



Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest

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*The **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest** is a biweekly collection of summaries of articles related to conservation, the environment and sustainability in Indonesia which have appeared in print or online in local, regional and global English-language media. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections. To learn more about us and to access previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our*

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A. Marine & Fisheries

Indonesia to issue quota-based fisheries policy in July, sparking concerns

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 1 July 2022

<https://news.mongabay.com/2022/07/indonesia-to-issue-quota-based-fisheries-policy-in-july-sparking-concerns/>

The Indonesian government will issue a decree that manages the country's marine fisheries based on capture quotas, but experts have raised concerns that this new approach may threaten the sustainability of the country's fish stocks. The fisheries ministry said it expects to issue a government regulation on quota-based fisheries management in July, after receiving the green light from the office of President Joko Widodo. In part, the new policy is aimed at boosting state revenue from the fisheries sector. The nationwide decree will come into effect in stages across the various fisheries zones in Indonesia, said a top official at the ministry.

Fish-farming practices in Indonesia come under scrutiny amid surge in mariculture

—Nick Rodway, *Mongabay*, 6 July 2022

A new report alleges poor animal welfare conditions on fish farms in Indonesia, one of the world's leading producers of fish products. The report presents evidence of unsanitary conditions, live fish transported on ice, and other mishandling in the raising and harvesting of milkfish, catfish, tilapia, carp and gourami.

Report: Lily Augustina and Kasan Woles, "[New Investigation—Fish farming in Indonesia](#)", (13 April 2022), Act for Farmed Animals.

FAO: Record-breaking seafood production must undergo a 'blue transformation'

—Elizabeth Fitt, *Mongabay*, 11 July 2022

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) latest *State of the World's Fisheries and Aquaculture* report, released in June, showed global fisheries and aquaculture production rose around 3% to a record 122.6 million tonnes in 2020, driven by a 6% rise in aquaculture output while wild fish capture declined by almost 4.5%. The number of sustainably-fished marine stocks continued its long-term decline from 90% in the 1970s to just 65% today. About 600 million people rely on direct and indirect employment in fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods, of which half are women and more than 84% are based in Asia. Aquatic food, both farmed and fished, will be critical to feeding a growing human

population this century, Manuel Barange, Director of the FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Division said. The report noted that Indonesia continued its role as one of the world's largest suppliers of farmed shrimp and a key tuna and tilapia exporter. Indonesia's marine capture fisheries production in 2020 was 6.43 million tonnes, second only to China.

Report: UN Food and Agriculture Organization, [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards a Blue Transformation](#). Rome. doi.org/10.4060/cc0461en

B. Forests & Land Use

[As the dry season starts, the risk of forest fires and transboundary haze looms](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 6 July 2022

A new analysis warns of potential forest fires in Indonesia which could spread haze to neighbouring countries as this year's dry season sets in following two years of mostly smoke-free skies across this part of Southeast Asia. The key risk is that current high global prices for crude palm oil (CPO) will create incentives for oil palm farmers to expand their plantations by burning forest and peatland, including clearing by fire. Haze from fires in Riau, Jambi, and South Sumatra could reach Singapore and peninsular Malaysia, while forest in West Kalimantan could affect air quality in eastern Malaysia. Adi Yani, the head of West Kalimantan's environmental agency, said the provincial government plans to ban companies from any activity on their concessions for five years if they're found to be deliberately setting fires. "If there's an indication that [the fires] are deliberate, [then] the burned areas will be sealed with a police line for five years," he said. "No activities are allowed and peatlands must be restored to their original function."

Report: Aaron Choo, et al, "[Haze Outlook 2022](#)", (15 June 2022), Singapore Institute of International Affairs,

[UN tells private sector: Net-zero commitments must include more anti-deforestation policies](#)

—Maxwell Radwin, *Mongabay*, 5 July 2022

Many private sector companies with net-zero commitments have made little tangible progress against tropical deforestation, according to a recent report from the UN Climate Change High Level Climate Champions, a task force responsible for developing stronger climate policy for the private sector. Today, it's clear that there is no solution to climate change without a solution to tropical deforestation. Yet, despite recent efforts, deforestation increased by 12% between 2019 and 2021. "All companies in the sector need to be committed to net-zero and tackling supply chain deforestation as a burning priority," Nigel Topping, one of the UN Climate Change High-Level Climate Champions, said in the report. About one-third of annual carbon emissions are absorbed by forests, the report says. Some of the companies on the list include major food producers like Cargill, Bunge and Marfrig, as well as Nestlé and PepsiCo. Around 31% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the agri-food industry, according to the FAO.

Report: UN Climate Change High Level Climate Champions, Global Canopy, The Accountability Framework Initiative, WWF, and Science-based Targets Initiative, "[Why net zero needs zero deforestation now](#)", (June 2022)

[The price for maintaining Indonesia's palm oil industry hegemony](#)

—Yassar Aulia and Sayyidatihiyaa Afra, *New Mandala*, 7 July 2022

Many view President Joko Widodo's appointment of Zulkifli Hasan as Minister of Trade as a merely strategic political consolidation. Whatever the intent, Zulkifli is far from the right person for the job. Only days after being appointed, he claimed that there was no "mafia" behind the cooking oil crisis, ignoring the Attorney General's naming a high-ranking Ministry of Foreign Trade official and three leading figures from the palm oil industry in an alleged corruption case involving exports of crude palm oil (CPO). As Minister of Forestry over 2009-2014, Zulkifli converted up to 1.64 million ha of forests into oil palm plantations, benefitting the interests of palm oil giants. Mismanagement of the palm oil industry has a long

history in Indonesia, coloured by corruption and government collusion with palm oil oligarchs. We cannot trust the government to solve the palm oil crisis since the crisis was mainly its creation, the scarcity of cooking oil that sparked it not a bug but rather a feature of Indonesia's palm oil oligopoly.

[European Union environment ministers agree on rules to address global deforestation](#)

—Edi Suhardi, *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

European Union environment ministers reached an agreement on a general approach to new rules addressing global deforestation during a meeting of the Environment Council in Luxembourg. The approach, aims to ensure that products and commodities imported into the EU are “deforestation-free”—defined as “not having caused deforestation or forest degradation during their production”, “Deforestation” is defined as the conversion of forest to agricultural use, while “forest degradation” means “structural changes to forest cover translating into conversion of primary forests into plantation forests or other wooded land.” The new due diligence rules will apply to all producers, operators who place, make available or export products of six commodities: coffee, cocoa, palm oil, beef and wood (timber) and their derivative products, no longer singling out palm oil as the main villain in deforestation. However, the commitment fails to recognize highly-forested landscapes like Papua and the need for indigenous Papuans to be able to economically develop and thrive, and disregards the nature of biophysical forests in other regions, including tropical forests.

The author is a sustainable palm oil analyst.

C. Conservation & Protected Areas

[Costly Komodo conservation](#)

—Dini Pramita, *Tempo English*, 11 July 2022

Starting 1 August, tourists visiting Komodo Island in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) will be required to pay an entrance fee of Rp 3.75 million (US\$250.00) for access to Komodo and Padar islands. “This is not about the entry ticket, but [rather] the comprehensive conservation of Komodo National Park, Vensensus Jemadu, Deputy for Tourism Destination Development and Infrastructure at the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy explained. The new fee includes compensation for conservation activities and will be valid for up to one year. “We will limit the total number of visitors to 200,000,” said Carolina Noge, coordinator for the national park’s conservation program. The plan has been criticized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which pointed out that new construction of tourist facilities in the park endanger the animals’ natural habitat. UNESCO also said the local community of the park had been undermined and deemed insignificant by the government in conducting conservation and tourism efforts. The government is using environmental carrying capacity arguments as an excuse to develop premium tourism.

[*Note: The number of visitors to Komodo National Park reached a total of 221,703 persons in 2019, consisting of 144,068 foreign tourists and 77,635 domestic tourists.*]

[Conservation failure in Sumatra serves as cautionary warning for PES schemes](#)

—Cassie Freund, *Mongabay*, 30 June 2022

A World Bank-funded conservation project in Indonesia that led to higher rates of deforestation after the project ended serves as a cautionary tale about the risks of failing to sustain such initiatives over sufficiently long periods of time. The Kerinci Seblat landscape is a highly biodiverse rainforest in western Sumatra, home to Sumatran tigers, elephants, and more than 300 bird species. The project was a US\$18.1 million World Bank project initiated in 1996. Part of the project centered on a conservation strategy called payments for ecosystem services, or PES. The PES-portion of the project established voluntary conservation agreements with 72 villages across the landscape who agreed to halt deforestation and take up sustainable livelihood in return for payments of about US\$25,000 over the six-year life of the project. But project implementation was marred by bureaucratic challenges and payment delays. Just 64% of the villages made it to the second stage of payments, and a 2008 analysis showed that the agreements failed to boost forest conservation above baseline levels.

Paper: James T. Erbaugh, "[Impermanence and failure: the legacy of conservation-based payments in Sumatra, Indonesia](https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac6437)", (25 April 2022), *Environmental Research Letters* 17:5, doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac6437

[In restoring polluted rivers, Indonesia looks at restocking populations of endemic fishes](#)

—Basten Gokkon, L. Darmawan, *Mongabay*, 12 July 2022

Two mudflows struck the Serayu River on Java in March and April, polluting its waters and depleting populations of more than twelve endemic freshwater fish species. The mudflows were attributed to a nearby power plant which opened its gates to flush out agricultural waste that had accumulated in the reservoir. Indonesia is home to more than 1,300 species of freshwater fishes, the most in Asia. Up to 80% of its rivers are in poor condition, particularly on Java. "Restocking is an effort to conserve the endemic fish species," I Nyoman Radiarta, head of the research department at the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (KKP) told *Mongabay* in an interview. "Inland waters are very important to people's livelihoods as a source of freshwater, biodiversity, food security and source of income." Rajendra Aryal, the representative for Indonesia and Timor-Leste at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said restocking must be combined with sustainable regulation, habitat rehabilitation, and community empowerment to be effective.

[Indigenous leaders react to Nairobi biodiversity talks—'30 by 30' target still up for debate](#)

—Laurel Sutherland, *Mongabay*, 1 July 2022

Negotiation talks in Nairobi, Kenya, for the new global agreement to preserve and protect nature ended last week, but parties have not yet come to an agreement over the final draft – including proposals laid out by the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB). Participants were disappointed that the inclusion of language recognizing indigenous and traditional territories in the final Global Biodiversity Framework remained up for debate after years of negotiations. The recognition of the contribution of IPLCs in achieving the '30 by 30' conservation target, also known as target 3 of the GFB, is still up for debate. The aim of 30 by 30 is to protect 30% of the world's oceans and land by 2030. Its proponents, including many of the world's largest conservation NGOs, say such protective measures would provide a lifeline for species struggling amid the global biodiversity crisis. However, many Indigenous leaders and human rights advocates say this goal may lead to the mass eviction of Indigenous and local communities for the creation of more protected areas.

D. Energy, Mining, & Climate Change

[State energy subsidies are holding up Indonesia's green energy transition](#)

—I Dewa Made Raditya Margenta and Filda C. Yusciantoro, *The Diplomat*, 11 July 2022

The unprecedented spike in fuel prices prompted by the Russia-Ukraine war has forced Indonesia to vastly increase energy subsidies. President Joko Widodo stated that the government had raised the state budget allocation for subsidies from Rp 152 trillion (US\$10.2 billion) to Rp 502 trillion (US\$33.8 billion), due to high public consumption of subsidized fuel and LPG amid high global crude oil prices. By keeping energy prices below market levels the subsidy policy lets lower income people continue to access energy they could not otherwise afford while stabilizing fossil fuel energy consumption. However, the wealthy in Indonesia also enjoy access to subsidized fuel. When Indonesia raised the price of unsubsidized fuel products like Pertamina, consumers simply shifted to Peralite, a subsidized fuel. Energy subsidies also hinder development of renewable energy by making renewable energy less competitive with fossil fuel energy. Implementing direct subsidies in the form of payments to lower income people would improve state budget efficiency and improve the competitiveness of renewable energy, but direct subsidies also have their economic costs.

[Indonesia learning lessons from South Africa's tough energy transition deal talks](#)

—Joe Lo, *Climate Home News*, 24 June 2022

At the Cop26 meeting last year the UK, US, France, Germany, EU and South Africa signed a deal to provide US\$8.5 billion to help South Africa manage the transition to renewable energy. That deal now serves as a kind of model for similar kinds of cooperation under discussion between Indonesia and a group of wealthy countries led by the US and Japan, which could result in a deal announced in November at the Cop27 in Egypt or at the G20 Summit in Bali. Fabby Tumiwa, director of the Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR) is advising the Indonesian government on the partnership. In an unpublished report, IESR estimated that there are 5 gigawatts (GW) of coal plant capacity that could be closed at a cost of US\$4.5 billion and are low-hanging fruit. Replacing all of Indonesia's coal capacity would cost about US\$1.2 trillion, but an accelerated coal phase out would save 168,000 Indonesian lives through 2050, more than US\$60 billion in health costs and US\$128 billion in coal subsidies.

Indonesia to enact mandatory B35 biodiesel program as global prices for crude palm oil fall

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 11 July 2022

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) will implement a mandatory 35% biodiesel (B35) program for all biofuels by the end of July, Dana Kusdiana, a ministry official said. The biodiesel program was part of the government's efforts to boost domestic use of palm oil to help support CPO prices. "This will help raise the price of oil palm fresh fruit bunches (FFB), which are currently falling, Danan said. Higher global production of vegetable oils is expected to drive down CPO prices from US\$1,500 per tonne in the first half of the year to below US\$1000 per tonne in the second half. "Issues concerning FFB prices cannot be [disclosed] at this time," Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan reportedly said. In order to increase exports, the government has allowed companies which are not part of the domestic market obligation (DMO) scheme to export palm oil provided they pay an additional fee of US\$200 per tonne on top of the export tax and other charges.

E. Pollution & Waste

Activists protest Unilever's massive and wasteful plastic waste sachet production

—Nadiyah Dzakhirah, *Tempo English*, 25 April 2022

Environmental activists rallied in front of the Indonesia Convention Exhibition (ICE) during Unilever Indonesia's annual general shareholders' meeting (RUPS), calling for a halt to the production of plastic sachet packaging. Members of the Zero Waste Indonesia Alliance (AZWI) brought mannequins covered with plastic sachet packaging produced by Unilever that had been collected from rivers and beaches across Indonesia. A recent report by the World Economic Forum showed that 116% of the plastic waste in Indonesia's oceans and natural environments consisted of plastic sachets, which cannot be recycled. Prigi Arisandi, Executive Director of the Wetlands Observation and Conservation Ecology (ECOTON), said audits of brands in the Nusantara Expedition found Unilever was consistently among the top three list of major brands that are big polluters. "Most of the microplastic contamination is filaments fragmented from plastic films and sachet packaging," Arisandi added. On 13 June, ECOTON campaign coordinator Daru Setyorini said Unilever-produced plastic waste was the most widely encountered during the brand audit at Ciliwung.

F. Investment & Finance

China's Silk Road Fund agrees to invest US\$3 billion in Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund

—Gayatri Suroyo, *Reuters*, 4 July 2022

China's Silk Road Fund (SRF) has signed a framework agreement to invest up to Chinese yuan 20 billion (US\$2.99 billion) in Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund, the funds announced. The agreement allows for investment in all sectors open to foreigners in Indonesia, in particular those promoting connectivity between the two countries, the Indonesia Investment Authority (INA) and the SRF said in a joint statement. Unlike other sovereign wealth funds which manage excess oil revenues or foreign exchange reserves, the INA's business model seeks to attract foreign co-investors to help fund economic development. The United Arab Emirates pledged to invest US\$10 billion in the fund after its launch in

February 2021, and global agencies such as the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) have also expressed interest. The INA has also formed a US\$3.75 billion toll road fund with Canada's Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), APG Asset Management (APG) and a unit of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) last year.

G. Other

[Southeast Asia's green recovery must stress links between environment and public health](#)

—Purple Romero, *Asia Sentinel*, 13 July 2022

Reducing risks to biodiversity is crucial to reducing the odds of another pandemic. The Manila-based Asian Development Bank is seeking to address the risks of another pandemic through a green Covid-19 recovery plan complementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF). The ADB report said pandemic impacts in Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines show that Covid-19 recovery packages must include assessments of impacts on the environment that are integrated into economic plans and regulations. "To ensure that the green recovery process from the pandemic goes beyond injecting temporary green investments and builds in permanent shift toward environmentally resilient pathways, "green" objectives such as climate mitigation and adaptation and safeguarding against biodiversity loss will need to be mainstreamed into all policies beyond Covid-19 response measures," it said. "Biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and negative health outcomes share many common drivers," wrote Liz Willets in the GBF draft, including pollution, climate change, harmful use of pesticides and antimicrobials, and unsustainable food production practices.

Report: Asian Development Bank, *Implementing a Green Recovery in Southeast Asia*, 6 July 2022, Manila, doi.org/10.22617/TCS220180

I. President Widodo visits Kiev and Moscow for talks with Zelensky and Putin

[Indonesia's Joko Widodo blazes a trail for Asian peace-making](#)

—Michael Vatikiotis, *Nikkei Asia*, 6 July 2022

Buffeted by escalating US-China tensions and the geopolitical fallout from the Ukraine War, Asia urgently needs to engage in more active diplomacy to protect regional strategic stability. The region has traditionally looked askance at intervening in military conflicts while the US and Europe do not place much faith in Asian peace-making that could detract from Western stewardship of the rules-based global order. China and the US are exerting pressure on smaller states in the region to choose sides in their contest for global hegemony, while fallout from the war in Ukraine is generating a new global arms race. Reinforcing and protecting strategic stability requires leadership and commitment, which is why Joko Widodo's Russia-Ukraine shuttle diplomacy is significant even if it does not have a significant impact on ending the war. Now Widodo should travel to Beijing and make good on China's quiet offers to help mediate an end to the war in Ukraine if others will join. Indonesia could support UN efforts to mediate a solution to unlocking grain supplies from Ukraine by refusing to accept direct supplies from Russia.

Michael Vatikiotis is senior adviser at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and author of "Lives Between The Lines: A Journey in Search of the Lost Levant."

[Widodo wades into Russia-Ukraine war mire](#)

—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 1 July 2022

For all the rhetoric, the underlying reason for Indonesian Joko Widodo's venture into world diplomacy was more about trying to save the G20 summit in Bali in November and address a growing world food crisis than any mission to try and end the war in Ukraine. While nothing of substance came of Widodo's two back-to-back meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, pulling off a peace-making miracle was hardly on the cards as the war rages into its fifth month. The president has shown little interest in foreign policy before now, but his efforts to salvage the G20 has

seen Indonesia forced into playing a more constructive role on the world stage rather than acting as a mere bystander, and Widodo may ultimately be able claim at least some credit for helping push a UN-brokered effort to reopen a trade corridor through the Black Sea, currently sealed off by Russian navy vessels and Ukrainian defensive mines. Widodo has a stake in freeing up wheat shipments. The longer the war drags on, the greater the danger that a flour shortage will compel local firms to raise the politically-sensitive price of instant noodles. 195

[US, China top diplomats voice cautious hope in rare talks at G20 ministers' gathering](#)

—AFP via *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

US Secretary of State Antony Blinkin and Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi voiced guarded hope of preventing tensions from spiralling out of control as they held rare talks on the sidelines of the Group of 20 ministers' meeting in Bali. "In a relationship as complex and consequential as the one between the United States and China, there is a lot to talk about," Blinkin said. Wang noted that Chinese president Xi Jinping believes in cooperation as well as "mutual respect" between the world's two largest economic powers and that there needed to be "normal exchanges" between them. "We do need to work together to ensure that this relationship will continue to move forward along the right track," Wang said. Daniel Kritenbrink, the top US diplomat for East Asia, said earlier that Blinkin will seek "guardrails" and do "everything possible to ensure that we prevent any miscalculation that could inadvertently lead to conflict". Blinkin and Wang are expected to prepare for virtual talks in the coming weeks between Xi and President Joe Biden. 172

[Ukraine War discussed at almost all bilateral meetings at G20 ministers' meeting](#)

—Reuters via *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi, chair of the Group of 20 (G20) gathering, praised her counterparts for attending the meeting in Bali in person amid global tensions over the impacts of the Ukraine war, decisions she said should not be taken lightly. Retno said food and energy security and reintegration of Ukraine and Russia's grain and fertilizer into supply chains was critical. US Secretary of State told G20 foreign ministers that if the grouping is to remain relevant, they must hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine and stressed the need to move a global food plan forward, adding that Russia was seeking to undermine multilateral institutions. A Western official said the value of the meeting had been to demonstrate to Russia how widespread the consensus is on the need to make progress on the grain issue. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov left the room after delivering his remarks and was not present for most of the afternoon session, observers aid.

[Blinken tells Russia at G20 talks to "let the grain out" of Ukraine](#)

—AFP via *The Jakarta Post*, 8 July 2022

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken demanded Russia allow grain shipments out of war-battered Ukraine during closed-door G20 talks in Bali on 8 July. "To our Russian colleagues: Ukraine is not your country. Its grain is not your grain. Why are you blocking the ports? You should let the grain out," said Blinken, according to a Western official present. Blinken has refused to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov but addressed Russia during the talks and laid out US financial assistance to ease global food shortages triggered by the war in Ukraine, a major source of global grain and corn exports.

[G20 FMM offers outlet to relieve tensions over Ukraine war](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil and Yvette Tanamal, *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

Indonesia urged foreign ministers from the Group of 20 (G20) nations to help end the war in Ukraine during the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) in Bali, Indonesia. "It is our responsibility to end the war sooner rather than later and settle our differences at the negotiating table, not [on] the battlefield," Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi said in her opening speech. The G20 FMM was overshadowed by the assassination of former Japanese prime minister Shinto Abe and the resignation of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was heckled as he shook hands with Retno on arrival at the venue. Lavrov later told reporters that delegates from Western countries "strayed almost

immediately, as soon as they took the floor, to the frenzied criticism of the Russian Federation in connection with the situation in Ukraine". Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, who addressed the forum by video link, delivered a seething rebuke of Russia for "playing hunger games". A Russian naval blockade of Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea has stopped grain shipments from the world's fourth largest exporter of wheat and corn, raising the spectre of food shortages and hunger in low-income and developing countries.

[Looking at the longer game, G20 FMM signals change in direction](#)

—M. Taufiqurrahman, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 July 2022

In the lead-up to the Group of 20 Foreign Minister's Meeting (G20 FMM) questions were raised whether that or any forum could find a solution to the war in Ukraine, but no single forum or summit can ease geopolitical tensions built up over decades. The fact that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov walked out of the meeting while the forum decided not to issue a concluding statement supported the charge that the G20 FMM had been an unmitigated disaster. But events on the sidelines should leave us with a sense of optimism. Foremost was the five-hour meeting between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, which is likely to be followed by a meeting between US President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping either at the APEC meeting in Thailand in August or at the G20 Summit in Bali in November. It also helps that China engaged in dialogue on the sidelines of the G20 meeting with Australia and Canada.

[President Widodo plans visit to China later in July](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *The Jakarta Post*, 13 July 2022

Following the Group of 20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (G20 FMM), Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Councillor Wang Yi remained in Bali to attend the second High-Level Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism meeting hosted by Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi and Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan. Minister Luhut indicated that he and Retno relayed a message to Beijing conveying Indonesia's desire to renew a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to coordinate Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) development strategy with China's infrastructure-focused Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). "Hopefully the MOU can be extended in time for President Widodo's visit to China at the end of July," Luhut messaged after he and Retno accompanied Wang to a meeting with President Widodo at Merdeka Palace on 11 July. Visits to Japan and South Korea are also reportedly on Widodo's itinerary. China was Indonesia's most important source of imports in 2021, accounting for US\$56.2 billion or 29% of total imports, nearly five times the value of imports from the US.

II. Three new provinces carved out of Papua

[Indonesia passes contentious law to create more provinces in Papua](#)

—Stanley Widiyanto and Kate Lamb, *Reuters*, 30 June 2022

Indonesia's parliament passed legislation to create three new provinces in its underdeveloped region of Papua, a move which critics fear could undermine the standing of the area's indigenous population and threaten special autonomy powers. The easternmost region of the country, currently split into Papua and West Papua provinces, will now be divided into five provinces with the addition of South Papua, Central Papua, and Highland Papua. Tito Karnavian, Minister of Home Affairs, said after the vote that the goal of the legislation was to "accelerate development and increase the welfare of the people in Papua, especially indigenous Papuans." But the plan sparked further protests in Papua, which has seen a low-level independence conflict since the disputed 1969 UN-supervised vote brought the region under Indonesian control. "By slicing and dicing Papua into smaller administrative units, Jakarta hopes to divide and conquer Papuan identity and resistance," said Veronica Koman, an Australia-based Indonesian human rights lawyer. Papuan critics have also charged that the legislation would lead to an influx of more non-indigenous Papuans into new government posts.

[House of Representatives passes law on new autonomous regions of Papua](#)

—Dewi Nurita, *Tempo English*, 30 June 2022

The Indonesian House of Representatives officially ratified three bills on new autonomous regions (RUU DOB) of Papua on 30 June for the new South Papua Province, Central Papua Province, and Papua Pegunungan Tengah (Central Highlands) province. However, ten organizations that are members of the Solidarity of Civil Organizations (SOS) for Papua rejected the government's plan, arguing that it would trigger social conflict between groups refusing and supporting the new autonomous regions. "The new autonomous regions have created a wide gap [dividing] Papuans into two groups. SOS said there have been human rights violations against groups rejecting the plan, for example during the demonstration which led to chaos and deaths during clashes with authorities in Yahukimo. The ten civil organizations are Papuan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Papua); JERAT Papua; KPKC Sinode GKI in Papua; YALI Papua; PAHAM Papua; University of Cendrawasih's Democracy, Human Rights, and Environment Group; Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of Sorong, WALHI Papua, Teraju Foundation, and Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat.

[Tribal leaders' support for special autonomy big hope for West Papua province](#)

—HA Kapisa, Rahmad Nasution, *I*, 12 June 2022

Support for implementation of Papua's special autonomy law and the development of new autonomous regions would become a big hope for West Papua Province's future, acting West Papua Province Governor Paulus Waterpauw said when receiving tens of native Papuan and non-native Papuan community leaders at his official residence in Manokwari. Waterpauw, who replaced Dominggus Mandacan as West Papua governor on 20 May, said he did not deny that a group of people still "reject" the special autonomy and development of new autonomous regions. However, Waterpauw stated that the "good things will be supported because the state must respond to the aspirations of our people who demand equal distribution of the benefits of development, and said that the coming of tribal leaders and those representing communities, women, youth, and the West Papua People's Assembly (MRPB) brought hope for the future of West Papua Province.

[House of Representatives systematically flouts democratic norms, critics say](#)

—Yerica Lai, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 July 2022

The House of Representatives (DPR) is under fire for what critics call a spree of undemocratic law making, including passage of at least two controversial laws and a lack of transparency. In June, the House moved quickly to pass a set of bills creating three new provinces in Papua after just nine days of deliberation. The bills' supporters said the legislation would spur development and create more civil service job opportunities for Papuans. But activists said the House pressed ahead without listening to the will of indigenous Papuans, a majority of whom fear the redistricting would undermine indigenous rights. The Constitutional Court has yet to rule on the legality of changes to the Papuan Special Autonomy Law, amended last year to allow the government to bypass the legal requirement to consult with the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) representing the region's indigenous peoples before creation of the new provinces. The MRP has challenged the constitutionality of the revised autonomy law at the Constitutional Court.

Ends



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*The **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest** is a biweekly collection of summaries of articles related to conservation, the environment and sustainability in Indonesia which have appeared in print or online in local, regional and global English-language media. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections. To learn more about us and to access previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our website at www.starlingresources.com. If you would like to add colleagues or friends to our distribution list or unsubscribe, please contact us at newsdigest@starlingresources.com*

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A. Marine & Fisheries

Indonesia to issue quota-based fisheries policy in July, sparking concerns

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 1 July 2022

<https://news.mongabay.com/2022/07/indonesia-to-issue-quota-based-fisheries-policy-in-july-sparking-concerns/>

The Indonesian government will issue a decree that manages the country's marine fisheries based on capture quotas, but experts have raised concerns that this new approach may threaten the sustainability of the country's fish stocks. The fisheries ministry said it expects to issue a government regulation on quota-based fisheries management in July, after receiving the green light from the office of President Joko Widodo. In part, the new policy is aimed at boosting state revenue from the fisheries sector. The nationwide decree will come into effect in stages across the various fisheries zones in Indonesia, said a top official at the ministry.

Fish-farming practices in Indonesia come under scrutiny amid surge in mariculture

—Nick Rodway, *Mongabay*, 6 July 2022

A new report alleges poor animal welfare conditions on fish farms in Indonesia, one of the world's leading producers of fish products. The report presents evidence of unsanitary conditions, live fish transported on ice, and other mishandling in the raising and harvesting of milkfish, catfish, tilapia, carp and gourami.

Report: Lily Augustina and Kasan Woles, "[New Investigation—Fish farming in Indonesia](#)", (13 April 2022), Act for Farmed Animals.

FAO: Record-breaking seafood production must undergo a 'blue transformation'

—Elizabeth Fitt, *Mongabay*, 11 July 2022

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) latest *State of the World's Fisheries and Aquaculture* report, released in June, showed global fisheries and aquaculture production rose around 3% to a record 122.6 million tonnes in 2020, driven by a 6% rise in aquaculture output while wild fish capture declined by almost 4.5%. The number of sustainably-fished marine stocks continued its long-term decline from 90% in the 1970s to just 65% today. About 600 million people rely on direct and indirect employment in fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods, of which half are women and more than 84% are based in Asia. Aquatic food, both farmed and fished, will be critical to feeding a growing human population this century, Manuel Barange, Director of the FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Division said. The report noted that Indonesia continued its role as one of the world's largest suppliers of farmed shrimp

and a key tuna and tilapia exporter. Indonesia's marine capture fisheries production in 2020 was 6.43 million tonnes, second only to China.

Report: UN Food and Agriculture Organization, [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022: Towards a Blue Transformation](#). Rome. doi.org/10.4060/cc0461en

B. Forests & Land Use

[As the dry season starts, the risk of forest fires and transboundary haze looms](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 6 July 2022

A new analysis warns of potential forest fires in Indonesia which could spread haze to neighbouring countries as this year's dry season sets in following two years of mostly smoke-free skies across this part of Southeast Asia. The key risk is that current high global prices for crude palm oil (CPO) will create incentives for oil palm farmers to expand their plantations by burning forest and peatland, including clearing by fire. Haze from fires in Riau, Jambi, and South Sumatra could reach Singapore and peninsular Malaysia, while forest in West Kalimantan could affect air quality in eastern Malaysia. Adi Yani, the head of West Kalimantan's environmental agency, said the provincial government plans to ban companies from any activity on their concessions for five years if they're found to be deliberately setting fires. "If there's an indication that [the fires] are deliberate, [then] the burned areas will be sealed with a police line for five years," he said. "No activities are allowed and peatlands must be restored to their original function."

Report: Aaron Choo, et al, "[Haze Outlook 2022](#)", (15 June 2022), Singapore Institute of International Affairs,

[UN tells private sector: Net-zero commitments must include more anti-deforestation policies](#)

—Maxwell Radwin, *Mongabay*, 5 July 2022

Many private sector companies with net-zero commitments have made little tangible progress against tropical deforestation, according to a recent report from the UN Climate Change High Level Climate Champions, a task force responsible for developing stronger climate policy for the private sector. Today, it's clear that there is no solution to climate change without a solution to tropical deforestation. Yet, despite recent efforts, deforestation increased by 12% between 2019 and 2021. "All companies in the sector need to be committed to net-zero and tackling supply chain deforestation as a burning priority," Nigel Topping, one of the UN Climate Change High-Level Climate Champions, said in the report. About one-third of annual carbon emissions are absorbed by forests, the report says. Some of the companies on the list include major food producers like Cargill, Bunge and Marfrig, as well as Nestlé and PepsiCo. Around 31% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the agri-food industry, according to the FAO.

Report: UN Climate Change High Level Climate Champions, Global Canopy, The Accountability Framework Initiative, WWF, and Science-based Targets Initiative, "[Why net zero needs zero deforestation now](#)", (June 2022)

[The price for maintaining Indonesia's palm oil industry hegemony](#)

—Yassar Aulia and Sayyidatihiyaa Afra, *New Mandala*, 7 July 2022

Many view President Joko Widodo's appointment of Zulkifli Hasan as Minister of Trade as a merely strategic political consolidation. Whatever the intent, Zulkifli is far from the right person for the job. Only days after being appointed, he claimed that there was no "mafia" behind the cooking oil crisis, ignoring the Attorney General's naming a high-ranking Ministry of Foreign Trade official and three leading figures from the palm oil industry in an alleged corruption case involving exports of crude palm oil (CPO). As Minister of Forestry over 2009-2014, Zulkifli converted up to 1.64 million ha of forests into oil palm plantations, benefitting the interests of palm oil giants. Mismanagement of the palm oil industry has a long history in Indonesia, coloured by corruption and government collusion with palm oil oligarchs. We cannot

trust the government to solve the palm oil crisis since the crisis was mainly its creation, the scarcity of cooking oil that sparked it not a bug but rather a feature of Indonesia's palm oil oligopoly.

[European Union environment ministers agree on rules to address global deforestation](#)

—Edi Suhardi, *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

European Union environment ministers reached an agreement on a general approach to new rules addressing global deforestation during a meeting of the Environment Council in Luxembourg. The approach, aims to ensure that products and commodities imported into the EU are “deforestation-free”—defined as “not having caused deforestation or forest degradation during their production”, “Deforestation” is defined as the conversion of forest to agricultural use, while “forest degradation” means “structural changes to forest cover translating into conversion of primary forests into plantation forests or other wooded land.” The new due diligence rules will apply to all producers, operators who place, make available or export products of six commodities: coffee, cocoa, palm oil, beef and wood (timber) and their derivative products, no longer singling out palm oil as the main villain in deforestation. However, the commitment fails to recognize highly-forested landscapes like Papua and the need for indigenous Papuans to be able to economically develop and thrive, and disregards the nature of biophysical forests in other regions, including tropical forests.

The author is a sustainable palm oil analyst.

C. Conservation & Protected Areas

[Costly Komodo conservation](#)

—Dini Pramita, *Tempo English*, 11 July 2022

Starting 1 August, tourists visiting Komodo Island in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) will be required to pay an entrance fee of Rp 3.75 million (US\$250.00) for access to Komodo and Padar islands. “This is not about the entry ticket, but [rather] the comprehensive conservation of Komodo National Park, Vensensius Jemadu, Deputy for Tourism Destination Development and Infrastructure at the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy explained. The new fee includes compensation for conservation activities and will be valid for up to one year. “We will limit the total number of visitors to 200,000,” said Carolina Noge, coordinator for the national park’s conservation program. The plan has been criticized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which pointed out that new construction of tourist facilities in the park endanger the animals’ natural habitat. UNESCO also said the local community of the park had been undermined and deemed insignificant by the government in conducting conservation and tourism efforts. The government is using environmental carrying capacity arguments as an excuse to develop premium tourism.

[*Note: The number of visitors to Komodo National Park reached a total of 221,703 persons in 2019, consisting of 144,068 foreign tourists and 77,635 domestic tourists.*]

[Conservation failure in Sumatra serves as cautionary warning for PES schemes](#)

—Cassie Freund, *Mongabay*, 30 June 2022

A World Bank-funded conservation project in Indonesia that led to higher rates of deforestation after the project ended serves as a cautionary tale about the risks of failing to sustain such initiatives over sufficiently long periods of time. The Kerinci Seblat landscape is a highly biodiverse rainforest in western Sumatra, home to Sumatran tigers, elephants, and more than 300 bird species. The project was a US\$18.1 million World Bank project initiated in 1996. Part of the project centered on a conservation strategy called payments for ecosystem services, or PES. The PES-portion of the project established voluntary conservation agreements with 72 villages across the landscape who agreed to halt deforestation and take up sustainable livelihood in return for payments of about US\$25,000 over the six-year life of the project. But project implementation was marred by bureaucratic challenges and payment delays. Just 64% of the villages made it to the second stage of payments, and a 2008 analysis showed that the agreements failed to boost forest conservation above baseline levels.

Paper: James T. Erbaugh, "[Impermanence and failure: the legacy of conservation-based payments in Sumatra, Indonesia](https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac6437)", (25 April 2022), *Environmental Research Letters* 17:5, doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac6437

[In restoring polluted rivers, Indonesia looks at restocking populations of endemic fishes](#)

—Basten Gokkon, L. Darmawan, *Mongabay*, 12 July 2022

Two mudflows struck the Serayu River on Java in March and April, polluting its waters and depleting populations of more than twelve endemic freshwater fish species. The mudflows were attributed to a nearby power plant which opened its gates to flush out agricultural waste that had accumulated in the reservoir. Indonesia is home to more than 1,300 species of freshwater fishes, the most in Asia. Up to 80% of its rivers are in poor condition, particularly on Java. "Restocking is an effort to conserve the endemic fish species," I Nyoman Radiarta, head of the research department at the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (KKP) told *Mongabay* in an interview. "Inland waters are very important to people's livelihoods as a source of freshwater, biodiversity, food security and source of income." Rajendra Aryal, the representative for Indonesia and Timor-Leste at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), said restocking must be combined with sustainable regulation, habitat rehabilitation, and community empowerment to be effective.

[Indigenous leaders react to Nairobi biodiversity talks—'30 by 30' target still up for debate](#)

—Laurel Sutherland, *Mongabay*, 1 July 2022

Negotiation talks in Nairobi, Kenya, for the new global agreement to preserve and protect nature ended last week, but parties have not yet come to an agreement over the final draft – including proposals laid out by the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB). Participants were disappointed that the inclusion of language recognizing indigenous and traditional territories in the final Global Biodiversity Framework remained up for debate after years of negotiations. The recognition of the contribution of IPLCs in achieving the '30 by 30' conservation target, also known as target 3 of the GFB, is still up for debate. The aim of 30 by 30 is to protect 30% of the world's oceans and land by 2030. Its proponents, including many of the world's largest conservation NGOs, say such protective measures would provide a lifeline for species struggling amid the global biodiversity crisis. However, many Indigenous leaders and human rights advocates say this goal may lead to the mass eviction of Indigenous and local communities for the creation of more protected areas.

D. Energy, Mining, & Climate Change

[State energy subsidies are holding up Indonesia's green energy transition](#)

—I Dewa Made Raditya Margenta and Filda C. Yusgiantoro, *The Diplomat*, 11 July 2022

The unprecedented spike in fuel prices prompted by the Russia-Ukraine war has forced Indonesia to vastly increase energy subsidies. President Joko Widodo stated that the government had raised the state budget allocation for subsidies from Rp 152 trillion (US\$10.2 billion) to Rp 502 trillion (US\$33.8 billion), due to high public consumption of subsidized fuel and LPG amid high global crude oil prices. By keeping energy prices below market levels the subsidy policy lets lower income people continue to access energy they could not otherwise afford while stabilizing fossil fuel energy consumption. However, the wealthy in Indonesia also enjoy access to subsidized fuel. When Indonesia raised the price of unsubsidized fuel products like Pertamina, consumers simply shifted to Peralite, a subsidized fuel. Energy subsidies also hinder development of renewable energy by making renewable energy less competitive with fossil fuel energy. Implementing direct subsidies in the form of payments to lower income people would improve state budget efficiency and improve the competitiveness of renewable energy, but direct subsidies also have their economic costs.

[Indonesia learning lessons from South Africa's tough energy transition deal talks](#)

—Joe Lo, *Climate Home News*, 24 June 2022

At the Cop26 meeting last year the UK, US, France, Germany, EU and South Africa signed a deal to provide US\$8.5 billion to help South Africa manage the transition to renewable energy. That deal now serves as a kind of model for similar kinds of cooperation under discussion between Indonesia and a group of wealthy countries led by the US and Japan, which could result in a deal announced in November at the Cop27 in Egypt or at the G20 Summit in Bali. Fabby Tumiwa, director of the Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR) is advising the Indonesian government on the partnership. In an unpublished report, IESR estimated that there are 5 gigawatts (GW) of coal plant capacity that could be closed at a cost of US\$4.5 billion and are low-hanging fruit. Replacing all of Indonesia's coal capacity would cost about US\$1.2 trillion, but an accelerated coal phase out would save 168,000 Indonesian lives through 2050, more than US\$60 billion in health costs and US\$128 billion in coal subsidies.

Indonesia to enact mandatory B35 biodiesel program as global prices for crude palm oil fall

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 11 July 2022

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) will implement a mandatory 35% biodiesel (B35) program for all biofuels by the end of July, Dana Kusdiana, a ministry official said. The biodiesel program was part of the government's efforts to boost domestic use of palm oil to help support CPO prices. "This will help raise the price of oil palm fresh fruit bunches (FFB), which are currently falling, Danan said. Higher global production of vegetable oils is expected to drive down CPO prices from US\$1,500 per tonne in the first half of the year to below US\$1000 per tonne in the second half. "Issues concerning FFB prices cannot be [disclosed] at this time," Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan reportedly said. In order to increase exports, the government has allowed companies which are not part of the domestic market obligation (DMO) scheme to export palm oil provided they pay an additional fee of US\$200 per tonne on top of the export tax and other charges.

E. Pollution & Waste

Activists protest Unilever's massive and wasteful plastic waste sachet production

—Nadiyah Dzakhirah, *Tempo English*, 25 April 2022

Environmental activists rallied in front of the Indonesia Convention Exhibition (ICE) during Unilever Indonesia's annual general shareholders' meeting (RUPS), calling for a halt to the production of plastic sachet packaging. Members of the Zero Waste Indonesia Alliance (AZWI) brought mannequins covered with plastic sachet packaging produced by Unilever that had been collected from rivers and beaches across Indonesia. A recent report by the World Economic Forum showed that 116% of the plastic waste in Indonesia's oceans and natural environments consisted of plastic sachets, which cannot be recycled. Prigi Arisandi, Executive Director of the Wetlands Observation and Conservation Ecology (ECOTON), said audits of brands in the Nusantara Expedition found Unilever was consistently among the top three list of major brands that are big polluters. "Most of the microplastic contamination is filaments fragmented from plastic films and sachet packaging," Arisandi added. On 13 June, ECOTON campaign coordinator Daru Setyorini said Unilever-produced plastic waste was the most widely encountered during the brand audit at Ciliwung.

F. Investment & Finance

China's Silk Road Fund agrees to invest US\$3 billion in Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund

—Gayatri Suroyo, *Reuters*, 4 July 2022

China's Silk Road Fund (SRF) has signed a framework agreement to invest up to Chinese yuan 20 billion (US\$2.99 billion) in Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund, the funds announced. The agreement allows for investment in all sectors open to foreigners in Indonesia, in particular those promoting connectivity between the two countries, the Indonesia Investment Authority (INA) and the SRF said in a joint statement. Unlike other sovereign wealth funds which manage excess oil revenues or foreign exchange reserves, the INA's business model seeks to attract foreign co-investors to help fund economic development. The United Arab Emirates pledged to invest US\$10 billion in the fund after its launch in

February 2021, and global agencies such as the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) have also expressed interest. The INA has also formed a US\$3.75 billion toll road fund with Canada's Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ), APG Asset Management (APG) and a unit of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) last year.

G. Other

Southeast Asia's green recovery must stress links between environment and public health

—Purple Romero, *Asia Sentinel*, 13 July 2022

Reducing risks to biodiversity is crucial to reducing the odds of another pandemic. The Manila-based Asian Development Bank is seeking to address the risks of another pandemic through a green Covid-19 recovery plan complementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF). The ADB report said pandemic impacts in Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar and the Philippines show that Covid-19 recovery packages must include assessments of impacts on the environment that are integrated into economic plans and regulations. "To ensure that the green recovery process from the pandemic goes beyond injecting temporary green investments and builds in permanent shift toward environmentally resilient pathways, "green" objectives such as climate mitigation and adaptation and safeguarding against biodiversity loss will need to be mainstreamed into all policies beyond Covid-19 response measures," it said. "Biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and negative health outcomes share many common drivers," wrote Liz Willets in the GBF draft, including pollution, climate change, harmful use of pesticides and antimicrobials, and unsustainable food production practices.

Report: Asian Development Bank, *Implementing a Green Recovery in Southeast Asia*, 6 July 2022, Manila, doi.org/10.22617/TCS220180

I. President Widodo visits Kiev and Moscow for talks with Zelensky and Putin

Indonesia's Joko Widodo blazes a trail for Asian peace-making

—Michael Vatikiotis, *Nikkei Asia*, 6 July 2022

Buffeted by escalating US-China tensions and the geopolitical fallout from the Ukraine War, Asia urgently needs to engage in more active diplomacy to protect regional strategic stability. The region has traditionally looked askance at intervening in military conflicts while the US and Europe do not place much faith in Asian peace-making that could detract from Western stewardship of the rules-based global order. China and the US are exerting pressure on smaller states in the region to choose sides in their contest for global hegemony, while fallout from the war in Ukraine is generating a new global arms race. Reinforcing and protecting strategic stability requires leadership and commitment, which is why Joko Widodo's Russia-Ukraine shuttle diplomacy is significant even if it does not have a significant impact on ending the war. Now Widodo should travel to Beijing and make good on China's quiet offers to help mediate an end to the war in Ukraine if others will join. Indonesia could support UN efforts to mediate a solution to unlocking grain supplies from Ukraine by refusing to accept direct supplies from Russia.

Michael Vatikiotis is senior adviser at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and author of "Lives Between The Lines: A Journey in Search of the Lost Levant."

Widodo wades into Russia-Ukraine war mire

—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 1 July 2022

For all the rhetoric, the underlying reason for Indonesian Joko Widodo's venture into world diplomacy was more about trying to save the G20 summit in Bali in November and address a growing world food crisis than any mission to try and end the war in Ukraine. While nothing of substance came of Widodo's two back-to-back meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, pulling off a peace-making miracle was hardly on the cards as the war rages into its fifth month. The president has shown little interest in foreign policy before now, but his efforts to salvage the G20 has

seen Indonesia forced into playing a more constructive role on the world stage rather than acting as a mere bystander, and Widodo may ultimately be able claim at least some credit for helping push a UN-brokered effort to reopen a trade corridor through the Black Sea, currently sealed off by Russian navy vessels and Ukrainian defensive mines. Widodo has a stake in freeing up wheat shipments. The longer the war drags on, the greater the danger that a flour shortage will compel local firms to raise the politically-sensitive price of instant noodles. 195

[US, China top diplomats voice cautious hope in rare talks at G20 ministers' gathering](#)

—AFP via *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

US Secretary of State Antony Blinkin and Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi voiced guarded hope of preventing tensions from spiralling out of control as they held rare talks on the sidelines of the Group of 20 ministers' meeting in Bali. "In a relationship as complex and consequential as the one between the United States and China, there is a lot to talk about," Blinkin said. Wang noted that Chinese president Xi Jinping believes in cooperation as well as "mutual respect" between the world's two largest economic powers and that there needed to be "normal exchanges" between them. "We do need to work together to ensure that this relationship will continue to move forward along the right track," Wang said. Daniel Kritenbrink, the top US diplomat for East Asia, said earlier that Blinkin will seek "guardrails" and do "everything possible to ensure that we prevent any miscalculation that could inadvertently lead to conflict". Blinkin and Wang are expected to prepare for virtual talks in the coming weeks between Xi and President Joe Biden. 172

[Ukraine War discussed at almost all bilateral meetings at G20 ministers' meeting](#)

—Reuters via *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi, chair of the Group of 20 (G20) gathering, praised her counterparts for attending the meeting in Bali in person amid global tensions over the impacts of the Ukraine war, decisions she said should not be taken lightly. Retno said food and energy security and reintegration of Ukraine and Russia's grain and fertilizer into supply chains was critical. US Secretary of State told G20 foreign ministers that if the grouping is to remain relevant, they must hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine and stressed the need to move a global food plan forward, adding that Russia was seeking to undermine multilateral institutions. A Western official said the value of the meeting had been to demonstrate to Russia how widespread the consensus is on the need to make progress on the grain issue. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov left the room after delivering his remarks and was not present for most of the afternoon session, observers aid.

[Blinkin tells Russia at G20 talks to "let the grain out" of Ukraine](#)

—AFP via *The Jakarta Post*, 8 July 2022

US Secretary of State Antony Blinkin demanded Russia allow grain shipments out of war-battered Ukraine during closed-door G20 talks in Bali on 8 July. "To our Russian colleagues: Ukraine is not your country. Its grain is not your grain. Why are you blocking the ports? You should let the grain out," said Blinkin, according to a Western official present. Blinkin has refused to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov but addressed Russia during the talks and laid out US financial assistance to ease global food shortages triggered by the war in Ukraine, a major source of global grain and corn exports.

[G20 FMM offers outlet to relieve tensions over Ukraine war](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil and Yvette Tanamal, *The Jakarta Post*, 9 July 2022

Indonesia urged foreign ministers from the Group of 20 (G20) nations to help end the war in Ukraine during the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) in Bali, Indonesia. "It is our responsibility to end the war sooner rather than later and settle our differences at the negotiating table, not [on] the battlefield," Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi said in her opening speech. The G20 FMM was overshadowed by the assassination of former Japanese prime minister Shinto Abe and the resignation of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was heckled as he shook hands with Retno on arrival at the venue. Lavrov later told reporters that delegates from Western countries "strayed almost

immediately, as soon as they took the floor, to the frenzied criticism of the Russian Federation in connection with the situation in Ukraine". Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, who addressed the forum by video link, delivered a seething rebuke of Russia for "playing hunger games". A Russian naval blockade of Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea has stopped grain shipments from the world's fourth largest exporter of wheat and corn, raising the spectre of food shortages and hunger in low-income and developing countries.

[Looking at the longer game, G20 FMM signals change in direction](#)

—M. Taufiqurrahman, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 July 2022

In the lead-up to the Group of 20 Foreign Minister's Meeting (G20 FMM) questions were raised whether that or any forum could find a solution to the war in Ukraine, but no single forum or summit can ease geopolitical tensions built up over decades. The fact that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov walked out of the meeting while the forum decided not to issue a concluding statement supported the charge that the G20 FMM had been an unmitigated disaster. But events on the sidelines should leave us with a sense of optimism. Foremost was the five-hour meeting between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, which is likely to be followed by a meeting between US President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping either at the APEC meeting in Thailand in August or at the G20 Summit in Bali in November. It also helps that China engaged in dialogue on the sidelines of the G20 meeting with Australia and Canada.

[President Widodo plans visit to China later in July](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *The Jakarta Post*, 13 July 2022

Following the Group of 20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (G20 FMM), Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs and State Councillor Wang Yi remained in Bali to attend the second High-Level Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism meeting hosted by Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi and Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan. Minister Luhut indicated that he and Retno relayed a message to Beijing conveying Indonesia's desire to renew a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to coordinate Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) development strategy with China's infrastructure-focused Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). "Hopefully the MOU can be extended in time for President Widodo's visit to China at the end of July," Luhut messaged after he and Retno accompanied Wang to a meeting with President Widodo at Merdeka Palace on 11 July. Visits to Japan and South Korea are also reportedly on Widodo's itinerary. China was Indonesia's most important source of imports in 2021, accounting for US\$56.2 billion or 29% of total imports, nearly five times the value of imports from the US.

II. Three new provinces carved out of Papua

[Indonesia passes contentious law to create more provinces in Papua](#)

—Stanley Widiyanto and Kate Lamb, *Reuters*, 30 June 2022

Indonesia's parliament passed legislation to create three new provinces in its underdeveloped region of Papua, a move which critics fear could undermine the standing of the area's indigenous population and threaten special autonomy powers. The easternmost region of the country, currently split into Papua and West Papua provinces, will now be divided into five provinces with the addition of South Papua, Central Papua, and Highland Papua. Tito Karnavian, Minister of Home Affairs, said after the vote that the goal of the legislation was to "accelerate development and increase the welfare of the people in Papua, especially indigenous Papuans." But the plan sparked further protests in Papua, which has seen a low-level independence conflict since the disputed 1969 UN-supervised vote brought the region under Indonesian control. "By slicing and dicing Papua into smaller administrative units, Jakarta hopes to divide and conquer Papuan identity and resistance," said Veronica Koman, an Australia-based Indonesian human rights lawyer. Papuan critics have also charged that the legislation would lead to an influx of more non-indigenous Papuans into new government posts.

[House of Representatives passes law on new autonomous regions of Papua](#)

—Dewi Nurita, *Tempo English*, 30 June 2022

The Indonesian House of Representatives officially ratified three bills on new autonomous regions (RUU DOB) of Papua on 30 June for the new South Papua Province, Central Papua Province, and Papua Pegunungan Tengah (Central Highlands) province. However, ten organizations that are members of the Solidarity of Civil Organizations (SOS) for Papua rejected the government's plan, arguing that it would trigger social conflict between groups refusing and supporting the new autonomous regions. "The new autonomous regions have created a wide gap [dividing] Papuans into two groups. SOS said there have been human rights violations against groups rejecting the plan, for example during the demonstration which led to chaos and deaths during clashes with authorities in Yahukimo. The ten civil organizations are Papuan Legal Aid Institute (LBH Papua); JERAT Papua; KPKC Sinode GKI in Papua; YALI Papua; PAHAM Papua; University of Cendrawasih's Democracy, Human Rights, and Environment Group; Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of Sorong, WALHI Papua, Teraju Foundation, and Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat.

[Tribal leaders' support for special autonomy big hope for West Papua province](#)

—HA Kapisa, Rahmad Nasution, *I*, 12 June 2022

Support for implementation of Papua's special autonomy law and the development of new autonomous regions would become a big hope for West Papua Province's future, acting West Papua Province Governor Paulus Waterpauw said when receiving tens of native Papuan and non-native Papuan community leaders at his official residence in Manokwari. Waterpauw, who replaced Dominggus Mandacan as West Papua governor on 20 May, said he did not deny that a group of people still "reject" the special autonomy and development of new autonomous regions. However, Waterpauw stated that the "good things will be supported because the state must respond to the aspirations of our people who demand equal distribution of the benefits of development, and said that the coming of tribal leaders and those representing communities, women, youth, and the West Papua People's Assembly (MRPB) brought hope for the future of West Papua Province.

[House of Representatives systematically flouts democratic norms, critics say](#)

—Yerica Lai, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 July 2022

The House of Representatives (DPR) is under fire for what critics call a spree of undemocratic law making, including passage of at least two controversial laws and a lack of transparency. In June, the House moved quickly to pass a set of bills creating three new provinces in Papua after just nine days of deliberation. The bills' supporters said the legislation would spur development and create more civil service job opportunities for Papuans. But activists said the House pressed ahead without listening to the will of indigenous Papuans, a majority of whom fear the redistricting would undermine indigenous rights. The Constitutional Court has yet to rule on the legality of changes to the Papuan Special Autonomy Law, amended last year to allow the government to bypass the legal requirement to consult with the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) representing the region's indigenous peoples before creation of the new provinces. The MRP has challenged the constitutionality of the revised autonomy law at the Constitutional Court.