

The Conflict Between The Nagari Kapa Community And PT Wilmar In West Pasaman

Aldio¹, Belinda Jessica Ades², Carin Loverina³, Diah Setia Ningsih⁴, Dinaria Sinaga⁵, Fito Saputra Nazara⁶, Hardiyansyah⁷, Jasmine Mallika Putri⁸, Khusnul Khoiroh⁹, Maygi Angga Prayogo Simarmata¹⁰, Rido Primanda Putra¹¹, Seila Keren¹²

¹⁻¹² Faculty of Agriculture, Riau University, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Jun 11, 2025
Revised Jul 2, 2025
Accepted August 1, 2025
Published August 9, 2025

Keywords:

Conflict, Agraria, Palm Oil

ABSTRACT

Palm oil plantations constitute a critical component of Indonesia's national economy; however, they are frequently implicated in the emergence of agrarian conflicts. This study investigates the dispute involving the Nagari Kapa indigenous community and PT Permata Hijau Pasaman I, a subsidiary of the Wilmar Group, situated in West Pasaman Regency. The conflict originated from the transfer of customary land (tanah ulayat) conducted without the formal consent of the rightful indigenous landholders. The research aims to uncover the fundamental causes of the conflict, identify the stakeholders involved, and assess its socioeconomic repercussions. A descriptive qualitative methodology was adopted, employing literature review and in-depth interviews as primary data collection techniques. Data analysis was carried out through systematic processes of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the conflict was principally driven by the marginalization of indigenous communities in the licensing process, the company's failure to implement its corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments, and the criminalization of local farmers. The study advocates for the legal recognition of customary land rights, a comprehensive reassessment of land use permits (HGU), and the implementation of inclusive mediation frameworks as essential measures for conflict resolution.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



Corresponding Author:

Maygi Angga Prayogo Simarmata
Department of Agribusiness,
Riau University,
Faculty of Agriculture, Riau University, Postal Code 28293, Pekanbaru
Email: maygi.angga1768@student.unri.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Agrarian conflict in Indonesia is a phenomenon deeply rooted in the long history of land and natural resource control by the state and corporations, often resulting in the marginalization of Indigenous communities (Leon et al., 2025). The conflict between the Indigenous community of Nagari Kapa in West Pasaman Regency and PT. Permata Hijau Pasaman I (PHP 1) is one such case that vividly reflects these dynamics. The root of the issue stems from the action of traditional leaders (niniak mamak) of Nagari Kapa, who handed over part of the customary land (tanah ulayat) to the Regent of Pasaman in 1992. This handover later served as the basis for the state's claim over the land, which was then transferred to the company through a Land Use Right (Hak Guna Usaha/HGU) scheme in 1997 (Efendi et al., 2024).

A mismatch between the company's commitments and the expectations of the local community had already occurred from the outset. The company promised social contributions in the form of public infrastructure development, educational and religious facilities, and welfare improvements

through partnership programs. However, as reflected in the prolonged conflict dynamics from 2014 to 2022, these promises were not significantly realized. On the contrary, the community suffered social, economic, and even ecological losses due to the aggressive expansion of oil palm plantations (Affandi, 2022). The conflict was exacerbated by the fact that the Indigenous people did not receive access to plasma land, nor did they obtain a fair share of the profits from the management of their customary land. In this context, the relationship between the company, traditional elites, and the community became imbalanced, even causing internal divisions within the community. Resistance from community members organized under the Indonesian Peasants Union (SPI), along with support from legal aid institutions, reflects the effort to renegotiate rights that have been denied.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a legal obligation that must be fulfilled by all companies in Indonesia, in accordance with the laws and government regulations in force. CSR aims to provide benefits not only for the company but also for local communities and society at large, particularly in areas such as education and religion, including the provision of educational facilities and places of worship. PT. PHP I's failure to realize CSR, particularly in providing educational and religious facilities, can be explained as follows: the company failed to provide educational facilities and did not implement plans for places of worship. This noncompliance may lead to legal sanctions, damage the company's public image, and result in dissatisfaction among local communities who are supposed to benefit from CSR initiatives. Moreover, the failure to provide these facilities hampers efforts to improve the quality of life and welfare of the local people (Sembiring et al., 2024).

PT. PHP I faced rejection from the Indigenous community due to the plasma land implementation not proceeding according to the initial agreement. Issues also arose regarding transparency of profits and the management of funds related to the plasma partnership. One highlighted problem is the absence of clarity regarding the remaining credit fund (KKPA) from Universal Bank, where IDR 23 billion was disbursed, but only IDR 11 billion was used and the debt was paid off by 2010. The community questioned the whereabouts of the remaining IDR 12 billion and pointed out that they never received certificates or other documentation that should rightfully belong to plasma farmers. The company's renewal of its HGU also became a source of conflict. Local government and security forces in West Pasaman played a key role in reinforcing PT. PHP I's position in the agrarian conflict by granting formal legitimacy to the company's HGU and securing company operations in disputed land, while simultaneously pressuring communities to comply with legal decisions.

The Indigenous community of Nagari Kapa in West Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra—part of the Indonesian Peasants Union (SPI)—opposes the occupation of their customary land by PT. Permata Hijau Pasaman I (PHP I), a subsidiary of Wilmar Group. For years, the community has faced neglect of their rights and unfulfilled company promises, including profit-sharing and social responsibility. This imbalance has driven the community to collectively reclaim land that has been an integral part of their identity and livelihood for generations. The struggle of the Kapa community is not isolated; they have received support from various civil society organizations advocating for their case. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), which oversees sustainable palm oil standards, has noted that Wilmar Group violated the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) by failing to fairly and transparently involve Indigenous peoples in land-related decision-making processes.

The agrarian conflict in Nagari Kapa reflects a real portrait of structural inequality in Indonesia's natural resource governance. Collusion between corporations, local elites, and the government in the name of development often sacrifices the rights of Indigenous peoples, ultimately displacing them from their ancestral land. The unilateral renewal of land concessions (HGU), weak state oversight, and the absence of strong legal recognition of customary land (tanah ulayat) worsen this injustice. This conflict not only illustrates a struggle over physical living space but also highlights the weak legal protection of Indigenous rights and the state's tendency to accommodate capital interests through long-term concessions. The case of Nagari Kapa must be viewed as part of a broader structural crisis in agrarian governance in Indonesia, which requires comprehensive policy reforms, strengthened recognition of customary land rights, and a thorough reorganization of the HGU licensing process to make it more accountable and participatory. Through the lens of Nagari Kapa, it becomes clear that agrarian conflict is not merely a matter of land legality, but a reflection of a deeper crisis in agrarian governance that fails to support Indigenous communities. Systemic measures such as legal recognition of customary land, review of HGU issuance and renewals, and

implementation of agrarian reform based on social justice are essential. The resolution of such conflicts must prioritize principles of participation, transparency, and accountability in the relationship between the state, society, and corporations, in order to achieve sustainable agrarian justice.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive qualitative method is used to describe the conflict between the Nagari Kapa community and PT Wilmar in West Pasaman. The research was conducted in May 2025. There are two types of data used in this study: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with key informants, while secondary data were gathered from literature and relevant sources. The collected data were then cited, analyzed, and summarized to form a comprehensive research result.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

General Overview

The agrarian conflict between the Nagari Kapa community in West Pasaman Regency and the palm oil plantation company PT. Permata Hijau Pasaman I (a subsidiary of Wilmar Group) reflects a systematic and prolonged case of customary land (ulayat) dispossession. The conflict began when traditional leaders (pucuk adat and ninik mamak) handed over customary land to the Regent of Pasaman in 1992. This land was later designated as state land and became the basis for issuing a Land Use Right (HGU) to the company in 1997.

From the beginning, there was a disconnect between the company's commitments and the expectations of the Indigenous community. Promises related to corporate social responsibility (CSR)—including the development of educational facilities, places of worship, and environmental management—were not fulfilled as expected. As a result, from 2014 to 2022, the conflict persisted, fueled by an unhealthy relationship between the company, traditional elites, and the broader community (Adawiyah et al., 2024).

The conflict reached a peak in 2019 when community members, organized under the Indonesian Peasants Union (SPI) Nagari Kapa branch, reclaimed approximately 600 hectares out of a total of 924 hectares controlled by the company. This reclaimed land was then managed as a corn production center by the Kapa branch of the Indonesian Farmers' Producers Cooperative (KPPI). However, the community's resistance faced legal obstacles, particularly regarding the company's automatic HGU extension, valid until 2034, which made it difficult for the community to file legal claims. Additionally, internal tensions arose due to a faction of traditional leaders who supported the company's dominance, and the community experienced legal intimidation, with several farmers at risk of criminalization (Adawiyah et al., 2024).

This case illustrates a pattern of agrarian conflict involving collaboration between corporate economic power and state legitimacy, often at the expense of Indigenous peoples' rights. Information asymmetry, the ambiguous role of local elites, and weak corporate accountability in fulfilling social obligations are key factors that have prolonged the conflict. The Nagari Kapa case not only highlights a crisis in agrarian governance but also serves as a portrait of structural injustice that demands resolution through land policy reform, the strengthening of customary land rights, and improved oversight mechanisms over HGU implementation and CSR compliance by large plantation corporations (Muaziz & Hidayah, 2024).

Causes of the Conflict

The conflict between PT Wilmar and the Kapa community in West Pasaman Regency, West Sumatra, stems from a long-standing land dispute. The people of Nagari Kapa claim that approximately 2,000 hectares of land currently managed by PT Permata Hijau Pasaman (a subsidiary of PT Wilmar) is customary land (tanah ulayat) traditionally owned by the local Indigenous community. However, the company obtained a land concession from the government without proper consent or meaningful involvement of the Indigenous people. This triggered tensions as the community felt that their rights had been ignored and their land taken without due process.

The situation was further exacerbated by a lack of transparency in the licensing process, the absence of fair profit-sharing mechanisms, and the failure to allocate plasma land to the local population. Efforts by the community to reclaim their rights—through both protests and legal

avenues—were frequently met with repressive responses, deepening the conflict and causing significant social impacts in the area.

Involved Parties

The agrarian conflict in Nagari Kapa, West Pasaman Regency, is a clear manifestation of the tension between Indigenous land rights and the expansion of the palm oil plantation industry. The Indigenous community of Nagari Kapa claims that their ancestral customary land (*tanah ulayat*), passed down through generations, was taken over by PT Permata Hijau Pasaman I (PHP I)—a subsidiary of the Wilmar Group—without the community's proper consent. The issue originated when traditional leaders (*pucuk adat* and *ninik mamak*) of Nagari Kapa handed over a portion of the customary land to the local government in 1997 to be designated as state land, without involving the broader community in a deliberative process. This land was later allocated to the palm oil company, which began planting oil palm in 1998 and only formally received its Land Use Rights (HGU) in 2014.

The local government—particularly the Regent of Pasaman and the Governor of West Sumatra—played a significant role in issuing land reserve permits and supporting the company's legalization process, although these decisions were seen as non-inclusive and lacking transparency. Tensions escalated when police forces began securing the company's operations and arresting residents deemed to be disrupting plantation activities. These actions were widely viewed as the criminalization of farmers and contributed to the community's growing distrust of the state. In response, the Indonesian Peasants Union (*Serikat Petani Indonesia* or SPI) took an active role in defending the community by organizing protests and advocating for agrarian justice. The community also received legal support from the Padang Legal Aid Institute (LBH Padang), which assisted in filing legal claims and submitting complaints to international bodies.

One such organization, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), found that PT PHP I had violated the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and recommended participatory mapping and renegotiation with the affected community. The Consortium for Agrarian Reform (*Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria* or KPA) was also involved by promoting land redistribution under the Agrarian Reform Object Land (TORA) scheme. With numerous actors involved and overlapping roles, this conflict highlights the urgent need for agrarian policy reform and the strengthening of legal protections for Indigenous land rights.

Proposed Solutions

A firm and community-centered resolution is essential to address the conflict between the Nagari Kapa community and PT. PHP 1, a subsidiary of the Wilmar Group. First, the customary land (*tanah ulayat*) covering 924 hectares, which is currently managed by the Indonesian Peasants Union (*Serikat Petani Indonesia* or SPI), should be formally recognized by the government as the legitimate property of the Nagari Kapa community. Second, the unilateral extension of the Land Use Rights (HGU) by the company must be reviewed and revoked, as the process failed to involve the local community. Third, the government must facilitate an open mediation process involving the *ninik mamak* (traditional leaders), the company, and the broader community to resolve the conflict stemming from the land transfer, which lacked collective consent.

4. CONCLUSION

The agrarian conflict in Nagari Kapa, West Pasaman Regency, arises from the appropriation of customary land by PT. PHP 1, a palm oil company and subsidiary of the Wilmar Group. This issue originated from the unilateral transfer of Indigenous land to the government without involving the local community in the decision-making process. The situation has been exacerbated by unfulfilled corporate social responsibility (CSR) promises, information asymmetry, and weak legal protection of Indigenous rights. The parties involved in this conflict include the Indigenous community of Nagari Kapa, PT. PHP 1, local government officials, law enforcement authorities, the Indonesian Peasants Union (SPI), the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), and agrarian organizations such as the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA) and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). Their roles range from facilitators to advocates of community rights. To resolve this conflict in a fair and sustainable manner, legal recognition of the customary land must be granted, the illegitimate HGU extension must be revoked, and the government must facilitate transparent and inclusive mediation involving all relevant stakeholders. This resolution must also be supported by comprehensive agrarian policy reform and strengthened legal protections for Indigenous peoples.

REFERENCES

- Adawiyah, R., Zubir, Z., & Efendi, H. (2024). Perampasan tanah dan perlawanan petani: Dampak perkebunan sawit terhadap kehidupan masyarakat di Pasaman Barat tahun 1980-2022. *ETNOREFLIKA: Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya*, 13(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.33772/etnoreflika.v13i1.2429>
- Affandi, M. I. (2022). Ekspansi Perkebunan Sawit: Perubahan Struktur Agraria dan Ketahanan Pangan Rumah Tangga Pedesaan di Desa Kanamit, Kalimantan Tengah (tesis). Sekolah Tinggi Pertanahan Nasional.
- Leon, A., Ramadhan, A., Dewani, C. H., Farhan, F. N. Z., & Winanti, A. (2025). Konflik Agraria dan Ketimpangan Struktur Kepemilikan Tanah: Studi Kasus Perkebunan Sawit di Kalimantan Tengah. *Media Hukum Indonesia*, 2(6), 101–106. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15486117>
- Muaziz, M. H., & Hidayah, N. N. 2024. Meninjau Akar Masalah Konflik Agraria. *AL WASATH Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 5(2), 105-116.
- Sihombing, ATM, Sitorus, R., & Sembiring, HN (2024). Kajian Implementasi Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) pada PT Kereta Api Indonesia (Persero) Divisi Regional I Sumatera Utara. *Jurnal Penelitian Interdisipliner Sains dan Teknologi Indonesia (MARCOPOLLO)* , 2(7), 1159-1178.