



## 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 that 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](http://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](mailto:newsdigest@starlingresources.com).*

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### A. Marine and Fisheries

#### [Strengthening archipelagic states' solidarity through AIS Forum](#)

—Dewa Ketut S W and Resinta Sulistiyandari, *AntaraNews*, 14 October 2023

The Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum is a unique platform connecting countries based on geography and shared challenges rather than economic scale or political views. The Forum's first Summit took place in Bali between October 10-11 2023, and focused on the four main themes of climate change, the blue economy, marine plastic waste, and maritime

governance. It emphasized the need for concrete contributions to save archipelagic and island nations from climate change threats and promote a sustainable blue economy. The forum also supports capacity building, innovation, and young entrepreneurs, and aids start-ups, digital-based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and provides scholarships and research assistance. With 51 member countries controlling a significant portion of the world's sea areas, the AIS Forum has the potential to become a powerful voice in global forums like the United Nations.

#### **Ministry uses nanosatellites to monitor fishing vessels in Indonesia**

—Fransiska Mariana N. and Resinta Sulistiyandari, *AntaraNews*, 13 October 2023

The Indonesian Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) will employ satellite-based technology to monitor fishing activities in Indonesian waters. They plan to purchase 20 nanosatellites, which will be part of their Integrated Surveillance System, used to monitor fishing vessels' operational patterns. Satellite monitoring will identify vessels that potentially violate regulations, allowing authorities to validate findings and approach the vessels in violation. The use of satellite technology is expected to make monitoring more effective, especially in remote border areas. The nanosatellites are slated to launch and commence operations in 2024 as part of Indonesia's marine space management strategy to support blue economy-based development, mapping sea activities and conditions.

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## **B. Forests and Land Use**

#### **Report: Half of plantations in Indonesia's palm oil heartland are illegal**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 13 October 2023

A recent report by Eyes on the Forest (EoF), a coalition of NGOs in Sumatra, has revealed that nearly half of the palm oil plantations in Riau province, Indonesia's palm oil heartland, are illegal. These illicit plantations span an area of 2.52 million hectares and encroach into government-designated forested areas, which are supposed to be off-limits for such activities under Indonesian law. This finding makes Riau the epicenter of illegal plantations in the country. To address this issue, EoF has urged the government to enhance transparency and prioritize its amnesty program, which provides a three-year grace period for illegal plantation operators to obtain proper permits. The report further exposes the ownership of some of these illegal plantations by major companies, including Sinarmas, Darmex, Surya Dumai, and First Resources. Activists are calling on these companies to rehabilitate degraded portions of their concessions. As Indonesia is the world's largest palm oil producer, resolving the issue of illegal plantations is crucial for sustainable development and environmental conservation.

**Report:** Eyes on the Forest (2023) [\*Omnibus Law bukan legalisasi otomatis untuk perkebunan sawit ilegal.\*](#) rep.

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## **C. Biodiversity, Conservation, and Protected Area**

#### **Indonesia reports a new Javan rhino calf, but population doubts persist**

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 6 October 2023

A Javan rhino calf has been spotted in Indonesia's Ujung Kulon National Park, home to the critically endangered species' last surviving population. Camera traps captured images of the female calf with its mother between July and September. While this is positive news, there are concerns over the government's claims that the population is steadily increasing. An

investigative report earlier this year revealed that 18 rhinos were missing from the official count, with at least three confirmed to have died since 2019. There are also indications that poaching attempts have resumed in the park, raising additional concerns for the species' future. Javan rhinos are now confined to Ujung Kulon and face multiple threats, including an unbalanced sex ratio and limited genetic diversity. The government has stated plans to increase security and, if necessary, use assisted reproductive technology, such as in-vitro fertilization with a Sumatran rhino surrogate, to save the species.

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## D. Climate Change, Energy, and Mining

### [Tesla sideswipes Indonesia's EV supply chain dream](#)

—Manggi Habir, *AsiaTimes*, 16 October 2023

Indonesia's ambitions to develop a robust nickel supply chain for electric vehicle (EV) batteries are facing challenges as major EV manufacturers shift from nickel cobalt manganese (NCM) to lithium-iron-phosphate (LFP) batteries, which are cheaper and more readily available. NCM batteries offer higher energy density and longer driving ranges, but LFP batteries are \$12 per kWh cheaper to produce. While Indonesia's nickel down streaming policies have attracted significant investment in NCM-focused nickel smelters, the growing popularity of LFP batteries may reduce demand for NCM batteries. Further causes of concern to the country's nickel industry are the significant environmental challenges and its over-reliance on Chinese investment. Over 90% of the country's nickel processing facilities are dominated by Chinese companies. Finally, confusion over overlapping mandates between the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Industry have led to different interpretation and enforcement of related policies. The government must consider recalibrating its nickel processing capacity and adopting flexible policies to navigate these challenges successfully.

### [Missing emission cap renders RI carbon exchange less effective: Experts](#)

—Divya Karyza, *TheJakartaPost*, 16 October 2023

Indonesia must swiftly implement emission caps across various sectors to unlock the full potential of its newly launched carbon exchange, according to experts. Emission caps are particularly crucial for energy-intensive industries, which significantly contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. While Indonesia has set emission caps for coal-fired power plants, it currently lacks comprehensive caps for other major sectors. The government is developing a roadmap that aims to introduce emission caps for forestry, agriculture, waste management, industrial processes, and manufacturing, as well as a carbon tax for companies exceeding emissions thresholds. Without clear emission caps, companies may struggle to determine when to reduce emissions, pay taxes, or purchase carbon credits. However, determining the appropriate caps for diverse industries is a complex task. The Indonesia Carbon Exchange (IDX) has seen limited activity since its launch, with only a marginal increase in carbon dioxide equivalent trades. Companies are encouraged not to wait for government mandates but to participate voluntarily, as it can demonstrate their commitment to emissions reduction.

### [Indonesia opens carbon trading market to both skepticism and hope](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 12 October 2023

Indonesia, a major global greenhouse gas emitter, inaugurated its carbon trading market as part of its climate strategy to attain carbon neutrality by 2060. The initial trading session on September 26 saw 13 carbon credits equivalent to 460,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide from geothermal projects in North Sulawesi, priced at IDR 69,600 (\$4.45) per metric ton.

Environmentalists have criticized the mechanism, arguing that it may perpetuate a "business as usual" mentality, where companies purchase inexpensive carbon credits to continue polluting without substantial emissions reductions. A recent analysis by The Guardian and Corporate Accountability revealed that most of the top 50 emission offset projects, responsible for selling the majority of carbon credits globally, lack the ability to guarantee permanent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. While some believe carbon trading has no place in climate policy, others suggest systemic changes to make the market contribute more effectively to combating climate change, including setting strict and transparent emission caps, limiting trading to residual emissions, recognizing local and Indigenous rights, promoting participation, and ensuring transparency and accountability.

#### [Indonesia signs tourism decarbonization road map](#)

—*TheJakartaPost*, 12 October 2023

Indonesia's Tourism and Creative Economy Minister, Sandiaga Uno, has signed a low-carbon tourism roadmap at the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) forum in Bali. Developed in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) through the Climate Promise project, the roadmap seeks to address emissions reduction in the tourism sector, focusing on three subsectors identified as significant emitters: accommodation, tourist attractions, and tour and travel services. Emissions from these sectors mainly arise from constant air conditioning, human-made attractions and transportation, respectively. Transportation represents the second-largest contributor to the country's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and propelled tourism industry growth between 2020 and 2022. The government plans to initiate decarbonization by assessing baseline emissions, establishing reduction targets, conducting surveys on energy and waste management, and implementing monitoring mechanisms with the goal of achieving net-zero tourism emissions by 2060 or earlier. Activists have also emphasized the need for social justice and community well-being in tourism areas, suggesting calculations of the "carrying capacity" to minimize negative impacts. Indonesia's tourism sector surged post-COVID, with foreign tourist arrivals exceeding official targets in 2022, reaching 5.5 million visitors.

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## E. Pollution and Waste

#### [ASEAN marine debris forum focuses on regional, global solutions](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 18 October 2023

Delegates from around the world convened in Jakarta for the 2023 ASEAN Conference for Combatting Plastic Pollution (ACCPP), aiming to address the impact of plastic pollution on oceans and the need for an international agreement in line with ASEAN principles. The discussions centered on drafting an international treaty to combat marine debris. Six ASEAN nations were among the world's top 20 marine polluters. Despite notable progress, ASEAN nations grapple with financial constraints and infrastructure limitations emphasizing the urgency for a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. Contention in the negotiations arose between developed and developing nations over the most suitable approach. Developing economies like most ASEAN countries are vulnerable to marine plastic waste and are advocating for policies that align with their economic interests and not their economic interests. Indonesia, in particular, is committed to reducing marine debris by 70% by 2025, and the conference seeks to strengthen cooperation to achieve this ambitious target.

#### [SEA to open new ocean plastic collection center with global partners](#)

—*TheJakartaPost*, 10 October 2023

Prevented Ocean Plastic™ Southeast Asia (POPSEA) has inaugurated a new collection center in North Jakarta, a significant step in their mission to establish efficient recycling infrastructure in underserved areas of Indonesia. This center, facilitated by a partnership with Singapore-based Circulate Capital, can process up to 110 tonnes of plastic waste each month and will create approximately 30 jobs. POPSEA aims to bridge the recycling infrastructure gap in Southeast Asia, setting an industry best practice standard. The organization focuses on enhancing the recycling supply chain in Indonesia and providing high-quality traceable recycled plastic to global markets, fostering environmental, social, and economic benefits from collectors to consumers. POPSEA's Prevented Ocean Plastic™ program has already prevented nearly two billion bottles from entering the ocean and collaborates with global brands like Lidl and LVMH. This expansion aligns with the mission to open 25 new collection centers in at-risk coastal communities by 2025, offering a blueprint to tackle plastic pollution at its source and promote a circular economy in Indonesia and the region.

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## F. Investment and Finance

### [Indonesia Urges Norway to Accelerate \\$250 Million Clean Energy Investment](#)

—Happy Amanda Amalia, *TheJakartaGlobe*, 15 October 2023

Indonesia is urging Norway to expedite its US\$250 million investment commitment under the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) to accelerate Indonesia's decarbonization program. Launched in November 2022, the JETP seeks to mobilize US\$20 billion in financing to decarbonize Indonesia's energy sector, with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Part of the JETP funding will support the early closure of coal-fired power plants by 2030. An Indonesian delegation visited Norway to hold business meetings with Norwegian companies and attract investments for renewable energy development. The delegation made plans for Norwegian companies to visit Indonesia for feasibility studies. Both countries have established the Bilateral Energy Consultation Forum to facilitate discussions and technology exchange in renewable energy. The UK also recently unveiled a £27.2 million grant to support Indonesia's green initiatives, as part of its commitments to spend over £11 billion in climate financing for developing nations by 2026.

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## G. Human Rights and Gender Equality

### [Rights groups highlight injustices, torture in death penalty sentences](#)

—Radhiyya Indra, *TheJakartaPost*, 14 October 2023

Indonesia is being urged to completely abolish the death penalty as rights groups raise concerns about fair trials, abuse, and torture in capital punishment cases. Despite recent reforms introducing a 10-year probation period for death row convicts with potential commutation based on good behavior, some groups argue that these changes are insufficient. Indonesia has witnessed documented cases of human rights abuse leading to death sentences, with allegations of torture and unfair trials. Gender-based violence is also a concern, particularly in women's prisons, where cases of sexual assault during investigations have been reported. While the revised Criminal Code has been seen as a positive step, rights groups continue to push for complete abolition, highlighting that 112 countries have already done so. Indonesia remains one of 55 countries still retaining and imposing death sentences.

The call is not only for policy change but also for the protection of the physical and psychological rights of death row inmates.

### [Indonesia wins sixth term on UN human rights body](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 12 October 2023

Indonesia has secured a record-high 186 out of 192 votes, marking its sixth term on the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the 2024-2026 period. The country joins 46 other nations on this intergovernmental body, which focuses on promoting, protecting, addressing, and offering recommendations on human rights issues worldwide. Indonesia's successful campaign was framed under the theme "Inclusive Partnership for Humanity." Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi hailed this victory as a testament to the trust placed in Indonesia to advance and safeguard human rights globally. The nation pledged to use its position on the UNHRC to strengthen national capacities for human rights, enhance dialogue between countries and regional groups, and promote the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Domestically, Indonesia aims to implement the National Action Plan For Human Rights (RANHAM), emphasizing inclusivity and the principle of "no one left behind."

### [Police kill one at Central Kalimantan plantation protest: rights groups](#)

—*TheJakartaPost*, 11 October 2023

The Indonesian National Police opened fire on demonstrators during a protest against an oil palm company in Seruyan village, Central Kalimantan province, leaving one protester dead and at least one injured. The protesters were rallying against a palm oil firm's refusal to comply with a government law known as the "plasma" scheme, which requires them to allocate 20% of their concession land to smallholders. The Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) decried the police's use of violence, which also included tear gas, and called for a resolution of the underlying agrarian conflict. Rights groups, including Indigenous rights NGO AMAN and Amnesty International Indonesia, have demanded an investigation and justice for the victims. The incident has drawn international attention and underscores long-standing concerns about the Indonesian police's response to environmental and Indigenous rights protests.

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## I. Presidential Race

### [Mahfud MD Officially Announced as Ganjar Pranowo's Vice Presidential Candidate](#)

—Najla Nur Fauziyah, *Tempo*, 18 October 2023

Megawati Soekarnoputri, Chair of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), has announced that Mahfud MD, currently the Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, will be the vice presidential candidate for Ganjar Pranowo in the upcoming presidential election. Megawati emphasized Mahfud's extensive government experience during the declaration at the PDI-P Office in Central Jakarta, just one day ahead of the candidate registration at the General Election Commission. The announcement marked a critical moment for supporters of Ganjar Pranowo as a presidential candidate. The Secretary-General of PDI-P, Hasto Kristiyanto, stressed that the vice-presidential candidate, along with Ganjar, will work towards a prosperous Indonesia, a commitment that will be affirmed at a joint declaration event with youth and millennial figures tonight at the National Archive Building in West Jakarta.



### [Jokowi's Son Gibran Eligible to Contest Presidential Election after Court Ruling](#)

—*TheJakartaGlobe*, 16 October 2023

Indonesia's Constitutional Court has issued a significant ruling, allowing citizens under the age of 40 to run for the positions of president or vice-president, provided they have served or are serving in elected public positions. The ruling came in response to a motion filed by a university student who challenged a 2017 election law that set the age limit for presidential and vice-presidential candidates at 40 and older. The student argued that this restriction violated the constitutional rights of young leaders, including Solo's mayor, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, who is 36 years old. Gibran is the son of President Jokowi and is speculated to be a potential running mate for presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto. This ruling, passed by a narrow 5-4 vote among justices, will take effect for the 2024 presidential election. The decision could create political tensions, especially within the ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, to which Jokowi and Gibran belong. Jokowi's support for a rival candidate could lead to his expulsion from the party and division within Indonesia's political elite.

### [Indonesian court rules on presidential candidate eligibility](#)

—*AlJazeera*, 16 October 2023

Indonesia's Constitutional Court has upheld the minimum age requirement for presidential and vice-presidential candidates, maintaining it at 40 years. However, the court has made an exception for candidates who have served or been elected as regional leaders. The court's decision has implications for the political landscape, since it opens the possibility of President Joko Widodo's 36-year-old eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, to run for vice president in the upcoming elections. The court's ruling was based on the belief that determining the age limit for presidential candidates should be a matter for parliament, rather than the judiciary. One of the seven judicial review requests calling for the reduced age limit came from the Indonesian Solidarity Party of which Jokowi's youngest son Kaesang Pangarep is the party's chair.

## **II. Palestine-Israel Conflict**

### [Jokowi, Xi Jinping Call For De-escalation in Palestine-Israel Situation](#)

—Najla Nur Fauziyah, *Tempo*, 18 October 2023

Indonesian president Jokowi and Chinese leader Xi Jinping discussed the situation in Gaza during a meeting in Beijing on October 17, 2023. Both leaders emphasized the need for de-escalation in the conflict triggered by the Hamas attack. In a press release, the Presidential Press Bureau highlighted the shared vision of Indonesia and China focusing on the humanitarian aspect of the issue. China, alongside other countries, is working to de-escalate the situation in Israel and Palestine following the United States' request, leveraging China's its relationship with Iran, a supporter of Hamas. President Jokowi called for an immediate halt to the violence and emphasized the need to address the root cause of the conflict, namely Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, in accordance with UN parameters.

### [Protesters in Malaysia, Indonesia Come Out in Support of Palestine](#)

—Sebastian Strangio, *TheDiplomat*, 16 October 2023

Protests in support of Palestine and against Israel's impending ground offensive in the Gaza Strip took place in Indonesia and Malaysia. In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, around 15,000 people gathered to condemn Israel's attacks. Political figures from both sides of the spectrum attended, including former prime ministers. Protests and support for Palestine were also seen

in other mosques across Malaysia. Indonesia, on the same day, witnessed thousands protesting in Jakarta, denouncing Israel as the "real terrorist." Labor groups gathered in front of the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, urging President Joe Biden not to support the Israeli attack on Gaza. Both countries have a long history of support for the Palestinian cause and have called for an "immediate end of violence" and resolution of the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel. These protests highlight the deep-rooted sentiments of solidarity in the Global South shaped by history and postcolonial ties.

**End**

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