



Transnational Advocacy Networks and Environmental Justice: The Role of WALHI in a Central Sulawesi Palm Oil Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on analyzing the role of the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) in advocating for the Astra Agro Lestari (AAL) palm oil case in international forums. The AAL palm oil case in Central and West Sulawesi has been in the spotlight due to allegations of land grabbing, environmental pollution, and human rights violations against indigenous communities and local farmers. This research also comprehensively discusses WALHI's strategy in conducting advocacy in international forums. The theoretical framework of Transnational Advocacy Networks is used to help analyze the case in this research, focusing on WALHI's role and strategy in advocating for the AAL palm oil case in international forums. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method. Data collection techniques include interviews and literature sources. Through structured interviews as primary data and literature analysis of secondary data, this research finds that WALHI's actions constitute a transnational advocacy network practice. In this case, WALHI significantly utilizes its membership in Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) as a means of advocacy in international forums, thus gaining the attention of the United Nations through the issuance of a Special Rapporteur. This study concludes that in the AAL palm oil case, WALHI has contributed significantly to advocating for AAL's palm oil case in international forums through its strategy of leveraging its relationship with FoEI. This study contributes to education about the role and strategies used by NGOs such as WALHI in international advocacy practices using the theory of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TAN).

Keywords: Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs), WALHI, Palm Oil Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the role of Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) in advocating concerns raised by communities regarding the operations of Astra Agro Lestari (AAL) in Central Sulawesi through international forums. As the largest

environmental organization in Indonesia, WALHI is a local NGO that plays an important role in connecting grassroots struggles with international advocacy, especially when domestic mechanisms fail to provide adequate protection. In this study, the term refers to concerns raised in reports by WALHI Central Sulawesi and partner organizations, including issues related to land tenure, environmental impact, and community–industry relations in Central Sulawesi, such as concerns related to land tenure, environmental impact, and community-industry relations.

In recent decades, the palm oil industry has become one of the strategic sectors in the Indonesian economy and one of the largest contributors to the country's foreign exchange earnings (KEMENKO, 2022). However, the massive expansion of palm oil plantations has also caused various environmental and social problems, such as deforestation, peatland degradation, and agrarian conflicts with indigenous peoples and local farmers. The classic problems of oil palm plantations in Indonesia are not only about environmental damage or deforestation, but also agrarian conflicts often involving overlapping land claims among various stakeholders, including companies and local communities. In 2023 alone, according to KPA records, oil palm plantations were the sector that contributed the most to agrarian conflicts in Indonesia (KPA, 2023). Agrarian conflicts in the palm oil plantation sector occur between companies and local communities. On the one hand, companies have access to capital, permits, and the support of security forces. On the other hand, communities who have lost their land often lack the political and legal power to demand justice. This situation highlights the weak governance of the palm oil sector in Indonesia and is considered by civil society groups as one of the main factors contributing to challenges faced by local communities.

In addressing this issue, the Indonesian government established the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) as a mandatory certification to ensure the sustainability of the palm oil sector in Indonesia. This certification is necessary to prevent concerns frequently raised in public discourse, such as disputes over land tenure, overlapping concessions, and environmental impacts caused by plantation expansion (Aisyah et al., 2024). However, weak implementation is also a classic problem that is inseparable from this issue. In addition, at the global level, Indonesia Government has declared its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, including goal 16 on “Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.” Astra Agro Lestari also affirms its commitment to sustainable practices and respect for the rights of local communities through its 2023 Sustainability Report (Lestari, 2024). Based on these various normative frameworks, including domestic regulations through ISPO, Indonesia's global commitment to the SDGs, and the sustainability claims made directly by Astra Agro Lestari, allegations related to land tenure disputes, environmental concerns, and reports of tensions between communities and local authorities are issues that, according to these normative frameworks, are expected to be prevented.

However, reports by WALHI and Friends of the Earth International describe concerns raised regarding the operations of AAL subsidiaries in Central Sulawesi, including civil society allegations of land tenure disputes, environmental impacts, and

reports of tensions involving indigenous communities defending their living spaces (WALHI et al., 2024). Civil society reports concerning AAL's operations in Central Sulawesi illustrate the types of issues raised in civil society reporting, including allegations concerning land tenure, environmental management, and community–industry relations, and reports from civil society describing tensions experienced by communities in the context of plantation expansion. These dynamics have been linked by civil society groups to perceived gaps in domestic certification and regulatory enforcement, while the available legal channels are difficult for affected communities to access. This vacuum has prompted WALHI, particularly WALHI Central Sulawesi, to bring this case to the international level by building alliances with transnational networks. Therefore, it is interesting to examine the role and efforts of WALHI Central Sulawesi in advocating concerns related to AAL's operations at the international level, both through submitting reports to UN mechanisms and through collaboration with global advocacy networks such as Friends of the Earth International and Greenpeace.

A number of previous studies have highlighted WALHI's role in advocating for a number of cases. First, research by Herry Wahyudi et al. in 2021 discussed WALHI's role in advocating for various environmental cases in Indonesia. In 2016, WALHI Riau advocated to the government regarding the issue of frequent smoke fires. WALHI Riau conducted advocacy at the national and international levels by utilizing the international network Friends of the Earth International (Wahyudi et al., 2021). A second study by Muhammad Astar Paradise and Sahrudin Lubis (2016) showed that WALHI Jakarta conducted joint advocacy with the Indonesian Traditional Fishermen's Coalition (KNTI) to the Jakarta regional government regarding the issue of reclamation. In this case, WALHI Jakarta acted as a civil society organization in advocating for the local government to reject reclamation in Muara Angke, Jakarta (Paradise & Lubis, 2025). In 2022, WALHI West Java advocated for the rejection of the environmental permit for the Tanjung Jati A Cirebon coal-fired power plant, which had the potential to cause environmental damage. WALHI West Java used the transnational advocacy network (TAN) method in advocating for this case (Fasmalia & Angela, 2024). In 2023, WALHI South Sulawesi advocated for the rejection of the reclamation of Lae-Lae Island in Makassar by publishing *Ecological Facts Volume III: Laelae Rejects Reclamation*. The strategy used by WALHI South Sulawesi included four transnational advocacy methods: information politics, symbolic politics, pressure politics, and accountability politics.

Although all three studies highlight WALHI's role as an environmental advocacy actor, their focus remains limited to the domestic sphere and the context of national or local policy. None specifically discuss how WALHI brings local issues to international forums as a strategy to engage transnational corporations through international advocacy mechanisms. In addition, previous studies generally focus on public policies that directly involve the government, while this study highlights the advocacy carried out by local organizations toward multinational corporations that operating within broader political–economic and global supply-chain structures. Thus, this study contributes to academic understanding of WALHI's role as a local actor operating within the global governance

architecture, while filling a research gap regarding the effectiveness of transnational advocacy networks in addressing agrarian conflicts and human rights violations in the palm oil sector.

In addition, this study also analyzes the effects or impacts of transnational advocacy carried out by WALHI Central Sulawesi, both at the international and domestic levels. Thus, this study not only focuses on how these advocacy strategies are implemented, but also assesses the extent to which these measures are able to bring about concrete changes, whether in the form of economic pressure on companies, increased international public attention, or encouragement for the Indonesian government to strengthen the protection of the rights of affected communities. Using the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) theory approach from Keck and Sikkink (1998), this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how local actors such as WALHI can utilize global advocacy networks to fight for ecological justice and human rights amid weak protection mechanisms.

METHOD

This study will use a descriptive qualitative method with the aim of describing WALHI's role in advocating the Astra Agro Lestari Central Sulawesi palm oil case at the International Forum through advocacy strategies and the impact of the advocacy carried out. A descriptive qualitative approach is used because this study focuses more on explaining how something can happen, so this approach will provide abundant and detailed data. The subject of this study is Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), which explains its role in advocating for a case. The data in this paper was obtained from primary sources, namely online interviews with the campaign manager of WALHI Central Sulawesi, Wandu. The data from the interview was also supplemented with secondary sources, such as literature studies from previous research, WALHI's official website, and news articles. This secondary data was used to reinforce and verify the information from the interview, as well as to provide a broader context regarding the dynamics of transnational advocacy in this case.

After both types of data were obtained, the findings from the interviews and secondary data were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, by grouping the data obtained into categories corresponding to the four strategies in the Transnational Advocacy Network theory. Thus, this study not only describes WALHI's role descriptively, but also highlights WALHI's role through an analysis of the transnational advocacy strategies carried out by WALHI in practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks

The Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) is a transnational network consisting of actors connected through voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal communication patterns. Keck and Sikkink (1998) explain that TANs are formed when actors such as local and international NGOs, local social movements, the media, academics, and certain

parts of international organizations are committed to value-based issues, such as human rights, the environment, and the rights of indigenous peoples. This commitment is demonstrated through their advocacy on specific issues. The main characteristics of TAN lie in its flexibility compared to hierarchical state structures and its effectiveness in issues that are highly dependent on information exchange. In this network, information, values, and strategies become the main tools for driving policy and behavioral change in states and corporations.

Actors within TAN exchange data, testimonies, and interpretations of issues to form a shared frame that can be used in global campaigns. Keck and Sikkink emphasize that local and international NGOs usually play a central role in the network because they are able to initiate campaigns, introduce new ideas, and put pressure on actors with greater power. It is in this context that TAN becomes a means for domestic actors to overcome power imbalances and limited access to state structures or national laws.

In carrying out their advocacy functions, Keck and Sikkink identified four main advocacy strategies employed by TAN: First, Information Politics, which is the network's ability to quickly and credibly generate, verify, and disseminate information to the public or policymakers. The information used is not only technical data, but also victim testimonies and moral framing that explains who the perpetrators are, what the problem is, and what the solution is. In many campaigns, TAN plays a role in turning technical issues into moral-political issues in order to gain international attention.

Second, Symbolic Politics, which is the use of symbols, stories, events, or specific moments to shake public consciousness and create emotional resonance. Symbols such as protests, historical dates, dramatic visuals, or specific figures are used to frame issues strongly so that they are easily understood by international audiences. This strategy helps expand the support base and accelerate the spread of campaign messages.

Third, Leverage Politics, which is the ability of networks to use external sources of power to pressure stronger actors. Leverage can be material leverage, such as economic pressure, aid restrictions, or loan conditions; or moral leverage, in the form of the mobilization of shame, which is to embarrass actors through international public scrutiny for violating the norms or commitments they have declared. It is through this leverage that weak local actors can gain significant influence in the global arena.

Fourth, Accountability Politics, which is a strategy to demand consistency between normative commitments and the actual actions of powerful actors. Activists monitor, document, and expose violations of established promises or standards, whether in the form of national laws, international agreements, or corporate declarations. Thus, this strategy forces states or corporations to be accountable for their actions before the public (Keck & Sikkink, 2014). By combining these four strategies, TAN is able to raise local issues to the international level, build global solidarity, and create political and moral pressure on states or corporations that were previously difficult for local groups to reach.

WALHI Central Sulawesi's Transnational Advocacy Strategy in the Astra Agro Lestari Case

WALHI Central Sulawesi is conducting transnational advocacy on the Astra Agro Lestari palm oil case, which is considered to have committed various legal violations and environmental destruction in the Central Sulawesi region. In its actions, WALHI is using strategies that can be employed to advocate for the case at the international level. The strategies employed by WALHI Central Sulawesi are in line with the concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) developed by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in their book *Activists Beyond Borders*. Based on the explanations in the book, the strategies employed by WALHI Central Sulawesi can be divided into four types:

Political Information Strategy Through Mass Media and Social Media

The Information Politics strategy is an advocacy approach that uses information as a strategic tool to influence decision-makers and public opinion, while consciously disseminating information to shape narratives or agendas that support advocacy goals. This strategy emphasizes the importance of producing and exchanging credible information as a means to influence public opinion and policy-makers (Green, 2024). Information functions not only as technical facts but also as testimonies that represent the experiences of affected communities. Strong and timely information forms the foundation for the effectiveness of cross-border advocacy networks.

In the context of the Astra Agro Lestari (AAL) case in Central Sulawesi, information politics can be seen in the efforts of WALHI Central Sulawesi to document and compile various forms of environmental violations and violations of indigenous peoples' rights. According to an interview with Wandu, Campaign Manager of WALHI Central Sulawesi, data collection was conducted through field investigations involving communities in 13 affected villages in Donggala and North Morowali districts.

The data were then compiled into a joint report with the Friends of the Earth (FoE) network and disseminated through press releases and international public reports. For example, an official release by WALHI and FoE in April 2024 stated that more than 2,485 families were affected, with a total of 5,856 hectares of disputed land controlled by four subsidiaries of AAL: PT Mamuang, PT Lestari Tani Teladan, PT Agro Nusa Abadi, and PT Sawit Jaya Abadi 2. These field findings were published in national and international media outlets such as Mongabay and The Guardian, which linked the violations to the responsibility of global investors such as Jardine Matheson, Unilever, and HSBC.

Beyond data collection, WALHI's Information Politics strategy also utilizes the internet, particularly social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, websites, and similar channels. Based on an analysis of WALHI's Information Politics model in advocating alleged human rights violations by PT Astra Agro Lestari and several of its subsidiaries, WALHI leverages the internet network. Firstly, WALHI uses the website <https://www.WALHI.or.id>, one of WALHI's internet platforms that facilitates information exchange and campaigns. On this website, WALHI shares its efforts to strengthen the environmental movement and build public awareness. The site features

news about AAL, including an article titled “Friends of the Earth Mengutuk Laporan Baru Tentang Kekerasan dan Ancaman Terhadap Masyarakat oleh Astra Agro Lestari dan Kepolisian Republik Indonesia” In the article, FOE (Friends of the Earth) expresses concern over reports of violence and threats of criminalization against communities in Sulawesi, caused by unresolved land conflicts. Subsequently, WALHI and FOE urged companies and global investors to reconsider their relationships with the company (WALHI, 2024).

In addition to using its website, WALHI also utilizes social media channels, especially Instagram, with the username @WALHI.nasional, which has 97,800 followers and 6,310 posts. On this account, @WALHI.nasional presents campaigns and information exchanges related to Indonesia's environment, highlighting issues such as ecological justice, the climate crisis, and the struggle against an extractive economy that damages the environment. One reel post from @WALHI.nasional, posted on November 26, 2022, shows a video of a group of FoE representatives protesting in front of the Unilever office. During the protest, FoE urged Unilever to stop purchasing palm oil from conflict lands in Indonesia, including from Astra Agro Lestari.

Finally, WALHI National's YouTube channel, with 8,870 subscribers, shares its activities and actions through documentary and short videos. On March 17, 2023, WALHI broadcasted live a video titled “Press Conference Postponed: Eight International Companies, Astra Agro Lestari & Government Remain Silent.” The video exposed alleged human rights abuses, land grabbing, criminalization, and ecological damage committed by three subsidiaries of AAL. This prompted eight international companies, including PepsiCo, Friesland Campina, L'Oreal, Nestle, Hershey, P&G, Colgate, and Danone, to suspend purchases of CPO from AAL.

Following WALHI's strategic use of information to advocate its cause through social media, PT Astra Agro Lestari responded by publishing an article on www.astra-agro.co.id. On the website, AAL stated that it released a comprehensive report from an independent third party in response to allegations reported by WALHI. The third party, Eco Nusantara (ENS), was appointed to conduct a thorough and independent review related to field activities (Lestari, 2023). In its report, ENS highlighted the complexity of land ownership, involving interactions not only between companies and communities but also among community members themselves (Kumparan, 2023). Zulfahmi, CEO of ENS, expressed respect for the decisions of all parties and hopes to identify the root causes to facilitate the establishment of solutions.

Santoso, CEO of AAL, said that the results of the ENS verification represent a positive step forward for all stakeholders as it provides a comprehensive assessment to address the allegations. Santoso also mentioned that the company focuses on efforts to assimilate and present proposed action plans to implement recommendations based on the report in due course (Lestari, 2023).

Political Symbol Strategy as an Emotional Force

The Symbolic Politics strategy is an advocacy model that utilizes symbols, narratives, and symbolic actions to construct strong meanings and emotional resonance within society (Keck & Sikkink, 2014). In this context, WALHI highlights the criminalization cases against farmers who reject AAL's expansion as part of its Symbolic Politics strategy. Not only does WALHI raise awareness of this issue, but it also implements Symbolic Politics through the narrative "Land Seized, Lives Seized." This narrative portrays the community's suffering caused by AAL's activities and holds powerful symbolic weight because it is easily understood and emotionally impactful. Furthermore, to strengthen advocacy efforts, WALHI translates this data into symbolic action by staging a protest in London on April 26, 2024, organized together with Friends of the Earth (FoE) from the Netherlands and the UK. The protest took place in front of Astra International's headquarters and the Mandarin Oriental hotel, both owned by Jardine Matheson, the majority shareholder of AAL at that time. Representatives from communities in Central Sulawesi and West Sulawesi also attended to directly voice their aspirations.

"We came all the way to London so that the voices of the people of Central Sulawesi can be heard directly by the company's owners," said Rio Mukti, a community representative from Lalundu (WALHI, 2024a).

This action was not merely a protest but a symbol of resistance against global inequalities in the palm oil industry. By bringing affected residents to the global financial center, WALHI employed symbolic politics to highlight the tension between corporate profits and community suffering on the ground. Moreover, the protest strengthened the moral narrative that palm oil issues are fundamentally matters of global justice and environmental concerns.

However, on the other hand, AAL stated that it operates in accordance with Indonesia's laws, regulations, and prevailing policies. AAL also emphasized that it has implemented an official sustainability policy since 2015 and has not engaged in any expansion or new land clearing since then. In its land acquisition processes, AAL asserted that it has carried out all procedures in compliance with applicable regulations, involving relevant stakeholders—including local communities—by conducting socialization activities and obtaining mutual agreement beforehand (Lestari, 2024).

WALHI Central Sulawesi's Political Leverage Through Material and Moral Pressure

The political information and symbolic strategy employed by WALHI Central Sulawesi paved the way for the next strategy. In the context of this study, Walhi Central Sulawesi reported violations committed by PT AAL through direct campaigns and in the mass media. These efforts facilitated advocacy that engaged influential actors at the transnational level. This expansion of networks is referred to by Keck and Sikkink as Political Leverage. Keck and Sikkink say that this strategy is a political effectiveness strategy carried out by advocacy actors to influence actions and policies.

According to Wandu, Campaign Manager for WALHI Central Sulawesi, WALHI has difficulty pressuring AAL through its national network. Therefore, WALHI Central Sulawesi is attempting to expand its network at the transnational level through a political leverage strategy (Wandu, 2025). The political leverage employed by WALHI Central Sulawesi can be categorized into two forms: material and moral. In the material form, WALHI Central Sulawesi attempts to engage transnational actors who have influence in the distribution of funds to PT AAL. This is done to link to things of value, such as money, trade, and prestige. This action requires engaging major actors related to PT AAL, such as the head office, investors, and buyers from PT AAL. In identifying these actors, WALHI Central Sulawesi utilizes reports of violations disseminated through the mass media and campaigns.

WALHI Pusat is indeed an official member of Friends of the Earth (FoE), an international network focused on environmental issues. WALHI utilizes this membership to collaborate on campaigns located overseas, one of which is in London. This location was chosen because it is where the headquarters of Astra International's owner, Jardine Matheson, is located. During the campaign, WALHI and FoE made various demands related to the issue of land grabbing from residents in Central Sulawesi, as well as all forms of alleged human rights violations at the project site (Results of an interview with Wandu, Campaign Manager for WALHI Central Sulawesi).

WALHI's screening efforts were not limited to directly related parties, but also included investors and customers of PT AAL. Two names mentioned by WALHI in its press release were HSBC and Unilever. WALHI demanded that Unilever, as a customer of PT AAL's palm oil products, cease all such activities. WALHI also demanded that HSBC no longer provide funding to PT AAL. In addition to these two names, WALHI also demanded that other parties, such as Norges Bank and BlackRock, as investors of PT AAL, take action. All demands made by WALHI are focused on ensuring that PT AAL stops all forms of violations against the people of Central Sulawesi (WALHI, 2024b).

The demands made by WALHI to PT AAL's investors and customers have yielded results. In 2022, ten consumer goods companies suspended their supply from PT AAL. In addition, BlackRock, as an investor, raised objections at the shareholders' meeting regarding the re-election of the directors and commissioners of PT AAL. BlackRock assessed that PT AAL had not fully implemented transparency aspects related to palm oil production (Stewardship, 2023). Another party that responded to WALHI's demands was Norges Bank, Norway's central bank. Norges Bank decided to remove PT AAL's parent company from the Norwegian government's Government Pension Fund Global (GPF). This decision was based on the negative impact caused by PT AAL (Norges Bank Investment Management, 2024).

WALHI's material leverage strategy was so effective in putting pressure on PT AAL. WALHI's network, which targeted influential actors such as investors and customers, put pressure on PT AAL's finances. PT AAL's removal from Norges Bank and pressure from BlackRock are proof of how influential WALHI's strategy was. PT AAL responded to this pressure through a press release. PT AAL appointed EcoNusantara (ENS) as an

independent party tasked with verifying WALHI's allegations. During the verification process, ENS invited various related parties, such as FoE and WALHI. In addition, PT AAL released a 3-year Action Plan in response to ENS's recommendations (Lestari, 2024). The plan contains PT AAL's commitment to actions and programs that prioritize community involvement and the implementation of principles in accordance with international guidelines (the principles of Free, Prior, Informed Consent) (Sahgal, 2024).

In addition to strategies that target material influence, WALHI also tries to exert pressure through morality. This can be seen through various campaigns and press releases from WALHI that always emphasize human rights violations by PT AAL. During a campaign in London, WALHI and FoE met with several members of the United Kingdom (UK) parliament. The meeting focused on explaining the current situation in Central Sulawesi. WALHI also demanded accountability because many British entities were involved in the issue, one of which was the owner of Astra International. WALHI attempted to appeal to the morality of the UK government to put pressure on PT AAL regarding the alleged human rights violations. This pressure has resulted in a negative image for PT AAL in the eyes of investors, customers, and the international public. The impact is interrelated with the material strategy implemented by WALHI, namely pressure from investors and customers of PT AAL's palm oil.

Due to moral leverage pressure, PT AAL responded with clarification that there were no human rights violations. In its press release, PT AAL responded with a commitment to increase community participation and involvement in a more transparent and constructive manner. In addition, PT AAL stated that some of the allegations made by WALHI and FoE arose from misunderstandings regarding the actual conditions on the ground. PT AAL also used the verification from ENS as a basis for responding to WALHI's allegations of human rights violations (Lestari, 2024). The response given by PT AAL shows WALHI's success in prompting further action from PT AAL. The political leverage strategy proved to be very effective in putting pressure on PT AAL. The pressure, which focused on material and moral aspects, had a significant impact on PT AAL.

WALHI's Accountability Policy Through Pressure on Commitment to Regulations

The next strategy employed by WALHI was accountability politics. With this strategy, WALHI attempted to pressure PT AAL and the Indonesian government to comply with existing regulations in Indonesia. These regulations related to AAL's commitment to sustainability in its work processes and administrative regulations such as AAL's land use rights (HGU). WALHI Central Sulawesi believes that AAL and the Indonesian government have violated these regulations (Wandi, 2025). In addition to violating land use regulations, WALHI also demands that PT AAL be consistent in its commitment to agrarian reform policies and human rights principles (WALHI, 2018).

WALHI's questions regarding the commitments made by PT AAL and the Indonesian government often arise through its press releases and reports. One of WALHI's main focuses is the alleged violation of land use rights, which concerns the discrepancy between the concession boundaries and actual use in the field. According to

WALHI's report, PT AAL's subsidiary is suspected of not having an HGU. In 2022, it was revealed that its subsidiary, PT ANA, was one of the companies that did not have an HGU. This report was confirmed by Eco Nusantara through its verification in August 2022 and November 2023. The reason for the absence of an HGU is due to the increasing number of unresolved land disputes. According to WALHI, this fact raises suspicions of misconduct in the practice of oil palm plantation land use (WALHI et al., 2024).

In addition, WALHI demands compliance with the international principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). In short, FPIC is a principle used to protect the rights of indigenous peoples or local communities to be involved in the approval of development projects. WALHI cites a statement from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that “With FPIC, indigenous peoples can give or withhold consent, at any time, to projects that affect their territory (WALHI et al., 2024). WALHI said that PT AAL had neglected to apply the values of the FPIC principle by not seeking consent when conflicts arose and communities began to be evicted. In response, PT AAL agreed to comply with FPIC. In its 3-Year Action Plan, PT AAL stated its commitment to improving the implementation of FPIC principles. They also said they would study various inputs from stakeholders and refer to frameworks such as the RSPO and AFi FPIC Guidelines (Sahgal, 2024).

WALHI's accountability policy highlights the discrepancy between PT AAL's commitments and its practices in the field. WALHI highlights two important areas, namely ownership of HGU and commitment to international principles such as FPIC. WALHI has consistently advocated for these two areas through campaigns and publications in various mass media. This political accountability strategy has proven to have an impact on PT AAL's stance, which subsequently issued a 3-Year Action Plan and expressed its willingness to improve the implementation of FPIC. Therefore, the political accountability strategy can be said to be effective in making PT AAL recommit to existing international regulations and principles. However, because it depends on commitment, WALHI must continue to monitor PT AAL to ensure that it does not repeat its mistakes (WALHI et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study shows that the role of Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), particularly WALHI Central Sulawesi, is significant in advocating cases of alleged human rights and environmental violations committed by Astra Agro Lestari (AAL). Through the Transnational Advocacy Network (TAN) approach as described by Keck and Sikkink (1998), WALHI has successfully utilized cross-border advocacy networks to expand local issues into global concerns. In this context, WALHI not only functions as a local actor highlighting violations at the domestic level, but also as a strategic link between affected communities and international networks that have the moral, political, and economic power to pressure transnational corporations.

WALHI's success can be seen in the four transnational advocacy strategies it has implemented. First, through information politics, WALHI has successfully collected and

disseminated credible data on land grabbing, environmental pollution, and the criminalization of indigenous peoples by AAL subsidiaries, and brought these issues to the international public sphere through collaboration with Friends of the Earth International. Second, in symbolic politics, WALHI utilized symbols and narratives such as “Land Seized, Life Seized” and staged protests in London as a representation of moral resistance against global inequality in the palm oil industry. Third, in leverage politics, WALHI, together with its international network, was able to pressure large companies, including Unilever, PepsiCo, and Nestlé, to suspend palm oil purchases from AAL, while encouraging global financial institutions such as Norges Bank and BlackRock to take similar steps. Fourth, through accountability politics, WALHI demanded that the Indonesian government and AAL comply with the principles of sustainability, agrarian law, and human rights commitments that they had declared.

In terms of results, WALHI's advocacy has proven effective at the global level by creating economic and reputational pressure on AAL. However, at the domestic level, structural change is still hampered by the government's weak response to reported agrarian conflicts and environmental violations. This shows that the success of transnational advocacy does not automatically guarantee domestic policy improvements without strong political commitment and law enforcement. Thus, WALHI's role in this case can be summarized as a concrete example of the effectiveness of cross-border advocacy networks in fighting for ecological justice, as well as a reflection of the still weak governance of sustainability in Indonesia. This study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between local and global actors so that environmental and human rights issues do not remain mere discourse, but result in real change that favors the community and the environment.

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