

A LANDSCAPE 360 OCCASIONAL FACT SHEET

The 2026 Season So Far

Indonesia, January 1 to August 26

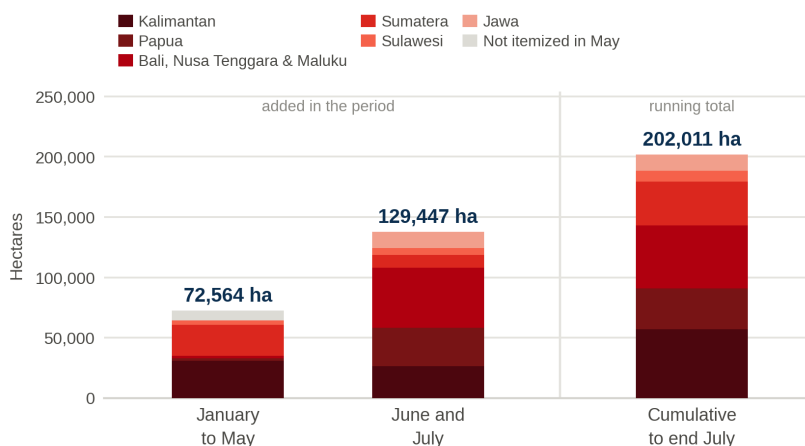


Figure 1. Burned area added during 2026, by region, hectares. The first two bars are increments between successive published vintages of the SiPongi register: January to May, 72,564 hectares, and June and July together, 129,447 hectares, of which July alone is 94,545. The third bar is the cumulative year-to-date total at the end of July. August is not shown: the register had not been updated for it at the time of writing, and the month is running at high hotspot density, so its increment will be substantial. No net bar is drawn: across thirteen provinces and three successive vintages there was no downward revision, so the published series carries no recovery dimension. Source: SIPONGI KEMENHUT (Kementerian Kehutanan, the Ministry of Forestry) burned-area register.



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Where the Season Stands

Indonesia recorded 202,010.96 hectares of burned land in January to July 2026 in the official register held by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Over the same seven months that is 1.47 times the 137,007 hectares of 2019 and 2.17 times the 92,924 of 2023, the two worst recent seasons.

July did most of the damage, 94,545 hectares against June's 34,901. Kalimantan leads the year at 57,081 hectares, then Bali, Nusa Tenggara and Maluku at 52,347 and Sumatera at 36,048. Riau's first half, 15,477.9 hectares, is its worst since 2019 and seventeen times 2025; 92 percent of it is peat.

Seven-month totals must not be read against full-year totals. 2019 ended at 1,649,258 hectares and 2023 at 1,161,193, yet only 328,724 had been registered nationally by the end of August 2019, a fifth of the eventual year. The peak falls in September and October, and 2026 is ahead of 2019 at the same date. The question is not whether this is a bad year but how far the coming curve runs.

Hotspots Are Not Hectares

A hotspot is a thermal anomaly in a satellite pixel, not a fire. One fire burning six days across three pixels is eighteen detections, and a gas flare or hot bare ground registers too. Counts also move with overpass timing and cloud.

The confidence filter matters more than any other choice. August 25 reads as 12,783 detections at all confidence levels and 1,153 at high confidence, an elevenfold gap from one setting. Figure 2 shows both for that reason. Comparison across years or agencies is meaningless unless the sensor set and threshold are stated and held constant, and a hotspot count must never sit beside a hectare figure as though the two were comparable.

Who Is Lighting Them

Seventy-two people have been named as suspects and not one company. The gap between what the enforcement record covers and what actually burned is the clearest signal in the 2026 data.

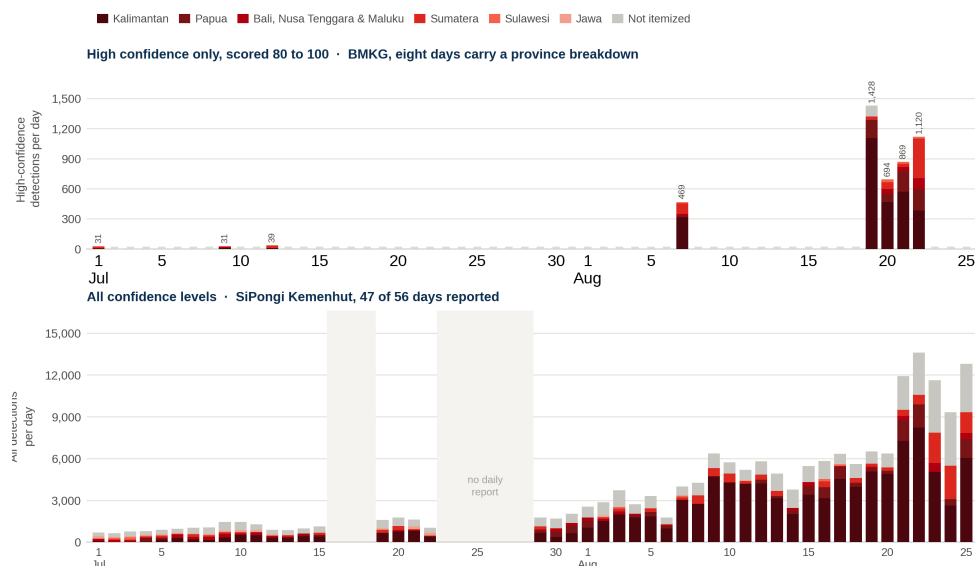


Figure 2. Daily hotspot detections, July 1 to August 25, 2026. The upper panel is high-confidence detections only; the lower panel is all confidence levels, same colours and regions, with grey the residual not itemized by province in the daily bulletins. Across 47 reported days the all-confidence series totals 178,718 detection-days: Kalimantan 55.8 percent, Sumatera 7.8, Papua 6.4, Bali, Nusa Tenggara and Maluku 3.2, Jawa 1.1, Sulawesi 0.6, unallocated 25.2. The strongest day was August 22 at 13,591; the high-confidence peak was 1,153 on August 25, 9.0 percent of that day's total. Source: SIPONGI KEMENHUT daily bulletins and BMKG (the national meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency).

The Prosecuted Fraction

That most of this year's fires were set on purpose is well supported for the share that reached a police file. By late August 2026, forces in nine regional commands had opened 89 *karhutla* cases — *kebakaran hutan dan lahan*, forest and peatland fires — and named 72 suspects, covering 1,006.67 hectares. Of 32 cases in Riau, only one was charged as negligence.

The method is consistent enough to have a name. The Riau police chief described a modus in which people enter a block carrying fishing tackle, *pura-pura memancing* (pretending to fish), and set the fire away from the road. On August 17 in Palangka Raya two men were arrested who admitted being paid to burn. Whoever paid them has not been named.

Where It Stops

Attribution ends at the individual. All 72 suspects are private persons. No corporation has been named as a criminal suspect. Asked by President Prabowo whether there was evidence against companies, the Riau police chief answered, "*Sampai saat ini belum ada, Pak*" ("There is none so far, sir").

The administrative track reads differently. The Minister of Environment reported roughly 85,000 hectares burned inside concessions and 335 companies flagged. Six have been sanctioned, covering 1,511.55 hectares, with one suspension and no revocations. PT TCP was sealed in August 2026 while still owing Rp 467.8 billion for a 2019 fire on the same concession.

Criminal files cover 1,007 hectares of the 202,011 that burned, half of one percent. Merauke in South Papua, the largest burned district in the country at 33,609 hectares, has no case at all.

Sources and method

Burned area: SIPONGI register, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forestry, provincial year-to-date endpoints retrieved August 13 and 18, 2026; national January to July total as stated by the Minister of Forestry. The register holds one cumulative figure per province, overwritten in place, so Figure 1's increments are differences between vintages.

Riau first half: Ministry of Forestry, BRIN (National Research and Innovation Agency) and Ministry of Environment, July 17, 2026. Hotspots: daily bulletins, 47 of 56 days, plus high-confidence province lists from BMKG. Enforcement: Polri (Indonesian National Police) and Ministry of Environment statements, July and August 2026. The register is revised upward over time.