



## Re: Canada-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) Consultation

Canada-Indonesia Trade Consultations  
Global Affairs Canada  
Trade Negotiations Division(TCD)

February 23, 2021

Dear Canada Trade Negotiators,

Pacific Peoples' Partnership along with its allies are deeply concerned with the possibility of a signing of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the nation of Indonesia.

For decades, Canada has purported itself to be a benevolent nation of peacekeeping and egalitarianism, yet it continues to struggle in acknowledging its colonial past and racist present (inadvertent or otherwise) and has repeatedly failed to reconcile with both its Indigenous and historically marginalized communities. It would therefore be prudent of the Canadian government to ensure its foreign policies and trade agreements first and foremost reflect its commitments to the principles set forth in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),<sup>1</sup> Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy,<sup>2</sup> and Canada's commitments to climate action.<sup>3</sup> Many of these principles continue to be disregarded to this day in Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> The signing of a CEPA without first ensuring commitments on these critical issues would be fundamentally hypocritical and only further serve to deteriorate Canada's diminishing global reputation.

In signing a CEPA with Indonesia, Canada will be willfully disregarding the ongoing human rights abuses perpetrated by the Indonesian military today in favour of an exclusively financial deal. We are concerned that in signing this CEPA, Canada would be turning its back on the thousands of West Papuans who continue to call for self-determination, and recognition and respect of the most basic of human rights.<sup>5</sup> Mass arrests and instances of indiscriminate torture and racism continue to surface from West Papua to this day, despite a strict media blackout. If Canada is committed to upholding UNDRIP principles, then its policies and agreements, both foreign and domestic, must align with the rights of Indigenous Peoples including West Papuans.

Furthermore, Canada has made substantial commitments to environmental stewardship, yet Indonesia continues to exponentially develop its mono-crop industry whilst levelling incredibly biodiverse land at unprecedented rates. Indonesia is the world's top palm oil producing country which carries significant environmental and social implications.<sup>6</sup> Corporations that are seeking to acquire land for mono-crop plantations often seek permission from the Indonesian government rather than the Indigenous communities residing there. Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is rarely attained during these negotiations.<sup>7</sup> Millions of hectares of forests have been razed for cash crops and agribusiness, most often at the detriment of local Indigenous communities. Not only have these plantations stripped Indigenous peoples of their cultural identities and economic resources but are also having detrimental effects in the fight against climate change.<sup>8</sup>

Alongside future trade deals and economic partnerships, Canada should also ensure that the rights of LGBTQ2I people are respected in the partner nation. Attacks on LGBTQ2I groups in Indonesia have been on the rise in recent years, with some top government officials continuing to stoke anti-LGBTQ2I rhetoric. A 2018 Human Rights Watch Report called the increase in attacks a “systemic crackdown on LGBTQ2I rights...”<sup>9</sup> Given these concerning reports and an uptick in violence and government crackdowns, it would be sensible for the Canadian government to advance and ensure protection of these communities before engaging in trade and signing economic partnerships.

The aforementioned issues outline a concerning pattern of Indonesian government policies that have: 1) undermined Indigenous rights which include the right to self-determined development, 2) violated human rights, 3) dispossessed Indigenous land in favour of agribusinesses, 4) compromised climate action ambitions through mono-crop expansion, and 5) orchestrated violence and persecution of LGBTQ2I people. Canada should ensure that its economic partners respect fundamental human and Indigenous rights as set out by recognized international agreements such as UNDRIP, as well as guarantee that its partners are not further contributing to environmental degradation and regressing on climate commitments.

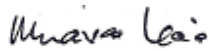
Pacific Peoples' Partnership along with its allies, set forth the following items for consideration before entering into a CEPA with Indonesia:

- 1 | **Promote and guarantee human and Indigenous rights** which includes the recognition of West Papuan and Indigenous self-determination, or at the very least, the establishment of a 2-way exchange of Indigenous Rights Advocacy between Indigenous Peoples in both Canada and Indonesia.
- 2 | **Establish and support Truth and Reconciliation processes** in Indonesia. Canada could support exchanges and cooperation between practitioners of truth and reconciliation across borders. Trade deals must include a commitment to action in this respect.
- 3 | **Advocate for LGBTQ2I rights** and condemn the escalation of systemic violence against these communities. Canada has a responsibility to follow through on its commitments to protect the rights of these people even if it means engaging in difficult dialogue with lucrative trade partners.
- 4 | **Ensure that proper processes are in place to attain Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** of Indigenous Peoples regarding mono-crop expansion and extractive industries such as mining, and fund studies which explore the environmental impacts of these sectors. Canada could work to offset the negative impacts of these industries by sponsoring initiatives such as forest preservation agreements and export diversification techniques.

Canada has a long road ahead in repairing its relationship with both Indigenous Peoples as well as reconciling with its own lands and waters it has often neglected and polluted. By signing on to UNDRIP, committing to ambitious climate action goals and adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada must ensure that its international partners both trade-related and otherwise, also respect these fundamental standards that promote a more just, equitable and sustainable world.



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## References:

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- 2 Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy: [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/iap2-eng.pdf?\\_ga=2.63197802.437147500.1613683546-1372757550.1613683546](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/iap2-eng.pdf?_ga=2.63197802.437147500.1613683546-1372757550.1613683546)
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