

Palm oil expansion on indigenous territory must stop
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AMAN and other leading Indonesian NGOs have intensified calls for a moratorium on the expansion of palm oil plantations, which is often on indigenous land leading to conflict and human rights abuses.

The Indonesian government has ramped up plans to expand this crop throughout the archipelago, including plans for expansion on indigenous land.

There are currently 9 million hectares of oil palm plantation in Indonesia, according to Jefri Gideon Saragih of Sawit Watch, with planned expansion of 200,000 hectares per year.

AMAN and other NGOs including Greenpeace, Indonesia Friends of the Earth, Sawit Watch, and Forest Watch Indonesia urged President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to order the Forestry Minister to revoke several policies on forest and peat land conversion for large industrial purposes.

As well as a major source of conflict between indigenous communities and oil palm companies, the expansion of oil palm plantations has led to serious human rights abuses. Government and company policy is contrary to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

In particular, oil palm expansion lacks free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) with affected communities and cases where consent is obtained is through coercion, manipulating community leaders into surrendering land that cannot be sold.

AMAN is campaigning for a law that protects the rights of indigenous communities. Under the current unfavourable legal framework, indigenous communities are extremely vulnerable, and face intimidation and eviction from their customary land when concessions are granted.

Indigenous people in Indonesia are mapping their land across the country as part of a push to defend their land rights in conflict with palm oil plantations and other development.

Organised by AMAN, Forest Watch Indonesia, and the Network for Participatory Mapping, these maps will present a clear message to companies and the government that they must seek the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous communities when considering development on their land.

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