

**LOCAL NEWS**

**Law firm pulls out of 'comfort women' lawsuit against city of Glendale**



This March 18, 2014 file photo shows the Comfort Women statue sits in Glendale Central Park. Los Angeles residents and GAHT-U.S., a nonprofit corporation, filed a lawsuit asking that the statue, which honors women forced to work as sex slaves during World War II, be removed because it symbolizes disapproval of Japanese women. (Photo by John McCoy/Los Angeles Daily News)

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Amid a backlash for taking the case in the first place, Mayer Brown LLP of Los Angeles this week backed out of representing two residents who believe the city's controversial "comfort women" statue should be removed.

Michiko Shiota Gingery and Koichi Mera, members of Global Alliance for Historical Truth (GAHT-U.S.), filed a lawsuit in February with the U.S. District Court regarding the bronze statue in Glendale's Central Park that honors women sold into sex slavery by the Japanese military in World War II. The complaint claims the memorial exceeds the city's power, infringes upon the federal government's right to exclusively conduct foreign affairs, violates the Supremacy Clause in the Constitution and negatively affects foreign relations with Japan. Mayer Brown was representing the plaintiff.

But on Monday, a request submitted in court by Mayer Brown to withdraw from the case was approved, according to a statement issued by the law firm. The law firm's spokesman and the attorneys who withdrew from the case declined to comment further.

The controversial lawsuit has garnered national criticism. A Forbes [article](#) published April 13 lambasted Mera, Gingery and Mayer Brown, referring to GAHT-U.S.'s lawsuit and Mayer Brown's decision to represent them as "one of the most controversial civil suits ever filed in the United States.

"Would any self-respecting U.S. law firm represent a client who suggested the Jews deserved the Holocaust? Probably not," wrote Forbes columnist Eamonn Fingleton. "Where imperial Japan's atrocities are concerned, however, at least one top U.S. law firm hasn't been so choosy."

Mayer Brown will represent the plaintiffs in the lawsuit until a replacement is found.

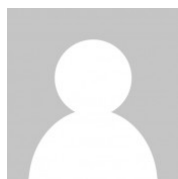
"There has been a lot of pressure on Mayer Brown LLP to go away from this lawsuit," Mera said, calling the firm's decision to back out of the lawsuit "totally crazy.

"Mayer Brown is a law firm, and once a firm decides to support a client, they should be doing it all the way to the end."

Sidley Austin LLP in Los Angeles, which is representing the city of Glendale, declined to comment.

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