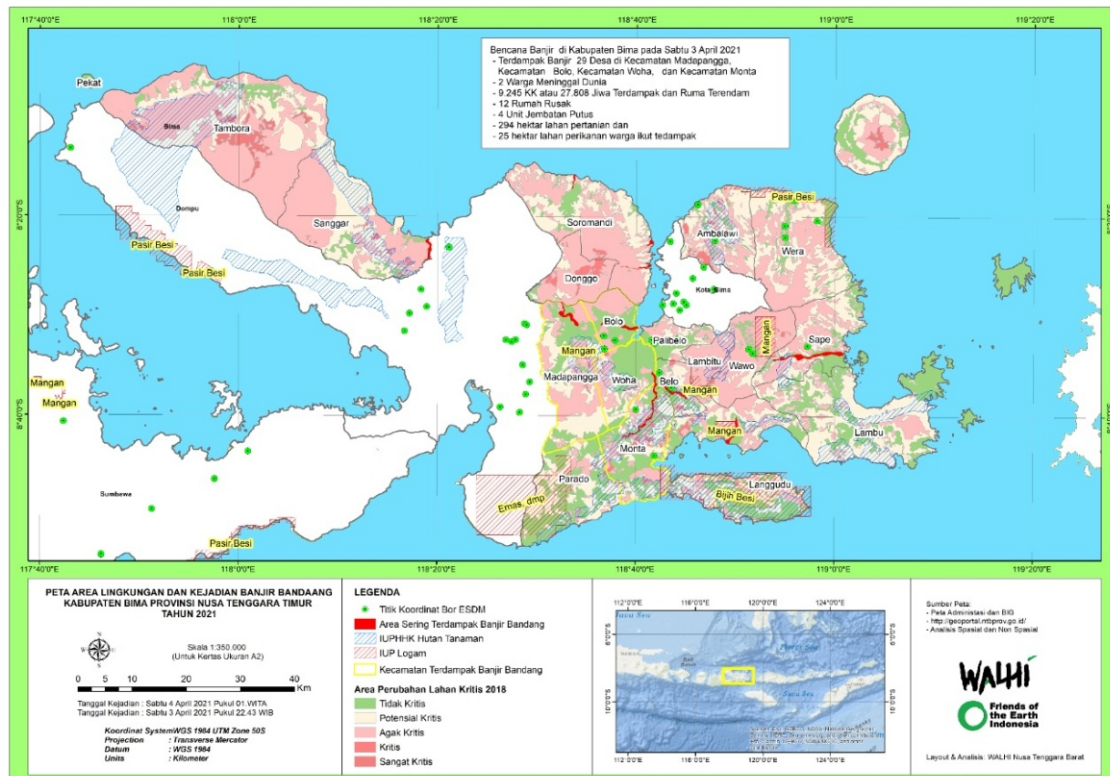




Small Islands and Profound Impact of the Climate Crisis



Small islands and their inhabitants are often overlooked in public conversations about the climate crisis. The debate over the climate crisis revolves around emissions reduction commitments and mathematical calculations about carbon without real action. Although in reality the impact of the climate crisis has been experienced by communities on the front lines with increasingly frequent disasters and damage to property and livelihoods for those communities. Not only that, the climate crisis has led to the loss of the right to live and earn a living for affected communities.



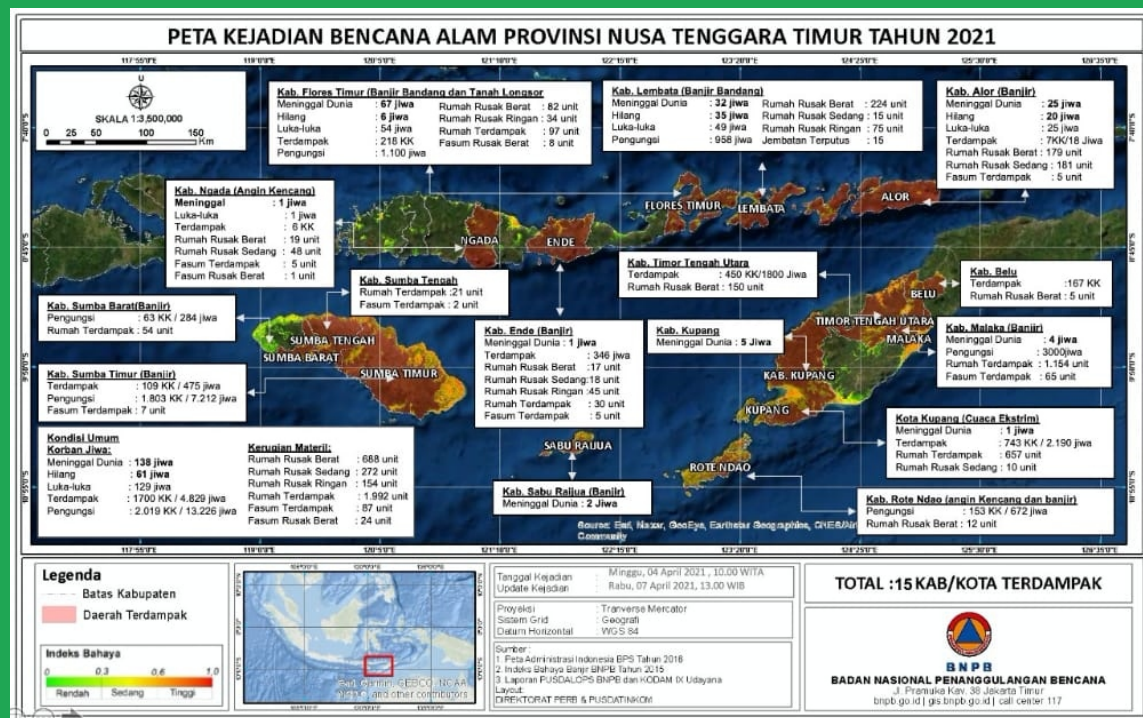
Indonesia as an archipelago with more than 17 thousand islands is experiencing the impact of the climate crisis. The climate crisis is brutally hitting human civilization and biodiversity on many of our country's islands. We believe this will continue to increase in the future. For example, East Nusa Tenggara. A province in southern Indonesia that is where I and more than 5 million people live.

East Nusa Tenggara consists of 566 islands with 47,932 square km of land area and 200,000 square km of water area. The province has in the last 10 years experienced a variety of prolonged droughts. Even land and forest fires in 2019 became the largest in Indonesia. The impact is widespread, crop failure, water crisis, stunting and extreme poverty.

The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency of East Nusa Tenggara every year always warns of potential disasters due to bad weather, both on land and in the waters. One of the worst disasters occurred in April 2020. East Nusa Tenggara was hit by a new variant of tropical cyclone Seroja.

As a result of the impact of Tropical Cyclone Seroja, 182 people died on several islands, hundreds of thousands of residents were left homeless and displaced. The value of damage to private and public infrastructure reaches trillions of rupiah. If calculated the impact of disasters on damage to carrying capacity, environmental capacity and biodiversity are even greater. Who should pay for this loss and damage? Of course, those polluters! Those who accumulate profits from the extraction of natural resources and fossil fuels.

The climate crisis sends a message of loss of existence for people living on small islands. Sea level rise that will partially submerge the entire landmass of small islands, we have experienced the impact. People in Halura Island, East Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara are experiencing the impact of their reduced land area bit by bit due to rising sea level. It is also confirmed from coastal.climatecentral.org data. Based on the data, one-eighth of the island which is currently 29 square km will sink in 2050. The same condition also happened on various other islands in East Nusa Tenggara.





Additional Burden of Small Islands

The island in East Nusa Tenggara not only bears the brunt of the threat and impact of the climate crisis. The threat that will and has been running is large-scale infrastructure development by the government and the private sector. The development is often indifferent to the carrying capacity of the island and unjust.

For example, currently the tourism industry development plan in the Komodo National Park Area. This industry will have the potential to destroy the Komodo ecosystem and indigenous peoples in it. Komodo dragons and their ecosystems that are part of world heritage sites face a real threat.



Large-scale infrastructure development and the granting of tourism concessions on a large scale have clearly ignored the principles of community-based conservation. The government's plan to relocate the people of Komodo Island in 2019 has also ignored the value of justice and humanity. Porro Duka, a farmer who was shot dead for opposing the efforts of tourism investors to forcibly take his customary land in West Sumba is also a marker that the value of justice and humanity is lost in the development of infrastructure on behalf of the tourism industry.

In addition to the tourism industry, East Nusa Tenggara has also been burdened again with large-scale mining investments and monoculture plantations on various islands. Mining activities in the history of East Nusa Tenggara have caused a lot of ecological social damage. The damage was never attempted to be recovered by the mine owners. The impact of the damage is borne by the local community.

WALHI East Nusa Tenggara has been working on the value of ecological justice with the community to reduce the rate of ecological destruction. The campaign was conducted to distribute knowledge about the importance of nature conservation and local cultural civilization. We also conducted dialogue with the government and also called on the government to respect the rights and sovereignty of citizens in natural resource management and development.





We have been working with farmers, fisherfolks and indigenous peoples. We are active in the work of advocacy, conservation and restoration. We will continue to work together with the community whose deep concerns continue to strive to ensure the safety of their lives and livelihoods.

We believe that in this forum lies the broad value of solidarity and justice. That human connectedness and dependence on nature cannot be hindered because of differences in country, religion, race or ethnicity. We are connected to ensuring the safety of nature and our humanity. We believe, if at this time, the safety of the people of Indonesia and its island is threatened by disaster due to the climate crisis, it is only a matter of time for your family and your country.

My tradition is rooted in the belief that the universe is a glorious crown on our heads. It is our duty to take care of it. For what? So as not to be taken and lost by the climate crisis. So that this glorious crown can be passed on to our future generation not with a bowed head and tears of regret. Salam Adil dan Lestari!

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