
PROTECTING THE **LEUSER** ECOSYSTEM

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



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== A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY ==

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ABOUT RAN



Rainforest Action Network campaigns for the forests, their inhabitants and the natural systems that sustain life by transforming the global marketplace through education, grassroots organizing and non-violent direct action.

COVER: Forest cover, Singkil-Bengkung region of the Leuser Ecosystem.
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

ABOVE: Waterfall in the Leuser Ecosystem.
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

INTRODUCTION

We have an opportunity to protect the **Leuser Ecosystem.**

Sumatran orangutan at the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme quarantine center.

PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

Known globally for its biological diversity, and prized locally as the core source of life-sustaining clean water, Indonesia's Leuser Ecosystem is a world-class ecological hotspot which must be protected from destructive activities.

Spanning roughly 6.5 million acres (2.6 million hectares) across intact tropical forests and teeming peat swamps in the provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra on the island of Sumatra, the Leuser Ecosystem is both a global conservation priority and a key resource for the communities that live in and around it. This vitally important protected area provides a clean water supply on which nearly 5 million people and their livelihoods depend. Communities and local agriculture downstream from the Leuser, namely the coastal communities which comprise roughly 70-75% of Aceh's population, are dependent on the water supplied by the ecosystem. For communities that live in or around it, the Leuser's standing forests help mitigate annual flooding and landslides. Continued destruction would jeopardize the Leuser Ecosystem's critical watersheds, resulting in increased deadly environmental disasters and threatening the long-term welfare of Aceh's people.

Globally we all depend on the Leuser Ecosystem. Its nearly half a million acres of carbon-rich peatlands and vast areas of rainforests absorb and safely store massive amounts of carbon. The destruction of these forests, the draining and conversion of its peatlands and the setting of fires to clear these areas are drivers of climate change. In the face of worsening global warming, it is imperative to keep in place the massive volumes of carbon stored inside the trees and soils of the world's remaining rainforests and the Leuser Ecosystem is no exception.

The Leuser Ecosystem is home to some of Southeast Asia's most iconic species and is the last wild habitat area where critically endangered Sumatran orangutans, elephants, rhinos and tigers coexist. These species will be driven closer to extinction in the wild if we do not keep the forests and peatlands of the Leuser Ecosystem intact.

Although the Leuser was afforded legal protection under Indonesian national law as a National Strategic Area for its Environmental Protection Function (under Law No. 26/2007 juncto

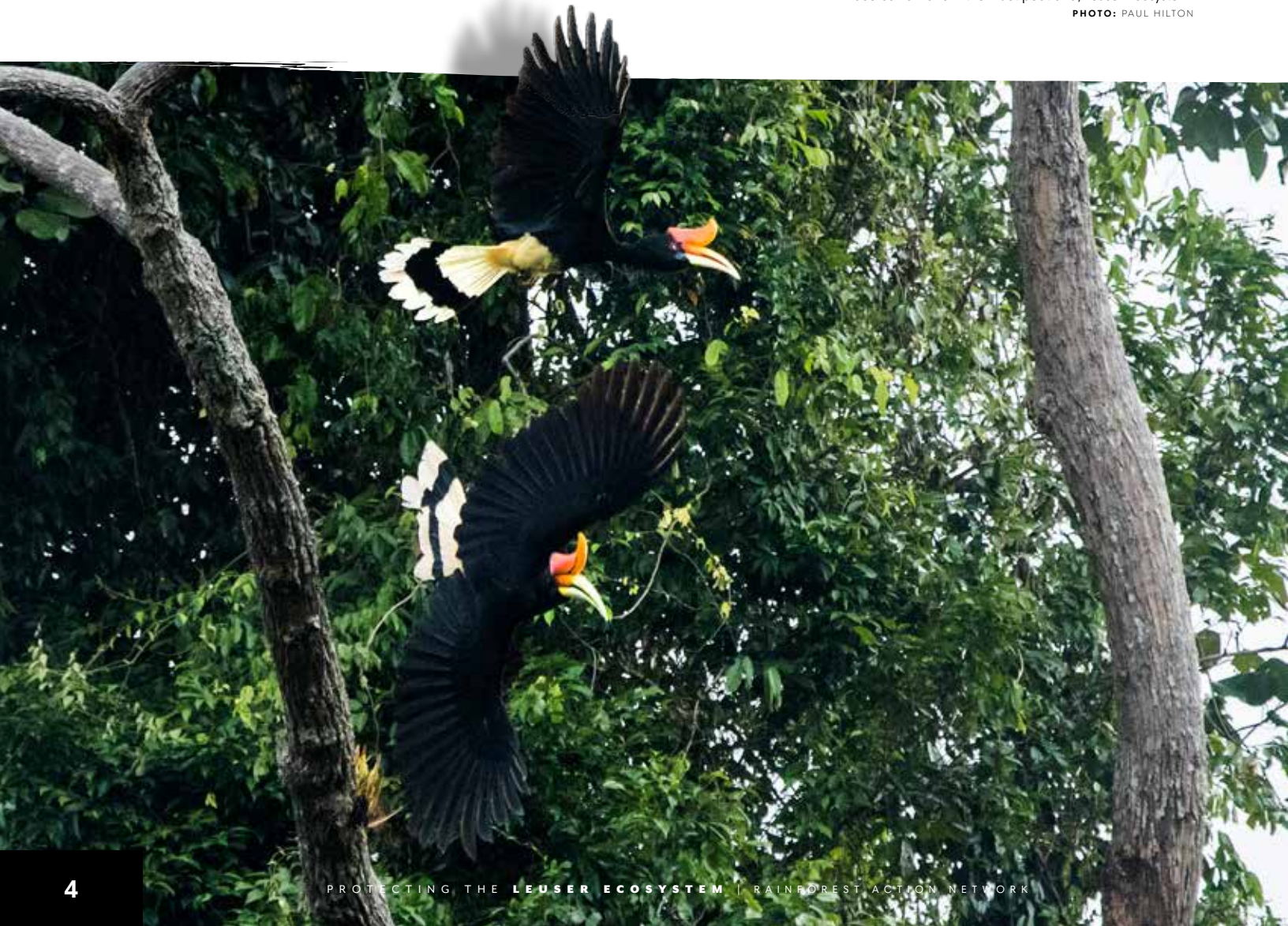
Law No. 26/2008), destructive industries continue to expand into vital areas of the Leuser, threatening its ecological integrity. In particular, lowland rainforests inside the Leuser Ecosystem continue to be bulldozed for Conflict Palm Oil plantations. The leveling of its forests for more industrial plantations must be stopped.

The good news is that opportunities are emerging to keep the rainforests of the Leuser Ecosystem standing. There are positive signals coming from the government of Indonesia, including the recent announcement made by the President of Indonesia to implement a moratorium on new palm oil and mining permits and the country's commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, in part by protecting intact areas of forests and peatlands. These policy initiatives must be paired with meaningful action by the world's biggest brands, in particular the largest snack food companies, to reform the operations of their suppliers, the corporate-owned refineries driving and profiting from the production of palm oil in the region. If key influencers and decision makers act together on these efforts, we can be successful in

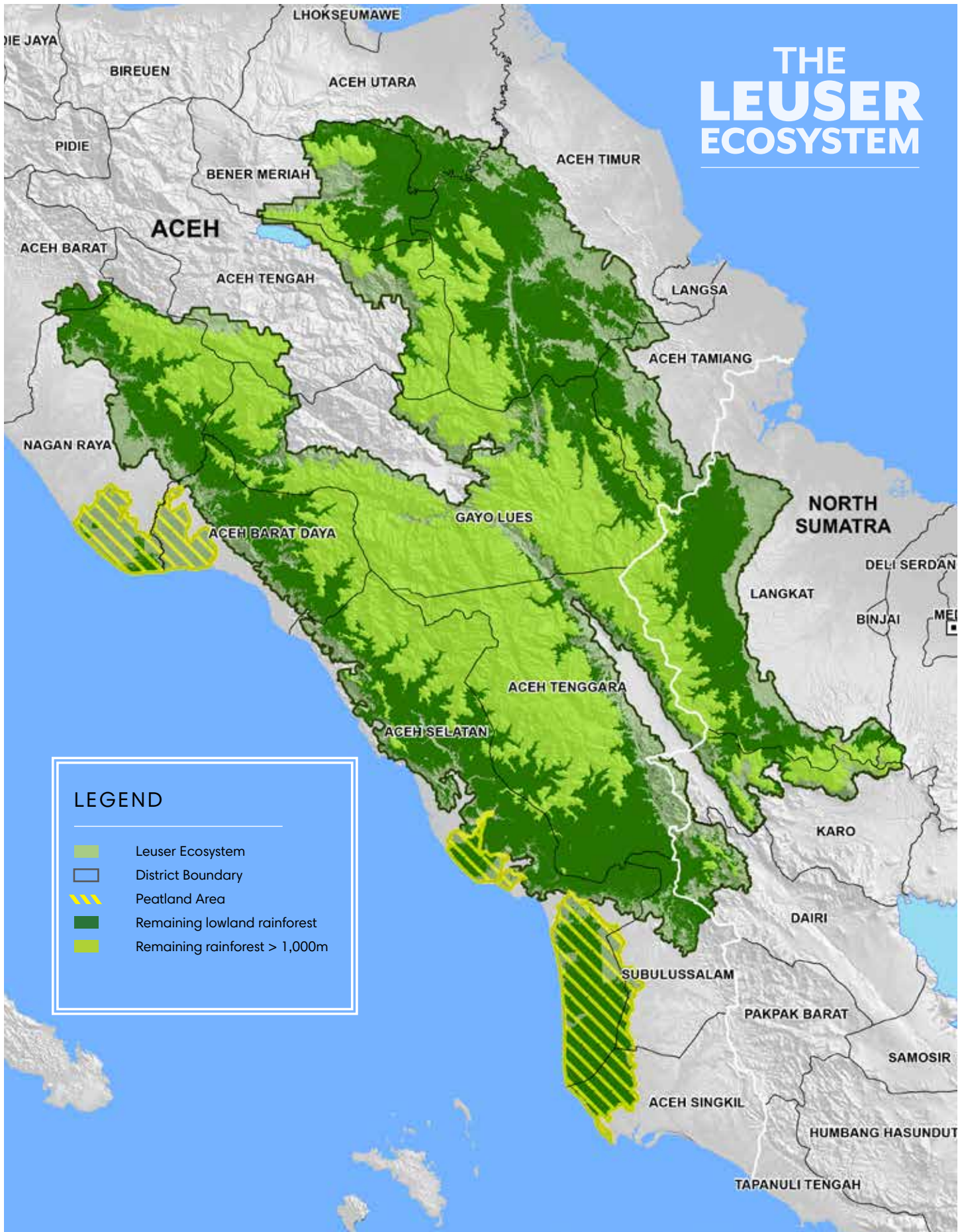
protecting and restoring the Leuser Ecosystem. This would make a major contribution toward securing these carbon stores, and ensuring the survival of endangered species, water supplies, and livelihoods for local communities.

This report is the third in a series of reports that expose the threats to the Leuser Ecosystem and the opportunities to protect it. Earlier reports, titled *The Last Place on Earth—Exposing the Threats to the Leuser Ecosystem: A Global Biodiversity Hotspot Deserving Protection* and *The Last Place On Earth: Tracking Progress and New Opportunities To Protect The Leuser Ecosystem*, have raised both the international profile of this region and the demand for its protection. Classified by leading scientists as one of the “world's most irreplaceable protected areas,” this report profiles the critical locations within the Leuser Ecosystem that remain under immediate threat, exposes the actors that continue to destroy them despite the Indonesian Government moratorium, and shines a light on the shared responsibility—and opportunity—each of us have to help protect this unique region.

Rhinoceros hornbills in the Kluet peatland, Leuser Ecosystem.
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON



THE LEUSER ECOSYSTEM



A LANDSCAPE OF OPPORTUNITY



It is clear that now is the time for action.

For the climate and our collective future, we must not let this opportunity slip through our fingers.

Forest cover in the Singkil-Bengkung region. August 2016.

PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

The Leuser Ecosystem is a landscape of opportunity. It is one of the largest expanses of intact tropical rainforest remaining in Southeast Asia, with a rich abundance of species not found elsewhere in the world. There is a strong, devoted movement of Acehnese people that has been calling for the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem since the 1920s. Original efforts to secure the highest level of legal protection for this incredible landscape were thwarted in 2004, when the boundaries of the Gunung Leuser National Park and the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra were established and excluded the Leuser Ecosystem's most valuable lowland rainforests and its forested peatlands. The weaker level of legal protection afforded to these areas has resulted in the allocation of licenses for and expansion of Conflict Palm Oil plantations within the Leuser Ecosystem. There is ongoing clearance of forests, new roads being built for palm oil plantations through the last elephant migratory corridors in the northeastern lowland rainforests, and deep drainage canals being dug through the peatlands along Aceh's west coast, all of which could seal the fate of this irreplaceable forest ecosystem if we don't act quickly.

Joko Widodo, the President of Indonesia, declared a country-wide moratorium on the issuance of new palm oil and mining permits in April 2016, which has the potential to limit palm oil expansion in Leuser and other important areas of rainforest and peatlands across Indonesia. Shortly after the president's announcement of the moratorium, Siti Nurbaya, Indonesia's Minister of Environment and Forestry, together with Acehnese leaders, also declared their support for the enforcement of the moratorium in the Leuser Ecosystem and for the government to conduct a review of all permits. In June 2016, the Governor of Aceh, Zaini Abdullah, issued a circular letter to all palm oil companies instructing them to cease all forest clearance activities, including in areas with existing permits. This was supported by the Vice Governor of Aceh and a number of district regents (Bupati) and leaders. These civic leaders have worked with several palm oil growers to prevent the loss of lowland rainforests in the Leuser, and to remove illegal Conflict Palm Oil plantations which are already in place, reducing the human-wildlife conflict which inevitably results from expansion into critical lowland rainforests. The moratorium is being actively monitored by Indonesia's Ministry of Environment

and Forestry and was most recently re-enforced with the issuance of a Gubernatorial instruction on a moratorium for new palm oil permits across Aceh on November 3, 2016.

The progress that has been achieved is cause for hope, and this increase in political support for the protection of Indonesia's rainforests presents tremendous new opportunities for the Leuser Ecosystem. Earlier efforts to enforce similar moratoriums have failed in part due to pressure from Conflict Palm Oil interests who, to this day, continue to destroy vital areas of the Leuser Ecosystem. The key to the current moratorium's success is action by all supply chain actors—including the growers; the

buyers, refiners and traders of palm oil; the global brands that purchase huge quantities of palm oil to use in the manufacturing of their products; and the transnational banks that fund the palm oil industry alike—to demand an end to the destruction of Indonesia's forests and peatlands and instead, to invest in real, long-term solutions that protect the Leuser Ecosystem and improve community livelihoods.

It is clear that now is the time for action. For the climate and our collective future, we must not let this opportunity slip through our fingers. If all actors that value the Leuser Ecosystem work together, we can secure its protection.

“The President’s commitment to this issue is clear. The saving of the peatlands, including those peatlands in the Leuser Ecosystem, is a non-negotiable.”

- MINISTER SITI NURBAYA NOVEMBER 1, 2016



As world leaders prepared to sign the Paris Climate Agreement, Indonesia's President Jokowi announced his intent to enact a country-wide moratorium on new palm oil and mining permits which has the potential to limit palm oil expansion in Indonesia. April 14, 2016.

PHOTO: INDONESIA'S MINISTRY OF STATE SECRETARIAT



Indonesia's Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya, the Wali Nanggroe Aceh Malik Mahmud Al Haytar, and the Governor of Aceh Zaini Abdullah commit to implement the moratorium on new palm oil and mining permits and review existing permits in the Leuser Ecosystem. April 19, 2016.

PHOTO: INDONESIA'S MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTRY

FORESTS FALL DESPITE MORATORIUM



Since the announcement of the moratorium in April 2016, Rainforest Action Network has undertaken investigations to determine if, in fact, the moratorium is being respected and upheld by palm oil companies with operations inside the Leuser Ecosystem.

Several companies operating inside the Leuser are respecting the moratorium on rainforest clearance for palm oil plantations, however, satellite monitoring and field investigations have found evidence that some rogue companies continue to destroy crucial lowland rainforests and peatlands inside the areas allocated to them for palm oil development. The findings of these investigations indicate that, in its first few months, the government-led moratorium is not yet fully effective.

Unfortunately, the clearance of forests and peatlands has continued within some existing palm oil concessions since the Governor of Aceh distributed the circular letter on June 17, 2016. In the three months following the circular letter (July, August and September 2016), evidence of continued deforestation was found in 12 palm oil concessions located within the threatened lowland rainforests and peatlands of the Leuser Ecosystem. Analysis of Landsat satellite imagery indicates a total of 294 hectares of forest has been lost in these concessions in this period. The highest observed rates of deforestation occurred within existing concessions located in the lowland rainforests in the district of Aceh Timur and the lowland rainforests and peatlands in Tripa and Singkil-Bengkung in the south and west of the Leuser Ecosystem.

These areas within the Leuser are highly stressed and sensitive, and seemingly small-scale deforestation can have much wider biodiversity impacts. The rapid increase in the rate of deforestation each month is of particular concern. While in July 2016, 38 hectares of forest were lost in Leuser concessions, this increased

to 58 hectares in August 2016. September 2016 satellite analysis showed more than a threefold increase over the previous month, with a loss of 199 hectares of forest.

Satellite analysis shows that 96% of the deforestation that has occurred since the issuance of the circular letter happened in just seven concessions, with nearly three quarters of that deforestation happening in three concessions with the largest forest loss (PT. Tegas Nusantara, PT. Surya Panen Subur II and PT. Agra Bumi Niaga) in the last three months. The palm oil concessions in the Leuser Ecosystem where the most destruction of rainforests and peatlands are occurring are exposed in the following table.

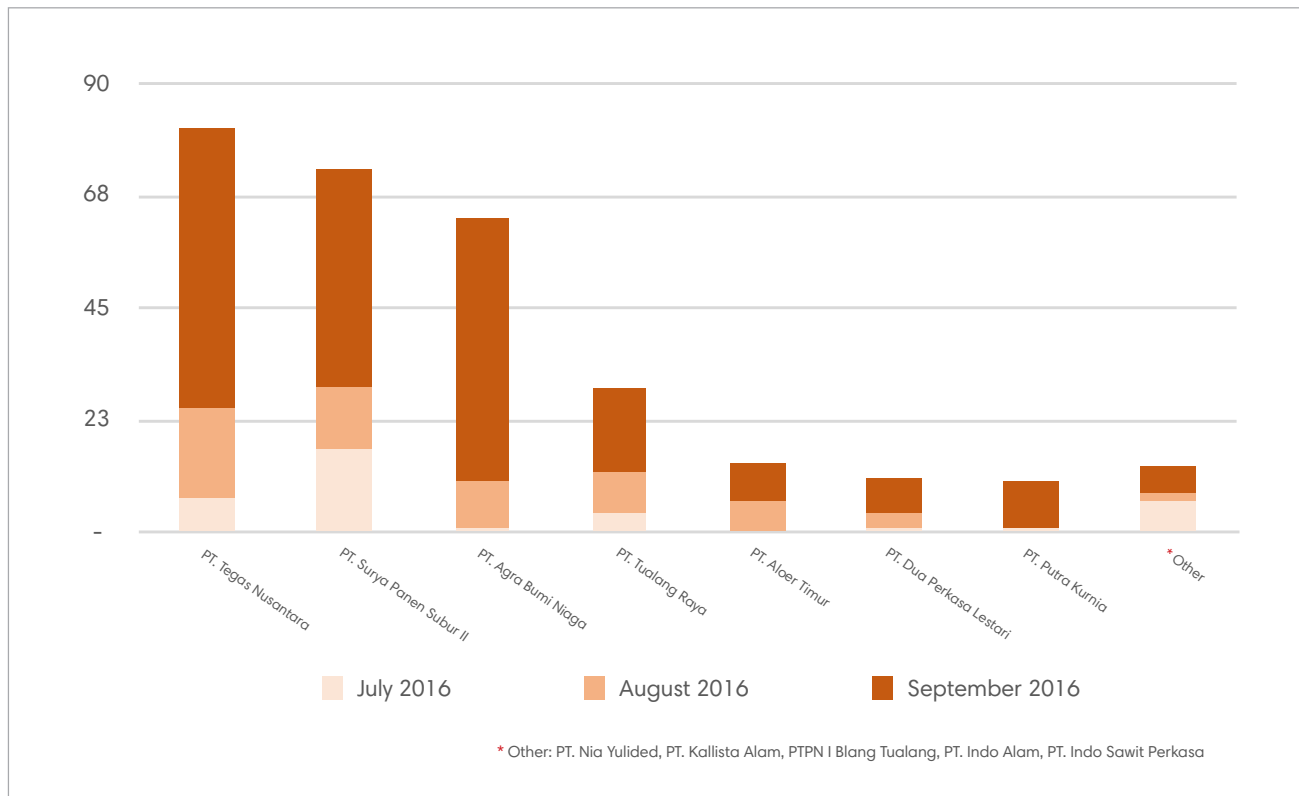
This analysis demonstrates that these companies are either actively clearing forests contrary to provincial and central government instruction or are failing to ensure that third parties are not clearing forests or peatlands. Given these initial findings, it is apparent that both the Indonesian and Aceh governments and other supply chain actors and stakeholders must improve monitoring and enforcement efforts to implement the moratorium inside the Leuser Ecosystem.

The snapshot of recent clearance is indicative of the ongoing trend of destructive activities inside the Leuser Ecosystem. Between January and September 2016, a total of 7,187 hectares of forests and peatlands were destroyed in the province of Aceh, which contains 85% of the Leuser Ecosystem. In the same period, 1950 fires were detected inside the Leuser Ecosystem—fires which are often intentionally lit to cheaply clear land, even while using fires for development is illegal in Indonesia.

Forest clearance and drainage of peatlands by a rogue actor in the Singkil peatland, Leuser Ecosystem. August 2016.

PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

HIGHEST RATES OF DEFORESTATION IN EXISTING PALM OIL CONCESSIONS IN THE LEUSER ECOSYSTEM, JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2016 (HECTARES)



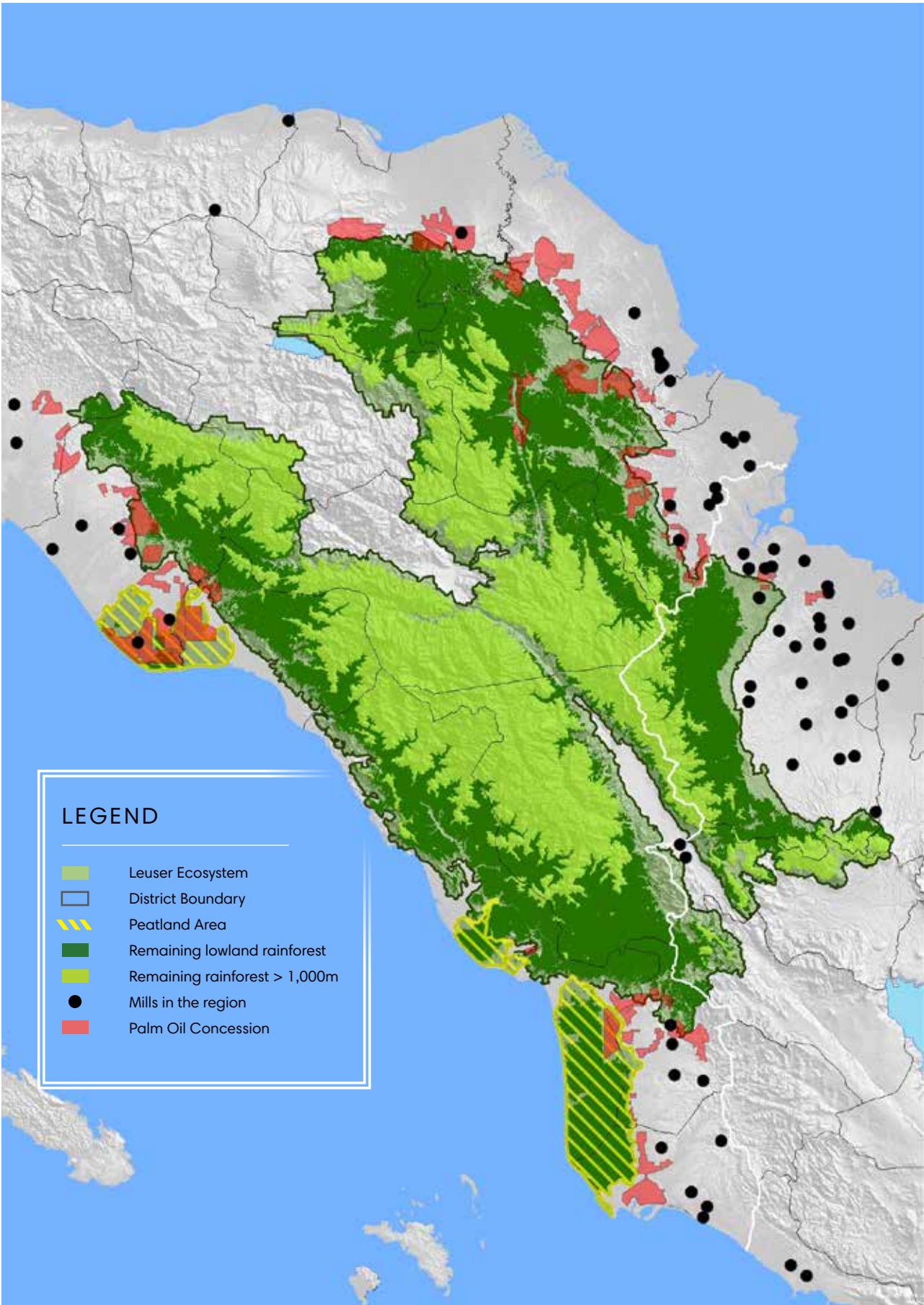
Satellite analysis found ongoing forest clearance inside the plantations controlled by these Conflict Palm Oil Culprits in the three months following the Governor of Aceh's issuance of a circular letter that informed all palm oil companies of the requirement to halt forest clearance as instructed by the President of Indonesia.

Indonesia experiences a long-standing problem with its annual haze crisis, as the country's dry weather season allows for the purposefully lit forest fires to rage out of control, resulting in a public health crisis and substantial carbon pollution. The 2015 forest burning season in Indonesia was among the worst ever experienced. It created a region-wide haze and public health crisis, contributing more carbon pollution than the daily emissions of the entire US economy, and which has been linked to the death of over 100,000 people. The World Bank estimates the 2015 fires cost a total of USD \$16 billion, more than the total value added to Indonesia's economy from its entire production of palm oil in 2014.

Following the 2015 forest fires, the President of Indonesia formed the Peat Restoration Agency (Badan Restorasi Gambut - BRG) in an effort to restore the badly fire-damaged peatlands. This commitment to peatland conservation is a positive sign, and the agency has since identified areas of carbon-rich peatland across Indonesia that it will designate for protection and restoration,

including globally significant areas in the provinces of Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, West Kalimantan and Papua. These positive efforts should be extended to the carbon-rich peatlands of the Leuser Ecosystem.

Given governance challenges and the potential for inconsistent enforcement of legal directives like the moratoriums inside the Leuser, it is clear that all levels of government need to scale up efforts to monitor and halt illegal clearance by rogue actors, mitigate fires and prosecute companies in breach of the law. In the past few months, Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry has deployed its law enforcement team to halt illegal logging and clearing in the Leuser Ecosystem. The latest investigations were informed by a joint monitoring effort with the NGO Greenomics Indonesia and resulted in the police apprehension of rogue actors destroying key peatland areas. Scaling up enforcement efforts such as these will be key to securing the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem.



Palm oil industry threats to the Leuser Ecosystem: All palm oil concessions inside, overlapping, or adjacent to the Leuser Ecosystem and all mills in the region.



Conflict Palm Oil is produced under conditions associated with the ongoing destruction of rainforests, expansion on carbon-rich peatlands, and/or human rights violations, including the failure to recognize and respect the customary land rights of forest-dependent communities and the use of forced labor and child labor.

Forest clearance by a rogue actor in the Singkil peatland, Leuser Ecosystem. July 2016.
 PHOTO: ULET INFANSATI / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



Aerial view of illegal peatland destruction by a rogue actor in the Singkil peatland, Leuser Ecosystem. July 2016.
 PHOTO: ULET INFANSATI / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



Forest destruction by a rogue actor along the Alas River in the Singkil-Bengkung region. August 2016.
 PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

CONFLICT PALM OIL EXPANSION IN **THE TRIPA PEATLAND**

The Tripa peatland is of special importance for the needed habitat it provides to some of the highest densities of critically endangered Sumatran orangutans in the world.



A male Sumatran orangutan seen in the Leuser Ecosystem.

PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

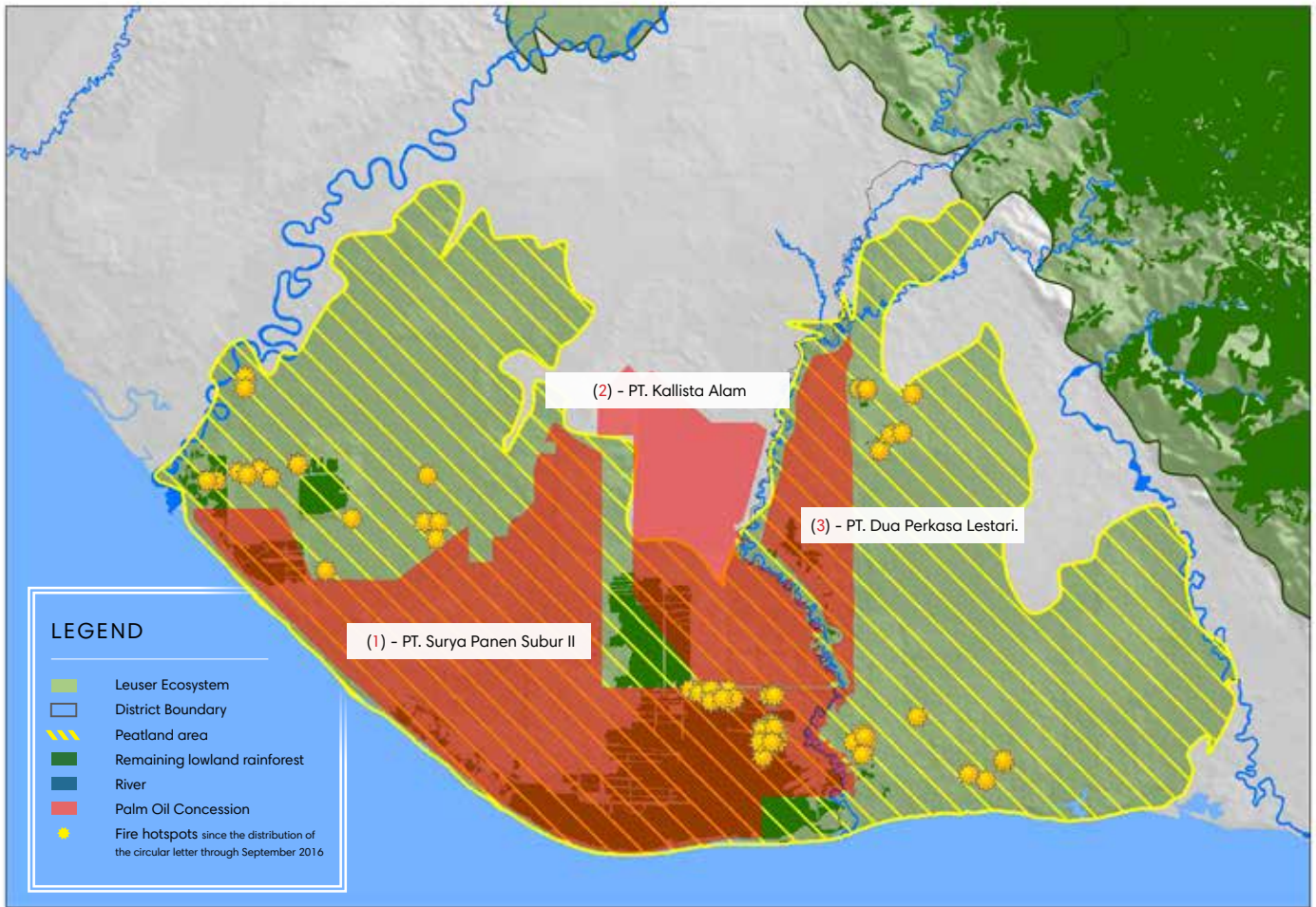
The Tripa peatland is one of three carbon-rich peatlands located inside the Leuser Ecosystem. Tripa, in particular, is of special importance for the needed habitat it provides to some of the highest densities of critically endangered Sumatran orangutans in the world. Despite the dramatic rate of destruction the Tripa peatland has experienced in the past two decades, it still contains vital habitat for the Sumatran orangutan, and many other species, including swamp species not found in dryland habitats.

Notorious palm oil plantations PT. Surya Panen Subur II (PT. SPS2), PT. Kallista Alam (PT. KA) and PT. Dua Perkasa Lestari (DPL) control palm oil plantations inside Tripa. These Conflict Palm Oil Culprits have been under international scrutiny since 2012 when they contributed to a man-made inferno that burned through the Tripa peatland and sent thick plumes of smoke across Sumatra and surrounding regions of Southeast Asia. As a result of the 2012 Tripa fires, lawsuits were filed by Indonesia's then-Ministry of the Environment against the three companies for illegally burning the forested peatland. All three companies were found guilty, ordered to pay hefty fines and members of their staff were sentenced to time in prison. PT. KA's fine was record-setting at USD \$25.6 million.

Shockingly, the Tripa peatland is still being cleared despite the moratorium, legal prosecutions and more than four years of international attention on the area. The highest amount of clearance since the issuance of the Governor of Aceh's circular letter has been occurring inside PT. SPS2, which contains most

of the remaining 6,307 hectares of intact forested peatlands in Tripa. Either PT. SPS2 is continuing to clear forested peatlands or has failed to adequately monitor its concession and engage with other parties that are developing the land. A field investigation undertaken by its buyer Golden Agri-Resources states that some areas of forested peatlands are being cleared and drained illegally by a rogue company, while others are being cleared by local communities, some of which have customary land rights to the area. It is imperative that the company achieves an end to the clearance and draining of the remaining forested peatlands and supports efforts to secure land rights for customary landowners.

In addition, 63 fires were detected in the Tripa peatland since the distribution of the circular letter on the moratorium. PT. KA has yet to pay its historic fines and serve prison sentences. PT. SPS2 and PT. DPL are still in the process of appealing their sentences. Therefore as of now, all three companies are yet to be held accountable for payment of fines or prison sentences, which is a possible factor contributing to the ongoing destruction in Tripa. PT. SPS2, PT. KA, and PT. DPL must pay their fines, serve their prison sentences and work with governments to secure land rights and explore solutions that deliver the protection and restoration of the Tripa peatland while improving the livelihoods of customary landowners. Additionally, Indonesia's newly formed Peat Restoration Agency (BRG) could help broker such solutions that would end the burning and destruction of the carbon-rich peatlands of the Leuser Ecosystem, including Tripa.

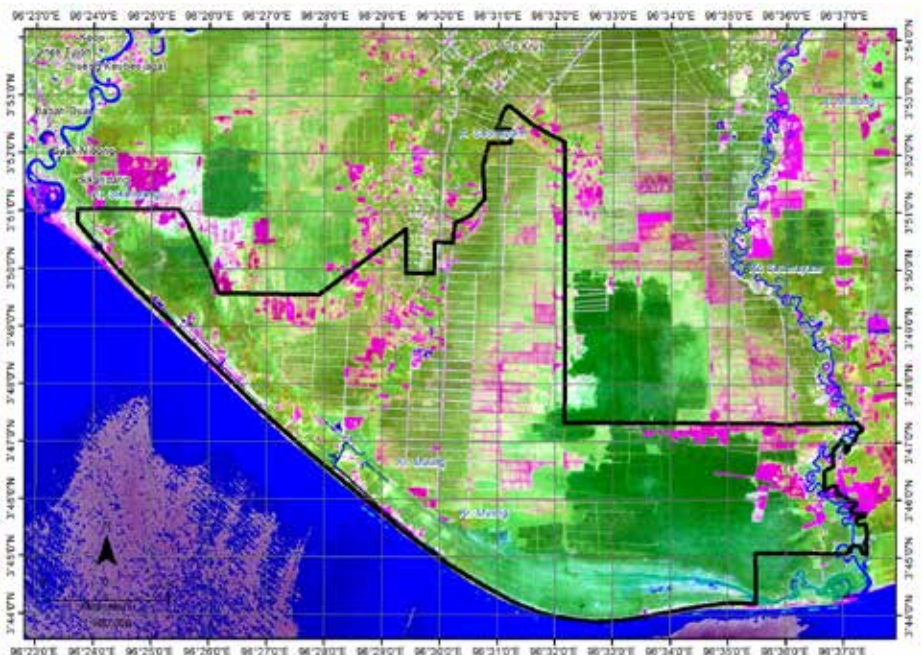


PALM OIL CONCESSIONS: (1) - PT. Surya Panen Subur II, (2) - PT. Kallista Alam, (3) - PT. Dua Perkasa Lestari.

Destruction of the Tripa peatland is still occurring despite the moratorium, legal prosecutions and more than four years of international attention on the area. Since the issuance of the circular letter on the moratorium, clearance was observed in the palm oil concessions operated by PT. Surya Panen Subur II, PT. Kallista Alam and PT. Dua Perkasa Lestari.

* Map does not show all palm oil concessions in or near Tripa; all palm oil concessions shown on map on page 10.

73 hectares of forest has been lost inside PT. Surya Panen Subur II (SPS2) since the issuance of the Governor of Aceh's circular letter. Either PT. SPS2 is continuing to clear forested peatlands or has failed to adequately monitor its concession and engage with other parties that are developing the land.
GPS COORDINATES FOR CLEARANCE: 3°46'03.0"N, 96°35'26.0"E



BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT SINGKIL-BENGGUNG UNDER THREAT

The rainforests of **Singkil-Bengkung** are some of the most extraordinary and diverse in the world. Verdant towering trees and crystal clear rivers form a core area of intact forests that give life to an astonishing array of insects, amphibians, primates, birds and other animal life of all sizes, shapes and colors. This imagination-defying landscape is one of the most ancient forested areas on Earth.

One of the most critical areas of the Leuser Ecosystem is the Singkil-Bengkung region. Covering roughly 285,946 hectares in the southwest corner of the Leuser Ecosystem, Singkil-Bengkung is comprised of the Singkil peatland, the Kluet peatland and the connecting lowland rainforests. Its lowland rainforests and peatlands are facing an onslaught of new roads, canals and the clearance of forests for Conflict Palm Oil plantation development.

Within the Singkil-Bengkung region, the Singkil and Kluet peatlands are of particular importance. The deepest areas of these ancient peat soils can hold thirty times more carbon than that of the standing biomass of the forests above them. The construction of canals to drain and then subsequently clear cut these peatlands, and the forest fires often used to cheaply clear the land for Conflict Palm Oil plantations, all result in severe



Forest cover in the Singkil-Bengkung region of the Leuser Ecosystem. August 2016.
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

climate pollution and contribute to the annual haze crisis.

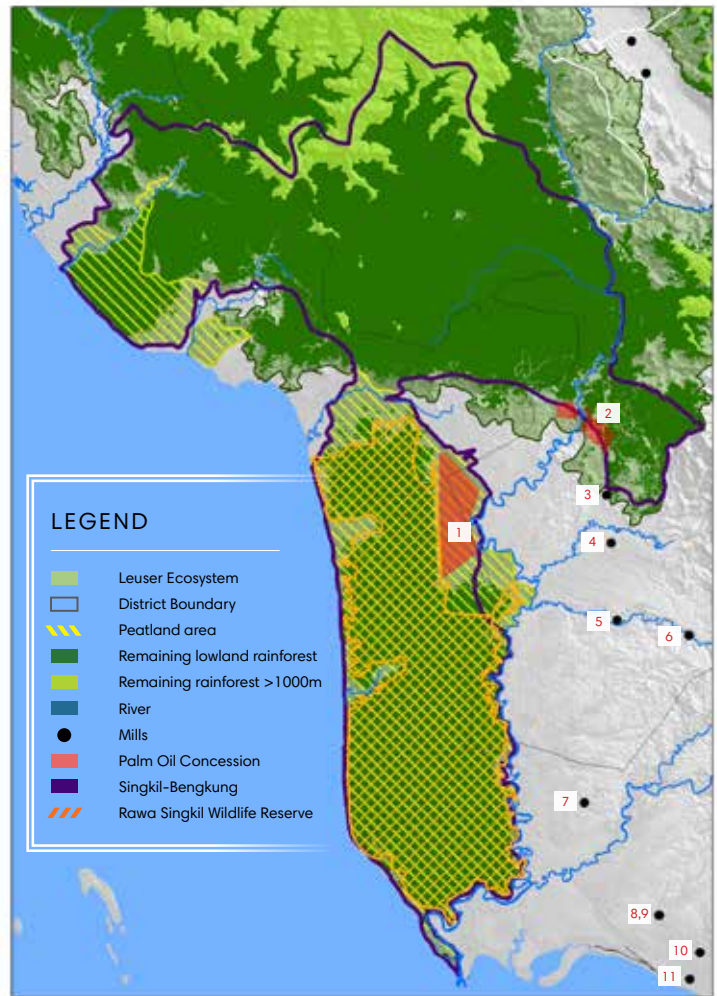
The Singkil peatland, most of which has high levels of protection under Indonesian law as the Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve, is particularly noteworthy as the largest, deepest and most intact peatland in Aceh. With peat deposits in some areas that are over ten meters, or roughly three stories deep, this peatland stores immense amounts of carbon. Local conservationists have raised concerns to changes made over the past several years to the reserve's boundaries, which has reduced the size of the area protected and, in some cases, made way for Conflict Palm Oil development.

The adjacent lowland rainforests which connect the Singkil and Kluet peatlands, and the rivers that run through them, play a crucial role in maintaining the ecological integrity of the Singkil-Bengkung watershed, upon which many local communities depend. Deforesting the area risks permanently damaging the flow and quality of water that runs out of the mountains and through Singkil-Bengkung. Of equal concern to local communities are the changes in the hydrological function of the peatlands that results in the flooding of community lands in the rainy season and water shortages in the dry season.

What's more, Singkil-Bengkung is also an important habitat for the iconic species of the Leuser Ecosystem: Sumatran orangutans, tigers, elephants and rhinos. We must keep this key habitat intact if these species are to survive in the wild. In particular, the Singkil and Kluet peatlands are dubbed the "Sumatran orangutan capital of the world" by world-renowned orangutan expert Dr. Ian Singleton on the basis of the high population density found in the area. The social nature of the orangutans found in these peatlands has led to their famous and unique "tool using" culture, where tools are routinely made and used to access honey and seeds, a characteristic not exhibited by orangutans elsewhere. Protecting both peatlands is even more important given the scale of destruction that has occurred in the neighbouring Tripa peatland.

Despite the value of the area, companies have established palm oil plantations within and adjacent to this critical landscape (see map on page 10). The largest concession that overlaps Singkil-Bengkung is PT. Agro Sinergi Nusantara (ASN), previously known as PT. Perkebunan Nusantara I (PTPN). PTPN I is a subsidiary of the Indonesian government's own palm oil plantation company. Its concession spans 5,588 hectares in the vitally important Singkil peatland.

A driving factor behind the expansion of palm oil plantations in this area is the appetite of surrounding palm oil mills. Once a mill is established, its constant demand for palm oil fruit creates incentives for the destruction of forests, and development of drainage canals and new roads that enable the transport of palm oil fruit to neighboring mills. A number of mills (see map for locations) are at high risk of driving the destruction of Singkil-Bengkung, including PT. Samudera Sawit Nabati, PT. Bangun Sempurna Lestari, PT. Global Sawit Semesta, PT. Subulussalam, PT. Nafasindo, PT. Singkil, PT. Ensem Lestari, PT. Delima Makmur, and PT. Perkebunan Lembah Bakti (subsidiary of PT. Astra Agro Lestari, majority-owned by Jardine Matheson Holdings Ltd).



PALM OIL CONCESSIONS: (1) - PT. Agro Sinergi Nusantara, (2) - PT. Indo Sawit Perkasia

MILLS: (3) - PT. Samudera Sawit Nabati, (4) - PT. Bangun Sempurna Lestari, (5) - PT. Global Sawit Semesta, (6) - PT. Subulussalam, (7) - PT. Nafasindo, (8) - PT. Singkil, (9) - PT. Perkebunan Lembah Bakti, (10) - PT. Ensem Lestari, (11) - PT. Delima Makmur

The Singkil-Bengkung region is one of the most critical areas of the Leuser Ecosystem. It covers roughly 285,946 hectares in the southwest corner of the Leuser Ecosystem and is comprised of the Singkil peatland, the Kluet peatland and the connecting lowland rainforests.

* Map does not show all palm oil concessions in or near Singkil-Bengkung; all palm oil concessions shown on map on page 10.



Severe flooding as a result of deforestation in the town of Singkil, May 2016.



An aerial photograph showing a dense green forest on the left and a cleared, muddy brown area on the right. A narrow, straight drainage canal has been dug through the forest, extending from the top right towards the bottom center. The cleared area shows signs of recent logging and land clearing.

CONFLICT PALM OIL CULPRITS

Since the issuance of the circular letter on the moratorium, critical areas of lowland rainforests and peatlands inside Singkil-Bengkung have been cleared. There is an urgent need for palm oil growers, mills and refinery operators, and global brands to work alongside governments and local communities to save Singkil-Bengkung from further destruction and find alternative development pathways for local communities.

Rogue actor digging a drainage canal and clearing the Singkil peatland. August 14, 2016.

PHOTO: PAUL HILTON



Rogue actor seen digging a new peat drainage canal in the Singkil peatland. August 14, 2016.
GPS: 2°44'23.1"N, 97°39'30.8"E
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON



Illegal destruction of the Singkil peatland by rogue actors. July 2016.
GPS: 2°39'10.482"N, 97°50'42.996"E
PHOTO: NANANG SUJANA / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



Forest clearance by a rogue actor in the Singkil peatland. Black charring indicates that fire was likely used to clear the land. July 18, 2016.
GPS: 2°44'55.1"N, 97°39'01.9"E
PHOTO: ULET INFANSATI / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION

A massive scale of conversion of the critical Singkil peatlands has occurred within PT. Agro Sinergi Nusantara. July 2016.

GPS: 2°44'36.618"N, 97°45'57.36"E

PHOTO: NANANG SUJANA / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



This image shows forest clearance for PT. Indo Sawit Perkasa's plasma area in July 2016. PT. ISP has a plantation covering over 1000 ha of which over half of the forest cover has already been cleared and planted. It's critical that the company complies with the moratorium and that the remaining standing forests are protected. It is critical that solutions are explored that secure the rights and livelihoods for local communities, such as community-based protection and management of the peatland ecosystem.

GPS: 2°49'44.136"N, 97°55'15.018"E

PHOTO: NANANG SUJANA / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



The Samudera Sawit Nabati mill straddles the boundary of lowland rainforests of Singkil-Bengkung and is at risk of sourcing Conflict Palm Oil. July 2016.

GPS: 2°46'8.28"N, 97°56'21.07"E

PHOTO: NANANG SUJANA / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



ANCIENT NORTHEAST LOWLAND RAINFORESTS UNDER THREAT



Targeted for yet more
**industrial palm oil
plantation expansion,**
these significant rainforests face the
greatest immediate risk of destruction.

A baby Sumatran elephant is pictured with its mother in the Leuser Ecosystem
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

Stretching from the district of Aceh Utara in Aceh through the district of Langkat in North Sumatra and covering 506,676 hectares, the rich lowland rainforests of northeast Leuser are under urgent threat. Targeted for yet more industrial palm oil plantation expansion, these significant rainforests face the greatest immediate risk of destruction.

Conservation experts consider the northeast lowland rainforests to be some of the most important intact rainforests left in Sumatra for securing the survival of its rich and unique biodiversity. They provide important habitat for some of the last remaining wild populations of critically endangered Sumatran elephants, tigers, rhinos and orangutans. If destruction continues, we stand to lose many of these species in the wild.

Leuser's northeast lowland rainforests are particularly important for the survival of the Sumatran elephant. Local conservationists estimate that 200 elephants, out of the fewer than 1700 individuals left in the wild, depend on these lowland rainforests. Palm oil plantation expansion is fragmenting these forests, cutting off ancient elephant migratory paths and making it difficult for herds to find adequate sources of food and water.

Encroachment on their habitat is also increasing elephant and human conflict. Herds stray onto lands cleared in their home range and come into direct contact with communities and plantation workers—frequently knocking over local community houses and supplementing their decreased food supply with local crops or newly planted palm oil seedlings. As a result, elephants are often deliberately poisoned, electrocuted or caught in traps, despite this being illegal.

A priority migratory corridor for the Sumatran elephant are the areas known as Sekoci and Sei Lapan, a combined 44,333 hectares of lowland rainforests located in the district of Langkat, North Sumatra and near the border of Aceh. These forests link Gunung Leuser National Park to 351,220 hectares of lowland rainforests in the northeast Leuser in Aceh, connecting elephants to food and water supplies they have depended on for hundreds or even thousands of years. Since the early 2000s, satellite analysis estimates roughly 10,000 hectares of forests have been cleared in Langkat district, most of which has occurred in the critical Sekoci and Sei Lapan corridor in large part for Conflict Palm Oil.

Other key species, like the Sumatran orangutan, also depend on Sekoci and Sei Lapan as a link between North Sumatra and

Aceh, but they too are being squeezed out of this corridor and their populations bisected by palm oil encroachment and related road construction. As their habitat continues to be cleared around them, orangutans are getting trapped in ever smaller islands of forests, making them even more vulnerable to extinction and in many cases leading directly to starvation or death. Local orangutan rescue operations are frequently called in to try to save stranded orangutans clinging for their lives in these corridors—a symptom of a much larger problem.

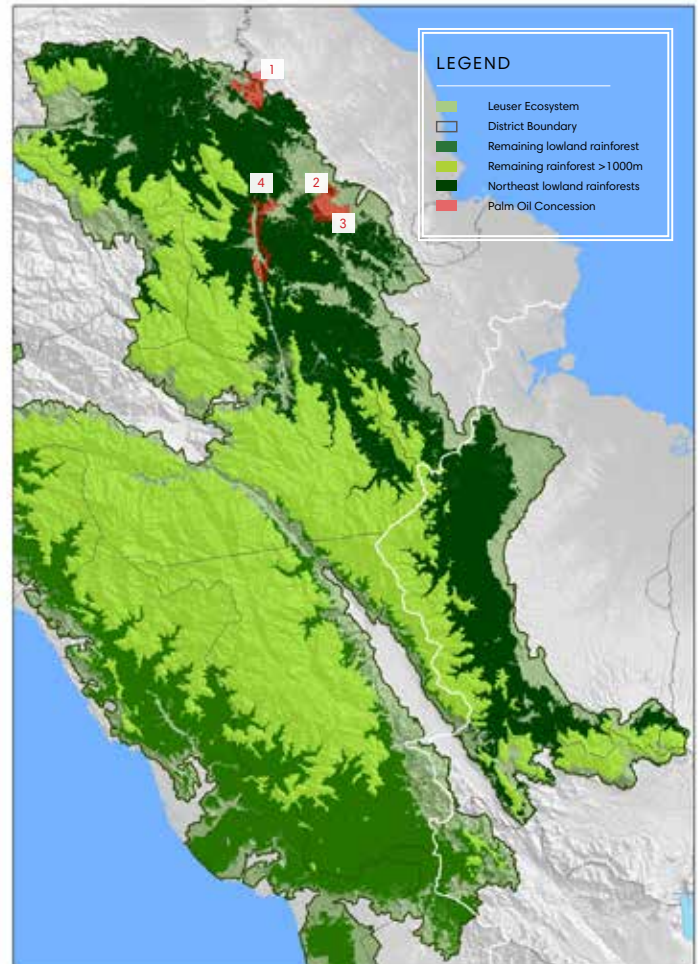
The lowland rainforests of northeast Leuser are also of considerable value to the communities living in the surrounding areas. These forests provide and regulate the flow of clean water, supplying homes, agriculture and fisheries along the coastline of northern Aceh—fish being the top source of protein for local people. Increased deforestation is also leading to extreme erosion and an increase in the frequency and severity of floods, landslides and other environmental disasters.

Environmental disasters like floods and landslides, which follow deforestation, not only impact local communities and biodiversity but also come with a steep cost. For example, the World Bank estimates the widespread flooding that struck eastern and central Aceh and parts of North Sumatra in late December 2006 cost USD \$210 million. These same floods tragically caused the deaths of 47 local residents and the disappearance of many others.

Since issuance of the circular letter on the moratorium the largest area of forest loss has occurred inside the palm oil concessions operated by PT. Tegas Nusantara, PT. Agra Bumi Niaga, PT.

Tualang Raya and PT. Aloer Timur.

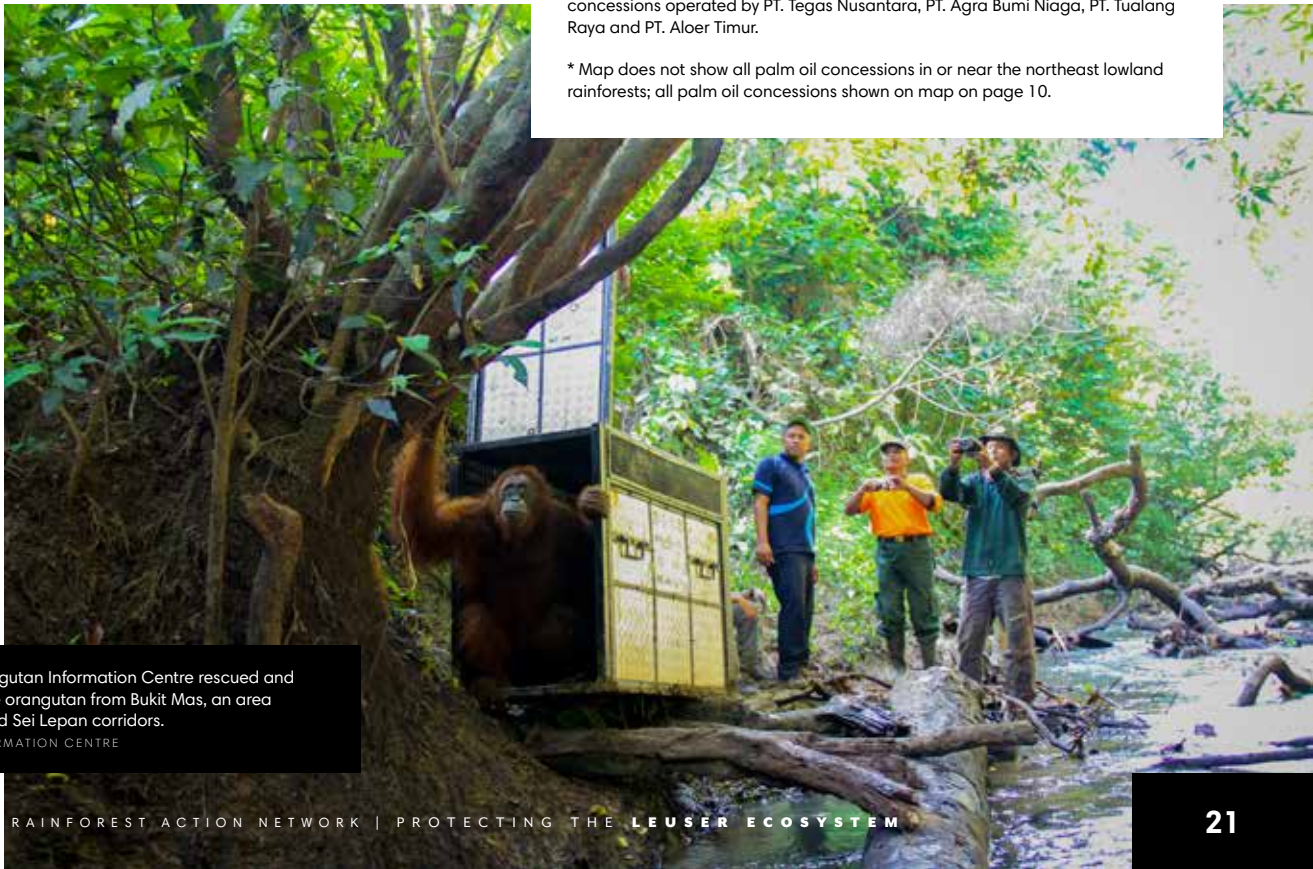
Government intervention is urgently needed to protect the remaining forests in these concessions from further clearance for Conflict Palm Oil.



PALM OIL CONCESSIONS: (1) - PT. Tualang Raya, (2) - PT. Agra Bumi Niaga, (3) - PT. Aloer Timur, (4) - PT. Tegas Nusantara

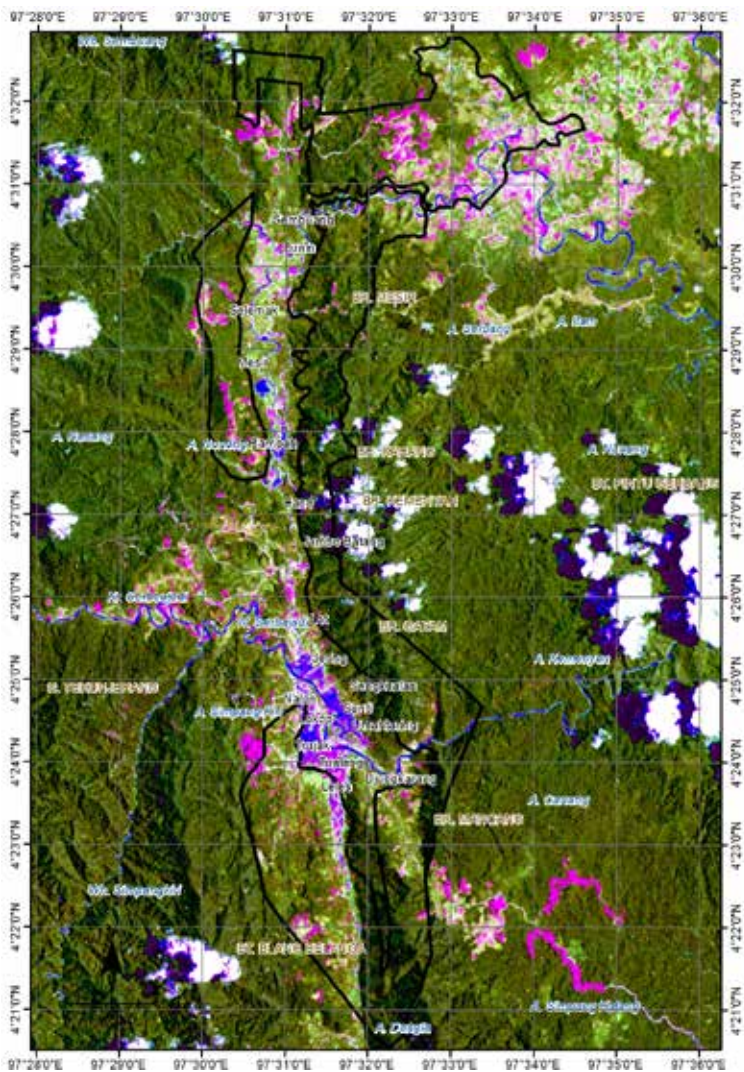
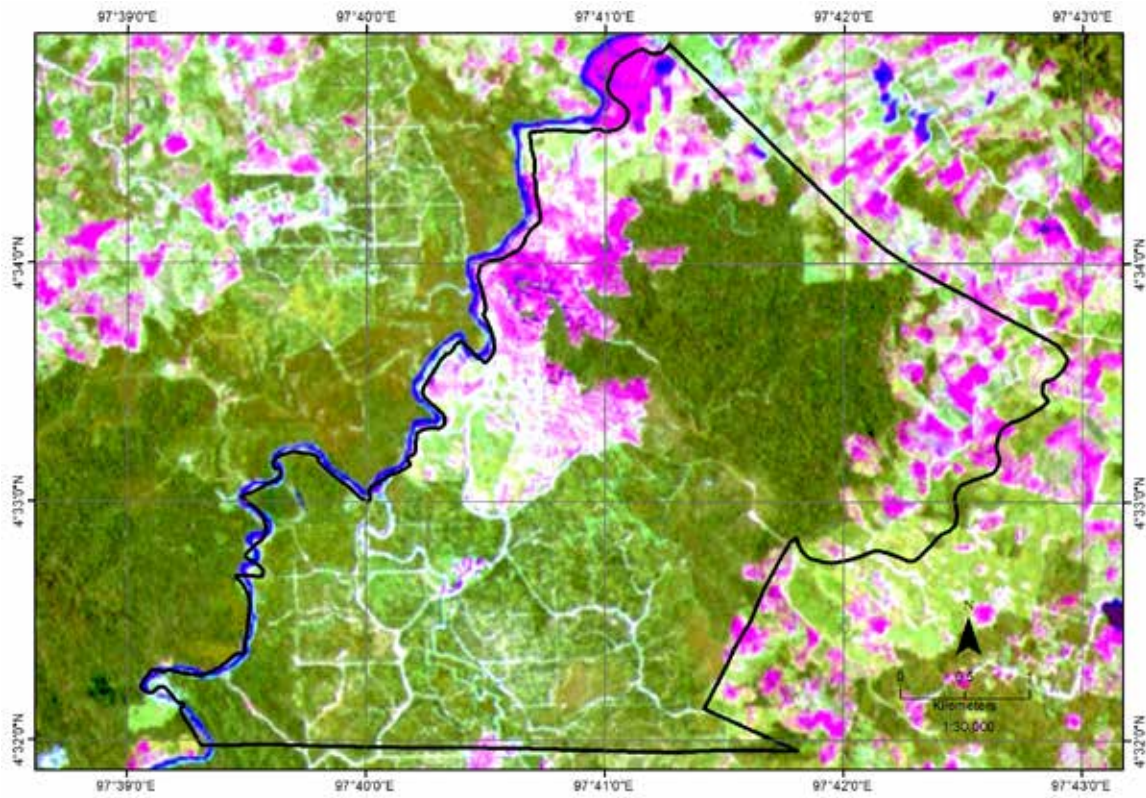
The lowland rainforests of northeast Leuser, covering 506,676 hectares, face the greatest immediate risk of destruction. Since issuance of the circular letter on the moratorium the largest area of forest loss has occurred inside the palm oil concessions operated by PT. Tegas Nusantara, PT. Agra Bumi Niaga, PT. Tualang Raya and PT. Aloer Timur.

* Map does not show all palm oil concessions in or near the northeast lowland rainforests; all palm oil concessions shown on map on page 10.



In January 2016, the Orangutan Information Centre rescued and relocated an adult female orangutan from Bukit Mas, an area adjacent to the Sekoci and Sei Lengan corridors.

PHOTO: ORANGUTAN INFORMATION CENTRE



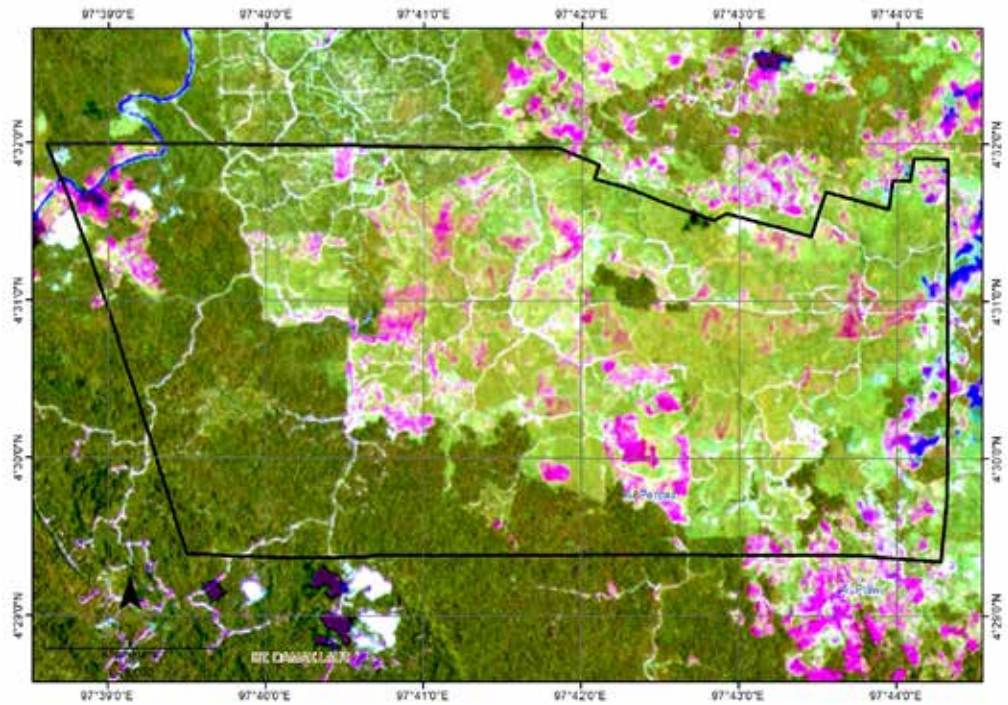
63 hectares of forest has been lost inside PT. Agra Bumi Niaga (ABN) since the issuance of the Governor of Aceh's circular letter. Forest clearance continued in the three months following the circular letter despite the concession being sealed off on June 22, 2016 by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry because the company did not have the proper permit for land clearance.

GPS COORDINATES FOR CLEARANCE: 4°34'02.0"N, 97°41'14.0"E

In the palm oil concession operated by PT. Tegas Nusantara, 81 hectares of forest has been lost since the issuance of the circular letter on the moratorium. This was the highest rate of forest clearance observed from July-September, 2016. PT. Tegas Nusantara must take immediate action to stop clearance inside its concession.

GPS COORDINATES FOR CLEARANCE: 4°31'36.0"N, 97°32'38.0"E

In April and June 2015 Indonesian NGO Greenomics exposed PT. Aloer Timur for clearing critically important lowland forests in northeast Leuser. At the time PT. Aloer Timur and its parent company Mopoli Raya Group were suppliers to Musim Mas and Wilmar, both of whom put Mopoli Raya on notice. Wilmar stated that it had suspended purchases from the Mopoli Raya Group for three months starting on July 9, 2015. Wilmar states it is monitoring this case therefore it is unclear whether PT. Aloer Timur still supplies the company. PT. Aloer Timur also is not included in the latest list of mills published by Musim Mas so it appears that Musim Mas has cancelled its sourcing relationship with this Conflict Palm Oil Culprit.



14 hectares of forest has been lost inside PT. Aloer Timur since the issuance of the Governor of Aceh's circular letter. Either PT. Aloer Timur is continuing to clear forest or has failed to adequately monitor its concession and engage with other parties that are developing the land.
 GPS COORDINATES FOR CLEARANCE: 4°29'35.0"N, 97°41'28.0"E

Satellite imagery shows that since the circular letter on the moratorium was issued, 14 hectares of forest were lost in the PT Aloer Timur concession, most in the northwest corner. Either the company is continuing to clear forests or failing to ensure that other parties are complying with the government's instructions to halt clearance.

FINDING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

A new initiative is underway in the district of Aceh Timur in northeast Leuser that aims to reduce major human-wildlife conflicts and halt further clearance of lowland forests that form an essential migratory path for the last 200 Sumatran elephants populating the area. This effort has been spearheaded by the District Regent Hasballah bin M. Thaib, also known as Bupati Rocky, and demonstrates that the protection of the district's last remaining lowland rainforests can deliver positive outcomes for communities, governments and palm oil companies alike.

A similar initiative has been underway in the neighboring district of Aceh Tamiang in northeast Leuser where the District Regent Hamdan Sati is removing illegally planted oil palm from Protection Forests within the Leuser Ecosystem, that are protected under national laws. These restoration efforts are critical as these forests mitigate major floods and landslides that impact local villages every year. To date, 1,500 hectares of forest have been restored and efforts continue with a goal to restore a further 10,000 hectares.

Local solutions like these show that, under the right circumstances, communities, governments and private sector actors can come together to support the protection and restoration of the Leuser Ecosystem. Such political leadership urgently needs to be supported and scaled up across all parts of the ecosystem. It must begin with an immediate halt to all clearance of forests and peatlands in the palm oil plantations being destroyed by, or under the watch of, the Conflict Palm Oil Culprits profiled in this report.

Field investigations conducted in September show that oil palm fresh fruit bunches grown in PT. Aloer Timur's plantation continues to be processed at Mopoli Raya's own mill (Mopoli Raya I Pks Tamiang).



Fresh fruit bunches being loaded onto a truck inside PT. Aloer Timur. September 30, 2016.
GPS: 4°30'59.4"N, 097°44'13.2"E

Any company sourcing from Mopoli Raya I Pks Tamiang is connected to the destruction caused by **PT. Aloer Timur**.



The same truck carrying fresh fruit bunches arrives at the palm oil mill for processing (Mopoli Raya I Pks Tamiang). September 30, 2016.
GPS: 4°17'29.04"N, 98°09'09.36"E

SUPPLY CHAIN LINKS TO THE LEUSER ECOSYSTEM

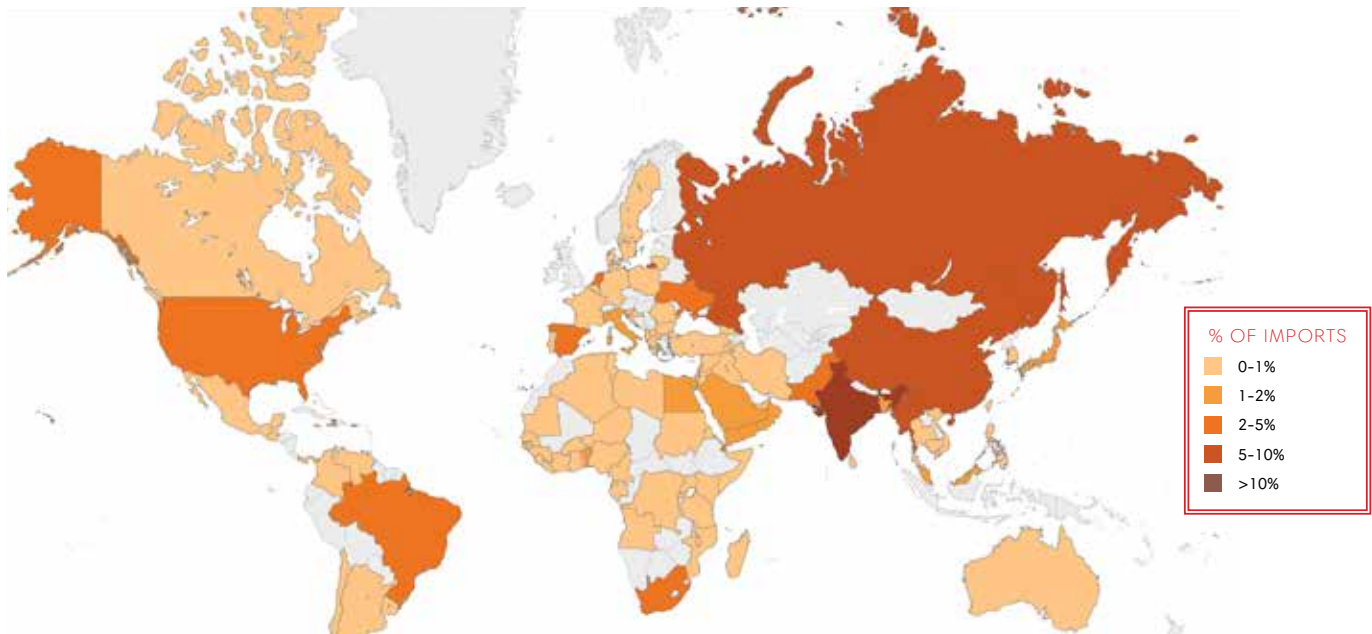
Forest clearance by rogue actors in the Singkil peatland. July 2016.
PHOTO: ULET INFANSATI / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION

The destruction of the Leuser Ecosystem may seem a world away, but it is a lot closer to home than one would think. The palm oil grown at the expense of its forests is processed and shipped around the world by global palm oil traders that supply some of the world's biggest and most well known brands, including PepsiCo, Kraft Heinz, Nissin Foods, Toyo Suisan and Tyson Foods. These brands are part of a group—dubbed by RAN as the Snack Food 20—that sell their products in dozens of countries in addition to the US, including Southeast Asia, India, China, Japan, and Europe. Together, they have the power to engage with their global supply chains to drive a fundamental transformation of the way palm oil is traded and produced.

The Snack Food 20 brands manufacture a diversity of consumer goods products using palm oil produced across Indonesia,

Malaysia, Central and West Africa and Latin America. Indonesia is the largest producer of palm oil globally. Palm oil grown at the expense of its rainforests, including the Leuser Ecosystem, is shipped to the USA, Europe, India, China, Japan and other countries across Asia. Many of the Snack Food 20 companies have manufacturing facilities in the countries that source palm oil from ports across Indonesia. None of the Snack Food 20 have traced all of the palm oil products they use to the plantations where the palm oil fruit was grown. This means they are unable to guarantee to customers worldwide that their products have not led to the destruction of Indonesia's rainforests. Given these supply chain connections, whether you are buying foods such as mac and cheese, a frozen apple pie, a granola bar, instant noodles or a bag of potato chips, you are at risk of consuming Conflict Palm Oil that has been grown at the expense of the Leuser Ecosystem.

IMPORTERS OF PALM OIL FROM MEDAN (APRIL - JULY 2016)



The palm oil exported from Medan has a global reach, with exports being shipped to more than 100 countries globally, the palm oil ends up in a vast number of different consumer goods and industrial products sold by consumer brand companies.

Exports of palm oil products from Aceh and North Sumatra, the two provinces where the Leuser Ecosystem is located, leave Indonesia through the port of Belawan. This port is to the north of Medan, where most of the refineries are located, and further south from the port of Kuala Tanjung where Wilmar, the world's largest palm oil trader, is operating a large facility. These refineries process crude palm oil and palm kernel oil prior to being shipped in large quantities to refineries and manufacturing facilities around the world. According to official Indonesian export data, in the months from April to July 2016 around 20% of all Indonesian palm oil exports originated in this region. This is an increase in the proportion of overall exports from this region from May, June and July 2015, when these ports were responsible for less than 17% of all Indonesian exports.

The palm oil exported from the ports around Medan has a global reach, with exports being shipped to more than 100 countries globally, the palm oil ends up in a vast number of different consumer goods and industrial products sold by consumer brand companies. In the four months from April to July 2016, 18% of products were exported to India, followed by China, the European Union, Russia (9% each) and Myanmar (8%). Around 4.5% of the exports were shipped to the United States, while Japan received 2% of all exports. More than half of all exports of palm oil products from Medan were sent to Asian countries.

Over the past several years, a growing number of consumers have begun to understand their connections to these major brands and demanded for change in the palm oil industry. As palm oil can be found in roughly half of all packaged goods, as consumers, we are all linked to the Leuser Ecosystem and have a responsibility to do what we can to protect it from further Conflict Palm Oil expansion. Due to consumer pressure, a majority of the Snack Food 20 companies have adopted responsible palm oil procurement policies, which in turn has resulted in their suppliers—including Wilmar, Golden Agri-Resources and Musim Mas—in doing the

same. Corporate policies for sourcing responsible palm oil are a first and necessary step in driving real change to the forest floor.

However, a number of the Snack Food 20, including PepsiCo, Kraft Heinz, Nissin Foods, Toyo Suisan and Tyson Foods, are lagging behind their peers. Their weak palm oil policies and loopholes place these brands at extreme risk of sourcing Conflict Palm Oil from industry laggards, including the Conflict Palm Oil Culprits destroying the Leuser Ecosystem. All brands can, and must, do more to support the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem.

Wilmar International, Golden Agri-Resources (GAR) and Musim Mas Group are the Big Three Buyers of palm oil from the region. Each company has refining facilities at the ports closest to the Leuser Ecosystem and ship palm oil from those ports to markets across the globe. The shipping of large volumes of palm oil from the refineries at these major global ports is a considerable driver for the expansion and production of Conflict Palm Oil inside the Leuser Ecosystem.

72% of exports from the region involve the Big Three Buyers (as shown below), yet each of them has relatively distinct trading patterns, as is shown by an analysis of four months of official Indonesian export data.¹ Musim Mas, the largest exporter from the region in the period analyzed, shipped one quarter of its exports to India, followed by Russia, China and Spain. Wilmar has a much more diversified customer base, led by shipments to South Africa and the Ukraine in the top third of the company's exports. The United States is GAR's largest market for palm oil exports from the region, accounting for 25% of sales by volume, followed by another quarter being shipped to China.

The main export destinations of palm oil products from Medan, near the Leuser, by the Big Three Buyers (April-July 2016) and their share of total exports are:



¹ Note that while this is official government information, there may be reporting inaccuracies

PROGRESS BY THE BIG THREE BUYERS

The Big Three Buyers have taken action to improve the practices of their suppliers in the Leuser region but, given that rogue actors continue to clear forests in the Leuser Ecosystem, it is clear more needs to be done to deliver real change on the ground. These three companies control over 50% of the global market and have

the ability to make huge impacts in their supply chains. They also control more than 70% of the exports of palm oil products from the region, yet to a large extent they are not able to trace their palm oil supply back to the plantation level and thus ensure their supply chains are not linked to the destruction of the Leuser



Peat drainage canal running through recent clearance in the Singkil peatland. July 2016.

PHOTO: ULET INFANSATI / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION

Ecosystem. It is necessary that these three key companies scale up their individual efforts to secure the protection of the last stands of intact lowland rainforests and the Tripa, Kluet and Singkil peatlands inside the Leuser Ecosystem.

The following table presents a summary of the progress that has been made by the Big Three Buyers and outlines the critical milestones that need to be achieved as rapidly as possible.

	WILMAR	MUSIM MAS	GAR
POLICIES, PROCEDURES & INITIATIVES IN THE LEUSER ECOSYSTEM			
Has global No Deforestation, No Peatland, No Exploitation policy	YES	YES	YES
Acknowledges links to the destruction of the Leuser Ecosystem	YES	YES	YES
Established transparent peatland & deforestation monitoring system	NOT TRANSPARENT	NOT TRANSPARENT	NOT TRANSPARENT
Achieved a moratorium on forest clearance in supply chain	NO	NO	NO
Achieved a moratorium on peatland development in supply chain	NO	NO	NO
Published procedures to identify risks to workers & communities	IN PART	NO	NO
Established transparent grievance system	YES	YES	YES
Published supplier non-compliance protocol	NO	NO	NO
Established local community programs	IN PROGRESS	IN PROGRESS	IN PROGRESS
Sells third party verified products meeting its policy	NO	* NOT YET	NO
SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY			
Number of refineries in region	1	3	1
Published a list of all supplying mills	YES	YES	YES
% of palm oil products in the region traceable to mill level	99%	100%	100%
Published a list of all supplying plantations	NO	NO	NO
% of palm oil products in the region traceable to plantation level for Medan refineries	14%	36%	19%
Global goal for 100% traceability to plantations	NO GOAL SET	END OF 2016	END OF 2020
Number of supplier mills within 50km of Leuser ecosystem	52	25	33

* third party verification via the Palm Oil Innovation Group

The financiers of the Big Three Buyers also have an integral role to play in ensuring that these traders scale up their efforts to halt deforestation, development on peatlands and the exploitation of local communities and workers across their global supply chains.

International and Indonesian banks and institutional investors have a responsibility to rigorously assess and address environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk issues prior to financing any company involved in forest-risk commodity sectors linked to the Leuser Ecosystem, including those related to palm oil, pulp, timber and rubber. Regrettably, a recent evaluation of the ESG policies of 28 major banks financing palm oil and other forest-risk commodities in Southeast Asia found wide variation in the content and quality of their policies, with many banks lacking applicable social or forest safeguard policies. It's no wonder that finance is considered a major driver of Conflict Palm Oil: these 28 banks alone provided more than USD \$20 billion in financing to the palm oil sector in the last five years.

All banks operating in Indonesia under the authority of the Indonesian Financial Services Agency (OJK) should be held accountable for the social and environmental harms caused by their irresponsible financing of the forest sector. Such institutions must be required to have clear policies and due diligence systems in place that prevent financing associated with corruption, illegal activities, violations of human rights including labor and/or customary land rights, deforestation, degradation of peatlands, wildfires, damage to freshwater supplies or losses of biological diversity, including in the Leuser Ecosystem.

As part of effective due diligence, banks must establish a publicly available policy that clearly stipulates a commitment to protect high conservation value (HCV) areas and high carbon stock (HCS) forests, as well as peatlands. These policies must ensure the rights to land and FPIC, as well as core labor rights. Moreover, such policies must be rigorously implemented, including through contractual agreements with the client. In particular, banks must engage directly with their clients to identify ESG risk issues related to Conflict Palm Oil and implement proactive responses to address and remedy them.

For the Leuser Ecosystem, banks must pay close attention to the palm oil refinery companies, which are the direct buyers of crude palm oil from the region. The banks financing the Big Three Buyers are found around the world, from Japan's largest banks to Wall Street, Western Europe, Australia, Europe, China, Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Indonesia. A review of the current loans, credit and bonds to Wilmar and GAR, which are both publicly-listed companies, identifies the following banks: Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG), Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC), Mizuho, JP Morgan Chase, Citi, BNP-Paribas, HSBC, Rabobank, and Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), Westpac, Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the National Australia Bank, the China Construction Bank, the China Development Bank, the Bank of China, the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC), the United Overseas Bank (UOB), CIMB Bank, DBS Bank, RHB Bank, Maybank, Bank Mandiri and Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI).

ForestsAndFinance.org - The banks and investors exposed to deforestation risks in Southeast Asia
PHOTO: ULET INFANSATI / WILDLIFE ASIA / RAN / RACING EXTINCTION



In addition to the Big Three Buyers, other companies including Indofood, Pacific Inter-link, Permata Hijau, Best Group and Agro Jaya Perdana operate refineries at the port of Belawan. Further investigations are required to determine if these refineries are sourcing Conflict Palm Oil from the Leuser Ecosystem. These companies are lagging behind the Big Three Buyers as they have so far failed to adopt comprehensive responsible palm oil policies that require all suppliers to end the destruction of rainforests, peatlands and the exploitation of local communities and workers. It is imperative that these other refinery operators buying from producers and mills in the region adopt and rapidly implement a time-bound responsible palm oil policy and support efforts to protect the Leuser Ecosystem.

REFINERY OWNER	MUSIM MAS	WILMAR	GAR	PERMATA HIJAU	PACIFIC INTER-LINK	BEST GROUP	INDOFOOD	AGRO JAYA PERDANA
RESPONSIBLE PALM OIL POLICY	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
ESTIMATED % SHARE OF EXPORTS FROM MEDAN (APRIL - JULY 2016)	34%	24%	14%	12%	5%	3%	<1%	<1%

INDOFOOD: DRIVING EXPLOITATION AND DESTRUCTION

PT. Indofood Sukses Makmur (Indofood) is Indonesia's largest food company and one of the world's largest producers of instant noodles, which contain up to 20% palm oil by weight. The company has a large consumer products distribution and sales business and partnerships with global brands such as PepsiCo, Unilever and Nestle. The company is also a major producer and processor of palm oil. The palm oil arm of Indofood, Indofood Agri Resources Ltd (IndoAgri), is the third largest private palm oil company in Indonesia. IndoAgri's palm oil plantations are conducted by its subsidiaries PT. Salim Ivomas Pratama (Salim Ivomas) and PT. PP London Sumatra Indonesia Tbk (Lonsum). IndoAgri operates a palm oil refinery near Medan in North Sumatra. Around 90% of the edible oils produced by IndoAgri's various palm oil refineries are sold within Indonesia. Parent company Indofood is a major user of palm oil with its fourteen large instant noodle factories, including one located in North Sumatra and three more in South Sumatra.

Indofood is a major laggard in the palm oil industry with documented links to the destruction of forests and peatlands and the exploitation of workers and communities. Recent investigations conducted by Rainforest Action Network, Indonesian labor rights advocacy organization OPPUK, and International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) have exposed the exploitation of workers in Indofood's own plantations in North Sumatra. Accreditation Services International (ASI), the accreditation body to the RSPO, carried out an assessment on a third Indofood plantation. ASI's report was released in September 2016, and found similarly widespread violations of Indonesian labor law, unsafe and inconsistent practices for use and storage of pesticides, a lack of contracts for casual workers prior to 2016, contract terms for casual workers which prevent them from meeting the basic minimum wage, lack of registration for social benefits for all workers, and discriminatory employment terms. To date, Indofood has failed to acknowledge the labor violations occurring in its operations, or commit to taking action to address them. Indofood is now the largest private palm oil company in Indonesia that has not adopted a comprehensive responsible palm oil policy.

ACEH'S DISASTROUS SPATIAL PLAN



Aerial view of illegal destruction of the Singkil peatland by a rogue actor. July 2016.

PHOTO: NANANG SUJANA

One of the biggest threats to the Leuser Ecosystem is the Aceh Spatial Plan (2013–2033). This disastrous land use plan has been proposed by the government of Aceh without the recognition of the Leuser Ecosystem's designation as a National Strategic Area for Environmental Protection Function under Indonesian Law No. 26/2007 on the National Spatial Plan, Government Regulation No. 26/2008 on the National Spatial Plan, and Law No. 11/2006 on Aceh Governance. As it stands, if implemented, the Aceh Spatial Plan will remove protection from large regions of forests within the Leuser Ecosystem and open up new areas to large-scale industrial development, including more oil palm and pulp plantations, logging, mining and the roads and other infrastructure that come with them.

In 2014, Indonesia's Ministry of Home Affairs submitted its review of Aceh's proposed Provincial Spatial Plan and requested for it be revised to include the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem and to comply with 20 additional issues that conflict with existing laws and procedures. The revisions have not been made by the government of Aceh, however, and instead the plan has been enacted into provincial law regardless, as Qanun No. 19/2013 for the Aceh Spatial Plan 2013–2033. Under Indonesian national law, the Aceh government is required to revise the regulation in accordance with the evaluation from the Ministry of Home Affairs, and in the absence of appropriate revisions, the Minister of Home Affairs is required to formally reject the spatial plan.

In response, nine Acehnese citizens formed GeRAM (Aceh Citizen Lawsuit Movement), and filed a class-action lawsuit in January 2016 against three defendants: Indonesia's Minister of Home Affairs for failure to reject the unlawful Aceh Spatial Plan, and the Aceh parliament and the Governor of Aceh for failing to address the legal and procedural shortcomings of the plan. The case presented by GeRAM presents evidence to show that the parliament and government have essentially enacted an illegal document into provincial law. Court proceedings are ongoing and judges will likely come to a decision by November 2016. The plaintiffs have presented four expert witnesses, including a former Indonesian Minister of Environment, each giving strong testimony to support the inclusion of the Leuser Ecosystem in the spatial plan.

In order to secure the long-term protection of the Leuser Ecosystem, the Aceh Spatial Plan must be rejected by the Minister of Home Affairs. A new spatial plan must be developed by the Governor and Parliament of Aceh that is based on a comprehensive environmental sensitivity analysis, aligned with existing laws including those that recognize and protect the Leuser Ecosystem, and maximizes the long-term interests and well being of the people of Aceh.

THREATS BY OTHER INDUSTRIES

In addition to palm oil plantations, other controversial and destructive projects threaten the Leuser Ecosystem and the species and people who depend on it. This includes poaching, mining, pulp plantations, logging operations, and geothermal and hydroelectric projects, and the road infrastructure associated with these projects.

Two pulp concessions of particular significance are PT. Rimba Wawasan Permai and PT. Rimba Timur Sentosa, which are located in the heart of prime Sumatran elephant habitat in northeast Leuser. Both concessions are historically associated with forestry giant Royal Golden Eagle International and the forests in the concessions are threatened by illegal logging and encroachment. While officially inactive due to a provincial logging moratorium, if allowed to commence operations these concessions would have devastating effects on key lowland rainforests upon which Sumatran elephants and other species depend. It is crucial that the permits for these concessions are revised and transferred for the protection of these areas consistent with Leuser's designation as a National Strategic Area for Environmental Protection Function.

Despite the moratorium in effect, the government of Aceh is planning to build a hydroelectric dam on the Kluet River in coordination with energy company, PT. Trinusa Energy Indonesia. If implemented, this controversial project and its accompanying roads would permanently damage the Kluet peatland and forests surrounding the dam site and threaten the species that call it home. This project must be cancelled and the government of Aceh must not issue any permits. The government, partnering company PT. Trinusa Energy Indonesia, and international investors should explore appropriate locations for hydroelectric projects outside of the Leuser Ecosystem.

PT. MANDUM PAYAH TAMITA: **BAD ACTOR IGNORING THE NEEDS OF ACEH'S PEOPLE**

PT. Mandum Payah Tamita is a Malaysian company with plans to develop a pulp plantation in the district of Aceh Utara inside the Leuser Ecosystem.

Communities have been resisting PT. Mandum Payah Tamita's plantation development for more than 10 years. Local communities fear that if illegal logging continues and the plantation proceeds then the destruction of the forests that grow around the headwaters of the Keureuto and Jambo Aye rivers will result in major flooding, which would severely damage their homes and threaten their livelihoods. The forests under threat are also a source of rattan and honey for local people and a crucial corridor for the Sumatran elephant.

In response, a coalition of Indigenous leaders and NGOs called the North Aceh People's Movement to Protect the Cut Mutia Protected Forest is demanding that the Governor of Aceh revoke the company's license to operate in this important water catchment area. A letter was issued in February 2016 but the Government of Aceh is yet to respond.

To prevent social conflicts of this nature or similar conflicts in this region and elsewhere, governments must secure the land rights for communities with statutory, customary or informal land rights all across Indonesia, including Aceh and North Sumatra. Governments must also aid in resolving conflicts between communities and companies that have resulted in the displacement of communities from their customary lands.

KEY ACTIONS NEEDED BY INFLUENCERS & DEALMAKERS

BRANDS

The Snack Food 20 have a role to play in securing the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem. These and other global brands drive the demand for palm oil that is pushing palm oil plantations into critical areas of the Leuser Ecosystem. The Snack Food 20 need to step up their supply chain implementation efforts, including investments in solutions that deliver the protection of the Leuser and ensure that their suppliers are not sourcing from the Conflict Palm Oil Culprits responsible for its destruction. A failure to support initiatives to halt the destruction of the Leuser will be a breach of the commitments that many of these brands have made to their customers to cut Conflict Palm Oil. Laggards, such as PepsiCo, Kraft Heinz, Nissin Foods, Toyo Suisan and Tyson Foods, must take the first step and adopt a comprehensive and time-bound responsible palm oil policy.

PALM OIL TRADERS AND PROCESSORS

The Big Three Buyers, and other palm oil refiners and mill owners exposed in this report must stop buying palm oil that has been grown at the expense of the lowland rainforests and peatlands of the Leuser Ecosystem. These companies must use their buying power to drive improvements in the practices of all palm oil companies and smallholders in their supply chains and invest in efforts to protect the lowland rainforests and peatlands of the Leuser Ecosystem. Laggards such as PepsiCo's partner Indofood, Permata Hijau, Pacific Inter-link, Best Group and PT. Agro Jaya Perdana must take the first step and adopt a time-bound responsible palm oil production and procurement policy.

COMMUNITIES

The long term protection of the Leuser Ecosystem relies upon the participation of local communities across Aceh and North Sumatra. Bottom-up approaches where community rights are recognized and the voices of customary landowners and communities are heard will be integral to the alternative development solutions needed to maintain the Leuser's unique ecological values. If given the chance, communities can play a key role in carrying out solutions on

The survival of the Leuser Ecosystem depends on decisions made by a number of key influencers and dealmakers. These actors—from the global brands that use palm oil in snack foods, instant noodles and cosmetics, to the biggest traders and processors of palm oil and the transnational banks that fund the industry at large—must work together with communities and local and national governments in Indonesia to secure the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem. While the actions each actor needs to take may differ, the need for urgency is crystal clear.

the ground such as monitoring, safeguarding the conservation of their forests, and maintaining the unique cultural values of the region. The international community at large must support and stand in solidarity with local communities, and provide technical support to local and national governments, as they work to protect Indonesia's rainforests and peatlands, including the Leuser Ecosystem.

FINANCIERS

International and Indonesian banks and institutional investors have a responsibility to rigorously assess and address environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk issues prior to financing any company involved in forest-risk commodity sectors linked to the Leuser Ecosystem. As part of effective due diligence, banks must engage directly with their clients to identify risk issues related to Conflict Palm Oil and implement proactive responses to address and remedy them. For the Leuser Ecosystem, this is particularly the case for the palm oil refinery companies, which are the direct buyers of crude palm oil from the region.

GOVERNMENTS

All levels of government in Indonesia, as well as the international community, can strengthen policies and support frameworks to secure and uphold the legal protections afforded to the Leuser Ecosystem as a Nationally Strategic Area for its Environmental Protection Function. Most importantly, a new spatial plan for Aceh must be adopted and implemented. It must shift development priorities from the current model to one which does not rely on industries destructive to the unique ecological values of the Leuser. Instead, the revised plan should build on and enhance the ecological values of the region while benefiting and being driven by the collective voices and needs of local communities. In order to maximize long term benefits to Aceh's people, it must secure land rights and livelihoods, mitigate natural disasters by considering proper environmental sensitivity analyses, and promote responsible development alternatives that deliver payments for securing the protection of its remaining rainforests and peatlands.

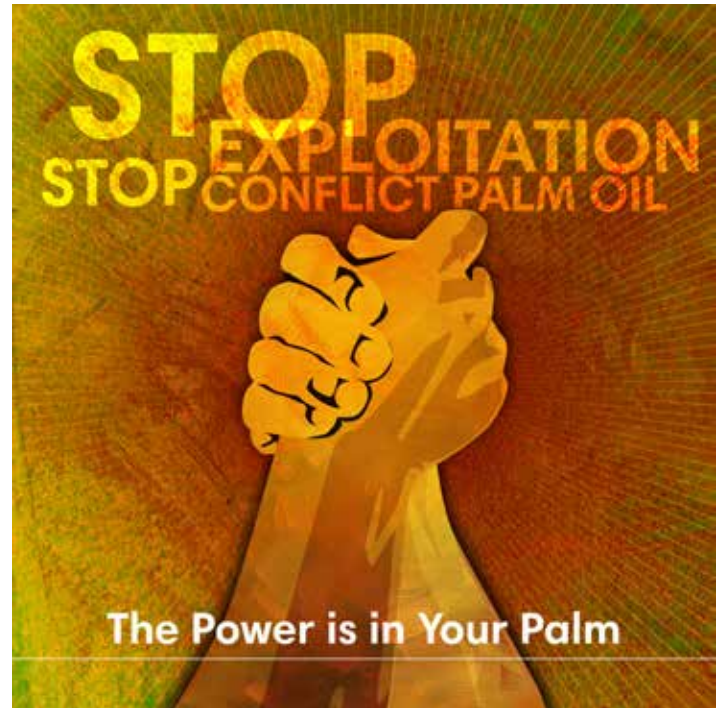
A GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION



Together we can protect the endangered Leuser Ecosystem. We will use our voices and amplify the calls to secure the protection of the Leuser Ecosystem and the livelihoods of the over 5 million people that depend on it for their well being and future prosperity. With your help, we will build a global movement to match: 5 million people that will stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Aceh and North Sumatra and demand an end to Conflict Palm Oil.

One of the most powerful ways that we can drive change is by demanding more from the major snack food companies driving the destruction of critical rainforests, including the Leuser Ecosystem. It is unacceptable that Snack Food 20 Laggards PepsiCo, Kraft Heinz, Nissin Foods, Toyo Suisan and Tyson Foods have failed to take meaningful action to address their Conflict Palm Oil problem or do their part to save the Leuser. If enough of us speak up, these global brands will listen.





Join us as we build a movement that will convince these snack food giants to stop the expansion of Conflict Palm Oil in its tracks **and save the Leuser Ecosystem.**

Visit RAN.org/snackfoodlaggards and take action to save the Leuser today.



RAN and the Illuminator Project stage an 'urban intervention' at NYC rock concert venue.


PHOTO: RAE BREAUX / RAN

International coalition throws elaborate protest at PepsiCo's global headquarters.

PHOTO: RASHID ZAKAT / RAN

In April 2016 protesters scaled an iconic PepsiCo landmark to demand the company cut Conflict Palm Oil.

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PHOTO: ANNA CONNELL

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit RAN.org/lastplaceonearth to download and read Rainforest Action Network's 2014 report, *The Last Place on Earth—Exposing the Threats to the Leuser Ecosystem: A global biodiversity hotspot deserving protection*, and 2015 report, *The Last Place On Earth: Tracking Progress and New Opportunities To Protect The Leuser Ecosystem*.



A critically endangered Sumatra rhino moves under the forest canopy, September 2016.
PHOTO: PAUL HILTON

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