

Govt told to support local initiatives in mangrove conservation

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A non-government organization has warned that Indonesia will suffer a serious loss of mangrove forests unless the government demonstrates seriousness in supporting local mangrove conservation initiatives.

The People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice Indonesia (KIARA) said the conversion of mangrove continued to take place, both in Sumatra and eastern parts of Indonesia.

"Ironically, the initiatives of fishermen in rehabilitating mangrove forests have often met resistance both from the government and companies due to overlapping rules," said KIARA secretary general Abdul Halim in a statement to commemorate the 2013 World Mangrove Day, on Sunday.

KIARA said mangrove destruction continued, particularly through the conversion of mangrove land to palm oil plantations and shrimp farms as well as reclamation of coastal land in cities.

KIARA urged the government to revoke the expansion permits for palm plantations, shrimp farms and coastal reclamation that have led to the damage of mangrove forests.

"The government should also prioritize their resources to support the initiatives of fishing communities in rehabilitating mangroves such as have taken place in Langkat and Serdang Bedagai in North Sumatra and East Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara," Abdul Halim said.

Citing data from the Indonesian Traditional Fishermen Association (KNTI), it stated the coverage of mangrove forests in Langkat regency, North Sumatra, had now declined to only 10,000 hectares from 35,000 hectares in 2010 due to massive expansion of shrimp farming and palm oil plantations in the regency's coastal areas.

"In their efforts to reclaim 1,200 hectares of mangrove forests in Langkat that had been converted into palm oil plantations, fishermen have found themselves in conflict with oil palm companies," said Abdul Halim. (ebf)

Sumber :

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