



# **Resistance and solidarity against corporate assault on territories**

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### **The articles in this Bulletin are written by the following organizations and individuals:**

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## OUR VIEWPOINT

# Struggle and Hope for a World Without Oil

**In this editorial, at a time in which elites and oil companies continue to cling to the power and profit derived from fossil fuels, we would like to acknowledge the contribution that the Ecuadorian people have made to the world in the fight for territories free of oil exploitation.**

In this editorial we would like to acknowledge the contribution that the Ecuadorian people have made to the world in the struggle for territories free of oil exploitation.

In August 2023, a national referendum won by almost 60 percent in favor of stopping oil exploitation in the Yasuní National Park; this is an Amazonian territory that Indigenous Peoples, including some in voluntary isolation, depend upon. Oil operations were already underway, forcing Petroecuador to dismantle its drilling rigs and infrastructure, and leave. “No more wells!” was the clear message of hope in support of the struggles to defend territories and life.

The results of the referendum were the fruit of committed, diverse and persevering movements, with Indigenous Peoples at the forefront. Members of the Waoraní People formed a delegation to travel to other territories and build ties of support with other Indigenous Peoples and sectors of the population.

This important and hopeful achievement of the Ecuadorian people has taken place at a time in which international elites—in particular oil companies—continue to cling to the power and profit they derive from fossil fuels. Let us not forget that these fuels are the pillars of the globalized capitalist economy; the fossil fuel industry, therefore, is strategic in the expansion of capital. Just five countries in the Global North are responsible for over half of current plans to expand oil and gas exploitation by 2050 (1).

Last September, on a panel with other CEOs of the world's largest energy companies, Vicki Hollub (CEO of U.S. oil company Occidental Petroleum) said: “I don't see where we are today as something that's going to end our industry, even though there are those who would like it to disappear. As we've done in the past, we will find ways to innovate out of the situation that we're in (...) The biggest challenge (...) is getting people to trust our industry again...” (2)

This statement exposes, once again, how the industry responsible for climate chaos and the devastation of countless territories and forests continues to deploy strategies to try to legitimize its business. Among other arguments, they claim that oil and gas are now “green,” “carbon neutral” or even “clean” (3). They back these claims with false solutions, such as carbon offset projects—which are mostly worthless and, even worse, harmful to communities, forests and the climate (4). The vast majority of these offset projects are related to forests and land, and in particular to conservation areas and industrial tree plantations (5). This, in turn, is a constant threat to forest-dependent peoples (6).

In this bulletin we share articles that show the flip side of these corporate greenwashing strategies: the many negative impacts that industrial tree plantations cause for peoples and territories in Uruguay, India, Brazil and Mozambique. Another article denounces the colonial model of protected areas, in particular the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Batwa People's struggle to recover their ancestral lands.

Once again, it is peoples and grassroots movements that model coherence and wisdom in the fight for life. Only by leaving fossil fuels in the ground can we move toward many possible worlds. In a press release, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE, by its Spanish acronym) announced: “The victory of the YES vote means that the Ecuadorian people have chosen to save life, to raise awareness about our Tagaeri, Taromenane and Dukagaeri brothers and sisters in voluntary isolation, and to vote YES to save their territory, their lives, their food sovereignty, and their medicines in the sacred rainforest. This YES is a respite for Yasuní and for the Andean Chocó, which are ecosystems of enormous biodiversity. Ecuador is making a significant contribution in the fight against climate change. We have won at the polls, and we are proclaiming this message so that other peoples of the world can also make use of their rights as citizens to protect nature” (7).

We reiterate the following statement made by an activist and former Minister of Energy in Ecuador: “What we need is to multiply the number of Yasunís around the world” (8).

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(8) David Hill, 2023, ‘What we need is to multiply the number of Yasunis around the world’,

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## **Oil palm plantations through contract farming and a new Forest Amendment Law threaten India's North-East forests**

***Land related struggles in India's Northeast states might worsen with the push to expand oil palm plantations on small-farmers and Indigenous land, threatening their food sovereignty and the ancestral practice of Jhum (shifting cultivation). On top of this, a new Forest Amendment Law will facilitate this expansion, jeopardizing further the region's forests and Indigenous Peoples.***

India's North East has a very particular geopolitical context. It comprises eight states - namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim-, and has almost its entire geographical boundaries shared with five countries – China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. The region is therefore only connected to the rest of India via the Siliguri Corridor (known widely as the Chicken's Neck), which is just about 20 km wide.

The region, moreover, is considered crucial to link with South East Asia via a land route, particularly with the expansion of the Trans Asian Highway and the Trans Asian Railway. For the state of Manipur especially, this is transforming their region into an international trade corridor, which can have far reaching impacts on their livelihood systems, forests and diverse territories.

### **Oil palm companies controlling more lands in the state of Manipur**

The state of Manipur has been recently in the news due to violent conflicts between the Meitei and the Kuki people. These conflicts however have occurred on and off since colonial times, when people were 'absorbed' under British rule, and later on, under the jurisdictions of the government of India or other neighbouring countries, without considering ancestral populations and territories. Hence, the root of the violence in Manipur can be traced to measures that threaten the customary rights of Indigenous Peoples over their territories. (1)

Nevertheless, conflicts might worsen with the current push to expand oil palm plantations. There are already around 6.300 hectares of identified poppy plantations in the hills, with some experts explaining that the 'golden triangle' of the drug's production has moved to Manipur. (2) The expansion of other monocultures will be disastrous for the forests of Manipur. The State plan is to establish the oil palm plantations on small farmers land in the valley as well as on the foothills, which are primarily forest under different forms of legal and community protection, but also some used for *Jhum* (known as shifting cultivation or terrace cultivation). This expansion will likely dispossess several Peoples from their food sovereignty and water sources, but it would also impede crucial aspects of their relations and connections with their territories, which include their memories, knowledge and practices. In a nutshell, a new system of economy imposed from outside and closely linked to the global trade systems will replace a largely subsistence economy that has been built over generations.

India is a net importer of palm oil, mostly coming from Malaysia and Indonesia – an estimated of around 9 million tonnes per year. Yet, in August 2021, the government announced the National Mission on Oil Seed and Oil Palm with the aim of increasing the national production of palm oil. The target of this Mission is to expand plantations to 1 million hectares by 2025-26 and 1.65 million hectares by 2029-30, with special focus on the North-East and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

In this context, in 2020, the State of Manipur released the Oil Palm Mission Manipur (OPMM) project, which aims to convert more than 66.500 hectares into oil palm plantations. Considering that almost 70 per cent of Manipur's territory is still forested, this represents a big threat to Indigenous Peoples' systems.

The strategy for accomplishing this expansion in Manipur seems to be mainly focused on contract farming. Although presented as a win-win deal, contract farming is in fact a trap for small-scale farmers. By being locked with contracts, small farmers accumulate debt right from the start, lose the freedom to decide who to sell their production to, face strict restrictions on planting other crops, and give up autonomy and even their land. (3)

For convincing small farmers to accept changing their cultivation and to start oil palm nurseries, the Central and State government are offering different subsidies, seeds and technical support. At the same time, companies like Godrej Agrovet or Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd., which is part of the multinational group Patanjali, offer contracts to guarantee farmers that their harvested fruit will be bought by them, even if market prices crash. Godrej Agrovet is the largest oil palm processor in the country, with around 65,000 hectares of oil palm plantations across India.

On 2022, Godrej Agrovet signed Memorandums of Understandings (MoU) with the states of Manipur, Assam and Tripura, through which the company got allotted land across the three states for the development and promotion of oil palm cultivation. The company already owns oil palm plantations in Mizoram, where it also has a processing plant since 2014, besides other five plants across India. Godrej Agrovet's CEO said in 2022 that the company plans to further convert within the four states 15,000 hectares into oil palms in the next five years. (4)

Moreover, on September 2023, the company signed an agreement with Malaysian palm oil company Sime Darby to import oil palm seeds for its plantations in India. Godrej Agrovet's spokesperson confirmed that it has more people working in the region and that it is opening places for distributing fertilizers, equipment and know-how for the farmers signing a contract with the company. (5)

According to groups active in the state of Manipur with whom WRM has spoken with, company representatives have been seen in Manipur and other North East states trying to convince small farmers to enter into the oil palm business. They are requesting small farmers to form committees in order to facilitate the conversion of 'grouped lands' into oil palm plantations. This, of course, mainly facilitates the company's plan to have large areas of land under its control.

Most of the area that the government has allotted for oil palm plantations in Manipur is on the valley and the foothills, where the land is most fractured among small holders. The government and the company thus need many hundreds of farmers on board in order to reach the thousand of hectares that they expect to convert.

Besides the valley, the consultant for the project in Manipur revealed in June 2022, during a workshop, that the plantations would also be established on ‘abandoned’ shifting cultivation lands in the hills, the fallow lands and the foothills. (6) The government claims that fallow *Jhum* lands – meaning lands under the ancestral practice of shifting cultivation in Manipur- are ‘unused’ and need to be converted into ‘productive’ lands. But there is nothing unused or abandoned in *Jhum* lands. The areas that are not being cultivated in a specific period of time are being rejuvenating and recuperating, which will lead to more fruitful harvests in a later period of time. *Jhum* has been used mainly by the Indigenous Nagas and Kukis for generations and it is intricately linked to their existence.

Yet, the colonial rhetoric that silences and diminishes Indigenous knowledges and practices is an imposition that is still repeated and used by governments and companies in order to expand their control over more areas of land. Destroying small farms and *Jhum* would destroy their food sovereignty as well as their relations to their territory, thus destroying their own existence as Indigenous Peoples.

### **RSPO: a brand for sustaining profits**

The state of Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram have already initiated oil palm plantations since 2017. However, the renewed expansion plans have sparked resistance among the Northeasterners because the National and States’ targets will require clearing vast areas of forests and fertile soils. Resistance is getting stronger, with groups in Mizoram beginning to reject large scale oil palm plantation in the State, (7) as they already see how water shortage is evident in several areas surrounded by palm oil plantations.

In parallel, State propaganda is focused on how the bad experiences from Indonesia and Malaysia will be different in the North-East, as small holders can leave space for farmers to grow their own food. (8) But small farmers have started to be more aware of the experiences in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Despite the resistance and concerns from many sectors of civil society in Manipur, according to groups in Manipur with whom WRM has spoken with, representatives of the certification scheme RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) have started to talk with small farmers in the North East region about what they call ‘responsible palm oil’, trying to convince them to sign the contracts. RSPO representatives argue that contract farming is going to be sustainable and beneficial for farmers and that farmers should not be afraid as these plantations can be done “properly”.



The certification presence in the region coincides with RSPO's latest milestone of reaching 100 members in India. In this regard, RSPO announced in August 2023 that it has "intensified its engagements and interventions with the Indian government, industry players and communities, amplifying the call for sustainability through effective partnerships in India's palm oil industry." (9)

According to Ram Wangkheirakpam, who is an environmental activist based in Manipur, the coming of RSPO attempted to diminish the resistance. However, the voice was clear: "There cannot be responsible oil palm plantations at that scale". It is not only about activists, but also about farmers' unions in Manipur having already made their position clear. Farmer representatives from all the districts of Manipur have stressed the necessity for establishing a strong farmers' union for the whole of Manipur to highlight their issues. They already resolved to say NO to oil palm tree plantations in Manipur. (10)

### **Defining 'forests' as plantations: A Law to allow further deforestation**

As if the plans to expand oil palm plantations in Manipur would not be enough threat to forest dependant populations, on August 2023, a new Forest Conservation Amendment Law was issued by the national government. Although the name of this Law is supposed to relate to "preserving forests", in reality, the Law actively promotes "compensatory afforestation". This means that industrial tree plantations are promoted with the stated objective of increasing India's 'forest cover' and fulfilling its international commitment of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes by 2030.

The Law is now set to dramatically change the forest conservation arena in India, altering the landmark Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, which attempted to put the brakes on widespread deforestation.

It severely constricts conservation to only those forests registered on government records after 1980, which means that 28 per cent of India's forests are automatically left without protection. On top of this, other large areas of forest are now exempt from protection due to national security and other reasons. The result will be rampant forest diversion for plantations, infrastructure and other commercial interests. (11)

The forests of the North-East of India, which comprise as much as 25 per cent of the country's total forest areas, are set to be especially hard hit by this new Law, as these areas are largely not in any official record. In Manipur, 88 per cent of its forests are not classified as forests under official registries. (12)

Even more alarmingly for the North-East is that under the Law, authorisation to clear forests within 100 km of international borders will no longer be required from the Ministry of Environment to construct "strategic linear projects of national importance". (13) This affects all



eight states in the North-East. The Law is effectively lifting a ban on deforestation on border areas. Given that all states in this region are surrounded by other countries, there will be hardly any area left if one counts the 100 Km. from the international borders.

The Law is also completely silent on the rights of forest communities. It makes no mention of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) or the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act from 2006). (14)

With large areas of forests threatened to lose protection and Indigenous Peoples to lose their rights, the focus is on expanding large-scale industrial plantations with the narrative of addressing climate change and implementing 'sustainable development'. Following the guidelines of the UN's FAO agency, 'forests' are defined in India (as in many other countries) in the same way as an industrial plantation. This is not only false but also dangerous, as it reduces all forest's diversity, complexity, interconnections and relations to others, including human populations, to accounting trees (and now, conveniently enough, to accounting the carbon stored in those trees). (15)

The Law is effectively opening the door for commercial exploitation of India's Northeast forests while converting these large diverse areas into monoculture plantations. Paradoxically, these plantations areas could be accounted as 'forests' under official records, as they will only account the tree cover increase, despite the traces of deforestation.

Resistance is nonetheless strong against all odds. It is crucial to stand in solidarity with those groups struggling to defend life in India's Northeast.

### ***The Secretariat of the WRM in conversations with groups active in Manipur and India's Northeast region\****

\* Some names of the groups and the people WRM spoke with remain anonymous due to security reasons

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- (6) The News Mill, 2023, Palm oil and the politics of eviction for oil palm plantation – in Manipur, <https://thenewsmill.com/2023/08/palm-oil-and-the-politics-of-eviction-for-oil-palm-plantation-in-manipur/>
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## **WRM's reply to Biofíllica Ambipar's "Clarification Note" about the article "REDD and the Green Economy exacerbate oppression and deforestation in Pará, Brazil", written by WRM and published in its Bulletin of July 2023**

**The company Biofíllica Ambipar sent a "Clarification Note" in response to an article on a REDD project in Pará, Brazil, which was published in the WRM Bulletin. We take this opportunity to make several clarifications regarding the company's serious accusation that the WRM is publishing "false information".**

After the publication of the [article mentioned above about REDD in Pará, Brazil](#), the company Biofíllica Ambipar sent and requested WRM to publish a "[Clarification Note](#)". We take this opportunity to provide the necessary clarifications against the serious accusation made by the company in such Note that WRM would be publishing "false information".

We wish to make clear that:

1. Regarding the allegation that WRM would be using "anonymous sources" without presenting "evidence of the allegations", Biofíllica Ambipar seems to completely ignore the reality of the Amazon region and of the state of Pará in particular, where violence against human rights defenders with threats, persecutions and murders, is part of everyday lives for members of communities and support organizations, especially around land conflicts with companies and landowners. Protecting witnesses and their testimonies in regions of land conflicts, like those where Jari Florestal and Agropalma operate, is therefore acting responsibly. Furthermore, the practice of preserving sources cannot be confused with lack of evidence.
2. Regarding the allegation that Biofíllica Ambipar would be following free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) procedures in its carbon projects, we declare that during our visit to the REDD project in the Pará region, residents repeatedly asked us for basic information about what REDD really was about and what Biofíllica's project consisted of. The lack or insufficiency of information demonstrates that Biofíllica Ambipar's allegation is not correct. In our perception – as is the case with many other REDD projects that we have visited in Brazil and other countries – the only consultation that seems to have taken place was about the type of welfare benefits the community would like to receive, such as workshops, courses, access to health services, access to electricity, etc. However, none of this is related to the focus of the REDD project, which claims to combat deforestation in order to generate carbon credits to be sold to polluting companies. Therefore, the community members we spoke to were not sufficiently informed to be able to make a free and informed decision about the project.

3. Also regarding the relations with communities, we are astonished at Biofílica Ambipar's shameless assertion in the Note that the Jari REDD project is developed with due respect for local communities, but immediately afterwards, in the same paragraph, attributes the problem of deforestation to subsistence agriculture and smallholders. This is a major contradiction of REDD projects in general. Instead of holding accountable companies like Jari, which has already cleared thousands of hectares of forest, projects put the blame for deforestation on local communities that depend on the forest for their survival and contribute little or nothing to its destruction. In recent years, the failure of REDD has once again been confirmed by important academic research, which shows that as a rule projects present exaggerated deforestation estimates, usually attributed to small-scale subsistence farmers.
4. Another allegation made by Biofílica Ambipar that must not remain unanswered is that *"Jari Celulose is not being investigated, or even being accused of any type of crime or misconduct as mentioned in the text of the World Rainforest Movement"*. In an attempt to back up this claim, Biofílica cites only one decision from a local court of first instance in Monte Dourado on 17 December 2021, which would have confirmed that *"Jari Celulose owns the land where it is located and develops its activities"*.

Firstly, it is worth stressing that for decades Jari has used the local justice system to criminalize community members, but would never take these cases to the agrarian affairs court, even though it would be the correct one. This reality only changed with the creation of the Agrarian Prosecutor's Office and the Office of the Public Defender.

Secondly, Biofílica once again seems to be in a world other than the Brazilian Amazon region, as well as entirely adopting the rhetoric of Jari Florestal, which is that the company is the victim of "mistakes" in the registration of the deeds to the land it occupies. However, we reaffirm that what happened in the case of Jari Florestal, Agropalma and so many others in Brazil, is part and parcel of a historical process of illegal appropriation of public lands – the vast majority of lands in the Amazon region are public –, known in Brazil as *grilagem*. The victims of this process are the communities evicted or seriously threatened with losing their land rights, as has taken place in the cases of Agropalma and Jari Florestal. These companies bear responsibility and commit crimes insofar as they affirm or act to try to transform fraudulent land titles into legal ones.

The illegalities surrounding the companies' land issues with which Biofílica Ambipar works have been pointed out by public prosecutors who specialize in this matter:

- In 2005, the Pará state government filed a lawsuit against Jari Florestal, requesting that it be declared that the company was not the owner of the lands it sought to legitimize with the Pará Lands Institute. (1) In the lawsuit, the Pará state's prosecutor questioned the Jari Group's supposed ownership over the area that in the past was the Saracura Estate, at the

time amounting to 2.6 million hectares. According to a historical study, “the circumstances under which [*around 1882, the alleged owner*] obtained these areas are surrounded by reports of electoral fraud and fraud in the region's notary offices, giving rise to a complicated land ownership situation that remains unresolved to this day”. (2) For this reason, the Pará State Court of Justice ordered the cancelation of the existent registrations, transcriptions and annotations on the [Saracura Estate] property, “(...) in order to prevent the legitimization of what Jari has done by transforming the Estate, as if by magic, into its property”, as the prosecutor states in the 2005 lawsuit.

- The second lawsuit against Jari Florestal dates back to 2011 and is being processed in the Federal Court of Pará on the basis of a complaint by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office against the director of the Jari Group. He allegedly committed the crime of ideological falsehood when presenting land documentation to obtain authorization to exploit native timber. The Grupo Jari's forest management plan was submitted to the federal environmental agency, IBAMA, in 2001 in order to get authorization to start logging. The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office was activated in 2005 following IBAMA's suspicions of fraud in the land documentation. (3)
- Jari Florestal's FSC certification has been suspended since 2017 but not due to the land question. (4) The decision was made by the certification consultancy agency SCS, on the basis of a special audit conducted in 2015 after an IBAMA operation fined Jari Florestal 6 million reais (US\$ 1.6 millions at the time) for irregularities in its forest management, which indicated illegal commercialization of timber. Due to the company's lack of cooperation with the certifier's investigation, SCS decided to suspend the seal. (5)
- In 2022, the Agrarian Prosecutor's Office filed a Public Civil Lawsuit in the state of Pará against the Jari Celulose Group, requesting that part of its property titles be annulled. The lawsuit results from the investigation of successive fraudulent and illegal practices related to the issuing of property titles and fraudulent public records regarding an area of 126 thousand hectares since 1937 in the Almeirim municipality. (6)
- Recently, in September 2023, in a lawsuit requesting that the State of Pará be compensated for the illegal use of public land, the State Attorney General's Office (PGE, for its Portuguese acronym) denounced Jari Celulose for a practice that may be characterized as a land grab superimposed on another. Once again related to the Saracura Estate. In the lawsuit, the PGE states that “there is not the slightest doubt that JARI CELULOSE is not the owner of the area, and therefore, if the land is not privately owned, it has to necessarily be public, so there is nothing more correct than its confiscation and registration as land belonging to the State of Pará”. And this has in fact already happened: the Estate was registered as Gleba Arraiolos. Now, the PGE denounces Jari for its continued attempts to appropriate the area, thus continuing with its practice of grabbing public lands. Furthermore, the PGE also denounces the fact that the company sold and made profits from carbon credits originating from this public land, which is an illegal practice that

implicates its carbon business partner, Biofílica Ambipar. The PGE describes this illegal sale as “a carbon grab” (or “*grilagem de carbono*” in Portuguese). (7)

With regard to Agropalma:

- Since 2016, the Federal Police in the State of Pará investigates Agropalma for the supposed existence of a criminal scheme. False documents were allegedly produced and used by company employees to regularize the land with public bodies and possibly to access resources from public funding, to the detriment of local dwellers.

In March 2018, temporary arrest warrants were issued for four people directly involved in the scheme, including an Agropalma employee, as well as search and seizure warrants for company materials. According to the delegate in charge of the investigation: “There are indications that these are cases of land grabbing (...). Agropalma is the real beneficiary of the whole criminal scheme.” He goes on to say that “They would come to a notary office in Belém [the capital of Pará], make a false deed, a whole false chain of ownership, always ending up with the company, as if the land, after all these comings and goings, would finally be sold to the company. Then, they would return to the municipality in question and restore registry books that had allegedly been lost.” (8)

According to the investigation, an order issued by the Pará Court of Justice authorizes the restoration of a lost registry book in case the interested party has documentary evidence. Using this artifice, Agropalma would be carrying out such restoration based on false documents, putting the land in the company's name and increasing its area. It would then continue with the land regularization process with public bodies.

In August 2018, the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Pará filed a Public Civil Action requesting, among other measures, the nullification and cancellation of two Estates' registrations, Roda de Fogo and Castanheira, whose combined would add up to 9501 hectares (equivalent to almost 9000 football pitches). Both were supposedly acquired by Agropalma by means of false registrations, made in a fictitious notary office of the city, and processed by the Pará Lands Institute (Iterpa). (9)

5. Also regarding Agropalma, countless members of quilombola and indigenous communities that were directly impacted by the establishment of the company and are currently directly affected by the REDD project in partnership with Biofílica Ambipar report that the situation they face is desperate. This has been made public through various articles published in recent years. (10) Their lands by right have been completely blocked off by Agropalma with fences and access gates. Former residents need to show an ID to the company's security guards, even to visit their graveyards, as if they were aliens in their own land. This is just an example of the communities' oppression mentioned by WRM.



Lastly, given the invitation by Biofílica Ambipar to visit their projects, we lament the misconception – naive or deliberate – that through its projects it is possible to understand the local reality. We consider it impossible to understand the way of life and the oppressions experienced by the communities through projects that arrive from abroad with the aim of “generating value for the environmental assets market” (11) through an abstract commodity that is completely alien to the communities (carbon credits) and that generates profits for the companies' owners, equally alien to these territories. This is what has led (members of) forest-dependent communities that have to deal with REDD projects in their territories to seek out and invite WRM to visit their communities. Given our commitment to these communities, it is these invitations that WRM usually accepts and prioritizes.

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## Uruguay: The impact of industrial tree plantations on the water crisis

**More than seven percent of Uruguay's territory is covered with monoculture tree plantations. A handful of companies have been behind this massive expansion—which has occurred mostly over watersheds and prairies—with devastating consequences. This year, almost half of the urban population had no access to drinking water—an imminent warning of the drastic change that is needed for Uruguay to maintain its water.**

Beginning in May of 2023, Uruguay faced an unprecedented water crisis that lasted more than 60 days. Almost half of the country's population, which lives in the metropolitan area, had no access to drinking water. There were multiple reasons for this crisis. The most obvious reason—and the one most mentioned both in the media and by politicians—was the prolonged drought the country was going through. However, those of us at social organizations know this crisis was due to a lack of planning and poor land management. And even though the drinking water supply has been reestablished, the water crisis that the country faces has not been solved.

### **Industrial tree plantations**

In Uruguay, a country of just 17 million hectares, there are almost 1.3 million hectares of industrial tree plantations, mostly comprised of two species: pine and eucalyptus. A handful of corporate players operate in the country. Among these, Finland's UPM, Swedish-Finnish Stora Enso, and Chile's Arauco stand out; as well as various investment funds in the sector, including GFP (Global Forest Partners), BTG Pactual Timberland Investment Group, The Rohatyn Group, Liberty Mutual and Stafford. Additionally, UPM and Montes del Plata (a company formed from the merger of Arauco and Stora Enso in 2009) have installed three pulp mills, with a total annual production of approximately five million tons of pulp.

Ever since the monoculture tree plantation model began to expand in the country, there have been significant negative impacts. One of the harshest impacts for rural producers who have found themselves completely surrounded by plantations has been the negative impact on waterways. Unable to cope with this impact, and unable to produce on their land, many of these rural producers have been forced to abandon their lands.

In light of the denial of these impacts on the part companies responsible for expanding the plantations, the University of the Republic has played a critical role in contributing data to the debate. Academic studies warn of a 50 percent decrease in water flow when our watersheds are planted with tree plantations (1). Even current research by forestry companies acknowledges a decrease of up to 30 percent (2 and 3).

Despite these data, trees continue to be planted on a large scale on watersheds in Uruguay. They are replacing grasslands—or prairies—which are part of the *pampa* biome that spans southern Brazil, part of Argentina and Uruguay. Grasslands are incredibly biodiverse-rich ecosystems that fulfill vital functions (4). Replacing them with soy or eucalyptus plantations is just as criminal as cutting down the Amazon to plant oil palm plantations (5).

Since the early 1990s, REDES – Friends of the Earth Uruguay, along with other organizations and representatives of academia, have been warning about how large-scale tree plantations on grassland ecosystems impact water. Studies and cases of legislation from other countries—including from South Africa and Spain, where they tried to prevent water flow decreases—have contributed to this discussion.

### **The evidence**

Since the 1990s, national studies, mostly from academia but also from one company in the sector, have compared the hydrological cycle of a watershed with monoculture tree plantations with that of a watershed with pasture or grasslands. Decades later, the results are alarming.

One study that was even financed by the North American forestry company, Weyerhaeuser, determined that in watersheds with plantations, “the loss of flow of the river is between 25 and 30 percent.” Weyerhaeuser sold its Uruguayan operations in 2017 (2 and 3).

Meanwhile, other studies (in which the University of the Republic has participated), have produced results that indicate a reduction in water flow of up to 50 percent in watersheds that have been affected by the plantations (6).

Even though the data are available, very little is said about these impacts. Worse yet, no measures have been taken to prevent or curb these impacts, even despite the recent water crisis.

During the 12 months of drought in the country, the bureaucrats responsible for overseeing these issues did not mention, much less analyze, the role of large-scale tree plantations or soybean monocultures in the lack of water in rivers and streams.

Also alarming is the lack of political will to analyze and discuss the results of scientific studies that looked at the impacts of plantations on the flow of our rivers, streams and aquifers. And this is in spite of all the national and international news reports warning that extreme events will become increasingly frequent due to climate change.

For decades, the organization, REDES – Friends of the Earth Uruguay, has campaigned to defend water and has denounced the onslaught of tree plantations. The Santa Lucía River basin—which is extremely important given that it supplies drinking water to 60 percent of the country's population—is being forested. And all signs point to ongoing expansion of the forested area. We have demanded that authorities stop this expansion by changing the definition of forest priority soils,

that is, areas where tree plantations are allowed. The classification of “forest priority soils” was made based on obsolete parameters that did not take into account, for example, impacts on watersheds. However, we have had no response.

The total area of the Santa Lucía River basin is 1,347,000 hectares. There are currently 47,362 planted hectares (i.e. 3.5 percent of the total), which are located mostly in the headwaters northwest of the basin. Since there are 161,522 hectares of forest priority soils (12 percent of the basin), the expansion of monocultures over this watershed area will continue. Furthermore, there continues to be intense pressure from plantation companies, in particular from Montes del Plata, to declare certain kinds of soils as forestry priority soils—that is, areas where plantations can expand. Currently, tree plantations are not allowed on these types of land, due to the impacts they would cause. However, companies like Montes del Plata have been lobbying to have them reclassified. Were this reclassification to occur, 346,178 more hectares of plantations could be added (25 percent of the river basin), located mainly at the headwaters of the watershed (7).

### **The future**

Climate change has caused an increase in the frequency of extreme events, including significant periods of drought (8). Rising temperatures have huge impacts on the hydrological cycle due to changes in precipitation, evapotranspiration, and soil moisture; and this is in addition to the pre-existing effects of the environmental crisis. The recent drought was an imminent warning of the drastic change that is needed to preserve water in Uruguay.

Therefore, it is important to implement environmental management and land use planning of watersheds throughout the whole country, and in particular in the Santa Lucía River basin. It should be a priority for the government of Uruguay to recognize the significant impacts that industrial plantations have on water catchment in watersheds, and the resulting social and environmental impacts this has on the population.

***Maria Selva Ortiz and Marcel Achkar, members of Redes – Friends of the Earth Uruguay.***

\* This article was adapted from the article originally published in the weekly paper, Brecha, on 17/02/2023.

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## The Batwa and the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the DRC: Will the new law on Indigenous Peoples help the Batwa recover their land?

**With the support of international funding, the establishment of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park has led to the forced and violent eviction of the Batwa Indigenous People. The DRC government recently passed a new law on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, which, though a step forward, does not apply to lands that have already been designated as protected areas, nor does it make any mention of historic injustices.**

The Batwa Indigenous People saw their ancestral lands expropriated from them following the creation of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB, by its French acronym) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In this process, the Batwa faced the worst atrocities and violations of their individual and collective rights. Their violent expulsion was supported by international donors (German and US funds, among others) and conservation NGOs (such as the Wildlife Conservation Society – WCS), which reinforced colonial and racist practices with respect to the Batwa.

In 2022, the government of the DRC passed a new law to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Will this law help the Batwa in their fight to regain their lands?

### ***Introduction***

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the largest network of protected areas in the entire African continent. This network covers 11.7% of the national territory (1). Indigenous Peoples and their diverse forests have lived in interdependence for centuries. Yet, the situation of these peoples, and thus of their forests, has never been as precarious as it is today (2).

The DRC's Kahuzi-Biega National Park (PNKB) is located near the western shore of Lake Kivu and the border with Rwanda. It was created in 1970 by Belgian colonial authorities, and its designation as a national park consequently denied the Indigenous Batwa People access to their ancestral lands. Kahuzi-Biega is one of the largest national parks in the country.

As in other state-managed protected areas, nature conservation in the PNKB has been an unquestionably violent and colonial project, which must be vigorously challenged. For more than four decades, the Batwa have basically been fighting to recover their ancestral lands and their access to the forests and natural resources of the PNKB. Several organizations that support the remaining Batwa inside the PNKB have attempted to respond to this crisis, but this has proven futile. In 2006, the Center for the Accompaniment of Indigenous Pygmies and Vulnerable Minorities (CAMV, by its French acronym) launched a huge campaign to seek dialogue and reconciliation between the Batwa who were expelled from their ancestral lands, and Kahuzi-Biega

National Park authorities. But this process, which culminated in the signing of a road map, was also unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the organization Environment, Natural Resources and Development (ERND, by its French acronym) took legal action on this matter against the Congolese State, in this case represented by the ICCN (Congolese National Agency for Protected Areas) and the PNKB. But this action was also unsuccessful.

Thus, angered by the cycles of unfulfilled promises by the Congolese government, and given their situation of extreme poverty, some Batwa decided to voluntarily return to their ancestral lands within the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in October 2018—despite the legal restrictions in force in the DRC. In 2019, another dialogue was convened in an unsuccessful attempt to convince the Batwa to leave the park.

Following the failure of these processes, the PNKB paramilitary structure, in coordination with the Congolese army, carried out large-scale organized violence against the Batwa Indigenous People living on their ancestral lands within the park. This organized violence began in 2019 and it continues to this day. The NGO Minority Rights Group was able to obtain evidence of systematic torture, killings—including of children—and gang rapes of at least 15 Batwa women by park rangers and soldiers during the operations in July and November-December 2021. The attacks documented by this NGO "constitute serious violations of international and national law and may constitute crimes against humanity. The attacks were well planned, targeted civilian populations, were geographically widespread and systematic, served a State policy, and involved crimes such as murder, rape and persecution" (3).

This systematic violence received crucial financial support from international partners, despite these partners having knowledge of the human rights violations committed by the park rangers they support. The PNKB's paramilitary unit has received substantial support from the governments of Germany and the United States, as well as from conservation NGOs such as the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS); this evinces the inherently militarized approach to conservation that is being promoted. In 2022, WCS signed a public-private partnership to co-manage the PNKB with the DRC government's National Agency of Protected Areas (ICCN) (4). Meanwhile, the park is open to, and being exploited by, numerous safari tourism agencies, making it abundantly clear why there are interests in the park being "undisturbed."

When it passed the law on the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous Pygmy Peoples (PAP) in 2022, the Congolese government finally recognized their right to their land and the natural resources it contains. This article seeks to reflect on Indigenous People's rights to land and natural resources enshrined in Chapter 5 of the aforementioned law, in light of the PNKB case. The main question pertains to whether this law can help the Batwa recover the lands stolen from them by the PNKB.

In order to fully understand this issue, this article will focus on three key points. The first provides a brief overview of the historical and legal foundations of Indigenous Peoples' rights to land and natural resources in the DRC. The second presents a succinct analysis of the Batwa's right to land

and natural resources in the context of the PNKB. And the third elaborates on the lessons that can be gleaned from analyzing this law.

***A brief look at the historical and legal foundations of the Batwa's right to land and natural resources***

***Historical background.*** The Batwa are widely recognized as Indigenous Peoples and are considered to be the first inhabitants of the DRC, both by the Congolese state and by other communities (5).

The Batwa People have their origins in the forests surrounding the Kahuzi and Biega mountains, two inactive volcanos from which the park derives its name. The Batwa maintain close ties to their ancestral territories. For millennia they lived in harmony with the forest—their natural environment—until 1937, when the colonial power created the "Zoological and Forest Reserve of Mount Kahuzi." This initially small nature reserve was expanded in 1951 to include 60,000 hectares of forest in the Batwa's ancestral territory. A few years after the DRC's independence, the government designated this area as a national park and expanded it, creating the Kahuzi-Biega National Park – PNKB.

Following this designation, what had been a protected area of 60,000 hectares now became 600,000 hectares. This expansion of the PNKB involved acts of brutality and barbarity (eviction of homes, humiliation and whipping, confiscation or malicious destruction of household goods, etc.), without any prior consultation, free consent or compensation to the Batwa. This continues to be the cause of the imbalance in the Batwa's way of life. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 6,000 Batwa (580 families) have been dispossessed of their ancestral lands to make way for the PNKB (6).

***Legal background.*** The nationalization of the land also greatly contributed to dispossessing the Batwa of all land ownership (7). The February 2006 Constitution of the DRC, as amended today, states in Article 9 that "the State exercises permanent sovereignty, in particular over land (...)," which is explicitly repeated in Article 53 of the Land Law.

However, it should be noted that where Article 387 of the Land Law establishes that "lands occupied by local communities become (...) state lands," this does not at all mean that these communities cease to have property rights to lands to which they have traditional ties. Above all, it should be noted that Article 34 of the Constitution of 2005 guarantees the right to property acquired by custom (or the right to ownership in a broad sense). Furthermore, Article 153 of said Constitution recognizes customs as a source of right, in the sense that it can be applied by courts and tribunals as long as it does not conflict with public order or good practices.

Furthermore, in addition to the 2022 Law on the protection and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights, other legislation that has been developed in recent years also guarantees the respect for local communities' rights with regard to lands and forests—including those of Indigenous Peoples. This includes, but is not limited to, the Forest Code of 2022. There is also Law No. 11/022 from 2011



on the fundamental principles of agriculture. It is also worth mentioning Law No. 14/003 from 2014 on the preservation of nature. Clearly, this law marks an evolution in favor of recognizing customary land rights, and the positive role that local communities can play in conservation. Pending the outcome of the current agrarian reform process, there are other interesting regulatory initiatives, particularly Decree No. 14/018 from 2014, which establishes the terms and conditions for the allocation of forest concessions to local communities. And in addition to its increasingly abundant domestic legislation, the DRC is also obligated to implement various specific international instruments related to promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples— instruments to which it has freely subscribed.

### ***Indigenous Peoples' right to ancestral territories in the context of the PNKB***

At first glance, an analysis of Article 42 of the 2022 Law on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples shows that the Congolese legislator has implicitly ignored the issue of the Batwa's rights to enjoyment (not to mention property rights) of their traditional lands/forests considered to be protected areas.

In fact, this provision expresses, rather, the Batwa's general right to lands and forests that they currently possess—not to the lands and forests that they occupied, used or possessed in the past, and which were classified as conservation areas or granted to private entities. The 2014 Law on Nature Conservation is the only legal instrument that defines measures for conservation and the use of natural resources in protected areas. And according to this law, the acquisition of any individual or collective property right in protected areas is prohibited. However, the 2014 law provides for some exceptions to conservation measures in regards to access to natural resources. Such exceptions are made in the interests of public health, safety, and food security for people living near protected areas.

### ***In light of the case of the Batwa of the PNKB, the analysis of the 2022 law on the protection and promotion of the rights of Indigenous Peoples shows that:***

1. The Batwa's right to land and natural resources enshrined in this law does not apply to traditional lands that have been granted to private parties and/or lands that have been designated as protected areas. In the case of the Batwa's ancestral lands designated as protected areas (e.g., the forests of the PNKB), the only way for the Batwa to recover their lands would be to dismantle all or part of the PNKB to allow them to occupy and fully use the forests it contains. Why dismantle? Because the PNKB has become a public good (protected area) that cannot be given away or sold.
2. The law makes no mention of reparations for the historic injustices to which Indigenous Peoples have been subjected following their expulsion from their ancestral lands. The legislator should have at least referenced this issue, on the basis of international customary law, which offers Indigenous Peoples the possibility to demand restitution of their lands and compensation for losses suffered (in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

3. Finally, this law does recognize, however, the important role that local communities and Indigenous Peoples must play in nature conservation.

### **Conclusion**

This analysis has shown without a doubt that the Batwa Peoples of the PNKB face the problem of not being able to access their lands and forests. Their expulsion from this protected area is the main reason for their diminishing rights to their traditional lands.

The rights to land and natural resources enshrined in Article 42 of the 2022 Law do not apply to conservation areas that are in the public or private domain. This law does not explicitly grant Indigenous Peoples any subsidiary rights to protected areas, beyond what is provided for in the law related to nature conservation. As a result, there are two fundamental problems: the Batwa's rights to their traditional lands that have been classified as conservation areas, and, by extension, reparations for the historic injustices to which they were subjected as a result of their eviction.

Nonetheless, this law could represent an important step in the legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples as owners and holders of rights assigned to forest areas. It is also a tool to enforce those rights. Going forward, implementation of this law will be key, and above all, adoption of its enforcement measures.

Likewise, the agrarian reform that is currently underway—which includes the interests of Indigenous Peoples as one of its objectives—should be completed. The 1973 Land Law left the matter of indigenous (traditional) communities' lands unresolved, which should be resolved through presidential decree. Hopefully this matter will finally be resolved to clarify the land ownership rights of indigenous communities in the DRC.

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## Communities from Brazil and Mozambique exchange experiences in the fight against industrial tree plantations

**Exchanges between activists put the voices of those who fight to defend their territories at the center of the conversation. In September, members of communities from Brazil and Mozambique united their struggles and connected their histories once again, helping to strengthen solidarity in the fight against industrial tree plantations.**

Exchanges between those who fight to defend their territories are crucial in helping connect and strengthen resistance movements; they also support mutual learning from the experiences, wisdom and struggles of diverse communities. In these spaces, the voices of those who have organized, mobilized and placed their bodies and communities on the frontlines to defend life are at the center.

These encounters between members of communities from Brazil and Mozambique are also important in connecting the struggles and histories of black communities who are currently resisting the multiple oppressions imposed by tree plantation companies. These exchanges, which strengthen ties of solidarity, have been taking place for more than five years – through virtual connections, face-to-face visits and various other exchanges.

*"One thing that I believe is very important for a resistance movement is the unity and mobilization of impacted peoples and communities, (...) as well as the relationship between the territory, the local culture and the means of production."* This was the message that Ronaldo, from Minas Gerais state in northern Brazil, gave [to Mozambican communities in 2019 through video letters](#). Meanwhile, in her message to counterparts and comrades in Mozambique, Francisca María of Maranhão state also warns them to *"never accept the company's deceitful proposals,"* and to focus on uniting their struggle.

In 2021, a gathering of communities facing the impacts of industrial tree plantations from Brazil, Mozambique and Tanzania concluded with a [declaration](#) that said, among other things: *"...this whole situation is causing a lot of suffering and hunger in the communities, and it especially impacts women. The government has opened the doors to companies and investors, and has closed them to the people. What is happening is a new form of colonialism in which companies are the new colonizers of lands where communities have lived for generations (...) We believe that together we will be stronger in resisting monocultures and all types of usurpation of our lands."*

In September 2023, a new gathering was organized as part of the International Day of Struggle Against Monoculture Tree Plantations. The activity provided continuity to these exchanges, and once again helped strengthen solidarity between Quilombola communities in Brazil who are fighting against Suzano Papel e Celulose plantations, and communities in Mozambique fighting

against Green Resources and Portucel Moçambique (The Navigator Company) plantations (1). The following was recorded in the declaration that emerged from this gathering:

**Virtual Brazil-Mozambique gathering: Resistance against eucalyptus monocultures, and a celebration of the defense of territories**

As part of the week of the International Day of Struggle Against Monoculture Tree Plantations, which is celebrated on September 21, communities affected by large eucalyptus plantations in Brazil and Mozambique held a virtual gathering to celebrate the resistance that unites us in struggle – for our territories and our lives, and against eucalyptus green deserts. Communities and organizations that comprise the Alert Against the Green Desert Network gathered in the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil to attend the virtual gathering; while sister communities and organizations in Mozambique gathered at the same time in the provinces of Nampula and Zambézia. We talked about the violence of the destructive model of plantation and paper companies in our local communities, and we shared our experiences of collective resistance, proving that we are much closer than the physical distance that separates us.

For more than 50 years in Brazil, we have been fighting against large eucalyptus monocultures that were installed during the military regime as part of the green revolution – in the Sapê do Norte region of Espírito Santo state, and in southern Bahía. These plantations were originally established by the company Aracruz Celulose, which is now Suzano Papel e Celulose. In Mozambique, the companies Green Resources and Portucel Moçambique (The Navigator Company) installed their monocultures more than 10 years ago in the provinces of Nampula and Zambézia. Despite the different companies, regions and time frames, we suffer very similar impacts in our communities – impacts which we denounce: the destruction of native forests; the disappearance and contamination of waterways; the appropriation of community lands; false promises on the part of companies; and criminalization, persecution and threats.

As women, we are even more affected. In addition to having our daily work affected, there has been an intensification in the physical and psychological violence that men perpetrate towards us; this is the case of both men employed by the company and men within our communities – where we have ever-diminishing access to land, water and resources for our children's subsistence.

We also share the same Afro past and present. In Brazil, our Quilombola communities are proud of their African ancestry and their heritage of resistance against white-led companies that affected, and continue to affect, our lives. In Mozambique, the struggle for independence was fought to free the land and the people, and now we are fighting to keep our territories. As Samora Machel used to say, "our enemy is not the white man or the black man, but anyone who does harm or destroys the wellbeing of the people."

At the end of the gathering, we had mixed feelings: indignation at the injustices our communities suffer, and enthusiasm as we realize that we are not alone in this fight. With this spirit of solidarity and resistance, we have already begun to recover territories that were usurped from us in Brazil. And in Mozambique, we will not wait 50 years to reclaim our territories, which we inhabited long before the arrival of the companies and eucalyptus trees.

**Down with green deserts!**

**We stand together in this great global recovery of our territories. Towards justice and reparations!**

In Mozambique:

Napai II Community – Nampula Province  
Namacuco Community - Nampula Province  
Meparara Community - Nampula Province  
Messa Community - Nampula Province  
Intatapila Community - Nampula Province  
Misión Tabita - Zambézia Province  
Justicia Ambiental - ¡JA!

In Brazil:

Alert Against the Green Desert Network  
Quilombola Commission of Sapê do Norte, Espírito Santo  
Quilombola Community of Angelim DISA  
Quilombola Community of Angelim I  
Quilombola Community of Chiado  
Quilombola Community of São Domingos  
MST – Landless Workers' Movement, Espírito Santo  
CDDH/Serra – Center for the Defense of Human Rights of Serra, Espírito Santo  
MNDH – National Human Rights Movement  
FACA - Anarchist Federation of Capixaba  
FASE – Federation of Social Assistance and Education Organizations, Espírito Santo  
WRM – World Rainforest Movement

(1) Quilombola communities are made up of descendants of African people who were subjected to slavery in colonial and imperial Brazil, and who managed to escape.

## RECOMMENDED

### **Brazil: Letter from the “Alert against Green Deserts” Network**

As part of the International Day of Struggle against Monoculture Tree Plantations, a meeting of the “Alert against Green Deserts” Network was held in Brazil. Members of different states and representatives of quilobola communities, fishermen and agrarian reform settlements participated in the activity. After finishing the meeting, the network released an open letter in which it denounces the impacts of the plantations and the crimes committed by the companies. At the same time, they demand reparation and reaffirm resistance against tree monocultures.

[Read the letter in Portuguese here.](#)

### **UPM environmental crime in Uruguay**

One of the pulp plants of the Finnish company UPM spilled one million liters of caustic soda into the Sauce stream, a tributary of the Negro River, in Uruguay. The event occurred in mid-August 2023 and adds to a long list of environmental impacts and rights violations committed by this company in that country. Organizations and social movements have been denouncing UPM for years, both in Uruguay and internationally.

For more information about the spill, you can [read here](#) and [watch this video](#) (in Spanish). About the resistance to UPM in Uruguay, [see here](#).

### **The video “Uganda: Resisting industrial oil palm plantations” is available in Bahasa Indonesian**

The video "Uganda: Resisting Industrial Oil Palm Plantations" is now available in Bahasa Indonesian. It highlights the resistance of communities in Buvuma Island, in Uganda, where the Bidco company (partially owned by the transnational Wilmar company) is trying to expand its oil palm plantations. By making false promises including the use of smallholder schemes, the company wants to expand its control over territories and peoples' lives. However, communities are determined to resist and raise awareness by exposing the deceiving practices of the company so that other communities in Uganda and elsewhere do not fall into the same traps.

The video was produced by the Informal Alliance against Industrial Oil Palm Plantations in West and Central Africa. [Watch it in Bahasa Indonesian here](#), and in English, [here](#).

### **Papua: The Moi Tribe Opposing Timber Corporate Giants**

Alamindo Lestari Sejahtera (ALS) Group, that owns and controls at least three timber companies and industries in Papua, is expanding the business of timber forest products exploitation in the customary area of the Moi Tribe through a company called PT Hutan Hijau Papua Barat (HHPB). On July, 2023, in Sorong City, dozens of youths and members of the Moi tribe staged a protest to reject the plan of the government and the company for Forest Utilization Business Permit (PBPH) in a forest area of 92,148 hectares.

At the same time, ALS Group is planning to develop a carbon business in partnership with nine companies holding Forest Utilization Business Permits (PBPH) for carbon sequestration in seven districts, with a total area of 1,573,705 hectares.

Read [this article from Pusaka](#) to learn more about this situation and the Moi Tribe struggle.

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