

MVP: Gibson Dunn's Rahim Moloo

By **Sarah Martinson**

Law360 (November 6, 2024, 12:02 PM EST) -- Rahim Moloo of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's international arbitration practice preserved a San Diego salvage company's \$9 billion claim to sunken treasure and secured a \$250 million award for an oil refinery investor against Morocco, earning him a spot as one of the 2024 Law360 International Arbitration MVPs.

His biggest accomplishment this year:

Moloo, while serving as co-lead counsel, helped oil refinery investor Corral Morocco Holdings win a \$250 million award with interest against the Kingdom of Morocco over its investment in the SAMIR Refinery.

In July, an International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes tribunal determined that Morocco breached its international legal obligations by expropriating Corral's investment in the refinery in 2015.

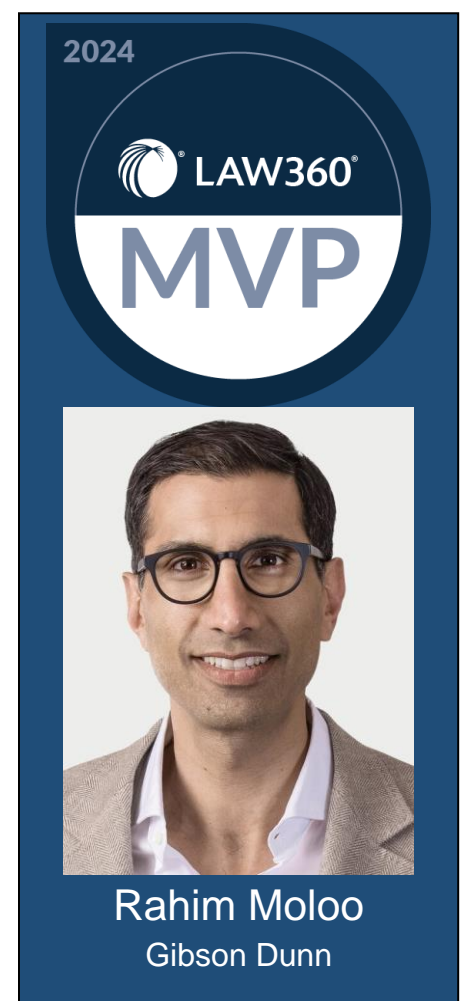
"These cases ... take a long time to prosecute because they're complicated, and they involve a number of witnesses and experts and submissions before the tribunal. So it's rewarding when you go through a several-year process to prosecute a claim, and at the end of it, your client is vindicated," Moloo said.

Other notable cases:

Moloo and a Gibson Dunn team defeated the Republic of Colombia's objections to salvage company Sea Search Armada LLC's claim to sunken treasure of gold and jewels from an 18th-century shipwreck off the country's coast.

In February, a Permanent Court of Arbitration tribunal denied Colombia's preliminary objections, rejecting the country's argument that Sea Search cannot properly be considered a protected investor under the Colombia-USA Trade Promotion Agreement, and that its claim is time-barred by a three-year limitation provision under the TPA.

"What it means now for our client is that the merits of its claim will be heard, and we hope that



ultimately it will be vindicated, and the ... 40-year-long battle that it's been fighting will finally come to an end," Moloo said. "Unfortunately, a lot of the folks who originally found the treasure in the early 1980s have since passed away. And so it's their families that are fighting this battle for them, and we want to bring a resolution to this long-running dispute where our client has been waiting to be compensated for its find back in the early 1980s."

His proudest moment of the year:

During a hearing in a dispute over the price paid for electricity in a long-term contract, three of Moloo's former Columbia Law School students who are associates at Gibson Dunn participated in cross-examination.

"It was a proud moment as lead counsel in a case to have all of the associates on the team being former students, but not only that, all having the opportunity to do oral advocacy in a significant case, and all doing, in my view, an excellent job and really doing the client proud," Moloo said.

Why he's an international arbitration attorney:

Moloo, who is Canadian, worked at a law firm in Canada in his home city of Calgary after receiving a bachelor of laws degree from the University of British Columbia. One of the partners at the Calgary firm asked him to help out on some international arbitration matters, which piqued Moloo's interest in the field.

He then earned a Master of Laws degree at New York University and decided to stay in New York when he realized that the city was a place where he could practice in an international setting and sharpen his oral advocacy skills.

"Sometimes serendipity lands you where you are," he said. "It's a combination of a bit of luck and what my interests were. I was always interested in international affairs and involved in debating and public speaking. It was a combination of those things that landed me on a path toward international arbitration at a time when I didn't even know I was on that path."

What motivates him:

To be sure, the desire to win drives Moloo in his legal practice. But so does his interest in complex international disputes where each case takes on its own life, with its own team, different counsel on the other side, different arbitration tribunals in different parts of world, and different languages where local laws that apply.

"There is so much variety in international arbitration, but at its core you're tasked with convincing a panel of three people that your client's position is the right one," he said. "The passion for wanting to both win and advocate on behalf of your clients are what motivate me."

His advice for junior attorneys:

Persistence is key for junior attorneys who want to play the long game in an international arbitration career, according to Moloo. There are no shortcuts, he said, especially in the practice of law.

"It's a profession where attention to detail matters," Moloo said. "Knowing the facts matters. Understanding the law matters. Even when you're giving strategic advice, it's not advice in a vacuum."

You have to do the hard work of reading the documents, understanding the applicable law and really getting to know the client's business. You have to put in the time."

--As told to Sarah Martinson. Editing by Dave Trumbore.

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2024 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.

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