

Vacancy: Special Adviser on Human Rights Defenders



Commencement: January/February 2015

Based: Paris, France and Geneva, Switzerland

Applications close: 9 November 2014

ISHR is seeking a Special Adviser on Human Rights Defenders to join our dynamic team. This is a new position, based predominantly in Paris, and will involve working with and reporting on a day-to-day basis to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mr Michel Forst.

Established in 1984, ISHR is a leading non-governmental organisation with offices in Geneva and New York. ISHR works to support human rights defenders, strengthen human rights laws and systems, and build and coordinate human rights coalitions.

ISHR's work to support and protect human rights defenders focuses on those who are most exposed or at risk, including women human rights defenders, LGBT rights defenders, defenders working on issues of corporate accountability and defenders working in States in transition.

ISHR's work to strengthen human rights laws and systems focuses on making international and regional human rights mechanisms more accessible and effective for human rights defenders. It also focuses on the enactment of national laws and policies to give effect to the international Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Key responsibilities

Members of ISHR's program team work together to design and implement ISHR's programs and pursue ISHR's advocacy objectives. These objectives include strengthening and supporting the mandate of the UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

It is envisaged that the Special Adviser on Human Rights Defenders will provide intensive assistance and support to the Special Rapporteur by way of a full-time secondment to work with the mandate holder. The assignment will include frequent travel.

While the Special Adviser will be employed by ISHR in Geneva and be legally accountable to the Director, on a day-to-day basis the Special Adviser will work in Paris under the guidance and supervision of the Special Rapporteur. An information barrier will be established between ISHR and the Special Adviser in relation to communications and other matters that are confidential to the mandate.

The aim of the position is to strengthen the capacity and profile of the mandate and expand its range of activities, all with a view to contributing to enhanced protection and a more enabling operating environment for human rights defenders on the ground, particularly those most exposed or at risk.

More specific responsibilities may include:

- Undertaking research and analysis, and preparing reports and publications, in relation to matters relevant to human rights defenders and human rights systems.
- Drafting speeches, press releases and opinion pieces for the mandate holder.
- Assisting with the planning, preparation, conduct and documentation of consultations, meetings and events.
- Assisting to raise visibility and awareness of the mandate, the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and the work of human rights defenders, including through the development and maintenance of a dedicated website for the mandate, the production of a regular newsletter, and the building of a social media network and profile.

- Monitoring and following up on the implementation of recommendations made by the mandate, including by providing support to, and preparing reports on, follow up missions.
- Providing advice and assistance to the mandate in its work to strengthen the legal protection of human rights defenders and to assess and enhance the effectiveness of protection mechanisms.
- Monitoring and following up on responses to communications issued by the mandate, including possibly through coordinating institutional partners to undertake a qualitative and quantitative analysis of communications issued and responses received, with a view to ascertaining their impact and identifying ways in which they could best be used to enhance protection.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with key partners and interlocutors, including NGOs, governments and diplomatic missions, intergovernmental organisations, human rights bodies and experts, journalists and funders.
- Supporting coordination and communication between the Special Rapporteur and other mandate holders and regional mechanisms.
- Supervising and managing interns and other staff where appropriate.
- Undertaking all such other tasks, including administrative and logistical tasks, as directed.

Qualifications and experience

It is highly desirable that the successful applicant has or can demonstrate:

- A degree or relevant qualifications in law (applicants with qualifications in international relations, journalism, politics or relevant social sciences may also be considered).
- At least 5 years' professional experience working to influence human rights laws, policies and institutions, preferably with NGOs, the UN or other intergovernmental organisations, diplomatic missions or governments.
- Experience in media or communications, with proficiency in the use of social media and the development and design of websites and newsletters an advantage.
- Experience in designing and implementing successful human rights programs and initiatives.
- A strong commitment to, and passion for, the principles and practice of human rights.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and the ability to work collaboratively, flexibly and effectively in a small, dynamic team.
- Ability to think and act quickly, creatively and strategically under pressure.
- Ability to work autonomously and with limited supervision.
- Excellent oral and written communication in English, at least a basic level of French, and proficiency in another UN language, particularly Spanish or Arabic, being an advantage.
- Capacity to travel overseas frequently, sometimes at short notice.

Equal opportunity

ISHR is an equal opportunity employer and actively seeks a diverse pool of applicants. For candidates outside Switzerland, ISHR may be able to assist with obtaining the necessary visas and work permits.

Salary

ISHR seeks exceptional applicants and offers competitive salaries and benefits. The successful applicant will be employed on an initial one-year contract with the possibility of ongoing employment.

Applications

Please submit a cover letter, curriculum vitae, contact details for two recent professional referees, and brief writing sample (maximum 3 pages) by email to jobs@ishr.ch by 9 November 2014.

Please use the subject title: *Special Adviser on Human Rights Defenders*. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.