



**Input for The Special Rapporteur on The Situation of Human Rights Defenders
Human Rights Defenders Working on Climate Change and A Just Transition in
Indonesia**

to be presented to the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in October 2025

Submitted by: ICELⁱ, Solidaritas Perempuanⁱⁱ, WALHIⁱⁱⁱ, WGII^{iv}, YAPPIKA^v

A. Human Rights Defenders Working on Climate Change and Just Transition Under Siege

1. Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) play a vital role in environmental and climate justice advocacy in Indonesia. They play a critical role in exposing environmental harm, protecting community rights to land, water, and forests, and challenging powerful corporate and state interests. These efforts are central to achieving a just and sustainable transition. However, HRDs, particularly those working on climate change and just transition issues, are under siege.
2. Between 2014 and 2024, WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia recorded at least 1,131 environmental defenders—comprising 1,086 men, 34 women, and 11 children—who experienced violence and prosecution, with some even killed by security forces while defending the environment. Violence was most prevalent in plantation conflict areas (548 cases), followed by National Strategic Projects and National Tourism Strategic Areas (292 cases), and mining conflicts (243 cases). In 2024 alone, Satya Bumi and Protection International documented 33 cases of attacks and threats against Environmental Human Rights Defenders, involving 204 individuals (including Indigenous people) and 15 groups. Perpetrators were predominantly police forces (involved in 16 cases) and companies (involved in 13 cases),¹ highlighting persistent and systemic risks faced by defenders, especially those in remote and rural areas with limited access to justice.²

¹ Satya Bumi and Protection International, “Tak Ada Ruang Aman, 204 Pembela HAM Lingkungan Jadi Korban Serangan Sepanjang 2024 ”, <https://satyabumi.org/laporan-ehrd-2024-tak-ada-ruang-aman-204-pembela-ham-lingkungan-jadi-korban-serangan-sepanjang-2024/>

² Freedom of Association Coalition (YAPPIKA), PSHK, LBH Jakarta, IMPARSIAL, and ELSAM, “Input for the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Working in Remote and Rural Areas in Indonesia - 58th



3. The arrest, arbitrary detention, and ill-treatment of HRDs working on climate and just transition issues constitute acts of torture under international human rights law, including the Convention Against Torture. These violations not only inflict personal suffering but also undermine broader struggles for food sovereignty, environmental protection, and sustainable development. Each act of violence against a defender represents a profound violation of human dignity and a setback for global climate and human rights commitments.
4. Indonesia's aggressive pursuit of economic development, exemplified by its promotion of National Strategic Projects like food estates, often sacrifices environmental safeguards and deepens climate risks. Communities located within development zones have faced increased impoverishment and declining living standards. Alongside these trends, the Indonesian government has intensified the practice of autocratic legalism—the manipulation of law to consolidate political power at the expense of ecological protection. The 2022 Omnibus Law on Job Creation has seriously weakened environmental protections, impacting 7,595 people across 57 villages, including 3,624 women (47.7%) and 3,971 men (52.3%). The 2024 revision of the Conservation Law continues to leave women environmental defenders and Indigenous peoples vulnerable to malicious prosecution, while the recently revised Military Law (2024) institutionalizes militaristic repression, escalating violence and intimidation against communities resisting environmental destruction.

B. Human Rights Defenders and Marginalized Groups Facing Multiple Violences

5. *Women and vulnerable groups bear the brunt of violence and displacement linked to major development projects.*

Women and other vulnerable groups have been disproportionately affected. According to Solidaritas Perempuan (2024)³ the construction of Makassar New Port displaced 150 traditional fisherfolk (131 women, 19 men) in Tallo and Buloa, erasing their fishing livelihoods and exposing them to violence. In Wadas Village, Central

session of the UN Human Rights Council, https://yappika-actionaid.or.id/uploads/downloads/FINAL_Input_for_HRC_report_2025_on_HRDs_in_Remote_and_Rural_Areas_-_Freedom_of_Association_Coalition_-_31Oct2024.pdf

³ Solidaritas Perempuan, "Catatan Tahunan Solidaritas Perempuan Tahun 2024", <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xT-1dqPzxmoTrp9rRJDeaOXnyTFA8qlE/view>



Java, 3,687 residents (1,944 men, 1,743 women) faced violence and legal harassment over opposition to a limestone mining project. In Poso, Central Sulawesi, seven farmers (six men and one woman) opposing a Land Bank cattle farming project were prosecuted.

6. *Indigenous peoples continue to face systemic human rights violations with limited state protection.*

Between 2021 and mid-2023, Indonesia's National Human Rights Institution (Komnas HAM) received 177 complaints from Indigenous peoples regarding land conflicts, environmental degradation, forced evictions, violence, and violations of religious freedom. AMAN (Indigenous Peoples Alliance) criticized the Indonesian government for systematically neglecting Indigenous rights, mirroring a broader global trend.⁴

7. *Peasants resisting strategic infrastructure projects are increasingly subjected to violence and prosecution.*

The Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) reported 43 cases involving 212 victimized farmers, linked to 35 National Strategic Projects. Central Java and Padang recorded the highest number of prosecutions, often initiated by large corporations such as PT Geo Dipa and PT BPI. Incidents include arbitrary arrests and accusations of theft on ancestral lands.⁵

8. *Human rights defenders in Papua experience escalating attacks fueled by state and corporate interests.*

Since 2019, Amnesty International Indonesia documented 454 attacks against human rights defenders in Papua.⁶ Environmental defenders face intimidation, forced land releases, and destruction of customary land boundaries, particularly under the expansion of National Strategic Projects and food estate initiatives. State

⁴ Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (Komnas HAM), "Melindungi Hak-Hak Masyarakat Adat", <https://www.komnasham.go.id/index.php/news/2023/8/9/2403/melindungi-hak-hak-masyarakat-adat.html>

⁵ Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (YLBHI), "Siaran Pers YLBHI & 18 LBH Kantor: Proyek Strategis Nasional Pemerintahan Jokowi 2017-2023", <https://ylbhi.or.id/informasi/siaran-pers/proyek-strategis-nasional-pemerintahan-jokowi-2017-2023-epicentrum-kekerasan-bagi-rakyat-dan-petani/>

⁶ Jubi Papua, "Pemerintah abaikan keselamatan pembela HAM di Tanah Papua", <https://jubi.id/polhukam/2024/pemerintah-abaikan-keselamatan-pembela-ham-di-tanah-papua/>



actors (military, police, local officials) and non-state actors (companies, pro-corporate groups) play a central role in these violations.⁷

9. *Renewable energy and net-zero initiatives expose local communities to new forms of injustice.*

While Indonesia's FOLU Net Sink 2030 promotes community involvement in forest conservation, researchers have found that Indigenous farmers are unfairly blamed for forest fires.⁸⁹¹⁰¹¹ Projects like the Mentingan Dam (West Lombok) and Poso Hydropower (Central Sulawesi) have caused severe environmental, social, and economic harm—destroying livelihoods, increasing disaster risks, and exacerbating community vulnerability, particularly among marginalized groups.

c. The Vicious Cycle Impacting Women Human Rights Defenders in Indonesia

10. The intersection of harmful state policies, structural poverty, and the climate crisis has disproportionately impacted Indonesian women. Extreme weather events—floods, droughts, and crop failures—have forced women farmers and fisherwomen into deeper precarity. Damaged coral reefs and shifting fish patterns push fisherwomen to venture farther offshore at greater cost for fewer catches. According to Solidaritas Perempuan, patriarchal development practices have affected 7,595 people in 57 villages, 47.7% of them women, worsening economic vulnerability. As a survival strategy, many women incur informal debts or migrate abroad as Women Migrant Workers (WMWs), often entering the high-risk domestic work sector with little state protection.

⁷ Ancaman Kepada Pembela HAM Lingkungan Papua Tahun 2020, https://pusaka.or.id/riset_investigation/ancaman-pembela-ham-lingkungan-papua/

⁸ Research project that covered interconnected topics focused on examining decentralizes fire governance of Indigenous Dayak in Central Kalimantan. One of it focused on how forest fire could jeopardize carbon reduction targets, can be accessed on <https://www.insideindonesia.org/editions/edition-156-apr-jun-2024/carbon-on-fire>. More articles on https://linktr.ee/fireplay_id

⁹ Goldstein, J. E., Graham, L., Ansori, S., Vetrira, Y., Thomas, A., Applegate, G., Vayda, A. P., Saharjo, B. H., & Cochrane, M. A. (2020). Beyond slash-and-burn: The roles of human activities, altered hydrology and fuels in peat fires in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 41(2), 190-208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12319>

¹⁰ LestariN. (2019). Factors Causing Failure of the REDD+ Program Implementation in Central Kalimantan. *Jurnal Manajemen Hutan Tropika*, 25(1), 28. <https://doi.org/10.7226/jtfm.25.1.28>

¹¹ Ansori, S. (2022, March 17). *Fire (and) infrastructure: Addressing environmental burden of indigenous peoples in Indonesia*. EnviroSociety, <https://www.envirosociety.org/2022/03/fire-and-infrastructure-addressing-environmental-burden-of-indigenous-peoples-in-indonesia/>



9. The intersection of harmful state policies, structural poverty, and the climate crisis has disproportionately impacted Indonesian women. Extreme weather events—floods, droughts, and crop failures—have forced women farmers and fisherwomen into deeper precarity. Damaged coral reefs and shifting fish patterns push fisherwomen to venture farther offshore at greater cost for fewer catches. According to Solidaritas Perempuan, patriarchal development practices have affected 7,595 people in 57 villages, 47.7% of them women, worsening economic vulnerability. As a survival strategy, many women incur informal debts or migrate abroad as Women Migrant Workers (WMWs), often entering the high-risk domestic work sector with little state protection.
10. Between October 2023 and September 2024, the Coalition of Sovereign Migrant Workers (KBMB) recorded the deportation of 1,941 undocumented migrant workers from Sabah, Malaysia to Nunukan, Indonesia, including 454 women and 218 children. Detainees suffered unsanitary conditions, scabies outbreaks, and reproductive health problems due to a lack of clean water and hygiene. Meanwhile, Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) continue to face militarization, land grabbing, and state violence—fueled by the Revised Military Law—further entrenching poverty, forced migration risks, and weakening Indonesia’s human rights and climate justice commitments.

D. Structural Barriers to Human Rights and Environmental Justice in Indonesia

11. Despite ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and enshrining civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in its Constitution and laws, Indonesia’s state actors—especially law enforcement—often fail to uphold these protections. Business interests, particularly in environmental sectors, continue to override human rights commitments.
12. The state increasingly views democratic participation and civic engagement as threats rather than partnerships for sustainable development, undermining democratic governance and inclusive policymaking.
13. The lack of comprehensive protections for human rights defenders, especially those resisting extractive industries and environmental harm, fosters structural



vulnerabilities. Weak regulations perpetuate impunity, contradicting the principles of a just and equitable transition.

E. Best Practices in Defending Climate Justice and Advancing a Just Transition

14. Since 2006, the Karisma Women Farmers Group in Banjararum Village, Yogyakarta, has practiced sustainable farming based on ancestral ecofeminist traditions. They use organic fertilizers, preserve local seed varieties such as Bongkar Rice and Merah Molok, and resist global seed uniformity, maintaining biodiversity across traditional crops like tubers, bananas, corn, and beans.¹²
15. Research by Resilience Development Indonesia underscores the essential role of local and Indigenous communities in sustaining Micro Hydro Power Plants (MHPPs), highlighting the need for simple business models, community-led decision-making, meaningful participation, and sustainable internal funding.¹³
23. Over the past three years, significant policy advancements have strengthened protections for environmental and climate defenders. Notably, operationalization of the Anti-SLAPP clause under the Environmental Protection and Management Act has progressed: the Attorney General issued a 2022 guideline enabling prosecutors to dismiss SLAPP cases; the Supreme Court in 2023 institutionalized Anti-SLAPP protections in civil and criminal proceedings; and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2024 introduced regulations to support environmental defenders facing threats or attacks.
24. These reforms have yielded early successes. In 2023, two Jakarta activists were acquitted of defamation after producing a podcast critical of environmental destruction in Papua, with the Supreme Court affirming their right to public participation. In 2024, a Jepara activist was acquitted after posting about beach degradation on Facebook, and in Konawe, Southeast Sulawesi, activists protesting illegal mining were found to have lawfully exercised their right to public participation under environmental and human rights protections.

¹² Ari Surida, “Peran Perempuan Petani Karisma di Era Krisis Iklim dan Pangan”, <https://megashift.fisipol.ugm.ac.id/2024/08/05/pertanian-lestari-peran-perempuan-petani-karisma-di-era-krisis-iklim-dan-pangan/>

¹³ N Prilandita et al 2022 IOP Conf. Ser.: Earth Environ. Sci. 1015 012017



25. Since 2023, ASEAN has initiated discussions on an ASEAN Environmental Rights Framework. Civil society across Southeast Asia is advocating for the explicit recognition and protection of Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) within the framework, amid escalating attacks on defenders.¹⁴

F. Recommendations

26. Indonesia's Government and/or House of Representatives must immediately:
- a. Repeal the problematic laws, such as the Job Creation Law and the recent revisions of the Indonesian Army Law.
 - b. Halt the National Strategic Projects that result in environmental destruction, the intimidation of HRDs and WHRDs, forced migration, impoverishment, and increased vulnerability.
 - c. Enact the Climate Justice Bill, Indigenous Peoples Bill, and New Criminal Procedural Law incorporating an Anti-SLAPP mechanism and robust judicial scrutiny to protect HRDs, through meaningful consultation with civil society.
 - d. Revise the Human Rights Law and Law on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers through meaningful participation.
 - e. Take a lead in the negotiation of the ASEAN Environmental Rights Framework to protect environmental rights.
 - f. Reinforce food sovereignty policies in close collaboration with Indigenous peoples, respecting their rights and interests.
 - g. Fulfill international human rights obligations and commitments under the Paris Agreement.
27. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry must immediately adopt comprehensive climate impact assessments in Environmental Impact Assessment and impose administrative sanctions for violations.
28. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection must establish a protection mechanism, including safe houses for WHRDs facing violence and attacks.

¹⁴ ICEL, AYF, ENTER Nusantara, dan lain-lain, "Kertas Posisi Organisasi Masyarakat Sipil Indonesia terhadap ASEAN Environmental Rights Framework", <https://icel.or.id/id-id/kerja-kami/publikasi/kertas-kebijakan/v/kertas-posisi-organisasi-masyarakat-sipil-indonesia-terhadap-asean-environmental-rights-framework>



29. Bank, financial institution, and financial service authority must adopt human rights due diligence procedures when financing climate, energy transition, and green projects.
30. Law Enforcement Officials must
 - a. Effectively implement the protection of witnesses and victims and the anti-SLAPP clause, and ensure widespread dissemination among law enforcement bodies and civil society organizations across Indonesia.
 - b. Apply human rights-based approaches in handling HRD cases, refraining from arbitrary prosecution, violence, intimidation, or torture.
31. The UN Human Rights Council should:
 - a. Facilitate multilateral dialogues to enable Indonesia and other countries to exchange best practices on green investment and climate financing that respect human rights.
 - b. Establish effective communication channels with Indonesian civil society organizations to monitor the protection of HRDs and WHRDs.
 - c. Provide technical assistance and capacity-building support to help harmonize Indonesian regulations with international human rights standards, particularly regarding HRDs and WHRDs working on climate justice and just transition
32. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders should conduct a country visit to assess the situation of HRDs and WHRDs working on climate change and just transition.
33. Civil society organizations and movements at the local, national, and international levels, along with the general public, must continue to support and strengthen solidarity in addressing human rights violations, particularly in the protection and defense of HRDs engaged in climate justice and just transition work.



ⁱ **Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL)** is a non-governmental organization that works for the realization of environmental justice based on the values of democracy, human rights, civilization, sustainability, rule of law, and good sustainable development governance. Visit: <https://icel.or.id/>

ⁱⁱ **Solidaritas Perempuan** is a feminist organization worked with grassroots women with a vision to realize a democratic social order, based on the principles of justice, ecological awareness, respect for pluralism and anti-violence based on an equal system of male and female relations where both can share access and control over natural, social, cultural, economic and political resources fairly. Visit: <https://solidaritasperempuan.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ **Walhi** is the oldest environmental organization in Indonesia. Visit: <https://www.walhi.or.id/>

^{iv} **Working Group ICCAs Indonesia (WGII)** is a working group formed after the ICCAs (Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas) Symposium in 2011 aims to promote and enhance the understanding of Natural Resource and environmental management practices by indigenous peoples and local communities based on their local wisdom or local customs. Visit: <https://iccas.or.id/>

^v **The Peoples Participation, Initiative and Partnerships Strengthening Foundation (YAPPIKA - a member of ActionAid International)** is a non-profit organization that has been standing and working together with some communities in Indonesia since 1991 to encourage government policies to improve public services in between the fields of education and health and advocate for a better enabling environment for civil society. YAPPIKA Visit: <http://yappika-actionaid.or.id/>