

# Challenging JBS' expansion in Nigeria and beyond



## Media Briefing

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Spokesperson available</b> | Elizabeth Atieno, Food Campaigner at Greenpeace Africa<br>Daniela Montalto, Global Campaign Lead at Greenpeace UK<br>Isabel Willemsen, Biodiversity Campaign Lead at Greenpeace Netherlands  |
| <b>Media Contact</b>          | Joe Evans, Agriculture Global Comms Lead at Greenpeace UK / <a href="mailto:joe.evans@greenpeace.org">joe.evans@greenpeace.org</a> / +44 7890 595387<br>Ferdinand Omondi, Communications & Story Manager at Greenpeace Africa / <a href="mailto:fomondi@greenpeace.org">fomondi@greenpeace.org</a><br>Greenpeace Netherlands Press Office<br><a href="mailto:/persvoorlichting@greenpeace.nl">/persvoorlichting@greenpeace.nl</a> / +31621296895 |

### Key points

- Greenpeace Netherlands has taken the first step towards legal action to force the world's largest meat giant JBS to disclose information on its climate, nature and human rights impacts, in order to challenge its planned \$6 billion global expansion in the courts.
- JBS reincorporated as a Dutch company last year as part of a move to list shares on the New York Stock Exchange.
- JBS is pursuing an aggressive USD 6 billion global expansion. USD 2.5 billion is earmarked for Nigeria.
- Nigerian civil society groups (CSOs) have raised serious concerns about the impact on climate, environment, human rights, food security and regional instability.
- CSOs have decried a lack of transparency from JBS and Nigeria's government regarding the plans, raising serious concerns about accountability, and public participation.
- JBS has three weeks to disclose assessments it holds relating to the climate, nature and human rights impacts of its historic operations and its planned expansion, or face legal escalation.
- This case represents a new frontier in the fight against climate change. If successful, it could set a major precedent for future legal challenges against the industrial agriculture sector, which is a major source of methane emissions.

### What is JBS and why is it a problem?

JBS is the [largest meat company](#) in the world, producing beef, pork, chicken, lamb, farmed fish and processed food products. It slaughters around 8% of the world's total daily beef, 6% of

chicken and 4% of pork. The company originated in Brazil and now has operations across the Americas, Europe, Australasia and parts of Asia.

The parent company, JBS N.V., is based in the Netherlands, having moved its headquarters from Brazil in 2025 as part of its plan to list on the New York Stock Exchange. JBS N.V. is [controlled](#) by its majority shareholders, the billionaire brothers Joesley and Wesley Batista, through their holding company J&F S.A. ([formerly known](#) as J&F Investimentos S.A.), which they jointly own. The Batistas also hold executive roles within JBS.

### **Corruption**

J&F has an admitted record of corruption: for example, in the US in 2020, J&F [agreed to pay](#) more than US\$256m in criminal fines, having admitted that its top executives had engaged 'in a long-running pattern of paying bribes to corrupt officials in Brazil to obtain financing and other benefits'. According to the [plea agreement](#) with the DoJ, the corrupt conduct of the 'executives at the highest levels of the company' included orchestrating mass bribery schemes of at least \$200 million to secure 'improper advantage' including 'corrupt payments' 'for [JBS]' expansion plans'. It is important to note that J&F [admitted that JBS' expansion](#) within and beyond Brazil has thus been facilitated by systemic corruption. As JBS N.V. acknowledges in its [2025 Prospectus](#) registered with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, it faces up to \$6.4 billion in liabilities from criminal, civil and other cases.

### **Environment and human rights**

JBS growth has gone hand in hand with numerous reports of illegality, environmental destruction and human rights abuses – including reports of [forced labour](#), [child labour](#) and [invasion of indigenous lands](#) – within its livestock supply chains and/or directly within its own operations.

Cattle ranching is considered the [primary driver of deforestation](#) across the Amazon biome, with a 2024 study finding [70% of deforested land](#) occupied by grazing pasture. JBS is the [market leader](#) in Brazilian beef, and is linked to enormous areas of deforestation in Brazil. A [conservative estimate](#) attributed the loss of 200,000 hectares to the company via its direct suppliers and up to 1.5 million hectares including its indirect suppliers between 2008 and 2020.

JBS' failure to properly monitor and regulate its own operations and supply chain means these are riddled with reports of human rights abuses. Recent cases include [slavery](#) in facilities within the JBS supply chain, [child labour](#) at company facilities, claims of other [unfair labour practices](#) at company facilities and indigenous rights violations including [illegal grazing of cattle on indigenous land](#) in the supply chain.

### **Climate**

JBS is also a major contributor to climate change. Estimates by Greenpeace Nordic [suggest](#) that JBS total greenhouse gas emissions would place it at number 13 amongst non-state fossil fuel companies in the Carbon Majors 2023 database. Of particular concern are its methane emissions, which Greenpeace Nordic [estimates](#) to be greater than those of ExxonMobil and Shell combined.

## What legal action has Greenpeace NL taken against JBS and why?

On 30 April 2026, Greenpeace Netherlands took the first step towards legal action against meat giant JBS demanding disclosure of information on its climate, nature and human rights impacts in order to challenge in court its business policies. This includes its [planned \\$6 billion global expansion](#), almost half of which has been earmarked for [Nigeria](#), Africa's largest country, which represents a new frontier for industrial meat production.

In the letter, Greenpeace Netherlands' lawyers set out multiple alleged breaches by JBS of Dutch law stemming from the extensive emissions and long history of environmental damage and human rights abuses linked to its business. It argues that JBS' expansion plans risk further exacerbating these harms, raising serious concerns that expansion will be inconsistent with the company's climate and biodiversity obligations and represent a continued breach of Dutch duty of care, which requires companies to act in line with international human rights law.

Greenpeace Netherlands requires this information to robustly assess the merits of future litigation against and to effectively counter JBS' anticipated defences. It has requested the information under the new Dutch law of evidence (article 194, Dutch Code of Civil Procedure), which allows parties access to specific data held by Dutch companies if they have a legitimate interest, in this case the bringing of litigation.

## How did we get to this point?

In June 2025, JBS concluded a decade-long effort to list shares on the New York Stock Exchange. Before the listing, Greenpeace International [warned](#) shareholders that JBS' move to the Netherlands could expose the company to the threat of climate litigation should it fail to comply with Dutch law. Greenpeace Netherlands' legal action today is the first step towards making that warning a reality.

JBS' efforts to list on Wall Street were widely criticised, including U.S. politicians on both sides of the political divide. In the weeks before JBS minority shareholders voted to approve the listing, two major American investor advisory firms, [Glass Lewis](#) and [Institutional Shareholder Services](#) (ISS), advised shareholders to vote against the proposal, citing serious concerns about corporate governance and the long association of JBS' majority shareholders, Brazilian billionaires Joesley and Wesley Batista, with corruption scandals.

Ultimately, the transaction was approved by a narrow majority of the minority shareholders eligible to vote. Over [46% of shareholder votes](#) cast on a very high turnout continued to vote to oppose the plans, illustrating the considerable unease the transaction generated amongst many minority shareholders.

## What are JBS' global expansion plans?

Listing shares on the world's largest stock exchange unlocks masses of potential investment for JBS to expand around the world. In 2025, JBS [announced](#) its intention to invest USD 5-6 billion in growth capital expenditure.

As JBS has peaked in many of the more mature markets where it has gained a dominant position, it now seeks to expand its business by building processing facilities in new markets. This is an incredibly aggressive sectoral expansion - and it is proceeding at pace.

Since 2025, JBS has announced over USD 250 million to build new production facilities in [Vietnam](#) and [Oman](#), as well as expanding production at new facilities in [Saudi Arabia](#). However, the largest share of investment - some USD 2.5 billion - has been [earmarked](#) for the establishment of six new large-scale meat processing plants and associated livestock production in Nigeria. This deal, based on an unpublished MoU between JBS and the Government of Nigeria, was [announced](#) in late 2024.

Niger State has [said](#) it will make available a staggering 1.2m hectares of land in relation to the investment, while [Ogun State](#) and [several others](#) are expected to be involved. Without immediate intervention, rapid, large-scale development of industrial livestock facilities in Nigeria is likely to begin imminently and with it a rapid increase in emissions and a repetition of the cycle of destruction and injustice already associated with industrial meat production in the Amazon.

### **Why is JBS' expansion in Nigeria particularly concerning?**

JBS' massive expansion in Nigeria would lock-in large-scale and irreversible environmental damage and risk corporate exploitation and loss of food sovereignty. The change foreseen is massive: Nigeria currently has no commercial beef processing facilities and most cattle are reared by smallholders and nomadic pastoralists (herders) from across Nigeria and neighbouring Sahel countries.

Any move to industrial agriculture threatens people's access to land and water, as well as endangering rich and diverse ecosystems, including mountain forests, savannahs, wetlands, and mangroves hosting wildlife from leopards and lions to elephants, aardvarks and baboons. Nigerian civil society groups (CSOs) are concerned that the company's track record of environmental destruction, deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions is [likely to be replicated](#) in Nigeria and that JBS' activities are [likely to displace](#) smallholder farmers and endanger food sovereignty. Further risks [include](#) risks to public health, water pollution, marginalization of women, and [tax evasion](#).

JBS has been non-transparent about its Nigeria expansion. Nigerian CSOs have been unable to access the MoU between JBS and the Nigerian government, or other documents and material relating to the project, such as environmental impact assessments and land allocation terms. This raises serious concerns about transparency, accountability, and public participation.

Nigerian CSOs have submitted Freedom of Information requests for the MoU, impact assessments and related documents, so far without result. JBS's track record raises particular concern for Nigeria and the wider region, where environmental regulation, land governance and community consultation processes are often under-resourced or unevenly enforced.

### **What impact could JBS' expansion have beyond Nigeria's borders?**

According to Nigerian CSOs, the implications of JBS' plans reach beyond Nigeria. Nigeria could serve as a gateway to further expansion of industrial livestock farming across sub-Saharan

Africa. Mariann Bassey-Olsson, head of Environmental Rights Action in Nigeria is [reported](#) as saying “Nigeria is considered like a big brother in the subregion with 200 million people [...] They [JBS] did their homework and know that if Nigeria is on board, it will be easy to go into the subregions”.

In August 2025, Niger State [announced](#) a \$100 million livestock export deal with the Saudi Arabia Export and Import Bank to supply the Middle East, a move the state governor reportedly claims will place Nigeria on the map of the international meat supply chain and boost foreign exchange earnings. Analysts have [claimed](#) Nigeria is laying the foundation for a new agricultural export narrative.

In terms of impact on the dynamics of the region’s cattle economy, the US Department of Agriculture [estimates](#) that 50% of cattle currently slaughtered for beef in Nigeria originate in neighbouring countries in the northern Sahel region, with live cattle driven to Nigeria for slaughter. In part as a consequence of climate change, the sector is [linked](#) to community tensions within Nigeria, and trade in cattle in the region has been [widely shown](#) by authoritative organisations to be a key contributor and finance mechanism for armed militias.

Partly as a result of this, certain Nigerian states [hold](#) the status of ‘conflict-affected high-risk areas’ (CAHRA). Given this status, it would therefore appear incumbent upon JBS to carry out heightened due diligence prior to any expansion to ensure its operations will not contribute to conflict and that all appropriate safeguards are in place.

## What happens next?

The letter demands that JBS disclose within three weeks certain information relating to its impact on the planet and people, as well as the steps it takes to measure and mitigate that impact, whether contained in documents or obtainable through the hearing of witnesses or independent expert reviews. This will allow Greenpeace Netherlands to robustly assess the merits of future litigation against JBS N.V.

If it remains uncertain whether a certain document or information exists, or if documents appear incomplete, Greenpeace Netherlands is entitled under Dutch law to seek the required information from senior JBS figures under oath, raising the prospect of the Batista brothers being forced to testify in Dutch court.

In the meantime, Greenpeace Netherlands is also calling in this letter on JBS to cease all further steps until it has provided the information demanded and demonstrates that it is operating in accordance with Dutch law.

At the same time, Greenpeace Africa is pursuing other avenues to hold JBS to account. In March 2026, Greenpeace Africa [submitted](#) an amicus curiae brief before the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights (AfCHPR), arguing that climate destruction is a systematic, ongoing violation of the rights of people across the African continent.

The submission explicitly highlights the growing threat posed by large scale industrial livestock expansion, referencing JBS’ expansion in Nigeria, challenged the impunity with which corporations operate and called on the court to make clear ruling on parent liability.