

Fellowship Description and Person Specification

Job Title:	Death Penalty Thematic Postgraduate Fellow
Reports to:	Head of or Project Manager in the Casework team
Salary:	\$57,966 annually. The successful candidate will secure a minimum of \$50,000 in institutional funding with the remainder provided by Reprieve US.
Benefits:	Health, dental, and vision insurance as well as vacation time of 25 days per year, plus federal holidays
Deadline for applications:	Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled
Start Date:	Approximately 31 August 2026
Duration:	Applicants are expected to secure institutional funding for a minimum of one year.

About Reprieve US:

Reprieve US is a registered 501(c)(3) assisting victims of extreme human rights abuses carried out by governments. We are made up of lawyers, investigators, and advocates helping people face detention without trial, execution and extra judicial execution. We are a small team but we are fearless in our fight for justice.

We work closely with our sibling organization, Reprieve, a UK charity founded in 1999. Reprieve US uses strategic interventions to end the use of the death penalty globally and to end extreme human rights abuses carried out in the name of “counterterrorism” or “national security”.

About postgraduate fellowships:

For the past two decades, Reprieve and Reprieve US have used a fellowship model to support and work with human rights defenders and their organizations in some of the most challenging jurisdictions in the world – including Indonesia, Pakistan, Yemen, Malawi and the US. Reprieve US’ fellowship program gives fellows the opportunity to be directly involved in ground-breaking human rights work and to work with colleagues and experts around the world. The work of our fellows enables Reprieve US and partners to seize on strategic opportunities and develop projects that have the potential to transform the criminal justice landscape.

Reprieve US invites applicants for a public interest fellowship working across our Death Penalty regional teams beginning in 2026.

Fellows will work from Washington DC and should have the right to work in the US at the time of application and for the duration of their fellowship. Fellows may have the opportunity to travel to a relevant jurisdiction during their fellowship.

Our preference is that postgraduate fellowship awards are transferred to Reprieve for disbursement to fellows, who will join us as staff members. If an awarding body has a policy requiring direct payment to the fellow we are happy to consider this arrangement

on a case-by-case basis. Reprieve has an open and transparent salary structure, governed by a principle that the highest-paid member of staff is paid no more than double the lowest-paid member of staff. Our postgraduate fellow salary is fixed at \$57,966. If fellowship funding falls between \$50,000 and \$57,966 we will top up the amount to meet our fixed salary.

Reprieve US offers staff a broad range of benefits including a generous annual leave allowance of 25 days plus federal holidays and their birthday off. We also provide healthcare and dental to fellows who join us as staff members.

The Death Penalty teams

Reprieve's regional Death Penalty teams work to abolish the death penalty around the world. Our main projects are based in Africa, MENA, South East Asia, South Asia, and the U.S. In each of these countries and regions, we work in close collaboration with local lawyers and human rights campaigners to represent clients in death penalty cases brought in domestic and international courts, and to lobby policymakers to amend laws and policies to prevent death sentences.

Our work is client-centred litigation and advocacy on behalf of individuals who are at risk of a death sentence or who have been sentenced to death. We conduct client interviews and investigations, draft submissions to court, and provide other trial and appellate-based representation. We also conduct out of court advocacy with domestic stakeholders, the United Nations treaty bodies and Special Procedures, the European Union, and with international allies.

In addition to our main focus on the death penalty, common themes of our work include: improving access to fair trial; highlighting discrimination by the justice system against the poor, migrants and foreign nationals, ethnic minorities, and other groups often wrongfully targeted by the justice system; improving prison conditions and treatment; raising awareness, support and treatment for clients with mental illness and intellectual disability; preventing torture and the use of torture-tainted confessions in court; and ensuring fair treatment for women and other disadvantaged groups in prison.

Our team is made up of colleagues in Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Malawi, Kenya, the UK, the EU, and the US. We work collaboratively, and divide up responsibilities such that all team members have significant responsibility for key parts of casework and advocacy. We generally work remotely from one another, but are fortunate to be able to travel to visit clients and meet our partners in person relatively regularly.

Death Penalty Thematic Postgraduate Fellow – Responsibilities

This fellowship will provide an opportunity at Reprieve to work thematically across death penalty teams, engaging with regional programmes but focusing on the trends emerging across the international death penalty landscape. This will include engaging international legal mechanisms such as the regional courts in Africa and the UN Special Procedures, along with carrying out research on thematic legal issues, such as the abolition of the death penalty for certain offences, exploring alternative sentencing for serious crimes, and supporting casework investigations.

Fellows can expect to:

- Work closely with death penalty teams to track progress and challenges arising relating to the core themes of our work so that we can identify opportunities for strategic intervention;
- Conduct legal and/or factual research and analysis and develop theories to support new litigation projects and advocacy strategies;
- Draft memoranda and briefings for internal and external audiences;
- Drafting submissions for domestic and international courts and tribunals;
- Maintain trackers and tools to identify opportunities for international advocacy, including before the UN, regional human rights mechanisms, and target governments.
- Draft submissions to UN bodies and Special Procedures and, as needed, preparing colleagues to present these submissions in oral hearings;
- Participate in team and office meetings and prepare summaries for these;
- Prepare interview questions, investigations plans, and conduct interviews with clients, witnesses and people who the team assists, as needed;
- Draft and edit non-litigation advocacy materials for internal and external audiences;
- Develop and support media output;
- Collaborate with international stakeholders, experts, and partners, including having regular meetings, leading initiatives, and convening coalitions to support issues and submissions as needed;
- Work in close collaboration with our colleagues and partners in country, including through regular meetings, collaborating on drafting, and brainstorming strategy for casework and abolition;
- Feed into strategy and provide ideas and feedback for ways to improve our work;
- Assist with administration for casework: filing, taking minutes, arranging meetings; and
- Attend in-person meetings when opportunities arise and be an ambassador for Reprieve US and its partner organizations.

This job description provides a general but not comprehensive list of the essential responsibilities and qualifications that may be required. It does not represent a contract of employment. Reprieve US reserves the right to change the job description and/or posting at any time without advance notice.

Person Specification

Applicants should demonstrate the skills and experience below:

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
The right to live and work in the US currently and for the duration of the fellowship	✓	
Excellent research and writing skills	✓	
Excellent interpersonal skills and judgement	✓	
Comfort and confidence in working efficiently with limited supervision	✓	
Analytical and investigative skills	✓	

Knowledge of prison conditions, rights of incarcerated people and/or human rights, related frameworks and institutions		✓
Interest in anti-death penalty, anti-torture, and access to justice issues	✓	
A commitment to the mission of Reprieve US	✓	

How to apply

Please submit a letter of interest of no more than 2 pages detailing your experience and motivations in applying for the Death Penalty Thematic postgraduate fellowship position, and a resumé. Please ensure your letter of interest details how you meet the criteria above and includes details of your proposed funding source, the funding amount, and funding application deadlines.

Your resumé should include a contact number and your address. Please send documents in PDF format to applications@reprieve.org.uk with "Death Penalty Thematic postgraduate fellowship- your name" as the subject line.

Please note that Reprieve US has a Safeguarding Policy. We will ask candidates prior to making an offer if there are any issues that may impact their ability to effectively carry out this role

Once applications are submitted they will be assessed by our fellowships panel. Applicants are invited to attend two rounds of online interviews before an offer for a postgraduate fellowship is made. Offers are dependent on successful applications for funding. If an offer is made and accepted we will work with the prospective fellow on their funding applications.