

# Aceh Governor's move threatens destruction of province's protection forest

The Governor of Aceh has written to Jakarta proposing the logging of protection forests covering an area equivalent to more than 75% of the area of Singapore to meet timber needs

11 February 2013



***The Ministry of Forestry needs to act to ensure the security of protection forests that are subject to the moratorium by rejecting the proposals of the Governor of Aceh***

***Norway needs to help prevent the destruction of forestland that is subject to the moratorium in Aceh***

# Why is the letter “destructive”?

The letter from the Aceh Governor, dated 30 October 2012, and addressed to the Minister of Forestry, has proposed the conversion of protection forest into production forest for, among other things, logging in order to meet the demand for timber.

This motivation is clear to be seen from the digital data (*shape files*), which when matched with the maps contained in the proposals signed by the Governor of Aceh Zaini Abdullah, turn out to be precisely the same.

This report prepared by Greenomics Indonesia shows protection forest blocks that are of a relatively large area, which are clearly intended for logging so as to meet timber needs. It should be noted that this report shows only the protection forest blocks with relatively large areas (over 1,000 hectares) that are threatened by the Governor of Aceh’s proposals.

The report reveals that there are five large blocks of protection forest - each more than 2,000 hectares in area - that have been identified for the sole purpose of felling so as to meet timber needs of more than 21,000 hectares, equivalent to 30% of the total area of Singapore.

In addition, the report reveals that there are two blocks of protection forest that are also relatively large which have been proposed by the Governor of Aceh for conversion into production forest.

The principal function of production forest is to produce timber, which is of course done through logging. In other words, they might as well propose the logging of protection forests so as to produce timber. These two blocks extend to more than 31,000 hectares, or 47% of the area of Singapore.

While the letter only contains proposals, the motivation involved needs to be quickly nipped in the bud by the Ministry of Forestry. Otherwise, it could lead to the legalization of destructive practices in the protection forests of Aceh.

**This is the reason why we deem the Governor of Aceh’s letter to be destructive.**

If approved by the Ministry of Forestry, the Governor of Aceh's proposals and these scanned maps would result in the destruction of almost 55,000 hectares of Acehnese protection forest, or the equivalent of more than 75% of the area of Singapore.





# Five large blocks of protection forest threatened to supply timber demand

The Aceh Governor's package of proposals, which was signed at the end of October 2012, requests the Minister of Forestry to change the status of five large blocks of protection forest so as to supply timber needs.

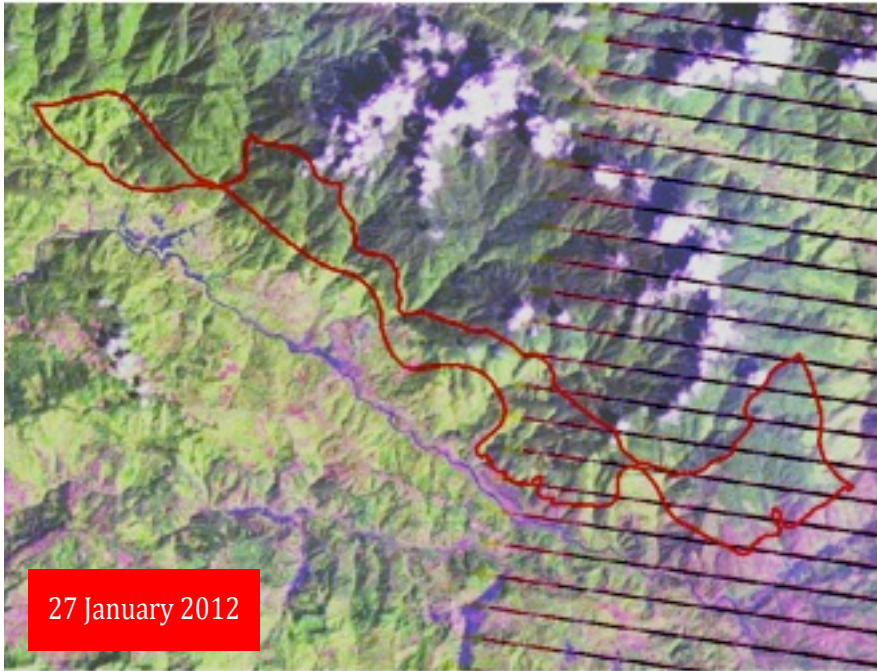
The five Krueng Sabe protection forest blocks are located in Gayo Lues and Aceh Barat Daya Regencies, and cover a total area of more than 21,000 hectares, or **the equivalent of 30% of the area of Singapore.**

The condition of the land cover in each of the five blocks is as described below:



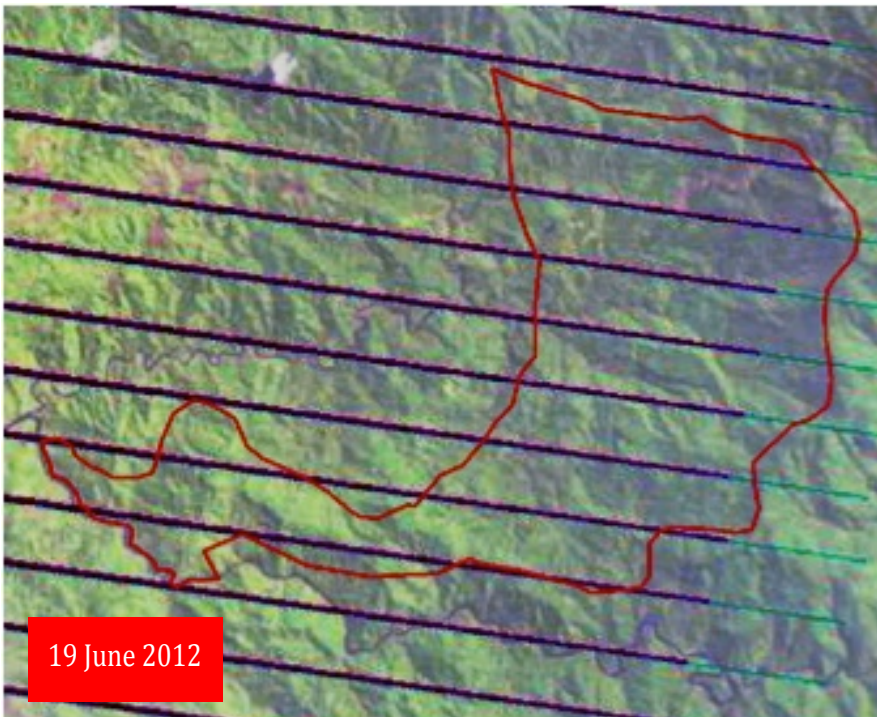
## **Block 1:**

*This protection forest block in Aceh Barat Daya Regency that is proposed to become a source of timber extends to 7,373 hectares. There is no doubt whatsoever that the forest cover in the block is still in good condition. The reason given for the proposal, namely, to log this block, has destructive implications for protection forests throughout Aceh.*



### **Block 2:**

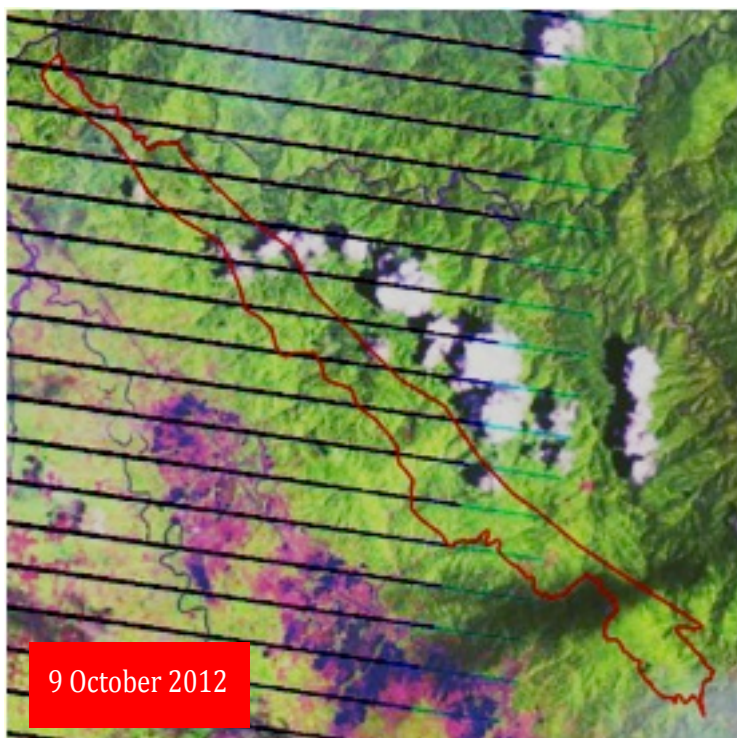
*The area of protection forest in this block extends to 5,245 hectares in Gayo Lues Regency. The majority of forest cover is still good. If the proposal of the Governor of Aceh is approved, the area will be cleared to supply timber needs.*



### **Block 3:**

*This protection forest extending to 4,031 hectares proposed by the Governor of Aceh to serve as a source of timber needs. The protection forest cover in this part of Aceh Barat Daya Regency is still clearly good.*





**Block 4:**

*This block of protection forest in Aceh Barat Daya Regency extends to 2,496 hectares and is also included in the Governor of Aceh's proposal. The forest cover is still relatively intact.*



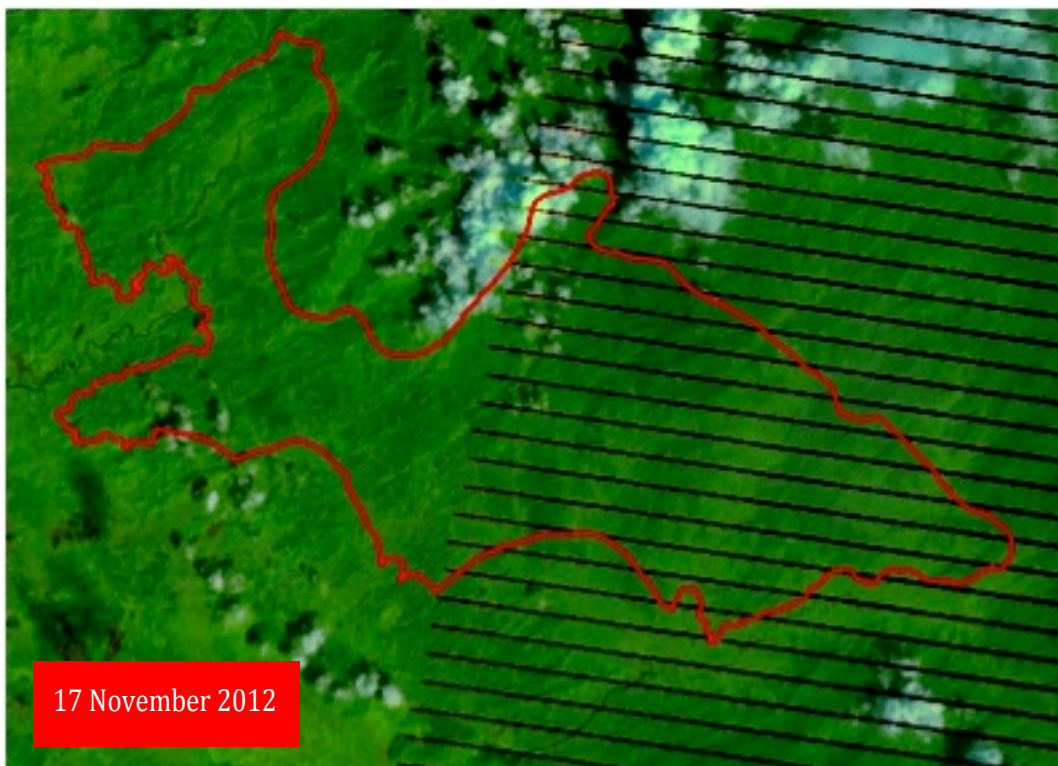
**Block 5:**

*This block of protection forest in Aceh Barat Daya Regency extends to 2,166 hectares and has also been proposed by the Governor of Aceh for logging in order to meet timber needs. As with the other blocks, the forest cover is still clearly good.*

## Three large blocks of protection forest are also threatened as part of the package of proposals

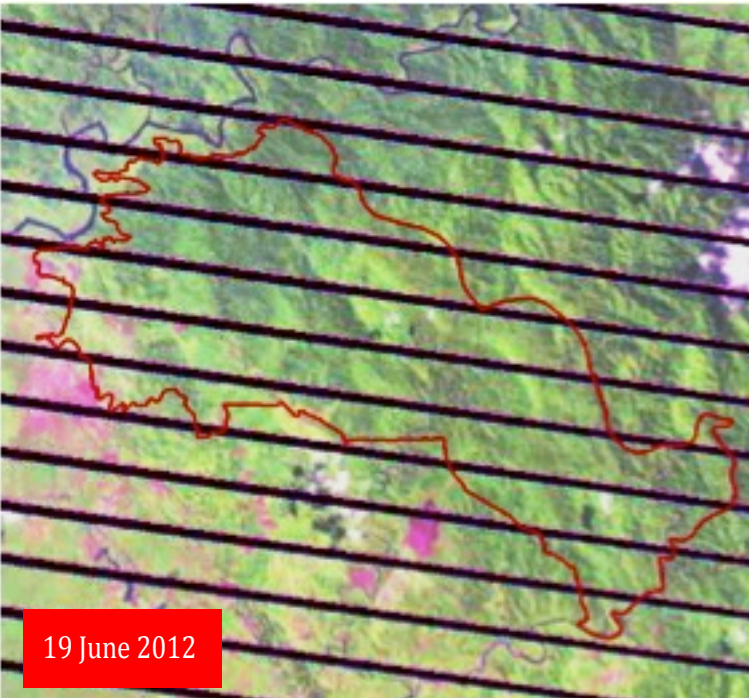
The reason in each case is clear, their forest cover is still relatively intact. This means that timber resources are the principal target of the Governor's package of proposals. The total area of the three blocks of protection forest in Aceh Jaya and Nagan Raya Regencies extends to more than 33,000 hectares – or **the equivalent of 47% of the area of Singapore**. It should be underlined once again that this report only focuses on the dangers facing protection forest blocks with relatively large areas (over 1,000 hectares).

Given that the proposed conversion of protection forest to production forest is motivated by the fact that the land in question is still forested, or, in other words, the sole motivation is to harvest the timber contained in the protection forests, we shall now describe the forest cover in each of these three blocks of protection forest:



**Block 1:** *This Krueng Sabe Protection Forest, which is also located in Aceh Jaya Regency and is proposed for conversion into production forest by the Governor of Aceh, has an area that is quite astonishing, extending to nearly 27,000 hectares, or the equivalent of 38% of the area of Singapore. There can be no doubt that the forest cover in the block is quite intact, given that the sole motivation for changing its functions is to harvest the timber. This block is subject to the moratorium and must be saved from destruction.*





### **Block 2:**

*This other block in the Krueng Sabe Protection Forest that has been proposed by the Governor of Aceh for conversion into production forest is located in Nagan Raya Regency, and has an area of 4,852 hectares. As the forest cover is also quite good, it should come as no surprise that once again timber is the main attraction.*



### **Block 3:**

*This block of the Krueng Sabe Protection Forest is located in Nagan Raya Regency and covers an area of 1,430 hectares. This protection forest is also included in the Governor of Aceh's package of conversion proposals, and has relatively intact forest cover. However, it is apparent that this protection forest is now being lined up for logging and encroachment, although the majority of the cover continues to be good.*

# The Governor of Aceh should not forget the important message he delivered in a speech he made to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the tsunami

The speech was delivered during an event to mark the eighth anniversary of the tsunami on 26 December 2012 at the Malahayati Port complex in Krueng Raya, Aceh Besar Regency. It was attended by some 5,000 people, including representatives of the teaching group at the Miyako High School in Japan.

Kyodo News – as posted on 26 December 2012 – quoted the speech of the Governor of Aceh, Zaini Abdullah, marking the eighth anniversary of the tsunami. In it, the Governor is quoted as saying that

**“Greediness of humans destroys forests ..., so it destroys the balance of nature.”**

It is certainly strange that what the governor said in his speech is so completely at odds with the proposals he has sent to Jakarta to log protection forest extending to more than 75% of the area of Singapore.

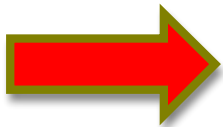
The question automatically arises as to whether these proposals may themselves be categorized as “greediness of humans”, and whether the Governor wishes to “destroy the balance of nature” in Aceh by proposing to Jakarta that 8 large blocks of protection forest in Aceh be logged?

I was present for that event marking that eighth of the tsunami and heard the Governor’s speech. I was very impressed by what he had to say about protecting natural resources in Aceh, and particularly the province’s forests.

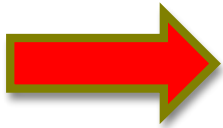
However, after seeing the proposals sent by the Governor of Aceh, I have no option but to conclude that what the Governor said was nothing more than empty rhetoric, rather than a commitment to protecting Aceh’s forests. If the Governor is sincere about protecting the province’s forests, then he will withdraw his destructive proposals immediately.

*Elfian Effendi, Executive Director of Greenomics Indonesia*

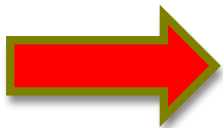
# What can you do when you read this report?



**Urge the Governor of Aceh, Zaini Abdullah, to withdraw this destructive package of proposals, which, if they are accepted, will assuredly lead to the wanton destruction of protection forests in Aceh!**



**Urge Indonesian Forestry Minister, Zulkifli Hasan, to reject the Governor of Aceh's destructive proposals!**



**Urge Norway to prevent the logging of moratorium forest in Aceh as a result of these destructive proposals from the Governor of Aceh!**



*There is no other option,  
the Governor of Aceh must  
withdraw his letter which  
will result in the destruction  
of protection forests in Aceh*

For further information please contact:

**Elfian Effendi**, Executive Director of Greenomics Indonesia  
[elfian@greenomics.org](mailto:elfian@greenomics.org)