



2019/2020 International Fellowship – Strategic Litigation in Afghanistan

4 – 6 month remote fellowship with 30 days in ILF-A Kabul office

“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 ILF is seeking an experienced criminal defense lawyer with litigation expertise to train and mentor lawyers across ILF-Afghanistan’s offices on zealous defense representation. The fellow will work closely with the Strategic Litigation Unit and ILF program staff on the development of ILF-A’s strategic litigation efforts, including pre-trial motions practice and impact litigation involving public advocacy campaigns. A total of four candidates will be accepted for this position from 2019 to 2020.

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 and stability. Without defense lawyers to ensure that judges, prosecutors and police officers follow the law, reform and reconstruction of the justice system is impossible. For the past ten 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 70 Fellows from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, India, Scotland 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.

Founded in 2003, ILF-Afghanistan is the largest legal aid provider in Afghanistan. Over 40 lawyers work from 13 offices throughout the country, and ILF-Afghanistan lawyers have represented over 50,000 clients to-date. In 2016, ILF-Afghanistan founded its Strategic Litigation Unit (SLU) with the goal of ensuring that ILF-Afghanistan leads the justice sector in identifying, researching, and litigating systematic injustices and violations in the criminal justice system.

Some of the issues the unit has identified and begun working on include:

- Abuses faced by National Directorate of Security (NDS) detainees, including arbitrary and illegal pre-trial detention, continued detention of those who have been acquitted, torture and other abuse by police and detention officers, and widespread denial of the right to counsel.
- Violations by the government of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Act (EVAW), the Constitution, and international human rights laws through the routine use of invasive and unreliable forensic examinations of female detainees, including hymen examinations and body searches, in order to form the basis for adultery charges.

To assist ILF-Afghanistan in developing and implementing effective litigation strategies around these and other issues, the Fellow will work with the New York and Afghanistan office for four to six months: Up to thirty days of remote preparation, followed by a 30-day residency in the ILF-Afghanistan Kabul office where the fellow will develop litigation strategies collaboratively with the SLU team while mentoring junior lawyers on a case-by-case basis. Remote mentorship will continue with the lawyers upon return for at least 2 months (and continuing as long as the Fellow and ILF-NY agree).

Qualifications: 5+ years of experience providing criminal defense legal aid; experience drafting appeals and/or as a law clerk; experience in pre-trial and impact litigation. Note that there are no language requirements for this position

For more information about the ILF, ILF-Afghanistan, and this fellowship opportunity, contact David Anderson at (212) 608 – 1188 or danderson@thelif.org. To apply, please send a thoughtful cover letter and resume to fellows@thelif.org.