



## Press Release

### Re: Seminar of the Constitutional Law Society, 29 May 2020

In light of the cancelation of a seminar organised by students from the Constitutional Law Society (CLS), originally planned for 29 May 2020 under the title “*Clarifying Presidential Impeachment under the Constitutional System*”, it is necessary to consider the following:

1. The above-mentioned event was part of an entirely student-led initiative to conduct an academic discussion in accordance with their interests and area of concentration in the study of constitutional law. It was organised entirely by CLS students.
2. A promotional poster designed by these students, bearing the title “*Firing the President in the Midst of a Pandemic under the Constitutional System*”, went viral on social media platforms on 28 May 2020. This was suspected to have been partially precipitated by an article titled “*Subversive Movement at UGM as the President is Busy Handling Covid19 [sic.]*”, on the website tagar.id. This article contains *inter alia* a passage that reads, “*Is it democracy [that], when the nation is working hand-in-hand to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, [we see] this rubbish group campaigning instead for the dismissal of the President. [sic.] This is clearly an act of subversion which must be given a clear response.*” (<https://www.tagar.id/gerakan-makar-di-ugm-saat-jokowi-sibuk-atasi-covid19>)
3. The organising committee from CLS had provided the following clarification:
  - a. On 28 May 2020, the student committee had revised the seminar poster and the title of the event into “*Clarifying Presidential Impeachment under the Constitutional System*”. This change, published on the CLS Instagram account, was accompanied by an official apology, as well as a clarification of the intent and purpose of the seminar (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAuzTSqFZzu/>). At the time of publication, there were already more than 250 people registered to attend.
  - b. On the evening of 28 May 2020, threats began to terrorise the individuals listed on the seminar poster—including the speaker, moderator, and liaison officers—and the Head of CLS. These threats range from the sending of online *ojek* vehicles to their respective residences, text messages threatening murder, telephone calls, and visits from several people. These activities continued until 29 May 2020, by which time the following text messages had been delivered even to the family members of the individuals involved with the seminar:
    - i. From the cellular number +6283849304820 on 29 May 2020, 13.17-13.19 WIB: “*Hello, ‘Sir. Tell your kid [name] they can be charged with subversion. [Tell them to] watch their mouth when they speak. Are you incapable of educating your kid! [sic.] I’m from Muhammadiyah in Klaten. Don’t mess with me ‘Pak. Tell your kid [to] surrender to the Sleman Police Office. Or [would your rather that] I pick them up? How about it? I will kill your whole family if you can’t tell off your kid.*”; and
    - ii. From the cellular number +6282155356472 on 29 May 2020, 13.24-13.27 WIB: “*‘Ma’am, can you tell your kid? Or teach them to be a good person, Bu. [sic.] [What is the point of] going to university [if they are going] to be a smart-arse about how to run the country. [sic.] College is expensive ‘Bu [and yet] your kid doesn’t know anything. Can you teach them ‘Bu? I’m from Muhammadiyah in*



*Klaten. Don't play around. I will find [name]. [Name] will be charged with subversion. Please just [tell them to] surrender themselves. I will kill [name's] entire family."*

- c. Additionally, the cellular telephones and social media accounts of CLS and its members were infiltrated and hacked on 29 May 2020. The hackers manipulated these accounts to declare the cancelation of the event and expel all the registered participants from the seminar group chat. Afterwards, they proceeded to de-activate the CLS Instagram account.
4. Based on concerns for their safety, at noon of 29 May 2020, the organising committee decided to cancel the seminar.

Herewith I would like to reiterate that the Faculty of Law, Gadjah Mada University:

1. *Appreciates* and *endorses* the academic discussion entitled "Clarifying Presidential Impeachment under the Constitutional System", organised by the students of CLS, originally planned to be held on 29 May 2020. This seminar exemplified academic freedom and the freedom of expression that we must support accordingly;
2. *Condemns* the intimidation that led to the cancelation of this seminar. It was a flagrant threat to the forum of academic freedom, especially as it prejudicially undermined the seminar. The UGM Faculty of Law encourages all members of the society to embrace and respect the freedom of expression in the academic corridor, and to contribute positively in the resolution of conflict in our society;
3. *Condemns* the publication of provocation and unfounded allegations against the above-mentioned seminar throughout the news outlet and social media platforms. This could lead to libel and defamation punishable under Indonesian law. The Faculty of Law emphasises the importance of legal consciousness in our society, in order to avoid the commission of crimes that disadvantage the society at large;
4. *Empathises* with the families of the students who had received psychological pressure from the intimidation, especially in the midst of a pandemic that has drained us all physically and mentally. The Faculty of Law must protect the entire academic community, including all the people involved in this seminar, from intimidation, terror, and threats which they had regrettably endured along with their families. The Faculty of Law had documented all evidence of intimidation and undertaken the necessary steps to protect the people involved in this seminar and the entire academic community.

Yogyakarta, 29 May 2020

Dean,

Prof. Dr. Sigit Riyanto., SH., L.LM