

APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO SUPPORT WEST PAPUA

A. Deforestation Trends in West Papua: A Growing Crisis

Over the past two decades, West Papua has lost or degraded more than 800,000 hectares of forest. While deforestation rates across Indonesia declined after 2015, the opposite occurred in West Papua, particularly under President Joko Widodo's administration.

[According to Greenpeace](#), 40% of Indonesia's palm oil-related deforestation since 2015 has taken place in West Papua. Research by PUSAKA, an Indonesian civil society organization advocating for Indigenous rights in Papua, found that the [deforestation rate from 2010-2019](#) more than doubled compared to the previous decade. Alarming, an additional 1.9 million hectares of forest in West Papua have already been allocated as concessions for palm oil and timber, signaling further destruction.

President Prabowo, within his first days in office, visited Merauke, South Papua, to promote the National Strategic Project (PSN) for the Merauke Food and Energy Zone. This initiative aims to convert approximately two million hectares of primary forests, mangroves, savannas, and swamps—home to Indigenous Papuans—into industrial agricultural zones, including 1.5 million hectares for rice fields and 500,000 hectares for sugarcane plantations controlled by fewer than ten corporations. This aligns with his administration's broader ambition to open [20 million](#) hectares of land for energy transition and food security, primarily through palm oil plantations.

However, research by Satya Bumi et al. estimates that Indonesia's palm oil plantations are already near their maximum capacity, with [17.77 million hectares](#) in use out of a projected upper limit of [18.1 million hectares](#).

In a troubling development, President Prabowo has deployed approximately 3,000 TNI personnel to secure the Merauke project. Human rights defenders from the Malind and Yei Indigenous communities, who have opposed the project, have faced [threats and intimidation](#) from the Indonesian military.

Furthermore, [the legality of forest release and business permits for ten companies involved in the proposed sugarcane plantations remains in question](#). Historically, natural resource extraction projects in West Papua have been riddled with legal irregularities, including failure to conduct full environmental impact assessments as required by Indonesian law and non-compliance with international Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles.

Indonesian human rights defenders who criticize these policies face regular harassment. [The criminalization of Fatia Maulidiyanti and Haris Azhar](#) exemplifies

the government's efforts to silence dissent. Investments that marginalize Indigenous communities have further fueled the region's long standing armed conflict, with the Indonesian military suspected of [committing crimes against humanity against civilians](#).

B. The EU's Role in Addressing Deforestation and Human Rights Violations

Although rice and sugarcane are not currently covered under the EUDR, [conversion of timber from deforested areas](#) is entering global markets. The Merauke Food and Energy Estates highlight how large-scale agricultural and forest-commodity projects in West Papua contribute to widespread deforestation, severe human rights violations, and regulatory failures. These issues are also prevalent in other large developments in the region, particularly [palm oil plantations](#).

The EUDR presents a critical opportunity to curb deforestation and protect Indigenous communities in West Papua and beyond. We urge the European Commission to:

1. Raise concerns with the Indonesian government regarding ongoing deforestation in West Papua linked to food and energy estates, the lack of consultation with local communities, and the negative impact on Indonesia's ability to meet its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.
2. Request the UN Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies to investigate whether the situation in West Papua constitutes a violation of Indonesia's international human rights obligations.
3. Support Indonesia in finding sustainable ways to enhance food and energy security, including improving agricultural productivity on existing lands, reducing food waste, and prioritizing the use of degraded lands for expansion.