

PRESS RELEASE | For Immediate Release

## **Expansion by Indonesia's largest palm oil company frozen for disobeying RSPO standards**

*Palm oil conglomerate ordered to halt expansion of operations following multiple violations of RSPO standards.*

7<sup>th</sup> May, 2015: The RSPO's Complaints Panel has upheld the Forest Peoples Programme in its complaint against Golden Agri Resources, which was seeking to expand 18 of its operations in Kalimantan. After concluding that it has 'reasonable grounds' to conclude that the company is in violation of several RSPO norms, the latest 'determination' by the Panel notes:

*The Panel hereby prohibits GAR from acquiring or developing any new areas until this complaint has been dealt with to the satisfaction of the Complaints Panel.*

Repeated field surveys by Forest Peoples Programme with local partner, LinkAR-Borneo, show that the company has sluggishly responded, after the NGOs had repeatedly raised concerns first with the company and then the RSPO. The NGOs found that the company had failed to expand its operations after it had taken land without proper consent, had not completed required High Conservation Value assessments and was of questionable legality. The Complaints Panel rules that:

*GAR must also take remedial steps to correct any shortcomings in its land acquisition process with the affected communities... and insists that GAR must honor its commitment to allocate 20 % of the land for the smallholders as it has promised to do...*

Agus Sutomo Executive Director of Pontianak-based LinkAR Borneo says:

*We need the Government to take note of this decision. Chaotic law enforcement and handing out permits for oil palm plantations on indigenous peoples' lands without even informing them in advance is bad for people, bad for forests and bad for Indonesia.*

In past years NGOs have expressed growing dismay that the RSPO was failing to enforce its standards and turning a blind eye to multiple violations.

*We hope this decision will now persuade GAR/SMART that it has to renegotiate with communities where it has taken over their lands without their informed consent, says Marcus Colchester, Senior Policy Advisor of the Forest Peoples Programme. We are greatly encouraged that the RSPO is upholding its standard. We need to eliminate all land-grabbing from the RSPO-endorsed supply chain.*

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*

## **Notes for editors**

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### **Links**

Complaint Letter PT Kartika Prima Cipta Golden Agri Resources Ltd:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/news/%5Byyyy%5D/%5Bmm%5D/Complaint%20%20PT%20Kartika%20Prima%20CiptaGolden%20Agri%20resources%20Ltd.pdf>

Detailed complaint:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/news/2014/10/Final%20text%20FPP%20complaint%20on%20GAR%20to%20RSPO%20Oct%202014.pdf>

Previous exposure:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/responsible-finance/news/2015/04/golden-agri-resources-still-violation-rspo-standards>

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/agribusiness/news/2015/03/forest-peoples-programme-complaint-against-golden-agri-resources--0>

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/palm-oil-rspo/publication/2014/independent-review-social-impacts-golden-agri-resources-forest>

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/agribusiness/news/2014/10/golden-agri-resources-postpones-palm-oil-expansion-plans-borneo-res>

Recent review:

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/news/%5Byyyy%5D/%5Bmm%5D/FPP%20Presentation%20to%20KPC%205th%20March%202015.pdf>

Our field surveys: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/Link-AR-Borneo/140096346116376>

Previous Reviews: <http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/palm-oil-rspo/publication/2013/conflict-or-consent-oil-palm-sector-crossroads>

**Forest Peoples Programme** works with forest peoples in South America, Africa, and Asia, to help them secure their rights, build up their own organisations and negotiate with governments and companies as to how economic development and conservation are best achieved on their lands. The vision of the organisation is that forests be owned and controlled by forest peoples in ways that ensure sustainable livelihoods, equity and well-being based on respect for their rights, knowledge, cultures and identities. For more information, please visit [www.forestpeoples.org](http://www.forestpeoples.org)