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Indonesia: High penalty for palm oil company

More than 100 fires were set to the swamp forest of Tripa

Jan 13, 2014

A court in the Aceh province in northern Sumatra sent a strong signal against the slashing and burning of rainforests: the palm oil company PT Kallista Alam has been sentenced to pay a fine of approximately 9 million US dollar as well as 21 million US dollar for reforestation of Tripa's destroyed swamp forest

"This ruling sends out a clear message to all companies that think they can destroy protected forest and get away with it," Muhammad Nur, head of the environmental organization WALHI Aceh, the Indonesian branch of Friends of the Earth, commented.

Following pressure from national and international environmentalists, the Indonesian Ministry of the Environment had filed a lawsuit in 2012 against the palm oil company PT Kallista Alam, which has led to the ruling and the "historically" high penalty for illegal slash and burn in the protected Tripa forest. As part of the Leuser Ecosystem, the precious swamp forests are a "National strategic zone for environmental protection," as well as an important habitat of the remaining endangered Sumatran orangutans.

In spring of 2012, Rainforest Rescue had also participated in the campaign against the palm oil company PT Kallista Alam with 50,000 protest Emails and 10,000 Euros in donations.

The illegal activities of PT Kallista Alam were brought to the attention of the public as early as August 2011, when the then Governor of Aceh gave his approval to the company's 1,605-hectares palm oil plantation – in the middle of the legally protected Leuser Ecosystem.

At the instigation of WALHI, the court of justice in Medan sentenced the now newly elected Governor of Aceh in August 2012, to withdraw the concession.

In addition to the large fine and the compensation payment for the destroyed swamp forest of Tripa, the judges of the District Court of Meulaboh obligated PT Kallista Alam to return 5,769 hectares of land.

This is a great success for the rainforest and its inhabitants. With the help of your 50,000 signatures and 10,000 Euros in donations Rainforest Rescue was able to do its part in helping to win the crucial trial against the palm oil company.

For more information:
EN: http://news.xin.msn.com/en/regional/indonesia/indonesian-palm-oil-firm-to-pay-losses-in-historic-ruling-1 ⬈
EN: http://www.sumatranorangutan.org/pr-tripa-090114.html ⬈
EN: http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/aceh-court-orders-palm-oil-firm-to-pay-for-environmental-damage/ ⬈

FR: http://www.7sur7.be/7s7/fr/2765/Environnement/article/detail/1771002/2014/01/09/Historique-une-societe-d-huile-de-palme-condamnee-pour-deboisement.dhtml

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Topic-related action alerts

Save the last orangutan refuge

Flames, as far as the eye can see. More than 100 fires have blazed across Tripa within a week. The forest, one of the last refuges for the endangered Sumatran orangutans, is at great risk. If the accountable palm oil corporation is not stopped, they could disappear completely by the end of 2012. **Please help the orangutans.** – Update: Jan 13, 2014

PROTEST   Start of campaign: Mar 30, 2012 ׀ 49,758 participants to date

Background knowledge

Facts about palm oil and rainforests

Palm oil is an edible plant oil which has become a common ingredient in many consumer products. Today, around 50 percent of the goods we use every day contain palm oil, from processed foods to candles, grooming products and "biofuels". Read on for more information on why palm oil has become so pervasive, and how it is destroying rainforests.

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