



20 Years of Innovating to Meet the Emerging Needs of Migrants Seeking Justice Across Borders

2005

Justice in Motion – then called Global Workers Justice Alliance – was founded to combat the crisis of abused migrant workers being shut out of the U.S. justice system when they returned to their home countries.

In a statement to the United Nations Committee on Migrant Workers, Justice in Motion coined the term **portable justice**—the right and ability for migrants to access justice across borders.

2008

Locally-led human rights organizations and lawyers from Southern Mexico and Guatemala gathered at our first convening in Chiapas, Mexico to explore how to ensure portable justice for migrants from their region. From that first convening, the Defender Network was born.

2013

We expanded the Defender Network to reach migrants in Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

2014
-2016

Overwhelmed by the crisis of unaccompanied children crossing the U.S. southern border, U.S. immigration lawyers asked if the Defender Network could help. **Recognizing that we could achieve an impact far beyond justice for workers, we expanded our mission and rebranded as Justice in Motion.**

2018

When the U.S. government forcibly separated close to 5,000 children from their parents at the U.S. border without a plan or intent to reunite them, we mounted an on-the-ground response to find and support the over 1,000 parents who were deported without their children.

2020

We launched the Child Detention Crisis Initiative so advocates in the U.S. could engage Defenders to collect the information needed to quickly free children from immigration detention.

2024

This year, Justice in Motion delivered portable justice for over 3,300 migrants, trained governments to protect their citizens from labor abuse, advocated for migrant rights with federal agencies and in the halls of Congress, and strengthened a network of locally-led human rights organizations and independent lawyers across Mexico and Northern Central America.

