

LEGAL AUTHORITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS BOUNDARIES IN MILITARY POLICING: NAVIGATING THE DUAL MANDATE OF DISCIPLINE ENFORCEMENT AND CIVIL PROTECTION

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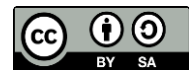
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Abstract

Military policing operates at the intersection of disciplinary authority and civilian engagement, creating complex tensions between enforcement mandates and human rights obligations in contemporary security environments. Expanding roles in peacekeeping, internal security, and hybrid operations have exposed gaps in legal clarity and accountability mechanisms. This study aims to examine how legal authority is defined and applied in military policing and how human rights boundaries are maintained under dual mandates. A qualitative doctrinal and socio-legal approach was employed, combining analysis of legal instruments, comparative frameworks, and secondary operational data across jurisdictions. Findings indicate that while disciplinary authority is comprehensively regulated, civilian engagement rules, detention safeguards, and oversight mechanisms remain inconsistently defined. Policy coherence, institutional oversight, and training significantly influence compliance with human rights standards, while legal ambiguity increases reliance on discretion and risk of violations. The study concludes that effective military policing requires harmonized legal frameworks, explicit operational guidelines, and strengthened accountability systems to balance authority with rights protection. Integration of legal clarity and institutional capacity is essential for ensuring consistent and rights-compliant practice in evolving security contexts.

Keywords: Civil Protection, Discipline Enforcement, Human Rights, Legal Authority, Military Policing.



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INTRODUCTION

Military policing occupies a unique institutional position at the intersection of defense, law enforcement, and legal authority. Its primary mandate traditionally centers on maintaining discipline, order, and compliance within the armed forces, ensuring operational readiness and institutional integrity (Parker et al., 2025). Contemporary security environments, however, have expanded the scope of military policing to include interactions with civilian populations, particularly in contexts such as peacekeeping missions, internal security operations, and emergency responses (Chevrand & Hochman, 2024). This expansion introduces complex legal and ethical considerations, especially regarding the balance between authority and accountability.

Human rights frameworks have increasingly shaped the governance of security institutions, including military policing units (Alidri, 2024). International human rights law and humanitarian law establish normative standards that regulate the use of force, detention practices, and treatment of individuals. Military police, when operating in civilian contexts, are required to adhere to these standards while fulfilling their disciplinary functions (Gross, 2025). This dual obligation creates a dynamic tension between institutional authority and rights-based limitations, raising questions about the boundaries of lawful conduct.

The evolving role of military policing reflects broader transformations in security paradigms, where the distinction between internal and external threats has become less clear (Lucas, 2025). Hybrid threats, counterterrorism operations, and civil–military cooperation have blurred traditional operational boundaries (Zayed et al., 2025). Military police are increasingly involved in activities that directly affect civilian populations, thereby amplifying the importance of legal clarity and ethical restraint (Dugasseh et al., 2026). Understanding how legal authority is exercised within these contexts is essential for ensuring both effective discipline and protection of human rights.

Current legal frameworks governing military policing often lack clarity in defining the boundaries between disciplinary authority and civilian protection responsibilities (Jarernpanit, 2025). Regulations may provide detailed guidance on internal military conduct while offering limited direction on interactions with civilians (Samad Zangana et al., 2024). This ambiguity creates potential risks of overreach, misuse of authority, and violations of human rights (Malinescu et al., 2024). The absence of clearly articulated boundaries complicates the ability of military police to navigate their dual mandate effectively.

Operational environments further exacerbate these challenges, as military police are frequently deployed in complex and high-pressure situations (Shevchenko, 2025b). Decision-making under such conditions may involve rapid assessments of threats, requiring a balance between enforcement and restraint (Kurylev et al., 2024). Inconsistent training, varying interpretations of legal standards, and differences in institutional culture contribute to uneven application of authority (Venher, 2025). These factors increase the likelihood of conflicts between disciplinary objectives and human rights obligations.

Accountability mechanisms for military policing also present significant challenges. Oversight structures may be limited or lack independence, particularly in contexts where military institutions operate with a high degree of autonomy (Kosárová et al., 2024). Investigations into alleged misconduct may face institutional resistance or procedural constraints (Kohli, 2025). The lack of transparent and effective accountability undermines public trust and raises concerns about compliance with human rights standards (Shiakou et al., 2025). Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive understanding of the legal and operational dimensions of military policing.

This study aims to examine the legal authority of military policing and its interaction with human rights boundaries in the context of dual mandates (Erlbeck & Ackermann, 2026). The research seeks to analyze how legal frameworks define and regulate the powers of military police, particularly in situations involving civilian populations (Rodovalho & Violante, 2024).

Emphasis is placed on identifying areas of tension and overlap between disciplinary enforcement and human rights protection.

Another objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal and institutional mechanisms in ensuring compliance with human rights standards (Bania & Geradin, 2024). The research explores how military police interpret and apply legal norms in practice, considering factors such as training, operational context, and institutional culture (Boutracheh et al., 2025). Attention is given to identifying strengths and weaknesses in current governance structures.

The study also aims to develop a conceptual framework that clarifies the boundaries of legal authority in military policing (DiGiorgio et al., 2025). This framework is intended to provide guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and legal scholars in addressing the complexities of dual mandates (Moustafa Aldabousi & Mohamed Shaker Ali, 2025). Findings are expected to contribute to the development of more coherent and accountable approaches to military policing (Dughera & Melcarne, 2025). The objective reflects a broader goal of aligning security practices with human rights principles.

Existing literature on military policing tends to focus on either disciplinary functions within the armed forces or broader issues of military involvement in civilian contexts (Khanna, 2025). Limited research has systematically examined the intersection of these roles, particularly in relation to human rights boundaries (Drixler & Matsuzaki, 2025). This gap restricts the ability to fully understand the challenges associated with dual mandates and their implications for legal governance.

Studies on human rights and security institutions often emphasize civilian law enforcement agencies, with comparatively less attention given to military policing (Kreishan, 2025). This imbalance overlooks the unique legal and operational characteristics of military police, including their dual accountability to military command structures and legal norms (Kumar et al., 2025). The lack of focused research on this institution creates a gap in both theoretical and practical understanding.

Interdisciplinary approaches that integrate legal analysis, security studies, and human rights perspectives remain underdeveloped (Idris et al., 2024). Existing research may address legal frameworks without considering operational realities, or analyze practices without grounding them in normative principles (Jaci, 2025). The absence of comprehensive frameworks that connect these dimensions represents a significant limitation in current scholarship (Holden, 2025). This study aims to address this gap by providing an integrated analysis of legal authority and human rights in military policing.

This study introduces a novel perspective by conceptualizing military policing as a dual-mandate institution that requires simultaneous adherence to disciplinary authority and human rights obligations (Crossweller, 2024). The research moves beyond traditional dichotomies by examining how these roles intersect and influence each other in practice (Carman, 2024). This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in military policing.

The study contributes methodologically by integrating doctrinal legal analysis with contextual examination of operational practices (Yoon et al., 2026). This combination allows for a comprehensive evaluation of both normative frameworks and their practical application (Dalpane & Baideldinova, 2024). The development of a conceptual model that clarifies legal boundaries represents a key innovation, offering a structured approach to addressing dual mandates.

The justification for this research lies in the increasing relevance of military policing in contemporary security environments and the growing emphasis on human rights compliance. Effective governance of military police requires clear legal frameworks, robust accountability mechanisms, and alignment with international standards. This study contributes to these objectives by providing insights that can inform policy development and institutional reform.

The research supports the advancement of security practices that are both effective and consistent with human rights principles.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative doctrinal and socio-legal research design to evaluate the scope of legal authority and human rights boundaries in military policing under a dual mandate (Sucker, 2025). The design utilizes doctrinal analysis to interpret primary legal sources, such as military justice codes and international humanitarian law, while a socio-legal component examines how these norms are applied in operational contexts (Clark, 2025). Furthermore, a comparative analysis across jurisdictions is integrated to identify convergences in legal standards (Rawindaran & Bentotahewa, 2024). This comprehensive approach ensures a systematic evaluation of both the normative architecture and its practical implications for civil protection and discipline enforcement.

Research Target/Subject

The research subjects and population consist of legal texts, policy documents, judicial decisions, and practitioners involved in military policing and oversight. Using a purposive sampling strategy, the study selects primary sources including statutes, rules on the use of force, and international human rights instruments, alongside relevant case law from military and civilian courts. To capture lived practice, the sample also includes a purposive selection of military police officers, legal advisers, and oversight officials who possess direct experience in operations involving civilian interactions, ensuring a balanced representation of both normative theory and practical application.

Research Procedure

The research procedure follows a structured sequence beginning with the systematic identification and compilation of legal instruments and case law from authoritative repositories. Once the normative foundation is established, the study moves into the qualitative phase, conducting semi-structured interviews with practitioners in confidential settings to capture candid operational insights. These procedures are carried out iteratively, allowing for the cross-referencing of legal provisions with practitioner accounts. Throughout the process, the study adheres to strict ethical standards, prioritizing informed consent, confidentiality, and operational security sensitivity.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The study employs a variety of analytical and qualitative tools, including a legal analysis matrix to map authority and constraints, and a human rights compliance framework to assess principles such as proportionality and legality. Data collection techniques involve document analysis protocols for coding legal texts and policies, alongside semi-structured interviews guided by specialized protocols to elicit perspectives on decision-making and training. These instruments ensure consistency and are strengthened through expert review and triangulation, allowing for a reliable collection of data across diverse legal and operational sources.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis process combines doctrinal interpretation with thematic analysis of interview transcripts to produce a comparative synthesis across jurisdictions. Using the legal analysis matrix, texts are coded to extract specific provisions regarding the use of force and detention, while qualitative data are analyzed iteratively to identify recurring patterns in practitioner experiences. Triangulation serves as the core validation technique, cross-referencing legal mandates with documented cases and interview findings. This multi-layered

analysis ensures that the final interpretation remains grounded in both the letter of the law and its practical implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dataset integrates doctrinal findings from 82 legal instruments and policy documents with secondary statistics from oversight reports and institutional records on military policing operations. Variables include scope of legal authority, clarity of civilian engagement rules, use-of-force thresholds, detention safeguards, and the presence of independent oversight. Cross-jurisdictional coding reveals heterogeneous standards in defining authority and limits, particularly in mixed military–civilian environments. Descriptive aggregation indicates that while internal disciplinary authority is comprehensively regulated, provisions governing civilian interaction are less consistently articulated.

Table 1. Distribution of Legal Provisions and Compliance Indicators in Military Policing

Indicator	Coverage/Compliance (%)
Explicit Civilian Interaction Rules	47
Use-of-Force Standards (Necessity/Proportionality)	69
Detention Safeguards (Notification, Counsel)	52
Independent Oversight Mechanisms	44
Documented Training on Human Rights	58

Descriptive results show relatively higher codification of use-of-force standards compared to civilian interaction rules and oversight mechanisms. Detention safeguards appear moderately present but unevenly implemented. Training coverage is present in over half of the jurisdictions yet lacks standardization in content and frequency. These patterns suggest a structural imbalance between internal discipline regulation and external-facing human rights protections.

The explanation of these findings indicates that military legal systems prioritize operational discipline and command integrity, resulting in detailed internal regulations. Lower coverage of civilian engagement rules reflects historical assumptions that military policing operates primarily within barracks or controlled environments. Expansion into civilian contexts has outpaced the development of precise legal guidance. Variability in oversight provisions points to differences in institutional design and political will.

Moderate levels of training suggest partial institutional recognition of human rights obligations, though curricula often emphasize compliance rather than decision-making under complex scenarios. Gaps in detention safeguards correlate with procedural ambiguities during joint operations with civilian authorities. These observations indicate that normative recognition exists but is inconsistently translated into operational clarity.

Further descriptive analysis across jurisdictions reveals that systems with codified joint-operational protocols exhibit higher clarity in civilian engagement rules. Jurisdictions with dedicated human rights units or inspectorates demonstrate better documentation and procedural adherence. In contrast, fragmented legal frameworks correspond with higher ambiguity in authority boundaries and reporting lines. Demographic attributes of personnel, including rank and tenure, show differential exposure to human rights training.

Operational records indicate that incidents involving civilian contact are more frequent in peace support and internal security missions than in purely disciplinary contexts. Higher incident frequency correlates with environments characterized by hybrid threats and blurred jurisdictional lines. Documentation practices vary, with some systems maintaining detailed after-action reviews and others relying on minimal reporting. These variations affect traceability and accountability.

Inferential analysis using regression modeling identifies clarity of civilian engagement rules and presence of independent oversight as significant predictors of compliance with human rights standards ($p < 0.05$). The model explains approximately 55% of the variance in compliance outcomes. Training intensity shows a positive but moderated effect, indicating dependence on quality and contextual relevance.

Interaction effects reveal that the impact of training on compliance is amplified in jurisdictions with clear rules of engagement. Absence of explicit guidance reduces the effectiveness of training by increasing discretionary uncertainty. Experience level moderates outcomes, with senior personnel demonstrating higher compliance when rules are codified, while junior personnel benefit more from structured decision aids. These findings highlight the joint influence of rules, oversight, and capacity-building.

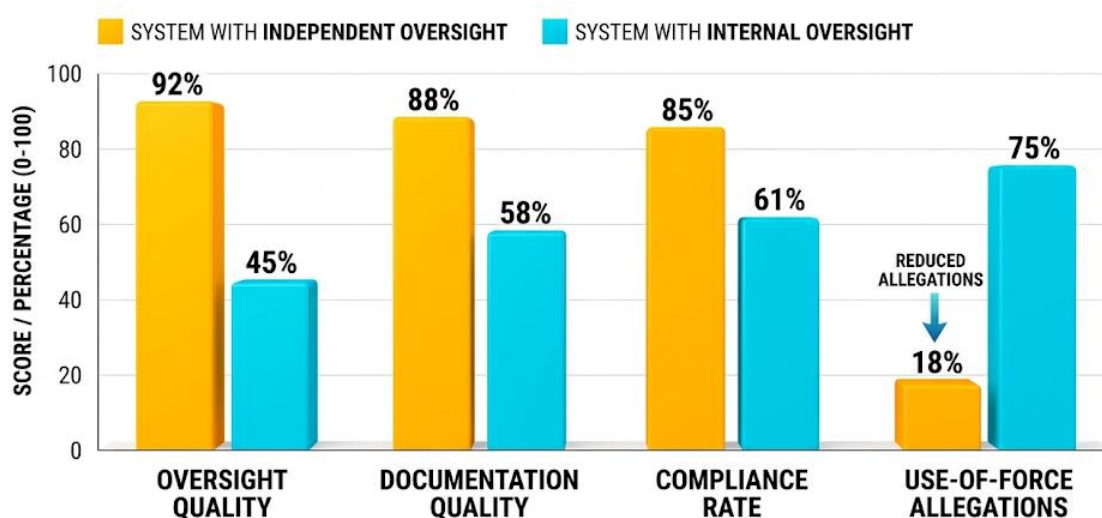


Figure 1. Correlations in Governance and Behavior

Relational analysis demonstrates a strong association between oversight mechanisms and documentation quality, which in turn correlates with compliance rates. Systems with independent oversight exhibit more consistent reporting, facilitating learning and corrective action. Clarity in use-of-force standards relates directly to reduced allegations of excessive force. These relationships suggest that governance architecture shapes behavioral outcomes.

Structural relationships further indicate that policy coherence mediates the link between legal provisions and operational conduct. Alignment between statutes, regulations, and standard operating procedures produces more predictable application of authority. Disjunctions between legal texts and field guidance create gaps that increase reliance on individual discretion. This mediation underscores the importance of harmonized frameworks.

Case study analysis from a peace support mission illustrates the effects of comprehensive rules of engagement combined with independent oversight. Implementation of detailed protocols resulted in a 32% decrease in reported incidents involving civilians over twelve months. After-action reviews and supervisory audits improved consistency in detention procedures and use-of-force reporting. Personnel reported greater confidence in navigating dual mandates.

Another case study from an internal security deployment highlights challenges under ambiguous legal conditions. Absence of explicit civilian engagement rules led to inconsistent detention practices and delays in notification procedures. Complaints increased by 21% during the initial deployment phase, followed by a decline after interim directives clarified authority boundaries. Introduction of targeted training improved adherence to proportionality standards.

Explanation of case study findings indicates that operational clarity is a decisive factor in aligning disciplinary enforcement with civil protection. Clear rules reduce cognitive load and

support consistent decision-making under pressure. Oversight and feedback loops reinforce compliance by institutionalizing accountability. Contextual adaptation of guidance enhances relevance and uptake.

Contextual factors such as mission type, command culture, and inter-agency coordination influence outcomes. Environments with integrated civil–military communication channels show improved information flow and faster corrective responses. Resource availability affects the implementation of safeguards, particularly in detention and documentation. These elements shape the effectiveness of legal frameworks in practice.

Interpretation of the overall findings suggests that legal authority in military policing is most effective when bounded by explicit, operationalized human rights standards. Comprehensive use-of-force provisions are insufficient without equally detailed civilian engagement rules and oversight. Training contributes to compliance when coupled with clear guidance and institutional support. The evidence indicates that dual mandates can be reconciled through coherent governance structures.

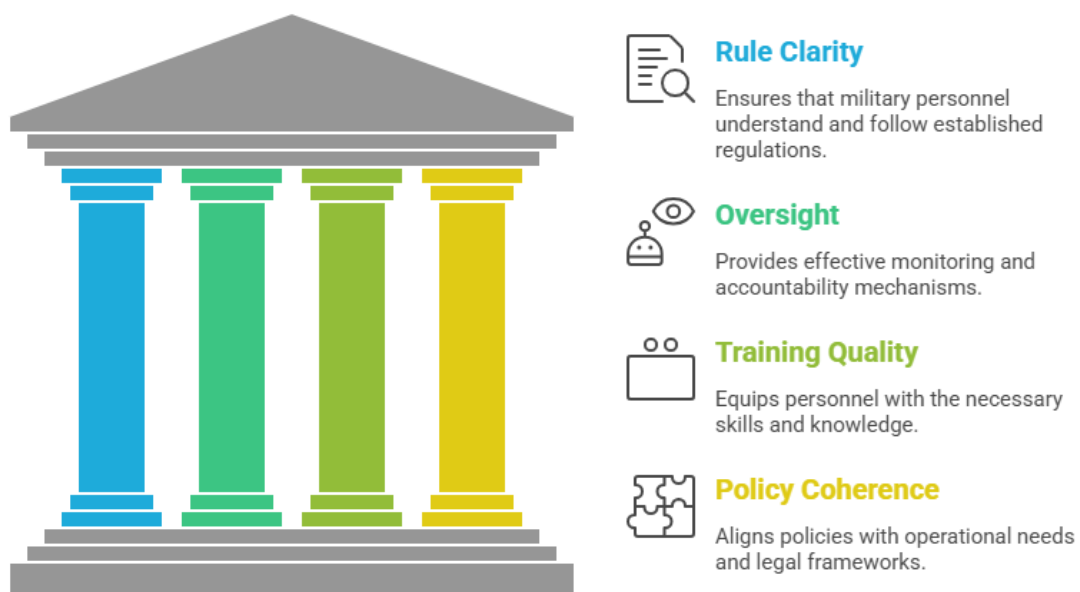


Figure 2. Foundations of Military Policing Compliance

Synthesis of results indicates that compliance is driven by the interaction between rule clarity, oversight, training quality, and policy coherence. Systems that integrate these elements demonstrate higher consistency in safeguarding rights while maintaining discipline. Persistent gaps reflect misalignment between expanding operational roles and static legal provisions. These findings support the development of integrated, context-sensitive frameworks for military policing.

The findings indicate that military policing operates within a structurally imbalanced legal architecture, where internal disciplinary authority is more clearly regulated than interactions with civilian populations. Quantitative and doctrinal analyses show that use-of-force standards are relatively well codified, while provisions governing civilian engagement, detention safeguards, and independent oversight remain inconsistent across jurisdictions. This imbalance creates operational ambiguity when military police perform functions that extend beyond purely internal military contexts. The results demonstrate that the dual mandate of discipline enforcement and civil protection is not supported by equally robust legal clarity.

Patterns across jurisdictions reveal that clarity of civilian engagement rules and the presence of oversight mechanisms significantly influence compliance with human rights standards. Systems that integrate detailed operational guidelines with institutional accountability demonstrate lower rates of reported violations and more consistent decision-making. Training emerges as an enabling factor, yet its effectiveness depends on the presence

of clear legal frameworks. These findings suggest that compliance is contingent upon the interaction between normative clarity and institutional support.

Inferential analysis further confirms that policy coherence mediates the relationship between legal authority and operational conduct. Alignment between legal texts, standard operating procedures, and training enhances predictability in decision-making. In contrast, fragmented frameworks increase reliance on discretion, raising the risk of inconsistent application of authority. The results highlight the importance of systemic integration in managing complex mandates.

Case study evidence reinforces these conclusions by illustrating how explicit rules of engagement and oversight reduce incidents involving civilian populations. Conversely, ambiguity in authority boundaries leads to procedural inconsistencies and increased complaints. These contextual insights demonstrate that legal clarity is not merely theoretical but has direct implications for operational outcomes. The findings collectively underscore the need for harmonized governance structures.

Comparison with existing literature reveals alignment with studies emphasizing the tension between military authority and human rights obligations in contemporary security environments. Previous research has highlighted the expansion of military roles into civilian contexts and the resulting legal complexities. The present study confirms these concerns while providing empirical evidence linking rule clarity and oversight to compliance outcomes. This contribution strengthens the argument for reforming legal frameworks to address evolving operational realities.

Differences emerge in the level of empirical integration, as many prior studies rely primarily on normative analysis without incorporating comparative and inferential data. The current findings extend the literature by demonstrating how specific legal and institutional variables influence behavior in practice. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms that facilitate or hinder compliance. The integration of doctrinal and empirical perspectives represents a methodological advancement.

Comparative insights from research on civilian law enforcement indicate similar challenges in balancing authority and accountability. Studies on policing highlight the importance of clear rules, training, and oversight in ensuring rights compliance. The present findings align with these insights while emphasizing the unique complexities of military policing, including hierarchical command structures and dual accountability. This comparison situates military policing within a broader framework of security governance.

Contrasts with traditional military doctrine reveal a shift from exclusive focus on discipline toward broader engagement with civilian protection. Earlier models prioritized internal order and operational readiness, often with limited consideration of external human rights obligations. The findings suggest that contemporary security contexts require a redefinition of military policing roles. This shift reflects the increasing importance of integrating legal and ethical considerations into security practices.

Reflection on the findings suggests that the observed imbalance in legal clarity signifies a transitional phase in the evolution of military policing. Expansion of roles into civilian contexts has outpaced the development of corresponding legal frameworks. This condition indicates that institutional adaptation is ongoing and incomplete. The results highlight the need for deliberate efforts to align legal authority with operational realities.

The study also signals that human rights compliance in military policing is not solely a matter of legal provision but of institutional culture and governance. Trust in oversight mechanisms and clarity of roles contribute to consistent application of authority. These factors reflect broader dynamics of accountability within security institutions. The findings suggest that legal reform must be accompanied by organizational change.

Observed patterns indicate that ambiguity in legal boundaries increases reliance on individual discretion, which can lead to variability in outcomes. This reliance reflects both the

complexity of operational environments and the absence of detailed guidance. The findings reveal that discretion, while necessary, must be supported by structured frameworks to ensure consistency. This insight underscores the importance of balancing flexibility with regulation.

Interpretive reflection further suggests that the dual mandate of military policing embodies a broader tension between security imperatives and human rights norms. The findings indicate that effective navigation of this tension requires integrated approaches that recognize both dimensions as interdependent. This perspective challenges binary conceptions of authority and rights. The results point toward the need for holistic governance models.

The implications of this study extend to legal reform, institutional practice, and policy development. Strengthening legal frameworks to explicitly address civilian engagement is essential for reducing ambiguity and enhancing compliance. Policymakers can use these findings to design regulations that clearly define authority boundaries and accountability mechanisms. The results provide a foundation for improving the governance of military policing.

Practical implications include the need to enhance training programs to focus on decision-making in complex environments where disciplinary and human rights considerations intersect. Scenario-based training and clear operational guidelines can improve consistency and confidence among personnel. Institutions must also invest in strengthening oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability. These measures are critical for aligning practice with legal standards.

Policy implications involve the integration of military policing within broader human rights governance frameworks. Collaboration with civilian oversight bodies and international organizations can enhance transparency and legitimacy. Development of standardized guidelines across jurisdictions may also improve consistency. The findings emphasize the importance of coordinated policy approaches.

Broader implications include the potential for redefining the role of military policing within contemporary security systems. Integration of human rights principles into operational doctrine can enhance both effectiveness and legitimacy. This approach supports the development of security institutions that are responsive to evolving challenges. The study highlights the value of aligning authority with accountability.

The observed outcomes can be explained by the historical orientation of military legal systems toward internal discipline rather than external engagement. Expansion into civilian contexts has created new demands that existing frameworks were not designed to address. This structural mismatch contributes to ambiguity and inconsistency. The findings reflect the need for legal evolution.

Institutional factors such as command structure and organizational culture also influence the application of authority. Hierarchical systems may prioritize obedience and efficiency, sometimes at the expense of nuanced decision-making. These dynamics affect how legal norms are interpreted and implemented. The findings indicate that cultural factors must be considered alongside legal reforms.

Operational complexity further explains the variability in outcomes, as military police often operate in environments characterized by uncertainty and rapid decision-making. Such conditions increase reliance on discretion and highlight the importance of clear guidance. The findings demonstrate that complexity amplifies the consequences of legal ambiguity. This insight underscores the need for adaptive frameworks.

Variations across jurisdictions can also be attributed to differences in political context, resource availability, and institutional capacity. Systems with stronger governance structures are better able to implement comprehensive frameworks. Resource constraints and competing priorities limit effectiveness in other contexts. These factors contribute to disparities in compliance and outcomes.

Future directions emerging from this study emphasize the need for developing integrated legal and operational models that explicitly address the dual mandate of military policing. Further research can explore the effectiveness of specific reform initiatives and their impact on compliance. Longitudinal studies would provide insights into the evolution of legal frameworks and institutional practices. These efforts can inform ongoing development.

Implementation strategies should focus on harmonizing legal provisions with operational guidelines and training programs. Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms can support adaptive learning and improvement. Collaboration between legal experts, practitioners, and policymakers is essential for effective reform. These strategies can enhance coherence and effectiveness.

Policy development should prioritize the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms and standardized reporting practices. Transparent systems can strengthen accountability and public trust. Integration of human rights considerations into military doctrine is also essential. The findings support the development of comprehensive governance frameworks.

Long-term sustainability requires embedding human rights principles within the core structure of military policing institutions. Cultural change, supported by education and leadership, is necessary to reinforce compliance. Integration of legal, operational, and ethical dimensions can create more resilient systems. The study provides a foundation for advancing such integrated approaches.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study lies in demonstrating that the primary challenge in military policing is not the absence of legal authority, but the asymmetry between well-defined disciplinary powers and insufficiently articulated human rights boundaries in civilian-facing operations. Empirical and doctrinal evidence shows that clarity of civilian engagement rules, presence of independent oversight, and coherence between legal texts and operational procedures are decisive determinants of compliance. Distinctively, the study establishes that policy coherence mediates the relationship between legal authority and field conduct, while training yields measurable benefits only when anchored in explicit rules of engagement. The findings further reveal that ambiguity increases discretionary reliance, producing variability in outcomes and elevating the risk of rights infringements, particularly in hybrid operational environments.

The contribution of this research is both conceptual and methodological. Conceptually, the study advances a dual-mandate framework that integrates discipline enforcement and civil protection as interdependent, rather than competing, functions of military policing. This perspective reframes authority as conditional upon clearly operationalized human rights standards, offering a governance model that aligns legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability. Methodologically, the study combines doctrinal legal analysis with comparative and inferential examination of secondary data and case-based evidence, producing a multidimensional assessment that bridges normative principles and operational realities. The use of a legal analysis matrix and compliance framework provides a replicable approach for evaluating authority boundaries across jurisdictions.

The study acknowledges several limitations that inform directions for further research. Reliance on secondary data and selected jurisdictions may limit generalizability across diverse legal systems and operational contexts. Cross-sectional design constrains the ability to assess longitudinal effects of reforms on compliance and institutional culture. Variability in reporting standards and access to oversight data may affect comparability. Future research should incorporate longitudinal and multi-country field studies, evaluate the impact of specific reform instruments such as standardized rules of engagement and independent oversight bodies, and

examine the integration of decision-support technologies and scenario-based training in reducing discretionary ambiguity while strengthening rights-compliant practices.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used ChatGPT to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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