

## Still Seeking Remedy: Ongoing Land Conflicts Challenge AAL's Claims of Progress

April 2026

On 26 January 2026 Astra Agro Lestari (AAL) released its most recent [progress report](#) on implementation of its Three Year Action plan, which was the result of a unilaterally-dictated process that ignored civil society inputs. The progress report, like the action plan upon which it's based, features critical gaps in acknowledging the causes of ongoing protracted land conflicts and addressing communities' grievances and demands for remedy.

AAL's progress report highlights several Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities implemented by the company and its subsidiaries, training provided to AAL staff, and participation in various multistakeholder forums, and seeks to present a picture of harmonious company-community relations. Unfortunately, the progress report, like the action plan upon which it's based, does not respond to communities' demands for redress, namely the return of any land taken without consent to rightsholders and restoration of any waterways damaged by company operations.

**The critical gap in AAL's plan is that it does not address the tenurial situation, which is the cause of ongoing conflict, violence, and threats of criminalization.** AAL presents a picture of amicable company-community relations, which fails to acknowledge numerous instances of ongoing conflict in areas where its subsidiaries operate. While AAL has taken steps to increase its understanding and capacity to address human rights, the omissions in its latest progress report reveal that a wide gap still exists between the company's stated aspirations and the protracted land conflicts on the ground.

A critical factor fueling ongoing land conflicts is the failure of AAL to ensure in all cases that its subsidiaries have received [Free, Prior, Informed, Consent \(FPIC\)](#) from affected communities and rightsholders. Importantly, FPIC applies for the duration of companies' operations, is enshrined in international human rights laws and frameworks, and a central component of companies' policies throughout supply chains. However, AAL has not demonstrated that its subsidiaries have received FPIC.

AAL's progress report attributes its lack of progress in resolving grievances to WALHI's decision not to meet directly with the company. WALHI is willing to meet with AAL, at the request of impacted communities, and alongside relevant government agencies such as the Central Sulawesi Agrarian Conflict Taskforce, if AAL is prepared to address communities' land claims, share relevant data and maps on AAL subsidiaries' land claims, and release land found to belong to rightsholders. Furthermore, violence, intimidation, and

criminalization by security forces must cease to provide enabling conditions for good-faith engagement.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility Ignores Communities' Demands for Redress**

In its progress report, AAL highlights several CSR activities, including supporting the creation of a cemetery in Towiora village, providing agricultural training for Rio Mukti village, providing food, livelihood and education support, renovation to buildings, and a circumcision program for the Tado Indigenous community, and providing food, infrastructure, and livelihood support for the Panca Mukti village, amongst other efforts.

**Under Indonesian law, companies such as AAL that operate in the natural resources sector are legally mandated to conduct and report on CSR activities.**<sup>1</sup> The activities listed in AAL's three-year action plan and subsequent progress reports are precisely the types of social and environmental actions that AAL is required to fulfill under Indonesian law – and do not constitute sufficient redress of longstanding grievances or remedy for alleged environmental and human rights violations.

While AAL's progress report highlights its CSR activities, the company still has not: demonstrated whether its subsidiaries in Sulawesi ever received FPIC from impacted communities and rightsholders; acknowledged permitting irregularities by subsidiaries in Sulawesi; investigated environmental degradation to rivers; or addressed the larger environment of intimidation and criminalization that persists on the ground. By ignoring these critical issues, AAL's plans do not address communities' primary demands for redress, namely, the return of land that, according to community members, was taken without consent, environmental restoration, and compensation for the loss of lands and livelihoods. The company's orientation to develop "partnerships" with communities, rather than returning land to rightsholders, reinforces a status quo where communities remain dependent on AAL subsidiaries.

AAL's violations in Sulawesi have resulted in ten consumer goods companies [suspending](#) palm oil sourcing, several [financiers](#) acting against AAL and its parent companies Astra

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<sup>1</sup> See Law No. 40 of 2007 on Limited Liability Companies and Government Regulation No. 47 of 2012 concerning the Social and Environmental Responsibility of Limited Liability Companies.

International and Jardine Matheson, and increased scrutiny from [industry bodies](#) to [journalists](#) to the [United Nations](#). CSR is not a replacement for AAL's obligations to provide meaningful redress and remedy.

### **Ongoing Conflict and Threats of Criminalization**

AAL's progress report seeks to present an amicable relationship with impacted communities, yet disregards numerous instances of conflict:

#### *July 2025*

According to community reports, on 18 July, the Towiora village community held a [demonstration](#) in front of the Donggala Regent's office demanding the government resolve ongoing agrarian conflicts between AAL subsidiary PT LTT and affected villages in accordance with circular letter no. 591/0339/pers. Demonstrators called on the government to review and reevaluate PT LTT's reportedly unfulfilled plasma obligations, address the fact that the company's HGU permit overlaps with community settlements and plantations, and pay attention to the environmental impacts on the Towiora village community, given that the settlement is located on a former waterway (Lariang River). The demonstrators also called for an end to criminalization, insisting that the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Polri) remain neutral and refrain from intimidation.

In response, the Governor of Central Sulawesi sent a letter to the Donggala Regent requesting that the community process a complaint regarding the agrarian conflict between the Towiora community and PT LTT. The Regent invited the community to a meeting alongside the Donggala Police Chief, relevant agency heads, village heads, sub-district heads, and PT LTT on 30 July. According to community members who attended, the meeting did not yield any meaningful recommendations to expedite the resolution of the agrarian conflict between the community and PT LTT.

#### *August 2025*

According to community reports, on 20 August, the communities of Towiora, Polanto Jaya, Minti Makmur, Tinauka, and Rio Mukti in Rio Pakava District [reported PT LTT](#) to the Governor of Central Sulawesi, raising allegations of PT LTT operating outside the HGU area and encroaching on former transmigration areas. The community was received by the head of the Central Sulawesi Agrarian Conflict Resolution Task Force. According to the head of the Task Force, the governor immediately responded to the community's report by forming a

special task force under his supervision. However, according to community members, to date, there has been no clarity regarding the conflict resolution process.

#### *October 2025*

According to community reports, on 9 October, the Towiora community staged an occupation of the area at the centre of the conflict. According to the community, the land was theirs and forcibly taken by PT LTT.

#### *January 2026*

According to community reports, on 17 January, three individuals from Towiora community picked up palm oil fruits understood to have been discarded by the company on land controlled by PT LTT. The three individuals were reportedly apprehended by security staff and taken to the Donggala police station where they were held for 24 hours. The case is ongoing and the individuals are reportedly required to report to the police every week.

#### *February 2026*

According to community reports, on 6 February, hundreds of residents clashed with security officers at a palm oil plantation owned by PT Lestari Tani Teladan in Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi. The trigger is believed to have stemmed from residents' dissatisfaction with the Central Sulawesi provincial government. The altercation escalated into a physical confrontation involving machetes, in which a number of people, including farmers and security officers, suffered machete wounds. At least five people required treatment at local health facilities.

Reports of violent encounters between farmers and AAL subsidiaries, frequent protests, and community reports of threats of criminalization indicate a starkly different reality from the story presented in AAL's progress report. These reported incidents and communities' existing land claims reinforce the need for the Government of Central Sulawesi to resolve protracted conflicts between AAL companies and local communities through the restoration of communities' land rights. Furthermore, AAL's buyers and financiers should be aware that claims of progress and amicable relations between AAL subsidiaries and impacted communities may serve to obscure tense and dangerous dynamics on the ground.

### **Engagement with Civil Society**

AAL's progress report attributes its lack of progress in resolving grievances to WALHI's decision not to meet directly with the company. It is important to clarify that WALHI is not a



**Friends of  
the Earth  
United States**

representative for communities impacted by AAL's operations but rather works alongside these communities.

WALHI is willing to meet with AAL, at the request of impacted communities, alongside relevant government agencies, with the explicit understanding that AAL is prepared to address communities' land claims, share relevant data and maps on AAL subsidiaries' land claims, and release land found to belong to rightsholders. An initial meeting can establish grounds for good faith discussions and aim to address land claims, beginning in Donggala district. AAL should be prepared to share data on its land claims while WALHI will present findings from recent participatory mapping regarding community claims. If an initial meeting is productive, WALHI would be inclined to engage in a larger process aimed at supporting meaningful grievance redress and remedy.