

ILF

THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FOUNDATION

2018 International Fellowship – Myanmar

“International Fellows are the backbone of the ILF’s success in post-conflict and transitioning countries. They work side by side with our local lawyers, helping teach them to think differently, to do more, and, beyond the skills training, inspire them and teach them that they are not alone in the work that they do.”

~Jennifer Smith, ILF Executive Director

The International Legal Foundation is seeking experienced criminal justice system lawyers to take part in its groundbreaking International Fellows Program in 2018 and 2019.

The ILF is a not-for-profit organization created for the purpose of establishing public defender systems in post-conflict and transitioning countries. The ILF operates on the belief that indigent representation is crucial to a functioning criminal justice system, and a functioning criminal justice system is crucial to long term rule of law development. Without defense lawyers to ensure that judges, prosecutors and police officers follow the law, reform and reconstruction of the justice system is impossible. By fighting against arbitrary detention, public defenders are often the first line of protection against human rights violations. For 15 years, the ILF has focused solely on providing criminal defense services to the poor, first in Rwanda, now in Afghanistan, Nepal, the West Bank, Tunisia and Myanmar.

Since 2001, over 60 Fellows from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand have helped transform the role of local lawyers in these countries from passive participants in the criminal justice system to proactive advocates for their clients. As a direct result, clients languishing in detention have been released and many innocent have been acquitted. Fellows have influenced judges to change policies and practices from the bench, and have helped win landmark legal victories in court that have improved the justice systems of all countries in which the ILF works.

International Fellows are lawyers—public or private defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges—with at least five years of criminal justice sector experience, and experience supervising and/or training other lawyers, who volunteer to work and live abroad in three-month assignments (shorter or longer assignments considered on a case-by-case basis). Fellows mentor our local staff attorneys and management staff day-in and day-out to help them develop the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure meaningful access to quality defense services for the indigent accused. The work may include assisting the staff lawyers as they visit clients in jail, write motions, make court appearances, and conduct investigation, or assisting the local management team to maximize their efficiency and impact, or meeting with government officials, other NGOs, and donor representatives to further the ILF’s in-country work. Each ILF program is unique in its cultural context, current stage of development, and current International Fellow needs.



Myanmar

Openings throughout 2018 and 2019

The ILF opened a new country program in Myanmar as of September 2017. We have now opened offices in Yangon and Mandalay, with two local staff lawyers in each, and will soon open a further two offices. International Fellows will engage in day-to-day, case-by-case mentorship with the staff attorneys to incrementally improve their skills and ability to zealously advocate on behalf of their clients. This includes closely supervising staff lawyers as they visit clients in jail, write motions, make court appearances, and conduct investigations. Additionally, Fellows will work with the staff lawyers to identify unconstitutional and discriminatory laws and work with local staff and ILF staff to develop strategic litigation campaigns to challenge them. The International Fellows will also help plan and execute trainings with justice sector stakeholders, and participate in meetings with government officials, other organizations, and donor countries involved in rule of law projects, as a representative of the ILF—a role that is particularly crucial early in a country program's founding. As part of the foundational work of starting a new country program, the International Fellow will also play an important role in developing the office's Practice Manual, motions templates, administrative policies, etc. Fellows should be willing to work to develop the skills and capacity of other support staff in this nascent office, including the paralegal and office administrator. Fellows may also be asked to assist in developing institutional policies and procedures to make the office a high-functioning, efficient and effective public defender office, and to contribute to efforts (including more administrative and logistical efforts) to expand and open new offices.

Burmese language skills are not required.