

Environmental Destruction and Corporate Greed in Indonesia

News:

The Singapore government is taking stern action by targeting seven companies suspected of inciting forest fires in Indonesia, leading to a worsening toxic haze crisis in Singapore and Malaysia. Under the Transboundary Haze Pollution Act, the seven companies have received formal warrants to immediately cease all their land burning activities. In addition, they are also required to submit a comprehensive prevention plan to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future. Prime Minister Lawrence Wong warned that the government would not hesitate to take firm legal action, which allows for fines of up to S\$100,000 per day for air pollution. The fires were mainly triggered by the traditional practice of slash-and-burn for clearing agricultural land which has been exacerbated by the extreme dry season of El Nino weather phenomena. The impact of this thick haze was significant, causing the Pollutant Standard Index (PSI) in Singapore to touch 160 to 227, a level that was categorized as "very unhealthy" for residents. The identities of the seven companies are planned to be made public after further investigation is completed. ([Source](#))

Comment:

The forest and land fires that hit Kalimantan and Sumatra this year have again become a dark record. This disaster not only expanded to burn more than 194,542 hectares of land, but also triggered an acute health and environmental crisis. The Ministry of Health (Kemenkes) recorded as many as 277,075 cases of Acute Respiratory Infection (ISPA) due to forest and land fires (karhutla) in 63 districts/cities in seven affected provinces. Data from the Ministry of Health as of October 12, 2026 recorded 277,075 cases of ISPA cumulatively in 63 districts or cities in seven affected provinces, including 62,400 cases or 22.5 percent in children aged 0-5 years. Forest and land fire smoke contains fine particles of PM2.5 and other harmful substances that can trigger ISPA, cough, shortness of breath, and worsen asthma," he said. Infants, toddlers, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with chronic lung disease are vulnerable groups exposed to these fine particles.

The destructive impact of these fires also extends beyond the country's borders to neighboring countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia, which in turn disrupt public activities in the region. Although extreme hot weather is often blamed on the black goats, in reality the main cause of this crisis is corporate greed. The practice of burning for plantation land clearing is still massive. This condition is exacerbated by the exploitation of wet peat ecosystems that are deliberately drained by industry for commercial commodities, making them fuel piles that are ready to explode at any time. In addition, the government continues to give permission to these corporations to continue operating and causing damage in Indonesia for a long time.

This ecological disaster can actually be prevented if the government firmly formulates a resource management policy with a comprehensive vision, putting environmental sustainability and human safety above all else. The current reality reflects the fragility of governance that still deifies the capitalistic paradigm. The logic of profit-loss continues to be used as the main basis in policy-making, while the preservation of nature is sacrificed. In fact, the Qur'an has long reminded in Surah Ar-Rum verse 41 that: **ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ** "Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people's hands have done, so that Allah may cause them to taste 'the consequences of' some of their deeds and perhaps they might return 'to the Right Path'".

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