

An aerial photograph of a sugarcane field. The field is filled with rows of young green sugarcane plants in dark brown soil. A single, larger, mature tree with a thick, light-colored trunk and dense green foliage stands out in the middle of the field. The bottom of the image shows a pile of cut sugarcane stalks.

Sweet Promises,
Bitter Reality:

Inside the Merauke Sugarcane Project

GREENPEACE

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● Forest clearance and sugarcane plantation development in PT Global Papua Abadi near Senayu village, Tanah Miring District, Merauke Regency, on September 18, 2025. 8°16'26"S 140°39'8"E. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace.

Contents

Executive Summary	3	The state's role in planning fresh deforestation	34
Key findings	4	Unwavering support from the previous regime	34
Recommendations	5	Benefiting from chaotic agrarian governance	37
Food and energy from sugarcane plantations	6	Firdaus Dewilmar	37
The shortcut to a national sugar surplus	7	Sofyan Djalil & M. Adli Abdullah and	
Merauke Sugarcane PSN	9	Merauke Sugar Group's FPIC failure	38
The real threat of forest loss and living space		Indonesia's biofuel policy incentivises	
for Merauke Indigenous communitiesw	11	No Deforestation rollback	43
The world's largest deforestation project	14	Bioethanol no climate solution	45
How a consortium of oligarchs secured		Turning a blind eye to environmental impacts	46
'National Strategic Project' status	16	Imminent emissions due to planned	
The Merauke Sugar Group: Fangiono, KPN,		deforestation	46
and Dudy Christian	18	Forest loss exacerbates flood risk	49
Fangiono group	20	Floods affecting transmigrant farmers	50
Involvement in Merauke Sugar Group	20	Biodiversity protection remains a pipe dream	52
Additional Fangiono interest:		Fighting for their future	56
Borneo Citra Persada	22	Misleading customary land owners	57
KPN group (family group of Martua Sitorus		Front yard frontline: barracks built on	
and Ganda)	23	community's doorstep	60
Involvement in Merauke Sugar Group	24	Military co-opting community resistance	61
Dudy Christian	25	Sowing horizontal conflict	62
Sugar Research Australia	26	Bitter past experiences	64
Wilmar	29	Resistance of the Muyu People against eviction	66
Continuing relationship between Wilmar		Seeking justice in the heart of power	67
and family of Martua Sitorus (KPN)	30		
Wilmar Consultancy provided services to			
Merauke Sugar Group companies	31		
Wilmar and its 'sugar journey'	31		
Global Papua Abadi building sugar refinery			
in Wilmar's heartland	32		

Cover: A tree stands alone with young sugarcane plantings in a recently deforested area of the PT Global Papua Abadi sugarcane concession in Bersehati, Merauke, South Papua. 14 December 2025. 8°13'38"S 140°42'1"E © Jurnasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace

Executive Summary

Travellers flying over Merauke, on West Papua's southern coast, have long been treated to a sight that's hard to find remaining anywhere in the world: an expansive lowland filled with natural forests, savannahs, and vast wetlands. But these days, they're also likely to see a landscape in the midst of change. Excavators turning green cover and blue creeks into brown mud. Felled logs piling up in rows.

In the forests and riverside villages, Indigenous Marind, Yei Nan, and Muyu communities are anxious. This new destruction stalks their livelihoods and threatens land passed down through generations. Companies are even encroaching upon the customary territories of Indigenous Peoples who refuse to surrender their land.

In the Marind homeland, land grabbing and forest destruction are taking hold in the name of the Indonesian government's program for food and energy self-sufficiency – designated as a National Strategic Project (PSN). President Prabowo Subianto has framed this ambition as strengthening national resilience to legitimize massive military involvement. A new Regional Military Command has been established in Merauke, estimated to house over 5,000 combat personnel.¹ On the roads of Merauke, military vehicles and soldiers passing by have become a common sight. But for Indigenous West Papuans, given the military's long history of brutal violence, their presence is a terror in itself.

The government's rhetoric is harshly ironic, because in reality the project enhances neither food security nor political security. For many Marind, food security and political freedom means moving through their natural forests, savannahs and wetlands, encountering abundant wild foods. Converting those landscapes into intensive monocultures such as sugar or oil palm plantations amounts to enslaving living organisms. As Marind woman Rafaela explained to environmental anthropologist Sophie Chao: "Free beings make free food. Forest foods taste of freedom. And nothing tastes as good as freedom."²

Greenpeace Indonesia investigated one of these government food and energy projects in West Papua, namely the Merauke Sugarcane PSN, which targets an area of 560,000 hectares – the size of the island of Bali. A consortium of ten companies is set to work on the project. Nine out of the ten are connected to two corporate groups with long track records in the palm oil industry.

If this sugarcane plantation project is not stopped, it will sow disaster through the destruction of West Papuan forests, which now serve as a global climate and biodiversity shield. Greenpeace Indonesia invites you, the reader, to join us in urging the government to stop the Merauke Sugar PSN and save Papua's forests. As West Papuans say, '*Papua bukan tanah kosong*' – Papua is not an empty land.

¹ Made Supriatma dan Fahri Salam, 2025. *Perang yang Timpang: 83.000 Pasukan Organik TNI-Polri dalam Agenda Kekerasan Indonesia di Papua.*
² Sophie Chao, 2025. *Land of Famished Beings – West Papuan Theories of Hunger.*

Key findings

1. Prabowo Subianto has positioned the ambition for food, energy, and water self-sufficiency as a national priority, aligned with strengthening the state defense system.
2. An industrial-scale sugarcane food estate in Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, is planned as a National Strategic Project (PSN) to achieve sugar and bioethanol self-sufficiency targets; but it fails to address the key problem, which is low smallholder sugarcane productivity elsewhere in Indonesia.
3. The government's aim in assigning PSN status may be interpreted as a strategy to reduce risks for operators in order to attract private capital to invest in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN, while sacrificing Indigenous rights and forests as collateral damage.
4. A consortium of ten companies is seeking to develop more than 560,000 hectares of land – an area the size of Bali – for sugarcane plantations in Merauke.
5. Clearing this natural vegetation could produce emissions equivalent to 221 million tonnes of CO₂, or as much as the annual emissions of 48 million cars.
6. More than 23,000 hectares of forests, savanna, and wetlands were cleared within the last 18 months by two of the companies.
7. As at October 2025, emissions from the clearing of forest cover (13,000 hectares of the total area developed so far) by these two sugarcane companies has generated estimated carbon emissions equivalent to the annual emissions of the City of Bandung.
8. Two corporate groups with a long track record in the palm oil industry are believed to be the main private sector actors behind this project: the Fangiono group and the KPN group.
9. Although a number of potential links have been discovered which may be considered to raise suspicions of a possible behind the scenes role for agribusiness giant Wilmar, Wilmar's chairman has denied any current role and pledged no future involvement.
10. The project benefitted from intense political support from the outgoing Joko Widodo government, especially during the transition period between the presidential election and the inauguration of Prabowo Subianto as Jokowi's successor.
11. Amongst the politically exposed persons involved with the project is Sofyan Djalil, a former agrarian minister. This is a cause for concern given that one of the concessions appears to be operating without the legally required cultivation rights title, and also because of the systematic government failures to ensure meaningful Indigenous land rights to protect communities from land-grabbing.
12. Flood events are no longer predictable by farmers since the forest was cleared by the company. In May 2025, floods inundated the area around the PT Global Papua Abadi concession. In Sermayam Indah Village, approximately 90% of farmers' rice fields out of a total area of 400 hectares were submerged, affecting both those newly planted and those already ready for harvest.
13. The concessions of seven of the sugarcane companies overlap with the proposed establishment of a Wildlife Corridor connecting Wasur National Park, Bupul Nature Reserve, and Bian Wildlife Reserve (the Wabubi Corridor). Approximately 310,000 hectares sheltering natural vegetation and serving as habitat for animals – including rare species such as the dusky pademelon, agile wallaby, palm cockatoo, cassowary, mambruk (crowned pigeon), and maleo – are threatened by clearing for sugarcane.

14. The Kwipalo Clan, part of the Yei Indigenous People in Blandin Kakayo Village, continue to be forced to release customary rights, putting them in conflict with other clans in the vicinity; the Muyu People in Senayu Soa Village are threatened with eviction; and the Marind People in Domande Village are continuously harassed. The company employs every means necessary to obtain the release of customary territories for sugarcane land.
15. Militarism is intensifying and makes Indigenous communities fearful. The military assists companies in obtaining customary right releases, even establishing new battalions inside company concessions. A number of Indigenous youths from villages that refused to release land for the Sugarcane PSN were recruited into the Reserve Components (*Komcad*), a special unit for civilians trained militarily.

Recommendations

1. The government should halt the Merauke Sugarcane PSN as it has been problematic from the outset, showing a clear lack of sustainable principles as the project is implemented. The process to develop the project was top-down, without community participation. Meanwhile, the process on the ground has been carried out coercively, trampling on customary rights by prioritizing a military approach, and has had a demonstrably negative impact on the environment and biodiversity, while also contributing significantly to the climate crisis.
2. The government should designate South Papua province, and West Papua in general, as a priority region in the climate change mitigation action plan for the FOLU (Forestry and Other Land Use) sector, ensuring that natural forests are protected and that swamps, mangroves, and peatlands remain in their natural state.
3. The government must strengthen and enforce public transparency regarding corporate beneficial ownership to prevent conflicts of interest for all parties involved in public-private partnerships.
4. Where contractually possible, palm oil companies in the corporate groups involved in the consortium should be added to no-buy lists. This includes Fangiono family interests (First Resources, FAP Agri, Ciliandry Anky Abadi/Mandiri) and KPN group companies (including KPN Plantation and KPN Downstream).
5. Shareholders, customers, and other stakeholders of Wilmar should remain vigilant to the possibility of its future involvement with Merauke Sugar Group companies, including supply chain relationships.
6. Respect the rights of Indigenous peoples who have existed and possessed living spaces long before the introduction of the PSN in Merauke, as guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution, international human rights law and national human rights regulations, and the Papua Special Autonomy Law.
7. Prioritize the natural food systems approach of Indigenous peoples and autonomous local production by small-scale agricultural communities to achieve just and sustainable food and energy sufficiency.

Food and energy from sugarcane plantations



Indonesia's eighth president, Prabowo Subianto, has chosen to continue the food estate program inherited from the previous government. Self-sufficiency in food, energy, and water was first on a list of 17 priority programs he hoped to achieve during his presidency. He also produced an eight-point vision statement, named Asta Cita, the second point of which in one sentence links

this priority with an aspiration to strengthen the state defense system.³ In this briefer, Greenpeace Indonesia reveals the bitter reality behind one of the ways this agenda is being implemented: the Merauke Sugarcane National Strategic Project (*Proyek Strategis Nasional* or PSN).

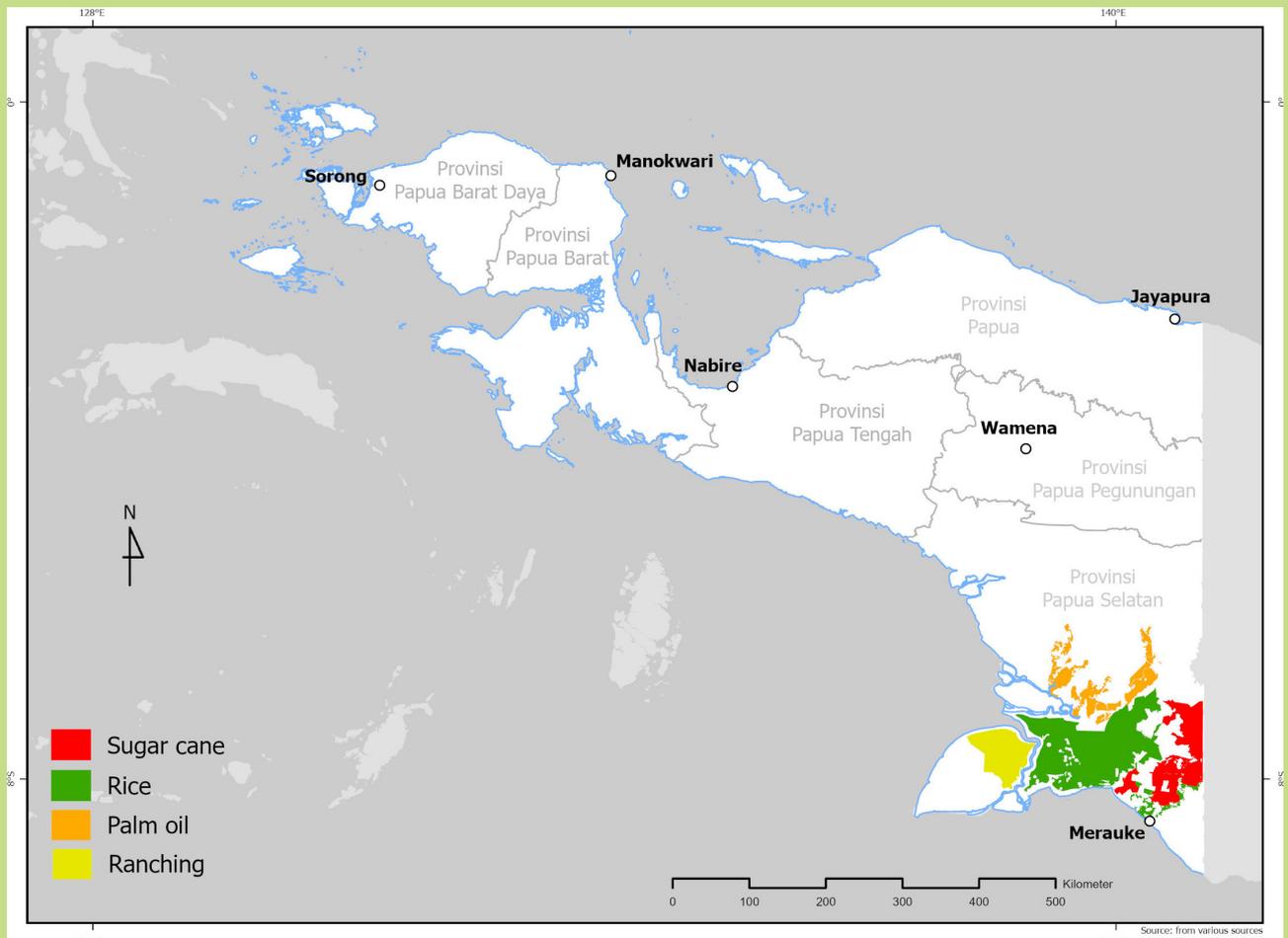


Figure A. Merauke Sugarcane PSN location map.

The shortcut to a national sugar surplus

Setting an ambition to achieve national-level self-sufficiency in sugar, and in energy through producing bioethanol, necessarily implies increasing sugar production. However, in its attempts to address this issue, the government has seemingly chosen not to take as its starting point the existing sugar industry in the country which is predominantly driven by smallholders, whose farms account for 56% of the 520,000-hectare harvest area. For these farmers, over the past decade, productivity has stagnated or even declined.⁴ The challenges are complex, including limited access to pest-resistant seeds, climate change, declining soil quality, lack of innovation, poor irrigation management and inadequate production facilities.⁵ Bureaucratic hurdles, excessive regulations, and rivalry between different government ministries continue to entangle the industry, rendering self-sufficiency within the targeted timescale of 3 to 5 years doubtful, if not impossible.⁶

Given these challenges, the government should focus on supporting sugarcane farmers rather than making unrealistic populist promises. Yet, for the sake of national food and energy self-sufficiency, the government appears inclined to take a shortcut by relying entirely on private capital. This approach mirrors the failed Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) project initiated under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency, which collapsed for various reasons.⁷

At the same time, the government is also faced with expensive energy transition costs.⁸ The government has sought ways to attract investor interest in developing sugarcane-based food and energy commodities. To achieve this, it implemented a de-risking policy that shifts the risk to the state or public institutions, providing reassurances to the private sector in order to incentivize investment.^{9,10} This strategic choice is confirmed by the provision of accelerated and simplified licensing and land acquisition, as well as a guarantee to provide security backup, which are all built in features of the National Strategic Project (PSN) framework.

In South Papua Province, the Merauke Sugarcane PSN will be carried out by 10 plantation concession companies, all strongly suspected of affiliation with two giant Indonesian palm oil business groups. This choice is considered very problematic, given the dark history of deforestation by palm oil corporations, both in the past and ongoing. Furthermore, investment in alternative energy commodities such as bioethanol may well be nothing more than a corporate diversification strategy to benefit these two groups rather than a genuine transformation toward sustainable practices.¹¹

4 Pusat Data dan Sistem Informasi Pertanian Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Pertanian, 2025. Buku Outlook Komoditas Perkebunan Tebu, p. 25-29.

5 Agnes Verawaty Silalahi, 2024, Kebijakan Pengembangan Tebu Menuju Swasembada Gula Konsumsi. Jurnal Perencanaan Pembangunan Pertanian, 1 (1), 75-86.

6 Khudori, 2024, Satgas Swasembada Gula: Mimpi di Ujung Senja Era Jokowi?, Tirto.id, 28 May 2024.

7 Greenpeace Indonesia, 2022. Food Estate: Feeding The Climate Crisis / Menanam Kehancuran Menuai Krisis Iklim.

8 To accelerate energy transition efforts, the Indonesian government stated that Indonesia requires an investment of approximately USD 235 billion. (Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024. Menko Airlangga Hadiri Peluncuran Global Clean Power Alliance: Potensi Baru Dukungan Transisi Energi Bagi Indonesia).

9 Ibid.

10 Berton Pakpahan, be'n habib, dan Ali Rahangiar, 2025. "Tinjauan Kebijakan: Pembaruan Ekstraktivisme Sumber-sumber Agraria dan Keuangan Publik Atas Nama Transisi Energi".

11 A new study on the involvement of dirty energy players in the new and renewable energy business found that these players are not abandoning profit foundations underpinned by fossil energy, but are merely adopting diversification and risk mitigation strategies across their portfolios: Grahat Nagara dan Dhany Alfalah, 2025. Pemain Energi Kotor di Transisi Bersih: Analisis Individu Berpengaruh dalam Bisnis-Bisnis Energi Terbarukan, Koalisi Transisi Bersih, p. 14-15.



- Forest clearance and sugarcane plantation development in PT Global Papua Abadi in Senayu village, Merauke regency, South Papua province on September 18, 2025. 8°16'25"S 140°39'12"E © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

Merauke Sugarcane PSN

A 2023 presidential regulation laid the foundation for sugar and bioethanol self-sufficiency by projecting a 700,000 hectare expansion of sugarcane cultivation, on land sourced from existing plantation land, smallholder sugarcane farms, and forest areas.¹² That same year, the government designated the Merauke Food and Energy Development Area as a National Strategic Project, without specifically mentioning sugarcane.¹³

Just five months later, through a presidential decree, President Joko Widodo formed the Sugarcane and Bioethanol Self-Sufficiency Acceleration Task Force within the Merauke PSN, which marked the government's official support for the sugarcane PSN. The Task Force was led by the Minister of Investment and Downstreaming/Head of the Investment Board, a position held by Bahlil Lahadalia at that time.¹⁴ The ministry listed 10 companies investing in the development of the sugar and bioethanol zone in Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, with an expanse of 637,420 hectares concentrated in an area identified as Cluster III of the Merauke PSN.¹⁵

12 Perpres No. 40 Tahun 2023 tentang Percepatan Swasembada Gula Nasional dan Penyediaan Bioetanol Sebagai Bahan Bakar Nabati (*Biofuel*).

13 Peraturan Menteri Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian No. 8 Tahun 2023 tentang Perubahan Keempat Atas Peraturan Menteri Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian No. 7 Tahun 2021 Tentang Perubahan Daftar Proyek Strategis Nasional. Regulations regarding the PSN list have undergone changes ten times; most recently, the PSN list was amended by Permenko Ekonomi No. 16 Tahun 2025, which expanded the PSN program in Merauke by adding oil palm plantations for biodiesel supply.

14 Keppres 15/2024 tentang Satuan Tugas Percepatan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol di Kabupaten Merauke, Provinsi Papua Selatan.

15 Kementerian Investasi, 2024. Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis (KLHS) Proyek Strategis Nasional Kawasan Pengembangan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol Klaster III di Merauke, p. 8



- Deforestation and young sugarcane plantings inside PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri sugarcane concession in Jagebob, Merauke, South Papua. 14 December 2025. 7°56'25"S 140°46'18"E © Jurnasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace

The real threat of forest loss and living space for Merauke's Indigenous communities

A large-scale sugarcane planting program in Papua was previously attempted by the government in the era of the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) around 2010. At the time, the Merauke Regency Government allocated 1.2 million hectares of land to develop food crops, with rice planned for 50% of the project area, sugarcane/sugar (30%), and palm oil (20%). Ultimately, the MIFEE program did not proceed as planned due to various problems.¹⁶

Fast forward ten years, and the administration of President Joko Widodo issued a regulation regarding sugar self-sufficiency and the provision of bioethanol as biofuel. Through this regulation, the government targets that self-sufficiency in what it terms “consumer sugar” can be achieved in 2028, and that “national sugar” self-sufficiency, which includes industrial use, as well as bioethanol development, can be achieved by 2030.¹⁷ One of the routes taken to achieve these national sugar self-sufficiency targets and the provision of bioethanol from sugarcane, at a minimum of 1.2 million kiloliters, is to expand new sugarcane plantations from existing plantation land, smallholder sugarcane land, and forest areas up to 700,000 hectares.¹⁸

Currently, investors have formed a consortium of ten companies,¹⁹ comprising both those that are already operating and those that are still awaiting licensing, which intend to operate in the areas shown in Figure B below. Those ten companies were granted sugarcane concessions covering 560,000 hectares in Merauke, an area the size of the island of Bali.²⁰ Of that area, three-quarters (419,000 hectares), is mapped by the government as forested. The majority of the remaining land comprises 83,000 hectares of wetlands and 34,000 hectares of savanna.²¹ Based on Greenpeace Indonesia's observations, plantation development by just two companies from March 2024 to October 2025 has cleared 26,000 hectares of land, of which the total natural forest deforestation summed to 13,000 hectares.²²



16 Among others, there is resistance from Indigenous Papuans due to the shift from a foraging cultural pattern to an industrial pattern, the community losing access to food sources, and horizontal conflicts with migrants. Environmental issues include landscape alteration, loss of soil sustainability due to chemical fertilizer residue, and damage to catchment areas for flood prevention. See Maria Maghdalena, *et.al.* 2023. Tinjauan Implementasi Program Food Estate dan Prospeknya di Merauke Papua. Forum Penelitian Agro Ekonomi, Vol. 40 No. 2, December 2022: p. 119-133.

17 Direktorat Jenderal Perkebunan, Kementerian Pertanian, 2025. '2030, Mentan: Gula Cukup, Energi Mandiri'.

18 Article 3 paragraph (1) of Presidential Regulation 40/2023. Article 3 paragraph (6) mandates the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs to establish a roadmap for sugar and bioethanol self-sufficiency. However, as of the publication of this report, Decree of the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs No. 418/2023 concerning the Roadmap for National Sugar Self-Sufficiency and the Provision of Bioethanol as Biofuel is not publicly available, and a request for information addressed to the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs has also been submitted, but has not received a satisfactory response.

19 Kementerian Investasi, 2024. Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis (KLHS) Proyek Strategis Nasional Kawasan Pengembangan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol Klaster III di Merauke.

20 According to Greenpeace Indonesia's spatial analysis, the exact area is 561,147 hectares. The area of Bali Island is approximately 563,666 hectares.

21 Complete data is available in this table, resulting from an overlay of sugarcane concession maps with the 2024 land cover map from the Ministry of Forestry.

22 Based on spatial analysis results by Greenpeace Indonesia, the area of land clearing by PT Global Papua Abadi and PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri during the period of March 2024 – October 2025 reached 26,722 hectares, including natural forest deforestation of 13,067 hectares.

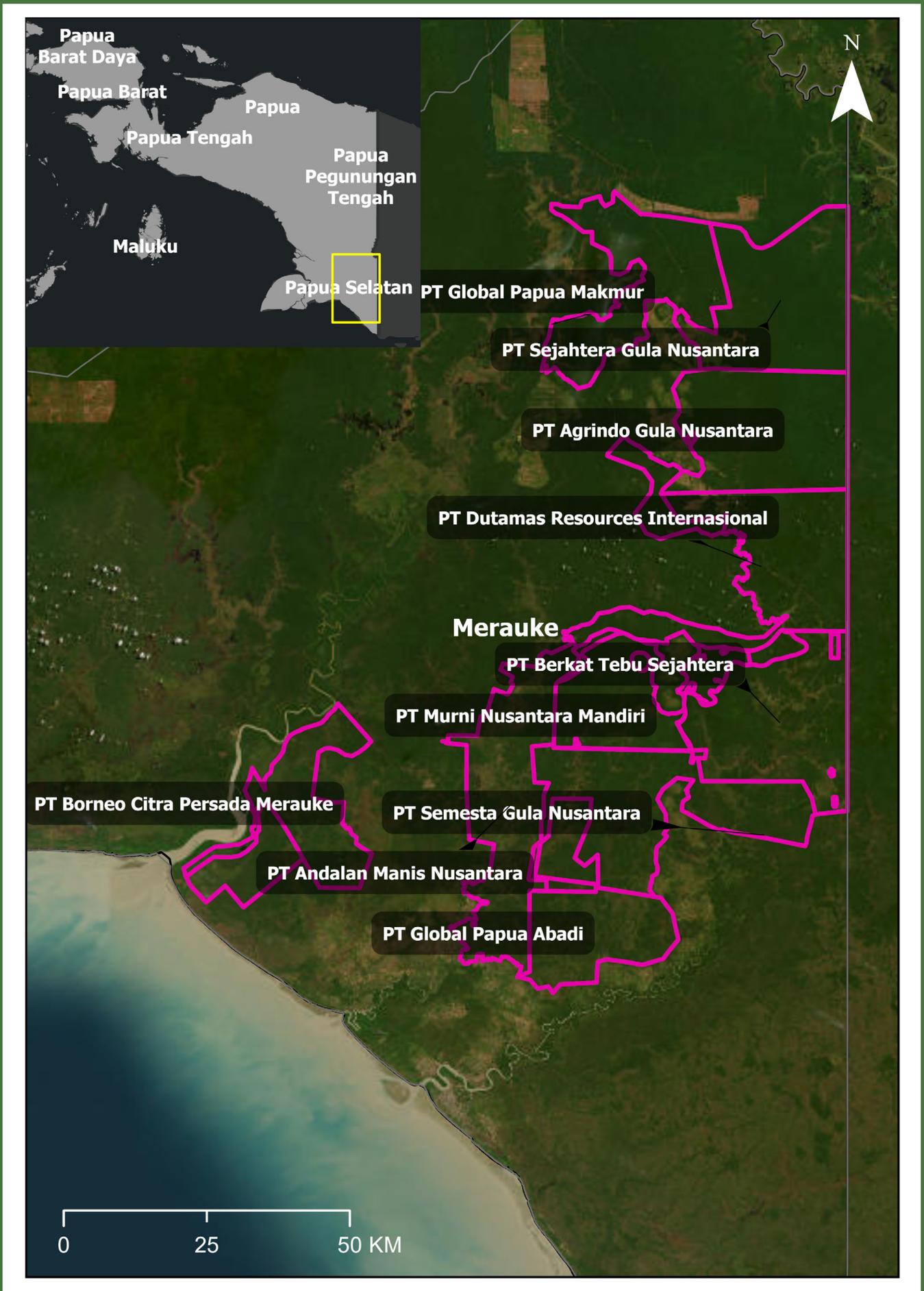


Figure B. Merauke Sugarcane PSN: Satellite view of locations and names of the consortium of ten companies participating.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has targeted a compulsory 10% bioethanol blend (E10) in all gasoline sold by 2030.²³ According to media reports, the sugarcane industry in Merauke, which is projected to produce 150,000 to 300,000 kiloliters of ethanol per year – besides producing sugar – hopes to open its first factory by 2027.²⁴ According to one analysis, meeting the objective of the 10% ethanol blending program would need around 7.3 million kiloliters of bioethanol, which would require at least 1.37 million hectares of sugarcane plantations.²⁵

The customary forests of the Yei and Marind Indigenous Peoples, which are administratively located in the West Papuan districts of Tanah Miring, Kurik, Animba, Jagebob, Elikobel, Malind, Muting, and Ulilin, are threatened with being cleared by these sugarcane companies. One Muyu Indigenous community, which has settled in Senayu Soa Village, Tanah Miring District, since before Indonesia's independence, is also haunted by the threat of eviction from their homes and livelihoods. All of this for the sake of Jakarta's national food and energy self-sufficiency ambitions.



²³ That target will be one of the subjects of discussion in the revision of Regulation of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources No. 32 of 2008 concerning Penyediaan, Pemanfaatan dan Tata Niaga Bahan Bakar Nabati (Biofuel) Sebagai Bahan Bakar Lain, which is currently ongoing.

²⁴ Azura Yumna Ramadani Purnama, 2025. Pabrik Tebu Merauke Ditarget Produksi 300 Ribu Kl Etanol. Bloomberg Technoz.

²⁵ Jakarta: Institute for Essential Services Reform, 2024. Indonesia Energy Transition Outlook 2025: Navigating Indonesia's Energy Transition at the Crossroads: A Pivotal Moment for Redefining the Future.

The world's largest deforestation project

As mentioned above, the long-standing ambition to develop a Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) remained largely unachieved during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo's presidential terms. Under President Prabowo, however, plans have been refreshed and expanded, and a number of concrete steps are being taken. In August 2025, Zulkifli Hasan, as the Coordinating Minister for Food, took on the responsibility to lead a new Coordination Team for the Acceleration of the Development of the National Food, Energy, and Water Self-Sufficiency Area.²⁶

Although this brief restricts its focus to Merauke, it is not the only regency in southern Papua facing massive deforestation. In September 2025, the scope of the PSN title was expanded to include all four regencies in the province of South Papua, and renamed the 'Merauke, Mappi, Asmat, and Boven Digoel National Food, Energy, and Water Self-Sufficiency Program'.²⁷

Ranching, rice and palm oil for biodiesel

Besides the 560,000 hectares dedicated to sugarcane which are analysed in this brief, the expanded National Food, Energy, and Water Self-Sufficiency Program in South Papua province covers now three other commodities over an area of nearly 2.7 million hectares: ranching (380,000 hectares), rice (1,330,000 hectares), and palm oil (418,000 hectares) – the latter intended to support expansion of the government's B50 (50% blend) biodiesel program.

If settlements, farmland, and similar existing land uses are excluded from calculations, this wider program threatens a total of 2,470,000 hectares of natural forest, wetlands, and savanna, as shown in Table A below (also see more detailed table [here](#)).

It is therefore not surprising that what is happening in the southern part of West Papua has been described as the largest ongoing deforestation project in the world today.²⁸

Landcover 2024	Merauke Sugarcane PSN				Area (hectares)
	 Palm oil	 Ranching	 Rice	 Sugarcane	
Natural forest	264,132	38,435	611,765	418,905	1,333,237
Wetlands	77,406	265,351	394,108	83,293	820,158
Savanna	53,090	65,069	163,959	34,189	316,307
Other landcover	22,923	10,952	160,272	24,761	218,908
Grand Total Merauke Sugarcane PSN	417,551	379,807	1,330,104	561,148	2,688,610

Table A. World's largest deforestation project: forest, wetlands and savanna threatened by the wider Program Swasembada Pangan, Energi, dan Air Nasional Merauke, Mappi, Asmat, dan Boven Digoel in South Papua province.

Road construction

The PSN plan includes the construction of a 135 km road from Ilwayab District to Muting District. Currently, the section of road that has been built is 115 km long. The total area of land that has been cleared during this road construction and creation of rice fields directly alongside it is 9,991 hectares, with a deforestation area of 6,843 hectares. Thus, combined with the clearing for sugarcane so far, the total area of land clearing for the PSN project in South Papua province until October 2025 has reached 36,000 hectares, with 19,900 hectares of deforestation.

²⁶ Keppres 19/2025 tentang Tim Koordinasi Percepatan Pembangunan Kawasan Swasembada Pangan, Energi, dan Air Nasional.

²⁷ Through Peraturan Menteri Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Nomor 16 Tahun 2025 tentang Perubahan Kedelapan atas Peraturan Menteri Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Nomor 7 Tahun 2021 tentang Perubahan Daftar Proyek Strategis Nasional.

²⁸ Victoria Milko, 2025, World's largest deforestation project fells forests for bioethanol fuel, sugar and rice in Indonesia, apnews.com, 7/4/2025.

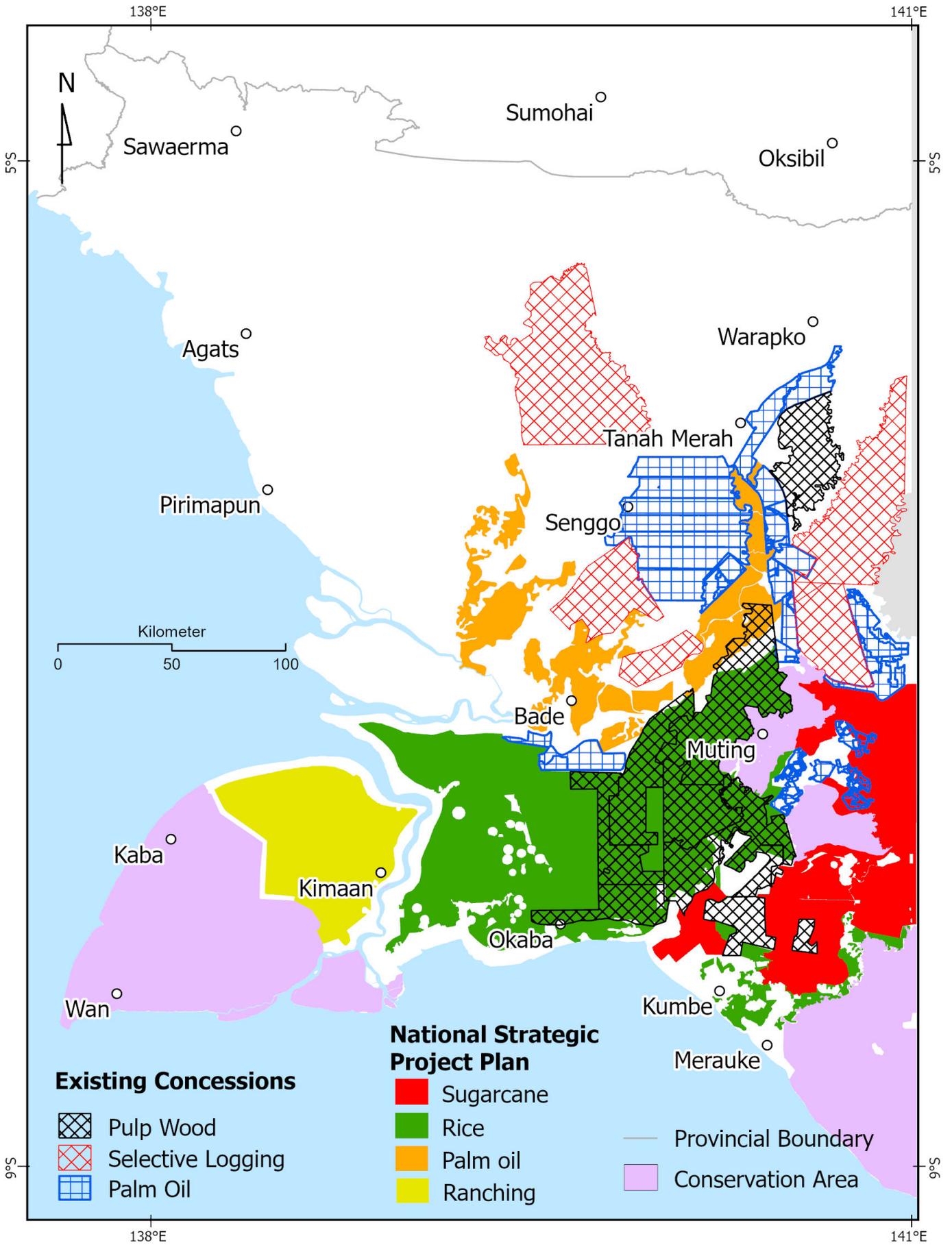


Figure C. The broader National Food, Energy, and Water Self-Sufficiency Program in South Papua province covers four commodities over an area of 2.7 million hectares: sugarcane, ranching, rice, and palm oil – shown in solid colours. The crosshatched areas are existing (mostly undeveloped) concessions.

How a consortium of oligarchs secured ‘National Strategic Project’ status



This section discusses the families that have controlling interests in the companies that aim to operate sugarcane plantations in Merauke. The ten company names and locations, shown in Figure B, were included in a strategic environmental assessment produced by the Investment Ministry in July 2024, which described the ten as part of a business consortium;²⁹ the central government recently reiterated that all ten companies in the consortium are still considered part of a (now wider) National Strategic Project.³⁰

Of the ten companies, we have only been able to find evidence that PT Global Papua Abadi, the first to start land clearing, holds all the necessary permits for a sugarcane plantation.³¹ According to the 2024 strategic environmental assessment, most of the companies still have a long process ahead to secure all the permits required: Greenpeace Indonesia has sent multiple freedom of information requests to different branches of government, but has received few replies to confirm which permits they hold so far.

The second company to clear land for a plantation, PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri, has gone through the environmental impact assessment process, but at the time of writing, it was not believed to hold cultivation rights (HGU), which are required to legally operate.³²

The government's one-stop permitting office in Merauke informed us that it had issued a preliminary permit for a third company, PT Borneo Citra Persada, to confirm that its concession was in accordance with the spatial plan. However, it had not processed permits for the remaining seven companies, which are PT Agrindo Gula Nusantara, PT Andalan Manis Nusantara, PT Berkat Tebu Sejahtera, PT Dutamas Resources Internasional, PT Global Papua Makmur, PT Semesta Gula Nusantara, and PT Sejahtera Gula Nusantara, suggesting that it was the responsibility of the Forestry Ministry, as those concession areas are largely within the national forest estate.³³

29 Kementerian Investasi, 2024. *Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis (KLHS) Proyek Strategis Nasional Kawasan Pengembangan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol Klaster III di Merauke*.

30 Coordinating Ministry for the Economy, 1 October 2025, Letter to PT Global Papua Abadi. The companies are PT Global Papua Abadi, PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri, PT Andalan Manis Nusantara, PT Semesta Gula Nusantara, PT Berkat Tebu Sejahtera, PT Dutamas Resources Internasional, PT Global Papua Makmur, PT Agrindo Gula Nusantara, PT Sejahtera Gula Nusantara, and PT Borneo Citra Persada.

31 It appears that PT Global Papua Abadi obtained an environment permit in August 2015, and that release from the national forest estate was received in 2017. Cultivation rights (Hak Guna Usaha) were apparently held since 2024, but it cannot be confirmed that this was issued before land-clearing started.

32 The fact of this legal obligation was reinforced by the Constitutional Court in 2016 (Decision Number 138/PUU-XIII/2015); the Court also modified wording in the 2014 Plantation Law to clarify the requirement that plantation companies must secure cultivation rights (Hak Guna Usaha) before beginning operations.

33 Pemerintah Kab. Merauke - Dinas Penanaman Modal dan Pelayanan Terpadu Satu Pintu (DPMPTSP), 2025. *Surat Balasan kepada Greenpeace Indonesia* (13 Aug 2025)



● A Greenpeace Indonesia activist stands amidst bulldozed forest logs at the PT Global Papua Abadi sugarcane plantation in Senayu village, Merauke regency, South Papua province on September 18, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace



● Tractors used by PT Global Papua Abadi at Senayu village, Tanah Miring District, Merauke regency, South Papua province on September 18, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

The Merauke Sugar Group: Fangiono, KPN, and Dudy Christian

Nine of the ten plantation companies in the project have the same ownership structure. All are subsidiaries of PT Merauke Sugar Group, and are therefore described in this briefer as Merauke Sugar Group companies. These include the two companies that have actively cleared land to date, PT Global Papua Abadi and PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri. The only company with a different ownership structure, PT Borneo Citra Persada, is discussed under the section on the Fangiono group below.

Two prominent business families with extensive interests in the palm oil industry are semi-openly associated with the companies, in that they have represented them in public, although they do not identify themselves formally through owning shares in their own name. The first is the Fangiono family, and the second is the family behind the KPN group, whose most prominent member is Martua Sitorus.³⁴

The two families' involvement with the Merauke Sugar Group was on display when key figures attended a PT Global Papua Abadi planting ceremony with Indonesian President Joko Widodo in July 2024. Participating in the event were Martua Sitorus, Martias Fangiono (father of the siblings who run First Resources and other Fangiono group companies), and his daughter Wirastuty Fangiono. Some of the evidence for their involvement is briefly touched on below, with more laid out in the accompanying Corporate & Political Links briefer.

The make-up of this consortium is not made transparent in the formal ownership structure of the companies, shown in Figure D below; we note, however, that many companies involved in securing plantation assets in West Papua appear to use individuals as nominees during the permit acquisition process.³⁵ During the initial period of plantation development, right up until late 2025, the majority shareholder of PT Merauke Sugar Group was an individual called Angelia Bonaventure Sudirman.³⁶ During this time, however, she was not a director of any of the nine sugarcane concession companies she owned on paper. Angelia is also not known to have experience in the agribusiness industry. She does, however, have a family relationship with the Fangiono family, as Martias's niece.

The ownership structure changed in October 2025 with the majority share of PT Merauke Sugar Group passing from Angelia to a Singapore company, Resources Harvest Pte. Ltd. The sole share in this company is owned by a Singapore-based trust, which, under Singapore law, has no obligation to disclose its beneficiaries to the public.

³⁴ The family name, Thio, is not used by the majority of the family members, at least in the Indonesian versions of their names. The group may be understood as the family group controlled by five siblings (full names Martua Sitorus, Ganda, Thio Ida, Bertha and Mutiara) and their children.

³⁵ See Greenpeace International, 2021. Licence to Clear: The Dark Side of Permitting in West Papua.

³⁶ From May 2024 to October 2025, according to official company profiles.

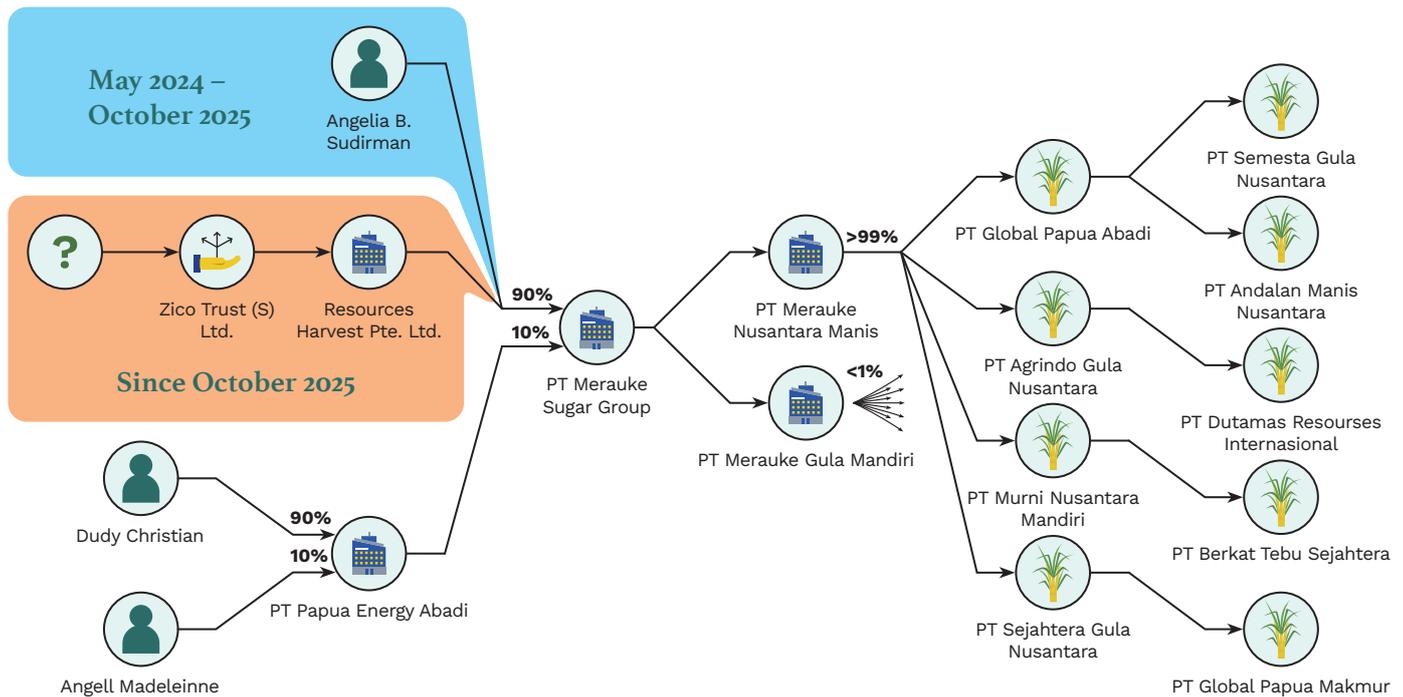


Figure D. Ownership structure in Merauke Sugar Group companies during initial development from May 2024 to October 2025 (blue colour) and following the October 2025 shift to an offshore trust (in pink). Note that PT Merauke Gula Mandiri owns a minority share in each of the nine plantation companies, but arrows are omitted for clarity.

Martias and Wirastuty Fangiono, along with Martua Sitorus, have never been official shareholders of the companies, despite representing the company at President Joko Widodo's visit. This does not necessarily mean that they do not control the company as part of a broad corporate group. There are certain reasons a corporate group engaged in the plantation sector may choose a non-transparent ownership structure for some of its assets. Key among these is where a company is likely to cause deforestation, a corporate group may decide to mitigate the risk to other parts of its group which have No Deforestation policies.

Greenpeace Indonesia endorses the definition of corporate group used by the Accountability Framework Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council, which is based on a broad range of types of control rather than simple share ownership.³⁷ This definition more closely reflects the realities of plantation business groups in Southeast Asia, where control within a single family is commonplace, as is the use of shadow companies to conceal control.³⁸

³⁷ Accountability Framework Initiative (n.d.) 'definition: Corporate group'

³⁸ See further details in Greenpeace International (2025) *Under The Eagle's Shadow: investigating the RGE/Tanoto Shadow Empire*.

Fangiono group

The Fangiono group, understood as the business groupings controlled by Martias Fangiono,³⁹ his wives and children, is largely focussed on palm oil via the following companies.

- First Resources: listed on the Singapore stock exchange,⁴⁰ it is one of the largest palm oil growers, processors and traders in Indonesia. Martias Fangiono's six children with his first wife, Irawaty, are the ultimate beneficiaries.⁴¹ The CEO is Ciliandra Fangiono, one of Martias's sons.
- PT FAP Agri Tbk: Originally named Fangiono Agro Plantation, this is another Fangiono-owned palm oil company, listed on the Indonesian Stock Exchange; at the time of its IPO, it was wholly owned by one of the children of Martias and Irawaty, Wirastuty Fangiono.
- PT Ciliandry Anky Abadi and PT Ciliandry Anky Mandiri: With a second wife, Silvia Caroline, Martias had two children, Ciliandry and Wiras Anky, and this second family also holds extensive palm oil assets through these two companies. When (now) Merauke Sugar Group company PT Global Papua Abadi was established as a company in 2012, it was a subsidiary of Ciliandry Anky Abadi.
- New Borneo Agri Group (more recently known as the Kalimantan Agro Sejahtera Group): One of Indonesia's largest recent deforesters, evidence for its connection with the rest of the Fangiono group is set out in the 'Chasing Shadows' report by the Gecko Project (note that First Resources denies allegations that these companies are related).⁴²

Involvement in Merauke Sugar Group

- Several of these family members, including First Resources' CEO Ciliandra Fangiono were present in China at a signing ceremony for the contract to build a 40,000 ton per day sugar mill for Merauke Sugar Group company PT Global Papua Abadi (more on this below).
- Merauke Sugar Group's majority registered owner, Angelia Sudirman, is Martias's niece. Funeral reports for Hertanto, Martias's father, who died in 2011, list Martias as his son and Angelia Sudirman as a granddaughter.⁴³
- As mentioned above, Fangiono group involvement in the Merauke Sugar Group is perhaps best illustrated by these government images⁴⁴ of Martias and Wirastuty Fangiono present at the project launch by President Joko Widodo:

39 Although he is often known as Martias Fangiono, and his children all bear the Fangiono name, in legal documents Martias only uses a single name (i.e. without Fangiono).

40 First Resources website.

41 First Resources Limited, 2024. Form 3 for SGX.

42 The Gecko Project, 2023. Chasing Shadows.

43 Info Meninggal Dunia, 2011. Hertanto (Peng Hok Kie).

44 Photos on the presidential website include a sign identifying Martias. The image showing the sign for Wirastuty Fangiono is taken from the State Secretariat's (Kementerian Sekretariat Negara) Youtube video of the event.



- Two images from Indonesian President Joko Widodo's visit to PT Global Papua Abadi show ceremonial planting signs labelled for both Martias Fangiono (first image, leftmost) and Wirastuty Fangiono (second image, leftmost). Documentation from the Presidential office and the State Secretariat, 23 July 2024

Additional Fangiono interest: Borneo Citra Persada

The tenth sugar plantation company, PT Borneo Citra Persada, is the only company currently seeking permits for sugarcane in Merauke, which does not have the same structure as the nine Merauke Sugar Group companies. Its ownership structure is shown in Figure E. Its parent company PT Ciliandry Anky Mandiri is owned by

Martias’s second wife Silvia Caroline and their two children, Ciliandry Fangiono and Wiras Anky Fangiono.⁴⁵ In contrast to the Merauke Sugar Group project, there are no indications that Martua Sitorus or his family has any involvement with PT Borneo Citra Persada.

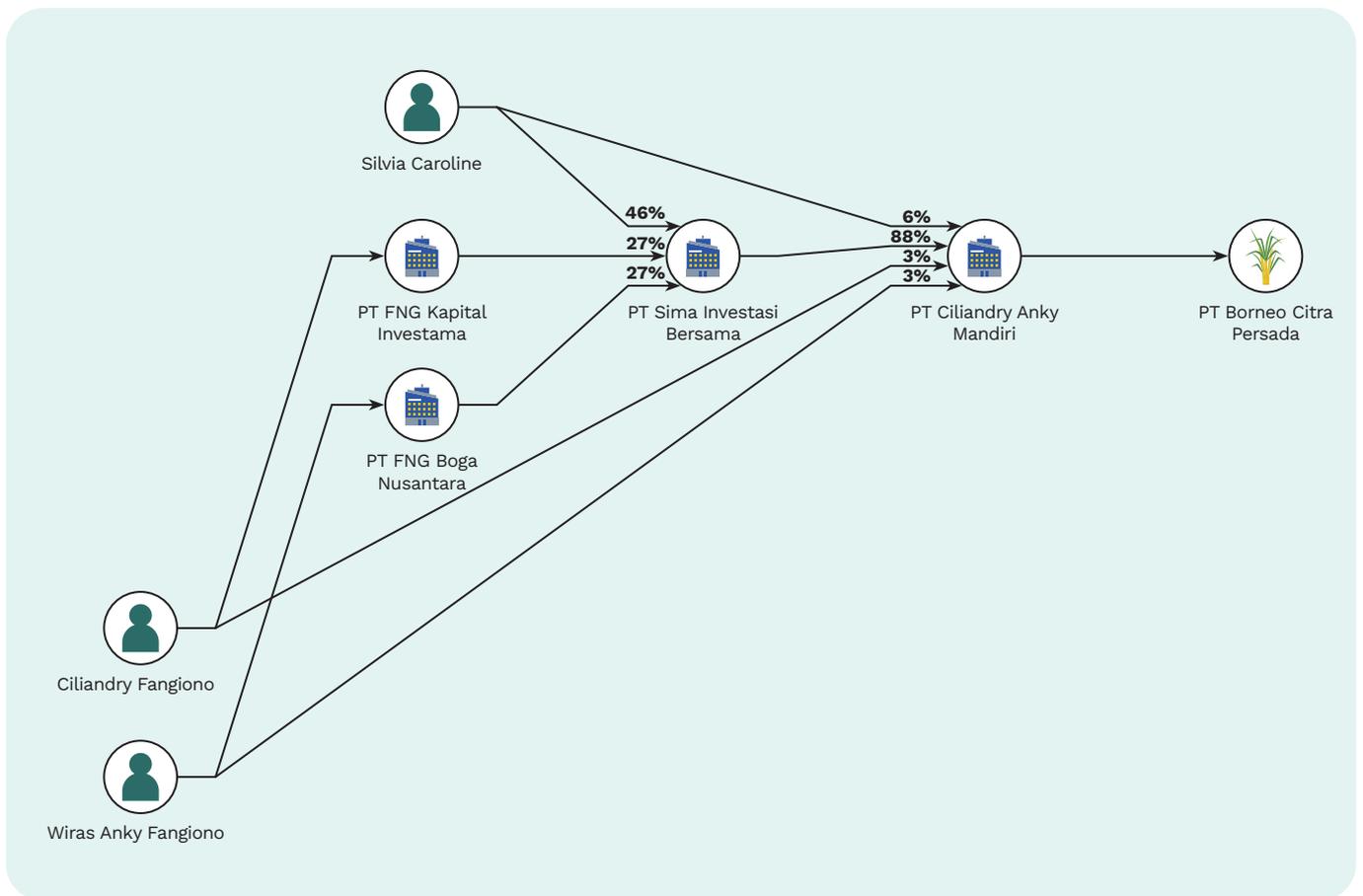


Figure E. Ownership structure diagram for PT Borneo Citra Persada.

45 More details of the current and historical connections between Ciliandry Anky Abadi and First Resources and FAP Agri are laid out in the accompanying Corporate & Political Links brief.

KPN group (family group of Martua Sitorus and Ganda)

Martua Sitorus was visibly present alongside Martias and Wirastuty Fangiono at the time of president Joko Widodo's Merauke visit to PT Global Papua Abadi in July 2024.⁴⁶ He is best known as one of the founders of agribusiness giant Wilmar, along with Kuok Khoon Hong, but besides this, he and his family also developed their own palm oil interests. They did this via a company now known as KPN but previously known as Gama (a portmanteau from the names of Martua's brother Ganda⁴⁷ and Martua himself).

Whereas Wilmar adopted a No Deforestation policy for palm oil in 2013,⁴⁸ Gama Group continued to be engaged in major deforestation, including, from 2013 onwards, on two palm oil plantations in Merauke just to the north of the current sugarcane project.⁴⁹ Martua left Wilmar in 2018 to concentrate on the family business after deforestation by Gama was exposed⁵⁰ by Greenpeace International.

Also owned by the family, but not branded as KPN, are palm oil plantations and forestry operations in Sulawesi, which go under the name Bintang Timur group.



● Martua Sitorus (right) greets President Joko Widodo during the planting ceremony event at PT Global Papua Abadi. Documentation from the Presidential office, 23 July 2024.

46 Photos on the presidential website show Martua Sitorus greeting the president during the planting ceremony event at PT Global Papua Abadi. Presiden RI, 2024. Tanam Tebu Perdana di Merauke, Presiden: Pemerintah Fokus Kembangkan Ketahanan Pangan.

47 Unlike his brother, Ganda goes by one name.

48 Wilmar, 2013. No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation Policy.

49 Namely PT Agrinusa Persada Mulia and PT Agriprima Cipta Persada.

50 Greenpeace International, 2018. Rogue Trader - Keeping deforestation in the family.

Involvement in Merauke Sugar Group

Besides Martua's appearance at the PT Global Papua Abadi ceremony, there are several other connections between KPN and Merauke Sugar Group companies:

- Jocelin Sitorus, who is Martua Sitorus's daughter and President Commissioner of KPN's cement company,⁵¹ was on the board of three holding companies, which are the parents of nine of the ten Merauke sugarcane plantation companies, for a period between August and November 2024.⁵²
- Tan Keng Liam, a key manager with the KPN group⁵³ who has also been on the boards of many Bintang Timur Group companies, was director of several companies involved in the Merauke project at different times between August 2023 and January 2025. He was also the initial majority shareholder of PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri when it was founded in August 2023. Several more names linking KPN companies to Merauke Sugarcane PSN companies are listed in the accompanying Corporate & Political Links briefer.
- Andy Indigo and Clifton Theodore of KPN travelled to Australia to negotiate and sign an agreement on behalf of PT Global Papua Abadi, the supply of sugarcane varieties from Sugar Research Australia (see SRA section below).
- Chinese company Sinoma (Suzhou) Construction Co. Ltd reports a delegation travelled from Indonesia to Shanghai to sign a contract to build a 40,000 ton per day sugar mill and 2,000 ton per day sugar refinery for PT Global Papua Abadi, on July 10, 2025.⁵⁴ Sinoma cites the major shareholders as being KPN group and (Fangiono family's) First Resources. Five leading figures from the two families – Martua Sitorus' and Martias Fangiono's – appear to be present in an official photo of the ceremony (below).
- Prior to a briefer published by NGO Mighty Earth in April 2025, representatives of KPN and its owning family reportedly acknowledged that they had been investors but claimed that they were no longer involved in the Merauke Sugar Group project. However, the family members' presence at the Sinoma signing ceremony is a strong indication to the contrary. More recently, when Greenpeace Indonesia contacted KPN's head office in December 2025 in search of Andy Indigo (just prior to publication of this report), we were instructed that we should contact him via his secretary at an email address belonging to Merauke Sugar Group.⁵⁵

51 Cemindo Gemilang (no date), Management.

52 The three are PT Merauke Sugar Group, PT Merauke Nusantara Manis and PT Merauke Gula Mandiri (information from official AHU registry profiles.)

53 His LinkedIn profile (archived copy) describes him as recently retired after being deputy COO of KPN Plantations.

54 Sinoma, 14 July 2025. Suzhou Sinoma signed a contract for the Indonesian GPA Sugar Factory (transl.) (archived copies of original page, translated page, photo).

55 The domain used for the email address, @mnmsugar.com when used for web connections is forwarded to Merauke Sugar Group company globalpapuaabadi.com.



- A gathering in China: Contract signing ceremony for the construction of PT Global Papua Abadi's Merauke Sugar Factory and Banten Sugar Refinery, apparently showing Fangiono group's Ciliandra Fangiono (front row, second from left) and Martias (front row, fifth from left). Signing the contract appears to be Wirastuty Fangiono. Also apparently present from KPN (see following section) is Andy Indigo (front row, third from left) and Martua Sitorus (front row, fourth from left). Photo from Sinoma (Suzhou) Construction Co. Ltd. website.

Dudy Christian

Dudy Christian, an investor with extensive projects in the energy sector, owns a company which holds 10% of the shares in the Merauke Sugar Group.⁵⁶ As the accompanying Corporate & Political Links briefer sets out, several of his other companies have experience relevant to producing biofuels, including ethanol. While an

official in the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry has stated that the government hopes that bioethanol will be produced in Merauke from 2027,⁵⁷ it is unclear whether that is the reason for Dudy's involvement.

Greenpeace Indonesia sent opportunity to comment letters in advance of this publication to the Merauke Sugar Group, KPN, Fangiono group companies First Resources and FAP Agri, and to Dudy Christian through his other companies, but had not received any responses at the time of publication.

⁵⁶ For this and other share ownership and directorship/commissionership statements, the source is official AHU registry profiles.

⁵⁷ Kompas.com, 2025. Pembangunan Pabrik Bioetanol di Merauke Ditargetkan Rampung 2027.

Sugar Research Australia

Indonesia's current sugarcane production is centred on Java and Sumatra, while no existing commercial plantations are reported in West Papua.⁵⁸ Productivity is relatively low, with one commonly cited reason being reduced yields due to agricultural pests (including pathogens).⁵⁹ Some of these can reduce yields by as much as 70% when occurring in combination.⁶⁰ One disease relevant in West Papua is sugarcane streak mosaic virus,⁶¹ and there are two other agricultural pests that are found only on the island of New Guinea, namely Ramu stunt virus⁶² and a species of sugarcane stem borer (*Chilo terrenellus*), which has affected sugarcane previously grown in Merauke.⁶³

The most viable way to minimise yield losses from agricultural pests such as sugarcane stem borers is by using resistant sugarcane varieties,^{64,65} however Indonesia suffers from a lack of sufficient research capacity to produce these in a timely manner.⁶⁶ This is believed to be one reason why previous plans to develop sugarcane plantations in West Papua did not progress to commercial viability, after hundreds of hectares initially planted in the Merauke area were destroyed by stem borers in 2012, at a reported cost of over US\$4 million.⁶⁷

This time around however, Sugar Research Australia has supplied six sugarcane varieties to PT Global Papua Abadi, which are believed to be the main varieties being tested for large-scale cultivation, alongside Indonesian varieties.⁶⁸ A first shipment reportedly arrived in Merauke by air in April 2024,⁶⁹ following a trip to Australia by Andy Indigo and Clifton Theodore of KPN where they signed an agreement to “establish a research and development collaboration” with SRA.⁷⁰

58 Pusat Data dan Sistem Informasi Pertanian Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Pertanian, 2025. Buku Outlook Komoditas Perkebunan Tebu.

59 Toharisman, A., Triantarti. An Overview of Sugar Sector in Indonesia. Sugar Tech 18, 636–641 (2016).

60 Sugar Research Australia, 2025. Annual Report 2024/2025.

61 Rob Magarey et al, 2019. Integrated disease management of sugarcane streak mosaic in Indonesia.

62 Kathryn S. Braithwaite, Leka Tom, and Lastus S. Kuniata, 2019. Planthopper Transmission of Ramu Stunt Virus, a Tenuivirus Causing the Sugarcane Disease Ramu Stunt, and its Distribution in Papua New Guinea.

63 Henny, H., Raditya, W., Andrian, F., & Achadian, E., 2022. Tingkat Parasitasi Hama Penggerek Batang Tebu *Chilo terrenellus* Pgn. (Lepidoptera: Crambidae) di Okaba Merauke. Indonesian Sugar Research Journal, 2(1), 35-39.

64 EM Achadian, F-R Goebel and A Nikpay, Current and future actions for integrated management of sugarcane stem borers in Indonesia. Proceedings of the International Society of Sugar Cane Technologists, volume 31, 989–998, 2023.

65 Rob Magarey et al, 2019.

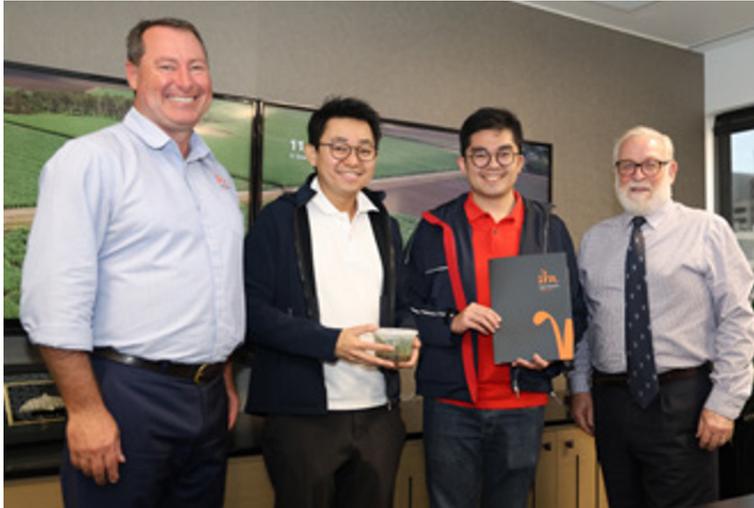
66 Widyasari, W.B., Putra, L.K., Ranomahera, M.R.R. et al. Historical Notes, Germplasm Development, and Molecular Approaches to Support Sugarcane Breeding Program in Indonesia. Sugar Tech 24, 30–47 (2022); Toharisman, A., Triantarti. An Overview of Sugar Sector in Indonesia. Sugar Tech 18, 636–641 (2016).

67 Yazid, Muhammad, 2012. *Ratusan hektar lahan benih tebu diserang hama* (archived copy).

68 Kementerian Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 2024. Dukung Papua Selatan Jadi Pusat Industri Gula, Wapres Tinjau Kawasan Perkebunan Tebu di Merauke.

69 Antara, 2024. Karantina Merauke awasi masuknya bibit tebu dari Australia.

70 Sugar Research Australia, 2023. Cane Matters Summer 2023/24 (archived copy).



● KPN Deputy Executive Director, Andy Indigo and Head of Business Management and Strategy, Clifton Theodore are seen in a picture from SRA's Cane Matters Summer 23/24 magazine. The article says the picture was taken after signing an agreement with Sugar Research Australia. They are standing with key SRA staff, General Manager Variety Development, Jason Eglinton and Interim CEO, Shaun Coffey.

Sugar Research Australia is the official services body for Australia's sugar industry, a status established by the Australian parliament.⁷¹ It is owned by sugarcane growers and milling companies, and is accountable to them as well as to the Australian minister for agriculture.⁷² The Australian government charges a mandatory levy on each tonne of sugarcane, which is then passed on to Sugar Research Australia to fund its research work.⁷³ It also funded by the Australian public, receiving direct research funding from the Government of Australia⁷⁴ and the State of Queensland.⁷⁵

This is why the transfer of Australian sugar industry's varieties to an Indonesian grower has raised eyebrows⁷⁶ among Australian growers concerned by increased market competition, not least because KPN and PT Global Papua Abadi did not openly own any existing sugarcane plantations at the time,⁷⁷ but also given that Merauke Sugar Group's projected 561,147 hectare licence area in West Papua dwarfs Australia's entire total 341,000 hectares of planted sugarcane.⁷⁸

Despite a general denial by Wilmar's CEO of any interest in the project (see below), the decision has also raised questions about the possible influence of Wilmar, as the group which produces over half of Australia's sugar (see below), because it would be expected to have strong influence over Sugar Research Australia's decisions, directly in general meetings (as SRA's voting rights are held by its members),⁷⁹ through its influence in the appointment of directors, and informally. This is especially so given the continuing strong relationship between Wilmar and the owners of KPN (see Wilmar section below).

Sugar Research Australia declined to answer this question and a number of others about the terms of the agreement, saying only that "SRA can confirm that it terminated its contract with PT Global Papua Abadi (GPA) a year ago in November 2024. SRA has had no involvement with GPA or KPN since then."⁸⁰

71 Via the Sugar Research and Development Services Act 2013 (Cth) – now superseded by the Primary Industries Levies and Charges Disbursement Act 2024 (Cth).

72 Australian Government, 19 August 2025. Directory: Sugar Research Australia Limited.

73 Sugar Research Australia, 2024. Corporate Governance : Leading Integrity in Governance.

74 Sugar Research Australia, 2025. Annual Report 2024/2025.

75 Queensland Government, 2025. Innovative laboratories to bolster State's sugar industry.

76 Kevin Borg, 2024. Considering Cane To Indonesia. Mackay Whitsunday Life.

77 Given it features in the summer 2023/24 issue of Cane Matters, the agreement presumably dates from late 2023 or early 2024, while PT Global Papua Abadi's inaugural planting ceremony was held on July 23, 2024: Sekretariat Kabinet RI, 2024. Penanaman Tebu Perdana di PT Global Papua Abadi, Kampung Sermayam, Distrik Tanah Miring, Kabupaten Merauke, Provinsi Papua Selatan, 23 Juli 2024.

78 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2025. Australian Agriculture: Broadacre Crops 2023-24 financial year.

79 According to SRA's constitution, voting rights for mill companies are distributed on a per-tonne basis, giving Wilmar a majority of those votes. However, grower members' votes are counted separately, and are not dependent on production volume. A majority of both growers and millers are needed for an ordinary resolution to pass. (Sugar Research Australia Limited, 2018. Constitution.)

80 SRA CEO Mick Bartlett, 2025. Letter in response to Greenpeace questions dated 28 Nov 2025.



● Peat forest and wetlands inside PT Semesta Gula Nusantara sugarcane concession in Jagebob, Merauke, South Papua. 14 December 2025. 8°4'57"S 140°33'51"E. © Jurnasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace



● Industrial buildings taking over an erstwhile forest landscape in the PT Global Papua Abadi sugarcane concession in Bersehati, Merauke, South Papua. 11 December 2025. 8°10'7"S 140°40'34"E © Jurnasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace

Finally, key figures from Sugar Research Australia are believed to now be working with the Merauke Sugar Group.

- Mark Day, who according to his LinkedIn was a non-executive director of Sugar Research Australia until March 2024, was also the head of mills and distilleries for PT Global Papua Abadi from November 2023.⁸¹ It is therefore highly possible that at the time the agreement was signed he held both of these positions – SRA declined to confirm or deny this. A decade earlier, between 2011 and 2013, he was working for Wilmar in Indonesia as ‘Head of Indonesian Sugar Estates’ – presumably on its Merauke sugarcane plans.⁸²

- Sugar Research Australia’s general manager for sugarcane variety development Jason Eglinton, who was pictured with the KPN representatives at the time the agreement was signed,⁸³ left the company in July 2024 to take up a position supporting a new initiative in Indonesia, according to an industry journal.⁸⁴ It has not been possible to confirm whether this is the Merauke Sugar Group.

As highly experienced individuals (Mark Day was also the CEO of Australia’s second largest sugar company Mackay Sugar, a Wilmar joint venture partner), their recruitment suggests that the Indonesian companies have serious sugar expansion plans.

Wilmar

It should be stressed that there is no direct evidence⁸⁵ that Wilmar is backing the current sugarcane project in Merauke, and Wilmar’s CEO has categorically denied that Wilmar has any interest in it, adding a promise that Wilmar will not be involved in any way in future.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, for a number of reasons, including its past and present entanglements with the business interests of Martua Sitorus and his family (of KPN group, above), and its previous interest in growing sugarcane in Merauke, there remain a significant number of potential connections between the Merauke Sugar PSN and Wilmar which could suggest some form of backing for the project.

While it is entirely possible that these are coincidental, Wilmar declined to address them specifically beyond a general denial of interest, following a detailed Opportunity to Comment letter sent by Greenpeace Indonesia. We therefore believe it is important to report them and recommend that Wilmar’s shareholders, customers and other stakeholders remain vigilant for any future links between Wilmar and the Merauke Sugar Group companies, including investments or supply chain relationships. We outline some of these briefly below, and discuss them in more detail in the accompanying Corporate & Political Links briefer.

81 LinkedIn, Mark Day (archived copies 1, 2).

82 See for example director biography in Sugar Research Australia’s annual reports.

83 Sugar Research Australia, 2023. Cane Matters Summer 2023/24 (archived copy).

84 Australian Cane Grower, May 2024 edition (archived copy).

85 Government officials with a knowledge of the project have reportedly said that Wilmar is involved in some media interviews (example: Dovana Hasiana, 2024, Megaproyek Gula-Bioetanol di Merauke Mulai Jalan, Ini Investornya (Sugar-Bioethanol Megaproject in Merauke Begins Operations, These are the Investors), Bloomberg Technoz 11 June 2024. However, this is interpreted as hearsay evidence that may have been misinferred from Martua Sitorus’s involvement, and his well-known historic connection to Wilmar.

86 Kuok Khoon Hong, RE: Request for Wilmar to clarify its position in relation to sugar cane expansion in Merauke, Papua Selatan, Indonesia (emails received 13 & 17 Dec 2025).

Continuing relationship between Wilmar and family of Martua Sitorus (KPN)

Wilmar was founded by Kuok Khoon Hong and Martua Sitorus in 1991, initially building palm oil plantations and processing facilities in Indonesia, but then developing rapidly to be a major multinational agribusiness and trading company, with interests around the world.⁸⁷ When Martua Sitorus and his brother-in-law Hendri Saksti left Wilmar in July 2018 after Greenpeace International's *Rogue Trader* investigation exposed its links to deforestation by their family's group,⁸⁸ Wilmar did not cut off all links to their family and its businesses, but has remained entangled to this day. Indeed just a few months later, Martua's nephew Darwin Indigo took over the role from Hendri Saksti as Wilmar's country head for Indonesia.⁸⁹ Darwin is the son of Ganda (cofounder of KPN), and therefore the brother of Andy Indigo, one of KPN's key directors.

Presumably as part of this role, Darwin Indigo was a commissioner of Wilmar's two Indonesian sugar refinery companies, PT Jawamanis Rafinasi and PT Duta Sugar International, until December 2024. Andy Indigo and his (and Darwin's) sister, Vince Erlington Indigo also have minority ownership in these two sugar companies.⁹⁰ This and other Martua Sitorus family dealings with Wilmar companies involved in ports and sweeteners are set out in the accompanying Corporate & Political Links briefer.

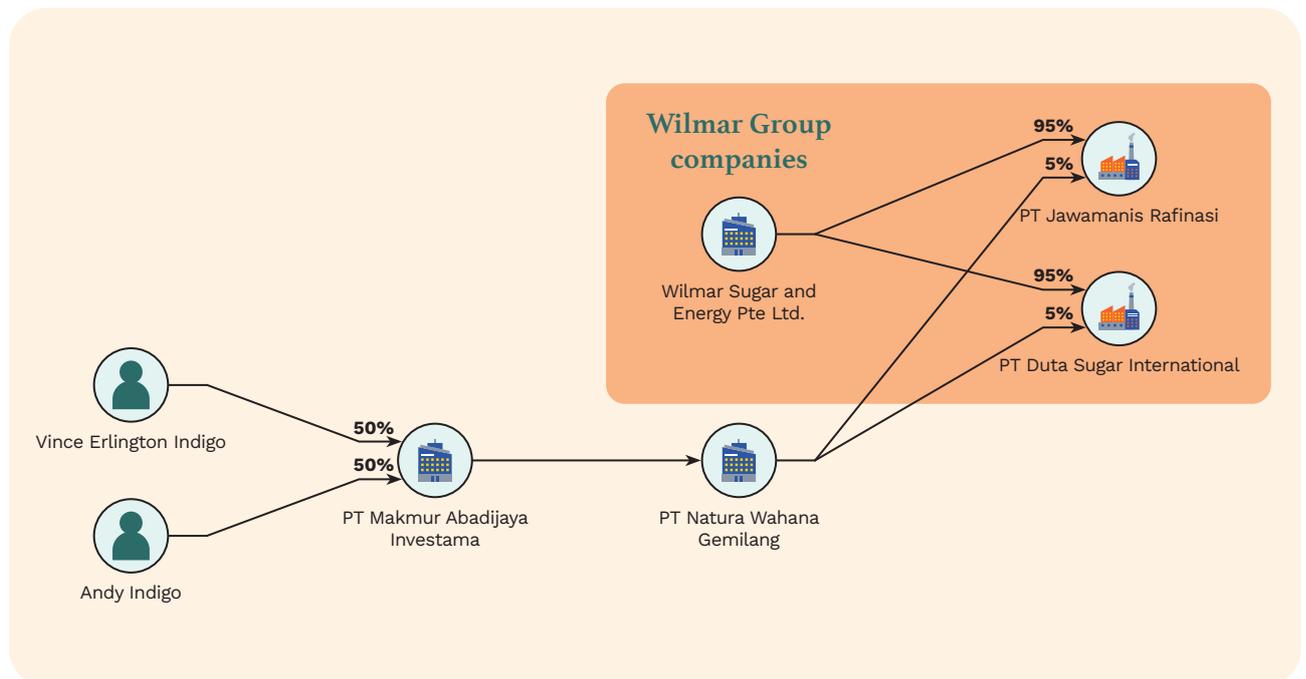


Diagram showing how Wilmar Indonesia's (only) two sugar refinery companies are part-owned by Martua Sitorus (KPN) family members Andy and Vince Indigo.

87 Wilmar, (n.d.) History & Milestones

88 Wilmar International, 2018. General Announcement: Resignation of Non-Independent Non-Executive Director.

89 Wilmar International, 2018. Change - Announcement of Appointment of Country Head, Indonesia. Note that Darwin Indigo responded by email to a formal Opportunity to Comment letter ahead of publication of this briefer, writing "I was appointed as Country Head for Wilmar because I earn it and not because of politic dynasty. So I got offended when you said I got into my position due to family connections." (email received 8 Dec 2025)

90 Source: official AHU registry profiles.

Wilmar Consultancy provided services to Merauke Sugar Group companies

A Wilmar subsidiary which provides IT solutions to the plantation industry has worked for PT Global Papua Abadi⁹¹ and PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri.⁹² PT Wilmar Consultancy Services does regularly work for third parties, however, this case is significant because of the KPN family connections. Not only was Darwin Indigo president commissioner of the company until

December 2023, but his aunt, Bertha (Martua Sitorus's sister) was also a commissioner of the company until June 2022. (Darwin replied to us regarding this to say "the two companies you mentioned [PT GPA and PT MNM] is no longer customers.")⁹³

Wilmar and its 'sugar journey'

Wilmar's big expansion into the sugar industry began in 2010-2011. In Australia, Wilmar bought the country's largest sugar producer, and now claims to be responsible for more than half of Australia's raw sugar production.⁹⁴ Meanwhile in Indonesia, Wilmar set about creating a large sugarcane plantation project, reportedly obtaining location permits for 200,000 hectares on Kimaam Island⁹⁵ in Merauke Regency, as part of a previous iteration of a food estate project.⁹⁶

The five companies awarded these permits were not Wilmar subsidiaries at the time, they were owned by individuals with links to Wilmar (and what would become the KPN group). This plan reportedly fell through in 2012,⁹⁷ but Wilmar continued its project via a new location permit for a 40,000 hectare concession very close to the location where PT Global Papua Abadi is currently clearing land, as well as two 40,000 hectare concessions in neighbouring Mappi Regency.

Wilmar's initial sugar plans in Merauke were sharply criticised,⁹⁸ and appear to have been abandoned in late 2013 or early 2014. Wilmar's No Deforestation, Peat or Exploitation (NDPE) policy, which it introduced in 2013, may have been one of the reasons why the project was no longer tenable.⁹⁹

Yet the company's taste for sugar has by no means abated. Wilmar titled its 2024 annual report "Our Sugar Journey" and announced that it is looking to expand its sugar operations, including as a grower.¹⁰⁰ Its 2021 sustainability policy for sugar, which it calls "NDPE Sugar"¹⁰¹ is notably weaker than its NDPE policy for palm oil; there is no explicit prohibition of conversion of forest areas, only legally protected areas and areas of high conservation value.¹⁰²

91 An employee LinkedIn account (archived copy) reports that she worked for Wilmar Consultancy Services on a project for PT Global Papua Abadi between March and August 2024.

92 A post by PT Wilmar Consultancy Services shows a 'kick-off event for a project with PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri in March 2024.

93 Darwin Indigo, komentar terkait publikasi Greenpeace Indonesia (email received 8 Dec 2025).

94 Sugar Manufacturing. Wilmar.

95 Also known as Dolok Island and Yos Sudarso Island.

96 Indonesia Today, 2010. Wilmar Secures 200,000 Hectares of Land in Merauke Food Estate for Sugar Plant; Tempo Interactive, 2010. Wilmar Begins Feasibility Study on Kinds of Sugar Cane in Merauke.

97 Forest Peoples Programme, Pusaka and Sawit Watch, 2013. 'A sweetness like unto death: Voices of the indigenous Malind of Merauke, Papua'.

98 Forest Peoples Programme, Pusaka and Sawit Watch, 2013.

99 AwasMIFEE. 2013. Wilmar's New 'No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation' Policy: What will it mean in Merauke?

100 Wilmar (2025) Annual Report 2024 states "The global demand for sugar continues to rise, primarily driven by emerging economies in Africa and Asia, where we have a strong presence. The growing demand is expected to drive the company's expansion in sugar operations, not only in refining but also in cane production and consolidation."

101 Wilmar (2021) NDPE Sugar Policy.

102 An accompanying Wilmar NDPE Sugar FAQ document (archived copy) does state that HCV areas include forests, but there is no commitment to exclude all areas which may be considered as High Carbon Stock, unlike the palm oil policy.

Global Papua Abadi building sugar refinery in Wilmar's heartland

PT Global Papua Abadi has applied to build a sugar refinery not far from Jakarta, in a location just adjacent to Wilmar's Banten integrated industrial complex.¹⁰³ Wilmar's two existing sugar refineries are located a few kilometres away.

The draft Environmental Impact Assessment for this refinery, which is intended to process raw sugar into plantation white sugar, states that the raw sugar will be either imported or sourced from domestic production. Indonesia's domestic sugar production is not very great, and the EIA does not suggest that raw sugar would be obtained from Merauke, which indeed would appear to make little sense since the company's Merauke mill is also intended to produce plantation white sugar. Instead, it seems that PT Global Papua Abadi plans to take advantage of a hard-to-come-by opportunity under strict Indonesian regulations that only permits raw sugar imports by companies that are either existing refiners of (currently) fifteen years' standing or which have their own sugar plantations.¹⁰⁴

Therefore PT Global Papua Abadi is creating an opportunity for foreign companies to increase their exports to Indonesia, when few other options are available. Given its links to KPN and existing port and other facilities in the area, there are inevitable questions about whether Wilmar could be an intended supplier to this planned facility.

Greenpeace Indonesia presented an opportunity to comment on the above findings to Wilmar, and challenged the company to publicly distance itself from the Merauke Sugar PSN. Specifically we challenged Wilmar to make the following commitments:

- To state that the Merauke Sugar Project as led by Merauke Sugar Group companies is incompatible with Wilmar's NDPE sugar policy and to commit that it will not at any point in the future accept any sugar produced by the companies concerned.
- To commit to never acquiring equity in any of the companies involved in the Merauke Sugar Project, nor to provide further services to them.
- To never directly supply (or knowingly indirectly supply) PT Global Papua Abadi's sugar refinery in Banten and to refuse the use of facilities in Wilmar's nearby industrial estate.
- To use Wilmar's participation in Sugar Research Australia to urge it to immediately disengage as far as legally possible from its relationship with the Merauke Sugar Group, and commit to undertake ethical due diligence on any further ventures in support of sugar companies outside Australia, that includes rigorous NDPE criteria.

Wilmar's chairman Kuok Khoo Hong responded to say that Wilmar was not involved with the project. When pressed to give a specific commitment on the points above, he did not do so but added that Wilmar would not be involved in the project in the future.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Provinsi Banten, 2023. AMDAL - Global Papua Abadi.

¹⁰⁴ Peraturan Menteri Perindustrian Nomor 47 Tahun 2024 tentang Jaminan Pemenuhan Kebutuhan Bahan Baku untuk Industri Gula.

¹⁰⁵ Kuok Khoo Hong, RE: Request for Wilmar to clarify its position in relation to sugar cane expansion in Merauke, Papua Selatan, Indonesia (emails received 13 & 17 Dec 2025).



The state's role in planning fresh deforestation



Unwavering support from the previous regime

Both the current President of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, and former president Joko Widodo, have advocated for the creation of new food estates, as part of a belief that this will reduce dependence on imports for certain key foods and therefore guarantee Indonesia's food security. However, Widodo and his government has been particularly associated with the Merauke Sugarcane PSN which enjoyed a remarkable level of support during the closing months of his presidency, which ended in October 2024. Since this support can be seen to have clearly benefited two of Indonesia's richest families, and took place around the time of the presidential election and transition of power, it is legitimate to consider whether other issues may also have been in play, in particular the risk of political clientelism.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Although it must be stressed that no evidence of any wrongdoing has been uncovered in this regard, Edward Aspinall and Ward Berenschot discuss the frequent connection between the very high expenses involved in contesting Indonesian elections, and the facilitation of the plantation industry, in their 2019 book *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia*.

In late 2023, during the runup to the February 2024 election to choose president Joko Widodo's successor, comments from ministers indicated that some kind of sugar project was under discussion. On 10 October 2023, Coordinating Minister for the Economy Airlangga Hartarto announced that food estate development in Merauke would be focused on two commodities, rice and sugar.¹⁰⁷ One month later, on 7th November, Agriculture Minister Andi Amran Sulaiman said that state-owned enterprises were planning sugar development, but that the government was also inviting the private sector to get involved.¹⁰⁸

The watershed moment came during revision of the National Strategic Project list in November 2023, when a 'food and energy development zone' in Merauke Regency was added, after which the sugarcane project would enjoy the benefits of formally being declared a government priority.¹⁰⁹ This pre-election activity was followed by a post-election transition period of eight months before Prabowo assumed presidential office in October (with Jokowi's son Gibran Rakabuming Raka as his vice president).

Jokowi's backing continued during the transition period, most visible through an extraordinary string of high level visits to PT Global Papua Abadi's operations as the company started to expand in mid-2024, indicating a strong desire to show visible support for the project. The ministers who visited were:

- 17 April 2024, Agriculture Minister Andi Amran Sulaiman.¹¹⁰
- 18 May 2024, Investment and Upstreaming Minister Bahlil Lahadalia.¹¹¹
- 04 June 2024, Vice President Ma'ruf Amin.¹¹²
- 23 July 2024, President Joko Widodo.¹¹³

A further indication of the high level of political support from Joko Widodo was the creation of a Task Force to accelerate progress towards self-sufficiency in sugar and bioethanol in Merauke on 19 April 2024, mandating eight ministers and dozens of other senior government officials chaired by Bahlil Lahadalia to work together towards facilitating the Merauke Sugar PSN consortium's investment plans.¹¹⁴ As far as we are able to ascertain, this appears to be the only time during Joko Widodo's ten-year presidency that he set up such a task force to support an investment project by a single corporate group or business consortium.

107 Liputan 6. 2023. Food Estate Merauke akan Jadi Kawasan Ekonomi Khusus, Tanam 2 Pangan Ini

108 Various news outlets reported this announcement, some adding their own analysis:

CNBC Indonesia. 2023. Pabrik Gula Siap Dibangun di Papua, Lokasi di Sini.

Katadata.co.id. 2023. Kementan Ajak Swasta Bangun Pabrik Gula Rp 3 T di Food Estate Merauke.

Tirto.id. 2023. Tantangan di Balik Ambisi Pemerintah Bangun Pabrik Gula di Papua.

Kumparan BISNIS. 2023. Mentan Amran: Pabrik Gula Siap Dibangun di Merauke Tahun 2024.

109 Peraturan Menteri Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian No. 8 Tahun 2023 tentang Perubahan Keempat Atas Peraturan Menteri Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian No. 7 Tahun 2021 Tentang Perubahan Daftar Proyek Strategis Nasional.

110 Mentan Dorong Produksi Gula Nasional Dari Kabupaten Merauke. merauke.go.id. 17 April 2024.

111 Kepada Investor, Menteri Bahlil Sampaikan 3 Syarat untuk Proyek Swasembada Gula Merauke. Kementerian Investasi dan Hilirisasi/BKPM. 18 Mei 2024.

112 Dukung Papua Selatan Jadi Pusat Industri Gula, Wapres Tinjau Kawasan Perkebunan Tebu di Merauke. Kementerian Sekretariat Negara. 4 Juni 2024.

113 Tanam Tebu Perdana di Merauke, Presiden: Pemerintah Fokus Kembangkan Ketahanan Pangan. Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia. 23 Juli 2024.

114 Keputusan Presiden Nomor 15 Tahun 2024 tentang Satuan Tugas Percepatan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol di Kabupaten Merauke, Provinsi Papua Selatan.



● Discarded logs piled up during deforestation in the PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri sugarcane concession in Jagebob, Merauke, South Papua. 11 December 2025. 7°56'31"S 140°45'16"E © Jurnasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace.



● An excavator destroys a meandering forest stream, carrying out deforestation to build the PT Global Papua Abadi sugarcane concession in Bersehati, Merauke, South Papua. 11 December 2025. 8°9'55"S 140°33'20"E © Jurnasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace

Benefiting from chaotic agrarian governance

Several individuals with political influence have been recruited to take up commissioner roles in Merauke Sugar Group companies by the oligarchic

families that control them. The following discussion explores the potential conflicts of interest that arise.

Firdaus Dewilmar

Firdaus Dewilmar has been the sole commissioner of two Merauke Sugar Group plantation companies, PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri and PT Berkat Tebu Sejahtera, since May 2024, and held the same role in Merauke Sugar Group's minority holding company during 2024.

He seems to have earned President Jokowi's trust during his time as a civil servant; Dewilmar was the only person expressly appointed by name (as Secretary) when Jokowi issued a presidential decree creating a task force comprising almost fifty positions to speed implementation of his personal legacy project, the new capital city Nusantara.¹¹⁵

Jokowi also appointed Firdaus Dewilmar as a member of the Merauke sugar and bioethanol task force on 19 April 2024;¹¹⁶ then just four days later the Merauke Sugar Group appointed him to his first commissionership for them.¹¹⁷ The practical role that Dewilmar plays in the management of Merauke Sugar Group is not clear, nor what benefit he receives. Nevertheless, given the sole commissioner's supervisory mandate and public visibility, their direct involvement in a government task force dedicated to advancing the company's interests would appear to be a potentially serious conflict of interest.¹¹⁸

Firdaus Dewilmar has retained influence under President Prabowo, serving as an expert at the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry,¹¹⁹ and as a special advisor to the minister, Bahlil Lahadalia.¹²⁰ This is significant because Bahlil Lahadalia is responsible for biofuel policy, and so has a mandate to make decisions which could potentially greatly benefit the Merauke Sugar Group. In his earlier role as minister for investment, Bahlil Lahadalia was also one of the key figures in Jokowi's government promoting the project; he was the chair of the Merauke sugar and bioethanol task force, and commissioned the strategic environmental assessment which introduced the Merauke Sugarcane PSN business consortium. As minister for energy and natural resources, Bahlil has continued to promote the project, including at the session of the National Energy Council in July 2025,¹²¹ where Indonesia's energy policy was discussed.¹²²

115 Firdaus Dewilmar is named Sekretaris at Pasal 5(c)(2), Keputusan Presiden Nomor 25 Tahun 2024 tentang Satuan Tugas Percepatan Investasi di Ibu Kota Nusantara.

116 At that time Dewilmar was in the position of Staf Ahli Bidang Ekonomi, Sosial, dan Budaya, Kejaksaan Agung, specified in Pasal 7(u), Keputusan Presiden Nomor 15 Tahun 2024 tentang Satuan Tugas Percepatan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol di Kabupaten Merauke, Provinsi Papua Selatan.

117 On 23rd April 2024, to Merauke Sugar Group holding company PT Merauke Gula Mandiri.

118 In Indonesian companies, commissioners have an oversight and accountability role, including in ensuring a company operates legally; while day-to-day executive management is the responsibility of the company's directors. See Kusuma & Partners, 2025 Understanding the Difference Between Board of Directors and Board of Commissioners in Indonesia.

119 Minangsatu, 2025. Wakil Menteri ESDM Tinjau Kesiapan PLN Sumbar Jelang Idulfitri.

120 Holopis, 2025. Firdaus Dewilmar Jabat Stafus Menteri ESDM, Pengamat: Bukti Alumni Kejaksaan Berkualitas.

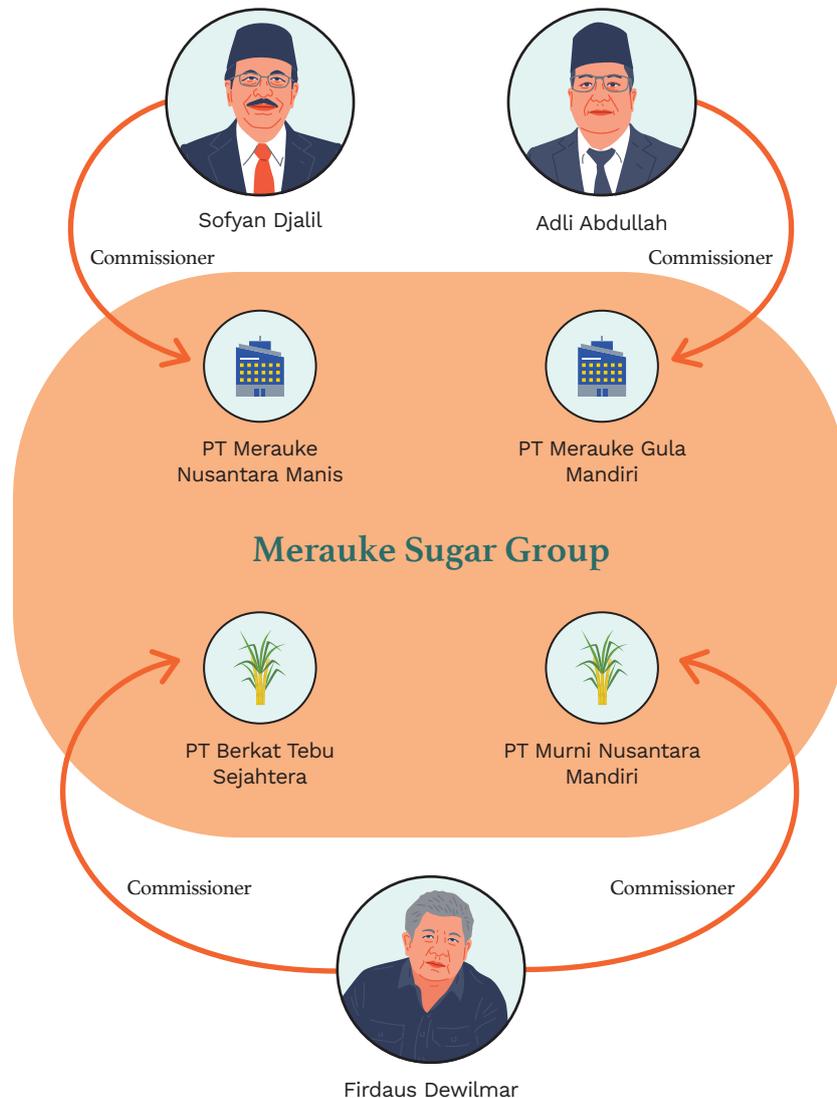
121 Kementerian ESDM, 2025. Menteri Bahlil Buka Sidang Anggota DEN, Dorong Pemanfaatan EBT untuk Transisi Energi.

122 Dewan Energi Nasional, 2025. Tugas Dewan Energi Nasional.

Sofyan Djalil & M. Adli Abdullah and Merauke Sugar Group's FPIC failure

Long-serving government minister Sofyan Djalil was appointed sole commissioner of Merauke Sugar Group's majority holding vehicle PT Merauke Nusantara Manis on 8 April 2025; two days later, his former special advisor on customary law,¹²³ M. Adli Abdullah, became sole commissioner of the minority holding vehicle.¹²⁴ These appointments highlight governance concerns around Indigenous land rights and FPIC, land-tenure transparency, and the requirement for plantation companies to secure cultivation rights (HGU) before operating.

Sebelumnya, Sofyan Djalil menjabat di bawah Presiden Joko Widodo sebagai Menteri. Previously, Sofyan Djalil served under President Joko Widodo as coordinating minister for economic affairs, and subsequently headed the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) in 2015. From 2016 to 2022, he was Jokowi's minister of agrarian and spatial planning and head of the National Land Agency. Following his departure from public office, Sofyan Djalil moved into the private sector, including joining the board of the plantation company PT Austindo Nusantara Jaya Tbk prior to its 2025 acquisition by the Fangiono family's First Resources.



123 Antara, 2021. M. Adli Abdullah Resmi Dilantik sebagai Staf Khusus Menteri ATR/Kepala BPN Bidang Hukum Adat.

124 PT Merauke Nusantara Manis and PT Merauke Gula Mandiri respectively, see Figure D.

It was during his period as minister of agrarian and spatial planning and head of the National Land Agency that Sofyan Djalil persistently ignored a Supreme Court order¹²⁵ to provide public access to data and maps on forestlands tenure, in particular cultivation rights (HGU).¹²⁶ During his time in office, and again in response to Greenpeace Indonesia's Opportunity to Comment letter prior to publication of this briefer,¹²⁷ Sofyan justified this by saying that HGU documents include private information and should be exempted from freedom of information (contradicting determinations by the nation's highest court, as well as the State Administrative Court and the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia).¹²⁸

Indigenous land rights have been languishing in legal purgatory due to the Jokowi era legislature's failure to pass the long-promised Indigenous Peoples Law.¹²⁹ As a result, Indigenous land is by default treated as state land (enabling the government to issue permits to plantation companies) unless an Indigenous community has secured formal recognition. In West Papua only a handful of Indigenous Peoples have won legal recognition of their land rights through district decrees, notably the Knasaimos People in South Sorong (97,000 hectares);¹³⁰ the Ndelet/Kenali People in Sorong (1,000 hectares)¹³¹ and

the Mpur People in Tambrau (68,000 hectares).¹³² In addition a couple have been granted Management Rights (*Hak Pengelola - HPL*)¹³³ or had village forest (*hutan desa*) rights granted,¹³⁴ although these fall far short of full legal ownership. This is despite all of West Papua being owned by different Indigenous Peoples under their own customary laws that predate the Republic of Indonesia.

Indeed, this reality in West Papua was cited by Sofyan when he appointed M. Adli Abdullah to his advisory role in 2021.¹³⁵ In their responses^{136,137} to Greenpeace Indonesia ahead of publication of this briefer, both men pointed to two regulations they were involved in drafting, saying that they formulated the Management Rights (HPL) approach to strengthen the position of Indigenous Peoples. Not everyone views the regulations as helpful, however:

- Government Regulation 18/2021 introduced the Management Rights approach.¹³⁸ This has been harshly criticised by AMAN, Indonesia's Indigenous Peoples' human rights and advocacy organization, as undermining their inalienable land ownership rights by providing more limited (management) rights granted at the pleasure of the government.¹³⁹

125 Putusan Mahkamah Agung No. Register 121 K/TUN/2017 Tertanggal 6 Maret 2017

126 See for example Greenpeace Indonesia, 2018. *Setahun Lebih Pemerintah Mengabaikan Putusan Mahkamah Agung, Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil Menganugerahkan Trofi kepada ATR/BPN sebagai Lembaga yang Tidak Transparan / Land management ministry awarded 'trophy' for year-long defiance of supreme court order to open forest data.*

127 Sofyan Djalil, 2025. *Surat Tanggapan Greenpeace (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).*

128 Hans Nicholas Jong, 2021. *Final court ruling orders Indonesian government to publish plantation data.*

129 Greenpeace Indonesia, 2024. *Menjelang Pelantikan Prabowo-Gibran, Greenpeace Ajak Publik Terus Bersuara dan Awasi Pemerintahan Baru / Ahead of Prabowo-Gibran Inauguration, Greenpeace Urges Public to Speak Out and Monitor the New Administration*

130 Greenpeace Indonesia, 2024. *Kabar Baik: Masyarakat Adat Knasaimos Terima SK Pengakuan Wilayah Adat dari Bupati Sorong Selatan.*

131 Keputusan Bupati Sorong Nomor 593.2 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pengakuan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat Ndelet /Marga Kenali.

132 Gamaliel M. Kaliele, 2025. *Hak wilayah adat Suku Mpur seluas 67.938 hektare resmi diakui Pemkab Tambrau.*

133 Two areas of only around 700 hectares total near Jayapura: Kampung Sawoi in 2023 and Muara Tami in November 2025.

134 Some areas of 'Indigenous forest' (*hutan adat*) have also been recognised or are in process, but this is still a limited category of land rights as it is still subject to Forestry Ministry authority.

135 Antara, 2021. *M. Adli Abdullah Resmi Dilantik sebagai Staf Khusus Menteri ATR/Kepala BPN Bidang Hukum Adat.*

136 Sofyan Djalil, 2025. *Surat Tanggapan Greenpeace (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).*

137 Adli Abdullah, 2025. *Tanggapan atas permintaan klarifikasi terkait laporan PSN Tebu Merauke (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).*

138 Peraturan Pemerintah (PP) Nomor 18 Tahun 2021 tentang Hak Pengelolaan, Hak Atas Tanah, Satuan Rumah Susun, dan Pendaftaran Tanah

139 AMAN, 2024. *Analisis Peraturan Menteri Agraria dan Tata Ruang No. 14 Tahun 2024 tentang Penyelenggaraan Administrasi Pertanahan dan Pendaftaran Tanah Ulayat Masyarakat Adat.*

- Sofyan Djalil was no longer minister when this approach was updated via Agrarian Ministry Regulation 14/2024,¹⁴⁰ but Adli Abdullah, who continued as special advisor on Indigenous affairs, was closely involved in its formulation.¹⁴¹ The AMAN network has critiqued the lack of meaningful participation by Indigenous Peoples in its formulation, and sets out several fundamental flaws in the regulation.¹⁴² Experts have also expressed concern that it could benefit third parties who wish to access Indigenous land for development purposes.¹⁴³

Due to the state's failure to implement legal recognition of Indigenous land rights, civil society took the initiative to establish the 'Indigenous Territory Registration Agency' (*Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat*) in 2010. Merauke's Indigenous landowners have already registered much of the land earmarked for the Merauke Sugarcane PSN with this body,¹⁴⁴ although such registration is unfortunately not recognised by the Indonesian legal system.

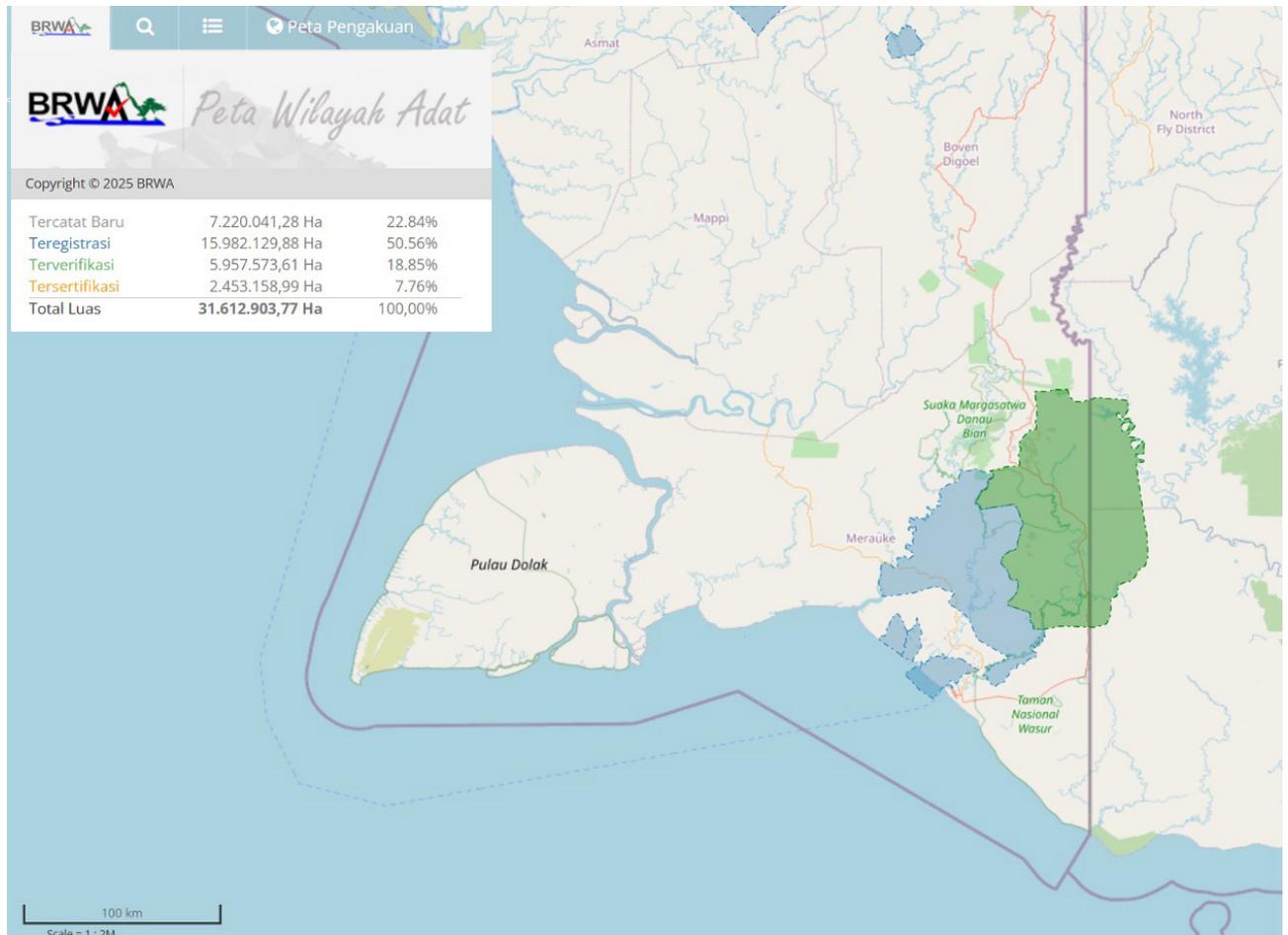


Figure F. Map of Indigenous land in South Papua Province that has been registered with the Indigenous Territory Registration Agency (*Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat*). Source: BRWA GIS.

140 Permen Menteri Agraria dan Tata Ruang / Kepala BPN Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2024 tentang Penyelenggaraan Administrasi Pertanahan dan Pendaftaran Tanah Hak Ulayat Masyarakat Hukum Adat.

141 Adli Abdullah, 2025. Tanggapan atas permintaan klarifikasi terkait laporan PSN Tebu Merauke (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).

142 AMAN, 2024. *ibid.*

143 Triyo Handoko, Mongabay, 2024. Menyoyal Hak Pengelolaan Lahan di Tanah Ulayat.

144 See map at GIS Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat.

After a group of UN Special Rapporteurs wrote to the Indonesian government and PT Global Papua Abadi in March 2025,¹⁴⁵ the government responded by defending its handling of Indigenous land rights with an apparent reference to the much criticised¹⁴⁶ Management Rights (HPL) mechanism.¹⁴⁷ The national government response said “*Negotiations have been underway between the companies and the MHA [Indigenous] communities. The MHA communities have proposed a temporary lease agreement, in which their customary land **would first be formally recognised** before being leased to the companies for investment purposes over a defined period.*”¹⁴⁸ [our emphasis]. The response also claimed that “no request has been submitted by any party for the area in question to be classified as customary land” – clearly ignoring the submission made via BRWA (Figure F above).

Greenpeace Indonesia’s field research amongst Indigenous communities affected by PT Global Papua Abadi, PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri and PT Borneo Citra Persada has found no indication that any agreement of this kind had been proposed, let alone that their Indigenous land rights have been formally recognised and registered. We also wrote to the ministry asking for data to back up this claim on 29 August 2025 but besides an acknowledgement we have as yet not received any information.¹⁴⁹ The local office of the National Land Agency in Merauke confirmed that this had not happened, telling us that such agreements would only be possible if the regency administration produced a local regulation to map Indigenous lands.

Our field investigations, set out later in this report, suggest that while the active Merauke Sugarcane PSN companies have been approaching Indigenous Peoples judged to hold customary rights over the areas they wish to develop, they have taken advantage of this weak legal framework for gaining access to Indigenous lands, and even weaker enforcement. Communities report intimidation by what they believe to be out-of-uniform soldiers, and repeated unwanted contact by companies. It is clear many feel powerless and manipulated, if not coerced. Greenpeace Indonesia has concluded that procedures employed for the project have not met the standard of Free, Prior and Informed Consent.¹⁵⁰

There is a gap between rhetoric and reality regarding the failure to ensure Indigenous People’s right to FPIC in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN. Sofyan Djalil has claimed that he and Adli Abdullah were motivated to become sole commissioners of the two Merauke Sugar Group holding companies to prevent this very injustice: “Our goal in becoming commissioners was so that we could protect the interests of the indigenous community from within the company.”¹⁵¹ For his part, M. Adli Abdullah said “My presence in the company aims to ensure the company adheres to the precautionary principle, respect for community rights, and the FPIC mechanism, as regulated.”¹⁵² Yet the injustice continues, as we show in this brief.

145 UN Special Rapporteurs, 2025. Information received regarding alleged violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly in the Merauke Regency of South Papua Province, Indonesia, linked to the implementation of National Strategic Projects. (Indonesian language compilation).

146 Triyo Handoko, Mongabay, 2024. Menyoal Hak Pengelolaan Lahan di Tanah Ulayat.

147 Permen Menteri Agraria dan Tata Ruang / Kepala BPN Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2024 tentang Penyelenggaraan Administrasi Pertanahan dan Pendaftaran Tanah Hak Ulayat Masyarakat Hukum Adat.

148 Government of Indonesia, 2025. Reply to the Special Procedures Mandate Holders (UN Special Rapporteurs). (Indonesian language compilation).

149 Greenpeace Indonesia, 2025. Surat FOI Kepada Kementerian ATR/BPN Permohonan Data dan Informasi Publik Berupa Peta Potensi Keberadaan Tanah Ulayat

150 FPIC is a requirement under international law, contained within the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007. Practical framework for obtaining FPIC is set out in: United Nations, 2013 Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

151 “Tujuan kami menjadi komisar is adalah agar kepentingan masyarakat adat dapat kami lindungi dari dalam perusahaan.” Sofyan Djalil, 2025. Response to Greenpeace (Surat Tanggapan Greenpeace) (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).

152 Adli Abdullah, 2025. Tanggapan atas permintaan klarifikasi terkait laporan PSN Tebu Merauke (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).



● A view of port development by PT Global Papua Abadi (GPA) on the banks of the Maro river in Soa village, Sermayam district, Merauke regency, South Papua province. September 10, 2025. 8°18'49"S, 140°39'52"E

One specific case worth highlighting is that of PT Global Papua Abadi's wharf, currently being built near the proposed factory site on the banks of the River Maro. Adli Abdullah spoke in an interview available on Youtube about having participated in the process to negotiate access for the company in 2024.¹⁵³ The method used, which he described as a cultural approach, did not sound like the procedure legislated for by Agrarian Ministry Regulation 14/2024, which he takes credit for helping to draft.¹⁵⁴ In the video, he says [the company] "first has to settle things with the traditional leaders there, the customary authorities in that place. It gives them money, the leaders gather, they agree, then the wharf can be opened. And that makes it official."¹⁵⁵

In this case, as explained below, the company only sought to negotiate with the Marind People who hold the customary rights over the land, while displacing the Muyu community who had lived on the land since West Papua was still a Dutch colony. When it comes to the interests of the company for which he is the sole commissioner, Adli Abdullah appears to be standing by without ensuring that the Merauke Sugar Group employs proper FPIC. In his response to Greenpeace Indonesia before publication, he wrote "I need to emphasize that I have no personal business interests in the project and was not involved in the formal process of land acquisition. The meaning of "cultural approach" that I conveyed in the [youtube] interview cannot be understood as a substitution for the formal mechanism of ATR/ BPN Ministerial Regulation No. 14 of 2024. Every legal process is the responsibility of the company and government agencies, not an individual like me who only provides a professional view."¹⁵⁶

153 Sagoe TV, 2024. Mengenal Adat, Budaya Hingga Potensi Papua Jadi Daerah Investasi | Dr. M. Adli Abdullah (from around 16:25).

154 Adli Abdullah, 2025. Tanggapan atas permintaan klarifikasi terkait laporan PSN Tebu Merauke (letter dated 11 Dec. 2025).

155 "Dia harus selesaikan dulu kepada keret yang ada di situ, penguasa adat di situ.... Dia kasi duit.... penguasa kumpul ada... udah setuju... baru sudah buka itu pelabuhan... dan itu resmi..."

156 Adli Abdullah, 2025. *ibid.* (11 Dec. 2025).

Indonesia's biofuel policy incentivises No Deforestation rollback

Both First Resources (Fangiano family) and KPN group (Martua Sitorus and family) have announced No Deforestation, No Peat and No Exploitation (NDPE) policies for their oil palm operations. By being visibly associated with the Merauke Sugar Group project and the broad scale deforestation it entails, they are taking the risk that buyers of palm oil who have similar policies for their supply chains will exclude purchases from these companies.

A decade ago, major international campaigns around palm oil markets effectively forced most large palm oil producer companies to state they would stop deforestation, as a critical mass of international buyers refused to buy non-NDPE palm oil. These campaigns undoubtedly contributed to the significant reduction in deforestation for palm oil from 2015 onwards.¹⁵⁷ The risk to Indonesia's forests and forest communities is that plantation companies embraced NDPE policies not out of a fundamental change of heart but merely to ensure continuing access to the export market. If a sizable enough alternative market is available, the possibility of expanding their plantations into forest areas and Indigenous land may once again become an appealing prospect.

That alternative market has now emerged thanks to Indonesia's pro-biofuel policy. Indonesia has for some time envisaged biofuels as part of the national energy mix,¹⁵⁸ mandated as a gradually increasing compulsory proportion since 2008, initially in the public sector.¹⁵⁹ By 2018, the policy called for the private sector to use diesel with a blend of at least 20% plant origin fuel (known as B20, and in practice derived from palm oil).¹⁶⁰ Production of palm biodiesel for domestic consumption has continued to grow, and since the beginning of 2025 all diesel fuel sold must consist of a blend of at least 40% (B40).¹⁶¹ Meanwhile production of fuel-grade bioethanol for use in petrol (*bensin*) engines remains limited, and a 5% ethanol mix fuel is so far only available in a handful of filling stations in Java.¹⁶² This has not stopped the government from announcing a plan to move to a mandatory 10% (E10) ethanol mix for petrol (*bensin*) within 2-3 years.¹⁶³

157 Angelsen et al. 2025. Explaining the recent reduction of Indonesia's deforestation. Centre for Land Tenure Studies Report, Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

158 Peraturan Presiden Nomor 5 Tahun 2006 tentang Kebijakan Energi Nasional.

159 Peraturan Menteri ESDM Nomor 32 Tahun 2008 tentang Penyediaan, Pemanfaatan dan Tata Niaga Bahan Bakar Nabati (Biofuel) Sebagai Bahan Bakar Lain.

160 According to implementing regulations in operation under Peraturan Menteri ESDM 41/2018 tentang Penyediaan Dan Pemanfaatan Bahan Bakar Nabati Jenis Biodiesel Dalam Kerangka Pembiayaan Oleh Badan Pengelola Dana Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit.

161 Kementerian ESDM, 2025. Wujudkan Ketahanan Energi dan Kurangi Impor, Menteri ESDM: Mandatori B40 Berlaku 1 Januari 2025.

162 Pertamina Patra Niaga. 2025. Peringati Hari Lingkungan Hidup Sedunia, Pertamina Luncurkan Pertamina Green 95 di Jawa Tengah.

163 Yohana Artha Uly and Erlangga Djumena. 2025. Kompas.com. Pemerintah Mau Wajibkan Campuran Etanol 10 Persen di BBM

The government provides massive financial support for this policy by allocating the majority of funds collected from an export levy on palm oil to biodiesel production,¹⁶⁴ enriching the biggest names in the palm oil industry. Of twelve corporate recipients of biodiesel subsidy allocations in 2025, many are Indonesian family groups including five listed by Forbes as being billionaire families (the families behind the KPN, Fangiono, RGE/Tanoto, Sinar Mas/Widjaja and Musim Mas groups).¹⁶⁵ The share of the market is allocated by ministerial decree. In 2025 both main groups involved with the Merauke Sugar Group were included as recipients: KPN group was set to receive 13.3% of national allocations, while First Resources would get 5.6%.¹⁶⁶

While both Jokowi¹⁶⁷ and Prabowo¹⁶⁸ have framed the biofuel policy as an effort toward energy diversification and self-sufficiency, others see the creation of a subsidised, stable market benefiting oligarchic interests. One claim which certainly does not stand up to scrutiny is that biodiesel supports a transition away from climate-destroying fuels. Unlike the No Deforestation, No Peat and No Exploitation (NDPE) policies that international buyers have demanded in the palm oil export market, there is no such requirement for domestic biofuel.¹⁶⁹ It therefore provides an incentive for corporate groups to consider expanding their plantations into forested areas. While such groups risk losing access to the NDPE market, the growing size of the domestic biofuel market surely reshapes calculations.

Since most NDPE policies are understood to apply at the corporate group level and do not specify that they are restricted to palm oil, these considerations would also apply to expansion plans for other commodities, such as sugarcane. Could this explain why the Fangiono and KPN groups are taking the risk to clear forest in Merauke? In the case of both groups, there are signs that a retreat from NDPE policies may be under consideration:

KPN group: In the years following the 2019 publication of KPN's No Deforestation policy,¹⁷⁰ no major deforestation by the group's palm oil companies was reported. However its commitment to sustainability appears to be faltering. Its updated 2023 sustainability policy removed the commitment that directors would avoid owning shares in non-compliant operations,¹⁷¹ and no sustainability report has been published since 2022.¹⁷² Furthermore, despite expanding downstream palm oil processing and trading capacity, it is not transparent about its upstream supply chain. By 2024, KPN's downstream website contained only a single sentence on sustainability, with no commitment to deforestation-free sourcing, nor a list of supplying mills.¹⁷³ In 2025, both plantation and downstream websites have been offline for many months, replaced by an under-construction notice.

164 Auriga et al. 2024. Policy Brief: Politically Exposed Persons Within Indonesia's Biodiesel Network.

165 Jane Ho dan Naazneen Karmali. Indonesia's 50 Richest 2024. The other recipients are the BEST, Permata Hijau, Jhonlin, Sungai Budi and Wings groups.

166 Kementerian ESDM, Ditjen EBTKE. 2025. Kepmen ESDM tentang Penetapan Badan Usaha BBM dan Badan Usaha BBN Jenis Biodiesel serta Alokasi Volume BBN Jenis Biodiesel untuk Pencampuran BBM Jenis Minyak Solar Sebesar 40%.

167 Antara, 2019. Jokowi highlights rationale behind expediting biodiesel program.

168 Tempo.co. 2024. Swasembada Energi dalam Pidato Pertama Presiden Prabowo: Kelapa Sawit Bisa Hasilkan Solar dan Bensin.

169 The most recent legislation, Permen ESDM Nomor 4 Tahun 2025 tentang Pengusahaan dan Pemanfaatan Bahan Bakar Nabati, does include a vague requirement to protect the environment, as set out in regulations by the environment ministry, but it is not clear whether relevant regulations exist, nor whether this requirement is intended to extend to the upstream suppliers of biofuel producers.

170 KPN, 2019. NDPE Policy. Now offline (archived pdf); archived copies of policy spread over several pages in 2019: deforestation, peat, exploitation, burning, transparency, other.

171 KPN, 2023. Sustainability policy. Now offline. (archived pdf).

172 KPN, 2022. TOWARDS NDPE POLICY COMPLIANCE - Progress Report - 4th January – December 2021. (archived copy)

173 The archived copy says: "We are committed to the long-term sustainable value creation for all stakeholders by integrating ethical, social, environmental, and economic considerations into our business practices. Our businesses go beyond profit, prioritizing environmental conservation and community welfare—Profit, Planet, and People."

Fangiono group: First Resources faces criticism due to deforestation by companies alleged to be shadow companies of the Fangiono group, and some palm oil buyers have reportedly added First Resources and other Fangiono group companies to no-buy lists.¹⁷⁴ First Resources maintains its NDPE policy and denies the allegations,¹⁷⁵ while FAP Agri has policies to protect high

conservation value and high carbon stock areas.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, unless the deforesting companies are disproved to be Fangiono shadow companies, the group faces further NDPE market exclusion, a risk only slightly increased by deforestation for sugarcane in Merauke.

Bioethanol no climate solution

President Prabowo visited Brazil in July 2025, accompanied by Energy and Natural Resources minister Bahlil Lahadalia,¹⁷⁷ to discuss among other things a desire to emulate Brazil's high rate of production and use of ethanol from sugarcane.¹⁷⁸ While Indonesia's palm oil biodiesel production is well established, its current bioethanol production is only around 63 million litres, far below the 1.2 billion litre target for 2030 set by the Presidential Regulation on sugar self-sufficiency and bioethanol.¹⁷⁹ The Merauke Sugar PSN could produce 244 million litres of ethanol annually, meaning it could supply a significant portion of this ambitious target and be by far the largest producer in Indonesia.

But what does it mean for the future of the government's bioethanol strategy that its flagship project to expand the sector is so heavily dependent on deforestation, suffers from poor hydrological management and lack of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and therefore is likely to be a net contributor to climate change rather than part of the solution? The government needs to disentangle itself from the vested interests of oligarch families and assert an energy policy which at the very least imposes a comprehensive ban on sourcing biofuels from corporate groups which engage in deforestation.

¹⁷⁴ The Gecko Project, 2024. Brands drop First Resources over 'shadow company' revelations. Note that other buyers said they would await an RSPO complaint concerning alleged shadow companies, which was undergoing investigation at the time. The RSPO has since delivered its decision, which in essence found that First Resources was not in violation of its membership rules, but explaining that it had interpreted those rules in a way which would seemingly not allow an RSPO member to be held responsible for any other company which was not itself an RSPO member, regardless of whether it might be under common beneficial ownership with the member company.

¹⁷⁵ First Resources' Response Addressing The Gecko Project's Articles. 2024.

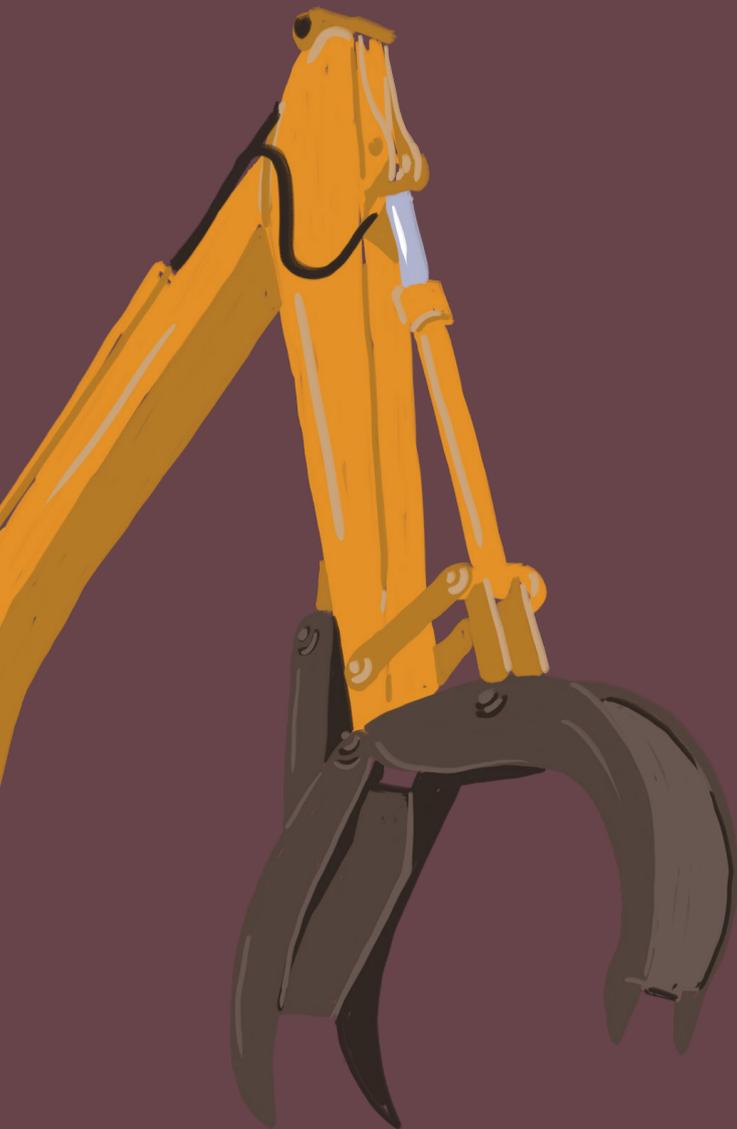
¹⁷⁶ FAP Agri (n.d.) High Conservation Value (HCV).

¹⁷⁷ Kementerian ESDM, 2025. Dampangi Lawatan Presiden Prabowo ke Brasil, Menteri ESDM Jajaki Kerja Sama Penguatan Bioenergi.

¹⁷⁸ UNFCCC TEC, 2023. Bioethanol activities in Brazil. This UN report explains that most small vehicles in Brazil either use an ethanol-gasoline mix or pure ethanol. While generally supportive, it does note "The expansion of ethanol production also had unforeseen negative impacts, such as on food production, population displacement and deforestation."

¹⁷⁹ Peraturan Presiden Nomor 40 Tahun 2023 tentang Percepatan Swasembada Gula Nasional dan Penyediaan Bioetanol Sebagai Bahan Bakar Nabati (Biofuel).

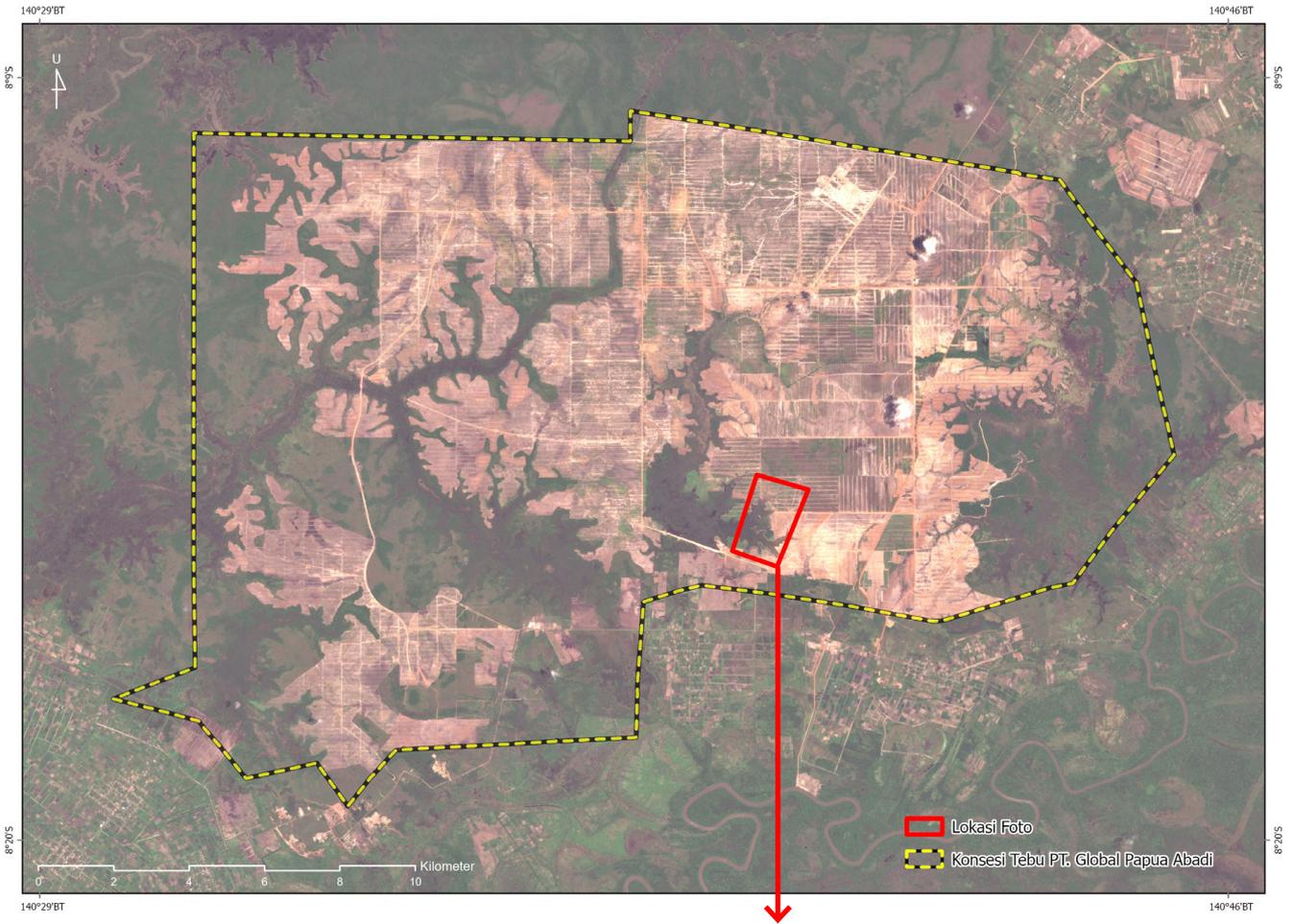
Turning a blind eye to environmental impacts



Imminent emissions due to planned deforestation

Clearance of natural vegetation for the Merauke Sugarcane PSN has already begun and is ongoing. By October 2025, the combined forest cover, savanna, and wetlands lost in concessions of PT Global Papua Abadi (PT GPA) and PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri (PT MNM) had reached 23,781 hectares, out of a total cleared land area of 26,722 hectares.

Based on analysis of land clearing area and type of forest cover using Planet and Sentinel satellite imagery, the loss of all forest types (deforestation) in PT GPA reached 8,733 hectares or 42% of all land cleared (20,690 hectares). Meanwhile, PT MNM has cleared 6,032 hectares of land since August 2024, including 4,334 hectares of deforestation, 71% of all land cleared.



Satellite view and closer aerial view of forest clearance and sugarcane plantation development in PT Global Papua Abadi near Senayu village, Tanah Miring District, Merauke regency, South Papua province, September 18, 2025. 8°16'4"S 140°39'13"E. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace.

Viewed as a whole, the deforestation potential for the Merauke Sugarcane PSN is very high. As presented in Figure G, of the 560,000 hectares of the ten sugarcane companies in this project's concession area, around 419,000 hectares are covered by forests. Besides the potential forest

loss, the sugarcane plantation development plan also has the potential to eliminate 34,000 hectares of savanna and 83,000 hectares of wetlands.¹⁸⁰

SUGARCANE CONCESSION LAND COVER 2024

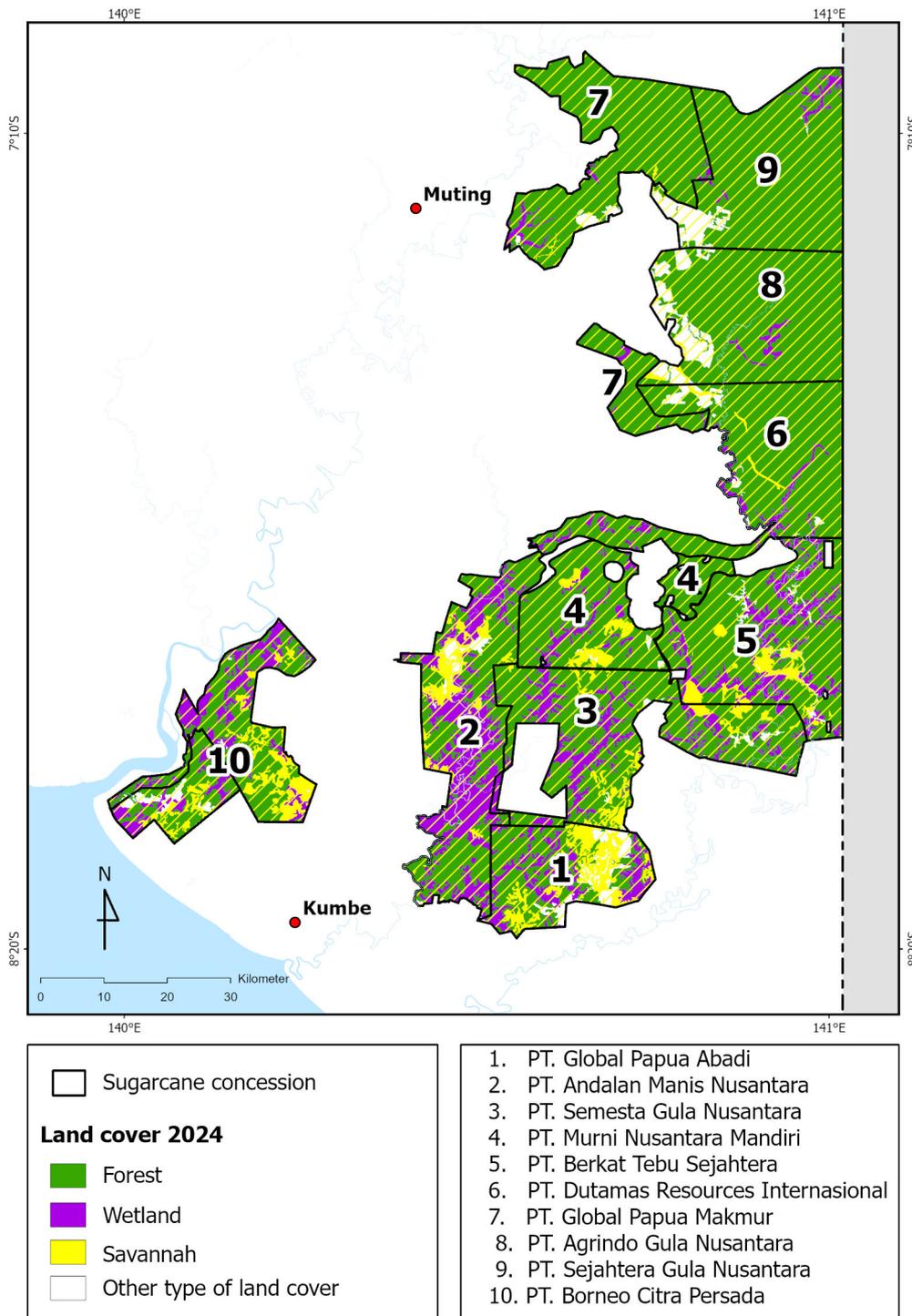


Figure G. Merauke Sugarcane PSN: locations and names of the consortium of ten companies participating, with land cover types based on the Forestry Ministry 2024 Land Cover Map.

180 The complete data is available in this table, which show the results of spatial analysis of sugar cane concessions in the Merauke PSN overlaid with the Forestry Ministry's 2024 Indonesian Land Cover Map.

Deforestation in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN has clearly already contributed to increasing carbon emissions. According to Greenpeace Indonesia's calculations, the clearing of natural vegetation cover in the concession areas of PT GPA and PT MNM indicates that the amount of carbon emissions released into the atmosphere from this project has already reached 5.6 million tons of CO₂, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of the city of Bandung.¹⁸¹

According to Greenpeace Indonesia's calculations, clearing this natural vegetation could produce emissions equivalent to 221 million tonnes¹⁸² of CO₂, or as much as the annual emissions of 48 million cars.¹⁸³ It dwarfs by almost twenty times the annual FOLU carbon sink that Indonesia hoped to achieve by 2025.¹⁸⁴ This alone makes Indonesia's climate target, presented at the 2025 UN climate talks in Belém, impossible to achieve.

This deforestation occurs amidst Indonesia's efforts to mitigate large-scale deforestation, as outlined in the FOLU Net Sink 2030 target. The poor quality of Indonesia's climate mitigation efforts in the forestry sector is demonstrated by the lack of a goal to reduce the destruction of natural forests to zero. In the FOLU sector mitigation plan, only half of the natural forests in Indonesia are included in the climate mitigation map. Deforestation occurring outside Indonesia's climate mitigation map is considered to be in accordance with policy, and even includes what is referred to by the government as 'planned deforestation', such as that which is happening in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN.

Forest loss exacerbates flood risk

The Merauke region has the character of a Wetland Terrestrial Ecosystem Region, as established in a 2025 Decree of the Minister of Environment concerning Ecoregions.¹⁸⁵ The natural vegetation of the wetland area extending along the southern lowlands of West Papua from Kaimana through Agats to Merauke constitutes a complex and diverse landscape. This landscape plays a significant role in soil formation, preventing soil loss, and acts as a water catchment area.¹⁸⁶ The very flat topography of the region makes the Merauke region very vulnerable to being hit by floods due to rainfall intensity and sea level rise.

This situation means the community in this region has had to adapt to this kind of flood event. However, since the sugarcane plantation industry began land clearing activities, floods have occurred erratically and have been difficult to predict. Agricultural activities are the most heavily impacted by these floods. Influxes of polluted waters and even crop failures have recently become recurring experiences for farmers around the company concessions. To avoid missing the window for new planting due to floods, some farmers have started using the strategy of planting immediately after harvest. However, this method is not profitable, because the yield is reduced with a shortened planting cycle.¹⁸⁷

181 Data Portal for Cities (Global Covenant of Mayors), 2025 (using 2017 dataset). Kota Bandung.

182 This figure has been obtained by calculating the above and below ground biomass stocks for the different mapped vegetation types and converting these to CO₂ equivalents according to the Indonesian government's method in its 2022 National Forest Reference Level for Deforestation, Forest Degradation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stock.

183 Based on estimated annual emissions of 4.6t CO₂ per car.

184 Under the LCCP_L scenario set out in Table 1 of Indonesia's 2nd NDC (2025).

185 Keputusan Menteri Lingkungan Hidup/Kepala Badan Pengendalian Lingkungan Hidup Nomor 694 Tahun 2025 tentang Penetapan Wilayah Ekoregion Indonesia.

186 Ibid., p. 448

187 Interview with Choirul Anwar, farmer in Sermayam Indah village, Tanah Miring district on 11 September 2025.

The largest flood to date, inundating villages as well as agricultural land, was reported by residents around the PT GPA concession to have occurred in May and June 2025. Residents interviewed by Greenpeace Indonesia in Senayu Village, Soa Village, and Sermayam Indah Village stated that they suspected the flood occurred due to land clearing by the company.¹⁸⁸ Their suspicion was strengthened by the appearance of the flood water, which they said recently appeared turbid, “like the color of milk coffee”, whereas in previous floods the floodwaters had been clear. Residents assess that this color change indicates that the water contained sediment due to erosion from areas stripped of vegetation cover. Furthermore, residents emphasized that the flood came suddenly, extended to lands that had never been inundated, and took much longer to recede.

Inside PT GPA’s concession, there are many swamps, each of which has a name. One large swamp – known by the community as Sakor Swamp – stretches from the PT GPA concession to the PT MNM concession. From these swamps, small rivers flow into the Maro River, passing through the villages around the concession. Residents suspect that PT GPA blocked the flows of these rivers and swamps, only opening them when they overflowed and submerged the sugarcane plantations. Yakob Mahuze, a customary land rights holder who also works at PT GPA, stated that he once participated in damming the swamp with wood and soil to store water, anticipating the arrival of the dry season. However, this dam later burst, and water overflowed into lower-lying areas around the PT GPA concession.

Floods affecting transmigrant farmers

Sermayam Village is located very close to the PT GPA concession. Its inhabitants are transmigrant farmers (farmers from elsewhere in Indonesia who were relocated to West Papua several decades ago) who cultivate rice fields. Supri Agung Joko Santoso, Chairman of the Association of Farmer Groups (Gapoktan) in Sermayam Indah Village, reported a major flood occurred in mid-May 2025. Santoso estimates that of the approximately 400 hectares of rice field area in this village, more or less 90 percent was submerged by floods. In the submerged area, some fields were close to harvest, and some had just been recently planted.¹⁸⁹

According to Santoso, this flood event caused farmers to suffer crop failure and financial losses. For one hectare of land that was close to harvest a farmer would have already spent 8 to 10 million Rupiah. Many farmers in this region rely on capital from the People’s Business Credit (KUR) schemes offered by government banks. Crop failure impacts the ability to repay these loans.

Because of these problems, Santoso, accompanied by the heads of Sermayam Indah Village and Tanah Miring District, met with company leadership at the PT GPA office in Ngguti Bob Village, Tanah Miring District, on May 17, 2025. Santoso reported that the meeting was tough. The company leadership he met at that time initially did not want to admit that the flood originated from their operational activities and instead stated the flood was a common phenomenon in this place. Although in the end, according to Santoso, the company admitted this flood event was due to an embankment inside the PT GPA plantation location that was breached. However, the company still did not respond to the farmers’ demand for compensation. The company only offered to help the farmers to clean up the irrigation areas around their lands.

188 Interview with Choirul Anwar and Supri Agung Joko Santoso in Sermayam Indah village, also Yakob Mahuze and Filomina Ndiken in Senayu village on 11 September 2025, and Agata Kimkamban in Soa village on 10 September.

189 Interviews in Sermayam Indah village on 11 September 2025.

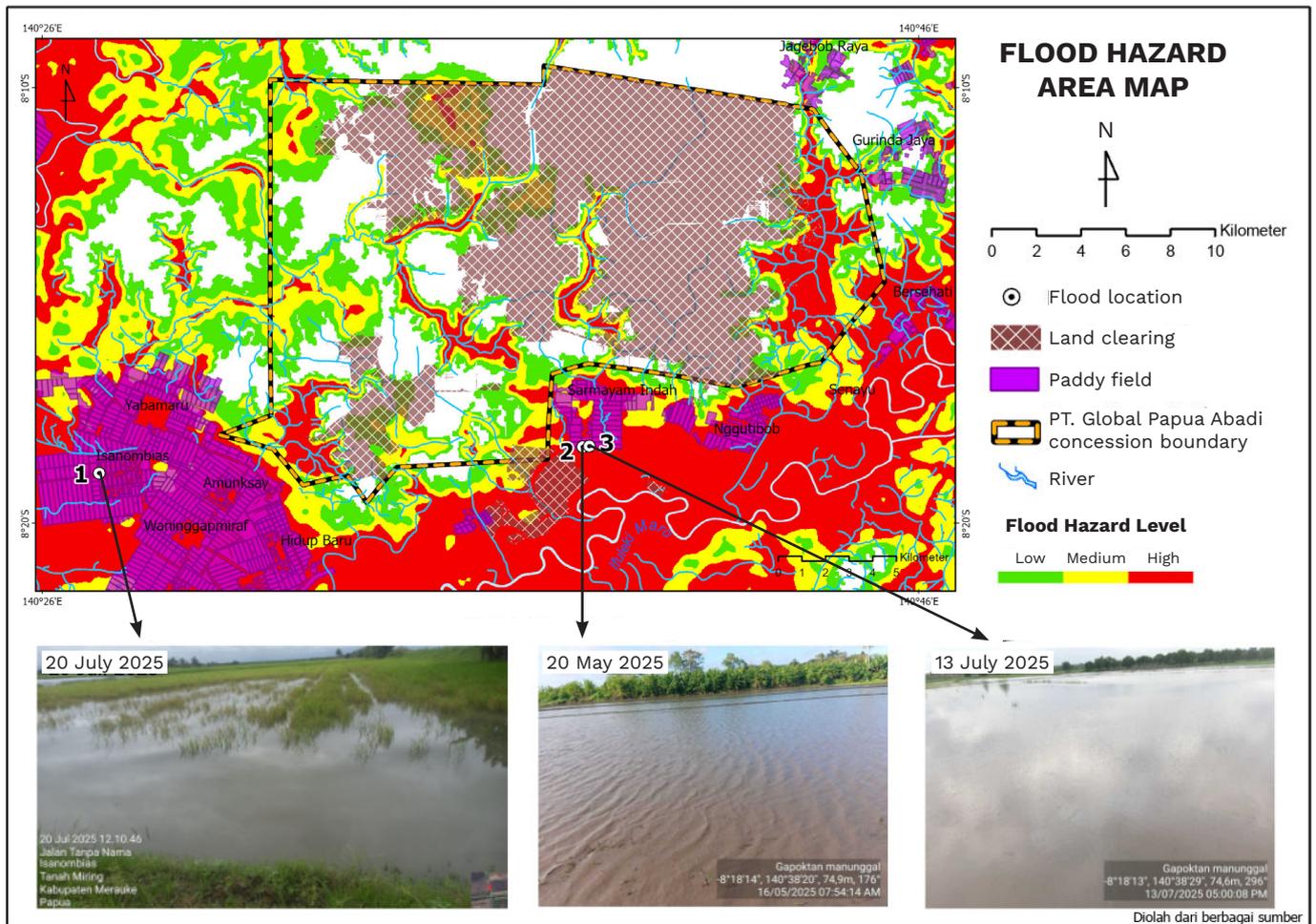


Figure H. Farmers' rice fields submerged by flooding. Map data was collated and processed from: (1) National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) map of Flood Hazard Levels, (2) PT Global Papua Abadi's Environmental Impact Analysis (ANDAL) Document, (3) Ministry of Public Works and Manunggal Farmers Group Association (Gapoktan)'s photos and maps of recent flood locations, (4) Geospatial Information Agency's Topographic Map of Indonesia, (5) Land clearing analysis made from Planet Mosaic Satellite Imagery for September 2025.

The Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of Merauke Regency released a map of flood hazard areas in Merauke before the company began operations, showing quite extensive flood-prone areas. These are distributed around the area which has now become the company's concession. There are also new flooding sites, which according to community reports, have only emerged since the company began operations, but which were already identified as areas with a high flood hazard level (red color) in the BPBD map. Rice field areas in Tanah Miring and Salor districts are essentially located in flood-prone areas. Large-scale land clearing in higher-lying areas, such as that currently conducted by PT GPA, risks exacerbating floods in these areas in the future.

Before PT GPA commenced operations, Indigenous communities in Merauke also relied heavily on swamps, lakes, and rivers (streams) as sources of clean water, for household needs, agriculture, and for fishing grounds. Water pollution due to erosion from land clearing for sugarcane plantations makes the community worried about consuming water and fish from natural swamps and rivers. Residents are also anxious about the risks from chemicals used by the company to manage the sugarcane plantations. This concern arose after residents reported several anomalies, such as the discovery of dead fish with enlarged heads and itching sensations when bathing or washing clothes in these water sources.

Not only impacting the area immediately surrounding the sugarcane plantations, forest clearing is also expected to worsen the floods that have historically plagued wider areas in Merauke Regency. This is due to the sugarcane concessions being located in flood-prone watersheds. The Merauke Sugarcane and Bioethanol Strategic Environmental Assessment indicates that sugarcane and bioethanol concessions exist in the upstream, midstream, and downstream areas of watersheds drained by the Maro, Kumbe

and Bian rivers.¹⁹⁰ Data from the Papua River Basin Regional Center in Merauke shows the downstream flood-prone areas in the wider Maro watershed include Merauke City on the river's east bank and Semangga District on the west bank. Meanwhile, two districts adjacent to the Kumbe River, Malind and Kurik, are also flood-prone areas.¹⁹¹ Large-scale forest clearing in the midstream and upstream of these two watersheds is expected to exacerbate floods in flood-prone areas located downstream.

Biodiversity protection remains a pipe dream

The Merauke Sugarcane PSN is destroying the habitats of endemic flora and fauna and threatens three important conservation areas. Analysis of concession maps and conservation area maps of Wasur National Park, Bupul Nature Reserve, and Bian Wildlife Reserve show that the Merauke Sugarcane PSN concessions directly border these three areas. Moreover, the concessions of several companies lie within the **Wasur-Bupul-Bian** (Wabubi) Corridor, a wildlife corridor connecting the three areas.

Wasur National Park, Bupul Nature Reserve, and Bian Wildlife Reserve are conservation areas, habitats for endemic flora and fauna in the Trans-Fly Ecoregion.¹⁹² The legislative framework regarding natural resource conservation has mandated the designation of areas to be preserved outside established conservation areas, which could include buffer zones and ecological corridors.¹⁹³ The Wabubi Corridor has long been slated for designation as an Essential Ecosystem Area by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

¹⁹⁰ Kementerian Investasi, 2024. Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis (KLHS) Proyek Strategis Nasional Kawasan Pengembangan Swasembada Gula dan Bioetanol Klaster III di Merauke, p. 15-16.

¹⁹¹ Balai Wilayah Sungai Papua Merauke. 2025. Peta Rawan Banjir (archived page, map 1, map 2, map 3).

¹⁹² "The TransFly ecoregion straddles the international border of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. This low-lying coastal region of grasslands, savannas wetlands and monsoon forest habitats covers more than 10 million ha. The area is home to some of the largest and healthiest wetlands in the Asia-Pacific region. It contains landscapes and species found nowhere else in New Guinea" WWF. nd. A Biodiversity Vision for the Transfly: TransFly Ecoregion - Western Province, Papua New Guinea and Papua District, Merauke, Indonesia.

¹⁹³ See article 8 clause (4), Undang-Undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2024 tentang Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam dan Ekosistemnya. The same article also describes areas of high conservation value, community conservation areas and areas of for the protection of local wisdom as potential areas to be preserved.



● Rawa Biru wetland in Wasur National Park, Merauke regency, South Papua province on September 18, 2025. 8°40'59"S 140°51'40"E.
© Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace



● Peat forest and wetlands inside PT Semesta Gula Nusantara sugarcane concession in Jagebob, Merauke, South Papua. 14 December 2025.
7°57'23"S 140°34'48"E. © Jornasyanto Sukarno / Greenpeace

The government, through the Papua Natural Resources Conservation Centre, working together with WWF, has planned for the Wabubi Corridor to serve as a wildlife migration route between these three conservation areas, guided by regulations regarding the formation of wildlife corridors.¹⁹⁴ Using these guidelines an area of 905,659 hectares has been mapped for the Wabubi Corridor, identifying excellent quality natural vegetation which serves as a habitat for

fauna, including rare species as recorded by WWF in 2016: Trans-Fly pademelon and wallaby species (dusky pademelon *Thylogale brunii* and agile wallaby *Macropus agilis*), palm cockatoo (*Probosciger aterrimus*), southern cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius*), southern crowned pigeon (*Goura sclaterii*),¹⁹⁵ and megapode ground-nesting birds (*Megapodiidae*).¹⁹⁶



● A flock of pelicans are seen in the Alel wetland in Domande village, Malind District, Merauke Regency, South Papua Province on September 13, 2025. 8°8'40.58"S 139°58'24.02"E © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace.

194 Peraturan Direktur Jenderal Konservasi Sumberdaya Alam dan Ekosistem No. P.8/KSDAE/BPE 2/KSA 419/2016 Tentang Pedoman Penentuan Koridor Hidupan Liar Sebagai Ekosistem Esensial.

195 WWF Indonesia, 2017, Upaya Pengelolaan Koridor Wasur-Bupul-Bian (WaBuBi) yang Berkelanjutan Bagi Masyarakat Adat Suku Yeinan di Kabupaten Merauke provides a camera trap image correctly identified as *mambruk*, i.e. the common West Papuan name for the *Goura* genus of crowned pigeons, of which there are four species, all confined to New Guinea. The image appears to show *Goura sclaterii*, consistent with its colouring and range in southern New Guinea, although the WWF report text perhaps accidentally names it as *Goura victoria*.

196 WWF Indonesia's 2017 study describes evidence including a distinctive megapode breeding mound, probably belonging to Orange-footed Scrubfowl (*Megapodius reinwardt*) or Yellow-legged Brushturkey (*Talegalla fuscirostris*) although the WWF report text perhaps accidentally names it *Macrocephalon maleo*, a megapode which is restricted to Sulawesi and Buton.

As ground operations in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN began, the Wabubi Corridor had still not been officially designated as an essential ecosystem zone. Nevertheless, the corridor has been integrated into the Merauke Regency Regional Spatial Plan as a regency-level strategic area to support its environmental goals. Currently however, a large part of this important area has been designated as sugarcane company concessions. Overlaying the Merauke Sugarcane PSN concession map on maps of

the conservation area and Wabubi Corridor shows that there are around 310,471 hectares of sugarcane concession area located within this planned corridor. From this analysis by Greenpeace Indonesia, seven sugarcane company concessions overlap with this planned essential ecosystem area, namely PT Agrindo Gula Nusantara, PT Dutamas Resources Internasional, PT Berkat Tebu Sejahtera, PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri, PT Semesta Gula Nusantara, PT Sejahtera Gula Nusantara, and PT Global Papua Makmur.

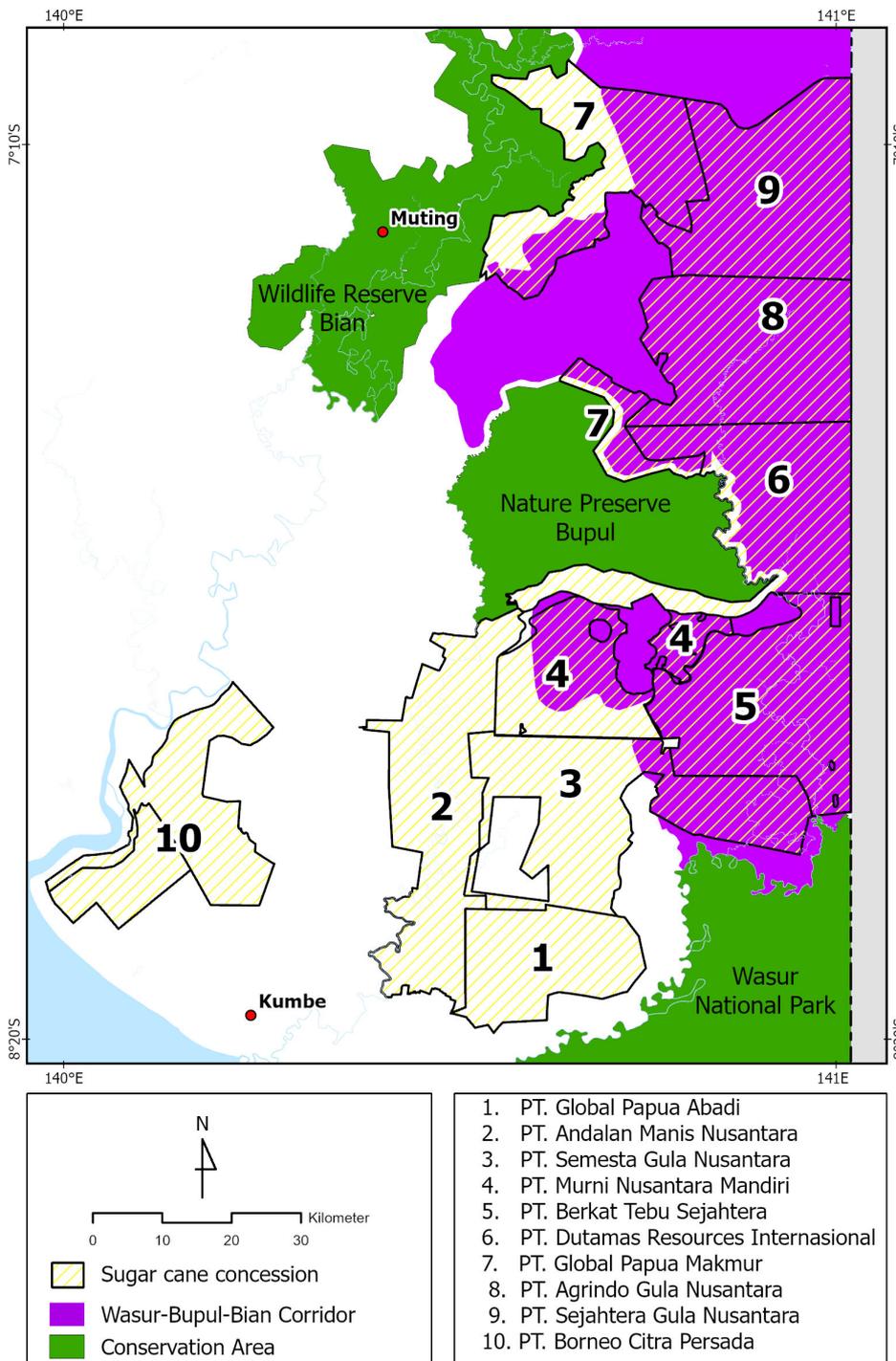


Figure 1. The seven Merauke Sugarcane PSN companies whose concessions overlap with the Wasur-Bupul-Bian (Wabubi) corridor are PT Agrindo Gula Nusantara, PT Dutamas Resources Internasional, PT Berkat Tebu Sejahtera, PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri, PT Semesta Gula Nusantara, PT Sejahtera Gula Nusantara and PT Global Papua Makmur.

Fighting for their future

The discussion in the following section is drawn from field visits and interviews conducted by Greenpeace Indonesia, Pusaka Bentala Rakyat, and YLBHI LBH Papua Merauke in September 2025 which set out to determine to what extent Indigenous customary land rights (*hak ulayat*) have been recognized, respected, and protected by the state and Merauke Sugarcane PSN companies. Visits were made to, among others, Blandin Kakayo, Senayu, Domande, and Onggari villages, in the concessions of three sugarcane companies: PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri, PT Global Papua Abadi, and PT Borneo Citra Persada (PT BCP). Observations and interviews during this visit revealed the problems faced by the communities as the project gets underway.



Misleading customary land owners

The Merauke Sugarcane PSN operates in the customary territory of the Marind and Yei peoples. Both the provisions of the Papua Special Autonomy Law¹⁹⁷ and national legislation on plantations require the government and companies to obtain Indigenous community consent before any activities planning to develop land in customary areas. The Merauke regency government has formally recognized the existence of the Yei people's customary territory through a decree which also

includes maps of the territory.¹⁹⁸ Participatory customary territory mapping efforts have also been facilitated by NGOs and registered with the Customary Territory Registration Agency (BRWA). Thus, interested parties have no excuse not to approach Indigenous landholders to conduct a full FPIC process prior to planning a plantation project. However, in reality, the consent of the Indigenous Community was only sought by the company after first obtaining permits from the government.



SALINAN

BUPATI MERAUKE
PROVINSI PAPUA SELATAN

KEPUTUSAN BUPATI MERAUKE
NOMOR 100.3.3.2/1413/TAHUN 2024

TENTANG

PENGAKUAN, PERLINDUNGAN, PENGHORMATAN HAK MASYARAKAT
HUKUM ADAT DAN WILAYAH ADAT SUKU YEI
DI KABUPATEN MERAUKE

BUPATI MERAUKE,

Menimbang :

- a. bahwa pengakuan, perlindungan dan penghormatan terhadap masyarakat hukum adat beserta hak tradisionalnya merupakan amanat Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945;
- b. bahwa berdasarkan ketentuan sebagaimana diatur dalam Pasal 2, Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 52 Tahun 2014 tentang Pedoman Pengakuan dan Perlindungan Masyarakat Hukum Adat, Pasal 6 Undang-Undang Nomor 21 Tahun 2001 tentang Otonomi Khusus Papua dan Pasal 21, Peraturan Daerah Nomor 5 Tahun 2013 tentang Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam Berbasis Masyarakat Hukum Adat Malind Anim, maka perlu menetapkan Pengakuan, Perlindungan dan Penghormatan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat dan Wilayah Adat Suku Yei di Kabupaten Merauke;
- c. bahwa untuk maksud tersebut pada huruf a dan huruf b diatas, perlu ditetapkan dengan Keputusan Bupati Merauke;

Mengingat :

1. Undang-Undang Nomor 21 Tahun 2001 tentang Otonomi Khusus Bagi Provinsi Papua (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 135, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 4151), sebagaimana telah diubah beberapa kali terakhir dengan Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2021 tentang Perubahan Kedua Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 21 Tahun 2001 tentang Otonomi Khusus bagi Provinsi Papua (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2021 Nomor 155, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 6697);
2. Undang...

A Decree of the Regent of Merauke from 2024 has officially granted recognition to the rights of the Yei Indigenous People in Merauke Regency.

197 Undang-undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2021 tentang Otonomi Khusus bagi Provinsi Papua.

198 Keputusan Bupati Merauke No. 100.3.3.2/1413/TAHUN 2024 tentang Pengakuan, Penghormatan dan Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat Suku Yei di Kabupaten Merauke (archived copy).

Negotiations for customary land rights holders to relinquish their rights only involved the company and the rights holders themselves, without any outside support which could have helped them to understand the project and its impacts and the permitting process. The customary land rights holders also did not receive legal support to ensure that their rights as Indigenous peoples were fully protected. The company just went to their home villages touting a series of benefits they would provide if the holders released their customary territories. The company's promises included allocating 20% of the plantations to a profit-sharing scheme known as *plasma*, providing employment to customary land rights holders, building new houses, paying children's school fees, and so on.

Communities in Blandin Kakayo, Senayu, and Domande villages, who rejected the company's offers, reported that they continued to be approached repeatedly. The company used Indigenous leaders it had convinced to

support it to influence the wider community. The position of Indigenous Peoples was further weakened because the company used apparent members of the Indonesian armed forces in its efforts to obtain the approval of customary land rights holders. All customary land rights holders Greenpeace Indonesia met in those three villages reported that individuals they strongly suspected to be soldiers were among the people who came to meet them.

The process of relinquishing customary land rights was also not preceded by a process of free deliberation between members of the Indigenous communities releasing the land. Once the company managed to control the Indigenous community leaders who it had approached repeatedly, it was able to obtain the consent it sought. Meanwhile, women reported that their voices were the least heard and their opinions were least taken into account in the process of deciding to release land for the Merauke Sugarcane PSN.



● Women interviewed by Greenpeace Indonesia report that their opinions were not sought nor considered in the process of obtaining Indigenous land for the Merauke Sugarcane PSN. Here local community members are seen attending a discussion held by NGOs providing advocacy assistance in Soa village, Seramayam district, Merauke regency, South Papua province on September 11, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

The companies in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN consortium kept all information regarding customary territory under their control, as well as the contents of agreements with customary land rights holders. The companies mapped the territories of clans whose areas fell within their concessions, but no documents produced in these exercises ended up in the hands of the customary land rights holders. Information about the compensation due only came verbally from field officers who had performed the mapping with the customary land rights holders. Furthermore, customary land rights holders also claimed they were not in possession of any written cooperation agreement detailing the benefits the companies had promised them while seeking their consent to release land.

Instead, monuments were erected to mark the agreement in the villages of the customary land rights holders, each with a similar appearance and displaying similar content. Written on the monuments were the companies' obligations on environmental management, to assign *plasma* land in the plantations for customary land rights holders, to utilize local labour (dependent on ability, skills, and education), and to implement Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, which would be implemented in stages once the factory started operating, based on identified community needs and the companies' financial capacity. The companies

also promised to protect sacred areas and name plantation blocks after the names of the customary land rights holders' villages. By this means, the customary land rights holders were considered to have given their consent to PT GPA being issued cultivation rights (HGU), the formation of cooperatives that would work with with the company to manage *plasma* plantation areas, and would also agree to participate in maintaining security and order as sugarcane plantations are developed.

Yakobus Mahuze, head of the Mahuze Clan in Senayu Village, has recently become disappointed with the company, after realising that the content of the agreement inscribed on the monument does not cover everything that was promised by the company. The signatures of the customary land rights holders on the monument turned out to be merely scans of signatures previously obtained by company workers. He has asked the company to dismantle the monument and update its contents to also include a calculation of the area of land taken by the company. Yakobus worries that he will face difficulties in holding the company to its promises based on the content of the agreement as currently displayed on the monument. Meanwhile, the company has yet to respond to his request to obtain a copy of the letter of agreement signed by the Mahuze Clan and PT GPA's leadership.



● A monument for the agreement between PT Global Papua Abadi and customary land holders to develop a sugarcane plantation and sugar factory in Senayu village, Tanah Miring district, Merauke regency, South Papua province. September 11, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

Front yard frontline: barracks built on community's doorstep

A commitment to provide security support is one of the privileges accorded to all designated National Strategic Projects. In the Merauke Sugarcane PSN, military officers are believed to be actively involved in efforts to ensure Indigenous peoples' customary land rights are relinquished to the company. This was admitted by the Head of the administration sub-division of the Merauke Regency Land Office, Yansen Belo Winardo. According to him, the president has directly ordered the involvement of the Indonesian National Armed Forces on lands designated as PSN.¹⁹⁹ Once military personnel have successfully facilitated the release of land from Indigenous peoples, the company and the local government will handle compensation payments, and the Agrarian and Spatial Planning Ministry/National Land Agency will finalize the administration.

Customary land rights holders in the concessions of PT GPA, PT MNM, PT BCP, and also the Muyu people, who are set to be evicted for the construction of a port belonging to PT GPA (see below),²⁰⁰ all stated that they were all approached by someone named Agung, who claimed to be a company spokesperson, to ask the community to release customary rights to the sugarcane company. The communities believe that Agung is actually a member of the military assigned to negotiate with customary land rights holders.²⁰¹

The military also facilitated the payment of compensation money for the relinquishment of customary rights to the indigenous community in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN, which took place in the hall of the 1707 Merauke Military District Command Headquarters (Makodim).²⁰² Besides company leadership and a number of military officers, also present at the event were government representatives, namely the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Licensing Service Agency (DPMPTSP) of Merauke Regency, and a notary who recorded the agreement.

199 Interview at the Agrarian and Spatial Planning Ministry/National Land Agency office in Merauke on 19 September 2021.

200 YLBHI LBH Papua Merauke, 2025. *Segera Hentikan Penyerobotan dan Penggelapan Tanah milik 75 Keluarga Orang Asli Papua di Merauke.*

201 The community of Domande Village, who to this day refuse to release their customary land to PT BCP, added that after they expressed their refusal at the first meeting attended by Agung, more people arrived during the subsequent visit whom they also suspected to be soldiers.

202 DPMPTSP Merauke, 2024. *Penyerahan Hak Atas Tanah Wilayah kepada PT. Murni Nusantara Mandiri Berlangsung di Merauke* (archived copy); *Beritasatu.com*, 2025. *PT. Murni Nusantara Mandiri Lunasi Pembayaran Tali Asih Kepada Masyarakat Adat* (archived copy).

Military co-opting community resistance

Customary land rights holders are also being recruited into the Indonesian National Armed Forces Reserve Component (Komcad). In one instance in Domande Village, where villagers are currently refusing to consent to the company PT BCP, the Ministry of Transmigration sent around 29 residents to participate in the Komcad selection process. They were flown to Bandung, West Java, via Mopah Merauke Airport on September 22, 2025, to be trained at the Siliwangi III Military Command base.

Minister of Transmigration M. Iftitah Sulaiman Suryanagara, who was present at Mopah Merauke Airport when this group departed, stated that this showed the seriousness of the government's commitment to defense.²⁰³ Transmigration, which has long been criticized as a trigger for conflict between Jakarta and Indigenous inhabitants in outer provinces, especially in regions like Papua, was overseen by a non-ministerial government body during the *Reformasi* era following the fall of Suharto's dictatorship.²⁰⁴ However, President Prabowo restored it as a ministry and appointed Sulaiman, a military veteran, to lead it.

Residents recruited as part of the Komcad process are those who had previously submitted their Identity Cards (KTP) and Family Cards (KK) in order to receive new houses to be built by the Ministry of Transmigration in Domande Village. Given the sudden recruitment process, the community has been questioning the basis for the recruitment, suspecting it to be part of an agenda to divide the community in Domande Village, linked to their opposition to the company. These community concerns arise from the fact that the Komcad program is run by the Merauke Military District Command (Kodim), a military unit which is also currently actively supporting companies in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN to acquire customary lands.

The military has also built two new bases within the company concessions, in Sermayam Indah village, Tanah Miring district, in the PT GPA concession, and in Blandin Kakayo village, Jagebob district, in the PT MNM concession. The military base in Sermayam Indah village is the Command Headquarters of the Territorial Development Infantry Battalion (Yonif TP) 818 Yuboi,²⁰⁵ while its counterpart in Blandin Kakayo Village is suspected to be the Command Headquarters of Yonif TP 817/Aoba.²⁰⁶ Both are under the Territorial Development Infantry Brigade (Brigif) TP 83/Bugodi, which is an organic unit of the newest

Regional Military Command (Kodam) XXIV/Mandala Trikora in South Papua Province, established on August 10, 2025.

The new Yonif TP bases and the Komcad program are closely related. The Ministry of Defense aims for each regency in Indonesia to be backed up by one Yonif and two reserve component battalions, under the control of a District Military Command. Both will support the government's program to acquire Indigenous Peoples' land in Papua for the interests of the PSN.

203 Josua Sihombing, 2025. Mentrans Berangkatkan 29 Warga Merauke Ikut Seleksi Komcad.

204 Made Supriatma, 2025, Peran Militer Membesar: Apakah Prabowo Sedang Melakukan Autogolpe?. Project Multatuli.

205 YON TP 818/YUBOI (@Yontp818.yuboi), "Update Pembangunan Yonif TP 818/YUBOI Hari Ini 17 September 2025 Lokasi Di Sermayam Indah Kab.Merauke", TikTok (archived copy).

206 Danbrigif TP 83/Bugodi, Letkol Inf Hadrianus Yossy S.B., S.I.Pem., M. Han. accompanied by Danyonif 817/Aoba, Letkol Inf Richie Fadly, S. Sos., conducted a direct inspection of the construction progress of Mako Yonif TP 817/Aoba in Blandin Kakayo Village, Jagebob District, Merauke Regency, South Papua, on Wednesday (August 13, 2025). This inspection aimed to ensure that the construction proceeds on target and efficiently in order to provide the best facilities for soldiers in carrying out their duties and service to the nation. YON TP 817/AOBA, (817_aoba), "Progres Pembangunan Yonif TP 817/Aoba, (archived copy).



● Aerial photo of the construction of Yonif TP 817/Aoba inside the PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri concession, Blandin Kakayo Village, Jagebob District, Merauke Regency. © Willy Pratama / Greenpeace

Sowing horizontal conflict

Vincent Kwipalo is one of the customary land rights holders who has been persistently refusing to release land for companies in the Merauke Sugarcane PSN. Since early 2024, PT MNM has approached Vincent Kwipalo to release his customary land. In a draft letter of agreement for the relinquishment of customary land rights²⁰⁷ which the company's public relations team handed to Vincent Kwipalo, it was written that around 1,400 hectares of the Kwipalo Clan's customary territory fell within the PT MNM concession. The company offered to pay compensation of IDR 300,000 (US\$ 18) per hectare in two installments.²⁰⁸ The first installment would come to IDR 210 million (US\$ 12,500). Vincent firmly rejected the contents of the letter.

A customary meeting held in Baad Village on September 2, 2025 concluded that Vincent Kwipalo had the right to refuse PT MNM entering his territory. However, after that meeting, the company seemingly continued its efforts to gain control of the land for sugarcane plantation development. It culminated on September 15, 2025, when Vincent Kwipalo and his family blocked a number of heavy equipment vehicles that had breached the boundary of the Kwipalo Clan land to build a road leading to the land of a neighboring clan that had already released customary land to the company.

²⁰⁷ Draft agreement letter 29/MNM/MER/VII/2024. (Archived copy).

²⁰⁸ A land value of Rp 300 thousand per hectare was also paid to the customary owners in the PT GPA concession.



- A member of the Kwipalo Clan stands by a signposted tree and painted fence erected to prohibit sugarcane plantation company PT MNM from trespassing on his land at Blandin Kakayo village, Jagebob district, Merauke regency, South Papua. September 17, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

PT MNM used various strategies to try to take control of the Kwipalo Clan's customary territory. At several points, the company cleared land in the Kwipalo Clan territory, causing conflict with neighboring clans. At one location, the company used the pretext that a neighboring clan had claimed the Kwipalo Clan territory as its own customary territory, and so the company claimed it had cleared the land after having obtained approval from the neighboring clan. Before the company arrived, the two clans, which have kinship ties, had always lived together and mutually recognized the boundaries of each clan's territory. However, this boundary conflict has now created hostilities between them. It came to a head on the night of October 6, 2025, when Vincent's house was attacked by

four persons that, according to a news report, were suspected to be connected to the clan that had previously released rights to their customary land to PT MNM.²⁰⁹

Vincent Kwipalo expressed his distrust of the company's promises. He has witnessed the experiences of Indigenous peoples in other areas of Merauke who have lost their territories to corporations. Contrary to their promises, these companies have not brought happiness or welfare to Indigenous customary landholders. This conviction was reinforced after Vincent was able to meet face-to-face with victims of other National Strategic Projects (PSN) in other parts of Indonesia and hear about their experiences.

209 BBC, 2025 'Kami diadu perusahaan' – Penyerangan terhadap masyarakat adat penentang PSN Merauke.

The experience of the Kwipalo clan demonstrates the immense physical, mental, economic, and social pressure that Indigenous peoples who oppose the Merauke Sugarcane PSN have had to endure. The company has a free hand to pressure customary landholders and engender conflict among

them. Meanwhile, the government, which has the authority to grant licences, has failed comprehensively to assume responsibility for protecting the rights of Indigenous communities who oppose plantation development.



● Vincent Kwipalo stands on his land in a forest cleared by sugarcane company PT Murni Nusantara Mandiri near Blandin Kakayo village, Jagebob District, Merauke Regency, South Papua province on September 17, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace.

Bitter past experiences

Not wanting to fall into the same trap twice, the people of Domande and Onggari villages, both in Malind district, are firmly committed to rejecting handing over land for the Merauke Sugarcane PSN. The customary territories of these two villages fall within

the concession of PT Borneo Citra Persada (PT BCP). As of September 2025, company representatives had visited these two villages twice attempting to obtain consent to release customary land. In both meetings, the customary landholders refused.

The Domande community has had bad experiences with sugarcane companies in the past. In 2011, two subsidiaries of the Rajawali Group, PT Cendrawasih Jaya Mandiri and PT Karya Bumi Papua, moved into the Domande area as part of the MIFEE Project.²¹⁰ Just like PT GPA today, the Rajawali Group also erected a monument in Domande Village marking its agreement with the community. After initially clearing the forest, the company ceased operations and left without notice. Various reports state that the sugarcane planting trials by the two companies (and other companies around the same time) failed due to crop pests.²¹¹ Several figures in Domande Village

said that at the time, the community had also launched protests because the company had not met the terms of its initial agreements with customary landholders.

Both the Domande and Onggari communities are now wary of further efforts by the new company. They refuse to sign any documents during meetings and refuse to attend consultations for its environmental impact assessment. The community worries that their signatures or presence at such meetings will be manipulated to imply acceptance of the company.



● A landowner carrying a pig caught in the forest area abandoned by the Rajawali group in Domande village, Malind District, Merauke Regency, South Papua Province on September 13, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

210 Awas Miffee, 2012. *Perusahaan Tebu Rajawali Manis Janjinya*.

211 Yazid, Muhammad, 2012. *Ratusan hektar lahan benih tebu diserang hama* (archived copy).

Resistance of the Muyu People against eviction

Senayu Soa Village is inhabited by the Muyu People who originate from Boven Digoel (the regency which borders Merauke to the north). They have settled in Senayu Soa since the 1940s. Their arrival in the area began with a bond of brotherhood between the first Muyu people who arrived in this place and the Balagaize clan (from a different ethnic group, the Marind) who are the customary landholders. They hunted, gardened, and lived together. Senayu Soa (named Dusun Arwa by the Balagaize Clan) was then entrusted to the care of the Muyu People.

In 1990, the Social Delegation of the Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of Merauke carried out a coconut planting livelihood program in Merauke. The Muyu People in Dusun Arwa, who are Catholics, were among the intended beneficiaries of this program. The Church then took the initiative to pay a sum of money and goods to the Balagaize clan as landholders, so that this area could subsequently become a village and farmland for the Muyu People to live in. The area of land released was 1,900 meters by 900 meters, and the release was evidenced by a letter validated by W. J. J. Roempoembo, the district Head (*Camat*) of Merauke at that time. To confirm this release of land, the Muyu People and the customary landholders also performed a customary ceremony involving a pig sacrifice at the village and coconut grove location. Subsequently, the Muyu People in Senayu Soa and the Balagaize Clan in Baad Village as customary landholders have remained on good terms. The history of Dusun Arwa (Senayu Soa) binds the two. Like family, the Muyu People in Senayu Soa are always involved in important events in Baad Village, such as contributing food and money during mourning ceremonies.

However, everything changed when PT GPA wanted to build a dock on the edge of the Maro River. Without the consent of the Muyu community in Senayu Soa Village, the company approached an individual from the Balagaize Clan and obtained approval to release the clan's customary rights. The company then installed boundary stakes inside the area, which consists of sago groves, coconut gardens, graves, and the settlement of the Senayu Soa Community. It also proposed to relocate the entire community to a new location because the company intended to take over the whole village area for its operational needs.

The Muyu community in Senayu firmly rejects this plan. They consider that the company is intentionally pitting them against the customary landholders. Evidence of the land handover between the customary landholders and the Senayu Soa Community has been presented, but the company claims it is false. The Muyu community have put in place a customary law blockade (*pemalangan*) at the dock site, to prevent the company further damaging sago palms and coconut trees, as well as their families' graves which lie within the area. Community protests were met with members of the Police Mobile Brigade (a militarised police force) assigned to provide security for the construction work.



● Residents of Senayu Soa village, Tanah Miring District, Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, on September 10, 2025. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace

Seeking justice in the heart of power

The Merauke Sugarcane PSN is openly expropriating lands which provide life to local people and destroying their environment. This dispossession is enabled by deceiving customary landholders with promises of prosperity and by engaging the military to facilitate land grabbing. Companies within the Merauke Sugarcane PSN consortium that have already entered into land negotiations appear reluctant to respect and fulfill the rights of customary landholders, denying them access to vital information on customary territories and the documents which set out agreements between the companies and the landholders.

Customary landholders who refuse to hand over their customary territories report being continuously coerced through various means, including by manufacturing horizontal conflicts to pressure them into releasing their customary rights.

This project also obliterates natural ecosystems that serve as homes for endemic flora and fauna, and overlaps with essential ecosystem areas supporting conservation. The loss of natural forests has increased carbon emissions, standing in stark contrast to global efforts to curb the rate of climate change, and has triggered detrimental impacts for communities surrounding the concession locations.

The refusal of the Marind and Yei people to release their customary territories, the refusal of the Muyu community in Senayu Soa to let their gardens and village be evicted, and the demands of Sermayam farmers for compensation for failed harvests due to disasters demonstrate community resistance against the implementation of the Merauke Sugarcane PSN. The companies remain unmoved, and the state appears to ignore the faint voices of PSN victims in South Papua. Instead, in the name of food, energy, and water self-sufficiency, the PSN continues to expand into other regions of South Papua. Evidence of the politics of “empty land” (*terra nullius*) in Papua²¹² is becoming increasingly entrenched with the Republic’s circles of power.

Community rejection and protests have been reinforced by the filing of a judicial review to the Constitutional Court against the Job Creation Law (*UU Cipta Kerja*)²¹³, which legitimizes the implementation of similar projects labeled as PSN. The civil society movement, consisting of PSN victims from various other regions as well as various civil society organizations in Indonesia, argues that a number of articles in the Job Creation Law have served as the basis for the acceleration and facilitation of the implementation of PSN-labeled projects throughout Indonesia. Vincent Kwipalo has joined as one of the plaintiffs against this law alongside other victims of the Food and Energy Security Development PSN, namely Sinta Gebze, Simon Petrus Balagaize, and Paulinus Naki Balagaize.



● Indigenous victims of the Merauke Sugarcane PSN in the Constitutional Court courtroom during the judicial review of the Job Creation Law regarding the facilitation and acceleration of PSN. 19 August 2025. Photo by Geram PSN.

212 Editorial, 2025, Politik ‘Tanah Kosong’ di Papua, TEMPO, 12 Oktober 2025.

213 UU Nomor 11 Tahun 2020 tentang Cipta Kerja.

Vincent Kwipalo also officially reported PT MNM to the Criminal Investigation Agency of the Indonesian National Police (Bareskrim Polri) in Jakarta on November 4, 2025. The report concerns allegations of criminal acts related to the illegal encroachment and exploitation of the Kwipalo Clan's customary land and forests by PT MNM which has developed sugarcane plantations in the Blandin Kakayo Village area without the permission of the Indigenous community. In Vincent's police report, PT MNM is accused of

land and forest seizure without the Kwipalo Clan's permission, damaging sacred sites and natural resources vital to the Indigenous community's livelihood and culture, as regulated in Article 385 of the Criminal Code (KUHP) regarding the unlawful seizure of customary land and articles within the Plantation Law.²¹⁴ The community has imposed a customary ban on the land, yet PT MNM is alleged to continue operating without a valid Right to Cultivate (HGU) permit.



- Characteristic of the regional savanna landscapes, these towering 'musamus' are earthen mounds built by fungus-cultivating termites of the *Macrotermes* genus. Wasur national park, South Papua. © Ulet Ifansasti / Greenpeace.