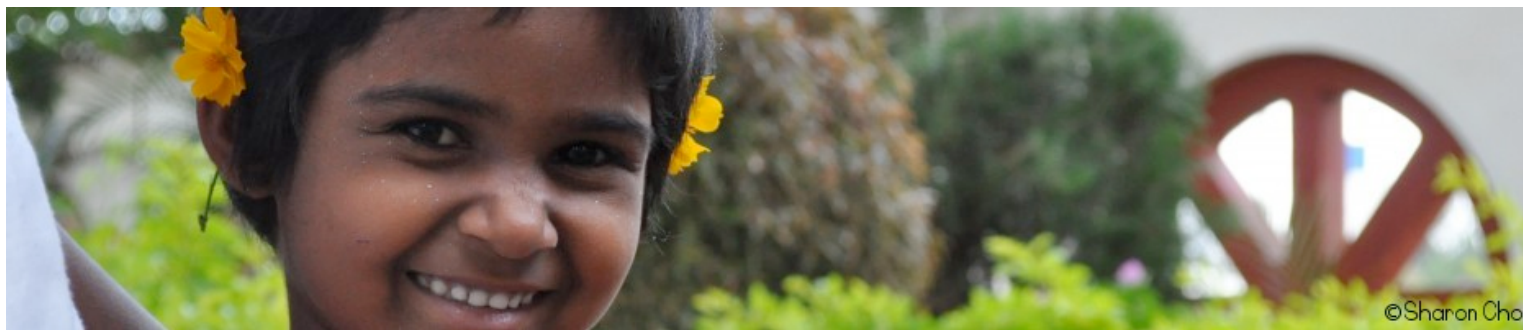


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“Largest Human Trafficking Civil Suit in U.S. History”

6 Feb

Hundreds of former guestworkers sue Signal International, LLC for human trafficking, forced labor, abuse and racial discrimination. Read the article below for more.

[SPLC Asks Court to Certify Largest Human Trafficking Civil Suit in U.S. History as Class Action](#)

The Southern Poverty Law Center and its co-counsels, who are suing Signal International, LLC, along with its co-conspirators and other entities for human trafficking and racketeering, asked a federal judge today to include hundreds of additional Indian guestworkers in the lawsuit. If class status is granted, the [lawsuit](#) would be the largest human trafficking case in U.S. history.

The SPLC, American Civil Liberties Union, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Louisiana Justice Institute and the law firm Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP filed the original, [proposed class action lawsuit](#) on behalf of the seven individuals, who seek to represent a class of approximately 500 former guestworkers. These guestworkers were lured to work in the U.S. after Hurricane Katrina and subjected to racial and national origin discrimination, forced labor, and other abuse by Signal and its agents and co-defendants, including labor recruiters Sachin Dewan and Michael Pol and immigration attorney Malvern Burnett.

Today’s filing urges the court to certify the class.

“This case illustrates in shocking detail the abuse occurring within the nation’s guestworker program,” said Dan Werner, deputy legal director for the SPLC. “These workers only wanted the American dream but instead were bound to an abusive employer and forced to endure horrific conditions.”

Signal, a marine and fabrication company with shipyards in Mississippi, Texas and Alabama, is a subcontractor for several major multinational companies. After Hurricane Katrina scattered its workforce, Signal retained labor contractors who used the U.S. government’s guestworker program to import employees to work as welders and pipefitters. Between 2004 and 2006, hundreds of Indian men paid defendants as much as \$20,000 each for travel, visa, recruitment and other fees after they were told it would lead to good jobs and permanent U.S. residency for themselves and their families.

However, when the men arrived at Signal in late 2006 and early 2007, they discovered that they wouldn't receive the green cards as promised, but rather 10-month guestworker visas. Signal also forced them to pay \$1,050 a month to live in overcrowded, unsanitary and racially segregated labor camps where as many as 24 men shared a trailer with only two toilets. When the guestworkers tried to find their own housing, Signal officials told them they would still have the rent deducted from their paychecks. Visitors were not allowed into the camps, which were enclosed by fences. Company employees who stood guard at the camps regularly searched the workers' belongings. Workers who complained about the conditions were threatened with deportation.

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Welcome!

Welcome to Odanadi US! Odanadi US is an arm for raising funds and awareness for Odanadi Seva Trust, based in Mysore, South India. The organization's mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, empower and reintegrate survivors (women and children) of sex and human trafficking.

We need YOUR help. Whether you are a student, professional, retired or in-between any of those: WE NEED YOU!

Interested in getting involved? Contact us at info@odanadi-us.org.

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