

Call for international solidarity with Torobulu, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, a community being criminalized for its opposition to nickel mining

To the Indonesian authorities

Environmental and human rights defenders Haslilin and Andi Firmansyah are being criminalized for speaking out against nickel mining

Demand for nickel is booming due to the energy transition in the countries of the Global North, but **nickel mining has a severe impact on local communities.**

To supply nickel to the automobile industry, the mining company Wijaya Intan Nusantara Mining (PT WIN), owned by Frans Salim Kalalo, **is mining nickel ore only about 100 meters from the village of Torobulu**, along the main road. This causes clouds of thick dust that constantly settles on the community and its houses. Two water sources are already unusable and rice fields are ruined. Residents are protesting because they do not want to suffer more landslides and fear that they will continue.

Despite the promotion of energy transition in northern countries as positive, **nickel mining in Sulawesi negatively impacts the local economy.**

Because of the close proximity to the residential area and the environmental impact, the villagers, the village chief and district chief met with the company and agreed to stop the mining – an agreement that the company did not respect.

On November 6, 2023, Ms. Haslilin (30) and Andi Firmansyah (41), along with other Torobulu residents, approached a PT WIN excavator to ask it to leave the area. They mainly wanted to know whether the activity, which was negatively affecting their lives, was in compliance with the law.

The two aforementioned individuals have already been summoned twice in writing by the Kendari Prosecutor's Office, Directorate of Special Investigations. They are accused of *"obstructing or interfering with mining operations pursuant to Article 162 of the Mining Act in conjunction with Article 55 of the Criminal Code"* (Letter S.Pgl /234/ VI/RES.5.5./2024/Ditreskrimsus and Letter S.Pgl/235/VI/RES.5.5./2024/Ditreskrimsus dated June 7, 2024).

Torobulu villagers were called to testify before the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Police about the situation in the community, i.e. the opposition to mining activities in the area. **On June 12, 2024, hundreds of Torobulu villagers demonstrated in front of the police building in Kendari to protest the criminalization of the two Torobulu villagers and the actions of the Kendari City Prosecutor's Office.**

Muhammad Ansar, a lawyer with the legal aid organization LBH Makassar and legal representative of Haslilin and Andi Firmansyah, explains:

*"According to the Constitution, **the right to a good and healthy environment is a human right**. Furthermore, Article 66 of Law 32/2009 clearly states that anyone who fights for the right to a good and healthy environment cannot be prosecuted under criminal or civil law. Therefore, we believe that the prosecution of Haslilin and Andi is an act of **criminalization of two environmental and human rights defenders**, which jeopardizes both **public participation** and the aforementioned **constitutional right**.*

*We believe that PT WIN is maliciously trying to silence the people of Torobulu by applying Section 162 of the Minerals and Energy Act. We therefore **call on law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and courts to uphold the dignity of the law and not criminalize Ms. Haslilin and Mr. Andi Firmansyah**.*

The community of Torobulu, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, demands:

1. Stop the criminalization of human rights defenders and environmentalists Andi Firmansyah and Haslilin and other people of Torobulu.
2. Restore the fishers' right to fish.
3. Immediately stop the destruction of the environment.
4. Give the people of Torobulu back the ability to live in their environment and ecosystems.
5. Revoke PT WIN's nickel mining license.

TESTIMONIALS

"It was previously agreed that there would be no mining for the time being. We went to the bulldozers, mainly to find out if the nickel mining around our residential area is being done according to the regulations. The village chief, the district chief and the residents of Torobulu were present at the meeting," says Andi Firmansyah.

"We did not go there to block the bulldozer, but to ask why they are still mining, when it was already agreed that both parties would keep a low profile, but the company is still mining nickel ore behind our backs. We don't want any more landslides, and we need water to survive. Our houses are inundated in dust. This is what mining has brought us so far," adds Haslilin.

"The fact that Ms. Haslilin and Andi Firmansyah are being prosecuted is absurd. This raises the question of who the law applies to. Instead of being criminalized, they should be protected because together with other Torobulu residents, they are trying to protect the environment for the whole community and save their homeland from the dangers of mining," says Andi Rahman, Director of Walhi Southeast Sulawesi.

"The people of Torobulu are paying the price for mining, and the environmental damage around Torobulu's homes is increasing and becoming more visible. If mining continues at the same pace, they can count the days until they are slowly displaced from their community," says Guadalupe Rodriguez of Rainforest Rescue and Yes to Life No to Mining, who participated in a Toxic Tour organized to study the impacts of nickel mining in Sulawesi late last year.

Co-signed by

- Aceh Wetland Foundation, Indonesia
- AidWatch Australia, Australia
- Aliansi Sulawesi, Indonesia
- AMAN MALUKU, Indonesia
- AMAN Tano Batak, Indonesia
- Apel green aceh, Indonesia
- Articulação Internacional dos Atingidos pela Vale AIAAV, Brazil
- Asia Pacific Network for Environment Defenders, Philippines
- Associação Unidos em Defesa de Covas do Barroso, Portugal
- Bios Iguana A. C., Mexico
- CELIOS, Indonesia
- Center for Sustainable Community Development (SCODE), Vietnam
- Chile Sin Ecocidio, Chile
- civil society women Organization, India
- Coal Action Network, United Kingdom
- COALITION AGAINST LAND GRABBING, Philippines
- Colectivo Voces Ecológicas COVEC, Panama
- Comité Ambiental en Defensa de la Vida, Colombia
- Communities Against the Injustice of Mining (CAIM), Ireland
- Community Development Trust, India
- Comunalisis, Ecuador
- Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag, Ecuador
- denkhausbremen, Germany
- Earth Thrive, United Kingdom

- Extinction Rebellion Serbia, Serbia
- FLIGHT: Protecting Indonesia's Birds, Indonesia
- Forum Ökologie & Papier, Germany
- Forum peduli gunung layung, Indonesia
- FORUM PENJAGA HUTAN DAN SUNGAI HARIMAU PINING, Indonesia
- Forum Petani Plasma Buol, Indonesia
- Frente Nacional Antiminero, Ecuador
- Green Youth Movement, Indonesia
- Humanity Institute, Myanmar (Burma)
- Igapo Project, France
- Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), Philippines
- Inishowen anti mining, Ireland, Ireland
- Inisiasi Masyarakat Adat (IMA), Indonesia
- Inisiasi Masyarakat Adat (IMA), Indonesia
- JARINGAN ADVOKASI TAMBANG SULAWESI TENGAH (JATAM SULTENG), Indonesia
- JusticeMakers Bangladesh (JMBD), Bangladesh
- JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France(JMBF), France
- Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, Philippines
- **Kaoem Telapak, Indonesia**
- Kedai JATAM, Indonesia
- Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY), Malaysia
- Link-AR Borneo, Indonesia
- London Mining Network, United Kingdom
- Melbourne Rainforest Action Group, Australia
- Merdeka West Papua Support Network, Australia
- Mesembau Mendiaga Nusa, Indonesia
- Mining Injustice Solidarity Network, Canada
- Mother Earth, Canada
- National Indigenous Women Forum, Nepal
- National Indigenous Women Fourm, Nepal
- Observatorio Plurinacional de Salares Andinos OPSAL, Chile
- OMASNE, Ecuador
- PERKUMPULAN HIJAU JAMBI, Indonesia
- Ponlok Khmer Organization, Cambodia
- PowerShift e.V., Germany
- Rainforest Information Centre, Australia
- Rainforest Rescue/ Rettet den Regenwald, Germany
- Rettet den Regenwald - Schweiz, Switzerland
- Rights of Nature Donegal., Ireland
- S.E.N.T. Saving the Environment of Navan Townlands., Ireland
- Salva la Selva, Spain
- Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA MUKAH), Malaysia
- Satya Bumi, Indonesia
- Save Inis Eoghain From Mining, Ireland
- Save Our Borneo, Indonesia
- Save Our Sperrins, Ireland
- Selamatkan Hutan Hujan, Indonesia
- Si a la Vida, No a la Minería, Colombia
- Sikola Mombine, Indonesia
- Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network (SHRDN), Pakistan

- Snowchange Cooperative, Finland
- Stiftung Asienhaus, Germany
- Surco Comun, Ecuador
- Tesla den Hahn abdrehen, Germany
- THE ALLIANCE OF PASTORALISTS
FROM AURUNCI AND CIOCIARIA,
Italy
- The Gaia Foundation, United Kingdom
- Trend Asia, Indonesia
- Unir en Haití, Mexico
- Urai uni, Indonesia
- Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, India
- WALHI NTT, Indonesia
- WALHI PAPUA, Indonesia
- WALHI Sumatera Utara, Indonesia
- Yayasan Pendidikan Lingkungan,
Indonesia
- Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat,
Indonesia
- Yes to Life No to Mining, United
Kingdom
- Youth Advocates for Climate Action
Philippines, Philippines