

Fellowship Description and Person Specification

Job Title:	Human Rights and National Security Postgraduate Fellow
Reports to:	Head of Unlawful Detentions 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 with teams working to address human rights violations committed in the name of national security 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.

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.

Background on human rights violations committed in the name of national security

Reprieve works all over the world to support people who endure human rights violations carried out in the name of “counter-terrorism” or “national security”. These include torture, arbitrary detention, and extrajudicial executions.

Notably we were one of the very first organisations allowed inside Guantánamo. Since then, we have secured freedom for more than 80 men illegally detained without charge or trial in Guantánamo, and we continue to support some of these men through our Life After Guantánamo project. Having survived torture and indefinite detention, these individuals have an absolute right to redress, reparations, and rehabilitation and, where possible, we support them to seek accountability.

Building on that expertise, Reprieve is now at the forefront of advocating on behalf of foreign national men, women, and children detained without charge or trial in camps and prisons in North East Syria, for suspected association with ISIS. We aim to ensure that detained individuals are treated in line with international law, and not subjected to the death penalty, extrajudicial execution, arbitrary detention, torture, or rendition.

Reprieve also works to ensure states, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States, are held accountable for complicity in human rights violations in the name of national security and in the imposition of the death penalty. In this respect, we are working to see an absolute prohibition on the sharing of intelligence where there is a real risk of torture or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment. We are also calling for reform of policies to mitigate the risk of complicity in human right abuses, where the UK is providing security and justice assistance to other states.

Violations in the name of national security also feature in our 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 some of these regions, the death penalty remains a tool used by governments to exert control on the population and stifle dissent, particularly targeting human rights defenders, protestors, dissidents, and political opponents.

Human Rights and National Security Postgraduate Fellow - Responsibilities

This fellowship will provide an opportunity to work thematically across teams, engaging with casework teams but also focusing on national security trends and cross-team issues. This may include supporting domestic litigation and also engaging with international legal and human rights mechanisms; carrying out research on thematic legal issues, such as jurisdiction and third country responsibility for human rights violations; and supporting casework investigations.

Fellows can expect to:

- Work closely with teams working for clients experiencing serious violations of their human rights in the name of national security;
- 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 research and submissions for domestic and international courts and tribunals, and UN bodies and Special Procedures;
- Maintain trackers and tools to identify opportunities for international advocacy, including before the UN, EU, regional human rights mechanisms, and target governments;
- Participate in team and office meetings and assist with preparation, summaries, and follow-up;
- Assist in investigating client cases and background creating an evidentiary base sufficient for litigation and advocacy;
- Draft and edit non-litigation advocacy materials for internal and external audiences;
- Feed into strategy and provide ideas and feedback for ways to improve our work; and,
- Assist with administration for casework: filing, taking minutes, arranging meetings.

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 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	✓	
Excellent analytical skills	✓	
Familiarity with the policy issues and domestic and international political dynamics underpinning abuses carried out in the national security context		✓
An awareness and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds and orientations	✓	
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 Human Rights and National Security 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 "Human Rights and National Security 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 round 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.