



## IJDH Legal Internship – Spring 2015

### About Us

The Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and its Haiti-based affiliate, the *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), have over 19 years of demonstrated success enforcing Haitians' human rights, in Haiti and abroad. We work in four areas: 1) *impact litigation* that opens the doors of Haitian, international and U.S. courts to precedent-setting human rights cases; 2) *documentation* that 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* that compels governments and powerful institutions in Haiti and abroad to respect Haitians' human rights; and 4) *systemic capacity building* that develops a corps of Haitian human rights lawyers and advocates trained to fight for sustainable change in their country.

The organizations' successes include spearheading the Raboteau Massacre trial, considered Haiti's most successful complex litigation, and *Yvon Neptune v. Haiti*, one of the most important human rights cases in the Americas and the first Haiti case to be decided by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. BAI's Managing Attorney, Mario Joseph was called "Haiti's most prominent human rights lawyer" by the New York Times.

### Project Description

IJDH is seeking one part-time legal intern (for a minimum of 10 hours per week) for the Spring of 2015.

The Legal Intern will work closely with a team of other volunteers and lawyers on the Cholera Accountability Project (CAP) (<http://www.ijdh.org/cholera/>), which uses advocacy and litigation to force the United Nations (UN) to respond justly to the cholera epidemic it brought to Haiti in October 2010, which is now the world's largest cholera epidemic. Overwhelming evidence has established that reckless disposal of human waste on a UN peacekeeping base in Mirebalais poisoned Haiti's rivers with a particularly deadly strain of cholera bacteria and caused the epidemic. CAP works with Haitian grassroots groups and international advocates in a broad-based campaign to push the UN to take action to stop cholera's killing.

BAI and IJDH filed a groundbreaking class action lawsuit in the Southern District of New York in October 2013 that seeks remedies for the injuries suffered. While the UN did not formally respond to the lawsuit, it requested that the U.S. intervene on its behalf and seek dismissal on the grounds of UN immunity. After a lengthy briefing period, a hearing was held in the Southern District on October 23, 2014 on the issue of the UN's immunity to suit. On January 9, 2015, the judge rendered a decision, upholding UN immunity and dismissing the case. IJDH is currently working on an appeal

in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals on this issue, which would be the legal intern's primary focus.

## Intern Responsibilities

Interns will work with and be supervised by IJDH attorneys on the following:

- Conducting domestic, international and comparative legal research;
- Drafting legal memoranda and contributing to pleadings and other court filings;
- Preparing advocacy documents, including human rights reports, op-eds and case summaries for publication;
- Supporting advocacy in the United Nations system, U.S. Congress and other international forums;
- Participating in regular team strategy meetings; and
- Participating in media work to advocate for human rights in Haiti, including drafting press releases, talking points and contributing to social media work.

## Qualifications

- Current 2L or 3L with a background in international law and human rights and strong grasp of U.S. law and legal research skills;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Proficiency in standard computer applications, including legal research databases;
- High level of initiative and motivation;
- Ability to handle sensitive client relationships and protect the confidentiality of our work and our communications;
- Ability to work from our Boston office preferred, but remote arrangements will also be considered;
- Must be available for a minimum of 10 hrs/week for the duration of the internship;
- Proficiency in French and/or Haitian Creole desirable, but not required.

## Funding

This is an unpaid internship. However, we are happy to work with applicants to get academic credit through their law schools.

## Application Procedure

Law students interested in the position of Spring Legal Intern should submit a cover letter, resume, transcript, short writing sample, and contact information for two references as soon as possible. Please send all application materials electronically to Ruth Vaughan ([ruth@ijdh.org](mailto:ruth@ijdh.org)) by **February 15, 2015** Include "Legal Intern Spring 2015" in the subject line. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

## Contact Information

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