



# Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti

*Fighting for the human rights of Haiti's poor*

## 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 over 15 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, and *Yvon Neptune v. Haiti*, one of the most important human rights cases in the Americas and 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."

### Project Description

IJDH and BAI have a one-year legal fellowship position open in Port-au-Prince, Haiti starting in September 2011.

The legal fellow is responsible for coordinating the Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network (LERN). Led by IJDH and BAI, LERN is a national network of more than 400 lawyers, law professors and law students in the U.S. who work with Haitian lawyers and grassroots leaders to implement a legal response to the earthquake in Haiti. LERN employs a human rights-based approach to advocate for the victims of the earthquake and reduce Haiti's vulnerability to future natural, political and economic stresses. LERN is working to develop replicable models for international legal responses to large-scale natural disasters. LERN projects also seek to ensure long-term, effective international assistance to Haiti and immigration opportunities to the U.S. for victims of human rights violations.

Specifically, the legal fellow will be responsible for coordinating one or more of the following projects:

- Using legal advocacy and grassroots mobilizing to fight for the realization of the right to housing for persons displaced by the earthquake and to protect displaced communities from forced evictions from displacement camps;
- Seeking justice and accountability for victims of gender-based violence; and
- Investigating human rights violations in prisons and using advocacy and litigation to improve prison conditions.

## Fellow Responsibilities

Legal fellows will work on a broad array of issues to advance the work of the BAI, IJDH and the LERN network. Given our small office and large 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 IJDH and BAI attorneys on the following:

- 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 case management, including legal research, preparing documents for the court, and reviewing documentary evidence;
- Collaborating with victims and victims' organizations, to help develop advocacy plans; and
- Engaging with Haitian and international media to draw attention to human rights violations.

## Qualifications

- Bachelors and J.D., or equivalent law degree (bar admission not required);
- Fluency in French, and a willingness to learn 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 challenging conditions; and
- Ability to handle sensitive client relationships and protect the confidentiality of our work and our communications.

## Funding

We are happy to support individual fellowship applications, but are unfortunately unable to offer a stipend at this time.

## Application Procedure

Attorneys interested in the position of LERN Legal Fellow should submit a cover letter, resume, short writing sample, and contact information for two references. Please send all application materials electronically to Annie Gell at [annie@ijdh.org](mailto:annie@ijdh.org). Include "LERN Legal Fellow" in the subject line.

This announcement was released in January 2011. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until positions are filled.