



## Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network (LERN): Legal Fellow Position

### About Us

The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and its Haiti-based affiliate, the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), have 14 years of demonstrated success enforcing Haitians' human rights, in Haiti and abroad. We work in four areas: 1) *impact litigation* forces open the doors of Haitian, international and U.S. courts for precedent-setting human rights cases; 2) *documentation* provides public officials, human rights advocates and grassroots activists the reliable information they need to speak up for human rights in Haiti; 3) *transnational grassroots advocacy* compels governments and powerful institutions in Haiti and abroad to respect Haitians' human rights; and 4) *systemic capacity building* develops a corps of Haitian lawyers and advocates trained to fight for sustainable change in their country.

The organizations' successes include spearheading the Raboteau Massacre trial, considered Haiti's best complex litigation ever, and one of the most important human rights cases ever in the Americas, and *Yvon Neptune v. Haiti*, the only Haiti case ever decided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The New York Times called the BAI's Mario Joseph "Haiti's most prominent human rights lawyer," and attorney Joseph has won several human rights awards.

BAI and IJDH established the Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network (LERN), to coordinate the response of international lawyers to the earthquake in Haiti. LERN employs a human rights-based approach to advocate for the victims of the earthquakes and reduce Haiti's vulnerability to future natural, political and economic stresses. The Network's projects include fighting for safe housing, long-term, effective international assistance to Haiti, and for immigration opportunities in the U.S. LERN will also develop replicable models for international legal responses to large-scale natural disasters.

IJDH launched LERN on January 17, 2010. Since then, over 270 lawyers, law professors and law students – many of them top experts in their field – have joined the network. IJDH provides overall coordination of LERN projects through the listserv and an interactive webpage. Individual projects will be coordinated through project leaders who will submit project proposals to an Oversight Committee comprised of prominent human rights lawyers with extensive experience working on human rights issues in Haiti.

### Project Description

IJDH and BAI are accepting applications for LERN Fellows, who will help coordinate LERN Projects from the BAI's office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Fellows must be fluent in French and commit to spending a minimum of sixteen weeks in Haiti.

## Fellow Responsibilities

LERN fellows will work on an array of issues to advance LERN projects. Given our small office and high volume of work, fellows will be given a high degree of responsibility from the start. Accordingly, fellows must be highly motivated and responsible. Fellows will work closely with BAI attorneys, and have the following responsibilities:

- Coordinating communication between U.S. and Haitian lawyers
- Facilitating human rights delegations and fact-finding trips
- Preparing advocacy reports incorporating legal research and factual findings made through LERN delegations
- Conducting trainings on various topics ranging from computer literacy to international law standards
- Participating in LERN projects, including legal research, preparing documents for the court, and reviewing documentary evidence
- Fellows who speak Haitian Creole will collaborate with victims and victims' organizations, to help develop advocacy plans

## Qualifications

- J.D. or equivalent (bar admission not required)
- Fluency in French, and a willingness to learn some Haitian Creole
- Experience in civil or criminal litigation a plus
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Proficiency in standard computer applications
- High level of initiative and motivation
- Willingness and ability to live and work under difficult conditions
- Ability to handle sensitive client relationships and protect the confidentiality of our work and our communications

## Funding

We are unable to offer a stipend at this time.

## Application Procedure

Attorneys interested in the position of LERN Fellow should submit a cover letter, resume, short writing sample, and contact information for two references at least one of who is familiar with the applicant's abilities and work ethic. Please send all application materials to: [brian@ijdh.org](mailto:brian@ijdh.org) and include "LERN Fellow" in the subject line.

## Contact Information

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