
President Prabowo Is Preparing Disaster For Papua

Joint Press Release

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In a briefing to the regional heads of Papua and the Executive Committee for the Acceleration of Papua's Special Autonomy Development (16/12/2025), Prabowo emphasized that "Papua regions must be planted with oil palm for fuel, sugarcane and cassava for ethanol" all aimed at achieving energy self-sufficiency.

President Prabowo did not learn from the ecological disaster in Sumatra, as a result of the massive deforestation of oil palm plantation and forestry extractive businesses, which has resulted in 1,030 deaths, 205 missing, and around 7 thousand injured (BNPB's data as of 16 December 2025). The Sumatra disaster has also resulted in up to Rp68.8 trillion of economic losses and the loss of property as well as socioeconomic infrastructure.

The statement "Papua must be planted" reflects a top-down approach that denies the right to self-determination of living space. Papua is once again positioned as an object of national policy, and disregarding the rights of indigenous peoples. The statement contains colonial logic: the most powerful state determines and changes the social life of the people and the natural environment in the Land of Papua, as if Papua is an empty space waiting to be filled by state projects.

"For the sake of food and energy self-sufficiency ambition, Prabowo is preparing an ecological disaster for Papua. To meet Prabowo's ambitions, millions of Papua's natural forests must be lost to make way for planting rice, oil palm, sugarcane and cassava. Prabowo also ignores the existence of Indigenous Peoples as the sovereign holders of the Land of Papua," said Asep Komarudin, Greenpeace Indonesia Forest Campaigner.

Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat has identified 94 oil palm plantation companies in Papua with an area of 1,332,032 hectares. Ironically, the said oil palm plantations are controlled and owned by a handful of corporations which are close to the ruler. This large-scale land grabbing and deforestation for the production and expansion of energy businesses [has led to socio-economic problems, land grabbing, deforestation and environmental destruction](#).

In Merauke, the food and energy self-sufficiency project has been running for almost 2 years, which was carried out without the consent of indigenous peoples and adequate business feasibility permits. In a short period, more than 22,680 hectares of natural forest areas were lost, leading to insecurity in the lives of indigenous peoples and environmental human rights defenders. The project involved thousands of military personnel, and there have been pressures as well as verbal, physical and psychological threats. There had been flood disasters in the areas around the concession in Jagebob, Tanah Miring, Muting and Eligobel Districts, which submerged agricultural land and residential areas. It is suspected that the disasters were caused by deforestation for the sugarcane

plantations of PT Global Papua Abadi and PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri, and oil palm plantations in the upper reaches of the river.

"In this forest conversion scheme, the most benefited parties are large plantation corporations and investors, as well as political and economic elites, who enjoy licensing rents. In contrast, indigenous Papuans are positioned as barriers to development or as recipients of "compensation", rather than the rightful owners of land and forests. The consent process often ignores the true Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principle. Consultation was carried out in a formality, without complete information, in a situation of unequal power relations," said Tigor Hutapea, Advocacy Staff of Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat.

Indonesia has always stated that it is strongly committed to global climate action with a target of Net Zero Emission (NZE) by 2060, but seeing Prabowo's policies and ambitions throughout the year, it feels very paradoxical.

Greenpeace's research consistently shows that oil palm expansion is one of the main causes of deforestation, peat degradation, and increased carbon emissions in Indonesia. While Sumatra and Kalimantan have suffered massive damage from palm oil, Papua is now being steered into a new frontier of the same industry—with an almost identical pattern.

Greenpeace notes that most of Papua's palm oil concessions are located in forested areas, including primary forests and areas of high conservation value. Land clearing is often carried out long before the plantation is truly productive, leaving behind permanent ecological damage. If all emissions from land-use change are taken into account, palm-based bioenergy is actually exacerbating the climate crisis, instead of resolving it. Calling palm oil a path towards energy self-sufficiency is a policy illusion which disregards the environmental and social costs borne by the public. This is clearly a false solution to the climate crisis, and is becoming a new source of conflict.

The current conditions should have been sufficient to make Prabowo realize that his ambitious projects are resulting in negative impacts on the people and the environment, therefore, we express our stance that Prabowo should correct his statement and immediately stop extractive industrial projects that destroy Papuan forests, stop the serakahnomics projects which suck the blood of the people, make immediate efforts to restore the rights of indigenous peoples and restore the environment, and for the Sumatra disaster, to immediately establish a national disaster status in order that the people can swiftly receive proper treatment.

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