



20
24
Annual Report

**Morning mist over Beutong Ateuh,
home of steadfast anti-mining voices.**

Credit: HAkA

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Letter From The Chairperson



Farwiza Farhan, Chairperson Yayasan Hutan Alam dan Lingkungan Aceh (HAkA)

2024 was a year of breakthroughs—and of sobering reminders.

We celebrated the safeguarding of over 20,000 hectares of forest in Aceh Timur, halted by joint advocacy before it could be converted into plantations. We witnessed community power blossom: from Seumanah Jaya's women-led honey enterprise to the paralegal movement in Beutong and the cultural defiance of the Linge Festival. And we saw hard-earned progress validated on a national stage, as our forest monitoring data was formally adopted by Indonesia's Central Statistics Agency and used in policymaking for the very first time.

“The lessons of 2024 are guiding this transformation: act early, build coalitions, protect civic space, and honour the leadership of communities whose futures are most directly entwined with Leuser’s.”

Yet, the year also made clear that success in Leuser is never final. A new threat emerged in the form of patchworked private land titles (SHM), used to mask industrial plantations. This legal grey zone is now the front line of deforestation. At the same time, 2024's political transition—ushering in a new generation of provincial and district leaders—will test our ability to advocate, persuade, and resist. The need to engage early and strategically has never been more urgent.

In this context, HAkA has chosen not to retreat—but to evolve. In 2025, we will launch a dedicated investigation and law enforcement unit, expand our campaign reach, and deepen our alliances with community leaders, religious figures, academics, and fellow CSOs. The lessons of 2024 are guiding this transformation: act early, build coalitions, protect civic space, and honour the leadership of communities whose futures are most directly entwined with Leuser's.

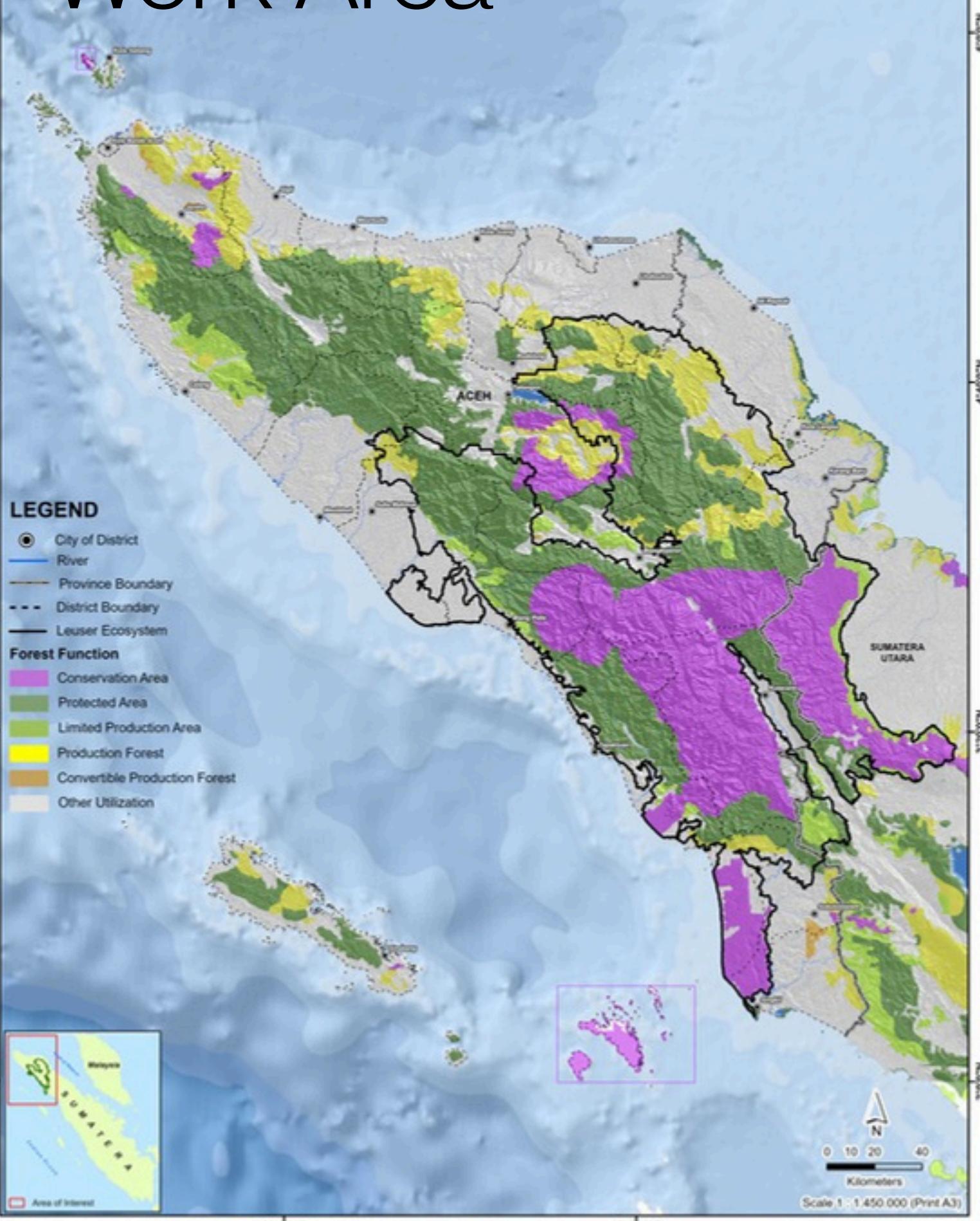
This year also brought tremendous honour. I was humbled to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership. But this recognition belongs not to me—it belongs to you. To every field staff who spent nights in the forest. To every woman who dared to speak up in village halls. To every donor, partner, and friend who trusted HAkA's vision even when the path ahead was steep.

Leuser's future remains uncertain, but one truth stands firm: together, we are capable of not only defending a forest, but reimagining what inclusive, justice-rooted conservation looks like. For the Earth. For the communities. For generations to come.

With deepest gratitude,

Farwiza Farhan
Chairperson, Yayasan HAkA

Work Area



How We Work in the Leuser Ecosystem

VISION

To safeguard the Leuser Ecosystem—Aceh's forests, nature, and environment—so that they continue to benefit communities in a truly sustainable way.

ADVOCATE

HAkA drives policy change, raises public awareness, and challenges ill-advised development projects that threaten the Leuser Ecosystem. We push for policy reforms at the district, provincial, and local levels to secure long-term environmental sustainability for the Leuser Ecosystem. We also work with grassroots communities to review and shape infrastructure plans so they respect people and forests.

EMPOWER

Working side by side with local communities, HAkA helps people take charge of their own development and natural-resource management. We foster grassroots leadership, build community associations for a stronger collective voice, and promote sustainable livelihoods. This empowerment approach also extends to strengthening the skills of partner NGOs, government agencies, and other civil-society groups.

MONITOR

HAkA continuously tracks changes in forest cover and land use across the Leuser Ecosystem using satellite imagery and remote sensing. We analyze these data to guide conservation strategies, inform decision-makers, and trigger timely field action. We also work with government agencies to build shared spatial and forestry information systems, so reliable data can be formalized for public use.



Highlight Impact and Learning

KEY IMPACTS FOR 2024

5 Grassroots

Bodies Established To Defend Leuser

Youth collective, Forum Pawang Aceh, Aceh Village Forest Forum, Paralegals, and Tgk Inong Networks give Leuser a permanent, community-led watchdog.

20,000 Ha

Forest Kept Intact

Joint advocacy stopped a plan to convert production forest into smallholder plots in Aceh Timur. Despite this, ongoing vigilance is crucial as the proposal could resurface.

HAkA's Forest Loss Data Published

Aceh's forest cover and deforestation data now released by National Statistics Agency, recognizing HAkA as trusted data source and giving policymakers and researchers evidence-based baseline.

49% Drop

in Annual Deforestation in Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve

Forest loss fell in 2024 after joint advocacy by HAkA and partner NGOs and 17 surat cinta documentary which leads to enforcement intervention by the government.

2,302 Ha

Tenure Legally Secured As Village Forest

Three villages were granted full management rights of their forest, locking in sustainable use and preventing destruction

5 Communities

are now better organized to oppose gold mining plans

Grassroots communities in Beutong and Linge are now strengthened and more confident to resist gold mining threats through legal tenure recognition, women-led organising and community mapping.



Learning, reflection and challenges in 2024

2024 reminded us that victories in Leuser are rarely permanent. We celebrated new Village-Forest decrees and a sharp drop in Rawa Singkil deforestation, yet a fresh threat surfaced almost overnight: palm-oil companies began patchworking hundreds of individual land titles (SHM) into industrial plantations. In Subulussalam, PT SPT levelled secondary forest with dozens of deeds; in Aceh Utara, PT IBAS followed the same playbook. Because SHM is classed as “private land,” district officials hesitate to act and national agencies see a civil matter, making enforcement extraordinarily difficult. The lesson is clear: our monitoring must now reach beyond concession maps to the cadastral micro-level. Beginning 2025, we will set up an investigation and law enforcement division at HAkA with the support from our partner NGO.

A second challenge is political. Provincial elections in late-2024 will install a new governor and most district heads (bupati). Campaign rhetoric already touts “economic growth” via fresh road corridors, hydropower dams, and estate crops. These projects, if left unchallenged, could cut through Leuser. Compounding this, several of our previous government champions are no longer in office, which has slowed or reset some of the groundwork laid in 2024. Beginning in 2025 we must redraw our advocacy map: rebuild relationships, identify reform-minded allies, brief first-term officials on Leuser’s strategic value, and intercept infrastructure blueprints before they harden into policy. The reset is unpredictable, but early, targeted engagement will be decisive.

On the positive side, community resistance is gaining muscle. Villagers in Linge, Beutong, and Manggamat are now more organised and confident to oppose mining proposals in the streets and in meeting rooms. HAkA's paralegal and EIA trainings, organisational clinics, and the formation of groups like United Beutong Women show that empowerment is the path to durable protection. We are also expanding paralegal training specifically to respond to and raise awareness about shrinking civic space, so communities can recognise intimidation, assert their rights, and keep advocacy lawful, safe, and effective.



HAkA and youth communities march for Rawa Singkil on Indonesia's Independence Day

Yet civic space is tightening. Under outgoing President Jokowi, the Electronic Information Law (UU ITE) became a convenient tool for online harassment and surveillance; the incoming Prabowo-Gibran administration offers little hope of reversal.



Students blocked Aceh Governor's Office to protest illegal oil-palm clearing

The year underscored that persistent advocacy, grassroots power and multi-level coalitions remain our most effective shields. In 2025 we will widen that chorus, expand public-facing campaigns, and press for tougher sanctions on violators, while demanding space for civil society to operate without fear.

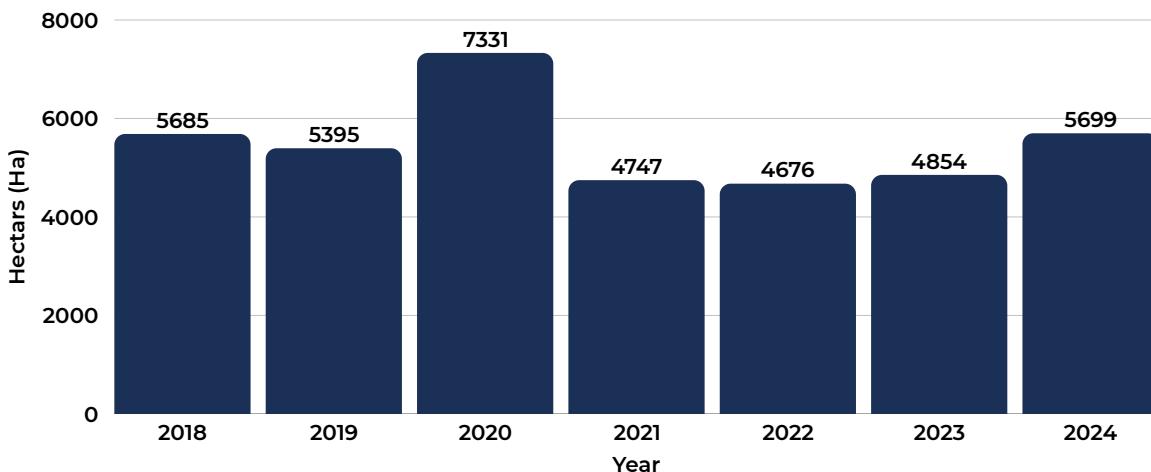
Leuser's future will hinge on our agility: to spot new advocacy and campaign tactics, out-pace political shifts, and deepen alliances from village halls to civil society offices. The work is harder than ever, but the roadmap remains the surest way to keep Sumatra's last great rainforest standing.



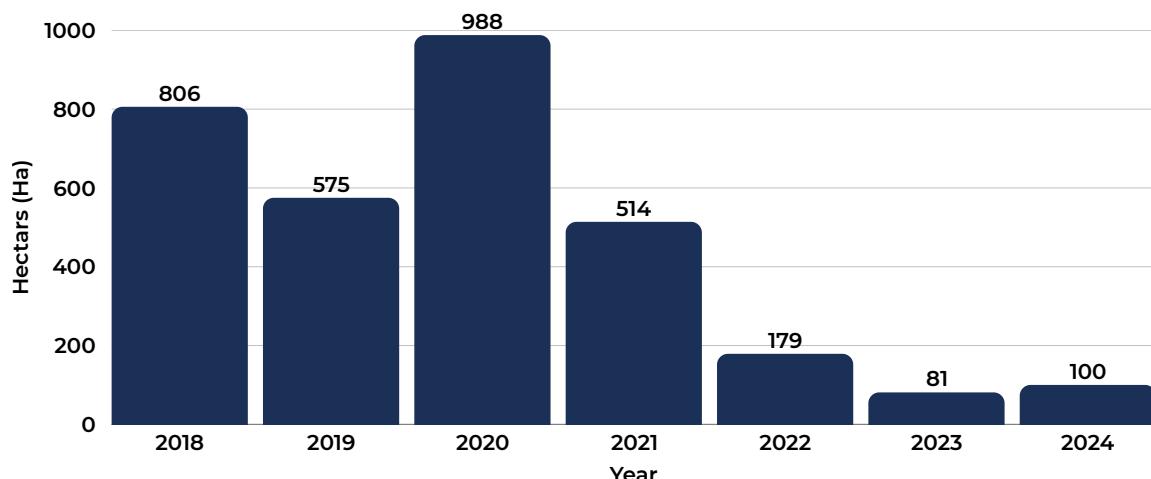
Community leaders pledge to guard Leuser for the next generation.

Forest Loss Report in the Leuser Ecosystem

Forest Loss in the Leuser Ecosystem 2018 - 2024



Forest Loss in Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP) 2018 - 2024



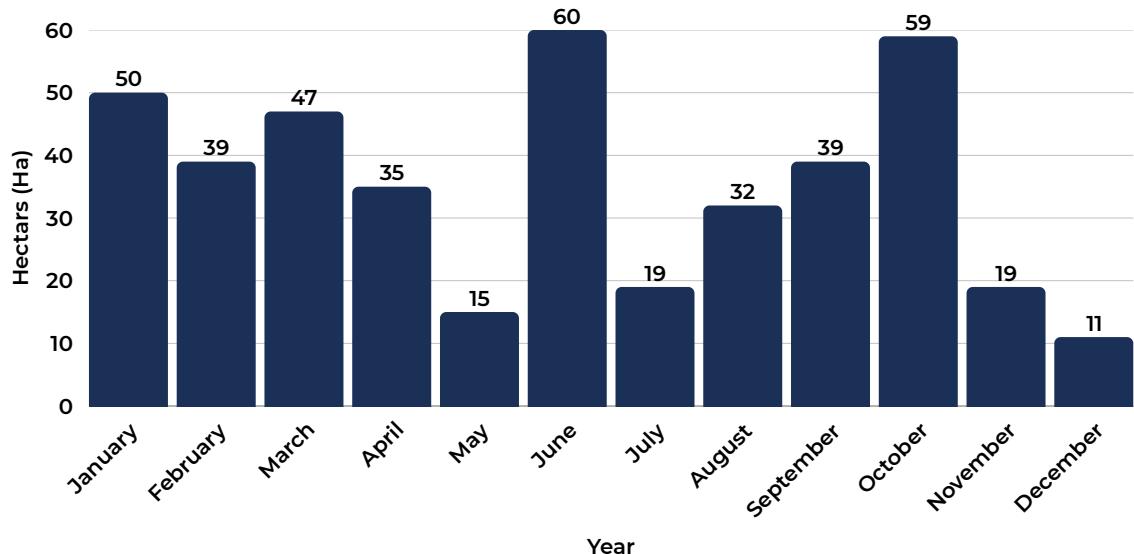
In 2024, deforestation trends across the Leuser landscape showed mixed outcomes. The Leuser Ecosystem (KEL) recorded a total forest loss of 5,699 hectares, an increase compared to 2023 (4,854 ha). Aceh Selatan remains the district with the highest loss, contributing over 1,350 hectares. This trend highlights the continued pressure in southern Aceh, particularly from encroachment and plantation expansion.

In contrast, Gunung Leuser National Park (TNGL), which spans across Aceh and North Sumatra, recorded a relatively low forest loss of 100 hectares in 2024—up slightly from 81 hectares in 2023. The park's relatively stable loss reflects effective protection in core zones, though buffer areas still require close monitoring.

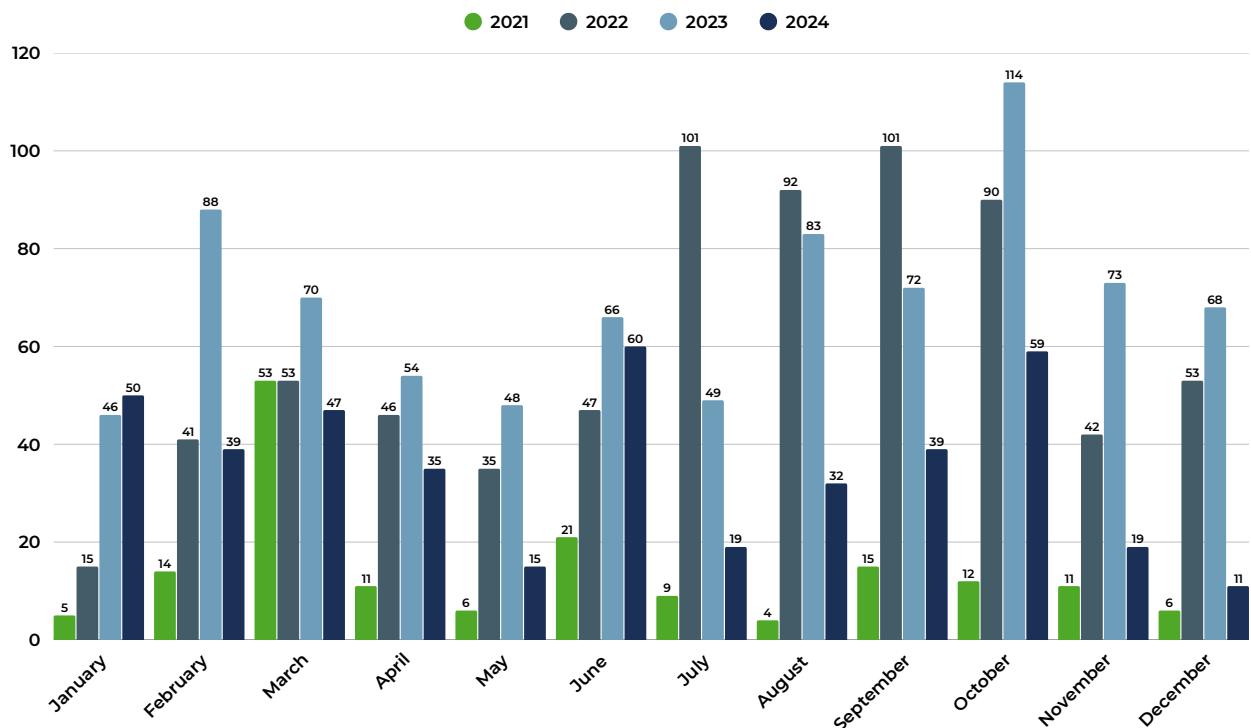
Meanwhile, Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve (SM Rawa Singkil)—a critical habitat for Sumatran orangutans—saw monthly fluctuations, with significant forest loss in March (47 ha), April (25 ha), and a spike in June (60 ha), before declining in July (19 ha). The overall pattern indicates temporary gains from enforcement actions in May, but also underscores the need for consistent protection to address persistent threats.

These trends reinforce the urgency of integrated monitoring, law enforcement, and community-based forest management to secure the long-term integrity of the Leuser Ecosystem.

Forest Loss in Singkil Swamp Wildlife Reserve : January - December 2024



Forest Loss in Singkil Swamp Wildlife Reserve 2021 - 2024



From Local Outcry to National Conversation: 17 Love Letters Documentary

In 2024, we completed “17 Surat Cinta”, a 1.5-hour investigative documentary that tells the story of the ongoing deforestation in the Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve and the struggles of civil society in demanding government action. The title refers to the 17 formal letters that we and other Aceh-based civil society organizations sent to authorities over the years—letters that were never properly responded to. Through this film, we aimed to document not only the ecological importance of Rawa Singkil but also the human stories behind the efforts to protect it.

The idea for the documentary began in late 2023, when we initiated collaboration with journalist and filmmaker Dandhy Laksono and Ekspedisi Indonesia Baru. Filming continued over several months, with a strong focus on the voices of local communities, the pattern of land conversion, and the role of government inaction. The film follows two of our staff members who work closely on forest protection efforts, bringing forward a personal yet critical narrative about what's at stake in Rawa Singkil. It also exposes how politically and financially backed actors continue to operate with impunity, often at the cost of forest and community welfare.

Once the documentary was completed, we organized a series of public screenings between November and December 2024 as part of a broader awareness campaign. The first took place on 18 November at Universitas Jabal Ghafur (Unigha) in Sigli, with 150 students attending. This initial screening led to discussions around internship opportunities and a potential collaboration agreement between us and the university. The campaign continued with a large-scale Nobar Akbar in Banda Aceh, held from 1-8 December 2024. Screenings were hosted at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Ar-Raniry and the Aceh Tsunami Museum. The first event drew over 1,000 people and included a panel discussion, press conference, and the official online launch of the film, with director Dandhy Laksono present.



Grass-roots spokeswoman Rubama briefs media on the current condition of Rawa Singkil



Limited-release poster calling Aceh journalists to watch the documentary



Full house in Jakarta as the film goes national

The film was also launched nation-wide: over 50 community and festival screenings were organised in 16 provinces—ranging from village halls to alternative cinemas in Yogyakarta, to NGO offices in Jakarta. Each event paired the screening with an interactive dialogue and a pledge booth where audiences signed a digital petition calling for a moratorium on new licences in the Leuser Ecosystem.

For us, “17 Surat Cinta” is more than just a film—it is a record of our collective frustration, hope, and ongoing fight for justice in forest protection.

Click here to watch: [17 Surat Cinta \(Full Movie\)](#)
Or scan the QR Code in the poster above.



Program 2024

Advocacy

All through 2024, HAkA put every bit of effort into one goal: making sure the Leuser Ecosystem is recognised, protected, and managed in a way that lasts. That goal guided our advocacy efforts we took as new roads, mines, and other projects pressed in on the forest.

First, we worked with people, not courts, on what we call non-litigation advocacy. We made a documentary, ran media investigations, and helped village groups speak up. Women's circles, paralegal classes, and small green-business projects turned locals from by-standers into strong forest guardians. Communities now lead the push to block new mines in fragile areas.

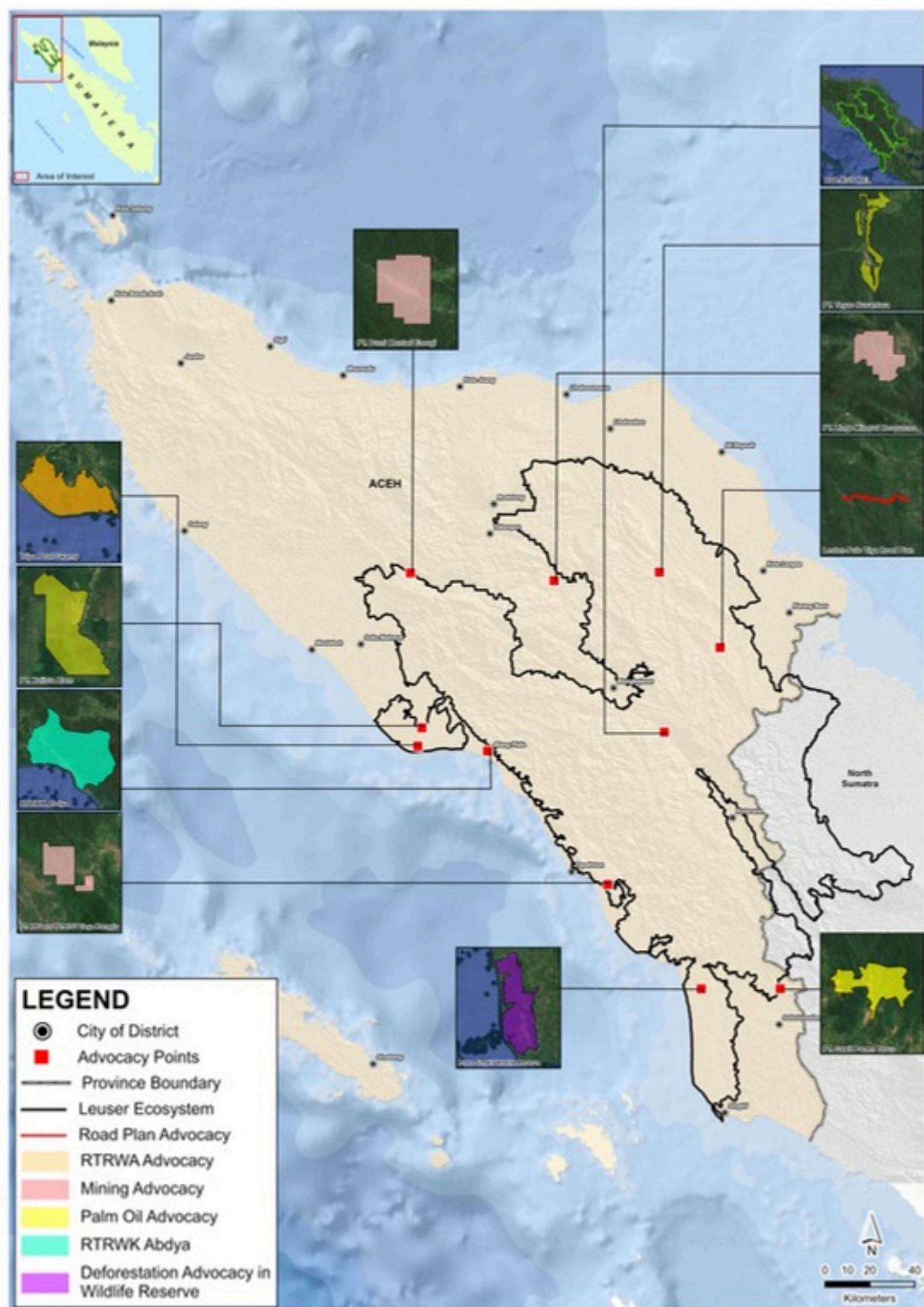
Secondly, HAkA navigated the policy arena to embed the Leuser Ecosystem's name in official government documents. From revising Aceh's spatial plan (RTRW) and the national Leuser strategic-area map (RTR KSN KEL) to shaping Aceh's Long-Term Development Plan (RPJP) and integrating green-growth principles, we narrowed

the space for projects that could harm Leuser. Satellite-data collaboration with the Statistics Agency, Leuser's inclusion in the draft RPJP Aceh, and academic partnerships with local universities all ensure that conservation now serves as a formal compass for long-term planning.

When dialogue and regulations were not enough, litigation became the last defense for ecological justice. Through strategic lawsuits, HAkA held forest destroyers accountable and secured precedent-setting rulings that strengthen deterrence against future offenses.

All these achievements were made possible by the steady support of partners, donors, and communities who stand with us. Thank you for being a vital part of the movement to protect Sumatra's last great rainforest. Without your courage and collaboration, the milestones we reached for Leuser in 2024 would not be nearly as strong.







Youth trace forest boundaries to strengthen a land-rights claim

Non-Litigation

4

Advocacy Wins

4

Ongoing Advocacy Actions

The Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve campaign bears fruit

HAkA's and partner CSOs campaign in Rawa Singkil has resulted in some positive outcomes which are the increased government response and law enforcement efforts. The investigative documentary "17 Surat Cinta" (17 Love Letters) on deforestation in the reserve has been published nation-wide with massive media campaign. More than 1,000 participants gathered in our screening of the documentary in Banda Aceh. A roadtrip to Jakarta to visit national CSOs, media outlet and foreign embassy has built partnerships for collaborative campaign. At the local level, other action that we have taken is HAkA has initiated the establishment of Tim Koalisi Penyelamatan Rawa Singkil (Save Rawa Singkil Coalition) to conduct focused campaign on the reserve. We conducted a protest in front of BSKDA office demanding law enforcement in Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve. The campaign significantly increased public awareness, strengthened networks with key stakeholders, and laid the groundwork for future advocacy and collaboration.

Advocacy efforts on mining in Linge and Beutong

Across Aceh, villagers are proving that local stewardship can out-maneuver large-scale extractive interests. In 2024, HAkA helped two geographically distinct communities—Linge in Central Aceh and Beutong Ateuh Banggala in Nagan Raya—build mutually reinforcing bulwarks against planned mining projects. Although the contexts differ, both efforts show how cultural pride, women's leadership, and secure tenure can converge into a powerful conservation front for the Leuser Ecosystem.

During the inaugural Linge Festival, elders, youth, and religious leaders stood on a single stage to read the "Joint Statement of the Linge Village Community" in front of the acting Bupati and local media. The declaration rejected all mining ventures on the grounds of spiritual heritage, watershed protection, and smallholder coffee livelihoods. Behind the scenes, HAkA had shepherded the legal recognition of a 450-hectare Village Forest (Hutan Desa) now managed by the Linge Village Forest Management Group (LPHK)

Fifty-five direct managers (40 men, 15 women) and 278 households benefit from secure access to non-timber forest products, turning the new tenure into a legal and socio-political firewall; any company must now reckon with both a signed community mandate and an endorsed forest-management license before setting foot in Linge.

At Beutong, PT Bumi Mentari Energi revived a decades-old plan to mine gold in Beutong. HAkA responded by training 55 women as paralegals, enabling them to form Perempuan Beutong Bersatu (United Women of Beutong, PBB), officially registered on 28 May 2024. Their first collective project—constructing a Rumoh Tuha (customary hall) that will double as a community museum—has its foundations and pillars in place and will immortalize Beutong women's story in defending their village, environment, and livelihood for future generations. In parallel, village leaders allocated 66 hectares of still-forested Other Land-Use (APL) to PBB for a planned community research station.



Linge villagers will now manage their new Village Forest, laying the groundwork for secure land rights and forest-friendly enterprises.



Women leaders in Beutong meet outside the Rumoh Tuha organising house

Policy Brief: Rejecting the 20,000 Ha Forest Conversion Plan for Ex-GAM in Aceh Timur

When the Governor of Aceh and Indonesia's Minister of Agrarian and Spatial Planning announced an accelerated plan to reclassify 20,000 ha of production forest in Aceh Timur for smallholder plantations, HAkA moved swiftly. The target area overlapped critical wildlife corridors inside the Leuser Ecosystem.

Throughout 2024, HAkA built a broad civil-society coalition—linking WALHI, local NGOs, community leaders, and academic experts—to offer a solution that met reintegration goals without opening new forest frontiers. Together we developed a comprehensive policy brief that (i) mapped non-forest land already available, such as abandoned or bankrupt HGU or plantation estates, (ii) promoted social-forestry allocations, and (iii) proposed under-canopy cash-crop models and peace-tourism enterprises. The brief was tabled in a public consultation with the Aceh Reintegration Agency (BRA) and later submitted to the Governor, the Aceh Regional Parliament (DPRA), Komnas HAM, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), and the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs/Spatial Planning (ATR/BPN).

Engagement continued inside the government's own inter-agency task-force (Tim Terpadu), where HAkA presented ecological risk assessments and socio-economic alternatives. By September, MoEF formally stated that farmland "should not be carved out of existing forest," ATR/BPN committed to a rigorous site-screening process, and Komnas HAM offered to integrate the brief's recommendations under the right-to-a-healthy-environment mandate. Crucially, the government's target to finalise the reclassification by December 2024 was indefinitely postponed, and the conversion process was frozen pending a new land-sourcing study.

While the task-force still exists—and vigilance remains essential—this pause represents a decisive win. It closes an immediate loophole for large-scale deforestation under the banner of social justice, and positions HAkA as a credible broker of post-conflict livelihood solutions that respect ecosystem limits. The episode also sets a national precedent: equitable land redistribution can, and must, be achieved without sacrificing the forests.



Policy brief to advocate against land reform
in the Leuser Ecosystem

Policy

Throughout 2024 HAkA's policy team worked on three fronts—national, provincial, and local—to anchor the Leuser Ecosystem in Indonesia's formal spatial-planning architecture. At the national level, we helped shepherd the Leuser Ecosystem National Strategic Area Spatial Plan (RTR KSN KEL) through its last bureaucratic hurdles: harmonisation at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights was completed in January, the State Secretariat began printing the regulation in June, and initial signatures from ATR/BPN and co-initiating ministries are now queued for presidential approval before the October 2024 administration change.

Provincially, progress has been two-track. On the positive side, eight rounds of technical hearings convinced Bappeda to insert "Leuser Ecosystem" into the Aceh Long-Term Development Plan (RPJP 2025-2045)—specifically in the chapters on environmental overview, strategic issues, and sustainable-development direction. This language forces every future sector plan (infrastructure, plantations, energy) to demonstrate consistency with Leuser protection. Locally, we supported district authorities of Aceh Barat Daya in synchronising their Strategic Environmental Assessments (KLHS) with the draft RPJP.

Conversely, the Regional Spatial Plan (RTRWA) remains contested: a September report from DPRA Commission IV shows no consensus, largely because Leuser spans half of Aceh's land and population. To unblock the deadlock we are organising a fresh policy dialogue (Muzakarah) to put ecological justice back at centre stage. At Muzakarah Kebijakan Ruang Aceh Berkeadilan Ekologis, we gathered 121 stakeholders—from ulama and academics to political parties—to produce seven recommendations for an ecologically just Aceh Spatial Plan.



Orangutan Day Parade



HAkA and Forest Gazzetteer Agency align data for Aceh Green Growth Plan

Meanwhile, the push for a Wildlife Management Action Plan (SRAP SL 2023-2027) derivative encountered delays after DLHK flagged overlaps with a separate regulation on Essential Ecosystem Areas. HAkA is now brokering follow-up meetings and rallying letters of support from district governments to restart the process. A March Rembuk Pawang brought together 15 elephant handlers and 11 community delegates, birthing the Forum Pawang Aceh, which is pressing the governor to finalise both SRAP SL and a Human-Wildlife Conflict Regulation (Ranpergub KLB).

The road ahead is far from smooth. Aceh's Regional Spatial Plan (RTRWA) is still being pushed back by parliamentarians who argue that inserting the Leuser Ecosystem would constrain development agenda. At the same time, progress on the derivative regulations of the 2019 Wildlife Management Qanun has stalled, leaving communities without a fast-response mechanism or compensation pathway when elephants, tigers, and other wildlife damage crops or injure people. Overcoming these political and bureaucratic headwinds will be our core advocacy challenge in 2025.



Environmental Cadres completing conservation boot camp

Empowerment

30 TRAININGS IN 2024

416

Community
members trained

53

Staff from partner
organisation trained.

7,221

Total individuals engaged

3,774

Total women engaged

3,447

Total men engaged

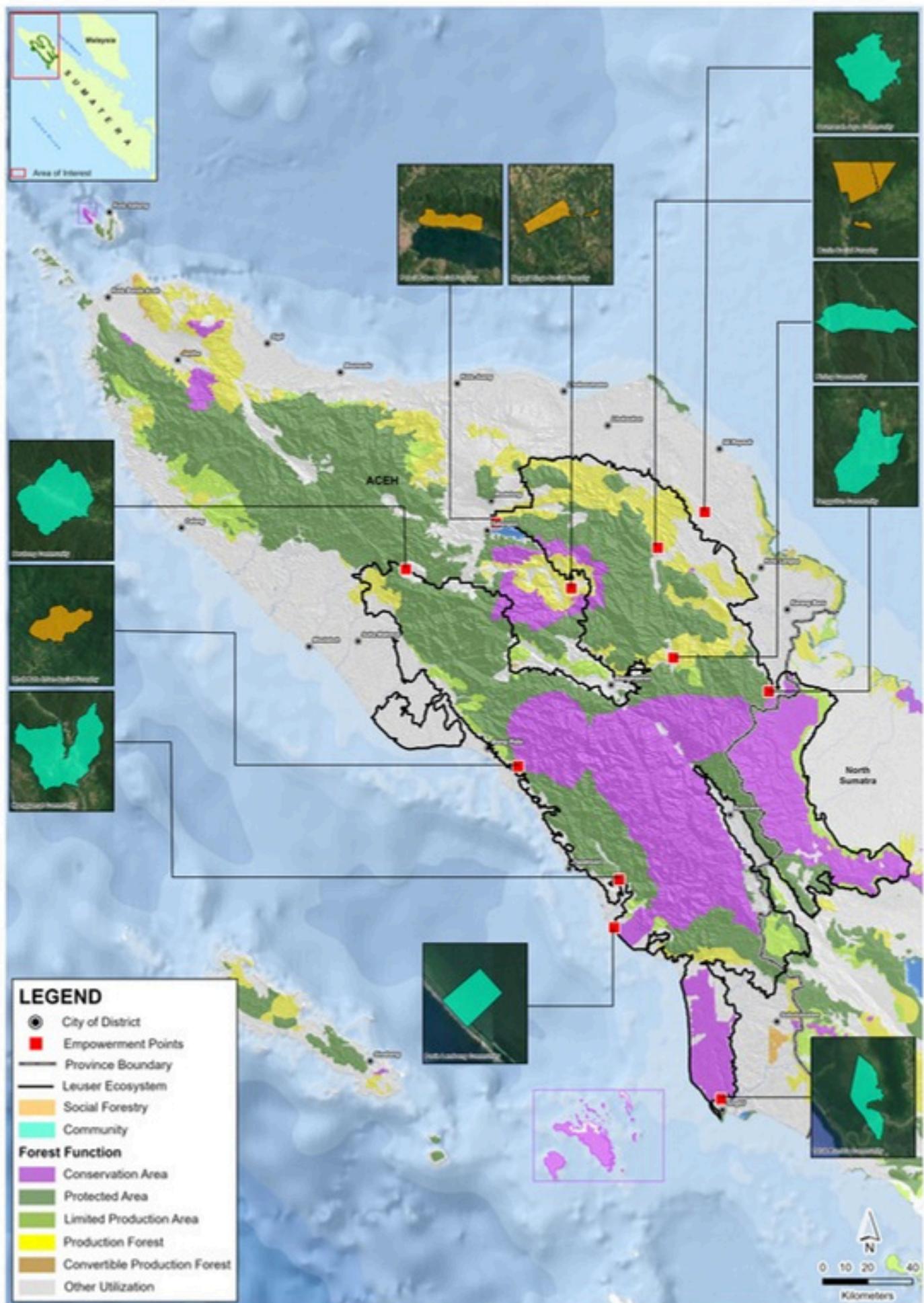
In 2024 HAkA recorded 7,221 people engaged (3,774 by women and 3,447 by men), representing multiple interactions with an estimated 3,800–4,200 unique individuals.

Throughout 2024, HAkA continued its commitment to strengthening community empowerment across Aceh through a range of initiatives grounded in environmental justice, cultural identity, and sustainable livelihoods. Our work this year emphasized supporting grassroots leadership—especially women, youth, and customary leaders—in protecting forests and asserting community rights.

One notable milestone was the series of community gatherings held in Banda Aceh in May, where representatives from 14 villages across 9 districts around the Leuser Ecosystem presented their community-led conservation and development efforts. The event facilitated peer learning and collaboration, sparking the idea for a future “Aceh Village Forest Forum” to ensure continued exchange and joint action among village groups. This platform connects HAkA-supported villages for joint planning, learning, and collective decision-making on forest governance.

Empowerment also took shape through public campaigns such as the Leuser Festival in December. Over six days, the festival united religious leaders, women paralegals, youth groups, customary forest guardians, and village representatives to exchange experiences, develop collective strategies, and reinforce their shared role in protecting the Leuser Ecosystem. During the closing ceremony, participants issued the Leuser Community Declaration, committing to protect their forests, uphold local wisdom, and resist extractive threats.

Religious-based advocacy also advanced, particularly through our long-term engagement with the Teungku Inong (female Islamic preachers) network. These leaders not only socialized the Islamic wildlife protection fatwa in schools and communities, but also implemented zero-waste practices, medicinal plant gardens, compost systems, and student-led environmental education within their respective dayahs. Dayah Mahyal Ulum, for instance, now integrates environmental education into its curriculum and manages a student-run poultry business.



In Seumanah Jaya, Aceh Timur, a women's group began cultivating *Trigona itama* bees for honey, achieving their first independent harvest and showcasing their product at events like the Linge Festival. This activity improved both household income and environmental stewardship, with blooming gardens serving as bee forage and food crops strengthening local food security.

In Beutong, Nagan Raya, the women's group Perempuan Beutong Bersatu (PBB) secured legal status and constructed Rumoh Tuha, a traditional house that now serves as a multifunctional cultural and organizing space. The building will also function as a community museum

documenting the women's resistance to mining and the defense of ancestral land. PBB is now preparing to co-manage a 66-hectare site as a future community-based research station.

Bunin also revitalized its Community Patrol Team, conducting 11 patrols over 55 days and documenting key wildlife such as elephants, orangutans, sun bears, and tiger tracks. These efforts have coincided with a dramatic reduction in forest loss—from 72.99 ha in 2015 to just 2.65 ha in 2024. Meanwhile, Bunin's ecotourism efforts progressed through the formation of KUPS Bunin, hospitality training, study visits, and local promotion, with youth engagement and digital outreach planned for 2025.



Riverside in Bunin, flagged for community-run ecotourism

In Linge and Mendale villages, we achieved a major milestone with the issuance of Village Forest permits—450 hectares for Linge and 1,351 hectares for Mendale—benefiting hundreds of community members. Both villages received follow-up support through training in patrol, logistics, organizational strengthening, and the development of Annual and General Work Plans. In Mendale, the newly established patrol team Rejewali began biodiversity monitoring and discovered a cave with ecotourism potential. In Linge, two patrol teams have been formed and will begin active patrols in the coming months.

The Linge Festival was also a defining moment of community empowerment. During this cultural event, the village publicly declared its opposition

to mining through the “Joint Statement of the Commitment of Linge Village Community,” read aloud in front of the Acting Regent and media. Celebrating the launch of the Linge Village Forest, the festival combined advocacy and local culture—featuring environmental-themed didong competitions, fishing games, heritage tours, and storytelling.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how HAKA continues to walk alongside communities to build agency, protect rights, and ensure that conservation efforts in the Leuser Ecosystem are inclusive, culturally rooted, and community-led.



New Village Forest Permits

1.338 Ha

LPHK Peteri Pukes

450 Ha

LPHK Nenggeri Linge

514 Ha

LPHG Lhok Batee Intan

Number of Active Community Protection Teams (CPT)

18

members

CPT Rejewali
LPHK Peteri Pukes

28

members

CPT Rimueng Aulia
LPHG Lhok Batee
Intan

15

members

CPT Tenggulun

12

members

CPT Bunin



Bu Mimi of Seumanah Jaya village now joins the beekeeping group toward safer farms and extra income

Exciting Stories from The Leuser Ecosystem

1. Women and Honey in Seumanah Jaya: Building Economic Resilience from the Backyard

Just two years ago, Seumanah Jaya carried the scent of crushed rice stalks and sleepless nights. Almost every dawn, Bu Nuriah and Bu Rohani inspected fields flattened by roaming elephants; the village conversation revolved around losses, not harvests. When HAkA and FKL arrived to help string an electric fence along the forest edge, the wire felt like a last line of defense rather than a doorway to something new.

With HAkA's support, the women built 30 squat wooden boxes under the shade of trees nearby the electric fence. They learned how to manage Trigona itama bees, to care for bee colonies, harvest honey and manage production independently. Their neighbours joked that "bees can't chase elephants."

On a bright February morning, Nuriah begins sapping a box and watched golden syrup coil pouring into a litre jar—worth IDR 600,000, more cash than a month of casual labour. By evening the group had bottled 10 litres, labelled "Madu Linot Seumanah Jaya". Money wasn't the only change. Neighbours started to follow their steps and joined the group "Kelompok Linot Lestari". Now as a collective, the community beautify their homes' and their village's yards with flowering plants that provide bee forage, under food tree such as dragon fruit that improve household security.

Their honey jars travelled farther than the women had ever dreamed—first to the Linge Festival, then to district fairs where officials asked how many colonies they planned next. Elephant raids dropped, partly thanks to the fence, partly thanks to the buzzing sounds of the bee.

Today, when visitors ask about Seumanah Jaya, villagers talk less about elephant conflict, but more about the electric fences and more about gardens, bees, and a savings book that they can be proud of. The partnership between HAkA, FKL, and a handful of determined women proved a simple truth: give women space, skills, and trust, and they will turn anxiety into enterprise, conflict into cooperation, and a threatened forest into their greatest ally.

And somewhere between the electric wire and the humming hives, the elephants still pass, but now they do so quietly outside the village, as if the sweet scent of kelulut honey has reminded everyone that the forest can provide enough for all.

2. Perempuan Beutong Bersatu and the Adat Museum: From Limited Space to Collective Power

In 2024 the women's collective Perempuan Beutong Bersatu (PBB) reached two milestones that changed how the community of Beutong Ateuh Banggalang organises itself against gold-mining threats. Early in the year PBB completed the registration process with Indonesia's Ministry of Law and Human Rights, gaining full legal recognition as a foundation. Soon after, with land donated by a village resident, the group constructed Rumoh Beutong—a stilted wooden house built in traditional Acehnese style. Until then, more than 30 active members had met in a cramped corner of the village office; the new building now serves as their permanent venue for meetings, exhibitions and public discussions.

Rumoh Tuha is designed not only as a meeting hall but also as a small community museum. Inside, the women are archiving photographs, videos and written accounts of Beutong's ongoing opposition to mining—stories that date back to mass protests against PT Emas Mineral Murni (EMM) in 2018. Among the documented voices is local leader Fatimah, who has repeatedly stated that mining would destroy Beutong's forests, water and cultural heritage sites, and that the community "will resist even at the cost of our lives."

With legal status secured, PBB is working with HAkA to obtain management rights over a 66-hectare forested area nearby. The goal is to establish a community-run research station that showcases sustainable livelihoods and strengthens the argument that Beutong's wellbeing depends on healthy ecosystems, not extractive projects.

Beutong Ateuh Banggalang sits in the valley below Gunung Singgah Mata—an area prone to flash floods, landslides and river pollution. Residents rely on rice fields, kemiri, chillies, and clean river water. They point to other mining regions where promised prosperity never materialised and refuse to "swap a living paradise for a mining pit."



A beekeeper taps stingless-bee honey

3. Leuser Community Declaration at Linge Festival: A Unified Voice for Customary Forests

The "Asal Linge Awal Serule" festival in July 2024, held in Aceh Tengah, became a landmark event for grassroots environmental advocacy. Celebrating Gayo culture and the official launch of a 450-hectare Village Forest permit, the festival brought together local communities, youth, adat leaders, and government officials.

One of the highlights was the reading of the Linge Community Declaration, a public statement affirming the people's rejection of mining activities that threaten their ancestral land. Read in front of the acting regent and media, the declaration symbolized the community's collective determination to protect their forests and cultural heritage.

The festival was rich in cultural and educational activities, including environmental discussions, traditional didong dance competitions with forest-themed lyrics, and children's fishing contests that honored nature. Visitors also took part in "Tour d'Linge" to experience local culinary traditions and handicrafts, and visited the sacred tombs of Linge Kingdom rulers.

More than a celebration, the festival was a powerful assertion of rights and identity. It demonstrated how cultural expression and environmental advocacy can reinforce one another. The Linge Community Declaration serves not only as a call to protect forests, but also as a symbol of unity—reminding policymakers that forest protection must begin with respect for the people who have safeguarded them for generations.



Perempuan Beutong Bersatu sharpen advocacy skills in paralegal training

Monitor



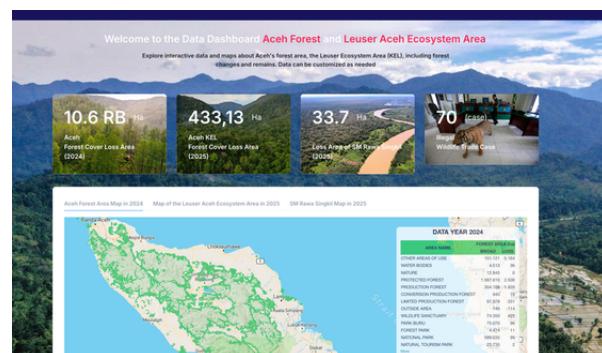
Agreement signing ceremony makes HAkA's forest data part of official records

Promoting Transparency Through Public Data Access

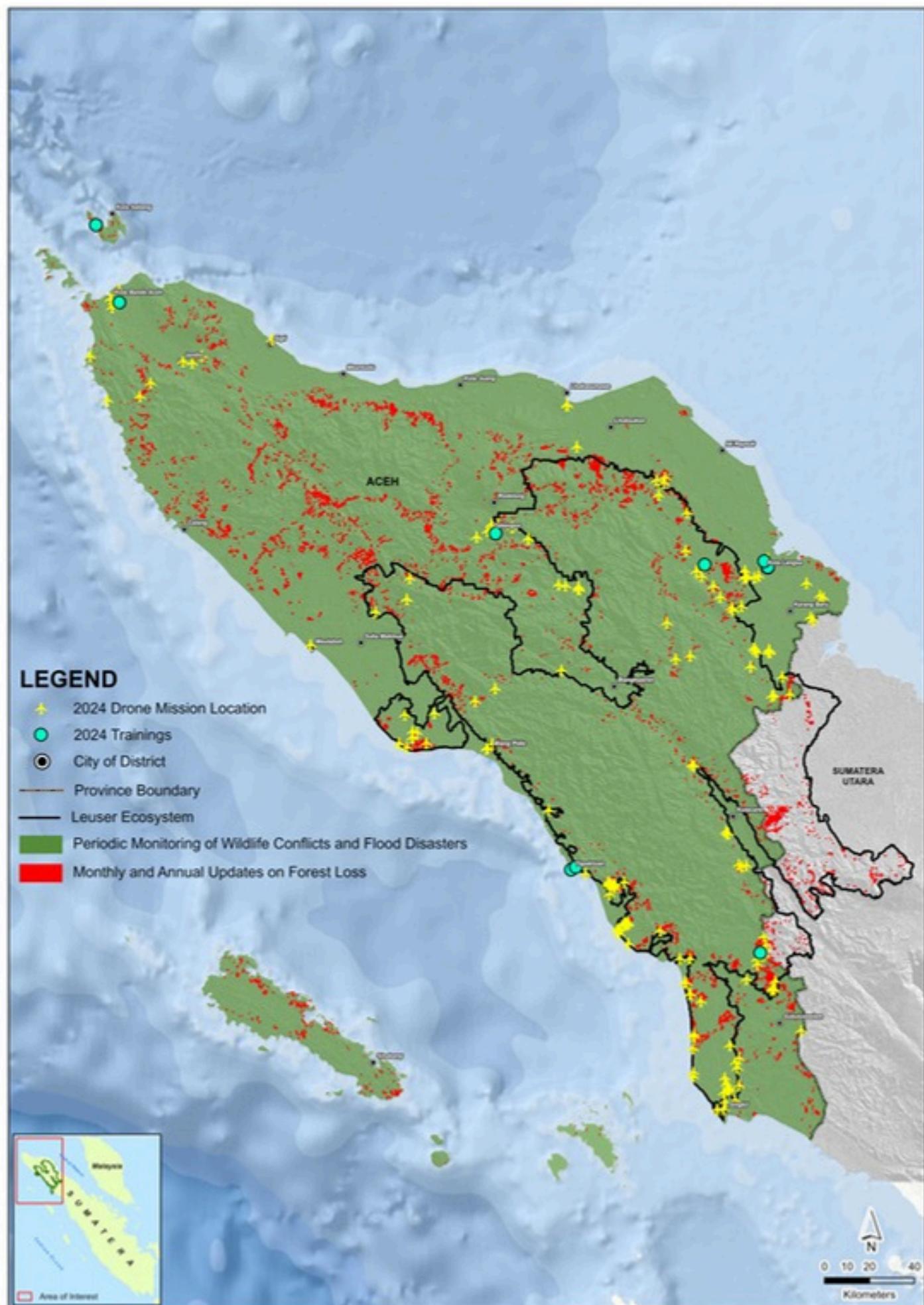
In 2024, HAkA achieved a significant milestone by ensuring that its deforestation monitoring data is increasingly recognized and utilized by public institutions. Our data has been incorporated into reports by Aceh's National Statistics Agency (BPS), the Communication and Information Agency (Diskominfo), and the Environment and Forestry Agency.

To further support public access and advocacy, HAkA collaborated with PT Media Digdata to develop Digdata.id, a digital dashboard designed to visualize environmental data—including deforestation, wildlife crime, and forest management—in accessible and interactive formats. Despite initial delays due to technical challenges, the dashboard has since been improved with features like data maps, downloadable documents, and narrative-based charts. A dedicated access was granted to HAkA for real-time data updates.

A public dissemination event held on 4 October 2024 gathered 57 participants, including government, CSOs, and media, to provide feedback on the platform. As a result, Digdata.id was named one of Indonesia's top 10 local media for data journalism. Notably, its use by researchers and local government agencies indicates growing adoption of open environmental data in policy and advocacy.



Digdata visualizes data from the Leuser Ecosystem



In 2024, the GIS team played a vital role in strengthening forest monitoring, data transparency, and spatial capacity-building for conservation partners and stakeholders across Aceh. Through consistent support to internal teams, partners, government agencies, and the broader public, the team has demonstrated both technical excellence and a strong commitment to open and actionable data. They consolidated forest-cover and loss layers into a shared repository with clear metadata, making it faster for multiple agencies to use the same source of truth. The team also ran hands-on trainings and provided helpdesk support for district partners, improving map literacy and field verification workflows. Finally, they delivered rapid-response maps and regular alerts that fed directly into patrol planning and advocacy briefs—tightening the link between satellite evidence and action on the ground.



HAkA's drone team maps forest edges for patrol planning

FORESTRY DATA DISTRIBUTIONS

• Map Production:

- 1,217 print maps (JPG/PDF), including:
 - 24 monthly forest loss maps (Leuser Ecosystem – Aceh)
 - 90 field monitoring maps
 - 344 field monitoring guides
 - 759 internal request maps
- 14 interactive maps (monthly MMU monitoring via Google My Maps)

• External Data Requests Fulfilled:

- 61 external requests from journalists, researchers, and government officials

• Official Data Letters Sent to Government Agencies:

- 13 proactive letters reporting forest loss and spatial updates to institutions such as KLHK, BKSDA, DLHK, and others

• Drone Missions:

- 3 mapping missions (2,844 ha), 90 free-flight missions

• Trainings Held:

- 7 GIS and drone operation trainings with 80 participants (79 male, 1 female)
- 4 holistic security trainings (72 participants: 35 male, 37 female)

• Internship Program

- Hosted 9 university students from 5 institutions

• Data Integration and Recognition

- HAkA's forest cover and forest loss data included for the first time in Aceh Dalam Angka 2024 by BPS Aceh

International and Media Engagement

- Joined the GFW Advisory Board (2024–2025)
- Contributed to two environmental documentaries: 17 Surat Cinta and Lemah Kuasa di Tanah Negara

National Dataset Contributions

- Continued participation in Mapbiomas Indonesia (Collection 3.0 & Fire dataset)

Monitoring visit to the District Court to oversee wildlife crime cases.

In 2024, HAkA intensified efforts to strengthen legal accountability in wildlife crime cases through district court monitoring and legal data collection. A key priority was retrieving court rulings related to Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT), many of which remain difficult to access. Between 2020 and 2024, 42 court rulings were identified, with 7 still inaccessible. To address this, HAkA conducted visits to four district courts—Pengadilan Negeri Lhoksukon (Lhoksukon District Court), Pengadilan Negeri Kuala Simpang (Kuala Simpang District Court), Pengadilan Negeri Calang (Calang District Court), and Pengadilan Negeri Blangkejeren (Blangkejeren District Court)—successfully covering three and obtaining five rulings. This data collection feeds into an upcoming case study with legal experts to analyze sentencing trends and judicial interpretation.

In Lhoksukon and Kuala Simpang, discussions with judges and prosecutors focused on the application of the revised Conservation Law (Law No. 32/2024), particularly the enforcement of Article 40A on mandatory minimum sentencing. Diverging interpretations of sentencing guidelines highlighted the need for continued judicial training. Meanwhile, Calang had no recent cases, though its Chief Judge will undergo Environmental Judge Certification. In Blangkejeren, two major wildlife crime cases were tried, exposing poverty and limited legal awareness as key challenges in curbing wildlife trafficking.



Visited Kuala Simpang District Court on October 3, 2024.



Visited District Court on November 2, 2024.



Basic Training For Environmental Judges, August 27-29, 2024



HAkA Co-Founder and Chairperson, Farwiza Farhan, honored with the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership.

Award

In August 2024, HAkA co-founder and Chair Farwiza Farhan was named a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership—often called “Asia’s Nobel Prize.” The recognition celebrates her decade-long dedication to safeguarding the Leuser Ecosystem, amplifying community voices, and pioneering evidence-based advocacy that bridges science, policy, and grassroots action.

For HAkA, the award is more than a personal accolade; it is an affirmation of our collective strategy. The Magsaysay Foundation cited Farwiza’s “courageous, people-centred approach to conservation” and her ability to transform complex environmental challenges into inclusive movements for change. Those very qualities underpin every HAkA programme, from paralegal training in Beutong to data-driven forest monitoring in Rawa Singkil.

The honour has already increased our national and global visibility to introduce Leuser Ecosystem to new audiences and potential partners. Above all, Farwiza’s award shines a spotlight on the everyday heroes of Aceh—community members, field staff, and volunteers—whose commitment makes Leuser protection possible. As we move into 2025, this continental recognition strengthens morale within the organisation and reaffirms our mandate: to defend Aceh’s forests so they continue to nurture both nature and people for generations to come.

Our Partners



Climate and
Land Use Alliance



The Ecology Trust



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