



Papuan
Voices

MIFEE

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Indonesia only needs Merauke for its land. Indonesia doesn't need the Marind people. Perhaps, the slogan (from the national song) 'From Sabang to Merauke' (Dari Sabang Sampai Merauke) should be changed into 'From Sabang to MIFEE' instead.

Yulan Meke, *Sinar Harapan* daily journalist

This document is written to provide background to the Papuan Voices videos that deal with the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE). These videos are 'Wolka Namek (Let's walk with me, mate)' and 'Ironic Survival'.

'Wolka Namek' focuses on Leonardus Deonggat Moyuend's village Bibikem and his role as a hybrid tribesman who fights for his land and culture with arts, films and now as the village's head. Ironic Survival is a story about Alex Mahuze, a Marind tribesman and a sago farmer in Merauke. His clan has lived in harmony with nature for generations. The arrival of the MIFEE program has forced him to earn money through other means, which ironically harms the environment. He lost his lands and his culture is threatened, but Alex fights on.

Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) Background

The Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) is an ambitious plantation and industrialised agriculture project that is planned to cover over a million hectares of land across the southern part of West Papua. MIFEE is the next frontier for Indonesia's plantation industry; vast areas of Sumatra and Kalimantan have already been converted from forest to plantation for the pulp and oil-palm industries. While there is immense pressure from the large number of international and Indonesian companies involved for MIFEE to proceed, there is significant dissent from communities of the Malind tribes. For them, the development represents a new order of exploitation that will irreparably damage the environment and the cultural connections.

On July 8, 2010, the indigenous communities in Merauke met to discuss the Government's decision to implement the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) in the Customary Council Meeting at Sector V:Ha-Anim. It was chaired by Stanislaus Gebze and the Secretary was Johannes Wob. The meeting decided to send a letter to the Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, demanding the government to revoke the plan.

The Ha-Anim sector is consisted of four districts that represented the following tribes: (1) in Merauke: Marind, Kanume, Marori, Yeinan, Makleu, and Kima-Khimah; (2) in Mappi: Auyu, Yaghai, Wiyaghar, Tamanyo and Kau; (3) in Asmat: the 12th Central Asmat Far; (4) and in Boven Digoel: Muyu, Wambon, Wanggom, Kombai and Korowai.

Based on the statement of Merauke Vice Regent Sunaryo on November 3, 2012, the Regional Administration has allocated 1.2 million hectares of land for the development of the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE).

To date there are 48 local and foreign MIFEE investors, one of them is PT. Muting Jaya Lestari which is largely owned by South Korean company Daewoo International. The company has obtained permission to develop maize (corn) estate in the Bibikem customary lands.



The company: (Daewoo International)

The main company that crosses path with Bibikem is South Korean company Daewoo International. Through its Indonesian partner PT Muting Jaya Lestari (largely owned by Dawee), the company has obtained permission to develop maize (corn) estate in the Bibikem customary lands.

Prior to the Asian financial crisis in 1998, Daewoo was South Korea's second biggest corporate conglomerate after Hyundai Group. It went bankrupt in 1999, however several parts of the company have survived and even expanded.

Aside from its steel and chemicals businesses, and a growing interest in mining, Daewoo International's [Agro-Resources](#) division has been recorded to have been involved in several cases of land grabbing across Asia and Africa. Most notoriously Daewoo has been attempting to develop [1.3 million hectares of land in Madagascar](#), an investment which has been put on hold by the government after much community resistance.

The village: Bibikem

Bibikem is a village in the Ilwayap District of Merauke, West Papua. Although the official population is 375, most people from the village live in the city or on food and energy estate properties.

To support the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) program, [the Indonesian Ministry of Public Work](#) in 2011 began a 152 km road project between these towns and villages: Merauke, Okaba, Buraka, Wanam, Bian and Wogikel.

The initial project plan was to cut through some of Bibikem's sacred grounds. Led by Leo Moyuwend, the Bibikem villagers have managed to fend off bulldozers and forced the Ministry to reroute the roads ... for now.

Marind Tribe

Malind-anim is the name used to call those who believe in Mayo. They are the indigenous people of Merauke. Mayo is the belief that all living creatures are created by unam (nature), and that all beings are interconnected and dependent on each other. This belief is expressed in a traditional Marind proverb "kamopha katalob-la es-hanid naggo" which means "life can continue if the relationship between animals, plants, and humans are maintained well". The Marind call these relations: Nakali, Namik and Iham. This relationship is a union of chains, where if one chain is broken, then there will be a catastrophe, which they refer to as "conn kewai out kame-wa" which means the destruction of the entire order.

The Marind's philosophy of life sees that all beings in the world are "the same" and interrelated. Humans and animals both play important roles. They all follow the stages of life, from lib (born) until finally khawid (dead). All creatures have Wi (soul), which sets humans apart from other creatures is because humans have Anim Anim mayan or the human language.



Leo the hybrid tribesman

Leonardus Deonggat Moyuend graduated from the Karya Dharma School of Administration in Merauke. He opted to work for the Bibikem village when he was appointed to be village head in 2012. Leo is a Marind tribesman who was initiated to protect the land and tradition of the Marind people.

In 2012 when the Indonesian Government announced the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE), Leo immediately saw it as *tiq anim* or plague in Marind. Leo and his friends responded by organising a group called the Papuan Solidarity to Say No to MIFEE (SOLPATOM).

Unfortunately, as it progresses, many SOLPATOM members were co-opted by MIFEE sponsored groups and government initiatives. Leo, however, soldiered on via different means. Since 2011, he has been active making films with Papuan Voices Merauke. He has made films, sang for several film productions, and distributed the films on his beat up motorbike, doing roadshow screenings with his netbook while urging community members to keep defending their lands and tradition.

“Film is a good way to express what’s bugging you,” said Leo during the shooting of ‘[Wolka Namek](#)’.

Leo has been involved in the following films:

- Ironic Survival (director/music):
<https://www.engagemedia.org/Members/papuanvoicesmerauke/videos/ironic/view>
- Damon Patura (spoke and sang for the film):
https://www.engagemedia.org/Members/papuanvoicesmerauke/videos/damom_patura/view
- The Onggat (director):
<https://www.engagemedia.org/Members/papuanvoicesmerauke/videos/DEONGGAT.m4v/view>
- Kelapa Berbuah Jerigen (director):
<http://www.papuanvoices.net/2012/07/19/jerry-can-coconuts.html>
- Save Papuan Culture (director):
https://www.engagemedia.org/Members/papuanvoicesmerauke/videos/save_papuan_culture/view
- Indonesia Pressured Us: PEPERA 1969 Testimony (camera):
https://www.engagemedia.org/Members/papuanvoicesmerauke/videos/testimoni_pepera.m4v/view
- Berdiri Tanpa Diskriminasi (music/camera):
https://www.engagemedia.org/Members/papuanvoicesmerauke/videos/berdiri_tanpa_diskriminasi/view



Notes:

In September 2012, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UN HRC) adopted a resolution on the recommendations on the situation of Human Rights in Indonesia, following the review of Indonesia under the Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). From 180 recommendations given by the Council to Indonesia, 151 were accepted while 29 were rejected.

The respect of the right of Indigenous Peoples was one of the most contentious issues during the UPR debate. Fifteen member states of the United Nations questioned the Government of Indonesia's policy toward the situation of the Papuan indigenous populations, which include the accountability of the violations of human rights committed by security forces, the international access to Papua and protection of human rights defenders. However, it is deeply regretted the Government of Indonesia reject the recommendation on Indigenous Peoples and refused to recognize their existence:

“Given its demographic composition, Indonesia, however, does not recognize the application of the indigenous people concept as defined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the country”

(The statement of the delegation of the Indonesia to the 21st Session of the UN HRC in September 2012)

This statement is in contradiction with article 18B-2 of the Indonesian Constitution, “The State recognizes and respects traditional communities along with their traditional customary rights...”. It also denies the existence of more than 30 million indigenous people which are spread out in different part of Indonesia. The human rights groups in Indonesia has consistently reports the on going violations of the human rights of the IP, especially on the rights to food, adequate standard of living, water and sanitation, healthy environment, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. The government development projects in Kalimantan, Papua, Flores and Sumatra very often fail to improve the livelihood of the IP, instead the bring benefits to the investors, both domestic and international investor. The extractive and agro food industries have impacted negatively to the IP and also their environment.



Take Action and Learn More

- Join the conversation at www.papuanvoices.net Ask questions, post comments, and share your ideas!
- Monitor Daewoo International's agro activities in your region
- Download and show the video to community groups, students and activist organisations

There are a number of organisations campaigning on MIFEE:

- Down to Earth (information in English and Indonesian)
<http://www.downtoearth-indonesia.org/campaign/mifee>
- Selwyn Moran has prepared a comprehensive briefing on MIFEE available at
<https://awasmifee.potager.org>.
- People who read Indonesian are recommended to consult Pusaka's thorough study of MIFEE
<http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2011/06/mifee-buku-low-res.pdf>
- A report written by Longgena Ginting (WALHI/FOE Indonesia) and Oliver Pye (Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies, Bonn University)
[Resisting Agribusiness Development: The Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate in West Papua, Indonesia \(PDF\)](#)

