



Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti Sponsorship for 2024 Externally-Funded Legal Fellowship

Position Title: Legal Fellow
Start Date: Sept. 1 2024 (negotiable)
Location: Remote/Boston, Massachusetts
Reports to: IJDH Senior Staff Attorney

Position Overview

The [Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti](#) (IJDH) is offering to sponsor a graduating law student or recent law school graduate for a one or two-year externally-funded legal Fellowship focused on defending Haitians' human rights in international fora. The Fellowship is designed to train and empower new lawyers to advance social justice movements in the Global South through immersive practice in human rights advocacy within a solidarity framework. In addition to improving your legal writing and familiarity with advocacy mechanisms, you can expect to learn trauma-informed perspectives, solidarity approaches, and how to engage effectively with a variety of actors, including grassroots organizations, government representatives, and international agencies.

The profound challenges Haiti is currently facing - including increasing gang violence, political repression, the lack of any elected officials, and a spiraling humanitarian emergency - are symptoms of a deeper crisis, one that IJDH and its Haiti-based sister organization, the human rights law office *Bureau des Avocats Internationaux* (BAI), are working to confront: decades of problematic foreign policies that have [robbed](#) Haiti of its resources alongside government capture by an elite that has persistently [dismantled](#) the country's democracy with the [support](#) of the [U.S. government](#). **Join us as we work to hold these actors accountable and help Haitians enforce their human rights!**

About Us

IJDH is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that has been helping Haitians enforce their human rights in powerful countries since 2004. In partnership with the BAI, IJDH advocates, litigates, and nurtures networks of advocates to advance human rights in Haiti and to create systemic pathways to justice for marginalized communities, including by holding international actors accountable. IJDH and BAI are at the forefront of confronting impunity for grave human rights violations, gender-based violence, and harms caused by international actors; strengthening Haiti's justice sector; and promoting economic justice alongside accountable and rights-based foreign aid.

IJDH and BAI accomplishments include:

- Leading the solidarity campaign supporting Haitians' fight for self-determination and to wrest their

democracy away from the repressive, U.S.-supported government;

- Litigating in Haiti alongside local and international advocacy efforts to defend the rights of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers and obtaining a first-of-its-kind child support judgment in Haitian court on behalf of a child fathered by a former UN peacekeeper, which we are working to enforce;
- Working with victims of the 2010 UN-caused cholera epidemic in Haiti to compel the UN to accept responsibility and commit to a \$400 million victim-centered response;
- Effectively supporting the prosecution of top military and paramilitary leadership of Haiti's de facto dictatorship in the 2000 Raboteau massacre case, considered one of the most important human rights trials in the Americas, and advocating on behalf of victims in proceedings;
- Supporting the prosecution of former dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier for crimes against humanity against the Haitian people and achieving a verdict holding that such crimes are not prescribable under Haitian law; and
- Establishing models of networked collaboration that combine grassroots advocacy in Haiti with solidarity networks in the United States and other countries in order to effect change.

Fellow Responsibilities

The Fellowship position is for one or two years, starting on September 1, 2024 (negotiable). The Fellowship will take place remotely, with an option for regular in-person meetings in Boston.

Fellows are fully integrated into our legal team and work alongside IJDH attorneys in a fast-paced, creative, and exciting environment. They work across the full range of IJDH's activities, including real-time advocacy in response to Haiti's [current crisis](#). Fellows will work with and be supervised by IJDH attorneys, and can expect to be asked to perform some or all of the following:

- Legal research and analysis on a variety of international human rights law topics, including seeking justice for human rights violations by domestic and international actors such as the UN, international financial institutions, and corporate actors (including restitution for the '[Independence Debt](#)' imposed on Haiti by France);
- Drafting legal and advocacy documents, including submissions to human rights proceedings in domestic and international fora, human rights reports, public advocacy documents, Op-Eds, and submissions to corporate accountability mechanisms;
- Monitoring and analyzing human rights developments in Haiti, including with respect to justice sector function, women's empowerment and gender-based violence, democracy and governance challenges, and drivers of insecurity;
- Legal and policy advocacy that contributes to the human rights dialogue on issues that impact justice, accountability, and human rights in Haiti, including presentations before human rights bodies within the UN and Inter-American systems, as well as engagement with Congress, U.S. government officials, other governments, and international organizations;
- Drafting and implementing high-level political and advocacy strategies and managing advocacy campaigns, including in collaboration with partner organizations and key stakeholders and collaborators;
- Organizing and supporting grassroots trainings and mobilization in Haiti;
- Proactive advocacy outreach that engages international media and the public in IJDH's legal and advocacy work, including drafting advocacy materials, talking points, and press statements, as well as contributing to social media communications;

- General project management support.

Qualifications

In our small, fast-paced organization, Fellows have a high degree of responsibility and autonomy from the start. Fellows must be excellent problem-solvers and strategic thinkers, as well as flexible, highly motivated, and reliable. To successfully support Haitian grassroots empowerment, Fellows further need exceptional humility; open-mindedness and a deep interest in learning from others; a keen sensitivity to issues of race, class, colonialism, imperialism, and related trauma; and a commitment to earning trust. In return, we at IJDH take seriously our commitment to Fellows to foster learning and provide engaging professional experiences; to offer consistent mentorship, guidance, and feedback; and to facilitate progressive responsibility and professional growth.

Additional Fellow requirements:

- Emerging lawyers with a J.D., equivalent law degree, or LL.M.;
- Demonstrated commitment to human rights and social justice;
- Excellent research, analysis, writing, and oral communication skills;
- Familiarity with international human rights law and related principles; knowledge of the UN and Inter-American human rights systems a plus;
- High level of initiative, resilience, independence, and self-motivation;
- Excellent interpersonal skills and demonstrated cross-cultural sensitivity;
- Ability to handle sensitive relationships and protect the confidentiality of our work and our communications;
- Fluency in French or Haitian Creole; candidates who are proficient and willing to work on improving towards fluency will be considered;
- Prior experience in Haiti or other similar environments is a strong asset but not required.

Funding

Fellows must secure funding from an outside source (e.g. a law school, foundation, law firm, or other funding opportunity) to support the Fellowship. Applicants should come prepared with ideas for external funding sources, but IJDH will work with selected Fellows to identify appropriate sources of funding and develop proposals as necessary.

Application Procedure

Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, law school transcript, short unedited legal or policy writing sample (preferably on a topic relating to human rights), and contact information for two references as soon as possible. Please send all application materials electronically in one PDF to [hiring@ijdh.org](mailto: hiring@ijdh.org) and include “2024 Fellow” in the subject line. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled, so applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications early.

IJDH is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. We value a workforce that includes people of all abilities, diverse backgrounds, and a range of perspectives, particularly those who have historically been marginalized or underrepresented. We encourage applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status and record of arrest or conviction, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.