

KEEP FORESTS STANDING:

HOW LOCAL COMMUNITY RESISTANCE
IS SAVING THE LAST RAINFORESTS OF BORNEO



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ABOVE, OPPOSITE: Khairul Abdi / RAN
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**Fraksi
Rakyat
Kutim**



INTRODUCTION

From regulating the flow of clean water around the world to producing the very air that we breathe, forests are essential to all life on earth. And in a world just coming to terms with the increasingly severe impacts of climate change, forests are one of our last and best lines of defense. In particular, the world's largest remaining areas of rainforest — in Indonesia, the Congo Basin, and the Amazon — are uniquely important for their ability to lessen the global climate and biodiversity crises and for sustaining the millions of people who live in or near them.

Around the world, however, forests continue to fall. For generations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities have successfully managed some of the last intact rainforests but face constant threats. Indigenous Peoples fight to retain control of their lands from companies looking to encroach with industrial-scale logging and agribusiness.

On the island of Borneo, we have a chance to keep forests standing. The rainforests that stretch across the Bornean provinces of North and East Kalimantan are some of the last intact forests in Indonesia but roughly two-thirds of the remaining rainforest is at risk of industrial development.¹ In the face of mounting threats, an Indigenous community called the Dayak Bahau of Long Isun has been conserving and managing some of these critical forests for generations. The community of Long Isun has fought for over a decade to delay the destruction of their ancestral home but the fate of their forests still hangs in the balance.

The Harita Group, one of the most influential corporate groups in the palm oil and forestry sectors in Indonesia, controls two timber companies which are planning to log customary forests on over a quarter of the Long Isun community's land for wood products.²

Global brands, like snack food and personal care giants Mondeléz³ and Procter & Gamble,⁴ knowingly source palm oil products from mills located in Indonesia that are operated by the Harita Group's palm oil company. These brands have adopted No Deforestation, No Peatland and No Exploitation (NDPE) policies that set out conditions requiring suppliers to end deforestation and the destruction of High Conservation Value forests, and respect the rights of Indigenous communities to say “no” to development on their lands.⁵ This case clearly shows that brands are failing to require their indirect palm oil supplier — Bumitama Agri of the Harita Group — to adhere to their policies across the operations of the entire corporate group as the Harita Group persists in its plans to log the customary forests of the Long Isun community without their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).

With their significant leverage, these multinational brands could greatly contribute to the protection of intact rainforests and ensure their supplier respects the rights of Indigenous communities across their entire operations, but they need to act and act now. Brands must engage with the Harita Group — and its ultimate beneficiary and owner Mr. Lim Hariyanto Wijaya Sarwono — to ensure the two forestry companies controlled by the corporate group permanently cancel their plans to log the customary forests of the Long Isun community.


For our future, we must Keep Forests Standing and Uphold Rights for Indigenous Peoples' and local communities. We have the power to stop the destruction.



THE LAST FORESTS OF BORNEO

Borneo is the world's third-largest island and holds approximately six percent of global biodiversity in its tropical forests, including the distinctive Bornean orangutans, elephants, giant pitcher plants, and the unique Rafflesia flowers.⁶ At its center is the "Heart of Borneo", a large intact rainforest, rich in biodiversity and covering an area the size of the whole of England and Scotland put together. The Heart of Borneo spans the countries of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and serves as the home, source of life, and critical source of ecological services for at least 11 million people. These forests, however, are rapidly disappearing. At least 30 percent of Borneo's tropical forest have been destroyed over the last 40 years.⁷

Indonesian Borneo (Kalimantan) now only has 36.5 million hectares of forests left, with much of it concentrated in the provinces of North and East Kalimantan.⁸ Between 2009 and 2019 alone, 487,631 hectares of forests were destroyed within well-known oil palm, pulp and timber concessions.⁹ Nearly two-thirds of the remaining forests in the two provinces — over 8.25 million hectares — remain on the chopping block as they have been allocated to companies for conversion to plantations or remain zoned for logging or agribusiness production.¹⁰ Studies confirm that global markets for deforestation-linked commodities like palm oil and pulp play a critical role in determining industrial plantation expansion and forest loss trends in Borneo.¹¹



An aerial view of the Lengasah river in the customary forest of the Dayak Bahau Umaq Suling Long Isun community, Long Pahangai District, Mahakam Ulu Regency, East Kalimantan.

PHOTO: Nanang Sujana / RAN / RIFKY

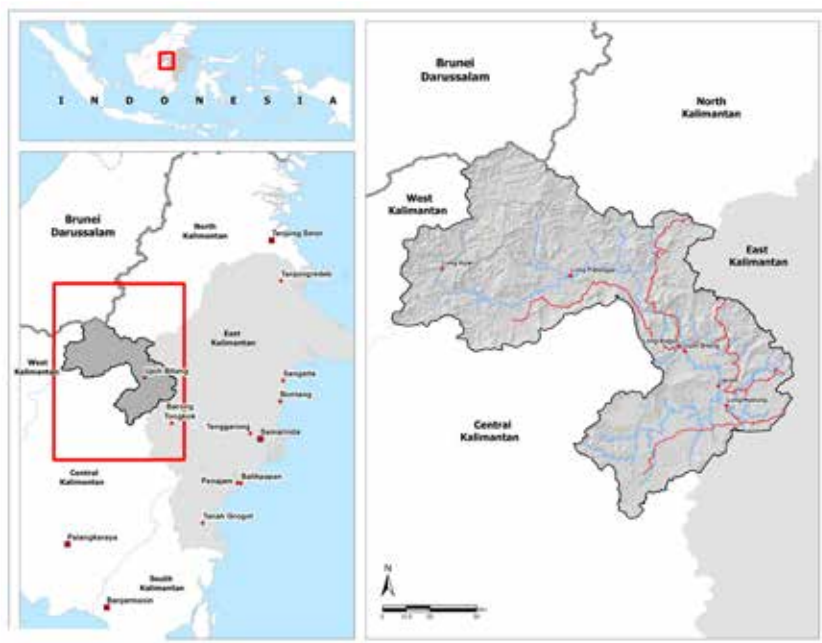
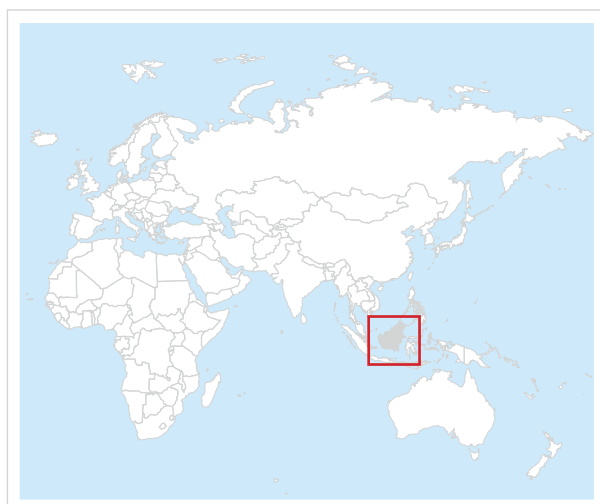


THE UPPER MAHAKAM DISTRICT

In particular, the vast areas of rainforests that stretch across more than 6.6 million hectares of land in East Kalimantan are some of the most important forests remaining in Indonesia.¹² The remoteness of this region has spared its intact forest landscapes from the industrial-scale logging and plantation development that have plagued neighboring provinces. However, large corporate groups are looking to develop what's left of Indonesia's forests here as well, with over 70 percent of the province allocated to forestry corporations.¹³

The district of Mahakam Ulu, or Upper Mahakam, in East Kalimantan, is located upstream from the Mahakam River and has over 1.5 million hectares of forests.¹⁴ The majority of the district is covered in rainforest, with 44 percent undegraded primary forests and 46 percent degraded secondary forests (see figure 2, page 7).¹⁵ Over 50 percent of its intact forests are concentrated in the northern subdistricts of Long Pahangai and Long Apari.

Despite its rich rainforests and the vibrant local communities that depend on and have maintained these forests, over 250,000 hectares of the district have been allocated to palm oil concessions and over 600,000 hectares to logging concessions — totaling over 56 percent of the district (see figure 2, page 7).¹⁶ Currently, 13 percent of the palm oil concession areas have been planted, but 62 percent remain as undeveloped, undegraded primary and degraded secondary forest areas that can still be protected.¹⁷



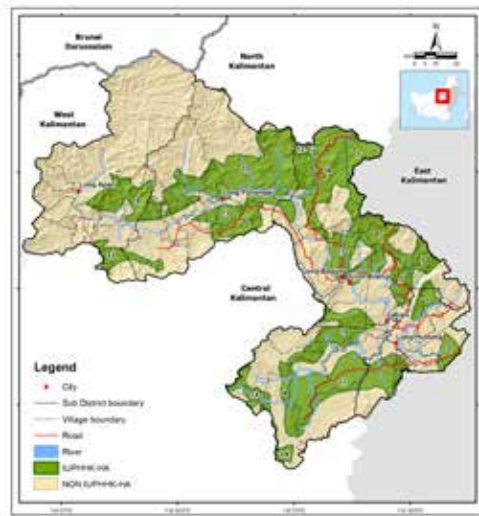
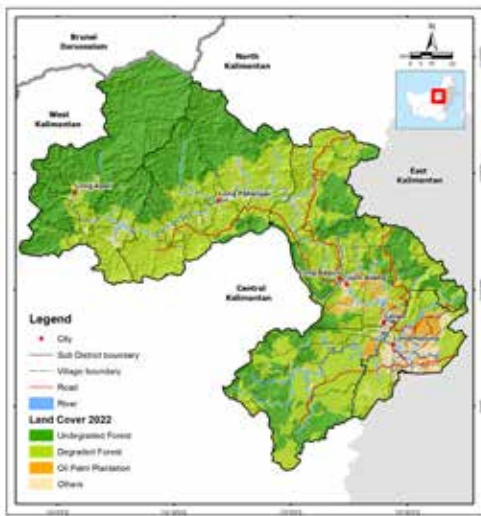


FIGURE 1:(LEFT) Forest cover of Mahakam Ulu

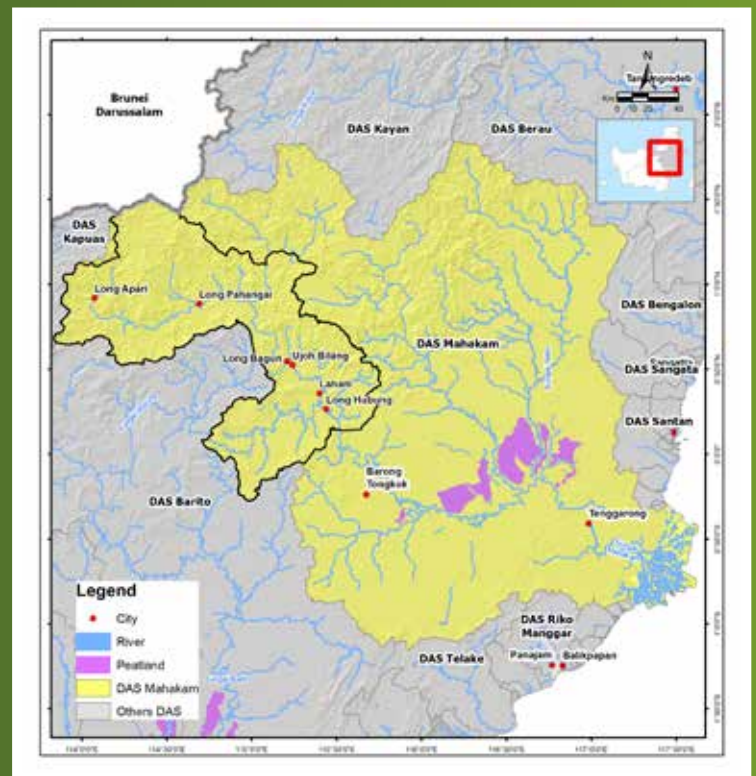
FIGURE 2:(RIGHT) Palm oil and logging concessions in degraded forest area in Mahakam Ulu

THE MAHAKAM RIVER

The Mahakam River flows from the mountainous rainforests in the Mahakam Ulu and West Kutai districts downriver to a major delta that empties into the Makassar Strait and the banks of Samarinda, the bustling capital city of East Kalimantan. The Mahakam River landscape covers 4.5 million hectares and stretches 980 kilometers, making it the second largest river in Indonesia.

The Mahakam landscape is home to 298 species of birds — 70 of them protected and 5 endemic — and 147 species of freshwater fish, including some endemic ones that migrate upstream every year.¹⁸ It's also the home of critically endangered species like the Borneo Orangutan and the freshwater Irrawaddy dolphin, locally known as Pesut.¹⁹ The good health of forests upstream, like those in the Upper Mahakam district, are critical in maintaining the overall integrity of the Mahakam River ecosystem. A healthy river ecosystem prevents floods and climate-related disasters downstream, like those that inundated South Kalimantan in 2021.²⁰

Despite the need for conservation in the region, the Mahakam River has been used for decades to transport timber harvested from the rainforest to nearby manufacturing facilities and export facilities. This fragile ecosystem faces growing pressure due to the rapid scaling up of extractive industries and the impending relocation of the capital city of Indonesia from Jakarta to Balikpapan, located just south of the Mahakam River delta.²¹



MAP: Mahakam River Basin

Communities, like the community of Long Isun, have been fighting for decades to defend their last intact forests from this looming corporate expansion.²² While many communities in Borneo have already lost their land to corporate development, the Long Isun community has been able to thrive and keep their forests intact.²³ But Long Isun is now facing two logging companies that hold concessions to their land, threatening the future of their forests and their way of life.

THE DAYAK BAHAU OF LONG ISUN

The Indigenous Dayak Bahau of Long Isun have resided on the banks of the Melaseh River, a tributary of the Mahakam River in the district of Mahakam Ulu, for generations. The Long Isun community has a deep-rooted connection to the forest — it's their source of life and where they believe their ancestors and the deities that protect them rest. This important connection is reflected in their customary forest management practices, where respect for the land and every living being in their territory is paramount.

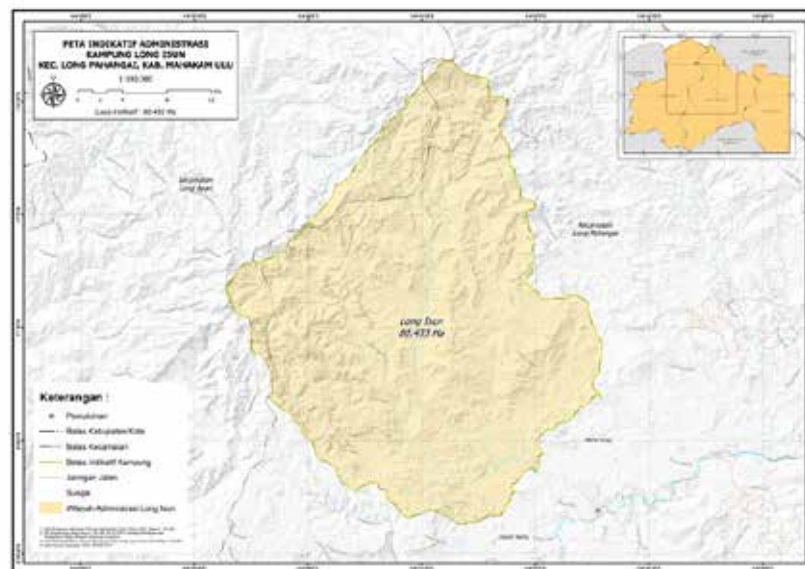
The Indigenous territory of Long Isun spans 80,443 hectares — larger than all five boroughs of New York City combined. An estimated 82 percent of their forests are considered undegraded primary forests and 16 percent have been degraded for traditional use such as settlements and community gardens.²⁴ The Long Isun community has a complex forest management system that includes eleven different customary categories of forest functions, including areas for settlement, production, hunting, medicine, and conservation.²⁵ For subsistence, the community grows rice paddies, cacao, durian, duku, and other fruits and vegetables. As with other Dayak communities, the Dayak Bahau rotate their crop farms and leave them to reforest, sometimes up to 10 years, using and restoring the forest ecosystem sustainably.²⁶

The development of new forest land for community use or by third parties for any reason — including logging operations — is also regulated by Indigenous leaders or *Hipui* with consultation from the community. Land ownership rights include individual, communal, and a mix of both, but cannot be transferred to anyone outside of the community except through marriage. According to the customary practices of the community, people outside the community can use Long Isun's land only with the permission of the *Hipui* in consultation with the community and will be required to pay taxes. The Long Isun community's way of life and customary forest management practices have enabled both the community and the forests to thrive.

Despite Long Isun's long-standing customary rights to their lands and forests, they are not legally recognized by the government of Indonesia. This lack of legal recognition is placing their very existence at risk due to the expansion of both industrial-scale logging and palm oil plantations into their territory.²⁷ The Long Isun community is demanding their Indigenous territory be legally recognized as the first step towards securing their customary forest title (*Hutan Adat*), which grants them ownership and management rights, and for their customary forests to be excised from all forestry and agribusiness concessions.²⁸

Indicative Map of Long Isun's customary land

SOURCE: Perkumpulan Nurani Perempuan



The Long Isun community is demanding their **forests be legally recognized** as customary forest (*Hutan Adat*), which grants them **ownership and management rights**, and for their customary forests to be excised from all forestry and agribusiness concessions.

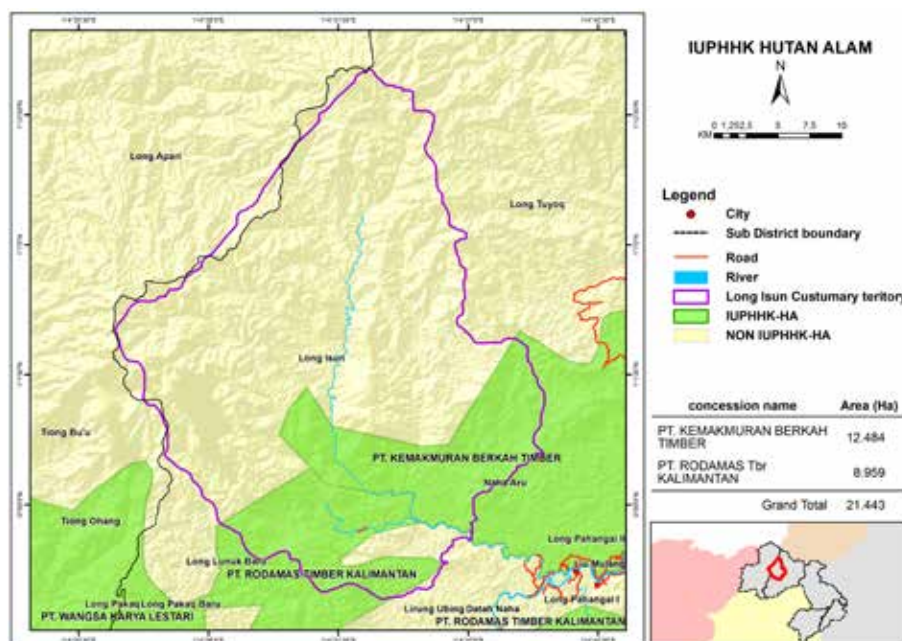


PHOTOS: Khairul Abdi / RAN



THE COMMUNITY OF LONG ISUN'S FORESTS AND RIGHTS UNDER THREAT

Two logging companies have been granted licenses by the Indonesian government to develop areas of land, including part of the Long Isun community's customary forests.²⁹ The concessions have been allocated to PT. Roda Mas Tbr Kalimantan (PT. RMTK) and PT. Kemakmuran Berkah Timber (PT. KBT). Both companies are under the common control of the Roda Mas Group, the timber division of the powerful Indonesian conglomerate the Harita Group. The logging licenses were acquired for both companies in 2014 and 2008 to log 26 percent, or 21,443 hectares, of Long Isun's territory — 8,959 hectares are within the PT. RMTK concession, and 12,484 hectares are within the PT. KBT concession.³⁰



Map of Harita Group's logging concessions that overlap with Long Isun's customary territory. PT. Roda Mas Tbr Kalimantan on the left and PT. Kemakmuran Berkah Timber on the right.



It is a legal requirement in Indonesia for forestry companies to first consult and involve the communities who will be affected by logging operations before a company establishes an operation on their land.³¹ Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is also a fundamental right enshrined in international human rights norms and outlined in the NDPE policies of global brands and traders. But this requirement is very rarely adhered to by forestry and agribusiness companies that are expanding their operations across Indonesia. When agreements are reached, the process to reach these agreements often falls well short of best practices, as outlined in global norms like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.³²

PHOTOS: Khairul Abdi / RAN

The testimonies of Long Isun community members, including their Indigenous Chief, clearly show that the Harita Group has not secured consent from the Long Isun community to log their customary forests. The Harita Group has failed to respect the rights of the community to say “no” to its proposed developments — a fundamental requirement of international human rights norms which enshrine Indigenous Peoples rights to give or withhold their free, prior and informed consent to development on their lands and territories.



Lusang Aran, the Indigenous Chief of Long Isun, describes the community’s own version of obtaining consent for people to enter their territory:

All the Indigenous rules are discussed with the villagers because the power rests with the villagers. The Indigenous Chief only manages. But whoever enters the village from outside, they are reported to the customary institution. The villagers would not make their own decision without the knowledge of the Indigenous Chief, Village Head, and the Head of the Village Deliberation Agency [Badan Permasyarakatan Kampung].

If an outsider wants to enter our area, we gather the villagers first. An outsider can’t enter without permission. If they enter without permission, they’ll be chased. What’s their purpose for entering our forest without our permission? They should be chased and asked for the permit and where they intend to go.

Lusang Aran, Customary Chief of Long Isun.
PHOTO: Khairul Abdi / RAN



PHOTOS: Khairul Abdi / RAN

In 2014, after learning about the Harita Group-owned Roda Mas' intention to log the community's forest, Long Isun sent a letter to the company formally stating their objection to logging because it would destroy their forests, livelihood, and violate the land rights that govern their territory.³³ That same year, despite their objection, PT. KBT began to log 2,000 hectares of Long Isun's customary forests, focusing on an area of land that was in dispute with a neighboring village called Naha Aruq.³⁴ PT. KBT took advantage of overlapping administrative and customary land claims between the two villages — and the lack of agreed and demarcated boundaries for the customary lands of both communities' territories — to ignore the objections from Long Isun and sought consent solely from the Naha Aruq community to begin its logging of the contested lands. PT. KBT used Naha Aruq's consent to justify beginning logging activities in the forests located on the contested lands, despite Long Isun's documented customary land claims to the area going back to 1966.³⁵

In fact, the horizontal dispute between these two neighboring villages stem from PT. KBT's and PT. RMTK's attempt in 2009 at conducting participatory mapping — a map-making process that attempts to demarcate the boundaries of communities' customary lands — in order to fulfill their certification requirements for the forestry certification scheme Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).³⁶ The maps were drawn up by environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) The Nature Conservancy without the knowledge and participation of the community. The resulting maps consisted of straight lines that did not follow natural land markers that had been the custom for the community.³⁷ Unfortunately, the district government went on to formalize these contested new maps in a decree and they were recognized as the official administrative village boundaries for Long Isun and Naha Aruq in 2011. The Long Isun community did not endorse the 2011 decree and sent a letter of objection to the district government in 2015, as the decree was not socialized with the Long Isun community and contradicted the natural boundaries that had been agreed upon and kept for generations between the community leaders in the subdistrict.³⁸ This flawed mapping process ultimately resulted in an ongoing dispute over thousands of hectares of forests and customary lands between the communities of Long Isun and Naha Aruq.

In May 2014, after PT. KBT ignored the community's objections to the logging of their customary forests, a team of over 25 Long Isun community members were assigned by the village to patrol their customary forest area and check if PT. KBT had begun operating.³⁹ They found PT. KBT had begun logging in the contested area on the border between Long Isun and Naha Aruq village, which included Long Isun's ancestral grave sites. Community members requested that the workers logging the forests give them the keys to the tractors and one chainsaw so the equipment could be used as "evidence" of the company's operation in a community-led proceeding. The community also asked for PT. KBT to meet with the wider community at their customary hall in the village to discuss the issue, an action which is consistent with Dayak customary law.⁴⁰

Instead of meeting with the company, letters from the police came in June 2014 which instructed three community members to appear at the West Kutai police station to be questioned as witnesses for extortion.⁴¹ On August 28, 2014, boats of a mobile police brigade (Brimob) came to the Long Isun village, and two village representatives were rounded up and arrested. The third village representative, the Village Head or *Petinggi*, was picked up in a town down river from the village the day before.

One of the community members arrested, Theodorus Tekwan Ajat, or Tekwan as his friends call him, was imprisoned for over three months, only to be later released without charge. When Tekwan was arrested, he was at his garden with his wife in the forest, away from his village, and felt immediately intimidated as the Brimob came with "long-barreled guns hung around their necks".⁴² After being escorted back to the village, they were met with many more Brimob officers and three of them waited for him by his front door with weapons as he finished bathing before taking him to the police station.⁴³

On August 31, 2014, after nine hours of interrogation, Tekwan was named as a suspect in the case despite his innocence. The West Kutai district attorney refused to proceed with the case several times because it did not have enough supporting documents but the police continued to keep him in prison.⁴⁴ Community representatives met with PT. KBT in September 2014, and requested that the company communicate to the police their support for dropping the charge against Tekwan, but the company set the resumption of their logging operation on Long Isun's customary land as the condition.⁴⁵ The community refused to accept this condition as they oppose logging on their lands. This response from PT. KBT allegedly made it apparent that the criminalization of Tekwan and his imprisonment were tactics employed by the company, with the support of the police, to coerce the community into accepting the logging operation. After protests and advocacy from the Long Isun community and a coalition of NGOs, he was freed in December 2014. To this day, Tekwan's status as a suspect has not been dropped.



PHOTOS: Khairul Abdi / RAN



Here is **Tekwan**'s retelling of the events and his criminalization:

The village government gave orders to collect proof that they are working in our territory. We didn't have mobile phones at that time so we couldn't take any pictures, so the workers gave the chainsaw as proof. I said to them, "I want this problem to be finished in the Long Isun traditional hall (Lamin), let's sit together in Long Isun's Lamin". But they didn't come to resolve the problem in Long Isun, instead they came with Brimob police.

I went through so many things when I was imprisoned. I had trouble speaking; I forget easily. I was used to living in a large open place [the forest], and suddenly I was locked in a small room and couldn't go anywhere. It felt like my brain broke. I no longer dare to work using chainsaws, because of the conflict with them.

Theodorus Tekwan Yeq, holding a banner that says "Recognize Long Isun's Customary Forest".
PHOTO: Khairul Abdi / RAN

In February 2018, the government mediated an agreement between PT. KBT, Naha Aruq, and Long Isun that determined the company's concession area on Long Isun's land as "status quo" and agreed to "process" the area of contested lands into customary forest (*Hutan Adat*).⁴⁶ They also agreed for the village boundary dispute between Long Isun and Naha Aruq to be settled through community deliberations. This agreement resulted in a cessation of logging of the forests on the contested lands within PT. KBT's concession area.

That same year, the Long Isun community filed a petition for legal recognition of their Indigenous territory from the Mahakam Ulu district government — the first step in the process to securing legal recognition of their customary forest in Indonesia, and which would grant them legal ownership and management rights over their forests, and for their territory to be excised from all concessions.⁴⁷

While the agreement temporarily stopped PT. KBT's logging operations — one of the Harita Group-owned concessions that overlaps with the Long Isun community territory — it does not apply to the second logging concession PT. Roda Mas Tbr Kalimantan or provide a permanent commitment from the Harita Group that it will never attempt to expand its logging operations into the Long Isun community's land. Five years since the agreement, Harita Group-owned Roda Mas' logging licenses have not been reduced to formally excise the Long Isun community's territory from the areas the company is permitted to log or revoked, and the community's petition for legal recognition of their customary forests and rights has stalled with the district government.

Meanwhile, PT. KBT personnel have made multiple visits to Long Isun since then and offered various means of in-kind support such as fuel oil, education support for primary school students, and employment — offers that community members think are meant to influence their position.⁴⁸ These actions by the company are concerning as it appears to be trying to convince the Long Isun community to overturn its rejection of PT. KBT's proposed logging operation on Long Isun's lands. According to PT. Roda Mas Tbr Kalimantan's 2022 Annual Workplan, the company is still planning to fully operate its logging concession up to 2030 and beyond, including in Long Isun's territory.⁴⁹ Due to the actions of PT. KBT, the Harita Group and its companies are clearly failing to respect the Long Isun community's right to say "no" to the planned logging of their customary forests.



PHOTOS: Khairul Abdi / RAN

These egregious violations of Long Isun's rights over their land and resources, their rights to free, prior and informed consent, and the criminalization of Tekwan, is a direct reflection of the business practices of Roda Mas' corporate group, the Harita Group, and go against the now-industry standard policy of No Deforestation, No Peatlands, and No Exploitation (NDPE). There are no assurances that these violations will not grow worse given Harita Group's continued control over the concessions that threaten Long Isun and the Harita Group's plans to develop these concessions in the future. Despite the failure of the Harita Group to respect the Long Isun communities' right to say "no" to development on their lands, major global brands like Mondeléz and Procter & Gamble⁵⁰ are continuing to do business with the Harita Group through their sourcing of palm oil from the Harita Group's palm oil company.

With the climate crisis in full swing and Indigenous communities on the frontlines, we cannot put the fate of Indigenous lands, resources, and livelihoods in temporary solutions. In places like Long Isun, where communities have clear opposition for development and a proven track record of managing their forests, companies need to be willing to step away and do all they can to support — not impede — the legal recognition of customary rights and forests as the most immediate and effective way to respect rights and keep forests standing.





THE HARITA GROUP

The Harita Group is an influential Indonesian business conglomerate and one of the main threats to the future of Long Isun's forests and community life. Controlled by the Lim family, Mr. Lim Hariyanto Wijaya Sarwono is the Harita Group's ultimate beneficiary and his son, Mr. Lim Gunawan Hariyanto, is the Harita Group's CEO.⁵¹ This corporate group is a significant player in Indonesia's palm oil and forestry sectors, in addition to its coal, nickel and bauxite mining operations, smelters, refineries, shipping and property development businesses.⁵²

The Lim family immigrated from China in 1915 to an area in East Kalimantan inland of the Mahakam River.⁵³ Since then, the family — under the leadership of father figures stretching over three generations — set up the Harita Group. The growth model for the Harita Group is like the approach taken by many of Indonesia's wealthiest families — they established several entities and joint venture partners in the natural resources sectors and profited from rainforest destruction over several decades during Indonesia's logging, palm oil, and mining booms.⁵⁴

In the 1980s, Mr. Lim Hariyanto Wijaya Sarwono set up his first logging company and a plywood factory called PT. Tirta Mahakam Resources (TIRT) in East Kalimantan.⁵⁵ Now, the Harita Group has controlling shares in both palm oil (called Bumitama Agri Limited) and timber companies (called the Roda Mas Group). The Roda Mas Group is itself a conglomerate of companies, containing the two subsidiary logging companies that occupy over 20,000 hectares, or over a quarter, of Long Isun's territory.

In addition to its timber company, the Harita Group supplies palm oil to brands around the world, via its palm oil company Bumitama Agri Limited. Established by the family in the 1990s, the company rapidly acquired concessions and expanded its landbank and oil palm plantations across Central Kalimantan.⁵⁶ Bumitama Agri is listed in the Singapore stock exchange and is headed up by Mr. Lim Gunawan Hariyanto, who is the Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the company as well as being CEO of the Harita Group.⁵⁷ The company now controls around 190,000 hectares of palm oil plantations and 15 palm oil mills which produce crude palm oil and palm kernel oil products.⁵⁸

Bumitama Agri was repeatedly exposed for the destruction of rainforests and orangutan habitat within its concessions on the island of Borneo during the establishment of its plantations in Central and West Kalimantan.⁵⁹ In 2015, it responded to public scrutiny and pressure from its palm oil buyers and financiers by adopting a policy which included some of the elements of an NDPE policy.⁶⁰ Major

gaps remain in its policy, including a failure to fully adhere to the High Carbon Stock Approach — the leading tool for implementing “no deforestation” policies. Instead Bumitama opts for adherence to the RSPO’s New Planting Procedure which is much weaker than the High Carbon Stock Approach, especially on the need to respect the rights of Indigenous communities to give or withhold their consent to new development on their lands.⁶¹ Since then, the company has tried to improve its reputation by launching conservation projects that aim to protect and connect forests within and surrounding its concessions with the support of local communities and NGOs.⁶²

Despite Bumitama Agri and the Harita Group’s claims of sustainability, the Harita Group remains the subject of controversy — including the actions of its logging companies PT. KBT and PT. RMTK. PT. KBT has long claimed to operate reduced impact logging operations that “find amicable accommodations with the local communities”, even though the company refused to respect the rights of the Long Isun community.⁶³ As a result of PT. KBT’s refusal to permanently withdraw its plans to log the customary forest of the Long Isun community, a formal complaint has been raised to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) by Forest Peoples Programme on behalf of the Long Isun community. In 2017, the FSC revoked PT. KBT’s Responsible Forest Management certificate over the land conflict in Long Isun, confirming violations against its standards.⁶⁴ On February 7th, 2023, the FSC announced that it will not proceed with the alternative dispute resolution process with the Harita Group after its corporate group member and FSC certificate holder, PT Roda Mas Timber Kalimantan (RMTK), self-terminated their FSC certificate.⁶⁵ PT RMTK’s certification body suspended their FSC certification in 2022 following an unannounced conformity assessment on PT RMTK by the FSC’s assurance partner, Assurance Services International (ASI), in which major non-conformities were found. Subsequently, PT RMTK self-terminated their certification and with it their engagement in the FSC mediation process to address the allegations against PT KBT. PT KBT and PT RMTK have the same beneficial owners as Harita Group so they are covered by the FSC’s Policy for Association.⁶⁶

PT. KBT is a major supplier of wood to PT. TIRT — the first plywood factory established by the Lim Family — and the plywood produced in this factory is used in the manufacturing of engineered flooring sold from its facility in Gresik, East Java.⁶⁷ If the company moves ahead with its plans to log — despite the opposition of the Long Isun community to its planned logging operation — the timber extracted from the forests will be processed at the Harita Group’s nearby PT. TIRT processing plant into wood products and shipped by major timber trading companies to global markets including the USA, South Korea, and to Japan via Itochu Kenzai.⁶⁸

Harita Group claims that it has consulted stakeholders, abided by necessary regulations, engaged in resolution processes through their grievance and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) grievance procedure, and ‘has always respected the choice of the Long Isun village to say no to development and stayed away from its areas, changing its RKUPHHK work plans (2010-2019 & 2019-2028)’ to reflect that. The company referred to a settlement that was reached in 2018 which temporarily stopped logging operations and “aims for official recognition of [the communities’] lands as customary forest”. This settlement temporarily stopped the logging operations of one of the companies under its common control (PT. KBT), but it does not apply to the second logging concession PT. RMTK. PT. RMTK’s workplan shows it may still plan to operate on Long Isun’s land after 2028. Assessments conducted during the FSC grievance procedure found inadequacies in the Harita Group’s policies and procedures for ensuring respect for Indigenous rights, including the right to object to development on their customary lands, which resulted in the termination of FSC certificates. The Harita Group has refused to confirm that it will provide a commitment to cancel all future plans for logging operations on the Long Isun community’s land and permanently excise the community’s territory from their concessions.

The full response from the Harita Group can be found at [RAN.org/publications/long-isun/](https://ran.org/publications/long-isun/).



THE ROLE OF BRANDS IN KEEPING LONG ISUN'S FORESTS STANDING

Global brands like Procter & Gamble, Mondeléz, Nestlé, Colgate-Palmolive, Nissin Foods, PepsiCo, and Unilever⁶⁹ have disclosed sourcing palm oil from mills that are controlled by the Harita Group.⁷⁰ With their significant leverage, these multinational brands can contribute to the protection of intact rainforests and ensure their supplier respects the rights of Indigenous communities across their entire operations, but they need to act and act now. Brands must engage with the Harita Group — and its ultimate beneficiary and owner Mr. Lim Hariyanto Wijaya Sarwono — to ensure the two forestry companies controlled by the corporate group permanently cancel their plans to log the customary forests of the Long Isun community.

Global Brands must take action to keep Long Isun's forests standing now. The agreement that the Long Isun community was able to reach with the Harita Group-controlled logging company PT. KBT only delays, for the time being, the logging plans in one of the two concessions threatening Long Isun's lands. The community's ancestral home still hangs in the balance. Brands must uphold their NDPE policies and commitments to the right of Indigenous communities to give or withhold their free, prior, and informed consent to development on their lands.

BRANDS MUST TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:



Brands must engage with the Harita Group.

Brands must engage with the Harita Group to ensure that, across its operations, Indigenous communities' rights are respected, and forests are spared from deforestation and degradation from industrial logging. This includes the corporate group's timber companies that are controlled by the Roda Mas Group and its palm oil company Bumitama Agri.

Each brand must engage with the Harita Group — and its ultimate beneficiary and owner Mr. Lim Hariyanto Wijaya Sarwono — and demand that the two forestry companies controlled by the corporate group cancel all plans to establish logging concessions on parts of the Long Isun community's territory. Brands, as buyers of palm oil from the Harita Group, have a lot of influence over the Lim family and all companies under its control. Brands need to communicate that respecting rights and providing remedy for past harm done to the Long Isun community is a requirement for supplying their company with palm oil products. Brands must engage with the Harita Group until the corporate group has agreed to permanently forgo its proposed logging operations on Long Isun land and communicated this decision to the government and the Long Isun community.



Brands must suspend all business with the Harita Group and place its palm oil company Bumitama Agri on No-Buy lists if Harita Group-owned Roda Mas Group fails to respect the rights of the Long Isun community to oppose its development on their territories.

When or if no meaningful progress has been achieved through engagement, brands must suspend sourcing of palm oil from the Harita Group, effective immediately. Their suppliers such as AAK, Cargill, Wilmar, IOI and the Sinar Mas Group will be responsible for putting this suspension into effect. For sourcing of palm oil from Bumitama Agri to resume, the Harita Group must have agreed to permanently forgo its proposed logging operations on Long Isun land and communicated this decision to the government and the Long Isun community.



Brands must engage the government of Indonesia and advocate in support of legal recognition of the Long Isun community's customary rights.

Brands can use their influence to actively support Long Isun's demand for legal recognition of their customary rights. Companies must engage the Mahakam Ulu district government and the national Ministry of Environment and Forestry to communicate their support for legal recognition of the Long Isun Indigenous territory — the first step in the process to securing legal recognition of their customary forest in Indonesia. These rights will grant them legal ownership and management rights over their forests, and result in their territory to be excised from all concessions that threaten their way of life.



Brands must take collective industry action to ensure Indigenous Rights are respected across forest-risk commodity supply chains.

Many brands are involved in the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) — a forum for the CEO's of over 400 of the world's largest corporations that manufacture consumer goods products.⁷¹ Despite over a decade of empty promises, the CGF has failed to prioritize collective action to ensure Indigenous Rights are respected across their members' supply chains and the entire operations of the corporations that each member does business with. The CGF must expand its focus from ending deforestation in the supply chains of its members to ensuring "Forest Positive" supply chains that hold their suppliers to account to NDPE practices across the entire operations of their corporate group.⁷² A cross-commodity approach is urgently needed to the enforcement of NDPE policies to ensure that Indigenous Peoples rights are respected, and forests are protected from destruction across forest-risk commodity supply chains. In 2023, keeping Long Isun forests standing and advocacy to support the legal recognition of their customary rights should be a priority for rights-based collective action by the CGF.

PHOTO: Khairul Abdi / RAN

ENDNOTES

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