

Mexico City, July 2023

Dear IMUMI Supporters,

We are reaching out to thank you for your continued support of IMUMI's team and the women in migration that we accompany. While we have had a challenging 2022 and first half of 2023, the families that we accompany inspire us to continue advocating for the rights of women migrants, asylum seekers and their families in our region. IMUMI advances access to justice in Mexico by ensuring that migrant women's experiences and voices are included in debates, litigation, and advocacy regardless of their nationality, migration status, socio-economic situation, age, sexual diversity, or the color of their skin.

Our team of 30 lawyers, psychologists, policy, and communication strategists are working at the intersection of U.S. and Mexican migration law and policy. If women and their families need to seek protection in Mexico, we can help. If they are fleeing violence or political threats and need to seek protection in the U.S., we can provide advice regarding current policies at the border. If women victims of violence have been deported to Mexico from the U.S., if they need help with family re-unification or to obtain documentation for their children, we understand the system and can assist.

Reading about migration in the media can be frustrating with a highly politicized U.S.-Mexico border, confusing statistics that focus on how many people are crossing and how many have been detained, and little focus on people's stories. However, if you zoom out and think about migration as a permanent occurrence, the perspective changes from a problem to an opportunity for public policy reform to improve access to resources and justice across borders.

No politician will be able to solve or end migration, only address it differently. People will continue to move to places where they are safe, have work and can unite with their families, but they are also voting with their feet, asking governments to pay attention to the conditions in their countries of origin and what destination countries have done historically, or currently, to contribute to those situations.



If you zoom in, you meet incredible human beings every day that are risking their lives to help their children escape violence, poverty, or the effects of climate change. In IMUMI we are privileged to meet these people and help find solutions within the regional legal framework. This is the hands-on, day to day work.

IMUMI also works on long-term strategies to decrease violence against women migrants and refugees, and their families, and increase integration opportunities in Mexico. These strategies align with those that our governments have committed to in agreements such as the U.N. Global Compact on Migration and the L.A. Declaration for Migration and Protection: increase regular pathways for migrants, expand protection for asylum seekers and decrease migrant smuggling.

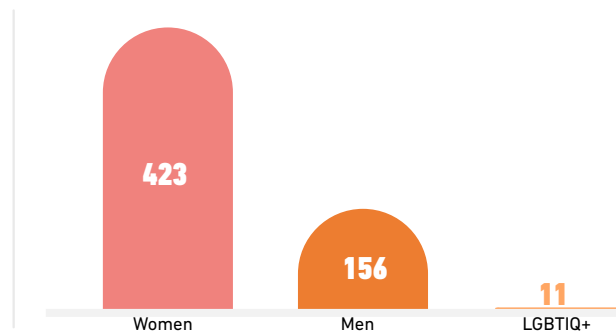
During our strategic planning in 2022, the IMUMI team defined two principal objectives that guide our mission to advocate for the rights of women in migration in the Mexican context: 1) Improve access to international protection and migration documentation for women migrants, asylum seekers and their families, and 2) Promote access to family unity, identity and education for women and their families impacted by migration. The methodologies to achieve this work include direct legal representation, research, monitoring and documentation, policy advocacy, strategic litigation, and communication. We work closely with ally organizations, including individual organizations and networks throughout the Americas.

This newsletter is divided into a brief summary followed by a more in-depth update of our work during 2022 - June 2023.

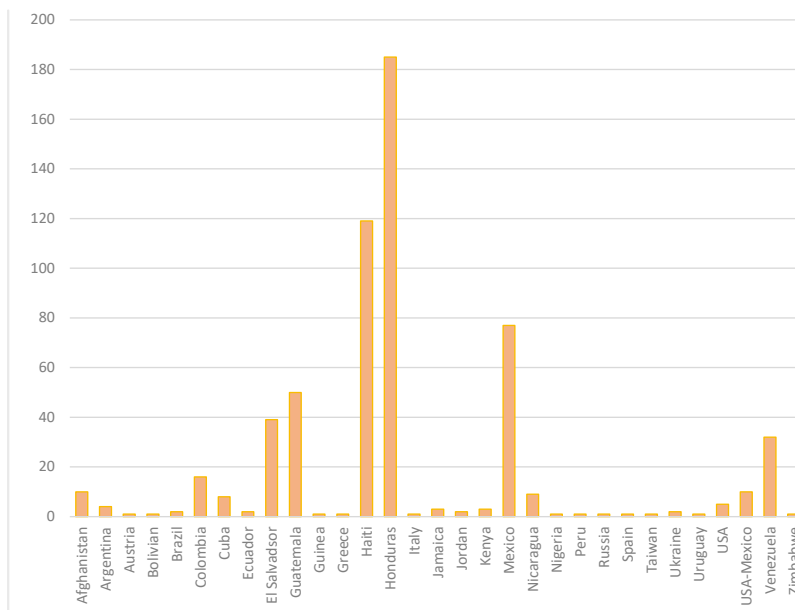
BRIEF OVERVIEW OF 2022

IMUMI provided direct legal representation to 590 women and their families, unaccompanied migrant children, and the LGBTQ community. In addition, 717 people benefitted indirectly. Cases ranged from women requesting asylum in Mexico, family re-unifications between Mexico and the U.S., Title 42 exemptions, supporting Venezuelan Humanitarian Program beneficiaries, and transnational custody cases.

Cases 2022 (January – December)



Cases by nationality 2022



We won two of our strategic litigation cases before the Mexican Supreme Court (SC) in collaboration with the Human Rights Clinic of the Mexican National Autonomous University (UNAM).

- » In the first case the SC declared that checkpoints to detain migrants within Mexico are unconstitutional because they are discriminatory, migration agents use racial profiling to “identify” migrants, and questioning Mexican nationals about their migration status violates their right to free transit and privacy. The decision creates a new opportunity to advocate for legislative reform and a profound change in the way that immigration enforcement is conducted in Mexico. Implementation would lead to reduced extortion and abuse of migrants moving through Mexico, reduce smuggling and force the government to create alternative practices to detain irregular migrants and evaluate protection and regularization procedures at the 194 international entry points. This was the first case in the history of the SC to examine issues of racial profiling in Mexico.
- » In the second case, the SC found that the Mexican Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry and the National Institute for Women violated the constitution by failing to publish a policy when it agreed to receive asylum seekers under the Remain in Mexico program between 2019-2022, without publishing a policy explaining what would happen to people waiting in Mexico for months or even years, while their U.S. asylum cases were pending in the U.S. We are using this ground-breaking resolution as the basis to litigate against Mexico’s acceptance of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans deported back to Mexico under Title 8 and the new Asylum Ban.



IMUMI's team for migrant children continued to train child protection officials to implement policies that prohibit the detention of migrant children and their families and require evaluations of each child's situation, including the possibility to return to family in the country of origin, live in Mexico in a long-term shelter or with a foster family, or to be re-united with family members in the U.S. or other countries. IMUMI worked through a consortium with Asylum Access, International Detention Coalition (IDC) and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) through a project supported by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migrants which ends in October 2023. In addition to training, the team lawyer assisted 61 cases of migrant children, some of whom remained in Mexico, others who were able to re-unite with family members in the U.S. and some who were returned to family members in their country of origin.





Public policy advocacy in 2022 focused on increasing access to Mexican nationality registration for children born in the U.S. to a Mexican parent. Through a network of organizations working on access to identity documents for migrants – Group on Identity and Education (GIE) – the organizations prepared a legal analysis of current barriers and presented a technical proposal to eliminate the apostille requirement for the Mexican nationality registration process. The legislative initiative will be taken up by Congress in September 2023. If passed, the more than 700,000 U.S. born children and adolescents living in Mexico (with a Mexican parent) will be able to register their Mexican nationality through a free and simplified procedure that will facilitate access to public services in Mexico.

Finally, IMUMI received two prestigious awards in 2022, the Alfonso García Robles Award for the protection of migrant human rights from the UNAM, and the Mexican Center for Philanthropy for IMUMI’s commitment to helping others.

IMUMI'S WORK IN 2022- 2023



Context Externalization of U.S. Migration Policy

Since 2019, with the implementation of Remain in Mexico (Migration Protection Protocol – MPP), our work has been impacted by U.S. externalization of migration policies (moving migration enforcement beyond U.S. borders). For example, in January 2022, the U.S. pressured Mexico to impose a visa requirement for Venezuelans, closing off travel for most Venezuelans who could come to visit their families in Mexico, or enter Mexico as tourists and adjust their status once in Mexico. Now Venezuelans who could safely fly to Mexico are forced to walk through 7 countries, including the deadly Darien Gap in Panama. Externalization also affects our clients who are identified by “[CBP Mentors](#)” in the Mexico City Airport and escorted to INM officials. These CBP agents, who are dressed as civilians, work in tandem with INM agents to “identify” migrants, many of whom have valid tourist visas, who are traveling on domestic flights from Mexico City to certain cities along the northern border.

Due to externalization policies, we have represented asylum seekers under MPP, helped clients reach the U.S. when MPP was ended the first time, and worked on exemptions under Title 42 through December 2022. When the Biden administration announced the humanitarian parole programs in October 2022 for Venezuelans and in January 2023 for Cubans, Haitians, and Nicaraguans, we worked with vulnerable women and families to identify sponsors through [Welcome U.S.](#), before the expiration date for irregular entry to Mexico. Currently we are helping people make appointments to request asylum at the Mexico-U.S. border through the CBP One mobile phone application. With geo-fencing of the application, people can apply for appointments from Mexico City northward. IMUMI has argued that anyone with a CBP One appointment should be allowed by the Mexican government to travel to their appointments at the border without Mexican migration documents. This will save time, resources and many people will take planes to their appointments, rather than land travel where there are more risks involved. In March 2023, the INM issued a [press release](#) stating that people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela can travel in Mexico if they have CBP One appointments. We are advocating for the Mexican Migration Institute to extend the policy to all nationalities.

More than ever, organizations in Mexico need to learn both Mexican migration procedures as well as keep up with U.S. policy changes to provide accurate information to people about their rights and best options in either country, or within the region.

Mexican Asylum Applications and Migration Deterrence Policies

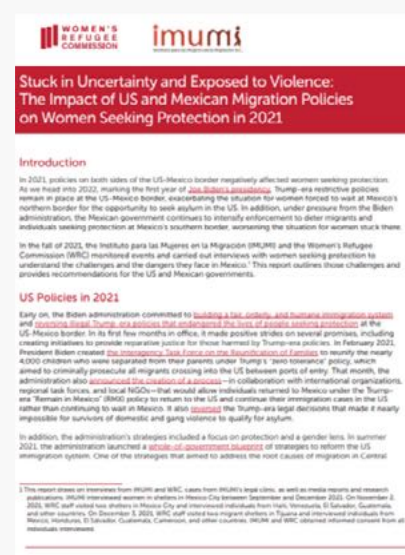


In 2022-2023, the numbers and diversification of the nationalities of asylum seekers arriving in and passing through Mexico City continues to increase. In May 2023, more asylum applications were presented in Mexico City than in the southern Mexican city of Tapachula, Chiapas, leading to overcrowding in the more than 12 migrant shelters in Mexico City. In 2022, 119,000 people requested asylum in Mexico, and between January-May 2023, the COMAR received 63,463 applications. The top 4 nationalities are Haiti (25,802), Honduras (14,391), Cuba (4,215) and Venezuela (3,213).

In 2022, the numbers of detentions by Mexican immigration authorities was the highest ever, at 440,000, 30% of whom were women. However, due to the diversification of nationalities and the elimination of child

and family detention in 2021, the percentage of detained people who are being deported has decreased. This means that more people are circulating within Mexico. To comply with its agreement with the U.S. government to increase deterrence, the INM detains people in the northern part of Mexico and buses or flies them to towns in southern Mexico where they receive a voluntary departure letter, requiring them to leave Mexico across the southern border with Guatemala. Under the new Title 8 deportations, Mexico has flown some deported Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to Tabasco and [Chiapas](#). Many people attempt to travel again, facing extortion and kidnapping along the [way](#). IMUMI has monitored this situation and a group of organizations is preparing litigation against the Mexican government's acceptance of non-Mexican deportees and its nonexistent migration policy.

IMUMI's team continues to monitor the impact of these externalization policies on women migrants and asylum seekers in Mexico. In 2022, we joined organizations in the region to participate in the IX Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles where 20 governments states signed a U.S. led Declaration on Migration and Protection. We organized a panel discussion at the event and visited the southern and northern borders with our colleagues in Women's Refugee Commission to document actions taken by the Mexican government to make the migration journey more difficult, as well as analyzing the discrepancies between the policies that Mexico announced in the context of the L.A. Declaration compared to reality.





I. PROTECTION

Advocate for Access to International Protection and Migration Documentation for Women Migrants, Asylum Seekers and their Families.

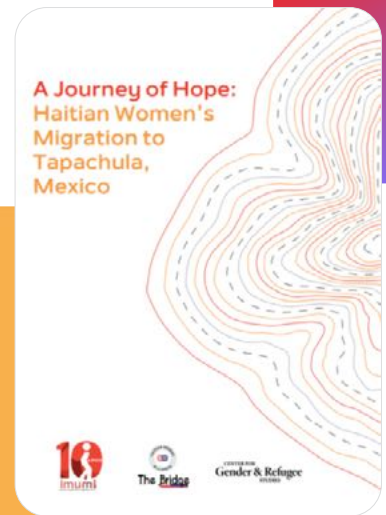
1. IMUMI Ensured that Women Asylum Seekers and their Families in Mexico had Safe Access to Asylum Procedures and Advocated for Gender-Based Violence to be Recognized as a Protection Ground in Resolutions.

In 2020, IMUMI began representing women seeking asylum in Mexico before the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR), the government agency charged with asylum adjudications. Our psychologist provides emotional support throughout their legal process. Since 2020, the Mexican asylum attorney has represented over 250 women and their families and provided information to thousands of people in migrant shelters. The cases have been closely documented to determine the types of gender-based violence that the asylum applicants have experienced. As part of this process, IMUMI analyzed decisions from the COMAR of women whose decisions were based on gender-based violence through access to information requests. This information was published in two reports, one that includes policy recommendations to improve the procedures that the COMAR utilizes to adjudicate cases of women who flee their countries due to gender-based violence. In 2023, IMUMI organized a group with the COMAR and UNHCR to implement the recommendations.



As a result of the increase in Haitian asylum seekers arriving in Mexico, as well as Black migrants from other countries, IMUMI produced two reports on racism and discrimination against these populations in Tapachula, Chiapas at the end of 2019-2021. The [reports](#) were [written](#) by an IMUMI legal fellow and in conjunction with [Haitian Bridge Alliance](#) and [Black Alliance for Immigrant Justice](#) (BAJI). Both reports have been cited extensively in amicus briefs for litigation against Title 42 as well as individual asylum cases of African asylum seekers in the U.S. who traveled through Mexico.

In addition to asylum and humanitarian status cases, IMUMI also assists women migrants and their families with other types of immigration procedures such as family-based visas, temporary and permanent legal status, humanitarian visas and birth registrations before the civil registry.



2. IMUMI Promoted Access to Protection for Women Migrants, Asylum Seekers and their Families in the U.S.

On May 11, the U.S. government finally lifted Title 42, a public health law that former president Trump implemented from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, which had left the Mexico-U.S. border essentially closed to asylum seekers. In 2022, one of the few options to help asylum-seekers was through an exemption program to Title 42 for particularly vulnerable cases including women with small children, the LGBTQ community, people with health issues, and victims of violent crimes in Mexico. From April-December 2022, IMUMI focused on vulnerable women and their families who needed to reach the border from other parts of Mexico in order to cross at the time designated by U.S. officials. This included 195 people from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, Colombia, and Venezuela who were in different parts of Mexico and who had suffered violence by organized crime, kidnapping, gender-based violence, discrimination based on gender identity, and political persecution. People were planning to join family members in Washington, California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Ohio, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana,




Texas, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts -- a testament to the social networks that people have all over the U.S. to support them while they continue their immigration proceedings.



In October 2022 and January 2023, the Biden administration announced a 2-year humanitarian parole program for Venezuelans and then Cubans, Haitians, and Nicaraguans with financial sponsors in the U.S. At the same time the program was launched, Mexico announced that it would accept Venezuelans expelled under Title 42, in addition to Salvadorans, Guatemalans and Hondurans that had been expelled since the beginning of Title 42 in 2020. This sudden decision meant that over 40,000 Venezuelans who were already in Mexico had the door shut on them from one day to the next. The Mexican government began sending expelled Venezuelans back to Mexico City or the southern border, while at the same time people continued to move north from the southern border, converging in Mexico City.

While we participated in the exemption and parole programs and are now helping people apply for CBP One appointments, being allowed to seek asylum should not be limited by a cell phone application as it is guaranteed by U.S. and international law. The Mexican governments' collaboration with the U.S. government to impede access to asylum also violates Mexican law so IMUMI continued to litigate against these policies in Mexican courts. We have two pending lawsuits from 2020 and a new claim filed in October 2022 when Mexico agreed to accept Venezuelans expelled from the U.S. under Title 42 and again when it agreed to accept Nicaraguans, Haitians, and Cubans in January 2023. Unfortunately, even after Title 42 was lifted on May 11th, Mexico agreed to accept deportations of people from those four nationalities under Title 8, so we have once again joined with other organizations to file new claims against this unprecedented policy.

In addition to asylum assistance, our U.S. legal staff helps deported women apply for U and VAWA visas based on violence that they experienced while living in the U.S.



Propuesta de Programa Piloto para aumentar la disponibilidad y flexibilidad de las vías de migración regular a México para mujeres centroamericanas víctimas de violencia de género y sus hijas e hijos

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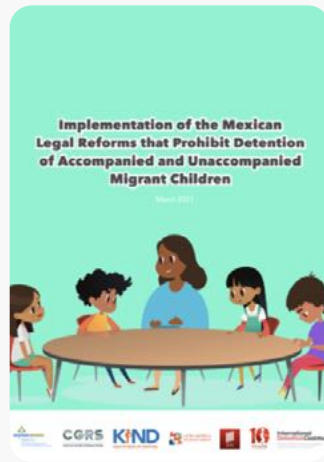
3. IMUMI Advocated to Increase Regular Migration Pathways for Women and their Families.

While IMUMI provides legal assistance to help regularize the status for women who are already in Mexico, we are also constantly thinking of different ways that women can arrive in Mexico with a visa already in hand. Most people in Central America are unable to obtain a visa to travel to Mexico because there is a presumption that people will travel to the U.S. border. Those with any chance of securing a visa for Mexico need to show that they already have a visa to the U.S. As a result, people are forced to travel and migrate irregularly. In 2022, IMUMI conducted research to determine the numbers and types of visas issued in Mexican consulates in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. We found that only 48 humanitarian visas were issued to women through the Mexican consulates in these three countries in a period of 4.5 years. We reviewed the legal framework

and presented a pilot project that could help women victims of gender-based violence receive a visa before entering Mexico that would help them be able to avoid extortion, physical and sexual abuse as an irregular migrant in Mexico and allow them to reach a safe city with assistance in Mexico. IMUMI discussed the policy proposal with organizations that assist women victims of violence in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala and they confirmed the impossibility of working through Mexican embassies in Central America. IMUMI held a webinar with [Pop NO'J](#), [GMIES](#) and [CASM](#) to present the proposal. We also shared the statistics and the proposal with Consular Services of the Foreign Ministry. Implementation of the policy would be a step toward compliance with the Global Compact on Migration and the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration Protection of 2022. In October 2022, IMUMI staff traveled with the Latin American Network (*Bloque Latinoamericano*) to Geneva where they met with UN stakeholders and the Mexican government to discuss advances and challenges to the implementation of the Global Pact on Migration in Latin America, including the need for increased regular pathways between Mexico and Central America.

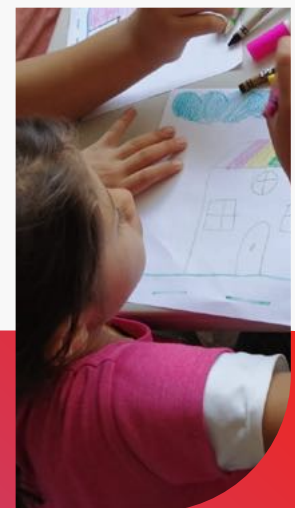


4. IMUMI Advocated for the Elimination of Detention for Migrant Children and their Families through the Implementation of the Child Protection System throughout Mexico.



In January 2021, after 10 years of advocacy, child and family detention was eliminated from the laws in Mexico. Full implementation will take years and IMUMI has been on the frontlines of the process to train Child Protection Offices in 7 different states, working in consortium with our colleagues at [Kids in Need of Defense](#) (KIND), [Asylum Access Mexico](#), and the [International Detention Coalition](#) (IDC). The Consortium was supported through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) for two years between 2021-2023. Like all other long-term strategies, success comes through perseverance – training, providing technical assistance, accompanying cases, and repeat. To strengthen this process IMUMI’s migrant children team designed an online course that has been taken by hundreds of federal and state authorities on good practices for protecting migrant children.

In 2023, the IMUMI’s team for migrant children has collaborated on a project with the Jesuit Service for Refugees and UNICEF to train workers in six migrant shelters in Ciudad Juarez Chihuahua on child abuse prevention and detection. The shelters prepared protocols based on the training to increase safety for children in their shelters. They also published and distributed notebooks for migrant children in Spanish, French and Kryeol, in workshops with children living in shelters in 7 different Mexican states (Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz, CDMX, Baja California, Sonora, and Chihuahua).



5. IMUMI Promoted the Right to Transit within Mexico and the Elimination of Racial Profiling in Internal Migration Checkpoints.

Mexico depends on a system of internal checkpoints to detain migrants instead of checking documents at international ports of entry (airports, land crossings and maritime ports). The government allows migrants to enter irregularly through land crossings along the Mexican border with Guatemala and then proceeds to set up obstacles such as stopping buses at checkpoints on the highways, pursuing high-speed chases after presumed smugglers carrying undocumented migrants (often leading to crashes), requiring migrants to demonstrate immigration status to purchase a bus ticket and checking immigration documents in airports on domestic flights going north.

In 2022, the National Migration Institute began issuing “entry” documents to migrants in southern states that are only valid in that state, so when the migrants leave the state, they are re-detained, and the agents destroy their documents. Agents also detain migrants along the northern border and send them on buses to small cities in the central or southern states, leaving them on the streets. The INM calls these detentions “rescues”, “identifications”, “findings”, “detections” and other euphemisms for depriving people of their liberty. This policy of pursuing and wearing down migrants so that they will give up, get sick, go home, be kidnapped, raped or killed is not only cruel and violates human rights, but also inefficient and leads to discrimination against Mexican nationals, particularly indigenous and Black Mexicans,

who are stopped on buses or pulled over because they “look like migrants”.



Photo. Reuters.



Photo. Reuters.

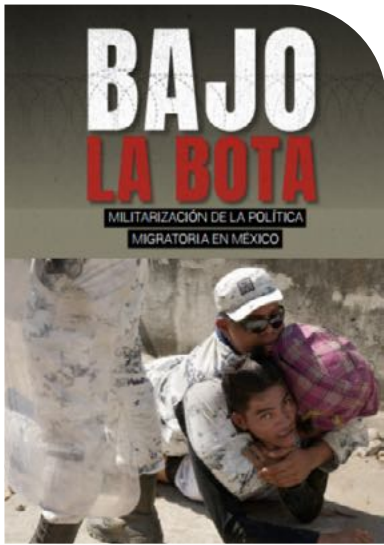


Photo. Alberto Pradilla/Animal Político.

IMUMI has been advocating against these practices since 2013 through research, documentation, and litigation. In May 2022, after 7 years of litigation, the Mexican Supreme Court declared these types of internal checkpoints unconstitutional. The case involved four Mexican indigenous migrants who were taken off a bus and held and tortured in a migration detention center. Over the seven years we had obtained a recommendation from the National Human Rights Commission, a public apology by the INM Commissioner, and damages for the victims, but the constitutional issue wound its way slowly through the system. The decision alone will not change the policy, but it is mandatory within the judicial system, and Mexican Congress should derogate the articles of the Law on Migration that allow these types of checkpoints, yet the INM is pushing back. In addition, the Interior and Foreign Ministries have been devising ways to evade the Supreme Court decision. In 2023, we continue to advocate for implementation of the Supreme Court resolution with all three branches of government. Notably, the SC Justice who prepared the resolution won an award from

the UNHCR and the Inter-American Commission for the human rights standards that she utilized in her analysis of discrimination based on racial profiling.

We will also continue to litigate against the INM policy that requires commercial bus lines to request proof of immigration status to purchase a domestic bus ticket. We have obtained an individual injunction for the plaintiff in the case who has the right to purchase a ticket without showing an immigration document, but the judiciary must extend the decision to all migrants. This policy has increased extortion by bus agents who accept bribes to issue bus tickets to undocumented people, and it has also pushed more people into the hands of smugglers and kidnappers.



In 2023 the SC will also decide on our case against the National Guard Law which allows elements to assist INM agents with immigration enforcement activities. We initiated this case in 2019 when the NG Law came into effect – the logic is that the NG cannot assist the INM in unconstitutional activities. Unfortunately, the SC confirmed that NG assistance in migration enforcement is constitutional in a separate case in April 2023. Now the question will be whether the NG can still accompany the INM in internal inspection activities on the highways within Mexico when these inspections have been declared unconstitutional. We collaborated with the Foundation for Justice and the Democratic Rule of Law and other organizations to document the impact of the militarization of migration enforcement in Mexico, published in the report, Under the Boot (Bajo la Bota), in 2022.

II. INTEGRATION: Advocate for Access to Family Unity, Identity and Education for Women and their Families who are Impacted by Migration.

Migrants living in Mexico, whether they are Mexicans who have returned from the U.S. or immigrants from other countries, need access to identity documents to obtain employment, education, health, work, housing, as well as security and integrity during legal proceedings. IMUMI works in alliance with 22 organizations across Mexico that provide direct assistance, document government practices, provide training and devise advocacy strategies to improve access to all types of documents including birth certificates, Mexican nationality registration for children of Mexican parents born in the U.S. who now live in Mexico, immigration documentation as well as basic Mexican ID. Through these strategies, the network has achieved important reforms to the Mexican law on Education facilitating access to all



children, regardless of their documentation. On a local level, organizations work with civil registries, and in some states, have helped established policies that facilitate dual nationality registration and access to education. Tlaxcala was the first state to eliminate the apostille for the dual nationality registration in July 2023 as a result of the collective work of the network. The Mexico City civil registry is making case-by-case determinations to exempt the apostille requirement.

Since 2018, IMUMI has facilitated a group of migrant women, *Promotoras*, who meet monthly to learn about advocacy strategies and document their own experiences with integration in Mexico. In 2022-2023, the *Promotoras* group has presented testimonies before Congress, promoted reforms to the Mexican Civil Procedure Law to eliminate the requirement of the apostille to register Mexican nationality, and promoted a new law to assist migrants deported from the U.S. The *Promotoras* also trained over 200 civil registry judges and employees in Mexico City in May 2023.

In April 2023, IMUMI promoted staff member, Rossy Atunez, to take on the Transnational Family Advocacy position to coordinate with the deported/returned community in

Mexico on strategies including access to birth certificates for undocumented parents, registration of Mexican nationality for dual nationals, access to education, validation of U.S. high school diplomas and vocational certificates, and family law issues related to transnational families. She will coordinate the Group on Identity and Education and will publish updated versions of IMUMI's [Guide to Issues of Transnational Families](#). In November 2023, a new legal fellow will begin working with this area to help deported people better understand why they were deported, what penalties were applied and if there are any possibilities for post-deportation relief. We are excited to strengthen this team.

In addition to the cases mentioned above, we also continue to work on the following cases to advocate for policy changes. These longer-term strategies require sustained support.



Rossy Antúnez, Transnational Family, IMUMI.

III. STRATEGIC LITIGATION

1. Fire in Ciudad Juarez Detention Center: the failure of the detention system in Mexico

On March 27, 2023, Mexico's National Migration Institute (INM) let 40 young migrant men and asylum seekers burn and suffocate to death in a detention center fire when guards failed to open the cell door or put out the fire. This is the most flagrant and devastating crime committed by Mexico's migration agency since it was founded in 1993.

What most people don't realize is that 27 young men survived the fire. Many had been waiting for appointments to request asylum in the U.S. and now their lives have been turned upside down. While the fire occurred in March, many of the survivors were released from the hospital in May and June and are just realizing that their health has been permanently compromised. Some are in Ciudad Juarez receiving medical attention, while 9 were transferred to Mexico City to be treated in specialized burn and lung hospitals. They have suffered severe internal burns, lung damage, external burns, and neurological damage.

Family members were brought to Mexico to help, but they entered into shock as they learned the extent of the harm suffered by their sons and husbands, who they had expected to reach the U.S. to assist with family struggles in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Venezuela.



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Mexico

Misery of Venezuelans stranded in Mexican city of fatal migrant fire

Marisol Chávez in Ciudad Juárez
Sun 2 Apr 2023 11:00 BST

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A photograph of a young girl in a white sweater covering her face with her hand, appearing to be crying. She is holding a microphone, suggesting she is speaking at a public event. Other people are visible in the background.

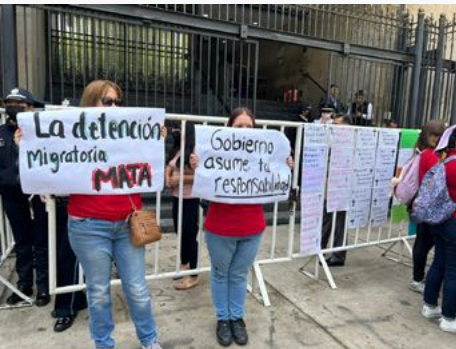


Photo. Reuters.

These parents and wives have lost their jobs, and the families in countries of origin have taken out loans to survive or are going hungry.



IMUMI, in collaboration with 5 other organizations, reached out to some of the survivors who were transferred to Mexico City and since April 2023, has been working to provide material, emotional and legal assistance to the victims and their families. We have filed criminal complaints, civil complaints, and notified key UN and Inter-American stakeholders of the situation. We are working with the families to understand their stories, learn about their medical prognoses, and prepare claims for reparations and humanitarian parole.



On June 30th, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) issued a recommendation regarding the case and found that the National Migration Institute committed grave human rights violations by failing to open the cell door and evacuate the 67 men. The video evidence is so compelling that the INM left the men to die, that at least 33 detention centers were closed after the fire and is the INM is waiting for the CNDH to make recommendations to improve infrastructure and training.



Our organizations believe that this tragedy should be the last and that detention centers in Mexico should be transformed into information and processing centers. Since 1993 when the INM was founded, the CNDH has issued over 80 recommendations regarding horrific conditions, lack of due process, physical and sexual abuse, torture, and death, in Mexico's migration detention centers. Impunity and lack of political are the underlying causes of these violations.





Photo. Por Esto

2. The Femicide of Victoria: Access to Justice Across Borders

Victoria was a Salvadoran refugee living in Tulum Mexico with her two teenage daughters. In March 2020 she was stopped by municipal police who pinned her down and knelt on her neck until she died. The scene was caught on video. IMUMI, together with the [Foundation for Justice and Democratic Rule of Law](#), and [AsiLegal](#), have worked for over three years toward justice for Victoria and her daughters who were returned to El Salvador to live with their grandmother. In addition to working on the criminal case, we have filed civil claims for reparations, and are pressuring the government of Quintana Roo State to re-structure training (use of force) for municipal police. The case also provides a platform to examine the needs of refugee women in Mexico, the ways that gender-based violence can persist even in the country of refuge, and the need to advocate for justice across borders, especially between Mexico and Central America.

3. Lili¹: Ending Child Detention in Mexico

In April 2019, Lili, a 10-year-old girl from Guatemala fell from a bunkbed in the Mexico City detention center. Her mother requested medical attention and the detention center doctor gave Lili a pain reliever. The mother and the other women detained in the cell screamed out for additional medical attention for more than 8 hours. Finally, when Lili began to have convulsions, the migration agents took her to the hospital, but she died on the way. IMUMI has represented Lili's mother and stepfather for over 4 years, obtaining immigration documents, psychological assistance, and reparations for them through the Executive Commission for Victim Assistance. Similar to other cases, the criminal case takes longer than the civil case, but we are hopeful that INM and the detention center agents and physician will be held criminally responsible for their actions. Above and beyond this horrific incident, IMUMI utilized the case to step up advocacy against child detention, which was eliminated from the law in 2021.



1. Fictitious name.

IV. INTERSECTIONS AND NEW CHALLENGES



IMUMI works from a gender perspective and takes an intersectional approach to understanding the reasons that women and their families need to leave their countries, how they are received in Mexico, and the barriers that they confront to receiving access to protection and justice. The common denominator is poverty, but other factors such as skin color, ethnicity, language, gender identity and expression, violence and education impact the way people are treated. In 2023, the IMUMI team is participating in ongoing trainings on racism, gender and climate change to help us improve our direct services and advocacy strategies.

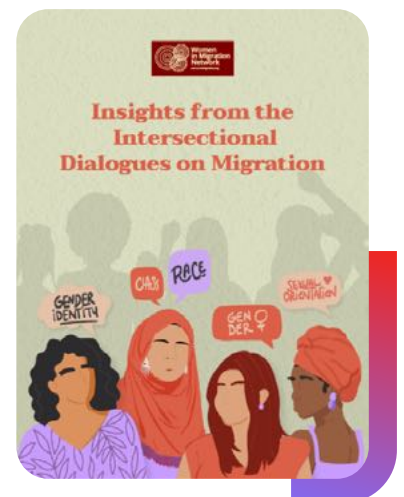
In November 2023 we will release a report on climate change, migration and gender that will include our experience and recommendations for detecting cases of migrants that are being forced to leave their countries in our region due to the effects of climate change, the particular impacts on women, and the legal framework in Mexico to protect them.

We are also working on a research project regarding the experiences of LGBTQ migrants in Mexico which we hope will help us do a better job to identifying and serving the population, including changing our intake questions, working closer with LGBTQ organizations, and making changes to our outreach information. IMUMI has done a good job representing transgendered women in Mexican asylum

procedures, ensuring that they are interviewed according to their gender identity and not the sex on their birth certificate. We helped several cases of LGBTQ asylum seekers reach the U.S. under the Title 42 exemption process, but we need to be more proactive, and this research will help.

To expand the movement against racial profiling in immigration checkpoints we are coordinating more closely with organizations working on issues of racism in Mexico such as [RacismoMX](#), and Black Mexican Women's organizations such as [Afrochingonas](#). In March, [RacismoMX](#) participated in a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on racism against migrants in Mexico with [Haitian Bridge Alliance](#). While IMUMI did not participate in person, we worked on the [report](#) that [RacismoMX](#) presented during the hearing.

In 2022, we helped organize a series of intersectional dialogues on migration through the [Women in Migration Network](#), which served as an opportunity to evaluate our work and how to incorporate an intersectional approach, especially through the networks that we participate in on a regional level.



V. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

1. Team

IMUMI is comprised of an inter-disciplinary team of 26 women and 4 men, including 14 lawyers and legal assistants, 2 psychologists, 1 social worker, 3 public policy advocates, 1 communication specialist, a group of internationalists and administrative staff. We also contribute partial salaries to 2 lawyers from the UNAM Human Rights Program Legal Clinic and the Coordinator of the Promotoras Group.

The Board of Directors is comprised of 5 women and 1 man who works in academia, the NGO and private sector.

IMUMI's team includes 20-30 volunteers each year, primarily from Mexican and U.S. universities. In 2022, these volunteers contributed more than 7,000 hours to IMUMI, working on cases, outreach, and administrative tasks. Between January-June 2023, volunteers have contributed more than 5,000 hours.

In addition to IMUMI's direct volunteers, through our MOU with the UNAM Human Rights Clinic, 4-8 law students work on our strategic litigation cases each semester. When we won the Supreme Court case in March 2022, more than 40 young lawyers attended the gathering to celebrate their work on the case over 7 years.



2. Budget and Funders

IMUMI's budget for 2023 is one million USD and is projected at 1.2 million for 2024, depending on the exchange rates (see below).

In 2022-June 2023, IMUMI has received support from the following funders:

- » AWO International
- » Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migrants (PRM)
- » Choose Love
- » Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives
- » Foundation for a Just Society (FJS)
- » Heinrich Boll
- » Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP)
- » International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- » Misereor
- » Open Society Foundations (OSF)
- » OXFAM Mexico
- » Semillas (Women's Fund)
- » The University of Texas at Austin
- » UNICEF
- » UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women

3. Funding Needs

IMUMI depends on support from private foundations and international cooperation. We are currently seeking general support to move forward with individual representation, strategic litigation, and advocacy strategies related to all our areas of work. General support allows us to fill in the gaps left by international cooperation grants that often cap salary support at 40%, require co-financing and depend on organizations to finance up front and receive the donations once the work is accomplished.

In 2023, IMUMI – along with all NGOs in Mexico – lost approximately 10% of its projected income due to the appreciation of the Mexican peso that was valued at 19.5 MXN to the USD in January and has dropped to 16.5 in June. As a result, we have received the equivalent of \$80,000 USD less than was projected.

This situation combined with changes in funder thematic and geographic priorities means that we continually seek new donors.

If you have questions about IMUMI or would like to discuss our work, please contact Marcela Orozco at fortalecimientoimumi@imumi.org.

DONATE TO IMUMI

Have a wonderful rest of the summer.

Regards,
IMUMI Team