

Prosecution boosts victim count in forced-labor case against CEO

By Nelson Daranciang

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 10, 2010

A federal prosecutor said Wednesday that a company victimized 900 Thai workers, more than double the 400 cited in a grand jury indictment that alleges forced labor at farms in Hawaii and on the mainland.

Susan French said she expects to have an updated indictment in November. She made those comments at the bail hearing for Mordechai Yosef Orian, the president and CEO of the company that provided the Thai farm workers, Global Horizons Manpower Inc.

French said Orian also faces up to 70 years in prison if he is found guilty of the charges in the current indictment stemming from actions involving the 400 Thai workers in 2004 and 2005. She said he will face up to 200 years in prison when the indictment is updated to include actions involving 900 Thai workers from 2002 to 2007.

She said the government has seized an aircraft Orian bought to transfer farm workers between islands.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Leslie Kobayashi found Orian, 45, to be a flight risk because he has access to substantial amounts of money, has tax liens against him, has ties in his native Israel, is not a U.S. citizen and is appealing a deportation order.

Kobayashi granted Orian release from custody pending trial if he posts \$1 million bond secured by real property.

Orian's Los Angeles-based lawyer, Mark Werksman, said Orian's home in Malibu, Calif., and property he owns in Kona together are worth at least \$1 million. However, he later asked Kobayashi whether Orian could use property owned by somebody else to satisfy the bond requirement.

Kobayashi said no.

She also ordered electronically monitored home detention, restricted Orian's travel to between Hawaii and California and prohibited him from living on his Hawaii property.

French said she will appeal Kobayashi's order granting Orian release on bond. She had asked Kobayashi to order Orian held in custody without the opportunity for bail pending trial.

Kobayashi's order is on hold pending appeal.

Werksman had asked for Orian's immediate release so he can return to California to celebrate the Rosh Hashanah Jewish holiday with his family. He also said Orian's 13-year-old son's bar mitzvah is on Sept. 26 and that it would be tragic if Orian was not there for a key milestone in his oldest son's life.

French said Orian has civil judgments and lawsuits against him across the country including Hawaii, Washington and Colorado. And a judge in Washington sanctioned Orian for not making payments toward a judgment against him.

She said she has a report of Orian involved in human trafficking of Chinese nationals in Israel in 1996, before he moved to the U.S. And when a judge prohibited him from recruiting and providing farm workers in Colorado as a result of a lawsuit in that state, Orian took his operation to Canada, French said.

"This is not new news. There is a pattern of this

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conduct," she said.

Orian was not at his California home when FBI agents tried to arrest him last week.

Werksman said Orian was in San Antonio, where he runs a nonprofit adoption service.

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