



PRESS RELEASE
Release of Two Semi-Wild Orangutans
18 December 2018

Palangkaraya – The KSDAE Directorate General in collaboration with the Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation, on this day, 18 December 2018, will release two Bornean orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*) to the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR). Orangutans, Kika and Alba, will be released in the working area of the Section Management of Kasongan Region II National Park, Central Kalimantan.

Triawan Munaf, Head of the National Creative Economic Agency (BEKRAF), expresses appreciation and support for BEKRAF's vision of developing Indonesia into one of the world's economic powerhouses by 2030, and stresses that Indonesia must actively develop more economic initiatives. He acknowledges the great potential for orangutan and habitat conservation in supporting national development and economic progress. Even conservation activities, such as those carried out by the BOS Foundation in their working areas, can encourage positive collaboration with local economic stakeholders. The cooperation achieved through these conservation activities involves direct community participation; not just for economic profit, but with environmental preservation in mind. Economic initiatives like this clearly provide added value for the people of Indonesia.

Indra Exploitasia, Director of Biodiversity Conservation, representing the Directorate General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, appreciates this activity and notes that it corresponds with the Government's commitment to increasing wildlife populations in their natural habitats. According to current regulations, animals can be released back to their natural habitat provided they are in good physical health; the species has high genetic diversity; and that the release location is part of the original distribution area of the species to be released. Research conducted on the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park has proven that it is area in which orangutans historically ranged. Several stages of conservation are already being carried out – starting with the rescue of protected animals; the rehabilitation of orangutans by developing adaptive abilities and natural behaviours similar to that found among the wild population; and finally, the release. The Director of Biodiversity Conservation greatly appreciates those parties that support this orangutan conservation program, in particular the Head of the National Creative Economy Agency, the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), the TNBBBR Authority, the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government, the BOS Foundation, and other parties that have supported this release. Multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving multidisciplinary sciences, is required to create synergy among the various parties that are dedicated to this sustainable orangutan conservation program.

Sugianto Sabran, Governor of Central Kalimantan greeted Alba's return to TNBBBR and warmly welcomed the decision to keep Alba in Kalimantan and to return her to a natural habitat. Earlier this year, Governor Sabran emphasized that Alba is a valuable asset and icon of Central Kalimantan Province. While this decision to release Alba in the national park is different from the plan he was previously made aware of – which was to place Alba on a forested island – Governor Sabran believes that collectively, we can ensure that Alba will live wild and free in a real forest. Governor Sabran

reminded everyone to not just hope, but to work hard and support the conservation of Alba and other orangutans in Central Kalimantan Province, the state of Tambun Bungai.

Adib Gunawan, Head of Central Kalimantan BKSDA, welcomes this activity and stated that both female orangutans - Kika and Alba - were rescued by a Central Kalimantan BKSDA team. Kika was rescued on 18 February 2017, in Buntok, South Barito Regency, Central Kalimantan. She was five years old at the time, weighed 9.3 kilograms, and was still exhibiting wild behaviours. Alba was rescued by the Central Kalimantan BKSDA in collaboration with the BOS Foundation on 29 April 2017, in the village of Tanggirang, Kapuas Hulu Sub-District, Kapuas Regency, Central Kalimantan. Alba was around five years old at the time, weighed 8.3 kilograms, was exhibiting wild behaviours and firmly disliked humans. Alba's condition is very unique; she has white hair, blue irises, and red pupils (technical transparent pupils that show the colour of the red blood vessels in the retina inside the eye), and was determined to be albino.

Kika and Alba underwent rehabilitation at BOS Foundation's Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Central Kalimantan, and were declared ready for release based on their health and the release site location. Today's orangutan release will be carried out according to the proper procedures.

Heru Raharjo, Head of the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR) Authority, states that a joint study conducted with the BOS Foundation identified seven potential zones for orangutan reintroduction in the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park area of Central Kalimantan, spreading from the west towards the east. Two of the seven potential zones, which are located near the Bemban and Mahalat Rivers, have good access, and large rainforest and lowland areas, making them very suitable orangutan release sites. The area is spacious with natural boundaries, is a suitable habitat for monitoring, and is able to support a decent wild population. We estimate that the area can accommodate up to 200 orangutans. We also highly appreciate the strong support shown by surrounding communities.

Jamartin Sihite, BOS Foundation CEO, says that since the day she entered BOS Foundation's Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, Alba has shown significant improvement in terms of her physical condition. Alba has consistently displayed sound climbing skills and moves with ease around the branches, which are good indicators that she may be ready to live in the wild.

The decision to return Alba, the first albino orangutan ever to be recorded, back to the forest supports the government's – in this case the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's – commitment to protecting all of Indonesia's wildlife, including orangutans and their habitat. As the implementing partner for this release, the BOS Foundation endeavours to use all of their experience to support the government's plans, and make this release the most successful it possibly can be.

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