



Status of Environmental Indonesia 2025

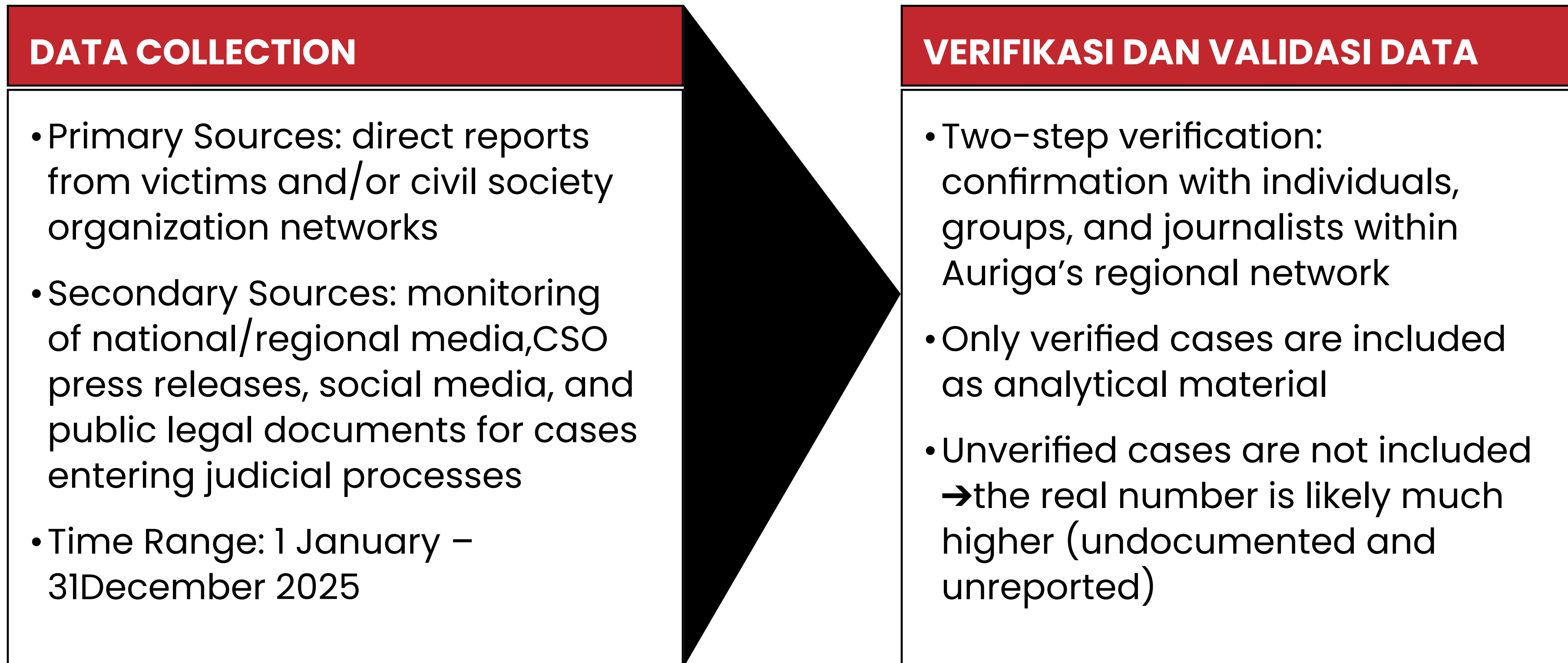
Resource Downstreaming
and the Escalation of
Threats and Violence

April, 2026

INTRODUCTION

- **John H. Knox** – *“without environmental defenders who are able to work safely, mechanisms for overseeing ecological damage will lose their front line.”*
- There is a paradoxical situation, where countries rich in natural resources often become countries with a high level of vulnerability for environmental defenders.
- In Indonesia, this condition is reflected in the trend of threats and violence against environmental defenders as a result of the acceleration of natural resource exploitation, unequal governance that allows corporations to exercise their power far beyond the supervisory function of the state.
- The transition of the governing regime still leaves a number of large-scale industrialization agendas for programs such as downstreaming of critical minerals, food and energy security, and other national strategic projects.
- These programs have the potential to expand conflicts with environmental defenders, especially local communities and indigenous peoples who depend on access to natural resources for their livelihoods.

METHODOLOGY

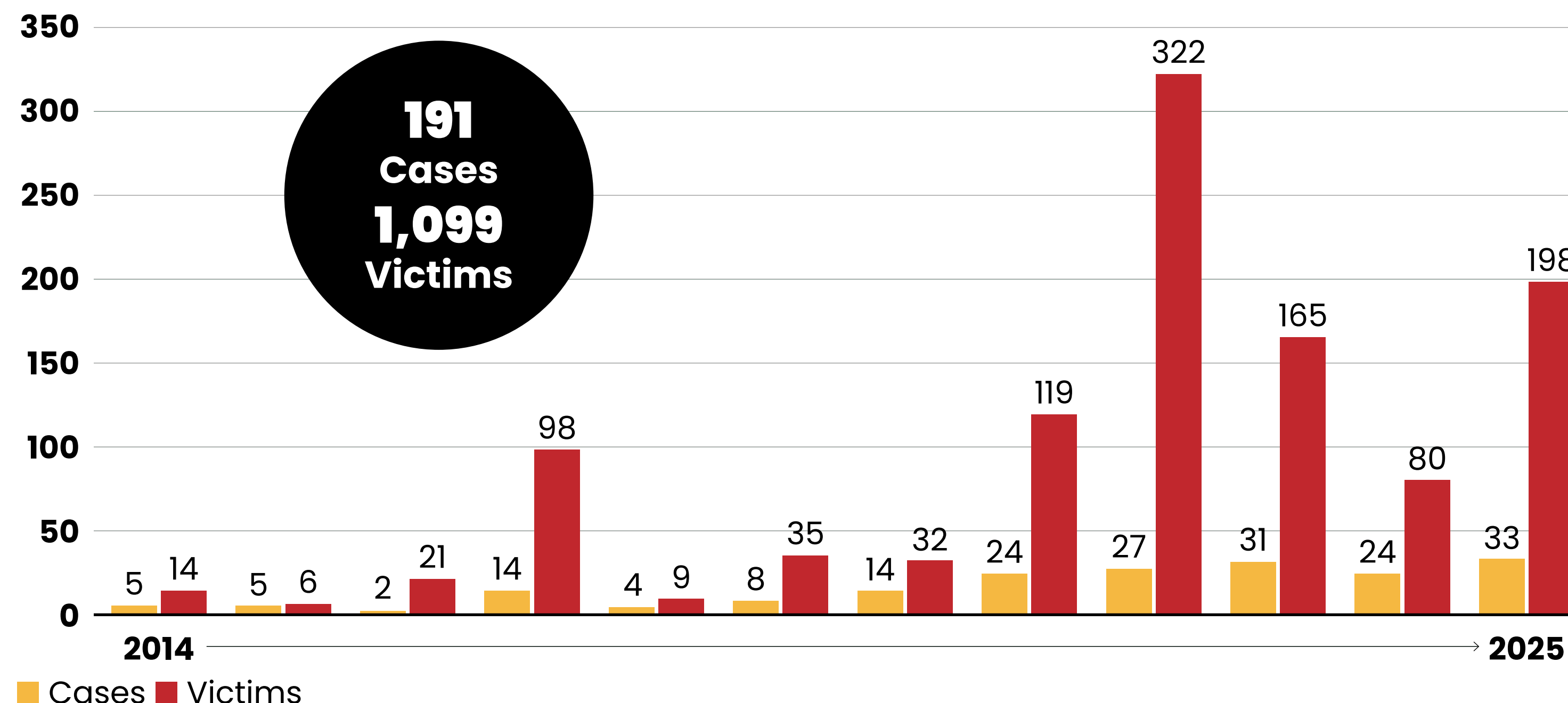


Definition of Environmental Defenders (Auriga version)

Any person, individually or in groups, voluntarily or professionally, protects Natural Resources from damage caused by large-scale business (mining, plantations, forest concessions), including indigenous leaders, farmers, fishers, activists, students, lawyers, journalists, scientists.

NUMBER OF CASES & VICTIMS

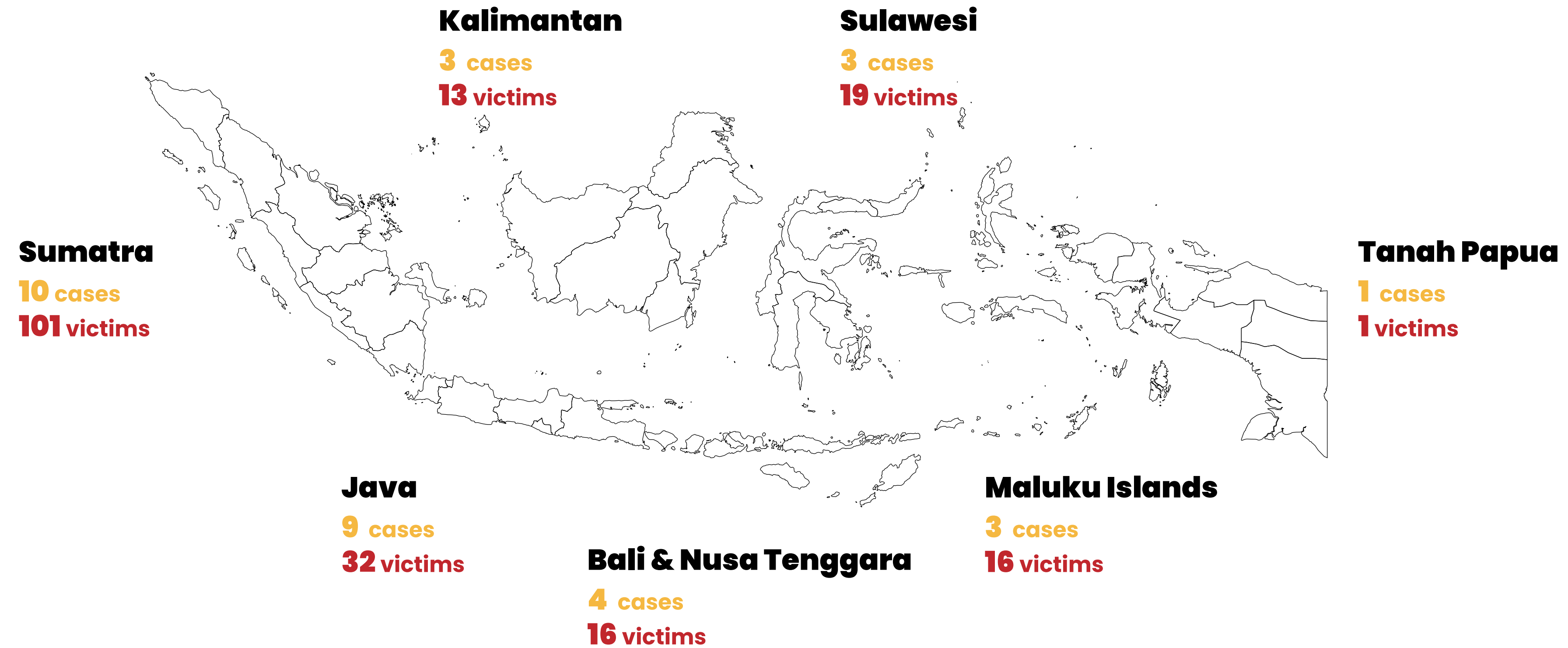
Trend of Threats and Violence against Environmental Defenders 2014–2025



Two main patterns of threats:

1. Individual threats targeting persons who hold strategic positions in environmental advocacy. For example, Bambang Hero who faced legal cases twice within one year;
2. Collective threats with a large number of victims. For example, the criminalization of 15 Cibetus residents, violence against 33 Sihaporas residents by PT TPL.

DISTRIBUTION OF THREATS AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS



THREATS BY SECTOR

33
Cases
198
Victims

17. Aceh

1 cases | 5 victims
Plantations(1)

3. North Sumatra

4 cases | 70 victims
Forestry (3), Plantations(1)

14. Riau

1 cases | 4 victims
Forestry (1)

7. Riau Island

1 cases | 3 victims
Tanah/Tanah Adat (1)

18. Bengkulu

1 cases | 5 victims
Plantations (1)

6. Bangka Belitung Island

1 cases | 1 victims
Mining & Energy (1)

10. Lampung

1 cases | 13 victims
Environment (1)

8. Banten

1 cases | 15 victims
Environment (1)

5. West Java

2 cases | 4 victims
Mining & Energy (1),
Forestry(1)

19. West Kalimantan

1 cases | 1 victims
Forestry (1)

15. Central Kalimantan

1 cases | 2 victims
Mining & Energy (1)

13. East Kalimantan

1 cases | 10 victims
Fisheries & Maritime (1)

11. North Sulawesi

1 cases | 14 victims
Plantations (1)

12. West Sulawesi

1 cases | 4 victims
Plantations (1)

9. Central Sulawesi

1 cases | 1 victims
Plantations (1)

4. North Maluku

1 cases | 2 victims
Mining & Energy (1)

16. South Maluku

2 cases | 14 victims
Mining & Energy (2)

21. South Papua

1 cases | 1 victims
Environment (1)

20. DKI Jakarta

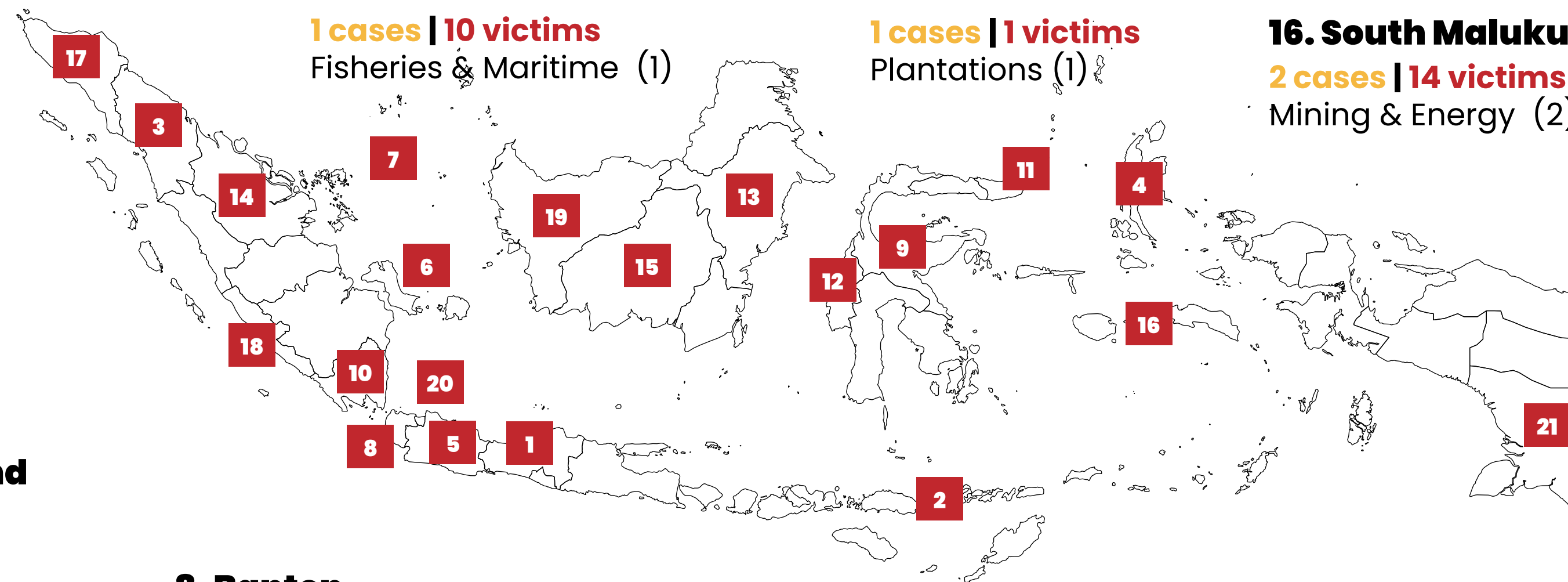
1 cases | 1 victims
Environment (1)

2. Nusa Tenggara Timur

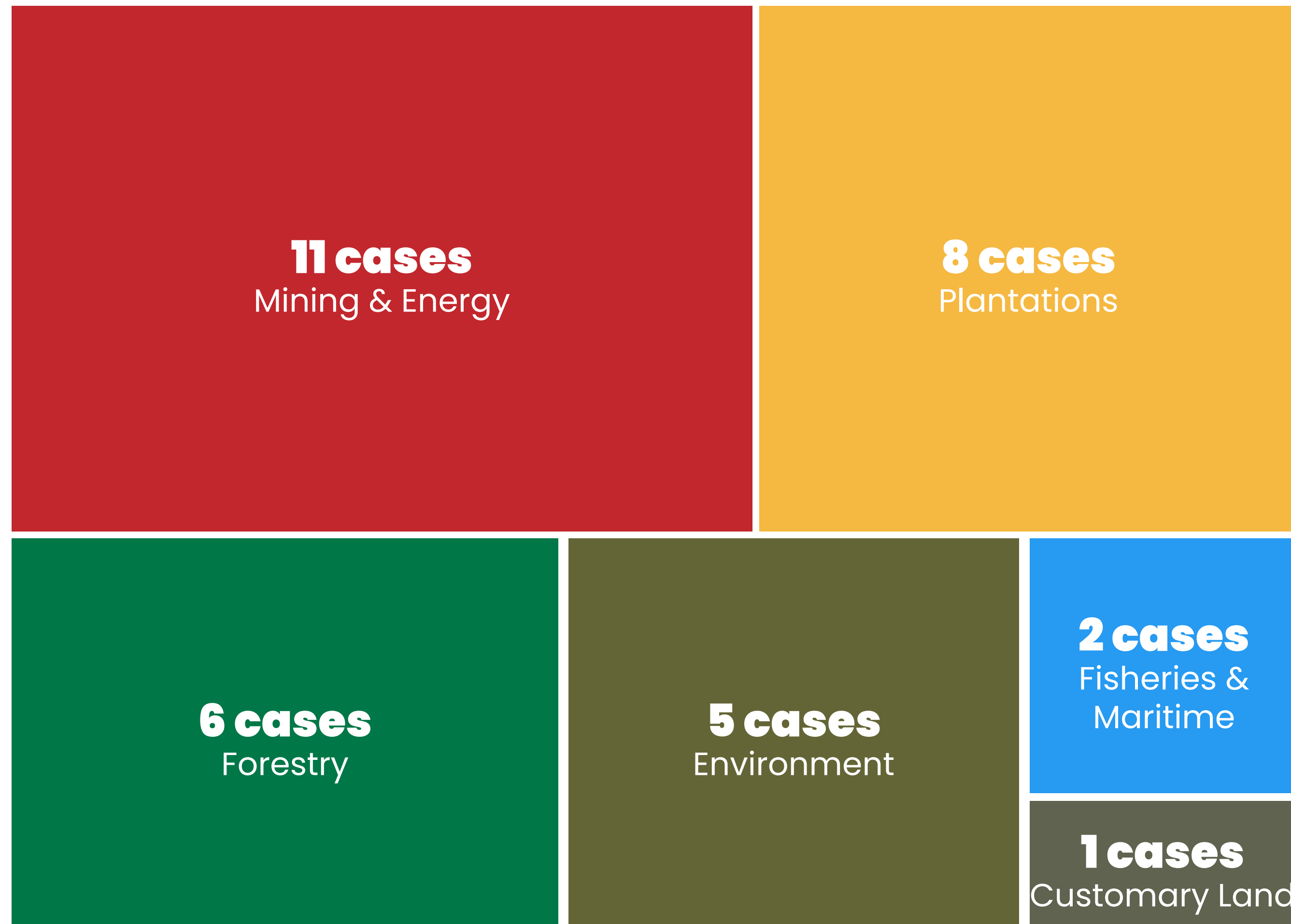
4 cases | 16 victims
Mining & Energy (4)

1. Central Java

5 cases | 12 victims
Mining & Energy (3),
Plantations (2)



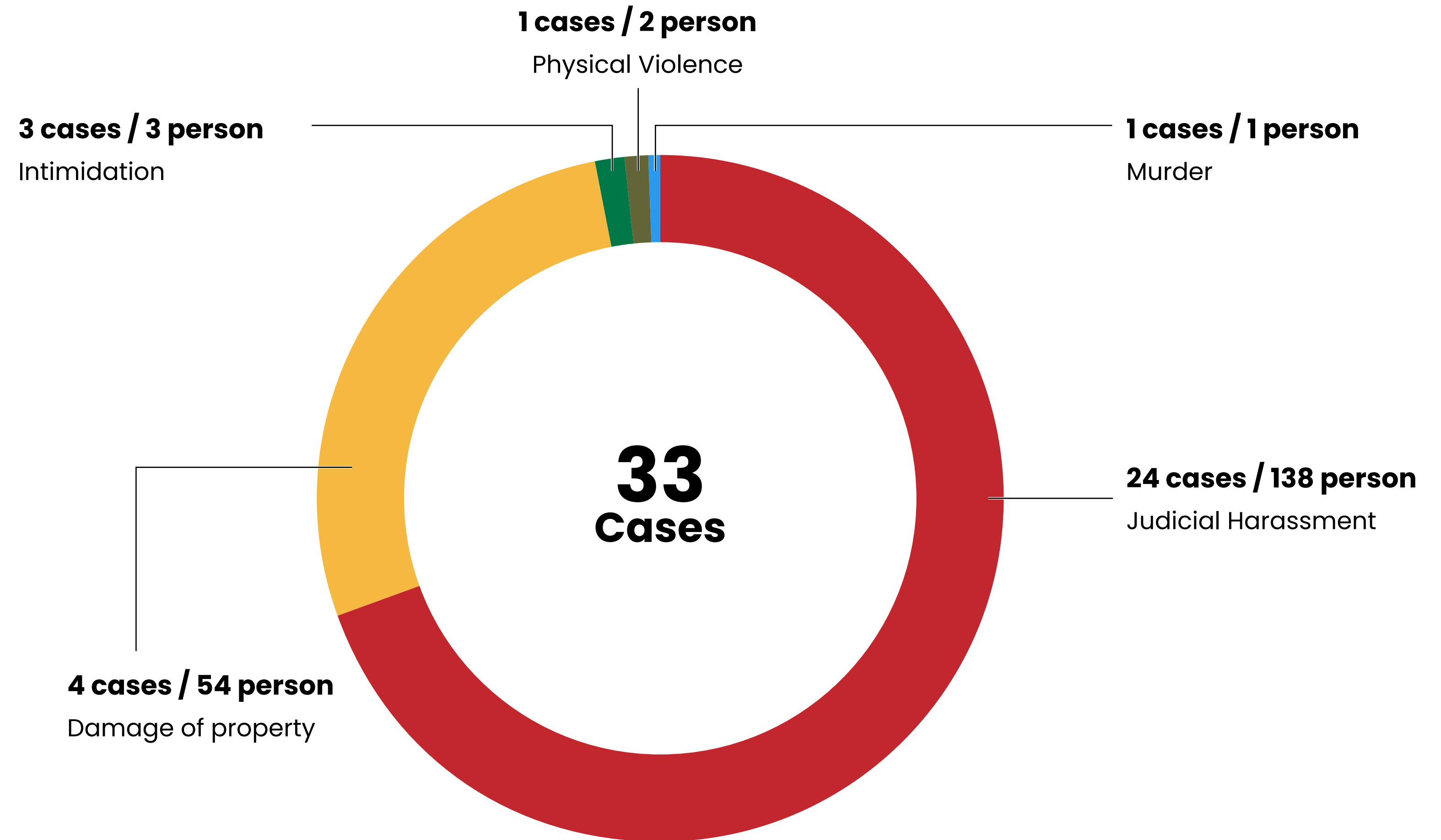
THREATS BY SECTOR



1. The dominance of the mining and energy sector reflects the strength of the critical mineral downstreaming agenda, which is considered to have high economic value.
2. Plantation conflicts are rooted in land overlaps between HGU concessions and lands of farmers/indigenous communities that have been managed across generations.
3. Environmental defenders are often positioned as “obstacles to development,” which ultimately increases their vulnerability to criminalization, intimidation, and physical violence.

FORMS OF VIOLENCE AND THREATS

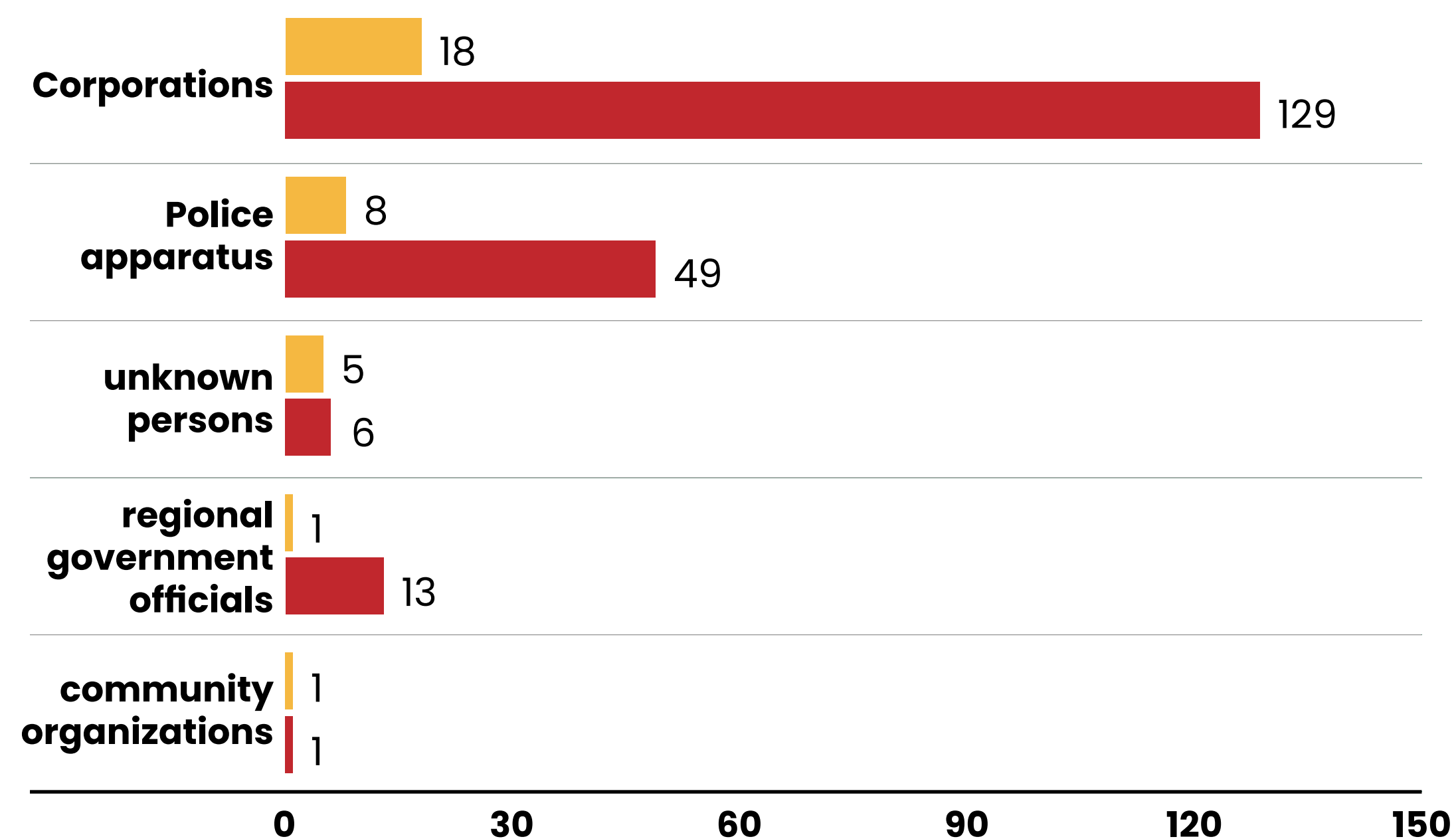
1. Judicial harassment is used as an approach considered effective in significantly draining the victim's resources, ranging from time, energy, and mental capacity to financial resources.
2. Criminalization is also considered effective in creating a widespread chilling effect within surrounding local communities, making others reluctant to speak out or to join resistance efforts.



CONFIGURATION OF PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS

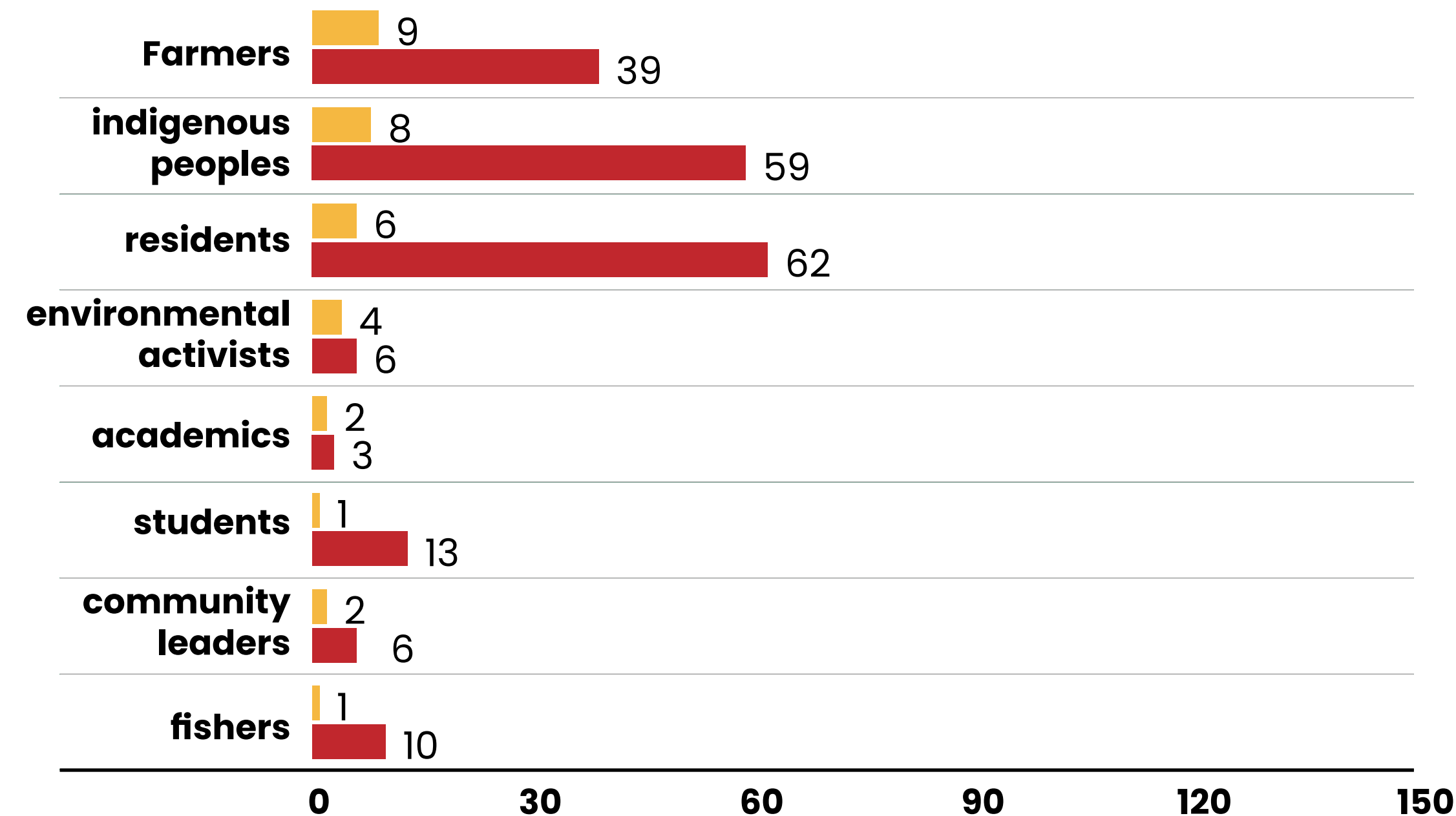
Configuration of Perpetrators

■ number of cases ■ number of victims



Configuration of victims

■ number of cases ■ number of victims



WHAT HAPPENED IN 2025

THE PERSISTENCE OF IMPUNITY FOR PERPETRATORS THREATENING ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

Behind the number of cases and victims, there is a recurring pattern: perpetrators of violence against environmental defenders are rarely truly held accountable. Many cases stall midway, while others are never fully uncovered.

THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP IN THE PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

On paper, protection for environmental defenders in Indonesia is relatively strong. These regulations position environmental defenders as legitimate actors in advocating for the right to a healthy environment. However, throughout 2025, threats against environmental defenders remained high. Violence, intimidation, and criminalization continued to recur. The law exists, but it has not functioned as it should.

COLLUSION BETWEEN THE STATE AND CORPORATIONS THAT THREATENS ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

Criminalization against environmental defenders occurs systematically, with around 77 percent taking place through legal processes that formally appear as law enforcement, but are often used to suppress objections from citizens, activists, and indigenous communities. The law more often becomes a tool of repression rather than protection, resulting in citizens facing criminal proceedings while business activities continue.

THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE 2023 CRIMINAL CODE AND THE 2025 CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE THAT INCREASINGLY THREATEN DEMOCRACY

Access to justice for environmental defenders is increasingly constrained alongside changes in national criminal law—particularly through elastic provisions such as insult, defamation, incitement, and disturbance of public order—which are often broadly interpreted to target criticism, thereby in practice opening space for the use of law to pressure citizens who oppose projects or expose environmental damage impacts.

WHAT REMAINS UNDOCUMENTED AT PRESENT

Undocumented

There is a possibility that victims of violence against environmental defenders do not appear in media reports, the internet, or other public spaces.

Unreported

Especially in remote areas, or in conflict-affected regions, it is highly likely that victims are silenced or choose to remain silent.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE GOING FORWARD

- The establishment of regulations that provide comprehensive and integrated protection for environmental defenders
- Law enforcement officials need to consistently apply the principle of due process of law, including limiting the use of detention and improving standards of evidence prior to the designation of suspects
- Documentation of similar cases involving human rights defenders and other public issues (public space defenders / democratic defenders) by civil society organizations



THANK YOU