

## Another Techno-Capitalism Failure: Cyberfraud Takes Control of Southeast Asia's Borders

### News:

DW was reporting on 15<sup>th</sup> May, despite recent crackdowns across Southeast Asia, online scammer syndicates continue to gain power and influence in the region. A recent report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) stated that Asian crime networks are continuing to expand their multibillion-dollar cyber scam industry. Countries in East and Southeast Asia are expected to lose around \$37 billion due to cyber fraud in 2023, while the United States will lose more than \$5.6 billion (around Rp. 94 trillion).

According to Benedikt Hofmann, the UNODC the regional representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, these crime syndicates are constantly evolving, and are now expanding their operations to Africa, Europe, South America and further, according to a UN report. "This is organized crime with a really high degree of sophistication and the continued adoption of new technology," Hofmann told DW.

Earlier this year, authorities in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos all moved against large-scale scam centers, mostly located in border regions. They shut down multiple sites and freed thousands of human trafficking victims including from Muslim countries who had been duped into traveling to these areas and then forced to work as scammers.

### Comment:

Techno-capitalism or the control of technological progress by Capitalism has once again shown its dangers to human life. Today's technology is designed by capitalism not to support human life but to support money-making machines. The development of cutting-edge science and technology such as AI (artificial intelligence), robotics, big data, and IoT (Internet of things) is being used more massively to serve the interests of the business world and political oligarchy, not for humans, let alone to solve human problems.

The development of online fraud syndicates and mafias targeting Asia can also be linked to the still high poverty rate and low technological literacy in this region. The combination of poverty and low digital literacy makes Asian society more susceptible to manipulative digital fraud practices.

Capitalism always makes natural resources and even human resources as assets for the market/money cycle mechanism alone, including the illegal gambling business through casino syndicates which are the root of this online fraud mafia.

The fundamental role of the state in capitalism plays as the 'guardian' of the market mechanism so that it continues to grow without slowing down. However, it turns out that this role led to the disclosure of many other major crimes, especially when the state's function fails as happened in Myanmar. So, the Mekong River region becomes a very conducive area of operation for major criminal practices, because money is the centre of its sovereignty.

As a result, the rapid advancement of technology under capitalism damages and destroys society, dehumanizes peoples and even tends to dehumanize human civilization. This corrupt goal continues to be maintained under capitalism which is increasingly destroying human civilization. Please reflect on the word of Allah (swt): ﴿لَا يَغُرَّتْكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ﴾ **"Do not be deceived by the prosperity of the disbelievers throughout the land."** (Ali 'Imran Ayat 196).

The interpretation of this verse is, do not ever be deceived or fooled by the activities of the infidels who move freely here and there throughout the country by tempting them with rank, wealth, and temporary pleasures that quickly disappear. Even though this verse is addressed to the Prophet Muhammad saw, it is also intended for his people.

The digitalization brought by the West to Muslim countries should not make us fooled, dazzled by their power and the sophistication of their technology. Above all that there is another, more powerful force that can sweep away this cruel power; namely the power of faith, ideology and brotherhood of the Ummah framed in Islamic Khilafah, where the vision of technology will always be guided by the revelation and authority of Allah (swt). Technology will be controlled by the boundaries of Islam which highly uphold morals, ethics and humanity, NOT by human greed and the power of money!

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