

Press release, 23 September 2025:

EU-Indonesia deal: global civil society alliance calls for a stop

A European-Indonesian alliance of civil society organizations and trade unions¹ criticises the political agreement on the EU-Indonesia free trade agreement being signed in Indonesia today. The organizations warn that this agreement threatens the environment, climate, and the rights of women, Indigenous Peoples, workers, small farmers and fisherfolk. Therefore the alliance calls upon governments and parliaments to veto the agreement.

Salsabila Aziziah (Koalisi Masyarakat Sipil untuk Keadilan Ekonomi / Indonesia CSO Coalition for Economic Justice) said:

By concluding this deal, the EU and Indonesia are prioritising multinational corporations' business interests over those of local communities and nature. They have negotiated in secrecy, even though it will affect the daily lives of citizens in both Indonesia and Europe. Matters such as jobs, rights, growth strategies, and protection of the natural world are public policy issues that should be debated in the full light of day, so that the public can see what is on the table and may be being traded away. The risks are great and the little bits of information that have been drip fed have not reassured us.

Perrine Fournier (Forest NGO Fern) said:

The deal reinforces an extractive model which has already caused immense harm to Indonesia's forests. It contains no tangible, foreseen benefits for those who have historically lost out when trade is liberalised – namely, Indigenous communities, smallholders and workers. Instead, it strengthens the already vice-like grip corporations hold over Indonesia's forests.

Marius Troost (Both ENDS) said:

It is vitally important that any deal has meaningful safeguards or brakes. Binding provisions on the protection of the environment, communities and workers must be an essential condition for responsible and sustainable trade agreements. Resource extraction in Indonesia is rapidly accelerating, from forestry products to mining, and deforestation is surging.² The human rights situation in Indonesia is deteriorating.³ We fear that this trade agreement will accelerate exploitation and environmental destruction.

Afgan Fadilla (Serikat Petani Indonesia/Indonesia Peasants Union) said:

EU-Indonesia CEPA negotiation has potentially imposed UPOV that is detrimental for the lives of peasants. UPOV is designed to strengthen intellectual property rights for seed corporations, not to safeguard the livelihoods or rights of peasants. For peasants, seeds are more than an input. They are the foundation of food sovereignty, cultural heritage, and ecological resilience. UPOV will restrict the traditional practices of saving, exchanging,

¹ [Joint Statement on raw materials in EU-Indonesia CEPA](#), 18 February 2025

² Hans Nicholas Jong, "[Surge in legal land clearing pushes up Indonesia deforestation rate in 2024](#)", *Mongabay*, 7 Feb 2025

³ Nur Janti, "[Discriminatory laws, impunity worsen Indonesia's human rights situation: HRW](#)" *Jakarta Post*, 25 Feb 2025. "[New report documents alleged crimes against humanity in West Papua's Intan Jaya](#)", *Human Rights Monitor*, 9 Jan 2025

and developing seeds, which are at the heart of peasant agriculture. Instead of adopting UPOV, states must strengthen peasants-led seed systems and promote legal frameworks that recognize peasants' rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP).

Tuti Suwartini (FSP FARKES REFORMASI/The Federation of Pharmaceutical and Health Workers Union) said:

Recent legislative changes in Indonesia—most notably the controversial Omnibus Law⁴—along with the narrowing of political space for workers and civil society, threaten to undermine the agreement's sustainability commitments. Fundamental rights such as freedom of association, wage setting, collective bargaining, and protection against anti-union discrimination are particularly at risk. The ILO and others have criticised the Omnibus Law for weakening these protections and failing to comply with core ILO conventions. Moreover, dissent against the law has been met with the suppression of protests, arrests of labour leaders, and restrictions on civic freedoms.

Jean Blaylock (European Trade Justice Coalition) said:

Governments and parliamentarians both in the EU and in Indonesia should not support such a high risk deal. Arguments that the deal is needed to counterbalance Trump are misguided - it would play into his hands by doubling down on an approach that has made ordinary people's lives more precarious. Instead we need to find a better approach to trade that can work for people and the planet.

Press contacts

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Rachmi Hertanti (Transnational Institute) from Indonesia is in Brussels until 30 September and available for interviews. Hertanti is a lawyer and researcher on trade policy.

Background

For more background see:

- [Briefing paper: Indonesia-Europe Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(IEU-CEPA\)](#)
- [Joint statement on raw materials in EU-Indonesia](#)

⁴ Omnibus Law on Job Creation (Act No. 11 of 2020)