

Palm oil for India 'destroying Indonesian forests'

June 19 2012



Workers harvest palm oil fruits at a plantation in Medan, Indonesia. Surging demand for palm oil in India for cooking and everyday grocery items is driving tropical forest destruction in Indonesia, Greenpeace said.

Surging demand for palm oil in India for cooking and everyday grocery items is driving tropical forest destruction in Indonesia, Greenpeace said Tuesday.

In its report "Frying the Forest" the group called on Indians to boycott products by brands Britannia, ITC, Parle and Godrej, such as biscuits and soap, until the companies commit to sustainable palm oil supply chains.

"[Palm oil plantations](#) in Indonesia are expanding rapidly every year to meet India's demands," Greenpeace forest campaigner Mohammed Iqbal

Abisaputra said in Jakarta.

"We are asking Indian consumers now to stop buying products made from unsustainable Indonesian palm oil."

Booming India is the world's hungriest nation for palm oil, consuming almost 7.4 million tonnes last year, or 15 percent of [global production](#), almost all of it imported, US Foreign Agricultural Service data show.

Of that amount, 5.8 million tonnes is imported from Indonesian companies, many of which Greenpeace claims are illegally clearing carbon-rich peatland.

One company targeted by the group is Duta Palma, which owns 155,000 hectares of palm oil plantations in Indonesia, the report says.

The company is deforesting peatland up to eight metres deep on the islands of Sumatra and [Borneo](#), the report says, despite a law banning the clearance of peatland more than three metres deep.

Greenpeace also claims fires continue to burn on peatland within the company's concession, even though the slash-and-burn technique for [forest clearance](#) is illegal.

The report comes after a string of successful consumer-targeted [Greenpeace](#) campaigns, in which brands like Barbie-maker Mattel and food-maker Kraft dropped paper packaging contracts with Asia Pulp & Paper, who were accused of logging outside their concession area.

The focus on India marks a shift in Greenpeace's strategy to consumers in developing countries.

"Asian countries will be among the first to feel the effects of climate

change, so we can no longer act as if it's Europe or America's problem," Abisaputra said.

Indonesia has implemented a two-year moratorium on issuing new logging concessions on peatland and other high-conservation forest. But unsustainable logging continues within companies' existing concessions.

Before the moratorium, 80 percent of Indonesia's greenhouse gas emissions came from deforestation, UN data show, making it the world's third-biggest emitter.

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Citation: Palm oil for India 'destroying Indonesian forests' (2012, June 19) retrieved 20 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-06-palm-oil-india-indonesian-forests.html>

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