

# THE LAUNCH OF THE TIADA.GURU CAMPAIGN: MALAYSIA RISES FOR CLEAN EDUCATION

***Tiada.Guru Introduces Justice Campaign for 21-Year-Old Sabahan Plaintiff Already 3x Victorious Over Federal Government in High Court***

KOTA KINABALU, Malaysia | 11 December 2020 — No more silence. No more fear. It is time for the corrupt and the powerful to take their knees off the necks of Malaysia's children and students.

The education, civil service, and human rights [legal case of a century](#) in Malaysia is quietly unfolding at the Kota Kinabalu High Court in Sabah. Tiada.Guru was born in late 2018 from the [searing-hot claims](#) of a 21-year-old Sabahan woman at the centre of a High Court public interest litigation lawsuit. We founded Tiada.Guru as a campaign of hope and a beacon of justice for rural Sabahans and all Malaysians.

## *Malaysia Rises for Clean Education*

**High Court Claims: the 7-month absent Kota Belud English teacher and multiple Ministry departments who protected him**

[In late 2018](#), then 18-year-old Siti Nafirah binti Siman of Kota Belud, Sabah summoned eight Defendants to High Court in public interest litigation. Her suit claims an intricate chain of shocking Ministry of Education misconduct and misfeasance in public office, including fabricated government records, extending from her teacher to the Federal Government in Putrajaya.

The High Court already agreed that her claims have enough merit to proceed to a full public trial for the world to witness (a date will be fixed after the CMCO is lifted). After [achieving victory](#) over 1) the Federal Government's Striking Out Application, 2) her Discovery for Evidence Application, and 3) her Further & Better Particulars Application, one of Malaysia's youngest plaintiffs is set for an explosive High Court Trial.

The Tiada.Guru campaign is not administered by Siti Nafirah nor her legal team. Our campaign works to be a microphone for all Ministry victims: we were inspired by the bravery of not only Siti Nafirah, but so many others standing up against the goliath that are the Ministry of Education's high-ranking public servants.

Not only will Siti Nafirah's searing claims of extreme teacher absenteeism, misfeasance in public office, and Constitutional violations go to trial at High Court, but **so will the Federal Government's decades of unfulfilled reforms that have led to these claimed events**. To the Ministry of Education, your time is up. Tiada.Guru is about to collect your exam papers and the world will see your results.

"The court remains the conscience of society so as to ensure that the rights and interests of the minority and the weak are safeguarded."

— Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima **Richard Malanjum**, the 9th Chief Justice of Malaysia ([source](#))

## About the Campaign

Tiada.Guru is a Sabah-based campaign of grassroots victims, whistleblowers, and activists. Our core team is comprised of current & former teachers, parents, and students inside the Ministry of Education (MOE) in an unprecedented act of fearlessness. We live on the other side and we know the truth.

Because of the grim protection for Malaysian government whistleblowers and victims of government negligence, abuse, and corruption, we are represented by the Tiada.Guru panel:

- **Fiqah Roslan** began a career in journalism in 2015. Her experience as a reporter catalysed her interest to delve into advocacy and activism through writing. Along with journalist colleagues, Fiqah is a writer and contributor for Borneo Speaks, a platform founded by Sabahan journalists as a form of alternative media to tell Sabahan and Borneon stories. Most recently, Fiqah is a Research and Content Engineer for Undi Sabah.
- **Sharmila Sekaran** is a senior litigation lawyer, child rights advocate, and Voice of the Children co-founder & chairperson. By day an advocate & solicitor, Sharmila is one of Malaysia's most dedicated advocates to protect the rights of children. By night, Sharmila's fearless policy & legal analysis have set the record straight on Astro Awani, Malaysiakini, the Malay Mail, Free Malaysia Today, Sky News, the Washington Post, and more. Sharmila acts as Tiada.Guru's Peninsular Director.

Both are available for media interviews upon request & availability.

## Campaign Priorities

The Tiada.Guru campaign has three major **justice-first** and **exposure-first** priorities:

01. Ensuring independent, transparent, and expedient justice at the High Court civil suit, through continuous **grassroots attention** and **context-building** of 1) Sabah, 2) the High Court litigation, 3) the Ministry of Education, and 4) the institutions that should be disciplining and/or investigating the Ministry of Education.
02. Ensuring all alleged criminal conduct by Ministry of Education officers in Siti Nafirah's case is investigated and, if found, fully prosecuted—no double-standards for senior public servants.
03. Ensuring the voices of victimized students & former students, whistleblowing teachers, and grassroots allies overpower the propaganda of turn-the-lights-off politicians and all enforcement agencies under the Executive.

## Campaign Choices

01. Tiada.Guru will not associate with any political party, religion, nor race. Child victims are not interested in these divisions, but simply whether you will protect children or you have something else “more important” to protect.
02. Tiada.Guru is not interested in false reformers, “confused” politicians, nor tepid status quo commentators. We act as if we were the children: what would we expect from the adults? It is clear hope is not found but made. It is clear evil is not brave but merely shielded. It is clear injustices are not just words but lives lived.
03. Tiada.Guru is not compromising with minor reforms or cheap talk: never confuse movement with action. Child victims tell us their fears: “You cannot reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth.” We will pressure those with power until it hurts—this lawsuit is a demonstration of that sheer will. And then we will pressure more.
04. Tiada.Guru will sustain itself until systemic avenues of justice are provided for all children: only the language of the wealthy allows shameful shortcuts for the powerful few, but compromises for the ordinary many. We will not yield to placate privileged elites if they seal their fates by consciously deciding to oppose child justice.
05. Tiada.Guru fights for Sabahan, Sarawakian, *orang asli*, and Peninsular children that—after they claimed their right to a quality education—they were dehumanized, neglected, and abused.
  - i. We fight for brave whistleblower teachers and Ministry officers who realize a future of justice is in our hands.
  - ii. We fight for enraged, passionate parents who dedicated decades and instead watched their lives’ only dream—their children’s future—be stolen in broad daylight.
  - iii. We fight for ordinary Malaysians who wonder what life is like for the children whose stories made headlines—and how many children never had a headline.
  - iv. We fight for the defiant activists who have known evil is not brave, but merely shielded.

## Campaign Demands Preview

*The complete demands will be in an upcoming open letter: there will be no mincing of words.*

We at Tiada.Guru realize these chains around our necks are critical to the comfort of many in your world. Thus, our proposal to loosen the chains is modest. God Willing, these demands remind us that we too are human.

We, the chained peoples of Malaysia and their Defenders, will soon submit an “application” to the Federal Government, all Members of Parliament, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, the Royal Malaysian Police, the Ministry of Education, and the Sabah Assembly Members to **loosen their chains around our necks.**

## Why the Tiada.Guru Campaign Began: To Be a Bright Beacon of Hope

01. **The Imbalance of Power:** Justice is never permanent but compelled. Hope is not found but made. Evil is not brave but shielded. Again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again, horrific misconduct against children by the Ministry's current caretakers has been reported. How many cases are not reported? How many never get a headline? The culture remains powerful because so many corrupt public servants realize they can create virtual immunity. On one side stand honest teachers, parents, students, and the grassroots of every *kampung* that are turning on the lights. On the other side, a small, but corruptly powerful set of public servants and weak politicians pray the lights stay off. The grassroots have chosen solidarity: whose side are you on?
02. **The "1 in 100 Lifetimes" Chance:** Never have dozens of Ministry of Education officers been summoned to High Court under allegations of misfeasance of public office, knowingly causing injury through unlawful acts. Never has a 15-year-old child patiently waited to walk the halls of justice as she turned 18 years old to file groundbreaking public interest litigation for all students. Sabahans can stand proud to have raised a daughter that is set to rewrite history on education reform and injustice.
03. **The History:** For 30 years, Malaysians have **talked** about extreme teacher absenteeism and abuses of power by Ministry of Education officers, yet without justice. The issue has been reported in the media, admitted by the Ministry of Education, and lambasted by opportunistic politicians. What is clear now, 30 years later: yelling at cancer does not make you a doctor. For families without the power of political connections, negligence & abuse of their children is how the poor sacrifice for the rich. Sabahans know this "open secret" better than most.
04. **The Home of the Grassroots:** Kota Belud, Sabah, is one of the few districts that has been home to two concurrent Federal Ministers. Yet, Kota Belud is one of Malaysia's poorest districts as its people remain slighted by government corruption and government failures: 1) its median household income is ranked 134 of 158; 2) its Absolute Poverty rate is 34%, 3x higher than rural Malaysia's average; 3) three out of its ten homes do not have piped water, nearly 7x Malaysia's average; and 4) its inequality rate is *one of the worst* in Malaysia: 152 of 158. We are you and you are us.
05. **The Transparency:** For once, this litigation may represent a bright light of justice at the end of the tunnel: no backdoor agreements, no settlements, no compromise. Tiada.Guru's launch signals the beginning of the end for fear, silence, and violence against child victims by the Ministry of Education. Tiada.Guru is demanding justice for all in the most fair, public, and powerful approach possible: a public interest litigation trial at High Court.
06. **The Shot at the Head:** This is *public* interest litigation: not *kami*, but *kita*. The remedies prayed for by Plaintiff Siti Nafirah in her High Court claims are primarily declarations against the Ministry of Education to ensure a legal precedence is set and, if the claims are judged true, the Ministry face the music of its alleged widespread misconduct that in other circumstances would have already called for an RCI and an international reckoning. Siti Nafirah said it best herself when speaking about her claims in High Court: "The culture of fear for speaking up must end."
07. **The Hypocrisy Exposing:** False reformers have long made political calculations to

periodically admit injustices exist, but they have not had 1) the spines to demand universal justice nor 2) the discipline to legislate universal justice. Siti Nafirah's claims have survived [now five Education Ministers and spanned three ruling coalitions](#). Not one has spoken the truth that so many Malaysians have lived. Siti Nafirah High Court litigation mean she, and the potentially thousands like her, need wait no longer.

- 08. The Bravery of a Young Sabahan:** “Scared is what you are feeling—brave is what you are doing.” There is no turning back for Siti Nafirah binti Siman. She was only [15 years old](#) when the claimed events occurred. She survives as her family's only daughter and youngest child; Siti Nafirah's father passed away when she was seven and she was raised by her widowed mother. A native of Kota Belud, Sabah, Siti Nafirah stands tall as one of Malaysia's bravest: willing to sacrifice everything to exact justice for the rights she and potentially thousands of other victims were born with yet were denied through an alleged network of misfeasance of high-ranking, wealthy civil servants. Because of her, we too at the Tiada.Guru campaign refuse to turn back.
- 09. Voicing the Voiceless:** The grassroots—of every race and of every religion—are hungry for equality in education quality and justice against abuses of power. Yet because their problems are the “status quo”, they are not given media attention. They are desperately hungry for a fair shot at a better life: a life without the knee of the powerful against their children's necks. We have waited generations, while watching parents & grandparents pass away without justice. Do the masses of Malaysia need to wait for their voice to be granted by the gatekeepers of political and government discourse? “If we don't fight hard enough for the things we stand for, at some point we have to recognize that we don't really stand for them.” — Paul Wellstone
- 10. Exposing the Ministry's Behaviour:** This High Court litigation from one of Malaysia's [poorest & most unequal](#) districts [claims to expose](#) “misfeasance in public office, a seven-month absent teacher, and Ministry of Education officers' collaborating to fabricate government records in a chain stretching from *Kampung Taun Gusi* to the Kota Belud District Education Department and the Sabah State Education Department.” In other reports, the behaviour of [Ministry of Education officers](#) has been exposed to include [sexual abuse](#), [teacher bullies](#), and [“serious” corruption](#). Students, parents, and teachers know all too well that the easiest targets are the [poor, weak, and/or unprivileged children](#). When the time comes for justice, the powerful turn the other cheek: “Justice for all would be unwise and politically dangerous, you see.” Why? Because dehumanization was the point and misconduct is the tool for those who want to turn off the lights for themselves & their corrupted colleagues. So today we set the first landmark on this journey of justice: the lights are about to turn on.

*"The struggle to reverse inequality is a long and onerous one."*

— Tan Sri Dato' Seri Utama Tengku Maimun binti Tuan Mat,  
the 10th Chief Justice of Malaysia ([source](#))

Through this, we arrive at the crux of the decades-long failures of reform: justice is never permanent but compelled. Hope is not found but made. Evil is not brave but shielded. **It is time for the powerful to take their knees off our children's necks.**

"This is to show you that the trauma does not end with the incident. Our systems are broken. Our society is broken. We have to be better. We must."

— Rosheen Fatima, police whistleblower and rape survivor ([source](#))

*The Tiada.Guru campaign is welcome to all—Sabahan, Sarawakian, and Peninsular Malaysians. We hold no race, no religion, nor no political party. Every child in Malaysia cares not for those labels, but simply whether you will fight for justice in the light or fight for corruption in the dark. We are all watching.*