



Friday, March 6, 2015

On Friday, February 27, 2015 Indonesian community activist Indra Kailani was murdered following a confrontation with security guards working for PT Wirakarya Sakti (WKS) – a company owned by the largest pulp and paper company in Indonesia, Asia Pulp and Paper (APP).

An eye-witness reported that at least seven security guards began to beat Indra at a checkpoint he needed to pass to pick up a colleague and attend a rice harvest festival. The witness' pleas for help were ignored. Indra's body was found the next day, seven kilometres away from the guard post and scene of attack. Local police are looking for seven suspects.

Europe-based environmental and human rights NGOs condemn this brutal murder. Indra was part of a growing network of people monitoring illegalities in the forestry and agriculture sector. He and many others risk their lives protecting their forests and revealing forest crimes. It is enshrined within Indonesian law via the Sistem Verifikasi Legalitas Kayu (SVLK) – Indonesia's timber legality assurance system, a part of the EU/Indonesian Voluntary Partnership Agreement – that independent forest monitors have a right to monitor their forests, and that any member of the public has the right to conduct forest monitoring.

This act of brutality shows how communities and activists are living under a constant threat from companies reliant on raw materials, often from lands the communities own under customary law. As European consumers, we rely on independent monitors from civil society organisations and communities on the ground to provide the truth behind opaque operations.

APP is well aware of the social conflicts that exist in areas it relies on for raw materials. Indonesian communities and NGOs have documented and provided information to the company about many of these conflicts. It is the responsibility of APP to clean its house of undisciplined security staff who to date have continued their unacceptable violent ways with impunity.

Conflicts over land are one of the major drivers of the rising violence against civil society and communities which rely on forested land. Combating corruption and defending local peoples'

economic, social and cultural rights is becoming more dangerous, especially when it exposes the powerful interests who are benefiting from timber and land concessions which are increasingly being protected by security forces.

The undersigned European NGOs demand that APP cooperates fully with any investigation and ensures a transparent and open process takes place to avoid corruption. We demand that APP prioritises conflict resolution over ownership and access to land with the hundreds of communities affected by its sprawling company operations. Should evidence be found linking APP or its subsidiary company in any way to this brutal crime, it must be held accountable in accordance with Indonesian law.

The undersigned European NGO further asks the EU Delegations and the European Commission to inform APP and the Indonesian Government that violence of any kind toward local communities and independent forest monitors is totally unacceptable. Indonesia has made a commitment through the VPA (enshrined in law) for civil society and community-based groups and individuals to have the right to monitor their forests.

It is incumbent upon the EU and Member States, as major consumers of pulp and paper from Indonesia, to ensure that the EU is not complicit, through its silence, in allowing this brutal crime to go unpunished.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doherty'.

Faith Doherty, Environmental Investigation Agency, UK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saskia Ozinga'.

Saskia Ozinga, Fern UK, Belgium

On behalf of:

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Denkhausbremen, Germany, Peter Gerhardt  
European Environmental Paper Network, Mandy Haggith  
Forest Peoples Programme, UK, John Nelson  
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Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker, Switzerland, Christoph Wiedmer  
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