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24 October 2015, Sei Ahass Village, Kapuas, Central Kalimantan: School children in thick haze pollution resulting from peatland fires that engulfed the region. ©Rante/Greenpeace

PUBLISH MAPS, STOP FIRES, SAVE FORESTS

→ *Transparency is essential to preventing another fires crisis, and improving forest protection to benefit all Indonesians*

"Greenpeace's new map platform will shed much-needed light on forest management in Indonesia, which remains far from fully transparent. Transparency is the hallmark of accountable government, and can help eradicate corruption. By ensuring everyone can see where rights over forests have been handed out, and to whom, these maps will help reduce state losses through corruption in concession issuance, and improve compliance with land management rules."
Bambang Widjojanto, public interest lawyer and former deputy chief of Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), speaking in support of Greenpeace's online publication of Indonesia Forest monitoring maps

In the latter months of 2015, Indonesia and the surrounding region was choking in smoke haze from a terrible fire crisis. By early November, the total emissions from these fires were estimated to have exceeded Japan's annual fossil-fuel emissions.[1] The crisis cost Indonesia an estimated US$16 billion[1] and toxic haze from the fires impacted millions of people including in neighboring Malaysia and Singapore.[1] Over 500,000 people in Indonesia are reported to have suffered from acute respiratory illnesses as a result of the haze.[1]

In total in 2015, some 130,000 fire hotspots were recorded the length and breadth of the country, many of them in plantation concessions. However, it is impossible for the Indonesian public to properly identify which concessions were affected by fire, because land tenure data is not published. Without mapping data of who controls land, where and for what purpose, the Indonesian public struggles to analyse the causes of fires and help prevent them from recurring, with evidence-based solutions.

This lack of transparency impedes accountability and is bad both for democracy and the environment on which we all depend.

Lack of transparency in the forestry sector has social costs

25 February 2016, Sungai Tohor, Riau: Sunrise above trees burnt during extensive peatland fires in 2014. ©Hikmal/Greenpeace

Millions of hectares of forest have been granted as palm oil, paper, timber, or mining concessions often without public consultation and often without disclosure about where or to whom. Indeed, many millions of hectares of forest are covered by two or more concessions. Studies by the KPK have shown that many regulations governing forest management are open to abuse, leading to corruption and loss of millions of dollars in public revenue – the money that pays for schools and healthcare.

When transparency is not observed by government, impacts include:

- **Corruption**: unscrupulous allocation of concessions for personal financial or political gain.

- **Loss of public revenue**: unpaid taxes, such as from illegal logging.

- **Social conflict**: the result of ignoring community land rights, leaving communities unable to participate in land-use decisions that impact them. Much of the forest area within concessions may also be rightly claimed as community land.

- **Private sector uncertainty:** poor coordination between institutions means that concessions often overlap, leading to conflicting management claims. Greenpeace's own maps show some 7 million ha of overlap between identified concessions, (over 5 million ha of this involves coal).

- **Poor law enforcement:** when the public do not have information, it is difficult to report crimes involving land management, and even law enforcement officials may have trouble gaining timely access to the information needed to pursue public reports.

- **Lack of credit where credit's due**: there may be little incentive for companies to actively support government initiatives to prevent fires through peatland protection.

Modern Indonesia was founded as a democracy, and its constitution specifically protects the right to information (notably via clause 28F). This should translate into proactive, timely and free provision of information in formats people can easily locate, use and understand. The constitution also states that the nation's natural resources belong to all Indonesians, meaning that forests are our collective property and our common responsibility for ourselves and future generations. Communities and the wider public need to know who is granting rights to forest lands, who is receiving those rights, and what they are doing with the forests.

Transparency in forest and land management in Indonesia means public access to:

- Land tenure maps, such as plantation and mining concessions (including proposed allocations) to enable the public to identify who is responsible for the land where forests and peatlands are being destroyed by clearance, drainage or fire.

- Maps of forest cover and change in forest cover, to enable:
    - monitoring of the impact of land allocation.
    - enforcement of laws on forest and plantation management.
    - identification of illegal logging.

- Maps of peatlands and peat hydrology, for management and to enable companies to enforce government instructions to prevent fire.

Members of the public cannot engage in the political process unless they have information and tools. Communities directly affected by the new mines and plantations have long been asking the government to publish such maps, and to respect community land rights. Sadly, full transparency remains unrealised.

Greenpeace's efforts to support transparency and the public interest
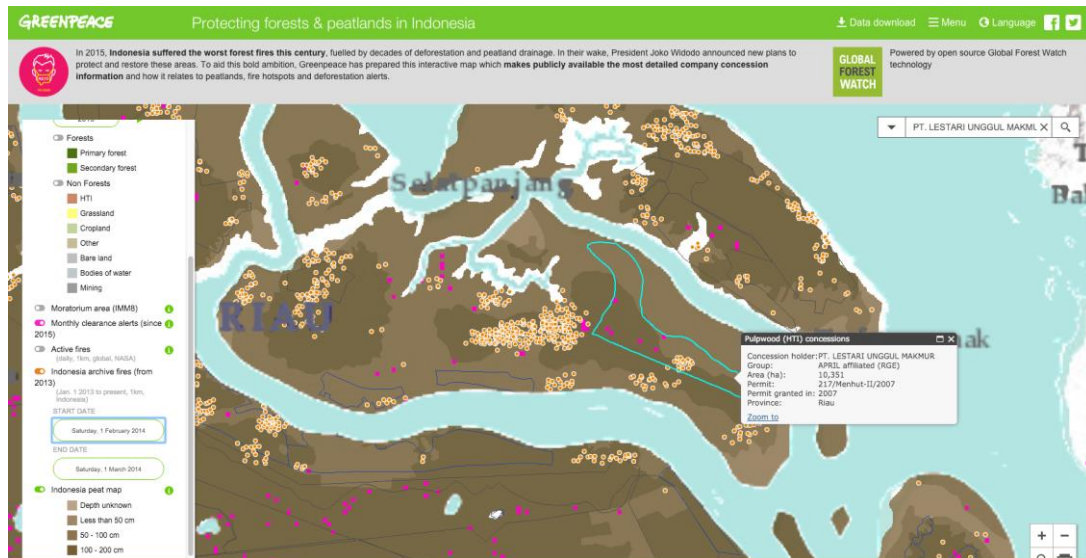
Screengrab from Greenpeace's online mapping tool 'Kepo Hutan' here reveals peat, concessions, fires between 1 February 2014 and 1 March 2014 in and around Sungai Tohor.

Another major contribution to reducing future fires would be an up-to-date online, searchable land registry. Land tenure in Indonesia is often unknown or disputed, making it difficult to establish where responsibility lies. Coupling such a database with digital mapping technologies such as WRI's Global Forest Watch could make identifying the culprits a whole lot easier. One Map, a government-backed project to develop such a spatial mapping solution, is currently under development.
Oliver Balch, 10 March 2016, www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/indonesias-forest-fires-what-you-need-to-know

In 2011, the then government made a promise to Indonesia to publish the One Map, giving detailed information on many topics. In spite of this promise, that government failed to deliver. President Jokowi came into office in 2014 on a promise of transparency, including delivery of the One Map initiative. But the timetable for completion of this project is not until 2019.

With the One Map project delayed, Greenpeace and other civil society organisations have appealed to the government, through Freedom of Information requests, to publish maps containing crucial data about Indonesia's forests. We asked for the data to be provided as shapefile maps. This open format allows any member of the public to combine the official government maps with recent satellite images or

other digital information and conduct analysis. Analysis can show not only where fires are breaking out or forest is being cleared, but who is responsible for the destruction.

As a new fires crisis builds in the country, Greenpeace Indonesia is launching 'Kepo Hutan' (Curious About Forests), an interactive online mapping tool allowing the public to monitor fires and deforestation in near-real time, and to see to an unprecedented extent who controls the land where they are taking place. The platform allows people access to information on individual and group-level concession holding, and how they relate to forests, peatlands, fire hotspots and deforestation alerts. This map is a work in progress based on available information from various sources.

Greenpeace hopes that the map will:

- assist democratic oversight;

- hold to account the companies responsible for the fires that devastated the country in 2015;

- encourage other actors, particularly plantation concession holders, to come forward and publish their own maps; and

- set a standard for the government's One Map initiative.

Achieving transparency

27 November 2014, Sungai Tohor, Riau: Indonesian President Joko Widodo joins members of the Sungai Tohor community in damming a canal draining the surrounding peatland. ©Rante/Greenpeace

The public has the right to comprehensive geospatial information in the most useful format — ie shapefiles — to allow continuous analysis and monitoring. No-one should have to jump through legal hoops and wait months or years to gain access to scraps of vital data. The government standard should be: All of the data, all of the time, available to all.
Bambang Widjojanto

Ministries should publish the data they have and invite all interested stakeholders – communities, experts, companies, and ministries – to work together to correct errors, improve the data and resolve land conflicts. Until the government meets its commitments to publish the One Map, Greenpeace will continue to press for access to this public information in the public interest.

Companies should put all concession maps for their own operations in the public domain, for example through Global Forest Watch's online forest monitoring and alert system or through Kepo Hutan, and require all suppliers to do the same.

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Case study:
Getting Tohor on the map

4 February 2015, Sungai Tohor vicinity, Riau: Canals cut through peatland between recently burnt areas and remaining forest. ©Moldenhauer/Greenpeace

Sungai Tohor village is situated on one of the Meranti islands off the coast of Riau. In 2014, the village drew international attention after a community member, Pak Manan, started an online petition calling on President Jokowi to come see for himself the terrible impact of fires on his community resulting from peatland drainage by a pulpwood plantation company.

In 2009, villagers discovered that more than 10,000 ha of their island had been allocated to a pulpwood company, with 10-metre-wide transport canals cutting through their peatlands and excavators clearing an area of land they use for cultivation. The community also learnt that a 21,000 hectare selective logging concession on the island had been relicensed as a sago plantation.

Not only did the community have no say over these allocations, they were not even told, despite these concessions overlapping with their own [unmapped] lands.

The impact was terrible. Drainage for plantations eventually led to fires in 2014 which burnt some 5,000 hectares of land including community sago orchards. Even without fires, the drainage was damaging natural forest and community sago plantations. According to the community, the drained peatland reaches up to 9 metres in depth – areas which legally are supposed to be off-limits to any such development.

In November 2014, as a result of Pak Manan's online petition, President Jokowi visited the village to see for himself the cause of the community's concerns. Moved by what he saw, the president personally helped the community construct a dam across the drained peatlands. He ordered his ministers to revoke the plantation licence and review all industrial concessions on peatland to see whether they were damaging ecosystems.

A year and a half later, the people of Sungai Tohor have been told that the pulpwood concession has been revoked, but are still unsure of the legal status of their own sustainable sago plantations, and of the boundaries of the industrial sago plantation concession which remains. The villagers have been given no official letters or maps to clarify the situation.

Maps such as those contained in Greenpeace's Kepo Hutan platform, seen in use below by Pak Manan at Sungai Tohor in March 2016, could help provide communities with the certainty that inspires both entrepreneurship and good stewardship. Ultimately however it is up to the government to ensure the latest and most complete information is available to the public.

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25 February 2016, Sungai Tohor, Riau: Abdul Manan uses Greenpeace's Kepo Hutan mapping tool to look at maps revealing the locations of the fires that plagued his community. ©Hikmal/Greenpeace

We want the maps to be public. We have a right to know what is happening to our own land. And we need to be able to monitor it – we want to be the first, not the last, to know when there is a fire or when there is clearance so we can defend our land and hold those responsible to account.
Pak Manan, March 2016

Published by Greenpeace Indonesia, March 2016

[1] GFED (2015) accessed 10 November 2015 gives estimated fire emissions as 1,713 MtCO2, compared to Japan's fossil emissions of 1,360MtCO2 in 2013 according to EDGAR (2015).
[2] http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-20/haze-crisis-cost-indonesia-almost-2-of-gdp-world-bank-says
[3] http://blog.cifor.org/36467/dont-inhale-scientists-look-at-what-the-indonesian-haze-is-made-of?fnl=en
[4] http://www.reuters.com/article/indonesia-haze-health-idAFL8N12Z2HT20151110 and http://news.asiaone.com/news/asia/haze-kills-10-people-indonesia-leaves-over-500000-respiratory-ailments-agency