
Job Description and Person Specification

Job title:	Lead Lawyer - Africa Death Penalty Team
Reports to:	Head of Death Penalty Projects – Africa and South East Asia
Salary:	£52,088, plus up to 5% employee matched pension contribution
Date call released:	9 May 2025
Deadline for applications:	8 June 2025
Start date:	ASAP
Duration and hours:	This is a full-time role, on a one-year fixed term contract, with the possibility to extend, subject to funding. The contract is based on a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. Our core working hours are 9.30am-5.30pm Monday to Friday. Due to the global and sometimes urgent nature of Reprieve's work, flexibility outside of, or in addition to, these hours will sometimes be required.

About Reprieve

Reprieve works with the most disenfranchised people in society. Our aim is simple: to consign the death penalty and abuses carried out in the name of “counter-terrorism” or “national security” to history, drawing public and political attention to these past harms with a view to preventing them from occurring again.

In our view, you can best judge a society by how it treats prisoners, criminal defendants, and the far-flung targets of an ever-changing counter-terror policy. To us, the rule of law means little if we selectively apply it to people we agree with. It is for all of us. Liberty is always eroded at the margins.

Reprieve's staff is made up of courageous and committed human rights defenders. Founded in 1999, we provide free legal and investigative support to people facing the death penalty and those victimised by states' abusive counter-terror policies – rendition, torture, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killing.

We fight our clients' cases in courts around the world; investigate their mistreatment; and advocate on their behalf, encouraging public and political debate of human rights issues.

Reprieve's main office is in Aldgate, London, UK. Reprieve also supports full-time Fellows, who work as lawyers, investigators and campaigners in the countries in which we work. We work closely with a number of partner organisations in jurisdictions all over the world, who provide access to clients, expertise, knowledge and guidance on specific issues or regions. We work in cooperation with relevant government officials, individual lawyers and human rights defenders, as well as individual, corporate and foundation funders to further the cause of our shared goals.

Reprieve works in close partnership with its independent sibling organisation Reprieve US. This collaboration is mutually beneficial to both Reprieve and Reprieve US as it enables each organisation to work more effectively and take advantage of the strategic locations to increase the impact of our work.

Reprieve is an equal opportunity employer and we particularly welcome applicants from Black and minority ethnic communities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and those with disabilities. Reprieve is committed to fighting racism and advancing racial justice, both in our work and within Reprieve. For more information, please see our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#). You can also [read more about our recruitment process](#).

Regional context

There is a trend toward the abolition of the death penalty in Africa. In recent years, countries across the continent have taken the decision to limit the application of the death penalty or to abolish it altogether. This has been seen as a turning away from old laws and systems that were imposed by former colonial governments, which obstructed alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and were designed to remove discretion from the local judiciary. African lawyers and judges are now at the forefront of a wave of progressive jurisprudence on issues related to the death penalty including methods of executions, torture, sentencing practice, conditions of confinement, and intersections of gender, disability, and socioeconomic status with criminal justice. This jurisprudence has become a model for the international movement to limit the death penalty and is being held up as best practice in jurisdictions around the world.

About you

You will be enthusiastic about working for an organisation with Reprieve's mission and vision. You will be committed to ending the death penalty. You will be excited to work with and learn from a group of legal experts and NGO partners from Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya to collaboratively achieve this goal.

You will be a qualified lawyer who is most comfortable when collaborating with a team to generate and iterate legal strategy and argumentation. You will be comfortable managing multiple well-established casework streams, each with shifting priorities, and you will have the skills necessary to line manage and support a team addressing an extensive portfolio of work. Your organisational and case management skills will lend themselves to guiding the team to set clear goals, from which you will create action plans, manage implementation, and monitor outcomes in both casework and advocacy projects.

You take a client-centred approach to legal work and are committed to zealously representing your client's interests. You are motivated to work with the team to brainstorm creative solutions to complex legal challenges and barriers to justice, and will be confident and responsible in testing novel approaches in an ongoing attempt to create better pathways to justice. You will be responsible for managing and coordinating extensive litigation in domestic and international courts, and as such will have substantial experience with investigation, litigation, and client-facing legal work, as well as with the advocacy in public and political settings that complements this work.

You will be an experienced line manager who is excited to apply and develop your management skills to support colleagues in London, Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya. You will be enthusiastic and proactive, and enjoy the challenge of project managing the work of the team across a broad set of activities, sometimes working to tight deadlines dictated by case developments. You will be happy to chip in and support with tasks big and small, and will model this positive, diligent approach to the team.

You are a fantastic communicator with brilliant organisational skills and practices, which in combination will provide the team with clear guidance to operate smoothly and effectively across continents and time zones. You will be someone who wants to work in an organisation that values the contributions of all staff, and who will work to foster a collaborative and positive working environment within the team and across the wider organisation. You will model respect, professionalism and engagement in your written and verbal interactions with all colleagues.

In coordinating your teams' work, you will collaborate closely with Reprieve's Joint Executive Directors, Directors, Deputy Directors, and the Head of Death Penalty Projects Africa and South East Asia.

A relevant legal qualification is essential. We welcome candidates with direct experience and / or deep understanding of the issues affecting our client base.

About the Role

The Lead Lawyer - Africa Death Penalty Team is responsible for coordinating Reprieve's litigation and advocacy in Sub-Saharan Africa. At the moment, the team works on death penalty casework and abolition advocacy in Malawi, Tanzania, and Kenya.

Our casework includes work on appeals to the Malawi Supreme Court of Appeal in the context of historic denials of a right to appeal and related contextual challenges; large-scale projects, such as the Kenya resentencing project, wherein we support stakeholders to ensure 5,000+ people are able to access a chance at reducing their sentence from death via a new sentence hearing, as well as supporting on individual strategic resentencing cases; and long-term regional projects, such as our strategic litigation before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, which challenges the mandatory death penalty, torture, and other associated violations of the African Charter. This is an opportunity to join a team that has developed groundbreaking work with great success in getting people off death row, making significant contribution to legal reforms and towards abolition.

You will share our commitment to fighting against racism and advancing racial justice, and understand our responsibility to do our work in a way that does not compound racist structures.

Responsibilities of the Role

Team Management

- Work with the Head of Death Penalty Projects – Africa and South East Asia to ensure processes and structures already in place are followed,

suggesting improvements where required, in order to enable teams to work most effectively

- Ensure teams have excellent systems in place to communicate clearly with all relevant external and internal stakeholders and to manage those relationships as efficiently and effectively as possible
- Liaise closely with partners and pro bono lawyers supporting on casework and advocacy
- Ensure meeting notes and actions are promptly and accurately recorded and tracked
- Support the Head of the team to implement the operational strategy, by organising regular brainstorming, maintaining databases, and documenting the operational plan for the teams
- As required, line manage key team members to deliver the work effectively, including experienced legal and advocacy fellows and consultants working in country, as well as post-graduate legal fellows
- Create and maintain up-to-date casework and project documentation and case trackers in order to monitor project effectiveness and sharing findings with relevant sections of the organisation.

Casework and Project Management - coordinate and support the teams in their work in the following areas:

- *Litigation:*
 - Managing a caseload that includes casework on three levels: 1) supporting large scale justice projects such as a resentencing project in Kenya that will enable 5,000+ eligible people formerly sentenced to death to seek new sentences, 2) supporting strategic litigation in cases that will impact a group of people, such as a case to ensure gender-sensitive mitigation is introduced at trial, and 3) supporting individuals in trials, appeals, and other procedures to challenge death sentences
 - For all three levels of casework, assisting in drafting and reviewing submissions for domestic and foreign courts, and international legal mechanisms
 - Developing mapping of legal systems and practice and identifying gaps for further research/investigation;
 - Where appropriate, developing and providing training, resources, and case management support for legal partners
 - Devising and supporting fact and mitigation investigation, and based on investigation results, devising robust case theories and litigation strategies
 - Collaborating with local legal experts and counsel of record to develop context-appropriate claims, and coordinating input from experts, pro bono lawyers, and other supportive organisations and individuals.
- *Advocacy:*
 - Drafting and reviewing submissions to various UN mechanisms and bodies that raise key issues relating to our casework
 - Building on our existing international advocacy to produce briefings for and take meetings with key UN and EU officials, and members of the diplomatic corps, as well as managing these advocacy streams

and identifying opportunities to expand them

- Developing advocacy materials and public information including briefings, opinion pieces, media pitches, and letters related to Reprieve's cases and the case for abolition
- Overseeing engagement with key partners in abolition advocacy, including policy makers, civil society, and communities impacted by the death penalty
- Collaborating closely with other members of the organization including policy, media, and campaigns to advance advocacy objectives for the Africa Death Penalty Team.

Other

- Drafting reports of achievements, casework and public education initiatives for funders, and developing and implementing systems for gathering the information required for such reports
- Maintaining and/or monitoring maintenance of databases and developing materials for internal and external use from emerging data
- Coordinate with media, campaigns and policy teams as needed to support/platform existing casework and advocacy
- Contributing to grant development and reporting, fundraising activities or other development needs
- Being an ambassador for Reprieve by representing Reprieve at functions. This may include speaking engagements
- Undertaking special projects from time to time.

Person Specification

CRITERIA	Essential	Desirable
Right to work currently and for the duration of the contract in the UK	✓	
A genuine interest in human rights and a commitment to Reprieve's goals	✓	
Legal qualification and 5+ years' experience working in law, human rights, or a related field	✓	
Brilliant organiser of yourself and others and meticulous time and case management abilities	✓	
Sound judgement and discretion with respect to highly confidential and sensitive information	✓	
High cultural competency, and an awareness and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and orientations	✓	
Flexibility and ability to work extremely well across different teams, and to manage staff in different time zones	✓	
Excellent written communications skills; experience preparing persuasive briefings, both for in-court and for	✓	

out-of-court advocacy		
Substantial, demonstrable professional experience of people and team management and/or complex project or strategic caseload management	✓	
Familiarity with the policy issues relating to the retention and implementation of the death penalty		✓
Familiarity with political and social structures of, and experience living and working in, one or more African countries.		✓
Lived experience or significant experience working with intersectional issues related to the discriminatory application of the death penalty, including gender, physical or mental disability, and poverty.		✓
Experience directly assisting people who have been incarcerated, victims of torture, or trauma		✓

Key Contacts

Reporting to the Head of Death Penalty Projects – Africa and South East Asia, the Lead Lawyer - Africa Death Penalty Team will work closely with our colleagues and partners in Malawi, Tanzania, and Kenya, as well as with Reprieve's Finance, Development, Policy, Media and Campaigns teams, the Deputy Directors, Directors, Reprieve US and others engaged by Reprieve; partner organisations and third party service providers.

Length and Salary

This is a full-time role, on a one-year, fixed-term contract. The annual salary is £52,088 per annum, less any required deductions for income tax and national insurance.

This role is based in Reprieve's London office. Reprieve operates a hybrid working model and we require staff to work 40% of their working hours from the London office and the rest of the week from home. Applicants must have the current right to work in the UK, which will be checked prior to interview.

Your presence is important during core office hours, whether remotely or in the office. You will also be available outside of office hours in the event of an emergency, for example case developments that require urgent action. This is a role that may require travel and work outside of core office hours from time to time.

Reprieve is proud to have an open and transparent pay structure, governed by a 2:1 pay ratio between the highest-paid member of staff and the lowest-paid member of staff. We are a flexible employer and offer a range of non-financial benefits to employees. We welcome applications from a range of backgrounds. [Learn more about Reprieve's salary structure and ethos.](#)

How to apply

To apply, [please download the application form and job description and then upload](#)

[your completed application form](#) by 23:59 BST on 8 June 2025. You also need to [complete a personal details form](#) in order for us to consider your application.

Please note that cover letters, CVs and other documents cannot be considered for this role and should not be submitted. We are also not able to accept applications via email.