

Vacancy Announcement

Africa Legal & Advocacy Officer

Work percentage: 100%

Length: Open-ended contract, in accordance with legal requirements of place of employment

Location: appropriate location in Africa or ISHR's office in Geneva, with a strong preference for a location in Africa.

Start date: As soon as possible

Reports to: Senior Programme Manager (Africa)

Applications close: 02.03.2025 (midnight Geneva time)

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) is an independent, non-profit organisation with offices in Geneva and New York. This position offers a unique opportunity to contribute to our work in Africa supporting human rights defenders, strengthening human rights systems, building and leading human rights coalitions, and responding to significant and systemic human rights concerns. For more information, consult our website www.ishr.ch.

The position

Under the supervision of the Senior Programme Manager (Africa), the Africa Legal and Advocacy Officer plays a key role in supporting ISHR's work to strengthen legislative protection of human rights defenders in Africa, as well as its advocacy at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and its engagement and advocacy on country situations in Africa at the UN Human Rights Council. As part of the Africa Programme team, the position holder will also be part of ISHR's larger programme on transparency and rule of law and be required to participate in and contribute to the work of another programme within ISHR - [Equality, dignity and non-discrimination](#); [Environmental justice and sustainability](#); or [International accountability](#).

The position requires regular travel, at times on short notice, on the African continent and to ISHR offices (Geneva /New-York).

Key responsibilities

Under the supervision of the Senior Programme Manager, the Africa Legal and Advocacy Officer will be responsible for:

Supporting the implementation of ISHR's work on legislative protection of human rights defenders in Africa:

- Develop and maintain strong and collaborative relationships with national and regional organisations and networks in Africa working in relation to the protection of human rights defenders;
- Research, monitor and advocate in relation to national legal frameworks, including restrictive legal environments for defenders, in African countries;
- Monitor and advocate on the implementation of adopted HRDs laws in countries in which ISHR works in Africa;
- Update and maintain ISHR's world map analysing laws and policies promoting and protecting human rights defenders, for African countries;
- Support the implementation of local advocacy activities related to the protection of human rights defenders. This includes development of advocacy campaigns and activities in consultation with civil society, and engagement with legislative bodies, executive/government agencies and departments, NHRIs, and other relevant stakeholders;
- Assist in the delivery of capacity strengthening activities in African countries where ISHR works to strengthen legislative frameworks, including through the conceptualisation and design of consultations and workshops, preparation of materials, and facilitation of sessions;
- Conduct and support strategic litigation and interventions to promote the legal recognition and protection of HRDs and to challenge legislative restrictions on their work in Africa; and
- Contribute to and animate a network of legal professionals in Africa, in furtherance of ISHR's work on legislative protection of defenders on the continent. This will include moderating the Listserv, convening meetings and organising trainings for the members.

Supporting the implementation of ISHR's advocacy objectives at the national, regional and international levels:

- Assist in the conceptualisation, design and implementation of advocacy activities and campaigns to influence international, regional and national standards, institutions and policies relating to the promotion and protection of human rights defenders in Africa;
- Monitor developments at regional mechanisms and in other relevant fora relevant to standards, policies and practices pertaining to the promotion and protection of defenders in Africa and identify opportunities for engagement;
- Preparation for, including all logistical and administrative aspects, and participation in the ordinary sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- Represent ISHR in, and contribute to the work of, the Litigants Group for the strengthening of the protective mandate of the ACHPR;
- Develop and maintain productive relations with State representatives and regional mechanism officials;
- Represent ISHR at local advocacy meetings with civil society, government officials, parliamentarians and national human rights institutions, as well as with African Union officials;
- Maintain and develop ISHR's relationships with partner organisations, allies across government, legislative bodies and regional human rights mechanisms in Africa;

- Together with the HRC team, conduct advocacy in relation to the situation, recognition and protection of HRDs in Africa at the UN Human Rights Council and other relevant UN human rights mechanisms;
- Write or contribute to the drafting of reports, briefings papers, position papers, formal correspondence, presentations, web pieces, and other internal and external documents articulating and contributing to ISHR's advocacy objectives in Africa;
- Contribute to the implementation of capacity strengthening activities for civil society in Africa on the use of African human rights mechanisms;
- Effectively communicate and promote the work of ISHR in Africa; and
- Carry out any other duties needed for the fulfilment of the Africa programme objectives or the effective operation and functioning of ISHR.

Qualifications

Required

- University degree in human rights law, public international law or equivalent, with admission to practice as a lawyer in an African jurisdiction an advantage;
- Minimum 5 years of experience working in the field of human rights law, policy or advocacy;
- Knowledge of international legal and policy matters relating to human rights, particularly the promotion and protection of human rights defenders;
- Strong knowledge of regional human rights mechanisms in Africa, especially the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- Knowledge of the national legal frameworks in Africa;
- Experience in carrying out and/or using legal research, ideally in a human rights context;
- Experience working on issues affecting civic space and human rights defenders in Africa, including restrictive legislation;
- Experience developing, organising and delivering trainings and consultation workshops;
- Attention to detail and ability to easily communicate legal and technical information orally and in writing;
- Ability to work cooperatively internally and externally with different stakeholders and people from diverse backgrounds;
- Excellent ability to represent ISHR externally, including in a diplomatic context, in governmental and other discussions;
- Ability to plan and prioritise work, including when under pressure, and to ensure that deadlines are met;
- Project management experience;
- Ability to effectively work remotely and independently;
- Excellent level of written, spoken and legal proficiency in English and French;

- A strong commitment to, and passion for, the principles and practice of human rights;
- A commitment to contributing to ISHR's work on transparency and rule of law, including through solidarity and support to defenders working to promote transparency, to combat corruption, and to safeguard and strengthen laws and institutions that protect defenders and promote democracy, accountability and the rule of law;
- A strong interest and relevant experience in another core ISHR programme area - [Equality, dignity and non-discrimination](#); [Environmental justice and sustainability](#); and [International accountability](#).

Desirable

- Fluency in a language spoken in Africa other than French or English such as Portuguese, Arabic, Swahili etc.

Remuneration

The monthly remuneration for this position ranges from EUR 3'000.00 to EUR 3'500.00 (depending on qualifications, experience and location in Africa).

Equal opportunity

ISHR is firmly committed to having a diverse team and to the principle of equal employment opportunity. ISHR's policy is to practice fair and non-discriminatory recruitment and selection procedures and strive for diverse, international and multicultural personnel.

We welcome all kinds of diversity. Applications are encouraged from all qualified candidates without distinction including on grounds of race, colour, national origin, age, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or sex characteristics, pregnancy, genetic information, protected veteran status, socio-economic status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

We particularly welcome applications from systematically, historically and/or traditionally discriminated against groups, including Africans and persons of African descent, women, persons of colour, LGBTIQ+ persons, persons with disabilities and other groups.

To request reasonable accommodation to participate in the job application or interview process, please contact ISHR's Human Resources department at hr@ishr.ch.

Applications

Please submit your application by filling out [this form](#) and attaching **a cover letter, a CV (no profile picture please) and one writing sample**. All applications will be handled in accordance with ISHR's [Privacy Policy](#).

Applications will close on 02.03.2025 (midnight Geneva time).

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please note that due to the high volume of applications, only short-listed candidates will be contacted.