International Private Client

Kobre & Kim represents ultrahigh-net-worth individuals with global business interests by deploying cross-border litigation and crisis management strategies to preserve their assets, liberty and reputation. Our team of former U.S. government lawyers and commercial litigators, who are uniquely integrated worldwide, have a proven track record of coordinating multijurisdictional defensive, offensive and counter-offensive litigation on behalf of international private clients in anticipation, or as a result of, high-stakes civil and criminal proceedings and investigations aimed at asset forfeiture or confiscation.

Tailored Global Network

Kobre & Kim has strategically positioned our lawyers across the world to solve these kinds of problems for clients. Our global team includes more than two dozen former U.S. government lawyers, offshore lawyers, Hong Kong solicitors, as well as English solicitors and barristers (including two English Queen’s Counsel). Most of our cases are cross-border in nature and require regular interface with local regulators around the world.

Conflict-Free, Special Counsel Model

We focus exclusively on serving as special counsel in discrete engagements and regularly work in tandem with family offices, financial advisers and transactional counsel, who serve as longstanding advisers to clients facing these kinds of high-stakes proceedings and investigations. This model allows us to:

- uphold the highest level of confidentiality;
- take aggressive positions against financial institutions involved in complex trust and estate structures; and
- litigate issues such as unlawfully frozen assets, breach of fiduciary duty and misuse of trust assets — where other law firms are likely to have competing interests.

Integrated Team

We are uniquely positioned to offer integrated strategic counsel in situations involving a mix of civil, criminal and regulatory issues, and develop strategies which exploit both the pitfalls and opportunities that arise in these parallel actions. Such complex matters often require diverse services and regions of focus. Our international private client team is comprised of both former U.S. government lawyers and commercial litigators; and we regularly counsel ultrahigh-net-worth individuals in matters involving combinations of trusts and estates counsel, joint venture disputes, financial disputes, contentious insolvencies, international asset tracing and recovery initiatives, investigations and enforcement actions, among other areas.

Representative Engagements

- Representation of a prominent European businessperson in exploring offensive litigation strategies against adversaries conducting a derogatory public relations campaign by alleging the client's involvement in a money laundering investigation being conducted by Spanish authorities, as well as deploying various reputation management efforts to aid the client's factual and legal defenses.
- Representation of a Russian businessman in a dispute over shares in British Virgin Islands companies concerning major Russian energy interests.
- Representation of Brazilian parties subject to seizure of their UK-based assets and in establishing an asset repatriation mechanism involving the UK, Jersey, Switzerland and Brazil.
- Representation of an Asian businessman in the potential filing of a U.S. asylum application with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in light of potential U.S. extradition proceedings requested by an Asian government alleging the perpetration of a large-scale fraud scheme.
- Representation of wealthy Central American family on issues related to cross border implications of a politically motivated prosecution in their home country. The repercussions include an offshore asset freeze.
• Representation of Jho Low, an international businessman, in global legal matters arising out of the “1MDB” matter, which involve criminal charges and civil asset forfeiture proceedings brought by the DOJ, as well as additional legal action from authorities located in Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Singapore and various other countries, involving several billions USD in controversy. We have resisted ongoing forfeiture and confiscation efforts for several years, and engaged in counter-offensive litigation in the Cayman Islands and New Zealand to secure more favorable positioning for the family’s assets.

• Representation of two Russian businessmen in connection with an investigation by Russian authorities into the Russia-based financial institutions founded by our clients. The Russian Federation is making numerous politically motivated legal assistance requests against our clients around the world in both onshore (e.g., the U.S.) and offshore (Mauritius and the Cook Islands) jurisdictions. We are coordinating the global defense of those requests. We are also acting as counsel in an ongoing civil case in the U.S., as well as implementing defensive strategies, including a “clean funds” analysis, with respect to cross-border asset forfeiture proceedings.

• Representation of several executives of Unaoil, a company operating in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa, in providing a strategy to release and protect assets in the U.S., the UK, the Cayman Islands and several other offshore jurisdictions in light of a foreign bribery investigation being conducted by the DOJ and UK authorities. In a major victory for our clients, our firm secured an order from a court in an offshore jurisdiction allowing for the replacement of the trustee at the request of the trust settlor and the distribution of once frozen funds.

• Representation of the Abacha family of Nigeria in defending against attempts to seize US $1 billion+ allegedly stolen from the national treasury through corrupt oil contracts, litigated in various European courts.

• Representation of Thaksin Sinawatra, a former prime minister of Thailand, in international corruption investigations in the Middle East and Asia and in associated dealings with the U.S. government.

• Representation of a well-known, high-level former Brazilian political figure charged in the U.S. with fraud related offenses in negotiating with the New York District Attorney’s Office concerning offshore trust structures related to the client’s business interests.