a social safety net to ensure that workers do not receive wages below the standards determined by the government ([Miarsa et al., 2023](#); [Bailey et al., 2024](#)). This provision establishes a minimum threshold that employers are legally required to observe when paying wages to workers. Through this policy, the state seeks to prevent labor exploitation and ensure the fulfillment of workers' basic living needs. Furthermore, the prohibition against paying wages below the minimum wage provides workers with legal certainty regarding the enjoyment of their economic rights.

Another form of legal protection is manifested through the obligation of employers to establish wage structures and scales. Wage structures and scales serve as guidelines for determining wage levels based on job position, length of service, educational background, competence, and workers' productivity. This regulation aims to create a more equitable and proportionate wage system within the workplace. Through the implementation of wage structures and scales, workers gain greater certainty regarding the mechanisms used to determine wages, as well as opportunities for income increases based on performance and work experience. This policy also promotes transparency in wage administration, thereby reducing the potential for discrimination and unfair treatment in wage determination.

In addition to preventive protection, labor law also provides repressive legal protection against violations of workers' wage rights. When employers fail to pay wages in accordance with applicable regulations or engage in actions that adversely affect workers in wage-related matters, workers have the right to pursue industrial relations dispute settlement mechanisms. Such mechanisms may be carried out through bipartite negotiations, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, or proceedings before the Industrial Relations Court. The availability of these dispute resolution mechanisms ensures that workers have legal avenues to defend and enforce their

rights in the event of violations. Accordingly, legal protection is provided not only through normative regulations but also through law enforcement mechanisms that can be utilized by workers ([Wibowo, 2023](#)).

The role of the government also constitutes an essential component of the legal protection of workers' wage rights. The government is vested with the authority to conduct labor inspections and supervision to ensure that wage-related regulations are consistently implemented by employers. Such supervision includes monitoring compliance with minimum wage requirements, the implementation of wage structures and scales, the payment of overtime wages, and the fulfillment of other wage-related rights. Where violations are identified, the government may impose administrative sanctions or initiate legal measures in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Through these supervisory and law enforcement functions, the state seeks to maintain balance in industrial relations while ensuring the effective protection of workers' wage rights.

Overall, the legal protection of workers' wage rights in Indonesia encompasses both preventive protection through wage regulations and policies and repressive protection through dispute settlement mechanisms and law enforcement measures. These two forms of protection complement one another in ensuring the fulfillment of workers' rights to fair and adequate wages. The existence of a comprehensive regulatory framework demonstrates the state's commitment to protecting workers as the economically weaker party in employment relationships. Therefore, the legal protection of wage rights is intended not only to provide legal certainty but also to promote social justice and the welfare of workers in Indonesia.

3.3 Implementation of the Legal Protection of Workers' Wage Rights

The implementation of legal protection of workers' wage rights represents the practical realization of various laws and regulations governing the wage system in Indonesia. Legal protection does not end with the enactment of regulations but must also be reflected in their effective application within employment relationships between workers and employers. In practice, the protection of wage rights is implemented through various mechanisms, including the application of minimum wages, the payment of wages in accordance with employment agreements, the provision of overtime pay, and the implementation of wage structures and scales within enterprises. The success of such implementation largely determines the level of protection experienced by workers in meeting their living needs. Therefore, the enforcement of wage-related provisions constitutes an important indicator for assessing the effectiveness of labor law in Indonesia.

One of the most tangible forms of implementing legal protection is the application of government-established minimum wages. The minimum wage policy

is intended to ensure that workers receive an income sufficient to meet a decent standard of living (Suhartono et al., 2024; Manurung & Rohela, 2025). In its implementation, employers are prohibited from paying workers wages below the minimum wage applicable within their respective jurisdictions. This provision provides a basic level of protection for workers, particularly those with less than one year of service, who are generally more vulnerable to unfair wage practices. Nevertheless, in practice, there remain companies that have not fully complied with minimum wage requirements due to various factors, such as limited financial capacity or inadequate supervision by the relevant authorities (Juliani & Kusuma, 2025).

The implementation of legal protection of wage rights is also reflected in the obligation of companies to establish and implement wage structures and scales. Wage structures and scales serve as guidelines for determining wage levels based on job position, length of service, competence, educational background, and workers' productivity. The implementation of this system is intended to promote internal equity within companies while providing certainty regarding career development and opportunities for increased earnings. Through the existence of clear wage structures and scales, workers are able to understand the basis upon which their wages are determined, thereby minimizing the potential for discrimination or unfair treatment. However, in practice, there are still companies that have not implemented these provisions effectively, particularly within the small and medium-sized enterprise sector (Hadin & Romainur, 2023; Japar et al., 2025).

In addition to wage policies, the implementation of legal protection is also carried out through labor inspection and supervision mechanisms. Such supervision is conducted by the government through labor inspectors whose responsibility is to ensure that companies comply with wage-related regulations in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Labor inspections include the examination of wage-related documentation, compliance with minimum wage requirements, payment of overtime wages, and the fulfillment of other workers' rights. Where violations are identified, labor inspectors may issue warnings or recommend the imposition of sanctions in accordance with legal provisions. The existence of this supervisory mechanism plays an important role in enhancing employers' compliance with wage regulations and preventing violations of workers' rights.

Despite the implementation of various legal protection instruments, their enforcement continues to face a number of challenges. Common issues include delayed wage payments, payment of wages below the prescribed minimum standards, non-compliance with overtime wage requirements, and a lack of transparency in wage determination. In addition, the limited number of labor inspectors and the extensive number of enterprises subject to supervision constitute factors that affect the effectiveness of labor inspection mechanisms.

These conditions indicate that the implementation of legal protection of workers' wage rights has not yet operated optimally. Therefore, greater synergy among the government, employers, and workers is required to ensure that all wage-related provisions are implemented consistently and in accordance with the principles of justice.

Overall, the implementation of legal protection of workers' wage rights in Indonesia is supported by a relatively strong regulatory framework and various enforcement mechanisms. However, the effectiveness of such protection remains influenced by employers' level of compliance, the quality of labor inspection and supervision, and workers' awareness of their rights. The effective implementation of legal protection requires the commitment of all parties involved in industrial relations. With proper implementation, workers' wage rights can be protected to the fullest extent, thereby enabling the objectives of labor law—namely, the promotion of workers' welfare and justice—to be achieved.

4. Discussion

The legal protection of workers' wage rights in Indonesia is supported by a relatively strong normative foundation through various laws and regulations governing the wage system. Nevertheless, the implementation of such protection continues to face numerous challenges that may hinder the optimal fulfillment of workers' rights. One of the primary challenges is the continuing existence of companies that have not fully complied with wage-related regulations established by the government. Common violations include the payment of wages below the minimum wage, delayed wage payments, and non-compliance with overtime wage requirements. These conditions demonstrate that the existence of sound regulations does not necessarily guarantee the effective implementation of legal protection unless it is accompanied by a high level of compliance on the part of employers.

Another challenge concerns the effectiveness of labor inspection and supervision, which continues to be constrained by various limitations. The number of labor inspectors remains disproportionate to the large number of companies that must be monitored, resulting in supervisory processes that are unable to effectively cover all sectors of economic activity. In addition, limitations in human resources, budget allocations, and supporting inspection facilities constitute further obstacles to the effective performance of labor inspection functions. As a consequence, certain violations of wage-related rights remain undetected or are not promptly addressed by the competent authorities. Such circumstances have the potential to create legal uncertainty for workers and diminish the effectiveness of the protection provided by the state.

Changes in labor regulations also constitute one of the challenges in protecting

workers' wage rights. Regulatory reforms introduced in recent years have generated diverse responses from workers, employers, and academics regarding their impact on the wage system and labor protection. Some stakeholders argue that these regulatory changes may enhance business flexibility and promote economic growth, while others express concerns regarding the potential reduction of protections afforded to workers' rights. These differing perspectives demonstrate that the implementation of labor policies requires a careful balance between the interests of worker protection and the needs of the business sector. Therefore, any regulatory reform should remain guided by the principles of justice and workers' welfare.

In addition to regulatory and supervisory factors, workers' limited understanding of their labor rights also represents a challenge that deserves particular attention. Not all workers possess a comprehensive understanding of their rights, including the right to fair and adequate wages and the legal mechanisms available in the event of violations. This condition causes some workers to be reluctant or unable to assert their rights when confronted with wage-related disputes. Limited access to legal information and economic constraints also frequently hinder workers from seeking justice. Therefore, enhancing workers' legal awareness constitutes an important aspect of efforts to strengthen the protection of wage rights.

In addressing these challenges, efforts to optimize the legal protection of workers' wage rights should focus on strengthening the labor inspection and supervision system. The government needs to increase both the number and capacity of labor inspectors to ensure that supervisory functions can be carried out more effectively. In addition, the utilization of information technology in labor inspection processes and the reporting of labor-related violations may serve as an alternative means of improving the efficiency and scope of supervision. Strengthening coordination among the central government, local governments, labor unions, and employers' organizations is also necessary to establish a supervisory system that is more responsive to wage-related issues. Through more effective supervision, compliance with wage regulations can be significantly improved.

Other optimization efforts may be undertaken through enhanced education and awareness programs concerning labor rights for both workers and employers. Workers who possess a better understanding of their rights will be more capable of protecting their interests and utilizing available legal mechanisms when violations occur. On the other hand, employers who understand their legal obligations will be more inclined to implement wage systems that comply with applicable laws and regulations. Furthermore, industrial relations disputes should be resolved through procedures that are expeditious, simple, and affordable so that workers can obtain

effective access to justice. Through these various efforts, the legal protection of workers' wage rights is expected to operate more effectively and thereby contribute to the establishment of industrial relations that are fair, harmonious, and sustainable.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the legal protection of workers' wage rights from the perspective of Indonesian labor law rests upon a strong and comprehensive legal foundation. The right to wages is not merely a right arising from the employment relationship between workers and employers, but also a constitutional right guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and a fundamental human right that must be protected by the state. Such protection is manifested through various labor regulations governing wage policies, including minimum wages, wage structures and scales, overtime pay, and dispute settlement mechanisms in cases involving violations of workers' wage rights.

This study further demonstrates that the legal protection of workers' wage rights in Indonesia is implemented through two approaches, namely preventive legal protection and repressive legal protection. Preventive protection is realized through the enactment of laws, regulations, and wage policies aimed at preventing violations of workers' rights, whereas repressive protection is manifested through law enforcement mechanisms and industrial relations dispute settlement procedures. In addition, the government plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of legal protection through labor inspection and supervision functions, as well as the imposition of sanctions for violations of wage-related regulations.

Nevertheless, the implementation of legal protection of workers' wage rights continues to face various challenges, including the low level of compliance among some employers with wage-related regulations, limitations in labor inspection and supervision, and workers' insufficient understanding of their rights. Therefore, optimizing the protection of workers' wage rights requires strengthening the labor inspection system, enhancing the legal awareness of parties involved in industrial relations, and improving labor policies capable of balancing the interests of workers and employers. Accordingly, the objective of this study—to analyze the forms of legal protection of workers' wage rights and their implementation within Indonesian labor law—has been achieved. Future research may focus on empirical studies concerning the effectiveness of the implementation of wage-rights protection across various industrial sectors in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of labor conditions in Indonesia.

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