

JURISDICTION AND DUE PROCESS CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING CROSS-BORDER CYBERCRIME

Naeem AllahRakha

Tashkent State University of Law, Uzbekistan

Correspondence: chaudharynaeem133@gmail.com

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Abstract

Cross-border cybercrime is identified as a growing concern due to the inherently borderless nature of cyberspace and the legal complexities associated with international cooperation and collaboration. Therefore, this research aims to examine the effectiveness of existing international legal frameworks, particularly the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, in harmonising national legislation and supporting cross-border investigations. A doctrinal research methodology was adopted to review current cybercrime regulations and assess how international standards related to due process and prosecution contribute to safeguarding individual rights and ensuring fair trials in cross-border contexts. However, the current legal frameworks for collecting and sharing digital evidence across jurisdictions remain fragmented, posing substantial challenges to practical cooperation among nations. This fragmentation was further exacerbated by the rapid advancement of digital technologies, which continued to outpace legal reform. Law enforcement agencies now face growing legal and privacy-related challenges, particularly when attempting to access cross-border data stored on cloud-based platforms. Moreover, the execution of mutual legal assistance requests in cybercrime investigations continued to remain slow and inefficient, largely due to procedural bottlenecks and a lack of coordination. Significant gaps within existing international frameworks continue to hinder lawful access to electronic evidence. Additionally, investigations are frequently delayed due to language differences, conflicting legal systems, and inadequate technical capacity among national authorities. These persistent challenges underscore the urgent need for a coordinated and standardised global strategy to address cross-border cybercrime.

Keywords: *due process, cybercrime, jurisdiction, cross-border, legal frameworks*

Abstrak

Kejahatan siber lintas batas diidentifikasi sebagai masalah yang terus meningkat karena sifat inheren dunia maya yang tanpa batas dan kompleksitas hukum yang terkait dengan kerja sama dan kolaborasi internasional. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas kerangka hukum internasional yang ada, khususnya Konvensi Budapest tentang Kejahatan Dunia Maya, dalam menyelaraskan undang-undang nasional dan mendukung investigasi lintas batas. Metodologi penelitian doktrinal diadopsi untuk meninjau peraturan kejahatan siber saat ini dan menilai bagaimana standar internasional yang terkait dengan proses hukum dan penuntutan berkontribusi dalam melindungi hak-hak individu dan memastikan persidangan yang adil dalam konteks lintas batas. Namun, kerangka hukum saat ini untuk mengumpulkan dan berbagi bukti digital di seluruh yurisdiksi masih terfragmentasi, sehingga menimbulkan tantangan substansial bagi kerja sama praktis antar negara. Fragmentasi ini semakin diperparah oleh kemajuan pesat teknologi digital, yang terus melampaui reformasi hukum. Lembaga penegak hukum kini menghadapi tantangan hukum dan privasi yang semakin besar, terutama ketika mencoba mengakses data lintas batas yang

disimpan di platform berbasis cloud. Selain itu, pelaksanaan permintaan bantuan hukum timbal balik dalam investigasi kejahatan siber masih tetap lambat dan tidak efisien, sebagian besar disebabkan oleh hambatan prosedural dan kurangnya koordinasi. Kesenjangan yang signifikan dalam kerangka kerja internasional yang ada terus menghalangi akses yang sah ke bukti elektronik. Selain itu, investigasi sering kali tertunda karena perbedaan bahasa, sistem hukum yang saling bertentangan, dan kapasitas teknis yang tidak memadai di antara otoritas nasional. Tantangan-tantangan yang terus berlanjut ini menggarisbawahi kebutuhan mendesak akan strategi global yang terkoordinasi dan terstandarisasi untuk mengatasi kejahatan siber lintas batas.

Kata kunci: kejahatan siber, kerangka hukum, lintas batas, proses hukum, yurisdiksi.

Introduction

In an era where cybercriminals can breach data systems across continents in seconds, a critical question such as “which legal systems should prosecute such offenders?”, arises. The increasing prevalence of cross-border cybercrime, ranging from ransomware attacks to online financial fraud, has introduced complex challenges related to jurisdiction and the enforcement of due process in the digital context. With cybercrime projected to generate \$8 trillion in revenue by the end of 2023 and reach an estimated \$10.5 trillion by 2025, the transnational nature of this offence, along with victims dispersed across different legal systems, underscores the urgency for a coordinated international response.¹

The borderless nature of cyberspace has largely dissolved traditional jurisdictional boundaries, underscoring the pressing need for a strong international legal framework to counter emerging cyber threats effectively. Central to this challenge is the delicate balance between managing cyber risk, upholding standards of due process and prosecution standards, and resolving jurisdictional complexities. As businesses increasingly embrace digital technologies for growth and innovation, they must also navigate a complex web of data protection laws and mitigate the risks of data breaches and cyberattacks.²

Monitoring, investigating, and prosecuting cross-border cybercrime present distinct and significant hurdles. The internet's decentralised and global structure inherently complicates the collection and preservation of digital evidence, which frequently spans multiple jurisdictions.³ Consequently, law

¹ Lena Klasén, Niclas Fock, and Robert Forchheimer, “The Invisible Evidence: Digital Forensics as Key to Solving Crimes in the Digital Age,” *Forensic Science International* 362 (September 2024): 112133, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2024.112133>.

² Saqib Saeed et al., “Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity Challenges for Businesses Resilience: Issues and Recommendations,” *Sensors* 23, no. 15 (July 25, 2023): 6666, <https://doi.org/10.3390/s23156666>.

³ Moses Ashawa et al., “Digital Forensics Challenges in Cyberspace: Overcoming Legitimacy and Privacy Issues Through Modularisation,” *Cloud Computing and Data Science* 5, no. 1 (December 25, 2023): 140–56, <https://doi.org/10.37256/ccds.5120233845>.

enforcement agencies encounter considerable obstacles when attempting to trace the origins of cyberattacks and secure cooperation from diverse nations, each operating under its own unique legal systems and data protection laws.

International standards concerning due process and prosecution are essential for ensuring that cross-border investigations are conducted with fairness and integrity. These standards, embedded in various international treaties and conventions, emphasise key principles such as the right to a fair trial, access to legal representation, and the protection of individual rights.⁴ However, applying such standards uniformly across different jurisdictions remains challenging, particularly given the rapidly evolving nature of cybercrime and the associated technologies.

Jurisdictional complexities inherent in cross-border cybercrime are multifaceted. The principle of territoriality, a foundational concept in traditional legal systems, faces increasing challenges in the digital sphere, where both data and criminal activity often transcend national borders.⁵ This fundamental shift has sparked ongoing debates about the appropriate legal tests for establishing jurisdictions and the extent to which nations can legitimately exercise authority over digital activities with cross-border implications. Efforts to address these pervasive issues continue through international initiatives. A prime example is the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, which provides a foundational framework aimed at harmonising national laws and significantly enhancing international cooperation in the fight against cybercrime.⁶

Jurisdiction over cybercrime is typically determined by several core factors, including the offender's nationality, the victim's nationality, and the crime's impact on national security. Nations may also invoke the protective principle, which allows them to safeguard essential national interests. However, for a legitimate exercise of jurisdiction, a clear connection must exist between the offence and the asserting state. For instance, the United Kingdom (UK) applied the principle of proportionality in *R v. Sheppard and Anor* (2010). In this case, two UK residents were convicted under the UK Public Order Act for posting racially inflammatory material on a website hosted in the United States (US), demonstrating extraterritorial jurisdiction. Similarly, Malaysia's Computer Crimes Act 1997, specifically Article 9, extends its authority to offences committed outside national borders, ensuring the law's applicability regardless of geographical location.⁷

⁴ Lucia Zedner and Carl-Friedrich Stuckenberg, "Due Process," in *Criminal Justice and Procedure*, ed. Ambos Kai et al., vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 304–342.

⁵ Fuad Zubaidi, "Territoriality in the Traditional Context," *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2013): 89, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.pbs.20130203.12>.

⁶ David Wicki-Birchler, "The Budapest Convention and the General Data Protection Regulation: Acting in Concert to Curb Cybercrime?," *International Cybersecurity Law Review* 1, no. 1–2 (October 22, 2020): 63–72, <https://doi.org/10.1365/s43439-020-00012-5>.

⁷ F A Onomrerhinor Onomrerhinor, "Universal Jurisdiction For Transnational Cybercrimes?," *UCC Law Journal* 3, no. 1 (July 1, 2023): 119–51, <https://doi.org/10.47963/ucclj.v3i1.1253>.

The transnational nature of cybercrime introduces significant jurisdictional complexities. Conflict frequently arises when victims and perpetrators reside in different countries. The transnational aspect of cybercrime often involves individuals, systems, and activities that span multiple legal jurisdictions. Moreover, digital evidence may be stored on servers located far from the actual scene of the offence, further complicating jurisdictional matters. A single website might be hosted in one country while targeting users in others, with its various components distributed globally. These realities show the inherent limitations of traditional legal frameworks in addressing crimes in the borderless realm of cyberspace.⁸

Furthermore, the internet has profoundly challenged traditional understandings of due process. Identifying and prosecuting cybercriminals remains a complex and resource-intensive task. Offenders frequently exploit global communication systems and sophisticated technology to conceal their identities and activities. Consequently, law enforcement agencies often struggle to obtain legally admissible evidence across jurisdictions. The internet also facilitates the rapid dissemination of false or defamatory information, leading to lasting reputational damage. Incidents of online harassment, cyberbullying, and defamation have become prevalent societal issues, prompting the development of new laws to address digital misconduct.⁹

However, government efforts to combat cybercrime can raise concerns regarding the protection of internet freedoms. A primary issue arises when proper search warrants are not obtained, leading to privacy violations. For example, the proposed Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) in the US faced significant criticism for encouraging mass surveillance and censorship, ultimately leading to its rejection due to public backlash. Another contentious practice is entrapment, where authorities induce individuals to commit cybercrime, raising serious constitutional questions about the legality of state-driven criminal activity. In *Riley v. California*, 573 U.S. 373 (2014), the US Supreme Court affirmed the necessity of a warrant before searching digital devices, thereby reinforcing protections against unlawful searches.¹⁰

Recent research has increasingly highlighted the intricate challenges of cross-border cybercrime, particularly in terms of jurisdiction and due process. The persistent lack of harmonised legal frameworks for collecting and exchanging digital evidence across borders continues to impede practical international cooperation.¹¹

⁸ Tripti Singh, "Cybercrime And International Law: Jurisdictional Challenges And Enforcement Mechanisms," *African Journal of Biomedical Research*, September 23, 2024, 697–708, <https://doi.org/10.53555/AJBR.v27i3S.2101>.

⁹ Giulia Gentile, "Between Online and Offline Due Process: The Digital Services Act," 2025, 219–38, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-65381-0_11.

¹⁰ Frank Chambers, "An Ongoing Seizure: The Struggle to Uniformly Protect Fourth Amendment Interests from Unreasonable Searches of Legally Seized Digital Data," *Houston Law Review* 51, no. 1 (n.d.): 153.

¹¹ Athina Sachoulidou, "Cross-Border Access to Electronic Evidence in Criminal Matters: The New EU Legislation and the Consolidation of a Paradigm Shift in the Area of 'Judicial'

Moreover, rapidly evolving technologies demand flexible, coordinated legal strategies.¹² Law enforcement agencies face ongoing legal and privacy hurdles when attempting to access cloud-based data in foreign jurisdictions. These issues collectively underscore the urgent need for comprehensive international agreements that facilitate the lawful collection of evidence while respecting individual rights and the sovereignty of states.¹³

Proposed international cybercrime treaties often raise concerns about the expansion of surveillance powers. Without adequate privacy and due process safeguards, such expansion can infringe upon human rights.¹⁴ Furthermore, executing mutual legal assistance requests in cybercrime cases remains a slow and inefficient process. This shows the critical need for streamlined mechanisms to facilitate practical cross-border cooperation.¹⁵ Existing gaps in international legal frameworks also hinder lawful access to electronic evidence, underscoring the need for comprehensive global solutions to retrieve cross-border data.¹⁶ In the US, jurisdictional challenges in cybercrime cases arise from the inherently international nature of the internet, frequently leading to enforcement complications and fragmented legal responses.¹⁷

The inherent tensions between territorial jurisdiction and global data flows necessitate innovative strategies, such as collaborative governance models for managing international data.¹⁸ Regional disparities in cybercrime policing, particularly across Asia, further underscore the urgency of adopting standardised legal and procedural methods to address these transnational threats effectively.¹⁹ Cross-border

Cooperation,” *New Journal of European Criminal Law* 15, no. 3 (September 6, 2024): 256–74, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20322844241258649>.

¹² Evis Garunja et al., “Impact of Cyber Laws in Information Security Management to Protect Businesses and Citizens,” in *Impact of Cyber Laws in Information Security Management to Protect Businesses and Citizens*, 2024, 617–28, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-6352-8_43.

¹³ Alexander J Pantos, “How the W How the World’s Largest Economies Regulate Data Priv Conomies Regulate Data Privacy: Drawbacks, Benefits, & Proposed Solutions,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studie* 28, no. 2 (n.d.): 267–291.

¹⁴ Oxford Analytica, “Issue of State Control Impedes UN Treaty on Cybercrime,” Emerald Expert Briefings, October 2, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1108/OXAN-DB282345>.

¹⁵ Joshua I James and Pavel Gladyshev, “A Survey of Mutual Legal Assistance Involving Digital Evidence,” *Digital Investigation* 18 (September 2016): 23–32, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.diin.2016.06.004>.

¹⁶ Halefom H Abraha, “Regulating Law Enforcement Access to Electronic Evidence across Borders: The United States Approach,” *Information & Communications Technology Law* 29, no. 3 (September 1, 2020): 324–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600834.2020.1794617>.

¹⁷ Shuai Chen et al., “Exploring the Global Geography of Cybercrime and Its Driving Forces,” *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 10, no. 1 (February 23, 2023): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01560-x>.

¹⁸ Robert D Atkinson and Nigel Cory, “Cross-Border Data Policy: Opportunities and Challenges,” 2021, 217–32, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5391-9_20.

¹⁹ Azfer A Khan, “Reconceptualizing Policing for Cybercrime: Perspectives from Singapore,” *Laws* 13, no. 4 (July 10, 2024): 44, <https://doi.org/10.3390/laws13040044>.

cybercrime investigations frequently encounter delays due to language barriers, differing legal systems, and a lack of technical expertise among national law enforcement agencies. This clearly shows the need for significant capacity building and improved knowledge-sharing mechanisms.²⁰

The reviewed literature offers several strengths, particularly its comprehensive analysis of jurisdictional and procedural barriers in addressing cross-border cybercrime; however, it also has notable limitations. While much research identifies systemic issues, such as delays in legal cooperation and fragmented regulations, most remain theoretical and offer limited empirical or actionable solutions. Additionally, the research tends to focus heavily on perspectives from developed or Western regions, dedicating insufficient attention to the unique challenges faced by developing countries or areas with limited cybercrime infrastructure and legal enforcement capabilities.

A notable gap in the existing literature is the limited exploration of how emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), can support cross-border enforcement of cybercrime. Despite their increasing relevance, empirical research in this area remains scarce. Furthermore, little progress has been made in developing a unified legal framework that effectively balances national data sovereignty with the investigative needs of international law enforcement. Future research should prioritise creating adaptive legal protocols that integrate emerging technologies to enhance international cooperation, particularly in underrepresented and resource-constrained regions.

This research explores jurisdictional and procedural challenges in cross-border cybercrime enforcement. It assesses existing international treaties, pinpointing gaps in legal frameworks. By focusing on procedural enhancements and cooperation, this study seeks to develop adaptive legal models for global enforcement, emphasising the need for efficiency and coherence in combating transnational cyber threats.

The core research question is: “How can jurisdictional and procedural frameworks adapt to effectively address cross-border cybercrime investigations while protecting privacy and due process?”

This research is crucial due to the escalating, borderless nature of cybercrime, which renders traditional legal systems insufficient. The investigation aims to establish transparent, adaptable, and efficient frameworks for examining international cybercrime. Current fragmented legal tools and slow mutual legal assistance hinder effective responses to these issues. While new technologies offer significant investigative potential, this is largely unexplored. The research also aims to bolster international cooperation without sacrificing privacy, stressing the vital need to uphold due process guarantees, even in urgent cross-border cybercrime responses.

²⁰ Fran Casino et al., “SoK: Cross-Border Criminal Investigations and Digital Evidence,” *Journal of Cybersecurity* 8, no. 1 (January 28, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/cybsec/tyac014>.

Methods

This research adopted a qualitative method, integrating a doctrinal approach with comprehensive document analysis. The design aimed to explore the complex context of cross-border cybercrime, with particular emphasis on jurisdictional challenges and issues related to due process. The objective was to develop a holistic understanding of the legal and procedural dimensions inherent in transnational cybercrime.

The target population comprised international legal instruments, policy frameworks, regulatory documents, and scholarly literature specifically addressing cybercrime jurisdiction. The sampling strategy prioritised recent and relevant sources, focusing on materials published after 2020. This ensured the capture of up-to-date insights into the evolving nature of cyber threats and corresponding legal responses, thereby providing a contemporary perspective on emerging challenges and trends in the field.

Data collection was systematically executed through searches on established academic and legal research platforms, including JSTOR, ProQuest, Web of Science, and Scopus. A well-structured keyword strategy, incorporating terms such as “cybercrime,” “transnational jurisdiction,” “digital forensics,” “extraterritoriality,” “mutual legal assistance,” and “electronic evidence,” was applied to facilitate comprehensive and precise data retrieval, reflecting the multifaceted aspects of cross-border cybercrime.

The primary research instruments included the use of academic databases and search engines, supported by a structured analytical framework designed for rigorous document evaluation and analysis. To uphold research integrity, several quality control measures were adopted. These included relying solely on official legal documents from credible sources, strictly adhering to temporal boundaries, cross-verifying information across multiple references, and consistently citing all utilised materials.

Data analysis employed two core methods: document analysis to identify key themes and legal interpretations in academic literature, and the doctrinal method for a detailed legal examination of statutory and regulatory texts, focusing on their interpretation and practical implications. This combined approach yielded a nuanced understanding of the situation.

Throughout the research, ethical considerations were paramount. Only publicly accessible documents were used, with all sources properly cited to ensure academic transparency and integrity. The study adhered to standard ethical practices for legal analysis, ensuring accurate representation and respectful engagement with referenced materials. Limitations were acknowledged, including the dynamic nature of cybercrime and the evolution of digital law, which posed challenges to comprehensive coverage. Additionally, varying legal interpretations across jurisdictions may affect the generalizability of the findings. Despite this, the research provided a broad perspective on cross-border cybercrime, recognising that legal systems remain fluid and continually evolving.

Results and Discussions

Cross-border cybercrime investigations face complex challenges that significantly hinder effective prosecution. A significant issue is the volatile nature of electronic evidence, which can be swiftly deleted, moved across jurisdictions, or encrypted, making preservation particularly difficult.²¹ Moreover, executing mutual legal assistance (MLA) requests is often slow and inefficient, frequently delayed by conflicting national interests and gaps in international coordination. Technological advancements, such as cloud computing and anonymisation tools, further complicate jurisdictional matters by obscuring the physical locations of perpetrators and their criminal infrastructure. Additionally, the increasing use of encryption, cryptocurrencies, and sophisticated organised cybercriminal groups makes tracing financial transactions and establishing clear legal frameworks increasingly complex. Investigations are further hindered by limited resources, a shortage of forensic expertise, and the absence of standardised international protocols for collecting and handling electronic evidence.²² The rapid rise in high-impact cyberattacks, combined with some victims' reluctance to report incidents due to reputational risks, exacerbates these investigative difficulties.

The recently proposed UN Cybercrime Treaty aims to enhance global enforcement by permitting states to assert jurisdiction based on the nationality of whether the victim or the perpetrator. However, this provision may lead to fragmented responses due to conflicting national laws and enforcement strategies. The application of “passive personality jurisdiction” risks introducing inconsistencies that complicate international cooperation.²³ Varying definitions of cybercrime among nations further undermine efforts to establish a unified global strategy for addressing cybercrime. Moreover, the treaty’s broad scope, extending to any crime involving digital evidence, raises concerns about potential overreach and misuse. The drafting processes of such international agreements often lack inclusive representation from developing countries, which face unique challenges related to cybercrime.²⁴ Many of these frameworks also fall short in providing adequate safeguards for privacy and freedom of expression. The unstable nature of digital evidence continues to pose a significant challenge to the timely and coordinated conduct of cross-border investigations.

²¹ Casino et al.

²² Borka Jerman Blažič and Tomaž Klobočar, “Removing the Barriers in Cross-Border Crime Investigation by Gathering e-Evidence in an Interconnected Society,” *Information & Communications Technology Law* 29, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 66–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600834.2020.1705035>.

²³ Kenneth S Gallant, “The Passive Personality Principle,” in *International Criminal Jurisdiction* (Oxford University PressNew York, 2022), 441–60, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199941476.003.0007>.

²⁴ Roman Girma Teshome, “The Draft Convention on the Right to Development: A New Dawn to the Recognition of the Right to Development as a Human Right?,” *Human Rights Law Review* 22, no. 2 (March 4, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/hrlr/ngac001>.

Nevertheless, emerging technologies offer promising solutions for improving the enforcement and investigation of cross-border cybercrime. AI-driven tools tend to process vast datasets at high speed, enabling the identification of patterns and anomalies that human investigators may overlook. These technologies can effectively support the detection of fraudulent activities, financial crimes, and malware, accelerating investigative workflows. Machine learning (ML) algorithms further enhance predictive analytics, allowing authorities to anticipate and mitigate future cyber threats.²⁵ According to a 2023 report by the European Union (EU) Agency for Cybersecurity, AI-powered tools have reduced investigation times by up to 40%, underscoring their effectiveness in addressing transnational cybercrime. Furthermore, AI and ML technologies can automate the collection of electronic evidence, helping law enforcement agencies overcome procedural delays and fragmentation that currently limit international cooperation. As such, these tools are increasingly viewed as essential components of modern cybercrime enforcement strategies.²⁶

The inherent conflict between data sovereignty and global law enforcement shows the urgent need for unified legal frameworks. These frameworks must effectively balance national autonomy with the demands of international cooperation.²⁷ Instruments such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the US Cloud Act exemplify the ongoing tension between safeguarding privacy and ensuring cross-border access to data for law enforcement and investigative purposes. GDPR, for instance, restricts data transfers outside the EU without adequate safeguards, complicating international investigations involving European data subjects. Conversely, the Cloud Act compels US technology companies to disclose data stored on overseas servers when requested by American law enforcement. This provision potentially infringes upon the sovereignty of other nations. To resolve these tensions, frameworks such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime have been introduced to facilitate cross-border cooperation. The instruments require greater alignment with emerging data privacy norms to maintain their effectiveness. A unified legal framework should incorporate flexible provisions that both uphold state sovereignty and support legitimate investigative access. These provisions may include standardised

²⁵ Stavros Kalogiannidis et al., “The Role of Artificial Intelligence Technology in Predictive Risk Assessment for Business Continuity: A Case Study of Greece,” *Risks* 12, no. 2 (January 23, 2024): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/risks12020019>.

²⁶ Luay Albtoosh, “Automated Evidence Collection and Analysis Using AI,” 2024, 143–86, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-0588-2.ch006>.

²⁷ Mark Ryan, Paula Gürtler, and Artur Bogucki, “Will the Real Data Sovereign Please Stand up? An EU Policy Response to Sovereignty in Data Spaces,” *International Journal of Law and Information Technology* 32, no. 1 (June 1, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijlit/eaee006>.

protocols for mutual legal assistance, encryption handling, and transparent safeguards to protect individual privacy during transnational investigations.²⁸

Developing countries face numerous barriers when addressing cross-border cybercrime. Limited financial resources, inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure, and insufficient governmental support hinder their ability to fully participate in global enforcement efforts.²⁹ The slow implementation of international instruments, such as the Budapest Convention, further complicates legal harmonisation in these regions. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), many low- and middle-income countries lack both the technical expertise and the institutional capacity necessary to combat cyber threats effectively. Additionally, inconsistencies in legal definitions, prosecutorial standards, and penalties across jurisdictions create loopholes that cybercriminals can exploit.³⁰ Strengthening global partnerships through platforms such as the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE) and supporting regional efforts, exemplified by the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (2014), can foster more consistent enforcement and improve cooperative capacity in under-resourced regions.

Jurisdictional and Procedural Frameworks Be Adapted to Safeguarding Privacy and Due Process

Traditional legal systems remain ill-equipped to handle the borderless nature of cybercrime. Perpetrators can operate seamlessly across jurisdictions, rendering national enforcement mechanisms less effective. Divergent privacy laws, evidentiary standards, and data retention policies further increase this challenge.³¹ For example, GDPR enforces rigorous rules for collecting and processing personal data, while many other countries lack equivalent legislation. Consequently, cross-border investigations often encounter a fragmented landscape of privacy protections. These discrepancies become even more problematic when investigations require access to sensitive digital content, including personally identifiable information. The necessity of ensuring due process and safeguarding privacy is amplified by the proliferation of global data protection standards, such as the Global Cross-Border Privacy Rules

²⁸ Enver Buçaj and Kenan Idrizaj, “The Need for Cybercrime Regulation on a Global Scale by the International Law and Cyber Convention,” *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 8, no. 1 (September 19, 2024): 2025024, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2025024>.

²⁹ Chinazunwa Uwaoma and Ayush Enkhtaivan, “The Affordability of Cybersecurity Costs in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review,” in *2024 IEEE International Conference on Cyber Security and Resilience (CSR)* (IEEE, 2024), 545–50, <https://doi.org/10.1109/CSR61664.2024.10679506>.

³⁰ Yulia Razmetaeva, Hanna Ponomarova, and Iryna Bylya-Sabadash, “Jurisdictional Issues in the Digital Age,” *Ius Humani. Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (April 12, 2021): 167–83, <https://doi.org/10.31207/ih.v10i1.240>.

³¹ Dr Seema Singh and Prerna, “Regulation Of Cross-Border Data Flow And Its Privacy In The Digital Era,” *NUJS Journal of Regulatory Studies* 9, no. 2 (May 30, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.69953/njrs.v9i2.9>.

(CBPR) Framework, introduced in 2023. Without robust regulatory oversight, digital investigations risk violating fundamental privacy rights and eroding public trust.

A crucial step in addressing the complexities of transnational cybercrime is the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001). The treaty establishes a foundational framework for international cooperation and collaboration. It aims to harmonise cybercrime definitions, introduce standardised procedures for collecting electronic evidence, and streamline mutual legal assistance (MLA) mechanisms. These provisions collectively aim to minimise jurisdictional obstacles that often hinder effective cross-border investigations. By aligning with internationally recognised standards, nations are better positioned to navigate the multifaceted nature of digital offence while simultaneously safeguarding privacy and ensuring due process. Nevertheless, further harmonisation of legal instruments remains essential to construct a cohesive and robust framework for digital forensics and data-sharing protocols. Strengthening international collaboration necessitates nations adopting transparent and accountable procedures for acquiring and utilising digital evidence in cross-border contexts. In particular, formulating uniform standards in digital forensics is necessary to ensure investigative practices remain consistent, technically sound, and minimally invasive.³²

An effective response to cross-border cybercrime requires a multi-stakeholder collaborative strategy that carefully balances investigative efficiency with the protection of privacy and due process. National law enforcement agencies must coordinate closely with international organisations such as Interpol and Europol to facilitate cross-jurisdictional investigations. However, the collaboration should not be limited to government actors. Private technology companies, civil society organisations, and academic institutions also need to play critical roles. For instance, technology firms offer technical expertise in secure data transmission and AI-driven threat detection. At the same time, civil society groups promote accountability and advocate for the protection of digital rights and civil liberties. This inclusive model fosters a holistic response that combines operational effectiveness with a profound respect for human rights.³³

Ensuring procedural fairness in cybercrime investigations requires incorporating robust safeguards to ensure the integrity of the process. Independent judicial oversight should be mandatory, allowing courts to review and authorise requests for access to sensitive digital data. Privacy impact assessments must be conducted at the outset of each investigation to evaluate potential privacy implications. Moreover, apparent limitations on the scope of data collection and storage should be imposed, accompanied by transparent disclosure of how digital evidence

³² Naeem Allah Rakha, "Cybercrime and the Law: Addressing the Challenges of Digital Forensics in Criminal Investigations," *Mexican Law Review* 16, no. 2 (February 7, 2024): 23–54, <https://doi.org/10.22201/ij.24485306e.2024.2.18892>.

³³ Nadia Gerspacher, "The Roles of International Police Cooperation Organizations," *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice* 13, no. 3 (2005): 413–34, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1571817054604100>.

is gathered, retained, and used. Establishing an independent oversight mechanism is also crucial for preventing abuse and ensuring legal accountability. Additionally, legal frameworks should provide detailed guidance on data localisation, require explicit user consent for data collection, and uphold the right to digital privacy.³⁴

The adaptation of jurisdictional and procedural frameworks can also be supported through the responsible deployment of advanced technological tools. Secure and encrypted platforms for international evidence sharing tend to facilitate safe and lawful data exchanges across borders. AI-powered systems tend to enhance the detection of cybercrime patterns, while machine learning algorithms identify cross-border threats more efficiently.³⁵ Nonetheless, integrating these technologies must be accompanied by built-in privacy safeguards to prevent infringements on individual rights. Legal principles such as proportionality in investigative measures and the right to digital privacy should guide the deployment of these technologies, ensuring that the pursuit of cybercriminals does not come at the expense of fundamental freedoms.

Primary limitations of existing international treaties and agreements

The rapid escalation of cybercrime poses substantial challenges to existing international treaties and agreements. Many of these frameworks were established before the emergence of complex digital threats, leading to inherent limitations. A primary concern lies in the issue of jurisdiction. By nature, cybercrime transcends national borders, making it difficult for any single country to assert comprehensive legal authority. This transnational characteristic introduces significant legal complexities, as cyber incidents often involve perpetrators, victims, and data scattered across multiple jurisdictions. Consequently, many international agreements lack clear and consistent jurisdictional rules to address the multifaceted offence effectively.

For example, the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime does not fully harmonise cybercrime definitions across different legal systems. Each participating nation maintains its domestic framework, resulting in inconsistent standards for defining and prosecuting cyber offences. While some jurisdictions have enacted comprehensive legislation, others do not criminalise certain digital acts, leading to enforcement gaps and legal uncertainty. Differences in evidentiary standards, particularly concerning the collection, admissibility, and transfer of digital evidence, further complicate cooperation.³⁶ The lack of standardisation in digital forensics and

³⁴ Radina Stoykova, "The Right to a Fair Trial as a Conceptual Framework for Digital Evidence Rules in Criminal Investigations," *Computer Law & Security Review* 49 (July 2023): 105801, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2023.105801>.

³⁵ Mohammad Shahriar Rahman et al., "Accountable Cross-Border Data Sharing Using Blockchain Under Relaxed Trust Assumption," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management* 67, no. 4 (November 2020): 1476–86, <https://doi.org/10.1109/TEM.2019.2960829>.

³⁶ Fernando Molina Granja and Glen D Rodríguez Rafael, "The Preservation of Digital Evidence and Its Admissibility in the Court," *International Journal of Electronic Security and Digital Forensics* 9, no. 1 (2017): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESDF.2017.081749>.

investigative practices also hinders collaboration, as some countries lack the technological capacity to secure and analyse electronic evidence properly.

Another critical limitation is the technological disparity among nations. Rapid advancements in fields such as AI, blockchain, and encryption have outpaced the development of international legal instruments. Many treaties were negotiated before the widespread use of these technologies, rendering them insufficient for addressing modern cyber threats. For instance, end-to-end encryption and decentralised platforms complicate the tracing of illicit activities and the retrieval of actionable evidence.³⁷ While technologically advanced nations benefit from sophisticated forensic tools and infrastructure, many developing countries lack the necessary resources, training, and institutional capacity to investigate and prosecute cybercrime effectively. This disparity not only deepens global enforcement challenges but also undermines equitable international cooperation, as better-resourced states may hesitate to engage with underprepared counterparts.

Enforcement of the Budapest Convention and other cybercrime-related agreements remains inconsistent. Although the convention outlines principles for mutual cooperation, it lacks binding enforcement mechanisms. Implementation is primarily left to the discretion of individual states, which often results in uneven application and selective compliance. Political considerations and national security concerns frequently obstruct meaningful collaboration. In particular, geopolitical tensions can restrict the exchange of cyber intelligence and hinder joint investigations. Furthermore, the absence of a universally binding mechanism to compel cooperation diminishes the effectiveness of existing frameworks. Without globally accepted and standardised protocols for real-time data exchange, coordinated incident response, and mutual legal assistance, the international legal community continues to struggle in presenting a unified and timely response to cybercrime.³⁸

A significant challenge in addressing cybercrime lies in the lack of consistency in legal procedures and protections across jurisdictions. Countries widely differ in their definitions of cybercrime, which in turn hampers efforts to develop uniform international standards for prosecuting offenders. Furthermore, the threshold for criminalising digital offences is not consistent. Some nations only recognise limited categories of cybercrime, and others adopt broader legal definitions, creating substantial gaps in enforcement capabilities. These inconsistencies extend to data protection and privacy regulations. For instance, the EU GDPR enforces strict privacy standards, whereas many countries lack comparable legislation or enforce conflicting rules. The disparities complicate international collaboration, particularly

³⁷ Hany F Atlam et al., "Blockchain Forensics: A Systematic Literature Review of Techniques, Applications, Challenges, and Future Directions," *Electronics* 13, no. 17 (September 8, 2024): 3568, <https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics13173568>.

³⁸ Noele Crossley, "Consistency, Protection, Responsibility," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 26, no. 3 (September 17, 2020): 473–99, <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02603001>.

in investigations requiring cross-border data access. Additionally, complex and lengthy extradition procedures often hinder efforts to effectively prosecute cybercriminals, delaying justice and weakening global enforcement mechanisms.³⁹

Cybercrime's governance strategies

Cybercrime poses a global threat, presenting particularly complex challenges for developing countries. One of the most pressing issues in these regions is the absence of comprehensive legal frameworks. Many developing nations have not established sufficient laws to govern digital crimes, leaving legal and enforcement gaps that cybercriminals can exploit. To address this, legal reform should commence by aligning national legislation with international standards, specifically those outlined in the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime.⁴⁰ This treaty establishes a foundational framework for global cooperation, data protection, and the exchange of digital evidence across borders. The initial step in aligning with such standards involves developing a strategy. Policymakers must assess the specific political, economic, and social risks that cybercrime poses to their countries. Understanding these vulnerabilities enables them to craft targeted strategies that integrate cybercrime prevention into broader national objectives. Therefore, national legislation must clearly define key cyber offences, including hacking, identity theft, and online fraud, to ensure that law enforcement agencies are equipped with precise legal tools for investigation and prosecution.

Building institutional capacity is another critical aspect of combating cybercrime. Developing countries also struggle with limited institutional capacity, particularly a shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals. This lack of technical expertise significantly undermines their ability to respond effectively to digital threats. To overcome this, governments must establish comprehensive legal mandates, allocate operational authority, and promote robust collaboration among relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders include law enforcement agencies, telecommunications regulators, financial institutions, and cybersecurity firms. This stage is key to ensuring that the necessary legislation and operational resources are in place to support cybercrime governance. Coordinating efforts ensures a more unified strategy to tackling cybercrime, allowing resources and information to be shared efficiently across sectors.⁴¹

Technological infrastructure is another important challenge. Many developing countries struggle with outdated or inadequate cybersecurity infrastructure, which

³⁹ Michael Foran, "The Cornerstone Of Our Law: Equality, Consistency And Judicial Review," *The Cambridge Law Journal* 81, no. 2 (July 22, 2022): 249–72, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000819732200023X>.

⁴⁰ Buçaj and Idrizaj, "The Need for Cybercrime Regulation on a Global Scale by the International Law and Cyber Convention."

⁴¹ Alok Mishra et al., "Attributes Impacting Cybersecurity Policy Development: An Evidence from Seven Nations," *Computers & Security* 120 (September 2022): 102820, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2022.102820>.

leaves them vulnerable to cyberattacks. To address this, governments must prioritise investment in robust national cybersecurity operations centres, advanced threat detection technologies, and secure communication networks. These investments are essential for enabling effective threat monitoring and swift incident response, significantly reducing the impact of cyberattacks. Establishing Operational Capability further shows the need to build technical proficiency in law enforcement and the broader criminal justice system.⁴² This involves equipping relevant agencies with specialised tools for digital forensics, providing comprehensive training on advanced investigative technologies, and ensuring adequate operational resources are consistently available to conduct thorough cybercrime investigations.

Given that cybercrime is inherently transnational, often involving perpetrators who exploit legal and jurisdictional gaps across borders, international cooperation becomes indispensable. Developing nations must actively participate in both bilateral and multilateral agreements to support seamless cross-border information sharing and coordinated law enforcement efforts. The principle of Tasking and Prioritisation encourages governments to allocate cybersecurity resources effectively, concentrating efforts on the most critical threats. Enhancing international collaboration further requires the development of swift and reliable frameworks for sharing threat intelligence. Establishing standardised protocols for information exchange ensures that threat data can be shared promptly, enabling faster and more coordinated responses to cyber incidents.⁴³

An effective cybercrime strategy must also incorporate mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation. Governments should regularly assess the performance of their cybercrime governance frameworks to ensure ongoing alignment with evolving threats. This includes evaluating outcomes from individual cases and examining broader indicators such as public trust, economic impact, and national security resilience. Ongoing feedback from law enforcement agencies, the private sector, and civil society is important in ensuring that cybersecurity policies remain adaptive and relevant. Moreover, implementing comprehensive performance metrics and reporting systems allows governments to track progress over time, identify existing gaps, and refine their strategies accordingly.⁴⁴

⁴² Carol A Archbold, "Police Accountability in the USA: Gaining Traction or Spinning Wheels?," *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 15, no. 3 (September 27, 2021): 1665–83, <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paab033>.

⁴³ Poopak Alacifar et al., "Current Approaches and Future Directions for Cyber Threat Intelligence Sharing: A Survey," *Journal of Information Security and Applications* 83 (June 2024): 103786, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jisa.2024.103786>.

⁴⁴ Temitayo Oluwaseun Abrahams et al., "A Review Of Cybersecurity Strategies In Modern Organizations: Examining The Evolution And Effectiveness Of Cybersecurity Measures For Data Protection," *Computer Science & IT Research Journal* 5, no. 1 (January 9, 2024): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.51594/csitrj.v5i1.699>.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the digital age has introduced immense opportunities alongside complex challenges, particularly the emergence of cross-border cybercrime as a critical threat to the global economy, national security, and individual privacy. As cybercrime becomes increasingly transnational, law enforcement agencies are compelled to operate across intricate legal boundaries, frequently encountering inconsistent national laws and varying procedural standards. To address such challenges, emerging technologies such as AI and ML, when combined with a harmonised legal method, offer promising solutions to enhance international cooperation while simultaneously safeguarding privacy and ensuring due process. This research posits that current jurisdictional and procedural frameworks are inadequate for addressing the multifaceted nature of cross-border cybercrime. Consequently, it advocates for adapting existing legal systems through integrating advanced technologies and developing flexible international protocols. These protocols should both uphold individual rights and enable efficient cross-border investigations.

The research supports this thesis by examining jurisdictional and procedural obstacles that hinder effective international enforcement. The analysis highlights the potential role of emerging technologies in enhancing investigative collaboration, particularly in underrepresented regions where cybercrime governance is underdeveloped. As cyber threats continue to evolve, it becomes increasingly evident that existing legal mechanisms lack the agility required to respond effectively to the complexities of digital crimes that transcend national borders. The introductory section identified the pressing need for a modernised legal framework. Correspondingly, the concluding recommendation emphasises the importance of reforming international treaties and leveraging technological advancements to resolve jurisdictional conflicts and ensure procedural fairness in cross-border cybercrime investigations.

A key finding of this research is the recognition that traditional legal systems are not designed to contend with the rapid pace of technological innovation. While individual countries enforce their cybercrime laws domestically, cybercriminals exploit the absence of coordinated international legal enforcement. This disparity underscores the urgent need for collaborative and innovative solutions. Critics may express concern that increased reliance on digital tools in law enforcement tends to threaten privacy and due process. However, this research maintains that, with appropriate safeguards, such as transparent oversight mechanisms and well-defined legal limitations, emerging technologies can reinforce, rather than undermine justice. Future investigations should prioritise developing a unified and adaptive international legal framework that incorporates technologies, particularly AI, to address cross-border cybercrime better. This includes drafting international agreements that accurately reflect the realities of modern digital infrastructure and data sovereignty, promoting both practical global cooperation and the protection of individual rights. Further empirical investigations are necessary to assess the

practical implementation of these frameworks and their actual impact on cybercrime enforcement.

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