

# Ongoing Harms, Limited Accountability

Climate, Environmental, and Human Rights  
Violations in the Indonesian Nickel Industry

June 2025








# Table of Contents

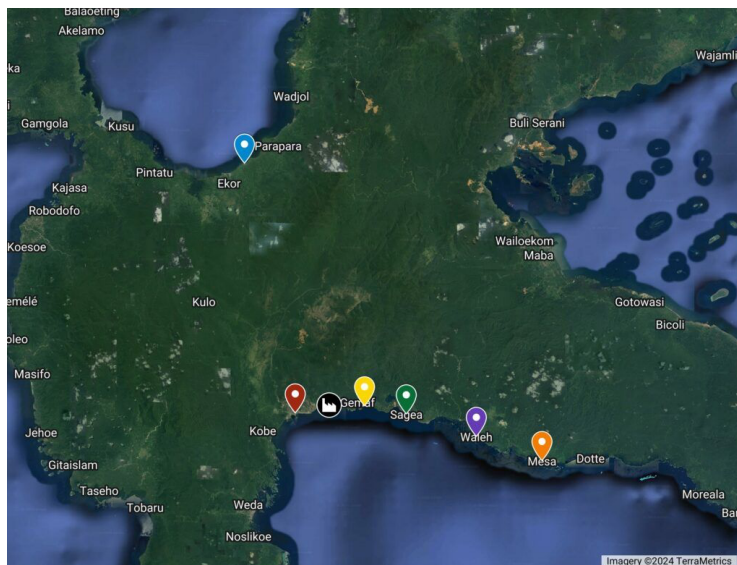
SUMMARY	5
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	13
METHODOLOGY	14
I. ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS	15
Impact on Access to Water	16
Impact on Livelihoods	19
Impact on Health	21
Increased Vulnerability to Flooding	24
Impact on Culture	26
II. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS AT STAKE	28
Cultural Impact on Sawai and Tobelo Peoples	28
Impact on O'Hongana Manyawa	28
III. CRIMINALIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS	31
IV. LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION	33
V. GROWING COAL USE AND INDONESIA'S CLIMATE GOALS	36
VI. CORPORATE ACTORS	42
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS	47
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	53
APPENDIX	54





## Villages

-  Lelilef
-  Gemaf
-  Sagea
-  Waleh
-  Mesa
-  Minamin
-  PT IWIP



## Glossary

**AEER** – People’s Emancipation and Ecological Action

**AMDAL** – Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan (Environmental Impact Assessment)

**Captive coal plant** – A coal-fired power plant that powers off-grid industrial activities and does not feed into the electricity grid.

**Transition minerals** – Also called critical minerals, these are mineral resources essential for clean energy technologies, economies, or national security.

**EIA** – Environmental impact assessment

**EV** – Electric vehicle

**FPIC** – Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

**G20** – Group of Twenty

**GHG** – Greenhouse gases

**GEM** – Global Energy Monitor

**HPAL** – High pressure acid leach

**IWIP** – PT Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park

**JATAM** – Jaringan Advokasi Tambang (Mining Advocacy Network)

**JETP** – Just Energy Transition Partnership

**NDC** – Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement

**NGO** – Non-governmental organization

**TDS** – Total dissolved solids

**WBN** – PT Weda Bay Nickel



## Summary

“The health of Sagea people has been affected considerably. More and more people contracted various health problems like respiratory infections, something we rarely got before IWIP came.”

- Anonymous resident, Sagea, December 20, 2024

“When it comes to environmental restoration, IWIP has done nothing. Floods still happen and there is no sign that it will stop.”

- Julfikar Sangaji, (JATAM, Mining Advocacy Network) activist, December 17, 2024

“We haven’t received a resolution for the pollution of the Sagea River. No one claimed to be responsible for the pollution despite the mounting facts of mining activities in the upstream area. Even the government turned a blind eye to the facts.”

- Anonymous resident, Sagea, December 20, 2024

The massive, multi-billion-dollar Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park, better known by its acronym IWIP, is an integrated nickel smelter mega-project located on the island of Halmahera in North Maluku.<sup>1</sup> It is also the site of serious environmental destruction, human rights abuses, and greenhouse gas emissions. Much of the nickel ore destined for IWIP is sourced from PT Weda Bay Nickel, the world’s largest open pit nickel mine.

In January 2024, Climate Rights International published “**Nickel Unearthed: The Human and Climate Costs of Indonesia's Nickel Industry**”, documenting how IWIP and nearby nickel mining are violating the rights of local communities, including Indigenous Peoples, causing significant deforestation, air and water pollution, and

---

<sup>1</sup> Media outlets report that total investments at the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park likely total US\$15 billion. Garry Lotulung, “A Nickel Rush Threatens Indonesia’s Last Nomadic Tribes and Its Forests, Fishermen and Farmers,” Inside Climate News, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/08012025/nickel-mines-threaten-indonesia-nomadic-tribes-and-forests/>; Project Multatuli, “China in the Downstream: Beijing Tightens its Stranglehold on Indonesia’s Nickel Industry,” <https://projectmultatuli.org/en/beijing-tightens-its-stranglehold-on-indonesias-nickel-industry/>.

emitting massive amounts of greenhouse gases from captive coal plants constructed to power the operations.<sup>2</sup>

Starting in late 2024, Climate Rights International began follow-up interviews with community members from Halmahera to inquire whether the Indonesian government or companies in the area had taken steps to remediate environmental and human rights harms and fully compensate community members for their land and assets. Based on these interviews, as well as additional reporting from other non-governmental organizations and media outlets, it is evident that community members living near IWIP continue to face serious human rights and environmental harms due to industrial mining and mineral processing operations. Indeed, the Indonesian government has failed to respond in any meaningful way to well-documented complaints from local residents about:

- large-scale deforestation;
- polluted drinking water;
- air pollution causing serious respiratory illnesses and other health conditions;
- loss of traditional farming and fishing livelihoods;
- land grabbing and lack of compensation;
- failure to undertake appropriate environmental impact assessments and make those assessments publicly available and accessible;
- lack of adequate public consultation, including obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent from Indigenous communities; and
- failure to provide necessary and timely information to communities about the scope of the project and air and water quality in the project vicinity, including in relevant local languages.

The Indonesian government's failures have enabled and been accompanied by a lack of corporate social responsibility to address these problems. Both the government and companies involved have put profits over people, in spite of the fact that the costs of addressing many of these problems would be modest.

Despite an early 2025 visit to IWIP by a committee of the Indonesian House of Representatives and a critical report to the Ministry of Environment, there is no

---

<sup>2</sup> Captive coal plants are not connected to the electricity grid and provide no power to local residents. Climate Rights International, "Nickel Unearthed, The. Human and Climate Costs of Indonesia's Nickel Industry," January 2024, <https://cri.org/reports/nickel-unearthed/>

evidence that there has been a full official investigation of the issues raised. Major companies continue to act with impunity.

In a process criticized for the lack of public consultation, in February 2025, the Indonesian parliament passed amendments to the 2009 Law on Mineral and Coal Mining, which may weaken environmental governance and threaten the rights of local communities. These changes aim to accelerate nickel downstreaming — processing raw materials domestically for economic gain — but may come at steep social and environmental costs.

\* \* \* \* \*

IWIP is a joint venture established in 2018 and now operated by the Chinese conglomerates: Tsingshan Holding Group, Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Ltd., and Zhenshi Holding Group. While IWIP claims, on its website, that it “has [a] vision and mission to conduct a sustainable development and to minimize the emission of greenhouse [gases],”<sup>3</sup> the site is fueled by eleven newly constructed captive coal-fired power plants, with three more captive coal plants under construction. Once fully operational, these fourteen coal plants will have 4.54 GW of capacity.<sup>4</sup> Pollutants emitted from these coal plants have been linked to rising respiratory illnesses among residents.

Some of the nickel processed at IWIP is used in the production of EV batteries by auto companies. Powering the production of nickel with coal undermines the purpose of EVs, which are intended to reduce the global reliance on fossil fuels. Additional captive coal plants, facilities to process nickel for EV batteries, and plants to produce EV batteries, are currently planned or under construction at IWIP.<sup>5</sup>

Much of the nickel ore processed at IWIP comes from nearby Weda Bay Nickel, the largest open pit nickel mine in the world, as well as dozens of other nickel mining

---

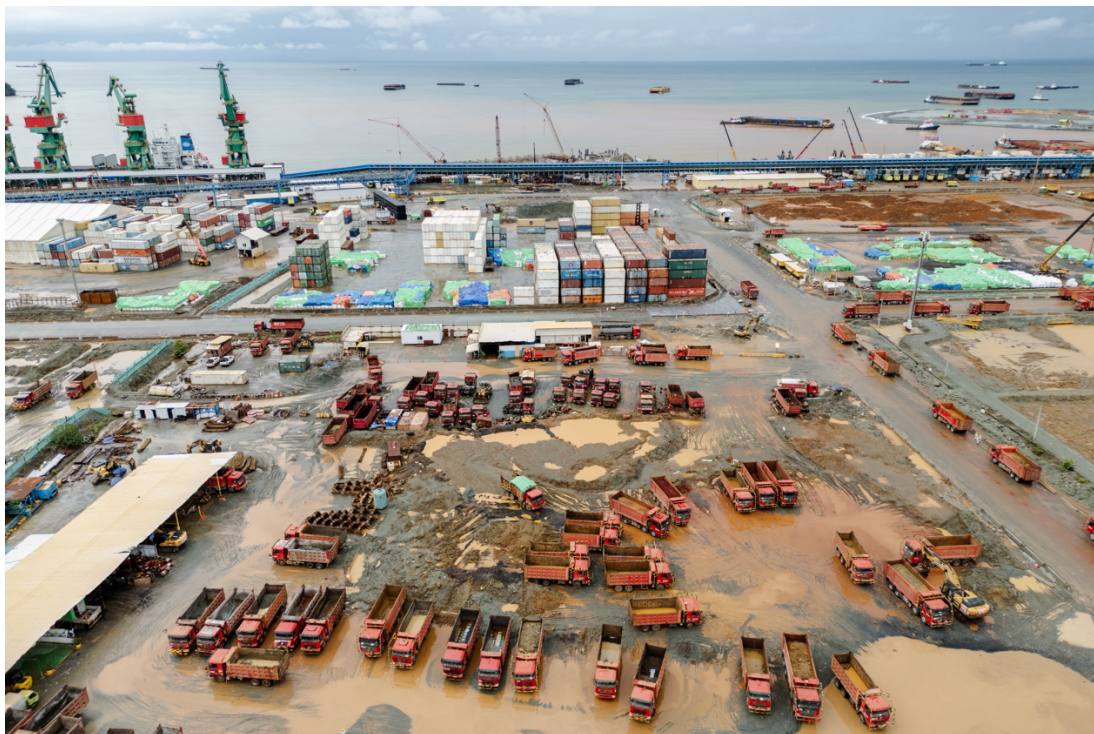
<sup>3</sup> IWIP, “About IWIP,” <https://iwip.co.id/en/about-iwip/> (accessed February 21, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Global Energy Monitor, “Weda Bay power station,” [https://www.gem.wiki/Weda\\_Bay\\_power\\_station#](https://www.gem.wiki/Weda_Bay_power_station#) (accessed February 21, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g. Huayou Cobalt, “Huayou Indonesia Precursor Project Starts,” May 11, 2024, <https://www.huayou.com/en/news/corporate-news/195> (announcing the beginning of construction for a project that will export 50,000 tons per year of Precursor Nickel Cobalt Manganese Hydroxide (NCM), an important raw material in the production of electric vehicle batteries); Editorial team, “Visit IWIP, Minister Of Industry Agus Gumiwang Ensures Precursor Exports In Early 2025,” VOI, December 23, 2024, <https://voi.id/en/economy/439347> (“Weda Bay Project will also continue to develop with plans to produce Electric Vehicle Battery and Energy Storage System (Energy Storage System) which will be managed by PT REPT Battero Energy Co. Ltd. This battery production capacity will start at 8 GWh in March 2026 and expand to 20 GWh by 2027.”)



concessions in Halmahera. Weda Bay Nickel is owned and operated by Tsingshan Holding Group, Eramet, and PT Antam Tbk.<sup>6</sup>



Trucks carrying nickel ore are parked as workers take a break at Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP) in Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. August 13, 2024.

© Garry Lotulung.

Local rivers once used for drinking water, such as the Sagea River, have become unsafe for consumption due to pollution. Water tests by Indonesian NGOs AEER and JATAM in 2023 revealed dangerously high levels of nickel and hexavalent chromium, among other pollutants. Residents no longer trust the water and fear for their health. Both IWIP and Weda Bay Nickel deny responsibility for the pollution.

Though companies claim to monitor water quality with third-party inspections and sensors, data transparency is lacking. Tests are not shared publicly, and villagers do not have consistent access to safe alternatives or information that could help them protect themselves.

Traditional livelihoods—fishing, farming, sago processing, and hunting—have been deeply disrupted by nickel mining and processing. Artisanal fishers in coastal

---

<sup>6</sup> Tsingshan Holding Group is a privately-owned Chinese conglomerate, Eramet is a France-based mining company, and PT Antam is majority owned by the Indonesian government. Weda Bay Nickel, “About Us,” <https://www.wedabaynickel.com/en/weda-bay-nickel/about-us/governance/> (accessed March 4, 2025).

villages like Gemaf and Lelilef report dramatic reductions in fish catches. Sago producers in Waleh say polluted river water is altering the taste and safety of their staple food. Forest clearance and land acquisition by mining firms have left many with no viable economic alternatives.

Air and water pollution from the industrial park are likely contributing to a spike in respiratory infections and other health problems. According to JATAM, an Indonesian NGO, data from community health centers near IWIP shows that the number of individuals who experienced respiratory infections has increased substantially since IWIP began operations.<sup>7</sup> Health facilities near IWIP also noted rises in allergic dermatitis and bronchitis.<sup>8</sup>

Local residents link the deterioration in community health directly to industrial emissions and coal plant pollution. Julfikar Sangaji of JATAM told Climate Rights International about information he obtained from just one community health clinic, in Lelief:

Over a span of three years, the prevalence of respiratory infections has increased by more than 24-fold. I managed to secure data from the local health authority in Central Weda back in 2024. It shows that the number of patients with acute respiratory tract infections has been steadily increasing from 434 patients in 2020 to 10,579 patients in 2023.<sup>9</sup>

Local residents also complained about the impact of the clearing of over 5,000 hectares of primary rainforest for mining operations. This large-scale deforestation has increased the frequency and intensity of flooding. Natural forest cover that once mitigated rainwater runoff has been stripped, making lower coastal areas more vulnerable. Neither IWIP nor mining companies in Halmahera have implemented sufficient environmental restoration to address this crisis, and at least thirteen major

---

<sup>7</sup> JATAM, “The Conquest and Pillage of Halmahera: IWIP as the Display of Corporate-State’s National Strategic Crime,” August 5, 2024, <https://jatam.org/id/lengkap/The-Conquest-and-Pillage-of-Halmahera> (accessed February 26, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Julfikar Sangaji, December 17, 2024. <https://jatam.org/id/lengkap/The-Conquest-and-Pillage-of-Halmahera> (accessed February 26, 2025).

floods have occurred since IWIP operations began. Floods in mid-2024 affected at least 6,500 residents.<sup>10</sup>

The Sawai and Tobelo peoples in Central and East Halmahera are experiencing cultural erasure as land is taken, dormitories for domestic and international migrant workers are built, and traditional economies are dismantled, all without the ability to exercise their right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. Particularly at risk are the O'Hongana Manyawa, who are nomadic hunter-gatherers. Mining concessions have encroached upon their forest territory, limiting their mobility and access to traditional resources. While companies like Eramet claim there is no evidence of communities in "voluntary isolation," Climate Rights International stresses that it appears that contact has occurred without proper safeguards or representation, threatening their rights and survival.

Cultural and spiritual heritage sites are also threatened by mining activities. The Bokimaruru karst area in Sagea is of spiritual and cultural importance to Indigenous Sawai peoples and is the site of an annual ceremony. However, nickel and limestone mining now threatens this ecosystem, and upstream mining is increasing sedimentation of the karst area.

Local activists and students who oppose IWIP have faced criminalization, harassment, and smear campaigns. In 2024, two students in Jakarta were charged with defamation and received online threats after criticizing a retired general for failing to address the impacts of IWIP on communities and the environment. Other defenders reported intimidation and defamation campaigns during elections and pressure to abandon protests. In some cases, villagers were forced to sign police agreements pledging not to disrupt mining company operations.

Adding to concerns, parliament passed revisions to the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) Act in March 2025, allowing active military members to hold civilian roles. Human rights groups fear this could intensify militarization and reduce

---

<sup>10</sup> Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro, "From Rich Soil to Flooded Plains: The Toll of Indonesia-China's Nickel Ambition," Global China South Project, Oct. 8, 2024, <https://chinaglobalsouth.com/analysis/from-rich-soil-to-flooded-plains-the-toll-of-indonesia-chinas-nickel-ambition/>.



accountability in regions affected by extractive industries. Groups such as KontraS that have spoken out have been threatened, creating an atmosphere of fear.<sup>11</sup>

Local residents in Halmahera and nearby villages remain in the dark about IWIP's plans. In 2024, IWIP conducted what appeared to be secretive environmental impact assessment consultations, known in Indonesia as AMDAL, using university personnel without disclosing affiliations. The consultations avoided Sagea, where community opposition is strong. IWIP reportedly still holds 22,000 hectares for future expansion, yet no details have been publicly confirmed.

Though the transition to electric vehicles is an essential part of the transition away from fossil fuels and in the fight against climate change, Indonesia's nickel industry is failing to operate in an environmentally responsible way that respects the environment or the basic rights of local communities. Electric vehicle companies are risking a consumer backlash from a particularly environmentally conscious customer base if they do not use their leverage to clean up the nickel industry in Indonesia — and other problematic sources of minerals, such as cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo and lithium in Chile and Argentina.

EV companies such as Tesla, Ford, and Volkswagen that directly or indirectly source nickel from Indonesia or have contracts to source nickel from companies that have operations at IWIP should immediately step up their due diligence by mapping their supply chains, setting robust decarbonization targets, and suspending sourcing from producers engaged in abuse. With or without government pressure, EV companies should follow through on their corporate social responsibility obligations and ensure that the minerals in their vehicles do not contribute to human rights, environmental, or climate harms.

\* \* \* \* \*

The environmental and human costs of the nickel industry are part of a wider problem of weak environmental protections, human rights abuses, and expanding greenhouse emissions that appear to be worsening under President Prabowo Subianto, who took office in October 2024.

---

<sup>11</sup> Andi Adam Faturahman, "KontraS Reportedly Terrorized After TNI Law Protest, House Speaker: File Police Report," Tempo, March 17, 2025, <https://en.tempo.co/read/1987484/kontras-reportedly-terrorized-after-tni-law-protest-house-speaker-file-police-report> (accessed May 23, 2025).

Despite Indonesia's vulnerability to the climate crisis as an island archipelago, Prabowo's government has made conflicting climate statements. At the G20 in November 2024, Prabowo pledged to phase out coal by 2040. However, Hashim S. Djojohadikusumo, Prabowo's brother, and the government's climate envoy, later claimed the pledge was misunderstood and that eliminating fossil fuels would be "economic suicide." Indeed, Indonesia's electricity plan includes building 20 GW of new captive coal plants over the next seven years—nearly equal to all of Turkey's current coal capacity. Prabowo and family members are heavily invested in coal, palm oil, forestry, oil and gas, and other industries.



Workers on their way to work at Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP) in Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. August 12, 2024. © Garry Lotulung.

Indonesia's climate commitments were further called into question by Prabowo's October 2024 announcement of a policy to attain domestic "food security," with the military assigned a leading role in this effort. As part of this policy, the Indonesian government is currently planning the largest deforestation project in the country's history by converting twenty million hectares of forests, including more than two million hectares of protected forests, into food and energy estate projects.<sup>12</sup> Energy

---

<sup>12</sup> Hans Nicholas Jong, "Indonesia targets 2.3m hectares of protected forests for food & biofuel crop production," February 6, 2025, <https://news.mongabay.com/2025/02/indonesia-targets-2-3m-hectares-of-protected-forests-for-food-biofuel-crop-production/>.

projects include large-scale biomass projects, as well as nickel and other transition minerals projects. Indonesia is home to the third largest tropical rainforest in the world, and the resulting deforestation from these food and energy projects would be disastrous for global climate action. New food and energy estate projects are also likely to result in the forced relocation of communities, threats to Indigenous Peoples' rights, and the loss of traditional livelihoods.

## Key Recommendations

To the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park and all nickel mining and processing companies in Central and East Halmahera:

- Remediate existing pollution and minimize future air, water, and soil pollution from industrial activities by installing air pollution control mechanisms, properly disposing of industrial waste and coal ash, and treating wastewater from industrial facilities and coal plants based on the best available science and technologies;
- Fully and fairly compensate all community members for land taken without compensation or where insufficient compensation was provided;
- Immediately stop the construction of new captive coal plans and announce concrete, timebound plans to replace existing coal plants with renewable energy sources as soon as possible; and
- Share all information related to future expansion, deforestation, land acquisition, and industrial activities with the public, and make that information accessible to local communities, including by holding public meetings and providing information in local languages.

To the Indonesian government:

- Adopt, strengthen, and enforce national laws and regulations to minimize the impacts of nickel mining and processing on communities;
- Hold accountable, including through criminal prosecutions and civil penalties, nickel mining and processing companies and their representatives that violate individual and community rights;
- Fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to Free, Prior, Informed Consent, and legally recognize Indigenous Peoples within Indonesia, including by passing the Indigenous Peoples Rights Bill; and



- Immediately stop the permitting of all new coal plants, include captive coal plants in national decarbonization and climate commitments, and move quickly to fulfill those commitments.

To electric vehicle companies:

- Leverage buying power to pressure mines, mineral processors, and suppliers to change practices that cause environmental or human rights harm;
- Conduct regular, transparent, and genuinely independent audits of mines and facilities where nickel and other transition minerals are refined to ensure that suppliers respect human rights and the environment;
- Increase transparency about EV supply chains by collecting and providing public information about all companies in supply chains engaged in mining, mineral processing, and battery production; and
- Make time-bound commitments to decarbonize supply chains.

## Methodology

This report is an update to Climate Rights International’s report, **“Nickel Unearthed: The Human and Climate Costs of Indonesia’s Nickel Industry,”** which was published in January 2024. Climate Rights International reviewed numerous reports by individuals and NGOs that have visited Halmahera since the January 2024 release of the report, including peer reviewed literature, media reports, and NGO reports, and spoke to the authors of some of those reports. In late 2024, we conducted phone and other remote interviews with local residents in Halmahera. We also reviewed legal documents and company reports. For context and continuity, we also include information from interviews conducted in 2023 that are published in “Nickel Unearthed.” All interviewees provided informed consent to participate in the interview. In some cases, we have given pseudonyms and/or withheld identifying information of interviewees to protect their identity over fears of retaliation. No financial incentives were provided to interviewees.

Prior to the release of this report, Climate Rights International wrote to the Ministry of Environment and the following companies: Eramet, Ford, Huayou Cobalt, Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park, Tesla, Tsingshan Holding Group, Volkswagen Group, PT Weda Bay Nickel, and Zhenshi Holding Group. Copies of these letters and government or company responses can be found in the Appendix.

## I. Environmental Destruction and Human Rights Violations

Rampant deforestation and habitat destruction from nickel mining and processing activities continues to impact the rights of local communities in Halmahera as the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP) continues to expand. Pollution of local rivers and Weda Bay limits access to clean drinking water and traditional livelihoods, while pollution from the eleven captive coal plants that currently power IWIP's industrial operations is having a severe impact on the health of local communities. Environmental degradation and pollution are also threatening to destroy an area of significant cultural importance to the community.

Despite complaints from local residents and numerous NGO and media reports, the Indonesian government and companies involved have taken insufficient action to limit the environmental harms, address rights violations, or provide necessary compensation.

In February 2025, the Indonesia Business Post published that the Indonesian House of Representatives' energy, minerals, and environment commission (Commission VII) reported IWIP to the Ministry of the Environment for environmental degradation after a site visit to the area.<sup>13</sup> In April 2025, Minister of Environment Hanif Faisol Nurofiq stated that, "I have learned that some small islands have been extensively polluted. So far, we've confirmed conditions in the industrial zones of Weda Bay and Morowali."<sup>14</sup> However, there is no public information about whether the Ministry of Environment has launched an investigation. Climate Rights International wrote to the Ministry of Environment to inquire about the investigation but had not received a response at the time of publication.<sup>15</sup>

In a backwards move, in early 2025, parliament passed amendments to Law No. 4 of 2009 on Mineral and Coal Mining that may weaken governance, environmental

---

<sup>13</sup> Gusty de Costa, "PT IWIP reported to Ministry of Environment for environmental damage," Indonesia Business Post, February 11, 2025 (accessed April 25, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Anton Santoso, "Indonesia to inspect mines on small islands over pollution concerns," ANTARA, April 17, 2025 (accessed April 17, 2025).

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix.

oversight, and community protections.<sup>16</sup> The amendments were passed with limited transparency, and may exacerbate deforestation and human rights problems by enabling universities and religious institutions—entities not typically involved with mining—to secure mining permits without bidding or evaluation of their environmental or social track record.<sup>17</sup> The chair of Parliament’s legislative committee told the media that the revisions were necessary to accelerate the downstreaming of transition minerals, such as nickel.<sup>18</sup> Yet, this acceleration will likely come at significant costs to frontline communities and the natural environment.

### Impact on Access to Water

Many residents in East and Central Halmahera rely on the local rivers for their drinking water. Nickel mining and smelting operations have had a serious impact on the quality of that water. Mariama, a Sawai woman in her fifties, told Climate Rights International:

The [Sagea] river is important for residents. [Before nickel mining,] the residents never drank bottled water...We used a bucket to take water from the river. But now we’re afraid to take water from the river.<sup>19</sup>

Studies of rivers in the area have confirmed her concern. Research conducted by People’s Emancipation and Ecological Action (AEER), an Indonesian environmental organization, found that the water from six rivers near Lelilef and Sagea was not safe to drink because it exceeded government limits for universally common water quality parameters, including hexavalent chromium, pH, and total dissolved solids (TDS).<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Hans Nicholas Jong, “Indonesia rushes mining law amendments, raising environmental and governance alarms,” Mongabay, January 30, 2025, <https://news.mongabay.com/2025/01/indonesia-rushes-mining-law-amendments-raising-environmental-and-governance-alarms/>. “House passes revised mining law to strengthen governance, boost industrialization,” Indonesia Business Post, February 18, 2025, <https://indonesiabusinesspost.com/3610/capitol-influence-and-lobbying/house-passes-revised-mining-law-to-strengthen-governance-boost-industrialization>

<sup>17</sup> Hans Nicholas Jong, “Indonesia rushes mining law amendments, raising environmental and governance alarms,” Mongabay, January 30, 2025, <https://news.mongabay.com/2025/01/indonesia-rushes-mining-law-amendments-raising-environmental-and-governance-alarms/>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Mariama, November 29, 2023, Sagea, North Maluku, Indonesia.

<sup>20</sup> Hexavalent chromium is typically produced by industrial processes and poses serious threats to human health, including harms to the respiratory system, kidneys, liver, skin, and eyes and increased risk of cancer. AEER, “Dilema Halmahera di Tengah Industri Nikel,” July 2023, <https://www.aeer.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Dilema-Halmahera-di-Tengah-Industri-Nikel.pdf> (accessed August 1, 2023); Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Dept. of Labor, “Hexavalent Chromium,” n.d., <https://www.osha.gov/hexavalent-chromium> (accessed October 25, 2023).



Moreover, water quality tests by the Indonesian NGO JATAM on the Ake Doma, Wosia, and Kobe Rivers near the IWIP complex showed that all three rivers contained between 4.37 mg/l and 4.84 mg/l of nickel, which is far beyond the 0.5 mg/l stipulated by the government.<sup>21</sup>

River sediment samples taken by Nexus3 Foundation, an Indonesian NGO, in 2024, found dangerously high concentrations of nickel, chromium, and cobalt in the Ake Jira River and the Ake Sagea River.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Nexus3 Foundation's analysis of water quality samples found that, "The Ake Jira River is no longer suitable for use as drinking water and clean water by the community." In addition, fish samples taken from Weda Bay by Nexus3 Foundation in 2024 had mercury and arsenic in every fish tested, with the concentration of arsenic in fish tested twenty-times higher than samples analyzed for Weda Bay Nickel's 2007 environmental impact assessment.<sup>23</sup>

Neither IWIP, the mining companies, nor the government has taken sufficient action to address this pollution. Mardani Legayelol, a youth activist from Sagea, told Climate Rights International:

The case of Sagea River pollution is not yet solved, because both PT Weda Bay Nickel and IWIP denied their involvement in the pollution, despite clear evidence that said otherwise. [The] Sagea River turns brown after rains.<sup>24</sup>

A resident from Sagea, who requested their name be withheld due to fears of retaliation, agreed:

We haven't received a resolution for the pollution of the Sagea River. No one claimed to be responsible for the pollution despite the mounting facts that said it is because of mining activities in the upstream area. Even the government turned a blind eye to the facts. The Sagea River is now brown most of the time and will turn reddish brown during the rainy season. This is something new to us, as we've never seen such color before, not until IWIP came obviously.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Julfikar Sangaji, December 17, 2024; JATAM, "The Conquest and Pillage of Halmahera: IWIP as the Display of Corporate-State's National Strategic Crime," August 5, 2024, <https://jatam.org/id/lengkap/The-Conquest-and-Pillage-of-Halmahera> (accessed February 26, 2025).

<sup>22</sup> Nexus3 Foundation, "The Extension Impact of Nickel Industry Activities in Weda Bay, Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia," May 2025, <https://www.nexus3foundation.org/publikasi/dampak-lanjutan-dari-industri-nikel-teluk-weda/>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Mardani Legayelol, Dec. 18, 2024.

<sup>25</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Sagea resident, Dec. 20, 2024.

Local residents continue to report that they are without access to basic information about the safety and quality of the water on which they rely. Without this information, they are not able to take steps to keep themselves and their families safe from potentially harmful heavy metals and other toxic pollutants.



Polluted sea water by Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP). August 14, 2024.  
© Garry Lotulung.

PT Weda Bay is majority owned by Tsingshan (51%), with Eramet (39%) and PT Antam Tbk (10%) owning the rest.<sup>26</sup> According to Eramet:

Weda Bay mine operations are not responsible for pollution of the Sagea River. In accordance with Weda Bay Nickel's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Environmental and Social Management Plans, water quality is regularly monitored, including by qualified third-party inspection entities. The monitoring program is approved by the Indonesian national licensing authorities and is drawn up in consultation with national and local authorities. Sensors are installed in various areas to monitor water quality in downstream river discharges. The data recorded by the sensors is transmitted

---

<sup>26</sup> Eramet letter to Climate Rights International, Dec. 15, 2023, <https://cri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Eramet-written-responses-to-CRI-questions.pdf>.

to government authorities. National and local authorities monitor and inspect on a regular basis.<sup>27</sup>

Whatever monitoring Eramet has done has not been made available to the local population that relies on that water, nor does Eramet's statement include the results of that monitoring. Since January 2024, Climate Rights International has been calling on the government and the companies operating at IWIP, including PT Weda Bay Nickel and its shareholders, to provide publicly available water quality monitoring systems, yet none have done so in a way that provides consistent, accessible information to residents. Multiple Indonesian NGOs, including JATAM, Forest Watch Indonesia, AEER, and Nexus3 Foundation, have reported on serious water pollution in Central Halmahera.

In an April 2024 statement on its website, PT Weda Bay Nickel reported:

Several times a year, the quality of well water in the villages closest to the industrial activities is checked by an independent sworn laboratory. Its agents come from Bogor to take water samples, which are immediately analyzed in the presence of village representatives. The results are communicated to the authorities to verify that the entire sampling and analysis process is carried out within the regulatory framework and environmental authorizations, and that the water quality meets current standards.<sup>28</sup>

However, it is unclear what pollutants or other indicators are being analyzed by samples, what steps PT Weda Bay Nickel takes if it finds the results do not meet current standards, where the samples are taken, or which local residents are present. Moreover, the statement only references checking well water, so it is unclear whether PT Weda Bay Nickel is taking surface water samples from rivers. This is crucial, as many people interviewed by Climate Rights International say they previously consumed water from rivers and do not have access to well water.

### **Impact on Livelihoods**

The degradation of freshwater resources, along with the nickel industry's destruction of forests, acquisition of farmland, and harm to fisheries, has made it

---

<sup>27</sup> Eramet, "Misconceptions about PT Weda Bay Nickel," <https://www.eramet.com/en/eramet-group/sites/eramet-in-indonesia/misconceptions-about-pt-weda-bay-nickel/> (accessed February 26, 2025).

<sup>28</sup> Weda Bay Nickel, "Village water and air measurement campaigns," April 2024, <https://www.wedabaynickel.com/en/2024/04/12/village-water-and-air-measurement-campaigns/> (accessed March 18, 2025).

difficult, if not impossible, for local residents to continue their traditional ways of life as fisherfolk, farmers, sago-makers, and hunters.

Fisherfolk in Gemaf and Lelilef, coastal villages located near IWIP, told Climate Rights International that their catch has decreased considerably since the early stages of construction of IWIP in 2018. They attribute this to pollution from the industrial complex. An anonymous resident from Sagea told Climate Rights International:

Some fisherfolk can still fish, albeit further away and with less and less catch. Others who still rely on farming or sago-making have to struggle more since their land has been surrounded by concessions and water from the river is not clean anymore.<sup>29</sup>



A fisherman throws out the remaining water pooled in his boat near Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP) in Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. August 12, 2024.

© Garry Lotulung.

---

<sup>29</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Sagea resident, Dec. 20, 2024.



This is consistent with what Marzolina Kokene, a 50-year-old fisherwoman from Gemaf, said to us in 2023:

Before, the sea was clean. The waters were crystal clear blue. Now, it's muddy and a reddish or blackish color. I can't catch fish nearby anymore.<sup>30</sup>

The pollution from upstream mining has also had an impact on those producing sago starch, a staple food of the region. Nurma, a woman in her 50's from Waleh, told Climate Rights International in 2023 that the river she has long used for production now turns red or dark brown, especially during heavy rains. She said:

It tastes different compared to sago processed using clean water from the mountain. But we have no choice because we have to keep our production. I can eat rice, but sago is a better choice, it makes me full faster and longer than rice ... Sago is part of our culture.<sup>31</sup>

Neither the companies nor the government has taken visible and sufficient action to address the impact of the nickel industry on traditional livelihoods in the area.

### **Impact on Health**

Air pollution from coal-fired power plants, combined with dust from construction and mining, air and water pollution from mineral processing, and water pollution from mining areas, continues to have a significant impact on the health of those living in the area. Air pollution is directly associated with respiratory diseases and is also a risk factor for infectious respiratory disease.<sup>32</sup>

The massive use of captive coal fired plants to power IWIP not only continues, but has increased, with two more captive coal power plants near Gemaf beginning full operations in the past year.<sup>33</sup> According to Global Energy Monitor, there are currently eleven coal plants in operation and an additional three under construction.<sup>34</sup> Once fully operational, the fourteen coal plants will have 4.54 GW of capacity (an increase from the 3.78 GW initially reported in "Nickel Unearthed").<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Marzolina Kokene, February 8, 2023, Gemaf, North Maluku, Indonesia.

<sup>31</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Nurma, February 8, 2023, Waleh, North Maluku, Indonesia.

<sup>32</sup> Rui Sun et al., "Air Pollution and Influenza: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Iran J Public Health*, 2024 Jan;53(1):1–11. doi: 10.18502/ijph.v53i1.14678.

<sup>33</sup> Global Energy Monitor, "Weda Bay power station, [https://www.gem.wiki/Weda\\_Bay\\_power\\_station#](https://www.gem.wiki/Weda_Bay_power_station#) (accessed February 21, 2025).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



Aerial view of nickel processing facilities at the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP).  
August 14, 2024. © Garry Lotulung.

According to the IWIP environmental impact assessment, coal burned at IWIP is sourced from the Indonesian province of Kalimantan, home to the country's largest coal mines. Coal mined in East and South Kalimantan is known to be low-caloric, with an average caloric content of 4,200 kcal per kilogram, and is thus a particularly high greenhouse gas emitting type of coal.<sup>36</sup>

A May 2025 report by the Indonesian NGO Nexus3 Foundation found dangerously high levels of mercury and arsenic in the blood of people living near IWIP, with 47 percent of individuals with blood mercury levels and 32 percent of individuals with arsenic levels exceeding safe limits.<sup>37</sup> Community members in Lelilef and Gemaf had

<sup>36</sup> IWIP EIA, page 1-22; R Rahman et al., "Coal quality characterization in East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia: review from proximate, ultimate and calorific value analyses," IOP Conf. Series: Earth and Environmental Science 473 (2020) 012100, doi:10.1088/1755-1315/473/1/012100 (accessed December 6, 2023).

<sup>37</sup> Nexus3 Foundation, "The Extension Impact of Nickel Industry Activities in Weda Bay, Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia," May 2025, <https://www.nexus3foundation.org/publikasi/dampak-lanjutan-dari-industri-nikel-teluk-weda/>.

higher concentrations of mercury and arsenic in their blood samples than did IWIP workers.<sup>38</sup>

Data from community health centers near IWIP gathered by JATAM shows that the number of individuals who experienced respiratory infections has increased substantially since IWIP began operations.<sup>39</sup> Julfikar Sangaji, of JATAM, told Climate Rights International about information he obtained from just one community health clinic, in Lelief:

Over a span of three years, the prevalence of respiratory infections has increased by more than 24-fold. I managed to secure data from the local health authority in Central Weda back in 2024. It shows that the number of patients with acute respiratory tract infections has been steadily increasing from 434 patients in 2020 to 10,579 patients in 2023.<sup>40</sup>

Data collected from community health centers by JATAM also finds there has also been a significant increase in the occurrence of allergic contact dermatitis, acute bronchitis, and common cold.<sup>41</sup>

A resident from Sagea described how members of their community are now experiencing more illnesses:

The health of Sagea people has been affected considerably. More and more people contracted various health problems like respiratory infections, something we rarely got before IWIP came.<sup>42</sup>

Data obtained by JATAM from the Sagea Health Center confirms this. “There has been a significant rise in the number of individuals suffering from ISPA [Acute

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> JATAM, “The Conquest and Pillage of Halmahera: IWIP as the Display of Corporate-State’s National Strategic Crime,” August 5, 2024, <https://jatam.org/id/lengkap/The-Conquest-and-Pillage-of-Halmahera> (accessed February 26, 2025).

<sup>40</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Julfikar Sangaji, December 17, 2024. According to the JATAM report, “The nickel mining activities and subsequent downstreaming, as well as the use of coal as an energy source, result in water and air pollution, which poses a health concern to the residents of Central Halmahera and mine labor. The data from the Lelief Community Health Center, which provides healthcare to inhabitants of Central Weda (Weda Tengah), one of IWIP’s operational regions, shows that the number of patients with Acute Respiratory Tract Infections (ARI/ISPA) has been steadily increasing from 434 patients in 2020 to 10,579 patients in 2023. To put it differently conversely [sic], over a span of three years, the prevalence of ISPA has increased by more than 24-fold.” JATAM, “The Conquest and Pillage of Halmahera: IWIP as the Display of Corporate-State’s National Strategic Crime,” August 5, 2024, <https://jatam.org/id/lengkap/The-Conquest-and-Pillage-of-Halmahera> (accessed February 26, 2025).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Climate Rights International interview with anonymous Sagea resident, December 20, 2024.

Respiratory Tract Infection, abbreviated as ISPA] since the commencement of industrial activities in the area. The number of individuals affected by ISPA is projected to rise from 282 in 2019 to 1,051 in 2023.<sup>43</sup>

## Increased Vulnerability to Flooding

People living downstream from mining concessions told Climate Rights International that floods have occurred more frequently and with higher intensity since mining in the area started. Nickel mining operations in Halmahera are responsible for the deforestation of more than 5,000 hectares of forests as of late 2023.<sup>44</sup> This loss of forest cover is a significant trigger of flooding, including flash floods. In contrast, natural forests retain water from precipitation events and help prevent flooding or landslides.<sup>45</sup> In an October 2024 report, Forest Watch Indonesia calculated that nearly 10,500 people in Central Halmahera are living in high-risk flooding areas due to changes in land cover, with floods also threatening 777 hectares of agricultural lands and 32 kilometers of roads.<sup>46</sup>

Floods in July and August 2024 submerged homes and fields in multiple villages near IWIP and led to landslides that blocked roads.<sup>47</sup> More than 1,700 people were evacuated from their homes, and one person was killed.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> JATAM, "The Conquest and Pillage of Halmahera: IWIP as the Display of Corporate-State's National Strategic Crime," August 5, 2024, <https://jatam.org/id/lengkap/The-Conquest-and-Pillage-of-Halmahera> (accessed February 26, 2025).

<sup>44</sup> Using geospatial analysis, Climate Rights International (CRI) and the University of California, Berkeley, AI Climate Initiative determined that at least 5,331 hectares of tropical forests had been cut within nickel mining concessions on Halmahera as of late 2023.

<sup>45</sup> M Rogger et al., "Land use change impacts on floods at the catchment scale: Challenges and opportunities for future research," *Water Resour Res* 53,7 (2017) 5209-5219, doi: 10.1002/2017WR020723 (accessed January 2, 2024).

<sup>46</sup> Forest Watch Indonesia, "The Hazard Behind Mining: The Flood Risk & Socio-Economic Impact of Nickel Mining in Weda Bay, Central Halmahera," October 2024, <https://fwi.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/The-Hazard-Behind-Mining-The-Flood-Risk-and-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Nickel-Mining-in-Weda-Bay.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro, "From Rich Soil to Flooded Plains: The Toll of Indonesia-China's Nickel Ambition," China Global South Project, October 8, 2024, <https://chinaglobalsouth.com/analysis/from-rich-soil-to-flooded-plains-the-toll-of-indonesia-chinas-nickel-ambition/>.

<sup>48</sup> NGO asks government to restrict mining in Halmahera," *Indonesia Business Post*, August 30, 2024, <https://indonesiabusinesspost.com/2661/Politics/ngo-asks-government-to-restrict-mining-in-halmahera>.





An aerial view shows a flood in Lukulamo village, Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. August 13, 2024. © Garry Lotulung.

According to Julfikar Sangaji:

The floods were definitely caused by the activities of IWIP with their concessions deep in the forest. This means the forest gradually lost its function as a system to catch rainwater. So, when the trees are gone, the water runoff will hit the villages on the lower coastal areas... When it comes to environmental restoration, IWIP has done nothing. Floods still happen and there is no sign that it will stop... In July last year [2024] at least three villages near IWIP were severely hit by flood and activists focused on relief support. Based on our records, since the operation of IWIP, there have been 13 severe floods occurred around the industrial complex.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Climate Rights International phone interview with Julfikar Sangaji, December 17, 2024. See also, Aha Centre, "Indonesia, Flooding in Halmahera Tengah (North Maluku) (20 Jul 2024)," press release, July 30, 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/indonesia/indonesia-flooding-halmahera-tengah-north-maluku-20-jul-2024>.



He further explained that the floods seriously impacted the livelihoods of the villagers:

For the past few years, since most villagers have lost their land to IWIP, they use their home yards as gardens where they plant vegetables and fruits for their own consumption. But when floods hit, they lost everything.<sup>50</sup>

Reporting by China Global South Project confirms the impact on villagers. Residents told them that they used to farm in the lands nearby but now, due to flooding, contaminated water, and frequent inundation of the fields, they can no longer plant crops.<sup>51</sup>

### Impact on Culture

The Bokimaruru karst area is one of the longest underground cave systems in Indonesia and is known for its clear water and biodiversity.<sup>52</sup> In 2019, the government of Central Halmahera proposed to the Ministry of Energy and Mining that the karst area be named a geological heritage site.<sup>53</sup> The Sagea River flows through and out of the karst and serves as a source of fresh water for the local community. The river and karst area are also an important part of the local history, cosmology, and culture.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Climate Rights International phone interview with Julfikar Sangaji, December 17, 2024.

<sup>51</sup> Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro, "From Rich Soil to Flooded Plains: The Toll of Indonesia-China's Nickel Ambition," Global China South Project, Oct. 8, 2024, <https://chinaglobalsouth.com/analysis/from-rich-soil-to-flooded-plains-the-toll-of-indonesia-chinas-nickel-ambition/>.

<sup>52</sup> Antara Maluku, "Halteng usulkan Bokimaruru jadi warisan geologi ke Kementerian ESDM," <https://ambon.antaranews.com/berita/192618/halteng-usulkan-bokimaruru-jadi-warisan-geologi-ke-kementerian-esdm> (accessed April 1, 2025).

<sup>53</sup> Kamis, "Halteng proposes Bokimaruru as geological heritage to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources," Antara Maluku, November 30, 2023, <https://ambon.antaranews.com/berita/192618/halteng-usulkan-bokimaruru-jadi-warisan-geologi-ke-kementerian-esdm>; Cermat, "Bokimaruru Cave and Central Halmahera Folklore," May 16, 2021.

<sup>54</sup> AMAN North Maluku, "Mendengar Cerita Rakyat Tentang Gua Boki Maruru," January 7, 2019, <https://malut.aman.or.id/2019/01/07/mendengar-cerita-rakyat-tentang-gua-boki-maruru/> (accessed December 1, 2023).



Men paddle a canoe along the underground Sagea River to check water color changes due to deforestation in the Bokimaruru karst area in Sagea Village, Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. August 16, 2024. © Garry Lotulung.

Among other things, the Sagea River and Bokimaruru Cave are the route and location of Arwahan, a community ritual carried out by local residents every year to honor their ancestors.<sup>55</sup> Local activists have raised serious concerns that sedimentation from upstream mining is damaging this piece of cultural heritage. Mardani Legayelol, a youth activist, told Climate Rights International:

To prove that the upstream area runs through the Bokimaruru Karst Cave and ended in Weda Bay, we spread special colored powder from the upstream area together with Forest Watch Indonesia, and the result is the sedimentation passes through Bokimaruru Karst Cave, and this clearly threatens the ecosystem and the people. There has not yet been a dialogue with companies or government officials as of now. So, the case is rather buried.<sup>56</sup>

According to Legayeloi, the karst area is further threatened by limestone mining.

---

<sup>55</sup> Forest Watch Indonesia, "Karst Sagea: The Magnificent Bokimoruru Cave and Its Threat," August 16, 2024, <https://fwi.or.id/en/karst-sagea-bokimoruru-cave-and-its-threat/>.

<sup>56</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Mardani Legayelol, December 18, 2024.

## II. Indigenous Peoples' Rights at Stake

The Maluku Islands are home to a diverse population, with approximately 28 ethnic groups and languages. The Sawai and Tobelo peoples in Central and East Halmahera are farmers and fisherfolk who live in coastal villages. The O'Hongana Manyawa are hunter-gatherer nomadic peoples who live in voluntary isolation in East and Central Halmahera.

As the nickel industry has transformed Central and East Halmahera, both coastal and forest communities are experiencing existential threats to their way of life.

### **Cultural Impact on Sawai and Tobelo Peoples**

The loss of traditional lands and increased industrialization threatens the way of life of traditional farmers and fishers living in coastal villages near IWIP. IWIP has continued to expand, acquiring more land, constructing more buildings, and bringing in workers from other parts of Indonesia, as well as migrant Chinese workers.

As an anonymous resident from Sagea explained to Climate Rights International:

Things have not improved in Sagea since the operation of IWIP. Those who have sold their land and make a little fortune are now busy building workers' dormitories. It's the only thing they can do since they can't farm anymore. More and more dormitories are being built, and it will change the social dynamics, where newcomers will outnumber the indigenous people. We have seen that coming to Morowali, where Indigenous communities are pushed because they can't compete with newcomers.

I think Sagea will slowly become the new industrial center if we don't reject the plan, and we do nothing to stop the mining activities from the upstream area that will destroy this village.<sup>57</sup>

### **Impact on O'Hongana Manyawa**

The O'Hongana Manyawa comprise roughly 300 to 500 individuals. They live in approximately 30 different clans in the forests of Halmahera. Civil society groups have reported that the way of life of the O'Hongana Manyawa is threatened as mining concessions encroach on their territory.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Sagea resident, December 20, 2024.

<sup>58</sup> Survival International, "Hongana Manyawa," n.d., <https://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/honganamanyawa> (accessed April 5, 2023).

An Indigenous rights defender from Halmahera, who requested their name be withheld due to ongoing threats, said:

This whole situation has eventually exacerbated the living condition of O'Hongana Manyawa, especially when mining companies are already operational and want to expand their operation. It has come to my knowledge that IWIP wants to provide housing for members of the O'Hongana Manyawa so that they can exploit their forests and avoid conflicts. Today there are still many members of the O'Hongana Manyawa still roaming the forests, but their movement is somewhat limited due to diminishing sources and mining activities. IWIP and other mining companies have turned the forests into concessions and workers' camps.<sup>59</sup>

Some of PT Weda Bay Nickel's concession includes areas in which the O'Hongana Manyawa live. Climate Rights International, among other civil society organizations, has raised the potential impact of mining on the O'Hongana Manyawa with companies operating in or sourcing from the area.

On its website, Eramet states that:

To date, there is no evidence that members of the O'Hongana Manyawa community are living in voluntary isolation in or around the Weda Bay concession. If the presence of groups living in voluntary isolation is demonstrated, Eramet will ask PT Weda Bay Nickel to refrain to any contact and not to engage in an FPIC process with them, in line with international standards.

However, Eramet also states that:

The Indonesian government does not recognize the O'Hongana Manyawa community as an "indigenous group." Nevertheless, since 2012, PT Weda Bay Nickel decided to set up an active engagement program with this community located within the concession perimeter, and in accordance with Indonesian law, Weda Bay Nickel's mining activities are subject to in-depth consultation with local communities, including this community. Since 2012, the company

---

<sup>59</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Indigenous defender, December 17, 2024.

has maintained mutually accepted exchanges with the community groups present in the vicinity of our mining activities.<sup>60</sup>

Out of respect for their way of life, Climate Rights International did not attempt to contact members of the O'Hongana Manyawa. Others, including mining companies, have been in contact with them. Regardless of the intent behind such contacts, Climate Rights International and others are concerned that they are one-sided, with company representatives meeting with people that do not have full knowledge of their rights or adequate representation.

Tsingshan Holding Group, the primary shareholder of PT Weda Bay Nickel, did not respond to Climate Rights International's inquiries about what steps it is taking to respect the rights of the O'Hongana Manyawa before the January 2024 publication of "Nickel Unearthed" or the publication of this report, nor did it respond to requests for comment by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre regarding Climate Rights International's findings. Climate Rights International is not aware of any public statements or commitments made by Tsingshan to respect the rights and way of life of the O'Hongana Manyawa.

---

<sup>60</sup> Eramet, "Misconceptions about PT Weda Bay Nickel," <https://www.eramet.com/en/eramet-group/sites/eramet-in-indonesia/misconceptions-about-pt-weda-bay-nickel/>.



### III. Criminalization of Environmental Defenders

Those voicing opposition to IWIP and nickel mining have faced harassment, intimidation and, in some cases, criminalization – a pattern that has continued in the past year.

On August 1, 2024, members of JATAM and three youth and student groups – Enter Nusantara, Front Mahasiswa Nasional (National Student Front), and Serikat Pemuda Nusa Tenggara Timur – gathered outside of IWIP headquarters at the Sopo Del Tower in Jakarta to ask IWIP to address its impacts on the environment in Halmahera, improve workplace safety, and take responsibility for recent flooding that had inundated villages near the industrial park.

Two students, Christina Rumahlatu and Thomas Madilis, were charged with criminal defamation for allegedly insulting Suaidi Marasabessy, a retired Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) General from North Maluku, by stating that he was failing to use his position to address the harms posed by IWIP and had no intention to help impacted communities.<sup>61</sup> A 2021 report by JATAM states that Suaidi Marasabessy has stakes in several mining companies, potentially limiting the willingness of local authorities or the security forces to address the harms caused by those companies.<sup>62</sup> As of the time of writing, the charges are still pending.

The students also faced a threat from Ali Marasabessy, Chairman of Bravo 5, a community organization that consists of well-connected retired military generals. In a Tiktok video, Ali Marasabessy called for the students to immediately apologize or face a “risk.”<sup>63</sup>

Others have faced harassment and smear campaigns. An Indigenous rights

---

<sup>61</sup> Climate Rights International, “Indonesia: Drop Criminal Charges Against Students Protesting Nickel Impacts,” press release, August 7, 2024, <https://cri.org/indonesia-drop-criminal-charges-against-students-protesting-nickel-impacts/>; Project Multatuli, “Tina Rumahlatu Melawan Batu Karang,” March 6, 2025, <https://projectmultatuli.org/tina-rumahlatu-melawan-batu-karang/> (accessed March 18, 2025).

<sup>62</sup> CNN Indonesia, “Jatam Ungkap Eks Jenderal TNI-Polri di Perusahaan Tambang,” January 2021, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210124195717-20-597804/jatam-ungkap-eks-jenderal-tni-polri-di-perusahaan-tambang>.

<sup>63</sup> Climate Rights International, “Indonesia: Drop Criminal Charges Against Students Protesting Nickel Impacts,” press release, August 7, 2024, <https://cri.org/indonesia-drop-criminal-charges-against-students-protesting-nickel-impacts/>.

defender from Halmahera said that, during a regional election campaign in October 2024,

The incumbent candidate spread black campaign against me and [other local] residents, saying we have received compensation from IWIP, and then he spread a hoax among other residents that I embezzled the money. It shocked me as we are still fighting for our land and no compensation was ever received. So, I tried to explain that to other residents to clarify things. The incumbent regent candidate is also a key person in the [name withheld] mining company.<sup>64</sup>

The military and police have engaged in intimidation of residents who have refused to sell their lands to IWIP or otherwise protested against IWIP or nearby nickel mines. According to the unnamed defender above, many residents are also being coerced by the police to promise not to engage in further protests:

I also heard that after our last protest, some residents were forced to sign an agreement issued by the police saying that they will not hold any activities that could disrupt the company's operation and activities, that means including protests.<sup>65</sup>

Human rights groups have warned that the March 2025 amendments to the National Armed Forces (TNI) Act, which will enable active members of the military to hold civilian roles in the government, including in state-owned enterprises and the justice system, will lead to more repression by the security forces on behalf of the mining industry.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Indigenous rights defender, December 17, 2024.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Kontras, "JOINT STATEMENT Indonesia: Rejection of the Problematic and Rushed Amendments to Law No. 34/2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI Law)," March 17, 2025, <https://kontras.org/media/siaranpers/joint-statement-indonesia-rejection-of-the-problematic-and-rushed-amendments-to-law-no-342004-on-the-indonesian-national-armed-forces-tni-law> (accessed March 20, 2025).

## IV. Lack of Access to Information

From the outset, IWIP has failed to provide clear information about its plans to local communities, leading to fear and confusion about whether and when specific villages will be affected.

Indonesian law requires an environmental impact assessment (EIA), called an AMDAL in Indonesian, for major projects. Before preparing the EIA, the company must announce its project in a local or national newspaper. It must also post the information on an announcement board or through another medium that is easily accessible by the affected community (e.g., brochures, pamphlets, television, websites, radio, or the announcement board at the local environment office). The company must also conduct a public consultation to enable community members to comment on the planned project.<sup>67</sup> Companies must also submit addendums to the EIA (AMDAL) for significant changes to the project made after the initial EIA is approved.<sup>68</sup>

In the EIA filed by IWIP in 2018, the company claimed that it conducted a public dialogue related to the construction of IWIP in 2018 at a PT Weda Bay Nickel office in Central Halmahera.<sup>69</sup> IWIP's EIA states that this meeting was "attended by agencies and related parties, such as representatives of North Maluku Province Dill, Central Weda District Muspika and North Weda District Muspika, NGOs, as well as community representatives from Lelilef Sawai Village, Lelilef Waibulan Village, Central Weda District and Gemaf Village, North Weda District."<sup>70</sup>

IWIP's EIA admitted that only five percent of Lelilef residents queried by IWIP had learned about the project from public consultations led by the company, with the majority of residents hearing about the project by word of mouth.<sup>71</sup> No one

---

<sup>67</sup> MER, "Indonesia: Legislation at Project Level," Dec. 14, 2023, <https://www.eia.nl/en/countries/indonesia/legislation-at-project-level/>.

<sup>68</sup> For more information on the full public participation and consultation requirements in the environmental impact assessment process, as well as the impacts of the 2020 Job Creation Law (Omnibus Law) on the AMDAL process, see: Indonesian Center for Environmental Law, "Anthology of the Rights of Citizens on Environmental Protection," November 2021, <https://icel.or.id/id-id/kerja-kami/publikasi/buku/v/antologi-hak-akses-masyarakat-dalam-perlindungan-lingkungan-hidup>; Indonesian Center for Environmental Law, "After Job Creation Law: Reviewing the Essence of Public Participation on EIA Process," December 2020, <https://icel.or.id/id-id/kerja-kami/publikasi/seri-analisis/v/setelah-uu-ciapa-kerja-meninjau-esensi-partisipasi-publik-dalam-amdal>.

<sup>69</sup> While the IWIP EIA is not available online, Climate Rights International has a copy of the document on file.

<sup>70</sup> IWIP EIA, page 4-2.

<sup>71</sup> IWIP EIA, page 3-135.

interviewed by Climate Rights International reported knowing about or attending this public dialogue, and Climate Rights International is not aware of any other public dialogues or consultations hosted by IWIP prior to the approval of its EIA. Residents interviewed by Climate Rights International claimed that information related to IWIP was not disseminated.

In Sagea, rumors about a plan to turn the village into an industrial complex with nickel smelters have been circulating for years. While information and speculation about such a plan has been informally shared between residents verbally and over WhatsApp, no reliable information has been provided by the government or companies. An anonymous resident from Sagea told Climate Rights International in December 2024 that:

We still hear the rumors of IWIP expansion that will include Sagea, but we haven't received official information about it, neither from officials nor IWIP representatives. We're still left in the dark and uncertain about the future.<sup>72</sup>

According to Mardani Legayelol, a youth activist from Sagea, IWIP conducted "consultations" in several villages in Central Halmahera in 2024 but did not disclose the purpose of those consultations:

It was in August last year [2024] ... when we heard from villagers that there was a team from PT IWIP doing consultation on what could possibly be AMDAL [environmental impact assessment]. But the consultation was not done openly. Instead, the team secretly went door-to-door.

We received a tip-off when we were in Sagea. Based on the information from villagers the team consisted of two students from North Maluku Muhammadiyah University, two lecturers from Khairun University and the Islamic Institute of Ternate. They have conducted consultation in several villages all the way from East Weda like Mesa, Dote, Yeke, Waleh, Fritu. But strangely they haven't done consultation in Sagea, probably because they knew that people in Sagea strongly oppose IWIP.

Based on the information, we planned to intercept the team to learn what they were doing. We managed to intercept them on their way back to IWIP, we questioned the team, and they admitted they were sent by IWIP for

---

<sup>72</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Sagea resident, December 20, 2024.

AMDAL consultation. They didn't wear any IWIP's attributions nor use a company car, obviously to avoid attraction.

Based on our own investigation from information gathered from people close with IWIP, including lawmakers, IWIP still has 22,000 hectares of land yet to be converted into industrial complexes. This information was also based on Central Halmahera Regional Spatial Planning. But this we can't confirm with IWIP, and we still don't know why they did the AMDAL consultation. Maybe, we suspect, they will carry out expansion.<sup>73</sup>

Climate Rights International was not able to find any official information on IWIP's website or elsewhere regarding its plans, if any, to expand the industrial park.

---

<sup>73</sup> Climate Rights International interview with Mardani Legayelol, December 18, 2024.



## V. Growing Coal Use and Indonesia's Climate Goals

In its Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement, Indonesia has committed to a 29 percent reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 through its independent efforts, or a 41 percent reduction if it receives sufficient international support. In the long term, Indonesia has pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2060 or earlier.

Yet, as described above, to power smelting and other operations there are now eleven captive coal plants operational at IWIP, and three more under construction, according to Global Energy Monitor. Once fully operational, the fourteen coal plants at IWIP will emit roughly 28.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year – roughly equivalent to the annual emissions from 6.6 million gasoline-powered cars.<sup>74</sup>

According to data gathered by The Sunrise Project, thirteen of the fourteen captive coal plants at IWIP are entirely or partially owned by Chinese companies.<sup>75</sup> In September 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the United Nations General Assembly that China would no longer finance overseas coal plants; plants announced after that date contradict and undermine that pledge.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> We are assuming that the capacity factor for the coal plants is 80 percent and that the coal plants are using sub-bituminous coal, which is commonly mined in Indonesia. Sub-bituminous coal has an emission factor of 96,100 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> and the supercritical combustion heat rate for sub-bituminous coal is 8863 Btu/kWh. Carbon dioxide emissions were calculated using the following formula:

capacity \* capacity factor \* heat rate \* emission factor \*  $9.2427 \times 10^{-12}$  = annual CO<sub>2</sub> (in million tonnes)  
 $4540 * .8 * 8863 * 96,100 * 9.2427 * 10^{-12} = 28.59$  million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>

Emissions equivalencies were calculated using the US EPA's emissions calculator.

Global Energy Monitor, "Estimating carbon dioxide emissions from coal plants," February 2025, [https://www.gem.wiki/Estimating\\_carbon\\_dioxide\\_emissions\\_from\\_coal\\_plants](https://www.gem.wiki/Estimating_carbon_dioxide_emissions_from_coal_plants); U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator," November 2024, <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator#results> (accessed May 28, 2025).

<sup>75</sup> Chinese companies that entirely or partially own captive coal plants at IWIP include: CNGR Advanced Material Co. Ltd., Tsingshan Holding Group, Huayou Cobalt, Zhenshi Holding Group, Zhejiang Huajun Investment Co. Ltd., Wang Sing International Resources Ltd., Metallurgical Corporation of China Ltd., EVE Battery, Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Ltd., and Lygend Resources and Technology Co. Ltd. The Sunrise Project, "Indonesian Captive Coal Power Plant Integrated Data," Nov. 15, 2024, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qGWi28Op4FPKLVFjtROS8DM67hFiKi2d43v7oYWLje8/edit?gid=129645660#gid=129645660> (accessed May 13, 2025).

<sup>76</sup> Reuters, "In climate pledge, Xi says China will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad," September 22, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/xi-says-china-aims-provide-2-bln-vaccine-doses-by-year-end-2021-09-21/>.

The use of coal to process and smelt nickel for batteries for electric vehicles not only undermines efforts to make the essential transition from fossil fuels to renewables, but also undermines Indonesia's climate goals.



Coal plant smokestacks at the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP). August 14, 2024.

© Garry Lotulung.

At the G20 summit in Brazil in November 2024, President Prabowo announced that Indonesia planned to phase out coal-fired and fossil-fuel power plants by 2040.<sup>77</sup> In the same month, Prabowo's brother, Hashim S. Djojohadikusumo, the head of Indonesia's COP29 delegation and the country's special envoy for climate change and energy, reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to reduce GHG emissions to zero in 2060 or sooner.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Office of Assistant to Deputy Cabinet Secretary for State Documents and Translation, "G20 Summit: President Prabowo Subianto Highlights Indonesia's Green Energy Vision, Global Climate Role," November 20, 2024, <https://setkab.go.id/en/g20-summit-president-prabowo-subianto-highlights-indonesias-green-energy-vision-global-climate-role/>.

<sup>78</sup> "Indonesia vows to 'enhance climate actions', Hashim tells COP29," Jakarta Post, Nov. 13, 2024, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/indonesia/2024/11/13/indonesia-vows-to-enhance-climate-actions-hashim-tells-cop29.html>.

In order for Indonesia to meet its new official climate goals, it is critical that Indonesia reduce its use of coal-fired power plants. As of the end of 2024, Indonesia was operating coal-fired power plants with a total capacity of almost 54.7 GW, according to Global Energy Monitor (GEM).<sup>79</sup> Data collected by GEM shows that captive coal plants accounted for over 80 percent of the 1.9 GW of new capacity additions in Indonesia in 2024.

An additional 1.1 GW of coal capacity entered construction in 2024, all of which is planned for captive use.<sup>80</sup> Captive coal more than tripled as a percentage of all coal capacity between 2015 and 2024, rising from 8 percent to 31 percent of the total.<sup>81</sup> Captive power is used only for industrial purposes and is not connected to the power grid, meaning it does not provide any electricity to surrounding communities, many of which do not have reliable access to electricity.

According to an analysis by EMBER, a UK-based energy think tank, Indonesia's National Electricity Master Plan shows that the country plans to add another 20 GW of new captive coal power over the next seven years, undermining its commitment to decarbonization.<sup>82</sup> This amount of captive coal capacity is nearly the capacity of all currently operational coal plants in Turkey.<sup>83</sup>

The geographically remote locations of many nickel industrial parks, including IWIP, mean that industrial areas cannot rely on existing electricity grids, which can more easily be powered by renewables, yet steps could be immediately taken to reduce the demand for and economic feasibility of captive coal plants and increase demand for renewables. For example, captive coal plants currently have weaker regulatory requirements than on-grid coal plants and are not required to report emissions or undergo individual EIAs. The Indonesian government should ensure that captive coal plants meet the same regulatory requirements as on-grid coal plants.

---

<sup>79</sup> Global Energy Monitor, "Boom and Bust Coal 2024," report, April 2025, <https://globalenergymonitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Boom-Bust-Coal-2025.pdf>.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> EMBER, "Captive coal expansion plan could undermine Indonesia's climate goals," report, February 20, 2025, [https://ember-energy.org/app/uploads/2025/02/EN-Indonesia-RUKN-2025\\_14022025.pdf](https://ember-energy.org/app/uploads/2025/02/EN-Indonesia-RUKN-2025_14022025.pdf).

<sup>83</sup> Global Energy Monitor, "Coal Plants by Country (MW)," January 2025, [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1\\_6AkrRZOn3ZXhSV9O6tZnX-m7aJsfG9HiQ\\_iEqBkbW8/edit?gid=1228809590#gid=1228809590](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_6AkrRZOn3ZXhSV9O6tZnX-m7aJsfG9HiQ_iEqBkbW8/edit?gid=1228809590#gid=1228809590) (accessed February 27, 2025).

Indonesia has vast potential for renewable energy using solar and wind.<sup>84</sup> According to a July 2024 report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, Indonesia has thus far only been able to develop 0.4% of its renewable energy potential:

Despite having 3,294GW of solar potential, Indonesia only added 574MW solar power to the grid [ever], a mere 0.017% of its potential. This means Indonesia has the lowest rate of solar use in the Asia Pacific and is also among the lowest globally. Additionally, Indonesia has only developed 154MW of wind power from a possible 155GW, or 0.001% of its total potential.<sup>85</sup>

According to EMBER, the levelized cost of electricity from new captive coal plants may already be more expensive than renewables.<sup>86</sup> In addition, a study by the University of Maryland's Center for Global Sustainability found that emissions in Indonesia from captive coal plants can be reduced significantly through biomass co-firing, renewable deployment, grid connection, and carbon capture and storage. In total, the study found that from 2025 to 2050 biomass co-firing at captive coal plants could result in a 47 percent decrease in emissions.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Low renewable adoption rates may be partially impacted by fossil fuel subsidies. The Indonesian government effectively subsidizes the price of coal by requiring coal miners to sell 25 percent of their coal to the state utility company at a capped price. Eliminating fossil fuel subsidies will be key for the country to meet its climate goals. International Institute for Sustainable Development, "Financial Supports for Coal and Renewables in Indonesia," May 2017, <https://www.iisd.org/publications/report/financial-supports-coal-and-renewables-indonesia>; Galen Erickson, "Indonesia's Fossil Fuel Subsidies Threaten its Energy Transition," The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/02/indonesias-fossil-fuel-subsidies-threaten-its-energy-transition/> (accessed May 15, 2025).

<sup>85</sup> Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, "Unlocking Indonesia's Renewable Energy Investment Potential," report, July 2024, <https://ieefa.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/IEEFA%20Report%20-%20Unlocking%20Indonesia%27s%20renewable%20energy%20investment%20potential%20July2024.pdf>.

<sup>86</sup> EMBER, "Captive coal expansion plan could undermine Indonesia's climate goals," report, February 20, 2025, [https://ember-energy.org/app/uploads/2025/02/EN-Indonesia-RUKN-2025\\_14022025.pdf](https://ember-energy.org/app/uploads/2025/02/EN-Indonesia-RUKN-2025_14022025.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> Some organizations have critiqued biomass co-firing at coal plants as a "false solution" due to the potential increased deforestation and limited air pollution reductions. See: Trend Asia, "The Looming Deforestation Threat from Energy Wood Plantation," November 2022, <https://trendasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/REV-EN-Artikel-Ancaman-Deforestasi.pdf>; Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, "Biomass co-firing in Indonesia: Prolonging, not solving coal problem," May 2025, <https://energyandcleanair.org/publication/biomass-co-firing-in-indonesia-prolonging-not-solving-coal-problem/#:~:text=Despite%20the%20promotion%20of%20biomass,Indonesia's%20goals%20to%20wean%20o>ff. University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability, "1.5C-aligned coal power transition pathways in Indonesia: addition strategies beyond the Comprehensive Investment and Policy Plan (CIPP), June 2024, [https://cgs.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2024-06/Final\\_Indonesia%20Report\\_IETP\\_6.4.pdf](https://cgs.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2024-06/Final_Indonesia%20Report_IETP_6.4.pdf).



The commitment of the current government to decarbonization and the climate goals announced by Prabowo and Hashim have been undermined by subsequent statements and policies. On February 4, 2025, Hashim told the media that the president had been “misquoted” regarding the pledge to decarbonize, despite the fact that the announcement was recorded.<sup>88</sup> He said that a commitment to retire the country’s fossil fuel plants would be “economic suicide.”<sup>89</sup> Prabowo and close family members are invested in coal mining and other extractive industries, including palm oil, oil and gas, and paper pulp companies.<sup>90</sup>

## Food and Energy Estate Program

Indonesia’s climate commitments were further called into question by Prabowo’s announcement of a policy to attain domestic “food security,” with the military assigned a leading role in this effort. As part of this policy, the Indonesian government is currently planning the largest deforestation project in the country’s history by converting twenty million hectares of forests, including more than two million hectares of protected forests, into food and energy estate projects.<sup>91</sup> Projects include large-scale biomass projects, as well as nickel and other transition minerals projects. Indonesia is home to the third largest tropical rainforest in the world, and the resulting deforestation from these food and energy projects would be disastrous for global climate action. New food and energy estate projects are also likely to result in the forced relocation of communities, threats to Indigenous Peoples’ rights, and the loss of traditional livelihoods.

---

<sup>88</sup> Mewakili Presiden, Hashim S. Djojohadikusumo Sampaikan Message Of The President Di COP29 Azerbaijan, Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzGR0eUoOeU> (accessed May 14, 2025).

<sup>89</sup> Gabrielle See, “‘Not true’ that Indonesia will shut down all coal plants by 2040, says climate and energy envoy,” Eco-Business, February 4, 2025, <https://www.eco-business.com/news/not-true-that-indonesia-will-shut-down-all-coal-plants-by-2040-says-climate-and-energy-envoy/>.

<sup>90</sup> Al Jazeera staff, “Who is Prabowo Subianto, the man likely to be Indonesia’s next president?,” Al Jazeera, Feb. 16, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/16/who-is-prabowo-subianto-the-man-likely-to-be-indonesias-next>; Viriya Singgih, “Unearthing Indonesia’s 10 Biggest Coal Oligarchs,” Feb. 13, 2022, <https://projectmultatuli.org/en/unearthing-indonesias-10-biggest-coal-oligarchs/>; JATAM, “Prabowo Subianto,” <https://pemilu.jatam.org/tokoh.php?nama=prabowosubianto>

<sup>91</sup> Hans Nicholas Jong, “Indonesia targets 2.3m hectares of protected forests for food & biofuel crop production,” February 6, 2025, <https://news.mongabay.com/2025/02/indonesia-targets-2-3m-hectares-of-protected-forests-for-food-biofuel-crop-production/>.

Further, after the Trump administration reneged on United States commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and withdrew from Indonesia's Just Energy Transition Partnership, Hashim said he considered the Paris Agreement no longer relevant for Indonesia. According to media reports, he stated that carrying out energy transition programs amid the current uncertain global situation will be very challenging for Indonesia.<sup>92</sup> Trend Asia, an Indonesian NGO, said that this statement, "shows a lack of understanding and concern for national resilience against the climate crisis and ecological disasters that threaten the safety of the Indonesian people."<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> "Paris Agreement no longer relevant for Indonesia, says envoy," Antara, January 31, 2025, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/343334/paris-agreement-no-longer-relevant-for-indonesia-says-envoy>.

<sup>93</sup> Trend Asia, Responding to Bahlil's Statement about Withdrawing from the Paris Agreement: The Government is Misguided and Anti-Science," January 31, 2025, <https://trendasia.org/menanggapi-pernyataan-bahlil-soal-mundur-dari-paris-agreement-pemerintah-sesat-pikir-dan-anti-sains/> (accessed February 27, 2025).

## VI. Corporate Actors

IWIP is a joint venture of three Chinese companies: Tsingshan Holding Group, Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Ltd., and Zhenshi Holding Group. Tsingshan Holding Group and Zhenshi Holding Group are privately held companies, and Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Ltd. is publicly listed on the Shanghai stock exchange. A wide range of other companies have announced plans to build, or have built, industrial facilities within IWIP, essentially acting as tenants of IWIP, to produce nickel materials, including nickel needed for EV batteries. For example, it was reported in March 2024 that Tsingshan Holding Group plans to build a battery factory in IWIP, with operations expected to begin in 2026.<sup>94</sup> The newly established Indonesian sovereign wealth fund, Danantara, and Eramet are also reportedly considering investing in a high-pressure acid leach (HPAL) nickel processing plant at IWIP.<sup>95</sup>

Prior to the release of “Nickel Unearthed,” Climate Rights International contacted many of the companies involved with IWIP, including those proposing to build facilities there, and nearby mining companies like Weda Bay Nickel, which provides much of the nickel ore to the industrial complex, to highlight the environmental, human rights and reputational risks of involvement in the project. Copies of correspondence, and failures by companies to respond to our inquiries, may be found in Appendix I of “Nickel Unearthed.”

Of the three joint venture partners, only Huayou Cobalt, which is also invested in three nickel refining plants at IWIP, responded prior to the release of “Nickel Unearthed.” In its response, Huayou Cobalt stated that it planned to install solar power for its IWIP facilities in 2024, but it took the position that it “is a minority shareholder in IWIP and we do not have control of management or operations at the park.”<sup>96</sup> Climate Rights International responded to Huayou Cobalt to ask whether it had, in fact, installed solar power, but we did not receive an answer as of the time of

---

<sup>94</sup> Indonesia Business Post, “Tsingshan Group to build battery factory in Weda Bay,” <https://indonesiabusinesspost.com/2383/investment-and-risk/tsingshan-group-to-build-battery-factory-in-weda-bay> (accessed May 5, 2025).

<sup>95</sup> Joy Liu, “Indonesia’s wealth fund Danantara eyes joint nickel venture with Eramet,” Steel News, May 6, 2025, <https://yieh.com/en/indonesias-wealth-fund-danantara-eyes-joint-nickel-venture-with-eramet/154354> (accessed May 14, 2025).

<sup>96</sup> Letter from Bryce Lee, Head of ESG & Sustainability, Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Ltd., to Brad Adams, Executive Director, Climate Rights International, December 25, 2023, <https://cri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/The-response-of-Huayou-Cobalt.pdf>

writing. Climate Rights International reviewed satellite imagery of IWIP taken in January 2025 and could not find evidence of the installation of any large-scale solar.

It was reported in January 2025 that Tsingshan Holding Group installed two windmills at IWIP and has plans for adding 2 GW of wind, solar, and other renewable projects at the industrial park, but we have not been able to confirm that information.<sup>97</sup> Climate Rights International wrote to Tsingshan Holding Group and IWIP seeking information about plans for renewable energy at the industrial park, but we had not received a response from either company as of the time of publication.

Among the other companies planning or operating facilities at IWIP, BASF, Eramet, CNGR, and Nickel Industries responded to the letters sent prior to the release of “Nickel Unearthed,” and Eramet and BASF engaged further. While many of the companies took the position that they had little control over what happened at IWIP, it is not clear that they have made serious efforts to use their leverage as tenants to push Tsingshan to reduce the environmental and human rights harms of the complex, or to fully and fairly compensate all community members for land that has been taken or devalued by IWIP.

Eramet and BASF had proposed a large nickel and cobalt refining facility in Halmahera called Sonic Bay that would have produced 67,000 tons of nickel and 7,500 tons of cobalt per year. The plant would have used HPAL technology, which uses high temperatures and chemicals to extract nickel from laterite ore.<sup>98</sup> In June 2024, BASF and Eramet announced that they would not proceed with the project. Climate Rights International had urged Eramet and BASF to wait to make a final investment decision regarding the Sonic Bay project until all land conflicts between IWIP and local communities at the proposed project site were resolved and community members fully and fairly compensated for their lands. We also called on the two companies to ensure that waste from the proposed plant did not add to the massive pollution already caused by IWIP by establishing its own waste management system to neutralize acid waste and effectively abate air and water

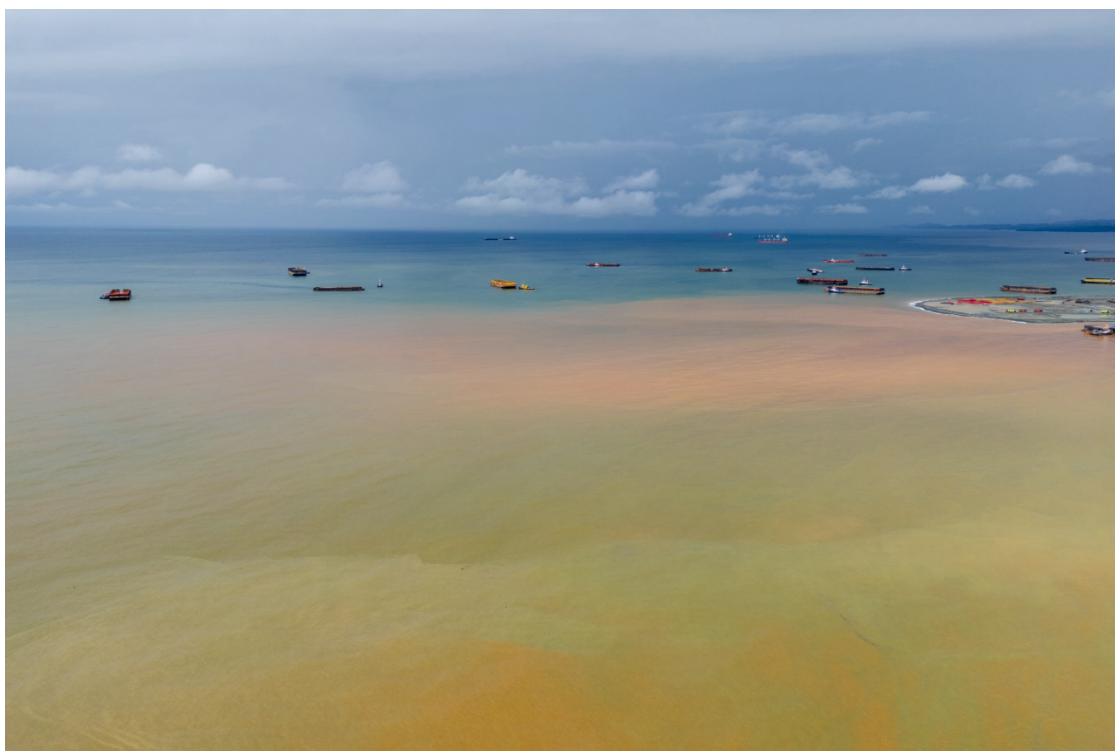
---

<sup>97</sup> Shanghai Electric Wind Power Group, “The first set of wind turbines in Weidabei Industrial Park, Indonesia, has been hoisted,” January 20, 2025, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/UuPZILf-2CAbWz3QvrUL0A> (accessed May 22, 2025).

<sup>98</sup> Climate Rights International, “Cancellation of Nickel Investments Should be a Wake-Up Call for Indonesia,” press release, July 5, 2024, <https://cri.org/cancellation-of-nickel-investments-should-be-a-wake-up-call-for-indonesia/>.

pollution that is already affecting the health of local residents. While the companies also cited commercial reasons for not moving forward, a BASF spokesperson said the company needed a “secure, responsible, and sustainable supply of critical raw materials.”<sup>99</sup>

Just after the Sonic Bay cancellation was announced, it was reported that Eramet was in discussions with Huayou Cobalt to invest in a refining facility at IWIP using HPAL technology.<sup>100</sup> Eramet is also a large, minority shareholder in PT Weda Bay Nickel (WBN), the largest open pit nickel mine in the world and a key source of nickel ore for IWIP. As of 2023, its concession is 45,065 hectares.<sup>101</sup>



Polluted sea water and cargo ships near the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP) in Central Halmahera, North Maluku, Indonesia. August 13, 2024. © Garry Lotulung.

---

<sup>99</sup> BASF, “BASF decides against investment in nickel-cobalt refining complex in Indonesia,” news release, June 24, 2024, <https://www.basf.com/global/en/media/news-releases/2024/06/p-24-224>.

<sup>100</sup> Bloomberg News, “Eramet and Huayou explore EV nickel partnership in Indonesia,” Mining.com, July 5, 2024, <https://www.mining.com/web/eramet-and-huayou-explore-ev-nickel-partnership-in-indonesia/>.

<sup>101</sup> Weda Bay Nickel, “Our Business,” <https://www.wedabaynickel.com/en/weda-bay-nickel/our-business/> (accessed May 29, 2025).



Because some of the nickel being processed at IWIP and similar industrial complexes around the country is used for the production of electric vehicle batteries, Climate Rights International contacted electric vehicle companies to alert them to the environmental and human rights risk of Indonesian nickel. Before the release of “Nickel Unearthed,” Climate Rights International wrote to Tesla, Ford, and Volkswagen, which source nickel from Indonesia, including from companies that have major nickel operations at IWIP.<sup>102</sup> Ford replied in writing as requested before the report was released and engaged in discussions. Tesla did not reply in writing but has engaged in discussions. Volkswagen responded in writing after the report was released and has engaged in limited discussions.<sup>103</sup>

Tesla sources thirteen percent of its nickel from Indonesia, according to its 2023 Impact Report. This report for the first time included multiple pages discussing the environmental and social impacts of Indonesian nickel. Tesla also stated that it had “asked suppliers to set decarbonization targets that move away from captive coal”.<sup>104</sup>

With respect to O’Hongana Manyawa, Tesla stated in its 2023 impact report, that it has:

engaged with NGOs, government and suppliers to explore the need for the establishment of a no-go zone for mining to protect indigenous and human rights, particularly those of uncontacted communities, in addition to supplier engagement to reinforce our commitment to protect the right of Indigenous People to grant or withhold Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).<sup>105</sup>

In April and May 2024, Climate Rights International wrote to sixteen additional electric vehicle companies prior to releasing a press release about EV companies’ due diligence regarding Indonesian nickel. Only four – General Motors, Mercedes-Benz, BMW Group, and Renault – responded.<sup>106</sup> Nio responded after the press

---

<sup>102</sup> B Goh and D Patton, “Volkswagen unveils Asian ventures to secure e-battery materials supply,” Reuters, March 21, 2022; Mining Technology, “Volkswagen plans JVs in Indonesia and China,” March 22, 2022; Ford, “Ford Releases New Battery Capacity Plan, Raw Materials Details to Scale EVs,” July 21, 2022; Tesla, “2023 Impact Report,” May 2024.

<sup>103</sup> Copies of all company correspondence is available in an appendix to the report: [https://cri.org/reports/nickel-unearthed/#elementor-toc\\_heading-anchor-56](https://cri.org/reports/nickel-unearthed/#elementor-toc_heading-anchor-56).

<sup>104</sup> Tesla, “Impact Report 2023,” [https://www.tesla.com/ns\\_videos/2023-tesla-impact-report.pdf](https://www.tesla.com/ns_videos/2023-tesla-impact-report.pdf), p. 121.

<sup>105</sup> Tesla, “2023 Impact Report,” May 2024, [https://www.tesla.com/ns\\_videos/2023-tesla-impact-report.pdf](https://www.tesla.com/ns_videos/2023-tesla-impact-report.pdf), p. 121.

<sup>106</sup> Climate Rights International, “Minerals: Electric Vehicle Companies Failing on Rights and Environmental Practices,” press release, August 20, 2024, <https://cri.org/electric-vehicle-companies-failing-on-rights-and-environmental-practices/>. Company responses can be accessed via links in the press release.

release was published. The other eleven companies have not responded, demonstrating an apparent unwillingness to provide basic information on how they ensure their supply chains are not contributing to serious climate, human rights, and environmental violations. The eleven are BYD, GAC Motor, Geely, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Nissan, SAIC Motor, Stellantis, Subaru, and Volvo.

Climate Rights International wrote to the following companies in advance of this publication: Eramet, Ford, Huayou Cobalt, IWIP, Tesla, Tsingshan Holding Group, Volkswagen, Weda Bay Nickel, and Zhenshi Holding Group.<sup>107</sup> Tesla responded and requested that its reply not be published but has continued to meet with Climate Rights International. Eramet sent written statements, which may be found in the Appendix. We did not receive any response from the following companies: Ford, Huayou Cobalt, IWIP, Tsingshan Holding Group, Volkswagen, Weda Bay Nickel, or Zhenshi Holding Group.

Due to the ongoing, serious human rights and environmental impacts of nickel mining and processing in Halmahera, all electric vehicle companies – including ones that have documented links to Indonesian nickel, like Volkswagen, Ford, and Tesla, as well as all other EV companies – should take a precautionary approach to their minerals sourcing. Simply relying on upstream suppliers to address harms has not been effective in preventing abuses. EV companies should directly engage with mining and mineral processing companies in their supply chains to ensure their sourcing is not contributing to human rights and environmental impacts. As more than half of the world's nickel comes from Indonesia, it is likely that many electric vehicle companies are sourcing at least some nickel from places like IWIP.

---

<sup>107</sup> Letters and correspondence to companies sent in advance of this publication may be found in the Appendix.

## VII. Recommendations

To the Government of Indonesia:

- Phase out all coal-fired and other fossil-fuel power plants by 2040, consistent with President Prabowo's statement to the G20, and stop permitting and construction of all new coal plants, including captive coal plants.
- Adopt and implement a national strategy to rapidly scale up renewable energy generation and infrastructure, aligned with Indonesia's climate obligations under the Paris Agreement and its just energy transition goals.
- Adopt, strengthen, and enforce national laws and regulations to prevent, minimize, and mitigate the environmental, climate and human harms of nickel mining, refining, and extractive waste on Indigenous Peoples and other affected communities, including:
  - Amend the environmental impact assessment process instituted by the Omnibus Law to allow the public, including civil society organizations and community members, the opportunity to participate in decision-making regarding proposed projects.
  - Amend the 2020 Mineral and Coal Mining Law article 162 to end the criminalization of peaceful expression, including protests, by activists and organizations.
  - Uphold and implement Law No. 32 of 2009 on the Protection and Management of Environment and impose penalties on companies in violation of that law.
  - Codify and protect the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as recognized in UN General Assembly resolution A/Res/76/30, which Indonesia supported.
  - Ensure legal reforms safeguard public participation, transparency, and accountability, and guarantee full respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights in line with international law and standards.
- Ratify ILO Convention 169, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognize Indigenous Peoples within Indonesia including by passing the Indigenous Peoples Rights Bill.
- Establish a “no-go zone” to protect the customary territory of the O'Hongana Manyawa from mining and other extractive industries.

- Ensure that domestic and foreign companies are fully compliant with Indonesian laws and regulations and hold companies that are in violation of environmental, climate, human rights, and other laws accountable, including through fines and cancelling of permits and licenses.
- Fully implement the Guiding Principles on Critical Energy Transition Minerals established in the 2024 report by the UN Secretary-General's Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals, the development of which the Indonesian government participated in.
- Immediately stop the permitting of new nickel mining concessions and smelters until the sector has taken genuine steps in line with the best available science and technologies to minimize emissions, pollution, and other harms on nearby communities, the environment, and climate system.
- Make data collected by the SIMBARA nickel tracking system publicly available, including by regularly posting data to a public website in Indonesian and relevant local languages.

To the Indonesian Ministry of Environment:

- Conduct an investigation into environmental degradation at and around IWIP, as requested by Commission VII of Indonesia's House of Representatives, and make the results of such an investigation publicly available and accessible to local communities.
- Conduct an investigation into the human rights violations at and around IWIP and make the results of such an investigation publicly available and accessible to local communities.
- Conduct an independent assessment, based on the best available science, of the climate impact of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the use of captive coal and other fossil fuels to power IWIP operations, including their transboundary effects on the climate system and the resulting harm to the rights, lives, and livelihoods of present and future generations.
- Strengthen the review process for environmental impact assessments when granting mining licenses to require that mining companies meet global environmental, social, and governance best practices in their mining operations, and ensure that all environmental impact assessments are publicly available and accessible, including online, in Indonesian and relevant local languages.

- Work with regional governments and all related agencies to ensure that mining companies are fully compliant with environmental laws and regulations.
- Make air and water quality information, including information provided to the Ministry by mining and smelting companies, publicly available and accessible in Indonesian and relevant local languages.

To the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park and its owners, including Tsingshan Group, Huayou Cobalt, and Zhenshi Group:

- Ensure that all mining and industrial operations at IWIP are carried out in accordance with Indonesian laws and regulations, as well as international environmental, climate and human rights standards.
- Fully and fairly compensate all community members with land conflicts with IWIP, including residents in Lelilef and Gemaf, including where insufficient compensation was provided.
- Take immediate steps to prevent, minimize and mitigate air, water, and soil pollution from industrial activities including by installing air pollution control mechanisms, properly disposing of industrial waste and coal ash, and treating wastewater from industrial facilities and coal plants, based on the best available science and technologies.
- Take immediate steps to remediate air, water, and soil pollution that has already occurred.
- Immediately stop the construction of all new coal plants at the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park and announce a time-bound plan to urgently replace existing coal plants with renewable energy sources.
- Fully respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples living near IWIP, including by ensuring all Indigenous Peoples are able to exercise their right to give Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, their right to self-determination, and their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- Share all information related to future expansion, deforestation, land acquisition, and industrial activities with the public, and make that information accessible to local communities, including by holding public meetings and providing information in local languages.



To PT Weda Bay Nickel, including its stakeholders, and other mining companies operating in Halmahera:

- Fully and fairly compensate all community members with land conflicts with WBN or other mining companies.
- Take steps to minimize deforestation in mining areas, including by avoiding mining in areas with young regenerating forests.
- Take immediate steps to prevent, minimize and mitigate air, water, and soil pollution from mining activities.
- Immediately stop all mining and other related activities in forests that have been historically designated as protected forests by the Indonesian government, primary forests, high carbon stock forests, and high conservation value forests.
- Fully respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to exercise Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, their right to self-determination, and their right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- Immediately suspend all activities on the lands of the O'Hongana Manyawa that could threaten their physical and cultural survival or that impedes their enjoyment of their economic, social, and cultural rights.
- Refrain from mining near environmentally sensitive and/or biodiverse areas, including the Sagea River and Bokimaruru Cave, to protect the environment and key freshwater and groundwater resources.

To Tesla, Volkswagen, Ford, and other electric vehicle companies sourcing nickel from producers at IWIP and other industrial parks in Indonesia, and all other global electric vehicle companies that may source nickel from Indonesia:

- Leverage buying power to pressure mines and/or suppliers to change practices that cause severe damage to the climate system and environmental or human rights harm, and if necessary, stop sourcing nickel from producers engaged in human rights and environmental violations.
- Leverage buying power to pressure mines and/or suppliers to provide publicly available information on water and air quality in the areas surrounding their operations, as well as an accurate account of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the use of coal to power IWIP operations.
- Require direct suppliers to disclose their full list of suppliers, as well as documentation that direct suppliers are implementing EV company policies on human rights, environmental and climate due diligence with their suppliers,

and make that information about EV supply chains publicly available and accessible.

- Conduct regular, transparent, and genuinely independent audits of mines and facilities where nickel and other critical minerals are mined and refined to ensure that suppliers are following procedures that protect and respect human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights, meet environmental standards, and don't contribute to climate change.
- Set explicit, time-bound targets to decarbonize transition mineral supply chains and ensure that suppliers are taking concrete steps to reach those targets.

To banks, insurers, and other financial institutions backing IWIP operations:

- Conduct enhanced human rights and environmental due diligence in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and conduct full assessments of actual and potential climate, environmental, and human rights harms caused by investments in IWIP, Weda Bay Nickel, and companies with nickel mining and/or processing operations in Central and East Halmahera.
- Suspend financing, underwriting, or insurance for companies or projects that are involved in land dispossession, pollution, deforestation, or violations of human rights, including Indigenous Peoples' rights, until meaningful mitigation measures and remedies are in place.
- Require full transparency from IWIP and companies operating at IWIP about their human rights, environmental and climate impacts, supply chain practices, greenhouse gas emissions, and plans for remediation and climate mitigation.
- Publicly disclose the full list of projects, companies, and mining and processing facilities in Indonesia they finance, insure, or underwrite, particularly those related to nickel mining and coal-based power generation.
- Adopt and implement strict exclusion policies for investments in projects that rely on captive coal plants, contribute to deforestation, or fail to obtain Free, Prior, and Informed Consent from affected Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- Align financing decisions with the goals of the Paris Agreement and emerging international legal obligations, including the upcoming advisory opinions expected from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Inter-American Court of

Human Rights, and African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights on states' obligations related to climate change and the rights of present and future generations.

- Support reparations and redress mechanisms for communities harmed by projects they have financed or insured, including by insisting on the establishment of dedicated community grievance mechanisms and engagement with independent civil society monitors.
- Collaborate with other responsible financial institutions to strengthen global standards for financing in high-risk sectors such as transition minerals and industrial energy projects, and actively participate in efforts to develop binding standards for responsible finance in alignment with climate, biodiversity, and human rights imperatives and law.

For additional recommendations for Indonesian government ministries, mining and processing companies, electric vehicle companies, and foreign governments, see: <https://cri.org/reports/nickel-unearthed/>.

## Acknowledgements

This report was researched and written by Krista Shennum, Researcher, and Linda Lakhdhir, Legal Director at Climate Rights International. Interviews were conducted by Adi Renaldi on behalf of Climate Rights International. It was reviewed by Brad Adams, Executive Director, and Lotte Leicht, Advocacy Director.

This report would not be possible without the community members in Central and East Halmahera sharing their stories with us.

Cover photo: Aerial image of part of the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP), including captive coal plants and port. August 14, 2024. © Garry Lotulung.

## Appendix

For copies of correspondence with companies and the Ministry of Environment, please visit: <https://cri.org/reports/ongoing-harms-limited-accountability/>.





Mining near Sagea Lake in Central Halmahera.  
Credit: © Muhammad Fadli for Climate Rights International