

Tesla, plus French and German companies, all linked to massive nickel mining plans

A unique uncontacted tribe could be wiped out by a massive Indonesian project to produce nickel for electric car batteries.

A vast mining scheme on the island of Halmahera is part of Indonesia's plan to become a major producer of electric car batteries – a plan into which [Tesla](#) and other companies are pouring **billions of dollars**.

But nickel mining is set to destroy vast areas of the forested interior of Halmahera. These forests are inhabited by 300-500 uncontacted members of the Hongana Manyawa tribe. If mining goes ahead as planned, they will not survive the [destruction](#).

The Hongana Manyawa – which means 'People of the Forest' in their own language – are one of the last nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes in Indonesia.

They now face the threat of seeing their land, and everything they need to survive, destroyed by corporations rushing to provide a supposedly 'sustainable' lifestyle to people thousands of miles away.

The mining is **illegal** under international law as uncontacted tribes cannot give their Free, Prior and Informed Consent to the exploitation of their land, which is legally required for all 'developments' on Indigenous territories.

Nevertheless, Weda Bay Nickel (WBN) – a joint venture partly owned by French mining company **Eramet** – has an enormous mining concession on the island which overlaps with Hongana Manyawa territory.

WBN began mining in 2019 despite being aware that their concession overlaps with uncontacted Hongana Manyawa territory. Since then, huge areas of rainforest which the Hongana Manyawa call home have **already been destroyed**. The company plans to ramp up the mining to many times its current rate and operate for up to 50 years.

Survival has learned that German chemical giant [BASF](#) is planning to partner with Eramet to build a refinery in Halmahera, and that a possible location for this will be on uncontacted Hongana Manyawa territory.

One recently-contacted Hongana Manyawa woman explained: **"They are poisoning our water and making us feel like we are being slowly killed."**

Another said: "I do not give consent for them to take it... tell them that we do not want to give away our forest."

Survival's Director Caroline Pearce said today: "It's appalling that [electric car](#) companies would sell customers a promise of 'ethical consumption', while their supply chains destroy

an uncontacted tribe. There is nothing 'climate-friendly' about laying waste to the Hongana Manyawa's rainforest, and nothing 'sustainable' about causing the deaths of Indigenous people who are living self-sufficiently.

"[Tesla](#) and other electric car companies have an opportunity to live up to their customers' expectations and to avert a horrific – and **illegal** – assault on human rights by pledging that none of the minerals they buy ever comes from the lands of uncontacted Indigenous people in Halmahera. Failing to do so would be a statement that the lives of the uncontacted Hongana Manyawa are expendable."

Source: [Survival](#)