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**Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest**

2022 Issue 5 — 10 March 2022

*The****Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest****is a biweekly collection of brief summaries of English-language articles related to conservation, environment and sustainability that have appeared in print or online in Indonesian, regional or global media. We welcome all comments, suggestions, and corrections.*

***Starling Resources****is an Indonesia-based sustainability consulting and advisory practice designing solutions to demanding environmental, social and economic challenges at local, regional and global scales with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. We work with stakeholders across sectors to find practical solutions to demanding environmental, social and economic challenges, helps build resilient communities that work together to enhance and sustain ecosystem functions and natural habitats. Our structured frameworks and approaches systematically consider complexity across sectors to address critical gaps in enabling conditions across finance, policy, capacity, institutions and socio-cultural dynamics.*

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**A.**    **The Covid-19 Crisis in Indonesia**

[**The number of new Covid-19 infections decreasing**](https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/indonesia/)

—Covid 19 Tracker, *Reuters,*9 March 2022

**The average number of new Covid-19 infections reported daily in Indonesia has fallen to 28,070, 50% of the peak highest daily average reported on 20 February. In total, there have been 5,826,589 infections and 151,135 coronavirus-related deaths reported in the country since the pandemic began. Indonesia has administered 354,566,415 Covid vaccine doses so far, sufficient to have vaccinated 65.5% of the population with two doses.**

[**Indonesia expects daily number of new Covid-19 infections to fall below 5,000 in April**](https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-expects-daily-new-covid-19-cases-to-fall-below-5000-in-april-says-its-health-minister-budi)

**—Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, *The Straits Times,*3 March 2022**

**Indonesia expects daily new coronavirus cases to fall below 5,000 in April as two-thirds of its 34 provinces have seen a decline in cases, Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin said on 2 March.  Charts issued by the Ministry of Health showed the Omicron wave peaked at 64,718 cases in late February before the count consistently declined. During the peak of the Delta wave in mid-July, 56,757 new cases were recorded. Southeast Asia’s most populous country, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, has been praised for accelerating its vaccine roll-out despite this geographic challenge.  Indonesia has fully vaccinated 69% of its eligible population, while 92% had received their first dose as of 2 March, placing Indonesia among the world’s top five countries with the highest number of vaccinations.**

[**Government ends quarantine requirement for foreign visitors to Bali**](https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-malaysia-ease-covid-curbs-foreign-visitors-further-2022-03-05/)

**—Nina A. Loasana, *The Jakarta Post,*8 March 2022**

**Indonesia waived the mandatory quarantine requirement for international visitors coming to Bali as of 7 March. The measure was described as a quarantine-free travel trial for international visitors who are fully vaccinated or have received a booster. International visitors must book at least a four-night stay at a local hotel and take at least three PCR tests: one before departure, one on arrival, and another on the third day of their visit. “The Covid-19 positivity rate among foreigners visiting Bali is very low, at 0.47% for the entry test and 1.0% for the exit test,” according to Kurleni Ukar, Deputy for Strategic Policy at the tourism ministry. New daily cases of Covid-19 in Bali have steadily declined since the peak of the Omicron surge on 8 February when 2,425 new cases were recorded. The province reported 152 new cases on 7 March. The government has also resumed its former visa-on-arrival policy for travellers from 23 countries, including the US, New Zealand, the UK, Italy, Germany, and all Southeast Asian countries.**

[**Two years into the pandemic, is the end in sight?**](https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/03/d92d77b91585-urgent-pm-kishida-to-attend-virtual-quad-summit-thurs-night.html)

**—Julien Dury (via AFP), *The Jakarta Post,*3 March 2022**

**The WHO says that the “acute phase” of the pandemic could end by the middle of 2022—if around 70% of the world is vaccinated. But there is no guarantee that future new Covid variants will be less deadly than Omicron. Researchers are calling for a “universal coronavirus vaccine” that would protect not just against Covid variants but also against future coronaviruses that could spread from animals and trigger another pandemic. In the meantime, WHO emphasizes that the best way to end this acute phase is for rich countries to share their doses rather than boost their populations again.  As of late February, only 13% of Africans had been vaccinated, according to the WHO—far below the 70% target that would need to be attained by midyear.**

**B.**     **Marine & Fisheries**

[**Indonesian 130 GT fishing boat found with banned trawl net highlights enforcement challenges**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/indonesian-fishing-boat-found-with-banned-trawl-net-highlights-enforcement-challenges/)

**—Yogi Eka Sahputra, *Mongabay,*9 March 2022**

**A fishing vessel seized for a zoning violation carried a destructive type of trawl net that is banned nationwide. Local maritime police seized the Indonesian-flagged KM Sinar Samudra on 18 February after it was found fishing within 13 nautical miles (nm) off the Natuna Islands. At 130 Gross Tonnage (GT), the vessel is required to operate at least 30 nm offshore under a fisheries law provision for vessels larger than 30 GT. An inspection found two types of fishing gear on board, one of which was a *cantrang*, a type of trawl net banned in 2015 for its destructive nature. The restriction was revoked in November 2020, but reimposed nationwide to protect the country’s marine resources. The captain claimed the *cantrang*net had never been deployed, but local fishers claim the KM Sinar Samudra was using the illegal net to catch fish. “They would show [port inspectors] the other net, but at sea they actually use the *cantrang*, said Hendri, chair of the Natuna Fishers Alliance.**

[**Four new MPAs in Maluku boost Indonesia’s bid to protect its seas**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/02/four-new-mpas-in-maluku-boost-indonesias-bid-to-protect-its-seas/?mc_cid=d366e8af86&mc_eid=5f2adfdd90)

**—Luh De Suriyani, Melati Kaye, *Mongabay,*28 February 2022**

**Indonesia’s Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries designated four new marine protected areas (MPAs) in the country’s east in January. The new conservation areas are in the waters surrounding the islands of Tanimbar, Damer, Mdona Hiera, Lakor, Moa, Letti and the Romang in Maluku province. The newly designated MPAs are home to threatened and protected species, including the green turtle, the scalloped hammerhead shark, and an abundance of coral reefs and other marine ecosystems. The four new MPAs, with a total area of 12,559 km2, bring Indonesia two-thirds of the way toward its goal of ensuring “effective management” of 10% of national waters by 2030. The Fisheries Management Area WPPP-RI 715 containing Maluku contains the highest percentage of conserved waters. Fishing is still allowed in 90-95% of Maluku’s MPA waters, but 4-9% of each MPA is set aside as a “core zone” or preserve where fishing and tourism are not allowed.**

[**Can we save coral reefs?**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/can-we-save-coral-reefs-problem-solved/)

**—Mike DiGirolamo, *Mongabay,*4 March 2022**

**Since the 1950s, the world has lost half its coral reef ecosystems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that with 1.5° C of warming above pre-industrial levels we could lose up to 90% of the world’s remaining coral reefs. This amount of warming could happen in as little as six years. Saving coral reefs will require swiftly addressing the three largest sources of impacts: land-based pollution, over-fishing, and most importantly, climate change. Land-based pollution, mostly in the form of human effluent and agrochemicals, affects roughly two-thirds of the world’s reefs. Overfishing remains a major threat because many reefs depend on fish and other marine creatures to survive. Reef restoration technologies and practices such as breeding and replanting are important, but they should not be viewed as a silver bullet to coral reef degradation. As things stand, we’re currently on track to reach even higher temperatures than 2.0° C without more aggressive action.**

**Paper: Hein, M. Y. et al, “**[**Perspectives on the use of coral reef restoration as a strategy to support and improve reef ecosystem services**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.618303/full)**”, *Frontiers in Marine Science*8 (2021).**

**Paper: Dixon, A. M. et al, “**[**Future loss of local-scale thermal refugia in coral reef ecosystems**](https://journals.plos.org/climate/article?id=10.1371/journal.pclm.0000004)**”, *PLOS Climate* 1(2) (2022)**

[**Climate change set to upend global fishery agreements, study warns**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/climate-change-set-to-upend-global-fishery-agreements-study-warns/)

**—Spoorthy Raman, *Mongabay,*9 March 2022**

**Warming of the world’s oceans by climate change is pushing fish away from their current habitats and toward the poles. By 2030, one quarter of global shared fish stocks could move, with 75% of countries seeing at least one fish species move out of their exclusive economic zone (EEZ). About half the world’s commercial fish in shared waters will move from their known habitats by the end of the century, the study by a team led by Juliano Palacios-Abrantes warns, which could lead to international disputes in EEZ, the areas within 200 nautical miles (nm) of a country’s coast where it has exclusive rights to fish. “One bad thing is that fish leaving the tropics are not being replaced,” said Daniel Pauly, co-author of a ground-breaking 2009 study that first reported the poleward movement of fish. Palacios-Abrantes’ study analysed the shifting ranges of 633 fish species in shared waters between 2005 and 2014 to project changes in catch proportions within EEZs for each year from 1951 and 2100.**

**Paper:  Juliano Palacios-Abrantes et al, “**[**Timing and magnitude of climate-driven range shifts in transboundary fish stocks challenge their management**](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.16058)**”, *Global Change Biology*28:7, (April 2022).**

[**Policy transformation in fisheries sector starting this year**](https://en.antaranews.com/news/217841/policy-transformation-in-fisheries-sector-starting-soon-this-year)

**—Katriana, *Antaranews, 2 March 2022***

**Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, affirmed that policy transformation in the Indonesian fishery sector would start soon this year, with a focus on measurable fishing policies. While addressing participants at the 9th annual World Ocean Summit international forum on March 1, Minister Trenggono stated that his ministry had introduced a measured fishing policy, one of three main phases in the transformation of fisheries governance in Indonesia. In this phase, quota-based fishing policies should be followed by efforts to restructure the fishers’ economy. The next phase will be accelerating growth focused on the blue economy as well as strengthening that growth. Through these phases, the government has targeted Indonesia becoming a sustainable marine economy-based country recognized by the world. According to Trenggono, Indonesia, as a member of the Ocean Panel, makes the blue economy principle one of the main bases for realizing a sustainable marine economy and improving the people's welfare.**

**C.**     **Forests & Land Use**

[**Indonesia sticks with biodiesel policy even as palm oil prices soar**](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-07/indonesia-sticks-with-biodiesel-policy-even-as-palm-oil-soars)

**—Eko Listiyorini, *Bloomberg,*7 March 2022**

**Indonesia, the world’s largest palm oil producer and exporter, will push ahead with its ambitioius biodiesel program even as prices of the tropical oil have soared, which could increase the costs of producing biofuel. The B30 program, stipulating that fossil fuels must be blended with 30% palm oil, is running as planned, said Dadan Kusdiana, Director General of New and Renewable Energy at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. The mandate is intended to soak up bulging supply in the top grower, but palm oil’s premium over gasoil has ballooned to record levels, most recently driven by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine that has tightened global cooking oil supplies. Efforts to increase the palm oil content of biodiesel to 40% by 2021 were put on hold due to cheaper fuel costs and record high palm oil prices. Raising the blend rate would require the government to provide a larger incentive through the money it collects from palm oil export levies.**

[**India asks Indonesia to raise palm oil supply as prices spike**](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/india-asks-indonesia-raise-palm-oil-supply-prices-spike-sources-2022-03-02/)

**—Rajendra Jadhav, Krishna N. Das, Aftab Ahmed, *Reuters*, 2 March 2022**

**India has asked Indonesia to increase palm oil shipments to the country to compensate for the loss of sunflower oil supplies from the Black Sea region due to the Ukraine crisis, government and industry sources in India said. India, the world’s biggest buyer of edible oil, relies on top palm oil producer Indonesia for more than half of its imports of the tropical oil, but is worried by restrictions Jakarta put on exports in January to calm local cooking oil prices. Limited palm oil supplies followed by the halt in exports of sunflower oil from the Black Sea region have sent global vegetable oil prices soaring to record highs. In India, the landed cost of imported crude palm oil has increased 38% since Indonesia announced export curbs on 27 January. The cost of soy oil, the second most consumed oil in India after palm oil, surged 29% this year, and sunflower oil suppliers have stopped shipping since Russia invaded Ukraine.**

[**Opinion:  Certified sustainable palm oil:  How the industry can decarbonize**](https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2022/02/24/certified-sustainable-palm-oil-how-the-industry-can-decarbonize.html)

**—Nicholas Hurt, *The Jakarta Post, 25 February 2022***

**The world’s population is expected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050. To meet future vegetable oil demand, the area planted to oil palm will have to double from 14.6 million hectares in 2019 to 31.1 million hectares by 2050. However, suitable current climatic zones for oil palm cultivation will shrink 22% by 2050. This could lead to the migration of oil palm cultivation to replacement lands, triggering deforestation and biodiversity loss in new ecosystems. This is a stern warning—decarbonize now! Palm oil is the most efficient vegetable oil crop on the market, meeting 40% of global demand yet only occupying 6% of the land used to produce vegetable oils. Replacement edible oils need between 4 to 10 times more land to produce the same yield. Replacing palm oil would lead to more deforestation and biodiversity loss—it is not a viable solution; establishing sustainable life cycles is. Comprehensive and inclusive certification schemes, such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), mitigate environmental and social issues and ensure that demand is met sustainably.   
*The writer is global head of stakeholder engagement at the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)***

[**Indonesian program’s promise of food security backfires for local farmers**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/indonesian-programs-promise-of-food-security-backfires-for-local-farmers/)

**—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay,*8 March 2022**

**The establishment of large-scale agriculture under the government’s “food estate” program, billed as improving domestic food availability, is harming local farmers in Sumatra. The program was announced by President Joko Widodo in 2020 to boost domestic food production and reduce reliance on crop imports. But farmers in North Sumatra—one region where the massive farms have been introduced—saw their rice harvests decline by up to 80% as they were told to cultivate other crops under the program, a study said. In one village, harvests from those other crops, including potatoes, shallots, and garlic, were not enough to compensate for their loss of rice harvest because they fetched lower prices. As a result, up to 30% of the households now lack enough rice to feed them for an entire year. In addition, time to work on paddy maintenance such as weeding and clearing bushes was reduced, said one farmer, and as a result the weeds have grown thick and the amount of rats is uncontrollable.**

[**Forest clearing for crop program in Papua could unleash massive carbon emissions**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/forest-clearing-for-crop-program-in-papua-may-unleash-massive-emissions/?mc_cid=d366e8af86&mc_eid=5f2adfdd90)

**—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongagay*, 2 March 2022**

**An area of 2.7 million ha—about the size of Belgium—will be cleared in three regencies in Indonesia’s Papua province (Merauke, Mappi, and Boven Digoel—to grow food crops under a government program. A new analysis by Pusaka, an NGO, found that the government’s food estate program, aimed at boosting domestic production of rice and other staple food crops, would lead to the clearing of vast tracts of forest, resulting in the release of 616 million metric tons of greenhouse gases—about one third of Indonesia total annual emissions, or the same as Australia’s. A government official says the program will try to minimize the area of forest required for the plantations and will prioritize the use of already degraded areas. “If we’re looking at the size of the impacted forest, considering that the total forest area in Papua is around 32 million ha, losing 2.7 million ha is huge,” said Arief Wijaya, senior manager for climate and forests at the World Resources Institute (WRI) Indonesia, a think tank.**

[**Palm oil and pulpwood the usual suspects as deforestation in Papua persists**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/palm-oil-and-pulpwood-the-usual-suspects-as-papua-deforestation-persists/)

**—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay,*4 March 2022**

**Indonesia’s Papua region forest area the size of Manhattan last year, mostly attributed to palm oil and paper pulpwood companies, a report said. Satellite imagery and on-the-ground investigations recorded 5,810 ha of deforestation in the two provinces, said Natalia Yelwin, a researcher for the environmental NGO Pusaka. The concession with the largest deforested area is PT Plasma Nutfah Marind Papua (PNMP), a subsidiary of South Korean paper manufacturer Moorim, which cleared 1,789 ha of lowland forest, swamp and peat in Merauke district Papua province. Next was PT Medco Papua Hijau Selaras (MPHS), an oil palm grower. MPHS cleared 1,038 ha of forest in Manokwari District, West Papua province. Third was PT Perkebunan Boven Digoel Sejahtera (PBDS), a palm oil company with 434 ha cleared in Papua province’s Boven Digoel district. Both MPHS and PBDS previously made commitments not to deforest or clear peatlands. Els Tieneke Rieke Katmo, University of Papua, said this reveals a gap between the image the Indonesian government projects and what it allows to take place.**

[**Banning high-deforestation palm oil has limited impact on saving forests**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/banning-high-deforestation-palm-oil-has-limited-impact-on-saving-forests-study/?mc_cid=d366e8af86&mc_eid=5f2adfdd90)

**—Loren Bell, *Mongabay,*3 March 2022**

**Import bans on palm oil produced through deforestation haven’t had as strong an effect in preventing forest loss as might be expected, according to a new study that looked at what impact restrictions in Europe on imports of high-deforestation palm oil from Indonesia would have had from 2000 -2015. The study found these restrictions would have reduced deforestation by just 1.6% per year, and emissions by 1.91% per year compared to what actually occurred*.***

**Paper:  Jonah Busch, et al, “**[**Effects of demand-side restrictions on high-deforestation palm oil in Europe on deforestation and emissions in Indonesia**](https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ac435e)**”, *Environmental Research Letters*17:1 (5 January 2022)**

**D.**    **Energy, Mining and Climate Change**

[**Indonesian coal miners may struggle to meet 2022 output target**](https://www.reuters.com/article/indonesia-coal/update-1-indonesia-coal-miners-may-struggle-to-meet-2022-output-target-association-idUSL2N2VA088)

**—Bernadette Christina Munthe, Fransiska Nangoy, *Reuters,*7 March 2022**

**Indonesian miners may struggle to reach a 2022 output target of 663 million tonnes because of export restrictions, Hendra Sinadia, Executive Director of the Indonesia Coal Miners Association. The government of the world’s biggest exporter of thermal coal shocked global energy markets when it halted overseas shipments of coal in January order to shore up domestic supply for power stations.  Exports have since resumed, but mining companies’ domestic sales are now monitored monthly and only those fulfilling local quotas are allowed to export. Meanwhile, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has sent demand and prices for coal soaring, leading buyers to seek alternative sources of supply from Indonesia and Australia. Buyers and even embassies of European countries have tried to facilitate additional imports from Indonesia, but Indonesia’s 2022 output target, up from 614 million tonnes, was too optimistic to begin with, Hendra said. Wetter than usual weather driven by the La Niña phenomenon during the first half of this year may be another brake on production.**

[**Opinion: Civil opposition in Wadas Village, Central Java**](https://magz.tempo.co/read/opinion/38949/opinion-opposition-from-wadas-symbolizes-peoples-rejection-of-jokowis-developmentalism)

**—Tempo, 28 February 2022**

**President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s style of developmentalism ignores the people and the environment. The Bener Dam in Purworejo, Central Java, will become its monument. The plan to mine andesite for the dam at Wadas village epitomizes the development vision of the Jokowi administration with its minimum public participation. Jokowi’s Job Creation Law made it possible to prioritize national strategic projects even if they do not accord with environmental capacity. The project is going ahead after manipulating the rules and pressuring those opposed to it. Oppressive measures by police officers went ahead under the guise of surveying the land. This is a concrete example of Jokowi developmentalism: projects are measured only by their contribution to the economy without any concern for whether the process brings suffering to the people. This is in line with New Order strongman Suharto who also used repression to sideline opposition when he built the Kedungombo reservoir in Central Java in 1989.**

[**BMKG:  Indonesia is experiencing impacts of climate change.**](https://en.antaranews.com/news/218005/indonesia-experiencing-impact-of-climate-change-bmkg)

**—Prisca T, Azis Kurmala, *Antaranews,*3 March 2022**

**The Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency (BMKG) has warned that climate change is affecting Indonesia, as evidenced by the melting of ice in Puncak Jaya, Papua, due to rising temperatures and extreme weather. It is predicted that the glaciers on top of the highest mountains in Indonesia will disappear in the next few years. The impact of climate change can also be seen in the increase in the frequency of extreme rainfall in many areas in the country causing floods and other destruction.  Climate change would not only result in excessive rain but could also potentially cause extreme droughts. The BMKG is  involved in strengthening climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, including in agricultural activities and the health sector. Medrilzam, the Environmental director of the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), had earlier cautioned that Indonesia could incur losses to the tune of nearly Rp544 trillion by 2024 due to climate change.**

**E.**     **Pollution and Waste Management**

[**Interview: For Reciki, even low value trash means business**](https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2022/03/04/for-reciki-even-low-value-trash-means-business.html)

**—Eisya A. Elokari *The Jakarta Post,*4 March 2022**

**While new plastic recycling firms have emerged in the last five years, those dealing with low-value waste, such as plastic bags, remain scarce. Reciki is an Indonesian waste management service using a zero-waste-to-landfill approach, meaning it tries to process all kinds of waste so that almost no trash goes to the final disposal site (TPA). Today it operates two recycling facilities in Lamongan, East Java and Jimbaran, Bali. The Lamongan facility collects waste from around 15,000 households and 200 commercial and industrial spaces, which amounts to 60 tons of waste daily. The Jimbaran facility has a capacity of 120 tons, and we collect trash from some 40,000 households and hotels around South Kuta. Reciki builds on existing waste management chains, meaning we collaborate with waste banks and communities so they can send their unprocessed waste to us. The company prioritizes employing scavengers from TPAs, give them protective gear, and pay them according to the regional minimum wage, including health care (BPJS *Kesehatan*) and social security (BPJS *Ketenagakerjaan*) coverage.**

[**Microplastics plus organic pollutants equals ten times the toxicity**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/microplastics-plus-organic-pollutants-equals-10-times-the-toxicity-study-finds/)

**—Elizabeth Claire Alberts, *Mongabay,*4 March 2022**

**A new study has found that small particles of plastic less than 5mm in size (microplastics) and trace organic compounds (TrOCs) found in pesticides, pharmaceuticals, and personal care products which may not be overly toxic to humans when encountered separately can result in the toxicity of the plastic increasing by a factor of 10 when they mingle in aquatic environments, including effluents from wastewater treatment plants. Since most microplastics in our environment have gone through some kind of weathering process, this means the microplastics polluting our world could harbour unsafe levels of toxins, posing a threat to human health if these plastics are ingested through contaminated food or water. While there are an estimated 350,000 different types of artificial chemicals circulating through global markets, plastic has become one of the most pervasive and damaging pollutants in our world. It’s currently estimated that we produce more than 300 million metric tons of plastic each year, nearly the weight of the entire human population.**

**Paper: Andrey Ethan Rubin, Ines Zucker, “**[**Interactions of microplastics and organic compounds in aquatic environments: A case study of augmented joint toxicity**](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0045653521036869)**”, *Chemosphere*289 (February 2022)**

[**Australia, Indonesia joint forces to tackle ocean pollution**](https://www.mangalorean.com/australia-indonesia-join-forces-to-tackle-ocean-pollution/)

**—Ians, *Mangalorean,*8 March 2022**

**Australia’s national science agency and the federal government have formed a partnership with Indonesia to address plastic pollution in the Indo-Pacific region. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) has announced that together with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), it has established the Plastics Innovation Hub Indonesia with $950,745 in funding, Xinhua news agency reported. The hub will bring researchers, investors and the private and public sectors together to collaborate on solutions to plastic waste in waterways in Indonesia and the wider region. Larry Marshall, chief executive of the CSIRO, said that a collaborative approach to plastic pollution could provide environmental and economic benefits. According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), there are between 75 million and 199 million tons of plastic currently in the world’s oceans. CSIRO estimates that there are 5 billion to 10 billion individual pieces of plastic on coastlines in the Indo-Pacific alone.**

**F.**     **Conservation and Protected Areas**

[**Loss of Sumatran rhinos leaves several plant species without a seed disperser**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/loss-of-sumatran-rhinos-leaves-several-plant-species-without-a-seed-disperser/?mc_cid=d366e8af86&mc_eid=5f2adfdd90)

**—Anna Nordseth, *Mongabay,*2 March 2022**

**The critically endangered Sumatran rhino*(Dicerorhinus sumatrensis)*plays a unique role in dispersing seeds in Southeast Asian forests, and its disappearance from these landscapes is already affecting the composition of the forests. Many plant species in this region evolved alongside large animals like rhinos and elephants, developing large, fleshy fruits to entice megafauna to eat and disperse the seeds. A new study shows that Sumatran rhinos play this key role for an estimated 79 plant species. Megafauna can swallow large fruits whole, carrying seeds in their guts for miles before depositing them in a nutrient-rich dung pile. On the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Borneo, fewer than 80 Sumatran rhinos are all that’s left of this critically endangered species. Despite overlap in dispersal with Sumatran elephants (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*), the study found that several plant species have no other known seed dispersers than rhinos. “I suspect … rhinos are much more important for the plants they disperse than the fruits of these plants are for rhinos,” study co-author Ahimsa Campos-Arceiz said.**

**Paper: Kim R. McConkey et al, “**[**Lost mutualisms: Seed Dispersals by Sumatran rhinos, the world’s most threatened megafauna**](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/btp.13056)**”, *Biotropica*(20 January 2022)**

[**Indonesia tries a new approach in a national park plagued by encroachers**](https://news.mongabay.com/2022/03/in-a-national-park-plagued-by-encroachers-indonesia-tries-a-new-approach/)

**—Tongo Simangunsong, *Mongabay,*9 March 2022**

**For years, people have settled illegally in national parks around Indonesia, clearing the land and farming it in the hope that they will be granted legal title. The government’s default approach has been to evict encroachers, but a new government program adopts a more collaborative approach. Under the conservation partnership program, settlers acknowledge that they cannot lay claim to the land or secure title and agree to work to restore damaged ecosystems. Since its establishment in 2018, the program has grown to encompasses nearly 177,000 ha of land at 69 sites, including areas in some of the country’s best-known national parks such as Tesso Nilo in Sumatra, East Kutai on the island of Borneo, Lore Lindu on the island of Sulawesi, and Halimun Salak on Java. “Encroachment caused by poverty, lack of agricultural land and land less farmers must be resolved not through law enforcement but through the provision of management access,” said Wirato, Director General of Conservation for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.**

[**Papua at the Crossroads:  A plea for systematic conservation planning in one of the largest remaining areas of tropical rainforest**](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2022.763131/full)

**—Christopher Parsch et al, *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change*, 11 February 2022**

**Indonesian New Guinea (Tanah Papua), one of the world’s last wilderness areas with extensive tracts of pristine and highly diverse tropical rainforests, has reached a crossroads between accelerating environmental degradation and sustainable development policies entailing landscape-scale conservation targets. Lowland ecoregions are less protected than mountainous regions, with half of the western and southern lowlands designated for plantations and other land-use concessions.  Under this threat, the political motivation in Tanah Papua toward conservation- and culture-centred land management provides a window of opportunity for scientifically-guided, proactive conservation planning that integrates sustainable development for the benefit of indigenous communities. The Manokwari Declaration, signed by the governors of Papua and West Papua provinces in 2018, aims to protect > 70% of Tanah Papua’s land area and ensure sustainable development for the benefit of indigenous communities. Conservation planning in the region will require spatial conservation planning approaches that balance the need to prioritize the protection of the region’s biodiversity with determination of how best to manage within and outside of these conservation areas.**

**Paper: Rodrigo Cámara-Leret, Charlie Heatubun et al, “**[**The Manokwari Declaration: Challenges ahead in conserving 70% of Tanah Papua’s forests**](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332766880_The_Manokwari_Declaration_Challenges_ahead_in_conserving_70_of_Tanah_Papua%27s_forests)**”, *Forests and Society*3:1 (April 2019).**

**G.**    **Banking and Finance**

[**Voluntary carbon trading becomes more competitive**](https://www.qcintel.com/article/voluntary-carbon-trading-becomes-more-competitive-cargill-4353.html)

**—*Quantum Commodity Intelligence,*24 February 2022**

**The trading of voluntary carbon offsets has become more competitive as more participants have entered the market in recent months, according to Iain Mackay, global head of carbon offset trading at Cargill, one of the world’s biggest agricultural traders. It now holds one of the world’s largest carbon offset trading books with a focus on nature-based credits, Mackay said. Trading has become more active as more companies have set up trading desks and new intermediaries spring up. “From a trader’s perspective, it’s different world. When we started it was very much environmental consultants who were drivers of this market, [but] that has started to turn a bit. [Now] you’ve got hedge funds getting involved and beginning to take stakes in project developers. Developers now have plenty of choice for selling their credits,” he added. “Lower quality credits could suffer following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, [but] it’s hard to find the best quality credits. The market is super short for reforestation and afforestation credits.**

[**Advancing Indonesia’s carbon market agenda**](https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2022/03/06/advancing-indonesias-carbon-market-agenda.html)

**—Alexander Jayasuria, Rasi Tamadhika Fajar Ramadhan, *The Jakarta Post,*7 March 2022**

**Mitigating carbon emissions is an urgent need, but how can Indonesia reconcile spending billions more on costly low-carbon technologies? The Ministry of Finance says Indonesia would need to spend Rp 3.77 quadrillion (US$269 billion) to follow its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) commitment pathway, implying an annual budget requirement would be Rp 200-300 trillion, or almost 11% of the entire 2022 budget. The government’s Long-Term Strategy for Low Carbon and Climate Resilience 2050 and the Green Recovery Roadmap 2021-2024 are ambitious, but robust government support will not be enough. Carbon markets may be key to ensuring continued international and private sector investment. A cap-and-trade market is essentially a market for pollution permits, while carbon offsets are used by governments and companies to invest in carbon-negative or climate-positive projects to offset their operational emissions. The current global supply of carbon offsets is insufficient to meet growing demand, which signals an opportunity for Indonesia to develop its carbon offset resources.**

[**Paving the way toward global tourism recovery**](https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2022/03/06/paving-the-way-to-global-tourism-recovery.html)

**—Sandiago Salahudin Uno, *The Jakarta Post,*7 March 2021**

**The global collapse of the travel and tourism sector in the Covid-19 pandemic was responsible for US$1.3 trillion in export revenues, US$2 trillion in direct tourism gross domestic product, and more than 100 million jobs and 40% of global trade in 2020 alone. As the main driver of socioeconomic development and job creation, the sector played a pivotal pre-pandemic role in poverty eradication and inequality workforce. The pandemic began to show signs of receding last year following the global rollout of vaccines and easing of mobility curbs. International tourism might not bounce back to pre-pandemic levels before 2023 or 2024, but it is time for world leaders to draw up a common strategy to rebuild the tourism and travel sector post-pandemic. Indonesia has taken steps to promote more resilient and sustainable tourism concepts focusing on empowering tourism-dependent local people, communities, and micro-, small-, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs). The government offers fiscal incentives in the form of tourism grants (tax refunds) for hotels and restaurants.**

***The author is the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia***

**H.**    **Special section on Indonesia & Russia-Ukraine War**

[**Indonesia’s Jokowi calls for cease-fire in Russia-Ukraine War**](https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Indonesia-s-Jokowi-calls-for-cease-fire-in-Russia-Ukraine-war)

**—Shotaro Tani and Koya Jibiki, *Nikkei Asia,*9 March 2022**

**Indonesian President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo called for a cease-fire between Russia and Ukraine, saying continued dialogue rather than economic sanctions on Russia is the way to resolve the crisis. In an interview, Widodo said sovereignty and territorial integrity “must be respected by all parties.” Western leaders have imposed severe economic sanctions on Moscow, but the Indonesian president, who holds the presidency of the Group of 20 nations this year, said sanctions are not the best solution because “people and civilians will be the victims. Indonesia’s reluctance to criticize Russian actions outright stems from a decades-old policy of non-alliance. “Ukraine and Russia are friends of Indonesia,” he said. Jakarta’s prioritizing of economic growth is also a factor, one which has also influenced dealings with Beijing. Russia accounts for less than 1% of Indonesia’s visible trade, but it is a major source of arms, according to the Stockholm International Peace Institute, which estimated that 15.7% of Indonesian weaponry is Russia made.**

[**The impacts of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine on the global and Indonesian economy**](https://magz.tempo.co/read/market-pulse/38934/the-impacts-of-russias-agression-to-ukraine-on-the-global-and-indonesian-economy)

**—Yopie Hidayat, *Tempo,*28 February 2022**

**The rise in energy prices resulting from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine may be good  for Indonesia’s coal exporters, but Indonesia is a net importer of oil and derivatives, mainly fuel, about 1 million barrels per day. If prices remain around US$100 per barrel or higher, Pertamina could drown in massive losses until it is allowed to raise fuel prices in the domestic market. Long-chain reactions of rising prices for interconnected commodities ultimately drive inflation. The effects of Putin’s aggression, which seem so far away as to be imperceptible, are now slowly gnawing away at the main strength of Indonesia’s economy: low inflation. Low inflation allows Bank Indonesia (BI) to maintain low interest rates for longer periods, but if inflation rises in Indonesia, BI will have no room to resist. Creeping domestic inflation and the start of global and domestic rate hikes is a terrible combination that can bring negative sentiments not only to financial markets but to the whole of the Indonesian economy.**

[**The boons of war against the threat of interest hike**](https://magz.tempo.co/read/market-pulse/38958/the-boons-of-russia-ukraine-war-against-the-threat-of-interest-hike)

**—Yopie Hidayat, *Tempo,*7 March 2022**

**War brings tragedy and catastrophe to many, but soaring commodity prices triggered by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has bring extraordinary wealth to others, including Indonesian commodity tycoons who have made billions of dollars in windfall profits. The benchmark Newcastle coal price soared 46% to US$446 per tonne on 2 March as countries scramble to find alternatives to Russian coal. In 2021, 70% of EU thermal coal imports originated from Russia. Indonesia is the world’s largest exporter of thermal coal. Edible oil is another commodity whose price jump favoured Indonesia. Russia and Ukraine supplied 75% of the global market for sunflower oil until the war brought this chain to a halt, pushing up the prices of all four main edible oils (palm, soy, rapeseed, and sunflower). Palm oil prices were already sky-high even before the Ukraine crisis, triggering a cooking oil crisis in Indonesia, the world’s biggest palm oil producer. Since Russia invaded Ukraine, the price of Indonesian palm oil rose another 20%.**

[**Asean nations’ reluctance to censure Russia**](https://magz.tempo.co/read/international/38973/asean-nations-reluctance-to-censure-russia)

**—Iwan Kurniawan, *Tempo,*7 March 2022**

**Ukraine is trying to rally support from various nations and international organizations, but its efforts are being disrupted by parties believed to be connected to Russia, including an incident during a virtual press conference held by Vasyl Hamianin, the Ukraine ambassador to Indonesia, in which the messages inbox was bombarded with a series of “glory to Russia” messages in the Ukrainian language, after which one participant unmuted and replaced their profile picture with pornographic visuals.**

**In his tweet on 24 February, President Joko Widodo wrote “Stop the war. War brings misery to mankind and puts the whole world at risk.” Neither President Widodo nor the foreign Ministry statements directly condemned Russia, nor did either mention “Russia” by name. ASEAN member nations’ foreign ministers joint statements regarding the Ukrainian war on 26 February and 3 March. called for a cease-fire and dialogue toward peace, but there was no condemnation or the Russian invasion, nor was “Russia” mentioned  by name. Vietnam and Laos opted to abstain, but Philippines foreign Minister Teodoro Locsin, Jr. said his country “explicitly condemns the invasion of Ukraine.”  Only Singapore declared economic sanctions against Russia, an unprecedented step for an ASEAN country.**

**I.**      **Special section on Papua unrest**

[**Indonesia, UN at daggers drawn on Papua**](https://asiatimes.com/2022/03/indonesia-un-at-daggers-drawn-on-papua/)

**—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 8 March 2022**

**Coming in a heated exchange between the Indonesian government and UN rapporteurs over alleged human rights abuses, the 3 March rebel massacre of eight telecommunications technicians has underscored the growing complexity of the security situation in the eastern province of Papua.  What was once a bow-and-arrow insurgency has morphed into a genuine shooting conflict where security forces are dealing with roaming gangs of tribal gunmen using the decades-long independence struggle as cover for the pillaging of mountain villages.    
      It was the worst mass killing of civilians since December 2019 when assailants linked to the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), the armed wing of the Free Papua Movement (OPM) massacred 19 bridge workers on the Trans-Papua Highway in Yahukimo regency. Three months earlier, a small OPM unit penetrated the highland capital of Wamena, 100 km to the east, setting government buildings ablaze and killing at least 33 non-Papuan immigrants.    
      All this explains the strong government reaction to a 1 March statement by UN human rights rapporteurs condemning the police and military for “shocking human rights abuses over the past three years, including alleged child killings, disappearances, torture, and mass displacement of villagers.” In an unusually harsh response, Indonesia’s Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva accused the UN of taking a biased, “one-sided megaphone approach” to Papua, continuing what it said was a pattern of “unconstructive and baseless attacks” against the government.**

**Former attorney-general Marzuki Darusman and other neutral observers say the reality of the situation on the ground does not lend itself to sweeping generalizations, pointing to widely-varying instances of excessive violence across the Central Highlands that can’t be attributed solely to one side.**

**Analysts saw a similarity in the tenor of the UN statement with remarks made on February 25 by Papua Governor Lukas Enembe, who claimed an unidentified senior government official had been pressuring him not to talk about human rights cases. A three-man legal team set up by the governor, a member of the dominant Dani tribe and former district chief of Puncak Jaya, found there was substance to the allegations of abuse, although team leader Saor Siagian did not elaborate.**

**The UN statement was issued only two months after the new armed forces (TNI) commander General Andika Perkasa told a Parliamentary hearing that the wanted to abandon the combat-heavy policy toward Papua and replace it with a softer “humanistic” approach that is long overdue. The move, publicly endorsed by Vice-President Ma’ruf Amin, who nominally oversees Papua policies, and newly-installed army chief of staff General Dudung Abdurachman, foresees servicemen functioning as teachers, health workers and building contractors.**

[**Opinion:  Self-denial about Papua**](https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2022/03/08/self-denial-about-papua.html)

**—Editorial Board,  *The Jakarta Post,*9 March 2022**

**Harsh words and phrases like “unprofessional, ill-intentioned and one-sided” chosen by the Indonesian Mission at the UN in Geneva in response to the report of UN human rights rapporteurs on Papua remind us of the repeated denials from the same mission during Indonesia’s 24-year occupation of East Timor, now Timor-Leste. East Timor, then an Indonesian province, voted for independence from the colonial power of Indonesia in a UN-sanctioned referendum in 1999.  Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975 and claimed only a small minority wanted to part from Indonesia.    
     What happened in East Timor decades ago could happen in Papua because discrimination and racism against the indigenous populations persists. Separatist groups, which the government refers to as criminal armed groups, have launched sporadic armed attacks on security forces and innocent people working in the territory. But we are often confused about whether the resistance movement is genuine or involves various interests of elites inside and outside of Papua.**

**The Foreign Ministry and the government alike should learn from our past mistakes. The government used to deny reports of international media and organizations, including the UN human rights body, claiming that the situation in East Timor was much better than what they saw. We understand the Foreign Ministry has to listen to the voices of other state institutions such as the Indonesian Military (TNI) and the Defense Ministry on domestic security affairs, including on Papua. Some Indonesian diplomats have complained that they have had to defend something they did not believe in. Now it’s time for diplomats to bolder in speaking the truth with their counterparts at home.**

[**Indonesia dismisses UN experts’ call to probe alleged abuses in Papua**](https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-dismisses-un-experts-call-probe-alleged-abuses-papua-2022-03-02/)

**—Stanley Widianto, *Reuters,*2 March 2022  
  
Indonesia dismissed a call by UN human rights experts for independent investigations into reports of “shocking abuses” against indigenous Papuans, saying the Southeast Asian nation had already tackled the accusations. Separatists have waged a low-level campaign for independence from Indonesia for decades, saying a 1969 vote overseen by the UN that brought the former Dutch colony under Indonesian control was illegitimate. In a statement on Tuesday, Three independent UN experts said that between April and November 2021 they had received allegations that indicated several instances of extra-judicial killings, including young children, enforced disappearance, torture, and enforced displacement of at least 5,000 Papuans. The statement from the UN experts cited estimates that 60,000 to 100,000 people had been internally displaced in Papua since an escalation of violence in December 2018. In a letter sent to the Indonesian government on 27 December, the experts also highlighted increasing violence since 2021 and said there has been a “surge” in raids to capture armed separatists that led to arbitrary arrests and detentions. The experts called for urgent humanitarian aid to the region and urged the Indonesian government to conduct full and independent investigations into the abuses against indigenous peoples.**

**Report: Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, “**[**Indonesia: UN Experts sound alarm on serious abuses in Papua**](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28180&LangID=E)**”, 1 March 2022**

[**Indonesia to file complaint against report by three UN human rights experts on conflicts in Papua**](https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2022/03/07/ri-to-file-complaint-against-un-papua-report.html)

**—Dian Septiari, *The Jakarta Post,*8 March 2022**

**The government said it will file a complaint against what it called an “unprofessional, ill-intentioned and one-sided” report by three UN human rights exports on its handling of conflicts in Papua. The experts’ joint statement, which called for urgent humanitarian access to Papua and West Papua provinces and independent investigations into alleged abuses against indigenous communities, was published on the UN Human Rights body’s website on 1 March and signed by Francisco Cali Tzay, the special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples; Morris Tidball-Binz, the special rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions; and Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, the special rapporteur on the human rights of displaced persons. The statement cited reported abuses against indigenous Papuans including child killings, enforced disappearances, torture and the mass displacement of at least 5,000 people. The West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), the armed wing of Free Papua Movement (OPM), recently claimed responsibility for the killing of eight technicians who were repairing a telecommunications tower belonging to state-owned operator Telkomsel.**

**Press Statement: Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the UN, “**[**Press Statement response to news release by UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders on 1 March 2022**](https://mission-indonesia.org/2022/03/01/press-statement-response-to-the-news-release-by-un-special-procedures-mandate-holders-on-1-march-2022/)**”, 1 March 2022**

[**Rebel gunmen kill eight technicians in Indonesia’s restive Papua**](https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/rebel-gunmen-kill-8-technicians-indonesias-restive-papua-2537816)

**—*ChannelNewsAsia*, 4 March 2022**

**Separatist gunmen killed eight technicians repairing a remote telecommunications tower in Indonesia’s Papua province, authorities and the rebels said. More than twelve gunmen stormed Telkomsel’s tower in the mountainous village of Beoga in Puncak Regency while the workers were repairing its transceiver on 3 March, Papua military spokesman Col. Aqsha Erlangga said. One technician managed to escape and called for help through a video from a security camera at the tower.  At attempt to recover the bodies by helicopter was hampered by bad weather and fog in the district, a stronghold of separatists who have battled Indonesian rule in the region since the early 1960s. “This is an extraordinary crime by the armed separatist criminal groups amid the government’s efforts to bring economic development,” Erlangga said in a statement. Erlangga said police and military forces were searching for the attackers, believed to belong to the West Papua Liberation Army, the military wing of the Free Papua Organization (OPM). Members of an armed group also attacked a military post in Dambet village in the same regency on 4 March, injuring a soldier.  In December 2018, at least 31 construction workers and a soldier were killed by the West Papua Liberation Army in one of the worst separatist attacks in the province.**

**J.**      **Other**

[**Presidential politics heats up in Indonesia**](https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/02/13/presidential-politics-heats-up-in-indonesia/)

**—Greg Fealy, *East Asia Forum,*13 February 2022**

**The seventh year of Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s presidency has been notable for the further entrenching of the president’s political position and the continuing reversal of democratic and human rights reforms. Determined to avoid becoming a lame duck in his second term, Jokowi’s resolve to maximise his authority and limit sources of resistance have only intensified after the delays and disruption Covid-19 wrought on the president’s ambitious development agenda. Jokowi accomplished this by enlarging the ruling coalition, now consisting of eight political parties with a sweeping majority of 82% of the seats in parliament, leaving just two opposition parties. In order to accommodate all the coalition parties’ demands for a share of power, Jokowi has had to greatly expand the number of deputy ministers. Parties are not just seeking influence over policies, but also access to resources and patronage opportunities for their supporters in the run-up to the 2024 parliamentary and presidential elections.**

[**A subversive game of thrones in Indonesia**](https://asiatimes.com/2022/03/a-subversive-game-of-thrones-in-indonesia/)

**—John McBeth, *Asia Times,* 7 March 2022**

**With popular President Joko Widodo staying mostly silent, powerful political figures around him appear to be persisting in their efforts to extend his term beyond scheduled elections in 2024, despite one recent poll which saw more than 70% of respondents reject a term extension. Widodo has repeatedly insisted he is not looking for an extension, but pro-democracy activists aren’t convinced, clearly for good reason now that the second-ranked Golkar Party, the National Awakening Party (PKB), the political wing of the mass Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama, and the National Mandate Party (PAN) have publicly endorsed the idea. Golkar, headed by Coordinating Minister of Economic Affaiars Airlangga Hartoto and includes Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Panjaitan, the president’s right-hand man and chairman of the party’s advisory board. The ruling Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle (PDI-P) has come out against the plan, but that’s because its chairman, former president Megawati Sukarnoputri—with whom Widodo has always had difficult relations—has presidential hopes for her daughter, House Speaker Puan Maharani.**

[**Jokowi’s divided coalition**](https://magz.tempo.co/read/cover-story/38968/jokowis-divided-coalition)

**—Hussein Abri Dongoran, *Tempo,*7 March 2022**

**Pro-government parties held a meeting to discuss the plan to extend the President’s tenure at the residence of Gerindra Party General Chairman Prabowo Subianto on 2 March.  The host told his guests that he disapproved of postponing the 2024 election, while the ruling Indonesian Party of Struggle (PDI-P), National Democrat (NasDem) Party and others had also already stated their disapproval of the idea, put forward by the National Awakening Party (PKB), the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the Golkar Party. Many members of Parliament would support postponing the general elections because it would mean they would not have to worry about the costs of campaigning in the run-up to 2024.**

[**‘Useless for us’:  New Indonesian capital excludes indigenous, poor**](https://www.reuters.com/article/indonesia-city-lawmaking-idUSL8N2TN265)

**—Rina Chandran, Leo Galuh, *Reuters*, 28 February 2022**

**The Indonesian parliament last month approved a bill to relocate the Indonesian capital to Nusantara, a site deep within the jungle of East Kalimantan, an idea the country’s leaders have been contemplating for years to achieve more equitable growth in the nation. Government officials said the new capital will promote sustainable growth beyond Java island and ease pressure on Jakarta, the current capital—a megacity of 10 million people which suffers from chronic congestion, frequent floods and deadly air pollution. But low-income residents in Jakarta fear losing their livelihoods, while indigenous people in Borneo say they have not been consulted and fear they will be uprooted from their ancestral lands as forests are cleared for the new capital. More than 20 communities comprising thousands of indigenous people are at risk of being uprooted from their land s to make way for Nusantara, according to Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN), which has mapped their lands. Government authorities have said concerns of indigenous people and the environment will be taken into account, but without giving details.**

**Ends**