

Legal Officer

Reports to: Senior Legal Counsel
Salary: £24,240-30,300
Contract: One year; 37.5 hours per week

The Media Legal Defence Initiative is a charity that helps journalists worldwide defend their rights. We provide support for the defence of journalists and independent media outlets, and we do so by providing finance as well as by helping develop legal arguments and providing substantive legal support. We are recruiting for a Legal Officer to strengthen our team. This is an exciting opportunity to join a young organisation and help build it to become a leader in the legal defence of journalists worldwide.

Role summary

Working under the direct supervision of the Senior Legal Counsel, the Legal Officer will assist in the legal defence of journalists whose cases are supported by MLDI and in the administration of legal defence projects run by MLDI and its partner organisations. The Legal Officer will assist the Senior Legal Counsel in providing the required support for these cases and also assist with the litigation of MLDI's strategic cases. The portfolio will consist of a mix of high profile strategic cases as well as the defence of other legal threats against journalists on which the Legal Officer will be expected to work with a high degree of autonomy. In addition, the Legal Officer will assist with legal research and administrative tasks related to MLDI's work.

The successful candidate will be highly motivated and excited by the opportunity to be part of a young organisation and to help bolster its emerging reputation in the field. He or she will be able to work in a fast-paced environment in which they will be expected to produce high-quality output at a consistent rate on a variety of issues.

Main responsibilities

The Legal Officer's main tasks and responsibilities will include the following:

Litigation and case support

- Assisting in the handling of requests for support and advice from individual journalists, media outlets and NGOs, and preparing case assessments
- Writing and/or editing briefs and other litigation materials as required
- Research on comparative and international law on freedom of expression and related issues
- Assisting in the preparation of amicus briefs, or arranging for international observation of selected cases
- Undertaking legal and factual research
- Reviewing proposed legal arguments together with the Senior Legal Counsel

- Following up on cases and analysing case outcomes and arguments made
- Helping to identify cases for international litigation and writing legal memos in preparation

Project management

- Assisting in the administration of specific projects run by MLDI and its partner organisations
- Assisting in the administration of grants
- Producing internal reports on the performance of grants

Other

- Helping maintain contacts with pro bono lawyers and other MLDI partners
- Helping maintain MLDI's cases and grants database
- Undertaking research on the legal environment in different countries
- Assisting in the preparation of MLDI's litigation plan and other litigation materials as required
- Developing work plans for interns and supervising their day-to-day activities
- Assisting with the development of training materials and presentations
- Assisting in the preparation of a monthly report on activities
- Providing material for the MLDI website as needed

Qualifications, skills and experience

The Legal Officer should have the following qualifications, skills and experience:

- Right to work in the UK
- Qualified lawyer, or an advanced law degree
- At least 2 years of experience working as a lawyer, preferably in human rights or media law
- Experience of working in different legal systems would be an advantage
- A good understanding of the international law of freedom of expression
- Fluency in English with excellent writing and editorial skills
- Good working knowledge (spoken and written) of French would be a significant advantage; a good working knowledge (spoken and written) of Russian or Spanish would be an advantage
- Demonstrated ability to work in a diverse multi-cultural environment
- Ability to manage effectively multiple cases and projects in a fast-paced environment
- Proven ability to work in a small team
- Pleasant, diplomatic manner and disposition in interacting with senior management and colleagues at all levels, contacts, and the general public
- Ability to work both independently and with others
- Integrity, professional discretion and ability to handle confidential matters

Familiarity with any of the geographic regions in which MLDI works is a plus.

Candidates should send a CV, writing sample and covering letter, including two references, to recruitment@mediadefence.org, quoting "MLDI – LO" in the subject line.

Closing date: 26 January 2013. Interviews will be held during the first two weeks of February. Only candidates short-listed for interview will be contacted. Please note that this job has been advertised before; if you have already applied, there is no need to do so again.