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PRO BONO ON THE MOVE: ISLP VOLUNTEER LAWYERS HEAD TO LIBERIA, SOUTH AFRICA, AFGHANISTAN, STRASBOURG

- n The International Senior Lawyers Project is partnering with the Liberian Ministry of Justice and the Center for Global Development in Washington, D.C., to send three senior legal advisors to the Ministry for an assignment involving both in-country and long distance legal work over the course of a full year. The volunteers will simultaneously assist the Ministry in its work and mentor young Liberian lawyers in the Ministry. ISLP volunteer Bill Gardner is first on the ground in Monrovia, working with the Solicitor General. Mr. Gardner is retired from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, where he founded and chaired the firm's white collar practice. Jeff Wood, a retired Debevoise partner with expertise in corporate finance, will depart this month for the first of his three stints with the Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. A third volunteer in this program will be selected shortly. In addition, Jim Dube of the Canadian firm Blake, Cassels & Graydon returns to the Ministry this April, made possible in part through the generous support of his firm for the second year in a row. (Read Jim's feature in the [Globe & Mail](#)).
- n Maine volunteer Joel Martin arrived in South Africa three weeks ago to begin a 3-month project with the University of Pretoria, providing concentrated training in human rights trial advocacy skills to LL.M. students from across the continent - the next generation of African human rights lawyers. He is also leading a group of clinical students in drafting a petition that will be submitted in May to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- n Washington DC-area volunteer Allen Keese is spending 6 weeks in Kabul working with an Afghani human rights organization on a detailed, independent evaluation of its legal aid program. The group has provided legal assistance to more than 4,000 victims, predominantly women, of human rights violations.
- n ISLP volunteer and board member Natasha Lisman recently spent 4 weeks in Strasbourg, France working with a leading Russian human rights lawyer who coordinates and supervises nearly 200 cases against Russia in the European Court of Human Rights. Ms. Lisman, a Russian-speaking litigator with Boston law firm Sugarman, Rogers, Barshak & Cohen, worked on an emergency action brought on behalf of political dissident Gary Kasparov; a case brought by the families of Chechens who disappeared during the war in Chechnya; a media law case; and a case involving the death of hostages inside a Moscow theater (the 2002 "Nord-Ost" siege) after police gassed and stormed the building. This ongoing project is made possible by a grant from the Ernst C. Stiefel Foundation.

Our sincere thanks also to the many individuals whose donations help support these and other ISLP global projects.

PRIVYET Russian Speakers! ISLP seeks senior litigators with Russian fluency for pro bono work on human rights cases before the European Court (see above) and other work in Russia. Work onsite in Strasbourg or provide vital legal assistance from home or office. Interested? Email ISLP's [Volunteer Coordinator](#).

FIRESTONE AGREEMENTS FINALIZED IN LIBERIA

ISLP volunteer and board member Joe Bell and colleagues at the firm of Hogan & Hartson assisted the Liberian Ministry of Agriculture and the Office of the President in a 12 month renegotiation of the Firestone Rubber concession agreement, the results of which were publicly announced in January by the President in her state of the nation speech. The amended agreement provides a significantly more favorable fiscal regime, gives the government more flexibility in its future operations, confirms additional investment, and improves and elaborates a number of social obligations dealing with education, employment, housing and health.

Note: Check out this upcoming documentary on Liberian President Ellen John Sirleaf's first year in office, "Iron Ladies of Liberia":
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/ironladies/film.html>

ISLP AND PARTNERS CONVENE SUMMIT ON SOUTH AFRICAN COMMERCIAL LAW OPPORTUNITIES

ISLP, the South Africa Black Lawyers Association, the Senior Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association, the Johannesburg law firm Brink Cohen Le Roux and the Mandela Institute at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg are coordinating to present a [3-day conference March 3-5, 2008](#), funded by the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#). Day 1 of the conference will assess ISLP's four year old commercial law training program in South Africa and its role in helping foster commercial law opportunities. Day 2 explores the opportunities and challenges for historically-disadvantaged South African attorneys to practice commercial law, and Day 3 includes a roundtable discussion on initiatives to make such services by black attorneys available to small and medium-sized businesses. Conference participants include instructors and certificate recipients from past ISLP commercial law education programs, South African government officials; commercial law practitioners; and business and financial sector leaders. For more information, contact ISLP Deputy Director Anna Shakarova at 212-895-1359.

TRIAL MONITORING: ALBERTO FUJIMORI AND CHARLES TAYLOR TRIALS

Alberto Fujimori, the former President of Peru, is currently on trial in Lima, charged with sanctioning the death-squad killings of 25 people. It is the first wholly national trial of its kind - taking place in Peruvian courts applying domestic Peruvian law. Meanwhile, Charles Taylor, former oppressive ruler of Liberia, is standing trial for war crimes committed during Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war.

ISLP volunteers are helping shine a spotlight on these prosecutions by providing daily commentary on the proceedings through an innovative use of weblogs. Partnering with the [Praxis Institute for Social Justice](#), with the generous support of the [Open Society Institute](#), ISLP sent volunteer Jim Manahan, a practicing lawyer from Minnesota with extensive trial advocacy skills training experience, to Lima to contribute to the Fujimori trial [bilingual blog](#). Jim will stay through May 2008 monitoring the trial, training the team on trial monitoring, and posting daily blog entries and legal analysis.

See why the AP, LeMonde, BBC, AllAfrica and other international media follow the daily happenings of the [Charles Taylor trial](#) on the blog created by ISLP, [OSI](#), and the [Open Society Justice Initiative](#). Lawyers from global law firm Clifford Chance are providing top-quality daily monitoring of the trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

LAW FIRM PRO BONO

Many thanks to the following firms who have recently undertaken these ISLP pro bono projects:

- n Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld - trade negotiation training in Rwanda and Liberian concession agreement renegotiation
- n Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson - organizational assistance to [The CO2 Offset Trust](#)
- n Latham & Watkins' Brussels office - trade negotiation training in Rwanda
- n Levine Sullivan Koch & Schulz - review of oil/gas revenue transparency report
- n Morrison & Foerster - organizational assistance to [Children of Tomorrow](#)
- n Proskauer Rose's Paris Office - cases in the European Court of Human Rights
- n Shearman & Sterling - organizational assistance to [Friends of FOKAL](#)
- n Weil, Gotshal & Manges - trade negotiation training in Zambia

Want more? Read ISLP's 2007 project summary on our website: www.islp.org