



The voice of #SaveRajaAmpat: Digital movements against nickel mining

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Received Date: January 19, 2025

Revised Date: February 24, 2025

Accepted Date: February 28, 2025

ABSTRACT

Background: The movement to against nickel mining in Raja Ampat was raised in early July 2025. The movement began with a post from Greenpeace Indonesia who were kicked out by security personnels when they protested against nickel mining in Raja Ampat in the middle of an event attended by industry professionals, government officials, experts, and representatives from various countries. This resulted in the digital community joining in to voice their opposition to Raja Ampat with the hashtag #SaveRajaAmpat. This research presents the circumstances that led the digital community to engage in the #SaveRajaAmpat campaign on social media and examines the effectiveness of social media campaigns. **Methods:** Using qualitative methods with a netnographic approach. The author used secondary data from Greenpeace Indonesia, organizational documents, news articles, and posts by X accounts about Raja Ampat. **Findings:** The digital community against nickel mining in Raja Ampat due to environmental concerns; frustration and disappointment with the state, government & oligarchy; Solidarity with the Papuan people; a spirit of resistance towards capitalism and a desire for tourism & to enjoy the natural beauty of Raja Ampat. However, the movement on social media was short-lived and faded due to minor victories achieved through the revocation of several companies permits and distraction by other issues. **Conclusion:** Social movement through social media are less effective, therefore it is necessary to unite social media movements and direct action with the spirit of disappointment towards the state and a spirit of resistance against capitalism so that the movement can be sustained. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This change explains the various motivations of the digital community to engage in activism and explains why digital movements are less effective.

KEYWORDS: digital movement; environment; greenpeace; nickel; Raja Ampat.

1. Introduction

Social media has become one of the tools for campaigns. In the digital age, social media plays a very important role in voicing criticism and messages to be received by other digital communities (Ang et al., 2021; Javed et al., 2025). This is reinforced by the fact that many intellectuals also utilize social media effectively and quite massively social media (Patrick et al., 2020). This has become a means of spreading critical narratives on social media (Barrowcliffe, 2021). In early June 2025, social media was rife with voices rejecting the Raja Ampat nickel mining in Indonesia. The rejection of nickel mining in Rajat Ampat started with a post by Greenpeace Indonesia, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that focuses on environmental issues. Greenpeace Indonesia and Papuan youths staged a protest on June 3, 2025, during the Indonesia Critical Minerals Expo & Conference 2025 at the Pullman Hotel in Jakarta as part of a delegation. Greenpeace activists gave speeches in the middle of the event and waved banners with the words “Nickel Mines Destroy Lives,” “What’s The True Cost of Your Nickel?,” and several other messages conveyed through T-shirts and other

Cite This Article:

Thohir, M. A. (2025). The voice of #SaveRajaAmpat: Digital movements against nickel mining. *Environment Conflict*, 2(1), 68–87. <https://doi.org/10.61511/environc.v2i1.2025.3134>

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banners. In addition to the banners, Greenpeace activists also delivered speeches at the event, repeatedly chanting slogans such as “Save Raja Ampat” and “Papua is not empty land.” A few minutes later, Greenpeace Indonesia activists were immediately escorted out of the room by security guards.

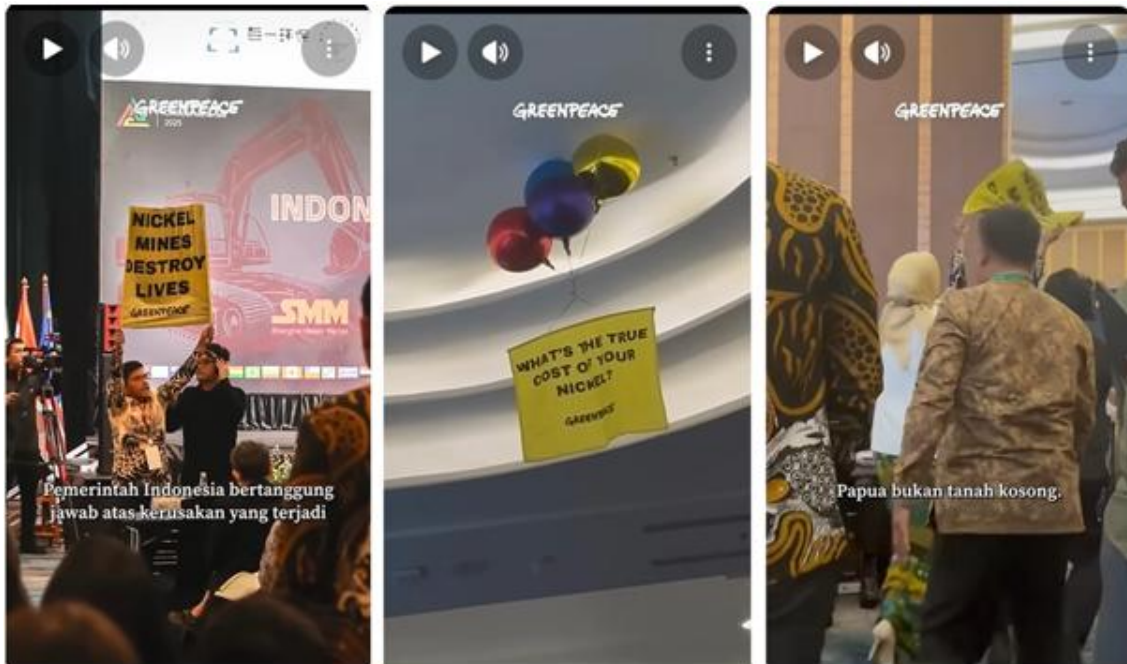


Fig. 1. Greenpeace activist campaigning in the middle of Indonesia Critical Minerals Expo & Conference 2025 (Greenpeace, 2025)

The Greenpeace campaign was immediately posted on social media on June 3, 2025. Many in the digital community were also outraged by the suppression, expulsion, and threats to the beauty of Raja Ampat. Many netizens reposted Greenpeace Indonesia's video on their social media accounts, with a total of 106,000 reposts (last updated on October 20, 2025). The posts were also supported by other NGOs such as *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup (WALHI)*, *Komisi untuk Orang Hilang & Tindak Kekerasan (KontraS)*, etc. Several Indonesian political figures were also seen in Greenpeace's posts, such as Rocky Gerung, who often criticizes the policies and mindset of government officials. There are also other political figures, such as Susi Pudjiastuti, the former Minister of Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia, who rejects mining in Raja Ampat.

The rejection through social media bore fruit. On June 5, 2025, mining activities were temporarily suspended, and on June 10, 2025, the government, through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM), issued a press release regarding the revocation of mining permits in Raja Ampat with number 054.Pers/KM/01.03/SJI/2025. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources revoked four mining business permits (IUP), namely PT Anugerah Surya Pratama (ASP), PT Mulia Raymodn Perkasa (MRP), PT Kawei Sejahtera Mining (KSM), and PT Nurham. The revocation was due to environmental violations that were deemed to have damaged the ecosystem, entered the geopark area, and the aspirations of the local community. However, one company, PT GAG Nikel, had its license retained as it was deemed to meet technical and geographical requirements. In early September 2025, PT GAG Nikel resumed mining operations. Greenpeace Indonesia expressed its disappointment with the decision issued by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

Save Raja Ampat movement was able to grow because of mobilization. According to McCarthy & Zald, (1977) social movements are a form of rational and organized collective action. In Resource Mobilization theory, movements are not only driven by public dissatisfaction, but also by access to and management of resources. The resources referred to by McCarthy and Zald include funds, media, activists, networks, public legitimacy, shared

values, and many others. Castells (1996), with his idea of Networked Social Movement, also mentions that resistance can move through digital networks. This shows that movements that are managed and packaged well on social media with shared values and anger towards something can amplify the movement. In the context of Save Raja Ampat, Walhi invites the digital community to protect the environment that has been destroyed by the government itself, which has prompted them to take action. Therefore, the Save Raja Ampat movement is influenced by shared values and digital community networks.

Social media campaigns have a positive effect in reaching the public. Greenpeace utilizes technological developments through TikTok and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for its campaigns (Muncie, 2024). The use of digital campaigns is driven by the adaptation of current advances in digital media. As a result, Greenpeace's digital campaigns easily went viral. Greenpeace's "Save The Arctic" campaign, which used visual and linguistic strategies, attracted global attention through emotional symbols and critical narratives (Agustin et al., 2025). Digital campaigns can promote changes in public behavior (Evans et al., 2022; Maryam et al., 2021). In addition, digital campaigns are also effective in criticizing a company or brand because it can threaten their business, which in turn can meet public demands (Leonel et al., 2023). Digital campaigns have an important contribution in shaping public awareness.

However, digital campaigns face difficulties in bringing about concrete policy changes. Digital campaigns are still unable to reach skeptical groups and have limitations in achieving an impact that encourages or changes concrete policies (Agustin et al., 2025). Digital campaigns are indeed preferred by young people, but movements through the media tend to die out quickly (Cooper, 2023). Digital campaigns are only suitable for short-term campaigns (Park & Rim, 2020). There is also a term that criticizes digital activism, namely slacktivism. Slacktivism defined as feel-good online activism with little meaningful social or political impact (Kristofferson et al., 2014; Morozov, 2009). Online campaigns may lead people to believe that they have already contributed to the cause, without doing anything meaningful (Chou et al., 2020). Zouhouri et al. (2020) summarize the criticisms of slacktivism. First, slacktivism is considered a symbolic gesture that has no substantive impact or commitment to creating meaningful change. Second, slacktivism can replace more impactful forms of campaigning such as direct action, volunteering, or providing financial assistance. The concern is that individuals feel they have already done their part by engaging in digital activism, without getting directly involved. Third, there is a false sense of accomplishment that makes individuals feel they have already contributed greatly to social change. As a result, this reduces their motivation to engage in more substantial and sustained activism. Fourth, it simplifies social and political issues. Movements are limited to slogans and hashtags, without understanding the substance or the root causes of the issues being discussed. Fifth, it does not contribute to real-world change. Finally, it lacks staying power and is unable to address complex issues. Some critics argue that activism requires sustained commitment. Digital activism has significant gaps in its methods of social movement.

Digital activism has the potential for sustainability, with one caveat. In global cases such as the Indignados movement in Spain, Occupy Wall Street in the United States, and Yo Soy 132 in Mexico, it began with a buzz on social media. From social media, they eventually took to the streets. Digital movements do not stand alone, and in order to survive in the long term, they must combine online and offline strategies in a sustainable manner (Treré, 2019). In prolonged movements, a mixed approach is needed, not one that is entirely digital. Digital campaigns have both positive and negative aspects. The debate surrounding digital campaigns has its own perspectives, but the method continues to be implemented today. The SaveRajaAmpat hashtag went viral as a result of digital campaigns. The social media campaign against mining in Raja Ampat achieved success. The revocation of 4 mining permits and the temporary suspension of mining activities were due to the explosion of opposition from the digital community on social media. However, the digital community easily shifts its focus, especially in August 2025 when other national issues arose, causing the opposition to nickel mining in Raja Ampat to not be as massive as before. On social

media, old narratives easily disappear with the emergence of new ones. This article aims to examine how social media plays a role in environmental social movements and how effective it is at sustaining social movements.

2. Methods

2.1 Research method

This article will review narratives on social media about the rejection of nickel mining in Raja Ampat, Indonesia. The method used to construct the argument is qualitative research with a netnography approach. In using this method, it explores media users in expressing their everyday lives, discussions of life situations, populist counternarratives, and shared cultural referents (Kozinets & Seraj-Aksit, 2024). Data will be taken from narratives and arguments in the form of captions and tweets on social media. The focus of data collection is on Instagram and X. The data collected can be in the form of narratives, posters, or videos on several social media accounts, both individual and organizational. To strengthen the data, the researcher also collected data from several online news sources in the form of videos and articles, as well as releases from several organizational accounts.

The starting point for the argument and data collection is from Greenpeace Indonesia's account. Greenpeace Indonesia became the source of the initial narrative that sparked the movement to reject nickel mining on social media. Afterwards, researchers will look at individual and organizational accounts that reposted the narrative and examine their narratives. Each narrative will be examined, along with the basis for their involvement in the opposition. In this article, individual accounts will not be shown, but organizational or community accounts will still be examined.

2.2 Data selection and analysis

In selecting data, priority was given to tweets from confirmed individuals rather than anonymous ones. This was verified through accounts that had been verified with a blue check mark, as well as validation from researchers through previous tweets, responses from media friends, uploaded photos, and several photos uploaded to show identity, such as work and college or school activities. Data codes with themes of Greenpeace activism and motivation to get involved in movements covering the environment, the state and oligarchy, solidarity with the Papuan people, capitalism, and tourism. These themes were selected from the overall motivation results, with at least 5 tweets found for each motivation theme. However, not all tweets were presented as data sources.

This article will begin by reviewing how Greenpeace rejected nickel mining in Raja Ampat and their campaign methods. Second, it will explain the background of the digital community's rejection of nickel mining in Raja Ampat. Third, it will look at the impact and effectiveness of the social media movement. Finally, the conclusion will present arguments about the effectiveness of social media movements with the environmental narrative promoted by Greenpeace Indonesia in the Save Raja Ampat issue.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Greenpeace's narrative against mining in Raja Ampat

Greenpeace Indonesia is among the NGOs that are vocal in fighting for environmental issues. The environmental issues addressed by Greenpeace include forests, climate & energy, oceans, urban areas, and alternative futures (Greenpeace, 2005). Greenpeace Indonesia has also advocated for communities opposing mining in Sangihe, advocated for cases of forest destruction caused by the Sinar Mas Group in Kalimantan, highlighted deforestation in South Papua, and opposed coal-fired power plants in Batang, Ombilin, Suralaya, and elsewhere. Most recently, Greenpeace has also voiced its opposition to mining

in Raja Ampat, with the tagline #SaveRajaAmpat. The issues highlighted by Greenpeace stem from the struggle to create climate justice so that the environment is not damaged during development.

Greenpeace Indonesia often conducts campaigns using social media. Greenpeace often shares photos from their campaigns with a message about the environment. Greenpeace often creates digital campaigns from photos taken in places that are difficult to reach and require extra effort, as well as using flags with visual messages. This was done at the Batang coal-fired power plant port (2016), with a photo of a giant octopus in the HI Roundabout pool (2023), and in the waters near the National Capital, East Kalimantan (2024). The photos uploaded by Greenpeace Indonesia have attracted significant attention on social media.

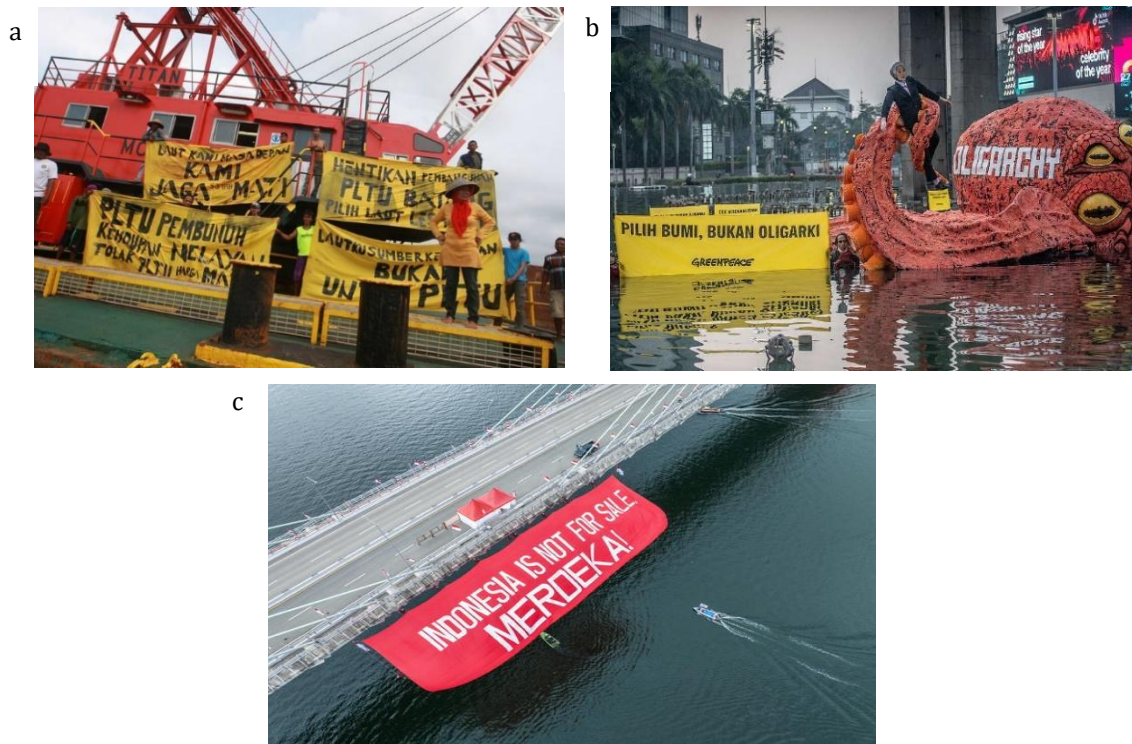


Fig. 2 (a) Residents rejected PLTU Batang, 2016; (b) “*Monster Gurita*”, rejecting elections without the oligarchy, 2023; (c) Residents campaign victims of “IKN” on the 79th independence day, 2024 (Greenpeace, 2016 - 2024)

Greenpeace also uses videos to convey the situation in conflict areas in more detail on its YouTube and Instagram accounts. Greenpeace has created web series uploaded to its YouTube account titled “Chasing the Shadow” (2023) and “*Cerita di Tanah Papua*” (Stories from the land of Papua) (2023). Chasing the Shadow tells the story of Greenpeace activists cycling from Jakarta to Bali, where the G20 summit was held in 2022. Meanwhile, Stories from the Land of Papua tells the story of the natural beauty of Papua, which is threatened by foreign projects that could destroy the harmony, environment, and ecosystem of the Papuan people. In addition to web series, Greenpeace also uploads other videos, such as podcasts and reports on environmental threats in Indonesia. Videos are used to make it easier for the digital community to understand what is happening to the environment in Indonesia.

Social media campaigns have not only been conducted in Indonesia and in the last 10 years. In 2016, Greenpeace collaborated with Ludovico Einaudi, an Italian pianist who played the piano in the middle of the melting Arctic ice. Einaudi played *Elegy for the Arctic*. This song was dedicated to Greenpeace's campaign to protect the Arctic from climate change, oil drilling and mass fishing. A campaign about the Arctic was also conducted through photography in 1997. Greenpeace conducted observations in the Arctic and Antarctica to see how climate change affected ice melting and cracking. The results of these

observations were documented through photographs. The technique of photographing ice melt was used to illustrate environmental issues that are invisible to the general public in a medium that is easily accessible (Doyle, 2007). Media has become an important tool for Greenpeace in conducting public campaigns.

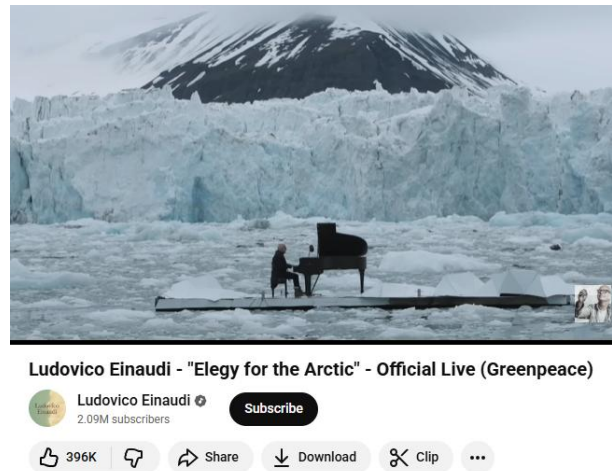


Fig 3. Lodovico Einaudi, playing music in the middle of a melting arctic ice (Youtube, 2016)

Greenpeace has guidelines for conducting digital campaigns. Greenpeace USA has released tools for running digital campaigns. In its digital campaigns, Greenpeace also emphasizes digital organization (Greenpeace USA, 2020). This means that real-world connections are still necessary, and social media platforms should be used to take action. Media platforms are used to overcome the difficulties of meeting in person due to distance or scheduling issues. Therefore, offline connections are also necessary for a digital campaign. Social media is not only used for consolidation, but also for campaigns. Social media is used to inspire individuals around the world to get involved in environmental protection (Sharma et al., 2024; Vu et al., 2021). Some of the methods used by Greenpeace in its digital campaigns include petitions and narratives that engage the digital community. In addition, Greenpeace also contacts the relevant parties directly to fulfill their demands, supported by the public. However, Greenpeace also understands that change can only be achieved through pressure from thousands to millions of individuals. Millions of human voices can achieve meaningful victories. Therefore, Greenpeace relies heavily on the support of the digital community and the public to win the narrative of saving the environment, including rejecting the Raja Ampat mine in Indonesia.

Raja Ampat is the world's best tourist destination. Raja Ampat has abundant biodiversity. A report from an international conservation agency states that the waters of Raja Ampat are home to around 75% of the world's marine species (Raja Ampat Geopark, n.d.). The sea and land area covering 4.6 million hectares is home to 540 types of coral, more than 1.600 species of fish, 47 types of mammals and 274 types of birds (Raja Ampat Geopark, n.d.). Its surface features many white sandy beaches scattered throughout the archipelago. Added to this are the views of high cliffs and tropical forests inhabited by cenderawasih birds, a rare species known as birds of paradise. In addition to nature, the culture of the Raja Ampat archipelago is also another interesting aspect. There are traditional dances, Sinole food made from sago, and Arborek's signature pandan leaf weaving, which has been passed down from generation to generation. There are also historical relics, World War II sites, and caves with ancient human hand paintings scattered throughout various regions of Raja Ampat (Hafid, 2015; Kakisina, 2019). Raja Ampat holds great significance for tourists, conservationists, and local communities due to its natural beauty, biodiversity hotspot, and source of livelihood. This is why Raja Ampat is often referred to as the last paradise on Earth.

However, the beauty of Raja Ampat is threatened by nickel mining. Quoted from Kompas (Yewen & Hartik, 2025), according to Hari Suroto, a researcher at the Center for

Environmental Archaeology Research at the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), nickel exploration in the Raja Ampat Islands was first carried out by the Dutch between 1920 and 1958 during the colonial period. After leaving Indonesia, Dutch-owned mining companies were nationalized by Indonesia. From 1960 to 1982, PT Pacifik Nikel Indonesia, a foreign-owned company from the United States, continued nickel mining. In 1996-1998, there was a collaboration between PT Aneka Tambang (ANTAM), owned by Indonesia, and PT Broiling Hill Proprietary (BHP) from Australia. This collaboration gave birth to PT GAG Nikel, 75% of whose shares are owned by Asia Pacific Nickel, based in Australia, and 25% by PT ANTAM. PT GAG Nikel then conducted exploration from 1999 to 2002 and obtained an extension for exploration from 2006 to 2008. It conducted a feasibility study from 2008 to 2013, followed by the construction phase from 2015 to 2017 and production in 2018. Since November 30, 2017, PT GAG Nikel has entered the production phase and obtained a 30-year production permit from the Indonesian government. PT GAG Nikel has rights to 13,000 hectares. In 2009, PT GAG Nikel partnered with Golder Associates to assess the potential of nickel reserves, which are estimated at 171 million WMT (wet metric tons). Amidst the global spotlight on nickel, the nickel reserves in Raja Ampat certainly represent an attractive potential for economic gains.

The Raja Ampat Islands are surrounded by five nickel mining companies. These five companies are PT Anugerah Surya Pratama (ASP), PT Mulia Raymodn Perkasa (MRP), PT Kawei Sejahtera Mining (KSM), PT Nurham, and PT GAG Nikel. However, four of these companies have had their mining permits revoked by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. According to Greenpeace Indonesia (2025), the Indonesian government has issued a total of 16 mining permits, but only five are currently active, while 11 have been revoked. There are 12 location permits located in the geopark area. Nickel ore from Raja Ampat will be transported to the Weda Bay Industrial Park (IWIP) on Halmahera Island, North Maluku. This area will serve as a processing site for nickel and nickel steel, which will be used to supply nickel steel and electric vehicle battery components.

Nickel mining will have a significant impact on the beauty of Raja Ampat today. Raja Ampat is considered the last paradise, attracting 33,277 tourists in 2024 (Central Statistics Agency of Raja Ampat Regency, 2024). In 2024, Raja Ampat was also nominated as a world heritage site by UNESCO. However, the presence of mines could pose a problem for Raja Ampat. Even before large-scale nickel mining, Raja Ampat already had problems with the destruction of biodiversity and traditional livelihoods. This was due to population growth, which led to plastic waste and polluted water that was not processed, as well as an increase in soap residue in the sea (Greenpeace Indonesia, 2025b). The waste came from cruise ships, resorts, lodgings, and the local community. At the end of 2024, wastewater caused more severe toxic cyanobacterial growth and coral bleaching. White et al. (2022) in their paper proposed the development of community-based marine conservation areas as a conservation strategy facilitated by NGOs.

In practice, it is necessary to connect with policy makers, namely the government, to produce knowledge for local communities about the importance of the environment and conservation areas, provide access to resources, facilitate community involvement, and increase community capacity. However, amid the environmental problems in Raja Ampat, nickel mining has become a new problem. Not only on the environment but also on the surrounding community. Nickel mining has an impact on human and wildlife health (Levická & Orliková, 2024), environmental damage (Bartzas et al., 2021), the livelihoods of local communities (Karsadi & Aso, 2023; Syahputra, 2024), and violations of workers' rights (Geurts et al., 2025). Greenpeace Indonesia explains in its petition that if nickel mining in Raja Ampat is not stopped, the following will be lost (Greenpeace Indonesia, 2025a): Endemic species of Raja Ampat such as the Waigeo lizard, peacock mantis shrimp, spotted carpet shark, and others. Manta rays that should be protected from extinction. Various species of coral reefs. 2,500 species of fish, 47 species of mammals, and 274 species of birds. Hundreds of small islands that are the main attraction of Raja Ampat. Ecotourism activities based on the local economy that have the potential to contribute to increased regional income. A source of livelihood for local communities in Raja Ampat. This is why Greenpeace

Indonesia rejects nickel mining in Raja Ampat because of its significant impact on the environment and local communities.

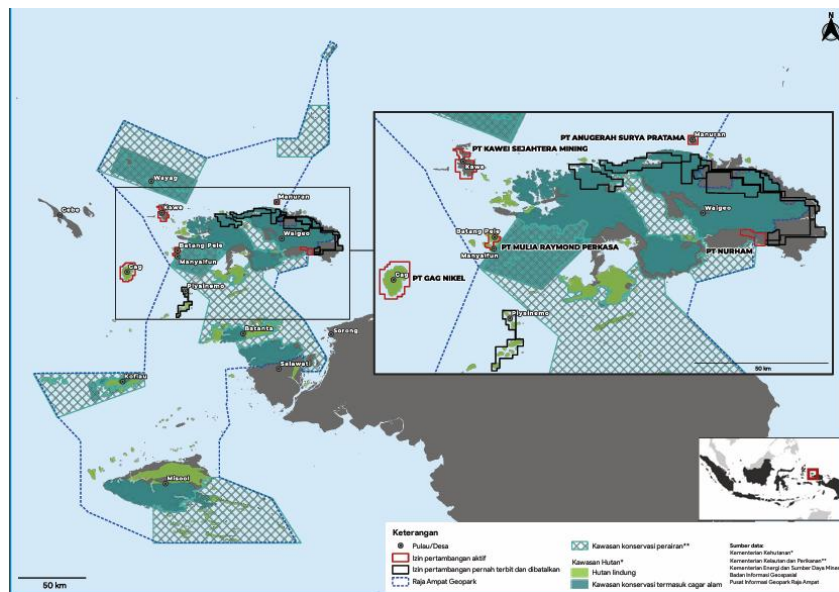


Fig. 4. Map showing the distribution of active and previously active nickel mining permits in Raja Ampat (Greenpeace, 2025)

Greenpeace Indonesia conducts various campaigns, both direct action and digital campaigns. Greenpeace Indonesia first took direct action at the Indonesia Critical Minerals Expo & Conference 2025 at the Pullman Hotel, Jakarta, on June 3, 2025, which was attended by industry professionals, government officials, experts, and representatives from 55 countries. The event was used by Greenpeace Indonesia to campaign against nickel mining in Raja Ampat with the slogan "Save Raja Ampat." Greenpeace activists were eventually expelled by security personnel. This was not the first time Greenpeace Indonesia had staged a direct action in the middle of an event attended by important figures.

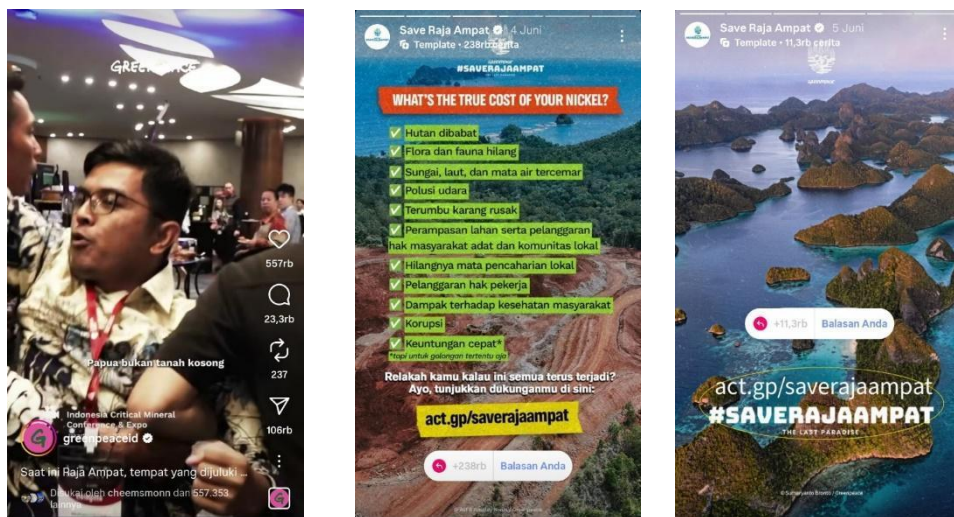


Fig. 5 (a) Greenpeace Indonesia's live action video at the Critical Minerals Expo & Conference 2025; (b) Instagram Story Template #SaveRajaAmpat 1; (c) Instagram Story Template #SaveRajaAmpat (Greenpeace Indonesia Instagram Account, 2025)

In 2023, Greenpeace Indonesia protested against a new coal-fired power plant in North Kalimantan during a general meeting of shareholders of PT Alamtri Resources Indonesia, Tbk, formerly known as PT Adaro Energy Indonesia, Tbk. Following the direct action at the

Indonesia Critical Minerals Expo & Conference 2025, Greenpeace Indonesia immediately reported their expulsion through a video uploaded on Instagram on the same day, June 3, 2025. The post attracted the attention of Instagram users, with a total of 557,000 likes, 17,900 comments, and 106,000 stories uploaded by Instagram users (last updated on October 20, 2025). In addition to the Instagram video, Greenpeace Indonesia also created two story templates that were reposted by 238,000 and 11,300 Instagram accounts (last updated on October 20, 2025). Both story templates contained information about the impact of nickel mining and links to a petition against Raja Ampat mining. The total number of petitions collected by Greenpeace Indonesia exceeds 60,000. This approach actively engages the digital community in opposing the Raja Ampat mine.

3.2 The voice of the digital community rejects mining in Raja Ampat

Social movements arise because of the existence of certain problems and situations. Tarrow (2022) explains that social movements arise because, first, there are open political opportunities, such as weakened authorities or divided power elites. Second, there are networks and organizations that enable mobilization. Third, there is a common identity. Tarrow explains that digital platforms also facilitate the emergence of social movements. Meanwhile, according to Porta (2020), social movements can arise due to several factors. First, dissatisfaction with institutions and structures. Second, the existence of political opportunities to demand something, such as an economic crisis, the existence of new spaces for action or opportunities to move, etc. Third, the existence of shared feelings among individuals, which then form organizations or networks, followed by collective action. Fourth, the weakening of power structures. Fifth, the spread of ideas from other countries and their adaptation to local situations. Finally, the use of technology, media, and the internet. Porta and Tarrow mention that digital platforms are a means for social movements to emerge.

In mobilizing a movement, resources are needed. McCarthy & Zald (1977), with their Resource Mobilization Theory, argue that resources are needed for sustainability. These resources include material resources (financial and physical), human resources (members, volunteers, activists, and experts), and social-organizational resources (leadership structures and community or organizational networks). In the context of digital movements, there is a need for content production equipment, social media administrators, influencers, content creators, online communities, and cross-platform coalitions. With these resources, digital movements can be more effective.

The advancement of social media has created a way for young people to get involved in global issues, such as the environment (Pandit et al., 2025). In the digital world, information moves quickly through transnational networks, ultimately making it easy for the entire digital community to receive information from various parts of the world. However, this digital movement also has challenges, namely clicktivism fatigue and limited internet sites. Digital activism faces specific challenges and opportunities when the movement is non-hierarchical, decentralized, and the activists only communicate digitally (Li et al., 2021). Therefore, there is need for integration between digital and direct action. This makes it easier for individuals to get involved and continue campaigning on environmental issues until it becomes its own algorithm on social media.

Digital activism as a tool and intermediary is supported by an increasing number of internet users. In 2024, the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) reported that there were 221 million internet users in Indonesia. In 2023, there were 215 million internet users, and in 2022, there were 210 million. Internet users in Indonesia in 2024 are dominated by Gen Z at 34.40%, followed by millennials at 34.40%, then Gen X, Post Gen Z, baby boomers, and pre-boomers. Internet users are predominantly from urban areas, contributing 69.5%. The year-on-year increase has also made Indonesia the country with the fourth-largest number of internet users in the world. With the number of internet users dominated by Gen Z and from urban areas, there is potential for the emergence of digital activism.

Digital activism in Indonesia has become one of the options for voicing criticism of the government. Digital activism has become a new space for voicing opinions, ideas, and demands (Zur & Hatuka, 2023). This is especially true amid the narrowing of civil space, which is closely linked to the violent dispersal of mass actions by the authorities (Aspinal & Mayangsari, 2025), threats to activists (Setiawan & Tomsa, 2023), and government crafted and used new legal tools to ban NGOs without prior judicial process (Mietzner, 2020). Research presented by the Tifa Foundation in 2022 states that digital activism in Indonesia grew from 2016 to 2021, from 114 to 1,548 digital campaigns. The peak of digital campaigns was in 2019-2021. During those years, many issues arose and became moments for the people's movement in Indonesia to rise up. Famous hashtags during 2019-2021 were *#ReformasiDikorupsi*, *#MosiTidakPercaya*, *#CabutOmnibusLaw*, and *#SahKanRUUPKS*. The digital movement in Indonesia has become a new style of activism.

Digital activism also made the Raja Ampat issue go viral on social media. The *#SaveRajaAmpat* movement appeared on various social media platforms such as Instagram, X, Facebook, and TikTok. The hashtag *#SaveRajaAmpat* appeared after Greenpeace Indonesia uploaded a video. The digital community welcomed this and enthusiastically participated in the *#SaveRajaAmpat* campaign. Individuals, organizations, communities, and NGOs also joined in the digital action by reposting or creating their own educational content. Even celebrities and political figures were actively involved in rejecting nickel mining in Raja Ampat. Celebrity involvement in digital movements can expand the Movement (Shahin & Hou, 2025). Each individual and group had their own motivations. These differing motivations reflect the perspectives and identities of the digital community. However, these differing perspectives and identities can unite in opposing nickel mining. Different identities can come together in one line, each with their own motivations, to oppose the same issue.

There are several key motivations for rejecting nickel mining in Raja Ampat. The digital community has diverse identities and backgrounds. There are five main findings that led the digital community to get involved in the *#SaveRajaAmpat* campaign, namely concern for the environment; frustration and disappointment with the state, government, and oligarchy; solidarity with the Papuan people; a spirit of resistance against capitalism; and a desire to travel and enjoy the natural beauty of Raja Ampat. Each of these motivations has its own meaning, which will be discussed one by one.

Table 1. Motivations digital community rejects mining in Raja Ampat

No	Key motivations	Main idea
1	Environment	The destruction of beautiful nature and loss of biodiversity in the Raja Ampat Islands.
2	State and the Oligarchy	The state, government, and oligarchy are considered greedy because they are willing to destroy the environment for the benefit of their own groups.
3	Solidarity with The Papuan People	Papua's nature continues to be destroyed, yet the Papuan people remain in poverty.
4	Capitalims	Extractive industries within the capitalist system will only take natural resources on a large scale and ignore the environmental and social impacts.
5	Tourism	The desire to see the beautiful Raja Ampat Islands.

3.2.1 Environment

Environmental issues were the initial trigger for the *#SaveRajaAmpat* movement. Greenpeace Indonesia was the first to explain the environmental impact of nickel mining in Raja Ampat. This sparked active involvement from many members of the digital community. Deforestation is an inevitable consequence. Meanwhile, global temperatures continue to rise. Deforestation will exacerbate the existing climate crisis (Lorenz et al., 2021). People have often complained about unpredictable weather and extreme heat. Therefore, environmental issues are easily understood by the digital community because they

understand the importance of protecting the environment and feel the impact of the climate crisis. The digital community regrets the destruction of the beautiful nature and loss of biodiversity in the Raja Ampat Islands. Raja Ampat has abundant beauty and biodiversity. This has encouraged the digital community to get involved in voicing #SaveRajaAmpat and inviting other digital communities to join in. Some have also uploaded their own videos with educational content and posters with the aim of campaigning for #SaveRajaAmpat.

"One by one, Indonesia's natural beauty is being destroyed for the sake of short-term gain by greedy people. Let's join the #SaveRajaAmpat movement, guys" (User X, June 4, 2025).

"Seeing the current state of Raja Ampat, it reminds me of this... (shows a picture from the movie Moana, which also tells the story of a beautiful island that was destroyed) [shows a sad emoticon] So evil, so evil, such beautiful islands had to be destroyed????!!" (User X, June 6, 2025).

"Let's protect Indonesia's incredibly beautiful nature. Blue seas, green forests, and biodiversity are our shared treasures. Raja Ampat, with its extraordinary beauty, is a heritage that we must preserve. Save Raja Ampat, a little paradise that we must care for together for a better future. Let's work together to protect and preserve its beauty so that it remains eternal" (User X, June 9, 2025).

In addition to motivations stemming from environmental issues, there are also those who continue to link it to several other contexts. In a tweet on social media platform X, some linked it to the poor conditions of Indonesian society. A World Bank report states that the poverty rate in Indonesia will reach 60.3% in 2024 (Hannany & Priambodo, 2025). Meanwhile, Central Statistics Agency recorded 8.57% in the same year (Central Statistics Agency, 2025). The difference is due to the different poverty line standards used. However, Indonesia's poverty rate of 8.57% is the lowest in history. In addition, some people associate this with groups that are hungry for wealth due to the opening of mines. Some even directly criticized Bahlil Lahadalia, Indonesia's Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources. Environmental issues can be linked to other related contexts.

"The environment is being destroyed but the people remain poor, and now they want to do it again. It's truly barbaric!!! #SaveRajaAmpat" (User X, June 5, 2025).

"It's sad that Indonesia's natural beauty is being exploited by people who are hungry for power and wealth, and the impact is felt by the people and will certainly threaten the surrounding natural ecosystem [sad emoticon]" (User X, June 5, 2025).

"Raja Ampat, the last paradise destroyed by nickel mining. Look at this @bahlillahadalia. Beautiful nature was suddenly destroyed by mining. [crying emoticon]. Revoke the permit, don't just suspend it" (User X, June 6, 2025).

Individual posts about Raja Ampat also have their own influence. Each upload or tweet on social media by individual accounts has a fairly wide reach, with some receiving hundreds to thousands of reposts. In addition, there are comments that support or criticize because of the fear of missing out or FOMO. Support through comments on each post has different motivations, as described earlier, such as the environment, country, oligarchy, and tourism. Environmental issues are the most frequently used motivation by the digital community. This environmental motivation is carried across generations in the digital community, including Gen Z, millennials, and Gen X. Their backgrounds in social media also vary, with some posting about their hobbies, idols, and personal lives unrelated to politics, while others are active in commenting on the national political situation. Environmental motivation is a cross-generational issue and cannot be based on identity. In tweets on X,

environmental issues are also most often raised with keywords such as the beauty of biodiversity and pollution.

3.2.2 *The state and the oligarchy*

The state is responsible for nickel mining in Raja Ampat. Through the Prabowo-Gibran administration and Bahlil as Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, the state is responsible for nickel mining in Raja Ampat, the last paradise on earth. In addition to the state, a new concept has emerged, namely oligarchy. According to Winters (2011) oligarchy is a form of politics that originates from enormous material wealth, whereby wealthy actors greatly determine political power. Meanwhile, according to Hadiz & Robinson (2004) Click or tap here to enter text. In the Indonesian context, oligarchy is a system of power relations between big capital, political or bureaucratic elites, and the state. Oligarchy enables the concentration of wealth and authority and efforts to protect that concentration of wealth. According to Hadiz, oligarchy emerged in Indonesia during the New Order era, when there was collaboration between the political bureaucracy and big business. Oligarchy itself became familiar to the Indonesian digital community after the release of the film *Sexy Killers* (2019) by Watchdoc Documentary. The film explains the relationship between the political elite and coal entrepreneurs for the economic interests of their group (Wibawa & Wardana, 2022). After the film's release, the terms oligarchy and state often became synonymous when it came to economic interests that damaged the environment.

The state, the government, and the oligarchy became the targets of the digital community. The state, the government, and the oligarchy were considered the source of the problem of mining in Raja Ampat. These three actors are considered greedy because they are willing to destroy the environment for the sake of their own group's interests. One community account, Logos. Id, also explicitly mentions oligarchy as the root of the problem and that it must be destroyed to save the ecology. Previously, Logos ID also created a thread about nickel mining in Raja Ampat. The digital community's frustration is directed at the state, the government, and the oligarchy because of the threat to Raja Ampat.

"Save Raja Ampat! Destroy the oligarchy, save the ecology!" (Logos ID, June 5, 2025).

"If this tweet appears on your timeline, please take a moment to sign this petition to protect Raja Ampat from the greed of the nickel mining oligarchy <http://Act.gp/saverajaampat> #SaveRajaAmpat #SavePapua #TheLastParadise" (X User, June 5, 2025).

"Who knows how much natural resources have been destroyed to open up mining areas in this country, only to end up enriching oligarchs and officials through corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

We should stop this #SaveRajaAmpat" (The_RedsIndo, June 6, 2025)

There are also those who criticize Bahlil Lahadalia as a minister. As Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Bahlil often makes controversial policies and statements, such as eliminating 3 kg gas retailers, claiming investment in the National Capital (IKN), accusing foreign parties of involvement in the agrarian conflict in Rempang, and completing his doctorate at the University of Indonesia in a short period of time, namely 1 year and 8 months. This has led many in the digital community to directly criticize Bahlil as the responsible party.

"Save Raja Ampat from Bahlil's greed for nickel mining #SaveRajaAmpat" (User X, June 3, 2025).

"Oh my god... Raja Ampat is already DESTROYED, but Bahlil still dares to accuse foreign parties of FAILING TO IMPLEMENT DOWNSTREAMING? This was predictable; Bahlil isn't

happy with the #SaveRajaAmpat hashtag. So which is more important, Raja Ampat tourism, recognized worldwide for its beauty, or nickel downstreaming? Seriously....." (X User, June 5, 2025).

There are also those who question the conscience and morality of the government. One Indonesian celebrity criticized the country's decision to mine Raja Ampat. He made a video stating that the profits from nickel mining do not improve the welfare of the Papuan people. His main point of view criticizes the country in the context of ethics and morality. In addition, there is also an X account that links the government to the context of religion, encouraging other members of the digital community to pray for the country's leaders to be more trustworthy to the people. Criticism based on the morals and ethics of leaders is also one of the bases for criticizing policies issued by the state. Motivation due to frustration with the state, the government, and the oligarchy is the main motivation after the environment. Accounts that voice #SaveRajaAmpat due to frustration or disappointment with the state, government, or oligarchy come from politically literate circles based on daily posts. Digital social movements also emerge due to accumulated frustration over previous issues with stakeholders.

3.2.3 Solidarity with the Papuan people

"Papua bukan tanah kosong" (Papua is not an empty land). This slogan has also become a rallying cry for the digital community to show solidarity with the Papuan people. Several sources explain that Papua has not achieved prosperity despite its natural resources being exploited (Chairullah, 2022; Yoman, 2013). This has prompted the digital community to show solidarity with the Papuan people against the exploitation of their natural resources for the economic interests of a handful of people.

"Raja Ampat is not just empty land that can be exploited. Indigenous communities have voiced their opposition. They are not anti-development, but anti-seizure and destruction. MINING ONLY PROVIDES TEMPORARY PROFITS BUT CAUSES PERMANENT DAMAGE!! #SaveRajaAmpat #SavePapua" (User X, June 5, 2025).

"This video is far more valuable than the leader's image video (showing a video of a Papuan youth describing the condition of the Papuan forest being cut down). Papua has contributed a lot of its natural wealth. It contributes gold. It contributes oxygen. But its rulers contribute greed, avarice, and cause the people to suffer. #SaveRajaAmpat #SaveRajaAmpat" (User X, June 5, 2025).

"Poor Papuan people, Freeport didn't give them the mining profits, now Raja Ampat is about to be taken away. Greed is rampant. We #SaveRajaAmpat #SavePapua" (User X, June 6, 2025).

The Papuan community is at the forefront of the opposition to Raja Ampat. The Papuan community held demonstrations to reject mining in Raja Ampat on May 26, June 10 and 12, 2025. These actions took place in different locations, such as the Raja Ampat Regent's office, the West Papua Governor's office, and Jayapura. These actions also became part of the digital campaign on social media.

3.2.4 Capitalism

The narrative of capitalism is not particularly significant in the #SaveRajaAmpat campaign, but it remains a motivation for the digital community to reject mining in Raja Ampat. The capitalist system not only exploits the proletariat or laborers, but also destroys the environment. This is because the logic of capitalism is to accumulate as much profit as possible, and the environment becomes a victim of massive resource extraction for the sake

of profit accumulation (Magdoff & Foster, 2011). Capitalism and environmental destruction due to industrial expansion are inseparable.

Nickel has become the focus of global attention. Nickel is the solution for making electric vehicle batteries. Electric cars are needed to replace fossil fuels that are not environmentally friendly (Henckens, 2024). However, Marx (2022) criticizes the use of electric cars, arguing that the use of private electric cars will not solve environmental problems. This is also in line with the rejection of nickel mining as a raw material for electric cars. Extractive industries in the capitalist system will only take natural resources on a large scale and ignore the environmental and social impacts. Although few, there are still members of the digital community who are motivated by a spirit of resistance against capitalism to reject the Raja Ampat nickel mine.

"Save Kendeng!, Save Kinipan!, Save Wadas!, Save Sangihe! and many more... again and again... we still have to shout Save Raja Ampat! The government has not learned its lesson. Destructive extractive economies are still being carried out..." (User X, June 6, 2025).

3.2.5 Tourism

The beauty of Raja Ampat makes the desire to enjoy its nature a motivation for some digital communities. In the digital world, not everyone is an activist in the real world. Some of them live their lives without paying attention to the economic and political situation because, by identity, they belong to a group that is not economically disadvantaged. For these people, tourism is a way of life. The news that Raja Ampat will be damaged by mining has prompted them to voice their opposition to mining. This is because they want to see the beautiful Raja Ampat archipelago.

"My FYP also contains Save Raja Ampat. This is my wishlist, please don't ruin it yet. Sometimes I wonder, why doesn't God punish those who are so cruel :) I'm thinking about the animals" (User X, June 4, 2025).

"Please don't ruin this beautiful island. It's one of my dream destinations for my honeymoon. [crying emoticon] #SaveRajaAmpat" (User X, June 5, 2025).

However, this motivation was met with pros and cons. The group that voiced #SaveRajaAmpat because of their motivation to criticize the state and show solidarity with the Papuan people felt that the motivation for tourism did not care about the Papuan people, who were the main victims. This resulted in horizontal conflicts between individuals (citizens) in the #SaveRajaAmpat digital campaign. Social movements in the digital world cannot be limited in who can join. Therefore, narrative wars can also occur even among activists. The digital movement can attract anyone to get involved because it is easy to join, but there are other challenges.

3.3 How effective are digital campaigns?

Greenpeace uses social media effectively. Social media is used to spread campaigns, raise environmental awareness, and provide the latest news on environmental issues around the world. In this era of digital technology, social media has become a tool for connecting and influencing people (Martoredjo, 2023). Greenpeace also believes that online activism has changed the world, with hashtags, petitions, and posts becoming more influential (Lawson, 2020). Hashtags are a way to attract attention and link content across social media platforms with catchy phrases (Kumar et al., 2022). This impresses and attracts digital citizens, which can make them learn and get involved in spreading the hashtag.

Although digital campaigns can spread quickly, they cannot last long. Manuel Castells also explains in his Network Society theory that digital movements are effective in the digital age because they are based on horizontal networks and spread through

communication networks. Every day in the digital world has its own trends. On social media, every day shows which hashtags are being talked about. Each social media account belongs entirely to the individual, who can post other narratives at any time, whether about their personal life or their hobbies. This is what makes digital campaigns only last for a short time (Cooper, 2023). Castells states that in order to maintain the effectiveness and sustainability of the digital movement, it is necessary to transform the online space into offline action (Castells, 2015). Therefore, without the transformation of the movement, digital campaigns often end without any meaningful victory.

Digital campaigns in Indonesia are very difficult to sustain. In Indonesia in 2025, there were many controversial policies such as tax increases, blocking inactive accounts for 3 months, revising the TNI Law, increasing the salaries of the House of Representatives, banning the sale of 3 kg LPG gas at retailers, and many more. These controversial policies angered the public in the digital world, which ultimately led to the policies being revoked. This is called viral-based policy, where policies are not researched but immediately announced to the public, and if rejected, they will be revoked. However, not all revoked policies are in line with the wishes of the public.

In the case of Raja Ampat, only four companies had their mining permits revoked, and one company was only asked to temporarily cease operations. In September 2025, PT GAG Nikel resumed operations. This situation escaped the attention of the digital community because they felt they had achieved a temporary victory with their motivation. Victory is a factor in the cessation of a movement (Tarrow, 2022). Moreover, there were many other distracting issues that shifted the anger of the digital community to other issues. In August, there was widespread coverage of the death of an online motorcycle taxi driver who was hit by a police officer during a protest against the increase in the salaries of members of the House of Representatives. This case also led to a new campaign, #ResetIndonesia, due to the many issues that arose in August, including the rejection of the Raja Ampat mine. However, these issues also died down in September. Distractions and shifting issues make it difficult for digital campaigns in Indonesia to be sustained.

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4. Conclusions

The development of social media can be used to voice aspirations. Social media has become a space for people to engage in activism. Greenpeace Indonesia voiced #SaveRajaAmpat to reject nickel mining in the archipelago through social media. The voices rejecting nickel mining in Raja Ampat echoed on social media as they were voiced by many

accounts. However, the movement only lasted briefly in early June 2025. Digital campaigns have the consequence of only lasting a short time due to distractions or other issues taking precedence. If too much focus is placed on digital campaigns, change cannot be fully realized. Policy makers will only issue statements or policies that appear to meet the demands of the public but do not actually solve the problem. Therefore, digital movements must go hand in hand with direct action, especially by the affected communities. In addition, the opening perspective can use motivations that are easily accepted, but gradually the perspective in a movement must be systemic, such as the state and capitalism. This is because the group that voices #SaveRajaAmpat and is motivated by frustration with the state and capitalism tends to always be involved in any issue and continues to voice other issues. Given these conditions, it is a way for digital campaigns to continue with a systemic perspective but with various issues because the problem remains the same, namely the state and capitalism.

This research is limited to a single case study of the #SaveRajaAmpat movement, focusing on the digital world and based on secondary data sources. The research period was limited to July–September 2025, when the #SaveRajaAmpat movement began until mining activities were permitted again. Researchers focusing on movements can observe in the future whether the movement to against mining in Raja Ampat arises again and what methods it uses, or conduct further research by collecting data through direct interviews with activists, the government, and the Papuan people living in Raja Ampat. Additionally, other researchers can also study various digital movements in Indonesia that coincide with direct movements such as #ResetIndonesia or other movements.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Alfiatul Khairiyah, M.A., an independent researcher and the author's wife, for her valuable support, insightful contributions, and continuous encouragement throughout the research process. Special appreciation is also extended for her dedication and expertise, which have been instrumental in maintaining the academic rigor and quality of this work.

Author Contribution

The author M.A.T, contributed to the literature search, interpretation, writing, and proofreading of the manuscript. The author have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Ethical Review Board Statement

Not available.

Informed Consent Statement

Not available.

Data Availability Statement

Not available.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI Use

This research did not use AI.

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