

**SNELL & WILMER APPELLATE PARTNER M.C. SUNGAILA CONTRIBUTES TO
SUIT FILED AGAINST DEFENDANTS FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

ORANGE COUNTY (January 11, 2012) - A suit was filed yesterday in federal court bringing several claims for forced labor and human trafficking against husband and wife defendants who are alleged to have engaged in modern-day slavery, depriving the plaintiff, their daughter-in-law, of her basic human dignity in violation of international, federal and state laws.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma by Human Rights USA, a non-profit human rights organization and the Oklahoma City law firm of Foliart, Huff, Ottaway and Bottom, in collaboration with Snell & Wilmer, alleges that the defendants' conduct violated the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2003, the Oklahoma Human Trafficking Act, and the Alien Tort Statute. The lawsuit is the first case brought under Oklahoma's anti-trafficking statute, which was enacted in 2010.

M.C. Sungaila, an appellate partner with the Orange County office of Snell & Wilmer, and Jessica Yates, an associate in the Denver office of Snell & Wilmer, are consulting with Human Rights USA on the case. Ms. Sungaila is also co-counsel with Human Rights USA in another pending case, *Chai v. Netfirms* (Central District of California Case No. CV11-06988), in which a web hosting company is alleged to have released personal information about Mr. Chai to the Thai government, which allowed Thai officials to identify, detain, and interrogate Mr. Chai both in Thailand and on U.S. soil, and charge him with violating a Thai law that restricts free speech. "I am honored to be working with Human Rights USA on yet another important case, and to carry on Snell & Wilmer's commitment to pro bono and public service," said Ms. Sungaila.

As set forth in the complaint, the defendants, Chandrakant and Nilam Udwardia, fraudulently induced the plaintiff, Diptiben Mistry, to marry their son by misrepresenting the terms of marriage. The defendants brought Ms. Mistry from India to their home in Elk City, Oklahoma and forced her to provide daily domestic labor for them through coercion, physical violence and threats of divorce and return to India. The defendants controlled every aspect of Ms. Mistry's life, restricted her access to food, deprived her of medical care, and subjected her to constant surveillance. In particular, the defendants leveraged the stigmatization of divorce in India to coerce Ms. Mistry into a life of domestic servitude.

"This case emphasizes the fact that forced labor is a human rights violation under any circumstances, regardless of whether the perpetrators are family members or whether there is a formal employer/employee relationship," said Lysnay Gott, Acting Executive Director of Human Rights USA.

The lawsuit, *Mistry v. Udwardia*, is pending before the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.

About Human Rights USA:

For 13 years, Human Rights USA has sought an end to torture, security for their clients from gender-based persecution, and accountability for abuses of power through fast and creative impact litigation. In case after case, they have achieved that goal. Human Rights USA is committed to bringing justice to the

survivors of human rights abuses, working to bring the U.S. laws in line with universal human rights standards. For more information about Human Rights USA, go to www.humanrightsusa.org.

About Snell & Wilmer L.L.P.

Founded in 1938, Snell & Wilmer is a full-service business law firm with more than 400 attorneys practicing in nine locations throughout the western United States and in Mexico, including Los Angeles and Orange County, California; Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; Denver, Colorado; Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Los Cabos, Mexico. The firm represents clients ranging from large, publicly traded corporations to small businesses, individuals and entrepreneurs. For more information, visit www.swlaw.com.

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