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Last update:

**2014-06-24**

## Wilmar International sugar plantations in Merauke, Papua, Indonesia



([https://file.ejatlas.org/img/Conflict/107/oil\\_palm\\_Indonesia](https://file.ejatlas.org/img/Conflict/107/oil_palm_Indonesia))

### ▼ Description:

Singapore-based Wilmar, controlled by the Malaysian tycoon Robert Kuok, is one of the world's largest palm-oil companies and a major sugar producer. In September 2009, the company secured a permit to convert 200,000 ha of mainly forested land in Papua, Indonesia into sugar-cane plantations, as part of the Merauke Integrated Food

and Energy Estate (MIFEE) mega-project that the Indonesian government is pursuing. In May 2011 Wilmar purchased PT Anugrah Rejeki Nusantara, the company to develop the largest food plantation under MIFEE. It was then decided to move Wilmar's permit to Animha district and restrict it to 80,000 ha. Local groups and indigenous women's

organizations are outspoken against the concessions, and most have refused to sell their land (only one village has sold a total of 1,000 ha). Progress is slow due to this and other legal roadblocks, including unclear zoning and existing protected land designation.

*See more*

### ▼ Basic Data

**Legal notice / Aviso legal (/legal)**

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**Name of conflict:**Wilmar International sugar plantations in Merauke, Papua, Indonesia

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**Country:**Indonesia (/country/indonesia)

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**State or province:**Merauke province

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**Location of conflict:**Merauke, Taboniji, Animha

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**Accuracy of location**

MEDIUM (Regional level)

**▼ Source of Conflict**

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**Type of conflict. 1st level:**Biomass and Land Conflicts (Forests, Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock Management)

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**Type of conflict. 2nd level:**Land acquisition conflicts  
Deforestation

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**Specific commodities:**

Sugar (/commodity/sugar)

**▼ Project Details and Actors**

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**Project details**

While plans for the project in Merauke are unclear, local groups report the plantation in Taboniji is moving forward, and another permit

has been acquired for 80,000 ha in Animha district in which plans are moving forward. Villagers in Koa, Baad, and Wayau have reported that

Wilmar negotiators approached them starting in 2012 to convince them to sign over their land.

*See more*

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**Project area:**

80,000

**Legal notice / Aviso legal (/legal)**

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**Level of Investment:**2,000,000,000

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**Type of population**Rural

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**Affected Population:**52,000

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**Start of the conflict:**2009

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**Company names or state enterprises:**Wilmar International (/company/wilmar-international) from Singapore (/country-of-company/singapore)

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**Relevant government actors:**Forestry Ministry of Indonesia, The National Government of Indonesia

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**Environmental justice organizations (and other supporters) and their websites, if available:**

Forest Peoples Programme (<http://www.forestpeoples.org> (<http://www.forestpeoples.org>)), awasMIFEE (<https://awasmiffee.potager.org> (<https://awasmiffee.potager.org>)), Sawit Watch (<http://sawitwatch.or.id/> (<http://sawitwatch.or.id/>)) Down to Earth (<http://www.downtoearth-indonesia.org/> (<http://www.downtoearth-indonesia.org/>)), PUSAKA (<http://pusaka.or.id/> (<http://pusaka.or.id/>))

**▼ Conflict & Mobilization**

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**Intensity**MEDIUM (street protests, visible mobilization)

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**Reaction stage**PREVENTIVE resistance (precautionary phase)

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**Groups mobilizing:**

Indigenous groups or traditional communities

International ejos

Local ejos

Women

Ethnically/racially discriminated groups

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## Forms of mobilization:

Creation of alternative reports/knowledge  
 Development of alternative proposals  
 Involvement of national and international NGOs  
 Media based activism/alternative media  
 Official complaint letters and petitions

### ▼ Impacts

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## Environmental Impacts

**Visible:** Deforestation and loss of vegetation cover

**Potential:** Biodiversity loss (wildlife, agro-diversity), Food insecurity (crop damage), Loss of landscape/aesthetic degradation, Soil erosion, Surface water pollution / Decreasing water (physico-chemical, biological) quality, Groundwater pollution or depletion

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## Socio-economical Impacts

**Visible:** Increase in Corruption/Co-optation of different actors

**Potential:** Displacement, Loss of livelihood, Loss of traditional knowledge/practices/cultures, Specific impacts on women, Violations of human rights, Land dispossession

### ▼ Outcome

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## Project Status

Planned (decision to go ahead eg EIA undertaken, etc)

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## Conflict outcome / response:

Under negotiation

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## Development of alternatives:

Forest People's Project puts forward the following requests: 'continue to monitor the situation of indigenous peoples, and suspend projects that may threaten their cultural survival, enforce labor conditions consistent with international labor standards, bring to light the human rights violations against indigenous Papuans, establish a Human Rights Court, etc' (p15-6, Request for Further Considerationâ)

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## Do you consider this an environmental justice success? Was environmental justice served?:

Not Sure

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## Briefly explain:

Groups are still mobilizing, including sending petitions to the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, without response. Although the petition to override the protected forest status of some of the land was denied, legislation and existing business environment encourages this and other companies to invest and progress with their projects.

### ▼ Sources & Materials

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## Juridical relevant texts related to the conflict (laws, legislations, EIAs, etc)

Papua Special Autonomy Law

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## References to published books, academic articles, movies or published documentaries

Forest Peoples Program, 2013, 'Starvation and poverty in Indonesia: civil society organisations appeal for suspension of MIFEE project in Papua pending redress for local communities'

Awasmiffee, 2012, 'An Agribusiness Attack in West Papua'

Estate in West Papua, Indonesia. ASEAS - Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, 6(1), 160-182.

Forest Peoples Program, 2013, 'Request for Further Consideration of the Situation of the Indigenous Peoples of Merauke, Papua Province, Indonesia, under the UN CERDs Urgent Action and Early Warning Procedures'

Ginting, L. & Pye, O. (2013). Resisting agribusiness development: The Merauke Integrated Food and Energy

**Ginting & Pye -**

[click to view] ([http://www.seas.at/aseas/6\\_1/ASEAS\\_6\\_1\\_A9.pdf](http://www.seas.at/aseas/6_1/ASEAS_6_1_A9.pdf))

**, 'Cane growers fear potential Wilmar Deal'**

[click to view] ([FarmLandGrab.org](http://farmlandgrab.org))

[click to view] (<http://farmlandgrab.org/post/view/15203>)

**Forest Peoples Program - MIFEE press release\_Aug2013\_Final.pdf**

[click to view] (<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/news/2013/08/CERD>)

**Wilmar Sugar -**

[click to view] (<http://www.wilmar-international.com/our-business/sugar/>)

**Forest Peoples Program -**

[click to view] (<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2013/08/cerduamifeejuly2013english.pdf>)

**, 'Wilmar secures 200,000 hectares of land in Merauke Food Estate for sugar plant'**

[click to view] ([FarmLandGrab.org](http://farmlandgrab.org))

**awasMIFEE, 2013, 'Malind Women's views about Companies Operating in Kampung Baad, Animha District, Merauke.'**

[click to view] (<https://awasmifee.potager.org/?p=458>)

**Awasmifee -**

[click to view] ([https://awasmifee.potager.org/uploads/2012/03/mifee\\_en.pdf](https://awasmifee.potager.org/uploads/2012/03/mifee_en.pdf))

[click to view] (<http://farmlandgrab.org/post/view/18410>)

**Forestry Ministry (status of petitions)-**

[click to view] (<http://lpp.dephut.go.id/media.php?module=izin&sub=listing&izin=4>)

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## Other comments:

The Merauke Integrated Food & Energy Estate Project (MIFEE) encompasses 2.5 million hectares, and will relocate 2-4 million workers to Merauke to provide labor. The Forest Peoples Program says this will overwhelm and threaten the rights of the existing Malind people who number 52,000 people, and are rarely meaningfully employed by the projects. Forest People's Program: 'MIFEE is a large-scale and extreme 'Encroachment on the traditional lands of indigenous peoples â for the purpose of exploitation of natural resources,' and represents a situation that threatens their cultural and perhaps even physical survival given their extreme vulnerability and the high likelihood of substantial, negative and multi-generational impacts on the maintenance of their relationships with their traditional territories.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, 'companies have acquired permits or are in the process of acquiring land from the local peoples â often, as the Committee observed, through 'the manipulation of communities by investors and State officials to obtain signatures necessary for complying with the legal requirements of proving land titles over indigenous lands''

AwamIFEE: 'Research in 2007 by Friends of the Earth Netherlands into Wilmar's oil palm plantations in Kalimantan found that the company was burning forest illegally to clear it, clearing land without the right permits and not consulting local communities that have customary rights over the land that Wilmar uses.<sup>8</sup> In 2011 PT Asiatic Persada, a company owned by Wilmar, bulldozed 83 houses of villagers who disputed the company's right to the land in Jambi province in Sumatra, after a confrontation in which one resident was shot and wounded and twelve people were arrested.<sup>9</sup> Before the conflict was resolved, the company was sold to AMS Plantations.'

### ▼ Meta information

#### Contributor:

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#### Last update

18/08/2019

### ▼ Comments

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