



JOÃO CHAVES

he/him

ABOUT ME

Federal Public Defender in Brazil and PhD candidate in migration studies. Specialized in immigration law, with a strong field experience in legal aid for migrants and refugees.

INTERESTS

Immigration and refugee law; child migration; smuggling of migrants; irregular migration; legal clinics; integration policies.

CONTACT

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in joao-chaves-46772a130



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São Paulo, Brazil

LANGUAGES

Portuguese (native)

English • French • Spanish (C1)

Italian • German (B1)

Arabic (A1)

Last update: March 2025

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PUBLIC DEFENDER, FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE OF BRAZIL
09/2010 - CURRENT

Current positions and activities

01/2017 – : Coordinator of Migration and Refugee Law Area at Federal Public Defender's Office at São Paulo., dedicated to individual legal aid in migration issues (documentation, naturalization and citizenship, asylum-seeking processes, expulsion defenses, family reunification, humanitarian relief, access to rights, etc.).

01/2018 – : Member and former Coordinator of the National Working Group on Migration, Statelessness, and Asylum at the Federal Public Defender's Office. Multi-level advocacy, project management, education on human rights, cooperation with international agencies and NGOs.

12/2023 – 12/2024: Observer at Brazilian National Council for Immigration – CNIG. Defense in individual cases, advocacy.

01/2019 – : Deputy Observer at Brazilian National Committee for Refugees – CONARE. Defense in individual cases, advocacy.

01/2018 – : Observer at São Paulo's City Council of Immigrants – CMI.

01/2022 – : Country focal point and current Coordinator of the Interamerican Network of Public Defenders In Context of Human Mobility within AIDEF – Interamerican Association of Public Defender's Offices.

03/2022 – : Member of the research group MIGREF - Transnational Migrations and Other Migratory Categories in the 21st Century, at the Federal University of ABC/São Paulo.

Previous positions and activities

06/2018 – 12/2020: Member and Co-Coordinator of the Public Defender's Office Special Mission at the humanitarian task force "Operação Acolhida" at Pacaraima (Northern Border of Brazil), in charge of legal aid and representation for Venezuelan migrants and emergency legal representation for separated and unaccompanied children.

06/2016 – 12/2017: Member of the National Working Group on Legal Aid to Brazilian Community Abroad.

02/2011 – 12/2022: Member of the State Working Group on Legal Aid to Foreign National Prisoners at Sao Paulo.

01/2012 – : Keynote speaker, panelist, and instructor in several events held by official institutions, universities, international UN organizations, faith-based and civil society organizations such as Ministries of Justice

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and Human Rights, Sao Paulo Federal Law Court, UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, IOM – International Organization for Migration, UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNODC – United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, ICMPD – International Centre for Migration Policy Development, International Red Cross, Universities and NGOs.

12/2024: Panelist at the side event “Reflexiones sobre el futuro: cinco años de los Principios Interamericanos para Proteger a Todas las Personas Migrantes”, proposed by the Special Rapporteur on Human Mobility of the Inter-american Commission of Human Rights during its 191st Period of Sessions.

10/2023: Panelist at the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, held by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime in the UN Office in Vienna.

07/2019: Participation at the 41st Session of the Human Rights Council at the UN Office at Geneva as an invited expert by the Brazilian NGO Conectas Direitos Humanos.

01/2018 - 12/2018: Invited expert of UNODC – United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime GLOACT Project at Corumbá and Belém do Pará (Brazil) for detection and prevention of human trafficking.

07/2018: Invited Member of the official mission of the Brazilian government to visit and interview detained unaccompanied Brazilian children at the United States of America.

01/2018: Invited member of the official mission of the Brazilian National Human Rights Council for assessment and monitoring of governmental response to the Warao indigenous migration movement at Pará State.

01/2012 - Keynote speaker, panelist, and instructor in several events held by official institutions, universities, international UN organizations, faith-based and civil society organizations such as Ministries of Justice and Human Rights, Sao Paulo Federal Law Court, UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, IOM – International Organization for Migration, UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNODC – United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, ICMPD – International Centre for Migration Policy Development, International Red Cross, Universities and NGOs.

Other experiences: Assistant Professor of Legal Theory at the Catholic University of Pernambuco, Brazil (2006-2010), Court Official and Legal Advisor at regional law courts (2001-2010).

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

PhD candidate, 2022-2026 (expected)

Federal University of ABC/São Paulo, Brazil

Research project: Legal protection of unaccompanied and separated migrant children in border zones – connections between migration governance and child protection system in Brazil (2018-2023) .

Master in Law, 2006

Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

Thesis: The problem of law in Michel Foucault – from resistances to the Outside.

Law Degree, 2003

Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

COMPLEMENTARY COURSES

2025: Online course “Legal writing and AI tools”, offered by National School of the Public Defender’s Office of Brazil.

2022: Online Course “Foundations of prevention of mass atrocities”, offered by Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.

2021: Online Course “Access to Decent Work for Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced People”, offered by ILO – International Labour Organization.

2021: Online Course “Training in Human Rights Monitoring for Human Rights Defenders”, offered by OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

2020: Online Course “18th International Migration Law Course” offered by IIHL – International Institute for Humanitarian Law at San Remo, Italy.

2020: Online Course “Prevention and Law Enforcement on Contemporary Forced Labour”, offered by Federal Public Defender’s Office of Brazil.

2019: Workshop “Strengthening protection for Venezuelan migrants and refugees in transit and reception countries”, organized by UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at Panama City, Panama.

2019: Workshop “Listening and interview techniques applied for migrant children”, organized by Mieux EU Initiative at São Paulo.

2019: 9th International School of Iberoamerican Network of Postgraduate Programs on Childhood (RED INJU), organized by CLACSO – Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales and COLEF – Colegio de la Frontera Norte at Tijuana, Mexico.

2018: 40th Interamerican Course on International Migrations, organized by IOM – International Organization for Migration at Mar del Plata, Argentina.

LATEST PUBLICATIONS (titles translated into English)

Chaves, J. (2024). Notes on a due process of law in immigration. In: Paffarini, J. et al. (eds.). Fluxos migratorios e direito : avanços, desafios e novas possibilidades no acolhimento do migrante. Itajaí: UNIVALI, p. 84-103. (Original title: notas sobre um devido processo legal migratório)

Chaves, J. (2024). Closure of land borders and access to territory during the COVID-19 pandemic: between health emergency and legal assistance. In: Barbosa, L., Moraes, A., Gomes, C. (eds.). *A tutela coletiva de vulnerabilidades pela Defensoria Pública da União durante a pandemia da COVID-19*. São Paulo: Tirant Lo Blanch, p. 102-118. (Original title: Fechamento de fronteiras terrestres e acesso ao território durante a pandemia de covid-19: entre emergência sanitária e assistência jurídica)

Chaves, J. (2024). From interdisciplinarity to child migration studies: pathways for a social sciences approach to child migration. *Travessia – Revista do Migrante*, v. 37, n. 99, p. 117-136. (Original title: Da interdisciplinaridade aos child migration studies: caminhos para uma abordagem das ciências sociais sobre a infância migrante)

Szabo, I., Silva, G. Z., & Chaves, J. (2022). The importance of Country of Origin Information for legal defense: reflections on the concept of safe countries and the Brazilian case. In: Ramos, A. C. et al. (eds.). *25 anos da lei brasileira de refúgio : perspectivas e desafios*. Brasília: UNHCR Brazil, p. 105-119 (Original title: A importância da utilização dos estudos de país de origem para a defesa: reflexões sobre o conceito de safe countries e o caso do Brasil).

Chaves, J. (2022). The response for the Venezuelan migratory movement by 'Operação Acolhida' in Brazil: impasses between humanitarianism and decent work policies. In: Portes, F., & I-Migra (eds.). *Informalidade e proteção dos trabalhadores imigrantes: navegando pelo humanitarismo, securitização e dignidade*. São Paulo: Outras Expressões, p. 25-36 (Original title: A resposta ao movimento migratório venezuelano pela Operação Acolhida no Brasil: impasse entre humanitarismo e políticas de trabalho decente).

Chaves, J. (2022). Legal aid and asylum: beyond the status determination and the judicial review. In: Szabò, I., Ribeiro, E. *Brasil, país de refúgio: a atuação da defesa na temática de refúgio*. Brasília: ENADPU, p. 31-45 (Original title: Assistência jurídica e refúgio: para além da determinação de status e do judicial review).

Lenci, L., Chaves, J., Maciel, N., & Torelly, M. (eds) (2022). *Handbook of Legal Assistance for Migrants and Refugees*. Brasília: IOM Brazil (Original title: Manual de Atendimento Jurídico a Migrantes e Refugiados).

Chaves, J. (2022). The two lives of Haitian migration. *Migramundo (Online)*, São Paulo (Original title: as duas vidas da migração haitiana).

Chaves, J. (2022). The right of asylum and the pandemic: a time for change. *Migramundo (Online)*, São Paulo (Original title: Direito ao refúgio e pandemia: a hora da mudança).

Chaves, J. (2022). Where is the National Council for Immigration? *Migramundo (Online)*, São Paulo (Original title: Por onde anda o CNIG, o Conselho Nacional de Imigração?).

Dorini, J.P., & Chaves, J. (2021). The Federal Public Defender's Office and the defense of asylum in Brazil. In: Ramos, A.C. et al. (eds.). *70 anos da Convenção relativa ao Estatuto dos Refugiados: (1951-2021) perspectivas de futuro*. Brasília: UNHCR Brazil, p. 176-195. (Original title: A Defensoria Pública da União e a defesa do instituto do Refúgio no Brasil)

Chaves, J. (2021). Congratulations for whom? Migrants and refugees in the pandemic Brazil. *Folha de São Paulo*, São Paulo (Original title: Parabéns para quem? Migrantes e refugiados no Brasil da pandemia).

Ruseishvili, S., & Chaves, J. (2020). Deportability: a new paradigm for Brazilian migration policy? *Plural – Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia da USP*, v. 27, n. 1, , p. 15-38. (Original title: Deportabilidade: um novo paradigma na política migratória brasileira).

Chaves, J. (2020). The Federal Public Defender's Office work in defense of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic: a report from the field. In: Baeninger, R. et al. (eds.). *Migrações internacionais e a pandemia de COVID-19*. Campinas: NEPO/Unicamp, p. 62-780 (Original title: A atuação da Defensoria Pública da União em favor de imigrantes durante a pandemia de COVID-19: um relato de campo).

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Chaves, J., & Atchabahian, A.C.R.C. (2020). Visas in Immigration Law: from sovereignty to judicial control. In: Ramos, A.C. et al. (eds). *Nova Lei de Migração: os três primeiros anos*. Campinas: NEPO/Unicamp, p. 145-160 (Original title: O visto na Lei de Migração: da soberania ao controle judicial).

All links are available at www.joaochaves.com, "Publications".

OTHER PRODUCTS

2024: website "DPU Migrante", dedicated to the risk prevention and awareness of irregular migration pathways and human smuggling in Americas.

2022: Coordination of the Handbook of Legal Aid for Migrants and Refugees (DPU/IOM)

2022: Guidance booklets on immigrant regularization pathways, citizenship and visa procedures (DPU/IOM).

2021: Co-author of the online course "The new Brazilian immigration law" (DPU/IOM)

2021: Report on the situation of stranded migrants at the Brazil-Peru border during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WEBINARS, LECTURES, STATEMENTS, AND PUBLIC INTERVENTIONS

Several presentations in webinars, panels, live discussions, general debates, and other public interventions on media are available on Youtube. The links are listed at www.joaochaves.com, "Public Speaking".

PRIZES

Best Litigation Team for two years (2023 and 2024) in the Sentences Prize (*Premio Sentencias*), awarded by the OAS – Organization of American States, IACHR – Inter-american Court of Human Rights and other organizations for legal sentences and related litigation teams that have impact on the international protection of migrants and refugees.