SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUP	REME COURT	OF THE	UNITED	STATES
			-	
MICHELLE MONASKY,)	
Pet	itioner,)	
v.) No. 1	8-935
DOMENICO TAGLIERI	- - ,)	
Res	pondent.)	
			_	

Pages: 1 through 65

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: December 11, 2019

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES	
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3	MICHELLE MONASKY,)	
4	Petitioner,)	
5	v.) No. 18-935	
6	DOMENICO TAGLIERI,)	
7	Respondent.)	
8		
9		
10	Washington, D.C.	
11	Wednesday, December 11, 2019	
12		
13	The above-entitled matter came on	
14	for oral argument before the Supreme Court of the	16
15	United States at 10:10 a.m.	
16		
17	APPEARANCES:	
18	AMIR C. TAYRANI, ESQ., Washington, D.C.;	
19	on behalf of the Petitioner.	
20	SOPAN JOSHI, Assistant to the Solicitor General	,
21	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.;	
22	for the United States, as amicus curiae,	
23	supporting neither party.	
24	ANDREW J. PINCUS, ESQ., Washington, D.C.;	
25	on behalf of the Respondent.	

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:10 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument first this morning in Case 18-935,
5	Monasky versus Taglieri.
6	Mr. Tayrani.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF AMIR C. TAYRANI
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. TAYRANI: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	The Hague Convention on the Civil
12	Aspects of Child Abduction is designed to
13	protect children who have a country of habitual
14	residence from the harmful effects of wrongful
15	removal from that country. In this case,
16	however, the Convention was applied to separate
17	two-year-old A.M.T. from her mother, the only
18	caregiver A.M.T. had ever known, and to return
19	the child to Italy, a country where A.M.T. had
20	spent only the first eight weeks of her life.
21	The Sixth Circuit's decision upholding
22	A.M.T.'s return to Italy rests on an erroneous
23	definition of habitual residence. The Sixth
24	Circuit held that A.M.T.'s parents could share
25	an intent to raise A.M.T. in Italy even if they

- 1 had no meeting of the minds. The court never
- 2 explained how parents can share an intent about
- 3 where a child will live if there is no actual
- 4 agreement between them.
- 5 Tellingly, neither Taglieri nor the
- 6 United States defends the Sixth Circuit's
- 7 habitual residence standard. They instead urge
- 8 this Court to adopt an amorphous, all relevant
- 9 circumstances inquiry. But, in cases involving
- infants, the foreign jurisdictions on which
- 11 Taglieri and the United States rely actually
- 12 apply a different habitual residence standard.
- 13 That standard focuses on the primary caregiver's
- 14 connections to the country of removal, a far
- 15 more appropriate inquiry.
- 16 Ultimately, however, under any of the
- 17 competing definitions of habitual residence and
- 18 standards of review, the outcome of this case is
- 19 the same. Eight-week-old A.M.T. was not
- 20 habitually resident in Italy. Indeed, the
- 21 district court's unchallenged finding that
- 22 Monasky intended to return to the United States
- 23 with A.M.T. as soon as possible is virtually
- 24 dispositive.
- This Court should put an end to this

- 1 already four-year-old litigation by entering an
- 2 order directing A.M.T.'s return to the United
- 3 States.
- 4 I'd like to turn first to the
- 5 definition of habitual residence.
- 6 The Sixth Circuit applied a shared
- 7 parental intent standard in name only because it
- 8 held that A.M.T.'s parents could share an intent
- 9 for her to live in Italy even if they had no
- 10 meeting of the minds or actual agreement --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Tay --
- 12 MR. TAYRANI: -- on that issue.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- Tayrani, a -- a
- 14 problem with your position, I take it your view
- is this child, taken to the United States at
- 16 eight weeks old, has no habitual residence?
- 17 MR. TAYRANI: That is our position,
- 18 Your Honor.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And if that's so,
- then there are many children who would not be
- 21 covered by the Convention. The whole idea of
- the Convention was to stop unilateral decisions
- 23 to move a child. And you would be taking out of
- the Convention's coverage cases of very young
- 25 children.

1	MR. TAYRANI: With respect, I disagree
2	with the proposition that our approach would
3	lead to a large number of children who do not
4	have a country of habitual residence.
5	First of all, we're talking in this
6	case only about infants. Older children are
7	evaluated under a different standard, and in all
8	likelihood, based on their connections, their
9	acclimatization to the country in which they
10	reside, they would have a country of habitual
11	residence. Even with respect to infants, we're
12	dealing here with the unusual case where the
13	breakdown of the parties' relationship was
14	simultaneous with Monasky's pregnancy and the
15	birth of the child.
16	In any case, where the breakdown of
17	the relationship occurs later in time, in all
18	likelihood, there will be an agreement between
19	the parents as to where the child will live for
20	at least the foreseeable future. But, from the
21	standpoint of the objectives of the Hague
22	Convention, there's nothing wrong with
23	recognizing that a subset of children will have
24	no country of habitual residence, because
25	JUSTICE GINSBURG: The problem with

- 1 the -- a standard that says if you -- the
- 2 parents have to have an agreement, in many of
- 3 these cases, the relationship between the
- 4 parents is so acrimonious that the likelihood of
- 5 -- of a actual agreement is slim to none.
- 6 MR. TAYRANI: That would only be the
- 7 case, Your Honor, if the acrimony was
- 8 simultaneous with the pregnancy and birth. In
- 9 other cases involving infants, the breakdown of
- 10 the relationship may occur later in time. And
- if there was a meeting of the minds after the
- 12 child's birth, that would be controlling. A
- 13 single parent could not unilaterally disavow
- 14 that agreement.
- 15 But from --
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: So you think this
- 17 agreement is irrevocable? If there's a -- I
- doubt that there are going to be very many cases
- 19 where there's a written agreement. So you think
- 20 that if, at the beginning, at the time of the
- 21 child's birth, there's a tacit agreement between
- the parents, that's irrevocable, and then, if
- 23 the relationship breaks down over a period of
- 24 time that -- where you might otherwise infer
- 25 that there is no longer any agreement, that

1 would not count? 2 MR. TAYRANI: That's exactly our approach, Your Honor. The -- the agreement, 3 once it's in place, is irrevocable until the 4 5 standard for older children comes into play, 6 which would be an acclimatization-based standard. 7 8 But, for infants, once the parents 9 have reached a meeting of the minds, a single 10 parent cannot unilaterally disavow that 11 agreement. 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, we're 13 -- we're talking about an international 14 convention, and yet none of the other parties to 15 the Convention have adopted your position. -- the courts of Canada, the U.K., the EU, 16 Australia, and others have, in fact, rejected 17 18 it. 19 We have said one of the important 20 quiding principles when interpreting the 21 Convention is what the other countries do. 22 should we depart from that guideline here? 23 MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, every 24 circuit that has addressed this issue applies

some version of the shared parental intent

- 1 standard to infants. Some circuits apply the
- 2 additional actual agreement requirement that
- 3 we're urging this Court to adopt. But every
- 4 circuit applies some version of shared parental
- 5 intent.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but I'm
- 7 -- you don't dispute the fact that no other
- 8 country, no other signatory to the Convention,
- 9 has adopted your position?
- 10 MR. TAYRANI: I don't dispute that,
- 11 Your Honor. But, to the extent that this Court
- is inclined to follow the approach of foreign
- jurisdictions, then the relevant test here is
- 14 not the all relevant circumstances test
- 15 advocated by Taglieri and the United States.
- 16 It's the primary caregiver focused
- 17 standard that the relevant foreign jurisdictions
- 18 actually apply in cases involving infants. And
- 19 that's the EU Court of Justice in the Mercredi
- 20 decision. It's the U.K. Supreme Court in the A
- versus A decision. It's the Australian High
- 22 Court in the L.K. decision. All of those courts
- have recognized that in cases involving infants,
- it's the primary caregiver's connections to the
- 25 country of removal that determine whether the

- 1 infant has a country of habitual residence.
- 2 And --
- JUSTICE BREYER: But how did you get
- 4 that out of -- I read Chief Justice Hale's
- 5 opinion, and it seems to me that she made a huge
- 6 point that this is family law. You know,
- 7 families differ. There are vast differences.
- 8 And don't treat these words "habitual
- 9 residence" as if it's like a black-letter tax
- 10 code. They're more like a factual matter. And
- 11 let the judge who's closest to it, even though
- 12 he's not a family court judge -- unfortunately,
- it's a federal system because it's a treaty --
- let them hear all the evidence and decide it.
- 15 And that's it.
- I mean, not 100 percent it, but that's
- it. And as soon as nine people who know -- I,
- 18 speaking for myself, know very little about this
- 19 -- start laying down black-letter standards, all
- we're going to do is maybe help people in some
- 21 cases and just cause chaos and hardship in
- 22 others.
- MR. TAYRANI: Well, there need --
- JUSTICE BREYER: That's -- that's
- 25 basically what I got out of her opinion. It

- 1 seems to me that's the British court, and that
- 2 sounds pretty sensible to me.
- MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, the U.K.
- 4 Supreme Court makes clear that while an all
- 5 relevant circumstances test is generally
- 6 appropriate, in the case of an infant, the
- 7 infant's connections to her environment are
- 8 formed through her primary caregiver.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, that may be in
- 10 some cases. That may well be. And in other
- 11 cases, maybe it isn't. I don't know every
- 12 family in the world.
- 13 And so, I mean, maybe we read it
- 14 differently, but I really read Justice Hale's
- opinion as just saying what I just said. So,
- 16 Judge, be careful. This is factual. It
- involves families. Don't adopt a standard.
- 18 Just let them apply these words.
- Now where is it -- where -- where is
- 20 that -- where did I get it wrong?
- MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, the U.K.
- 22 Supreme Court follows the approach of the
- 23 European Union Court of Justice in the Mercredi
- 24 decision, and Mercredi makes very clear that, in
- 25 cases involving infants, a primary caregiver

- 1 focused approach is the test that should be
- 2 applied. But, under any of the competing tests
- 3 that we're discussing here today, the outcome is
- 4 the same on these facts.
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: Can I ask you a
- 6 question about your position that somewhat
- 7 puzzles me? You think that, in this case, the
- 8 dispositive question is whether there was an
- 9 agreement between the parents? Am I right?
- 10 MR. TAYRANI: Yes, Your Honor.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: And then you say that
- 12 there should be review de novo. But that's a --
- if the question is whether there was an
- 14 agreement between the parents, isn't that a pure
- 15 question of fact? Why would it be reviewed de
- 16 novo?
- 17 MR. TAYRANI: It would be reviewed de
- 18 novo, Your Honor, because, while historical
- 19 facts would be reviewed for clear error, the
- 20 application of the habitual residence standard,
- 21 the actual agreement requirement to those facts,
- is a mixed question of law and fact.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Why -- why is it a
- 24 mixed question? Was there an agreement between
- 25 the parents or was there not an agreement

- 1 between the parents? It's a question of fact,
- 2 pure fact.
- 3 MR. TAYRANI: Because there does not
- 4 need to be a written agreement. There doesn't
- 5 even need to be an express oral agreement. An
- 6 agreement can be --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, was there a
- 8 tacit agreement? It's a question of fact.
- 9 MR. TAYRANI: It is just as much a
- 10 question of fact as a reasonable suspicion or
- 11 probable cause determination, which this Court
- 12 has held --
- JUSTICE ALITO: No --
- MR. TAYRANI: -- would be --
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: -- because those
- involve the application of a complicated legal
- 17 standard.
- 18 MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, the fact
- 19 that we're here today would suggest that the
- 20 habitual residence standard is less than
- 21 straightforward.
- Lower courts are in need of guidance
- from appellate courts setting forth clear legal
- 24 principles about how to make a habitual
- 25 residence determination, just as lower courts

- 1 need guidance about how to ascertain the
- 2 existence of reasonable suspicion and probable
- 3 cause.
- 4 This Court emphasized the need for
- 5 clear guidance in the Ornelas case, where it
- 6 held that probable cause and reasonable
- 7 suspicion are reviewed de novo.
- 8 And it's not only courts that need
- 9 quidance. It's parents who are confronted with
- 10 these difficult decisions about whether to
- 11 remove a child from a dangerous situation.
- 12 They need to know, if a child is
- 13 removed, what is the likelihood that the child
- 14 will be returned under the Hague Convention.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But over and over
- in the -- in the history of this Convention is
- that they don't want any rigid test. They don't
- 18 want domicile. They don't want nationality.
- 19 They want a totality of the circumstances.
- 20 And -- and the government points to
- 21 the Seventh Circuit case, the Redmond case,
- 22 saying that no one factor should be considered
- 23 controlling. You just take all the factors and
- 24 a district judge should weigh those and come to
- 25 a conclusion.

1	MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, the problem
2	with that approach is that it will breed
3	disuniform outcomes. It will prolong Hague
4	Convention litigation. It will undermine the
5	deterrent effect of the Hague Convention by
6	undermining the clear rules that would otherwise
7	apply in this setting.
8	But, to the extent that this Court is
9	inclined to look at the approach of foreign
10	courts, we would urge the Court to adopt a
11	primary caregiver focused standard. If the
12	Court applies an all relevant circumstances
13	test, however, it is essential that this Court
14	not only adopt that standard but then go on and
15	apply that standard to the facts of this case.
16	The Hague Convention sets a goal of
17	resolving these cases within six weeks. This
18	case has been going on for four and a half
19	years. Under Article II of the Hague
20	Convention, signatory states have an obligation
21	to use the most expeditious procedures available
22	to resolve
23	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: On on your
24	MR. TAYRANI: these cases.
25	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: on the standard

- of review, doesn't de novo review necessarily
- 2 prolong the matter?
- 3 MR. TAYRANI: I don't think so, Your
- 4 Honor. De novo review facilitates the --
- 5 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Because it's going
- 6 to push everything into the court of appeals
- 7 then, rearguing everything that's already been
- 8 decided by the district court without any
- 9 deference, so people will take appeals much more
- 10 readily.
- 11 MR. TAYRANI: Given the stakes in
- these cases, it's likely that the losing parent
- in the district court will appeal whatever the
- standard of review is. De novo appellate review
- 15 promotes the development of clear legal
- 16 principles that district courts can apply more
- 17 readily, more expeditiously, and that appellate
- 18 courts, in turn, can also apply in an
- 19 expeditious manner.
- 20 If this Court adopts an all relevant
- 21 circumstances test, then it would be displacing
- the shared parental intent standard that every
- 23 circuit applies, which is why it is of
- 24 overriding importance that this Court --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: In every circuit,

- 1 not the Seventh Circuit.
- 2 MR. TAYRANI: That -- that is not a
- 3 case involving infants, Your Honor, the Redmond
- 4 case. Every circuit that looks at the habitual
- 5 residence of an infant applies a test that looks
- 6 to shared parental intent. Some circuits also
- 7 look at actual agreement as part of that shared
- 8 parental intent inquiry.
- 9 The need for guidance from this Court
- 10 is of surpassing importance because this Court
- 11 would be adopting for the first time an all
- 12 relevant circumstances test that no lower court
- currently applies in a case involving infants.
- In order to live up to the United
- 15 States' obligation to use the most expeditious
- 16 procedures available to resolve these cases,
- 17 this Court should not only adopt a standard and
- 18 -- a standard of review and a definition of
- 19 habitual residence but should go on and apply
- 20 that standard to the facts of this case so that
- 21 this four-and-a-half-year-old litigation is
- 22 brought to an end, so that district courts have
- 23 guidance about how the habitual residence
- 24 standard will be applied.
- 25 On the facts of this case --

Τ	JUSTICE GINSBURG: How now will it
2	be brought to an end? The child is now in
3	Italy, and no doubt the Italian courts would
4	weigh in, so this this determination of
5	habitual residence is not going to settle where
6	this child the custody of this this child.
7	MR. TAYRANI: That's correct, Your
8	Honor. Hague Convention cases don't determine
9	custody. They determine the venue in which
LO	child custody determinations will be made.
L1	The appropriate venue for this child
L2	custody determination is the United States.
L3	And, in fact, there has been no child custody
L 4	determination in Italy. The Italian courts
L5	refused to make that determination because
L6	Monasky's parental rights were terminated in an
L7	ex parte proceeding of which she had no notice
L8	and no opportunity to be heard.
L9	If A.M.T. is returned to the United
20	States, then there will be a full and fair child
21	custody hearing.
22	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that will
23	depend on the Italian authorities returning her.
24	And given the position that they've taken up
25	until now that game most unlikely

1	MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, we believe
2	as a matter of comity that the Italian courts
3	would return A.M.T. and would adhere
4	JUSTICE GINSBURG: The court that has
5	declared her a non-parent
6	MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor
7	JUSTICE GINSBURG: would do that?
8	MR. TAYRANI: as as a matter of
9	comity, we believe that the Italian courts would
10	adhere to an order from this Court directing the
11	re-return of A.M.T. There is precedent for
12	foreign courts following re-return orders.
13	In the Larbie case, which is one of
14	the cases that this Court cited in its Chafin
15	opinion as an example of a case where a district
16	court issued a re-return order, the case went
17	all the way up to the U.K. Supreme Court as to
18	whether to adhere to that re-return order, and
19	the U.K. Supreme Court ordered the child
20	returned
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well
22	MR. TAYRANI: to the United States.
23	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: there
24	hasn't been any case where we're talking about a
25	a time in the the other country as long as

- 1 this. This would be the longest period of time
- 2 in which any re-return order has been entered,
- 3 wouldn't it?
- 4 MR. TAYRANI: I don't know if it is
- 5 the longest period of time. To the extent that
- 6 Taglieri has concerns about the propriety of
- 7 re-return, those are issues that he could raise
- 8 before an Italian court when we move to enforce
- 9 the re-return order. But in the absence --
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Which would
- just delay the proceedings that have already
- been delayed far longer than the Convention
- 13 contemplated.
- MR. TAYRANI: But, Your Honor, in the
- absence of a re-return order, the grave error
- 16 committed by the lower courts will remain
- 17 unremedied. As this Court held in the Chafin
- 18 case, a re-return order is typical appellate
- 19 relief.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But I'm not
- 21 interested for the -- hypothetically, oddly
- 22 enough, in the law. Suppose I were interested
- in how do we get to what's in the best interests
- of the child. Look at it from that point of
- 25 view. What do we do?

Τ	MR. TAYRANI: The best interests
2	JUSTICE BREYER: And I also think
3	judges, particularly federal judges, don't know
4	much about this.
5	So, in Italy, is there a family court,
6	or what's what do I do? I don't know. This
7	is a a genuinely open question. I don't know
8	what to do if my object is to try to secure the
9	best interests of the child. And you're
LO	familiar with this case, you tell me.
L1	MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, the best
L2	interests of the child would be furthered by
L3	returning A.M.T. to the United States so that
L4	there can be a full and fair child custody
L5	hearing at which a state court judge, steeped in
L6	family law issues, can make a determination
L7	about who should have custody and what is, in
L8	fact, in A.M.T.'s best interest.
L9	But, in the absence of a re-return
20	order, no court
21	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry, I
22	thought that there was a special order of the
23	Italian court giving the mother some visitation
24	rights, albeit limited. It's not clear to me
5	that you're representing to me that there is no

- 1 method or manner for her to go back to the
- 2 Italian court and reopen or revisit the custody
- 3 issue?
- 4 MR. TAYRANI: I'm not representing
- 5 that there is no procedural --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So assuming, as I
- 7 do, that there has to be something that can
- 8 secure greater rights for her, why should it be
- 9 here instead of there, assuming -- and you don't
- 10 want me to assume this -- that the totality of
- 11 the circumstances suggests that she has
- 12 acclimated?
- MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, Monasky has
- 14 --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I mean, after two
- 16 and a half years, even under the Convention, you
- 17 don't have to return a child who's been settled
- 18 for greater -- greater than one year. So --
- 19 MR. TAYRANI: That's correct, Your
- 20 Honor. That does not bear upon the availability
- 21 --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, of --
- MR. TAYRANI: -- of a re-return --
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- of the return
- 25 -- of the return, but -- but I still am

- 1 wondering why it is that it's the American
- 2 court, rather than the Italian court, who should
- 3 be dealing with the custody issue.
- 4 MR. TAYRANI: Well, first of all,
- 5 because Italy was not A.M.T.'s country of
- 6 habitual residence. So she never should have
- 7 been returned to Italy in the first place. The
- 8 only way to remedy that wrong --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, that --
- 10 that's a really interesting question, because
- 11 I'm not sure -- unless we accept your premise
- 12 that the mother's intent controls, but she was
- only here a couple of months when the father
- 14 sought custody -- re-return of her. So it's
- 15 hard to say she was acclimated in those couple
- 16 of months either.
- 17 MR. TAYRANI: But, Your Honor, the
- 18 question is whether A.M.T. had the type of
- 19 meaningful, settled, stable existence in Italy
- 20 when she was removed at eight weeks of age to
- 21 establish a habitual residence there.
- 22 And she must --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: How old -- how old
- is the child now?
- 25 MR. TAYRANI: She is four and a half

- 1 years old, Your Honor. A.M.T. did not have that
- 2 type of existence within her fleeting eight
- 3 weeks of living in Italy. The Hague Convention
- 4 is designed to protect children who have a
- 5 stable -- stable, settled existence.
- 6 That is what is explained in paragraph
- 7 72 of the accompanying explanatory report.
- 8 There will be some children such as A.M.T. who
- 9 don't form those types of settled connections to
- 10 a country and whose return to the country of
- 11 removal is actually detrimental --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: But --
- MR. TAYRANI: -- to the interests --
- JUSTICE ALITO: -- let me understand.
- 15 Your position is that she had no habitual
- 16 residence at that time?
- 17 MR. TAYRANI: That's correct, Your
- 18 Honor.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Is that correct? Not
- 20 that she had habitual residence -- all right.
- 21 So either parent at that time could snatch her,
- and possession would be ten-tenths of the law,
- 23 right?
- MR. TAYRANI: The Hague Convention
- 25 would not speak to that removal, Your Honor.

- 1 That doesn't mean that the left-behind parent
- would be without remedies. The left-behind
- 3 parent could seek relief, for example, under the
- 4 Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and
- 5 Enforcement Act. The left-behind parent would
- 6 have the opportunity to participate in a child
- 7 custody hearing in the country of removal.
- 8 That --
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the Convention,
- 10 which was meant to solve this problem of
- 11 unilateral removal, would not apply?
- 12 MR. TAYRANI: The Convention would not
- apply if a child had no country of habitual
- 14 residence. But, as the very foreign
- jurisdictions on which Taglieri and the United
- 16 States rely, including the U.K. Supreme Court,
- 17 the Australian High Court, and courts in New
- 18 Zealand have recognized, not every child will
- 19 have a country of habitual residence --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How -- how
- 21 long does the child have to -- how old does a
- 22 child have to be before you would say they have
- 23 a habitual residence?
- 24 MR. TAYRANI: It --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Eight weeks

- under your theory is not enough, but one year,
 two years?
- 3 MR. TAYRANI: Well, at a certain
- 4 point, around 18 to 24 months, the focus would
- 5 shift to the child's own acclimation to his or
- 6 her surroundings, because the child --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Where do you
- 8 get -- where do you get that number from?
- 9 MR. TAYRANI: Based on the development
- of a child, child psychology. At a certain
- 11 point, the lower courts shift their test from
- 12 shared parental intent to acclimatization, once
- 13 the child has formed his or her own connections.
- 14 Under the shared parental intent
- 15 standard for infants, the inquiry looks at
- whether the intent of the parents is a proxy for
- 17 the type of settled, stable, meaningful ties
- 18 that an older child would be able to form. And
- 19 there will be some children who do not have a
- 20 country of habitual residence because they did
- 21 not form the type of settled, stable ties that
- the Hague Convention is designed to protect.
- 23 Returning a child to a country where
- it did not have meaningful connections is just
- as harmful to that child as permitting the

1 child's removal from a country of --2 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Tayrani --MR. TAYRANI: -- habitual residence. 3 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- Judge Boggs 4 5 suggests that in the case of children, children who have lived in a single place for their 6 entire lives, in the case of infant children, 7 8 that is, who have lived in a single country 9 their entire lives with both parents, that the 10 usual rule should be that's their habitual residence, not irrebuttable, but that that 11 12 should be the usual rule, that that's their habitual residence. 13 14 And that's certainly a very 15 administrable rule. It provides a lot of guidance. And it deters anybody, either parent, 16 17 from taking the child anywhere else, which seems 18 to be of value too. 19 So why isn't the Judge Boggs rule the 20 right one for infants? 21 MR. TAYRANI: The problem with that 22 approach, Your Honor, is that it conflates a 23 child's residence with her habitual residence. 24 If the signatories to the Hague Convention had 25 wanted to enact an agreement that was all

- 1 encompassing, that applied to all children, they
- 2 would have prohibited the removal of a child
- 3 from his country of residence without the
- 4 approval of both parents.
- What they instead did was enact a more
- 6 targeted provision that prevents the wrongful
- 7 removal of a child from his country of habitual
- 8 residence because the signatories recognize that
- 9 removing a child from a country of habitual
- 10 residence, where the child has meaningful ties,
- 11 has a stable existence, would be harmful to the
- 12 child.
- But they also recognize that returning
- 14 a child to a country where it lacks those ties,
- 15 lacks those connections, would be just as
- 16 harmful to the child's interests. That is the
- fundamental problem with the one country rule
- 18 advocated by the panel in the Sixth Circuit.
- 19 But whatever the test is that this
- 20 Court adopts, the outcome is the same. The
- 21 facts are overwhelming here that, as a result of
- the physical and sexual abuse to which Monasky
- 23 was subject, she formed the intent during her
- 24 pregnancy to return to the United States with
- 25 her child as soon as possible. That's what the

- 1 district court found, at Pet. App. 94a, that
- 2 Monasky intended to return to the United States
- 3 with A.M.T. as soon as possible.
- 4 And that's what she did. The day that
- 5 A.M.T.'s U.S. passport arrived, Monasky left and
- 6 returned to the United States, fled from the
- 7 dangerous situation in which she found herself.
- 8 The signatories to the Hague Convention would
- 9 never have intended to prevent a mother from
- 10 removing her child from those dangerous
- 11 circumstances.
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: Why? That's a
- 13 question I have here. Of course, there's child
- 14 abuse or spousal abuse raised throughout this,
- which is a serious problem. So why does this
- 16 case not involve Article 13, where you don't
- 17 return a child if there is a grave risk that his
- or her return would expose the child to physical
- or psychological harm or otherwise place the
- 20 child in an intolerable situation?
- 21 That provision would seem designed for
- the problem of spousal abuse.
- MR. TAYRANI: Mr. Chief --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why isn't it here?
- 25 MR. TAYRANI: -- Justice, may I answer

1	the question?
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes.
3	MR. TAYRANI: Your Honor, we did urge
4	the district court to apply the exception for
5	grave risk of harm to A.M.T. Unfortunately,
6	lower courts have construed that exception
7	narrowly. And in this case, even though the
8	district court credited Monasky's allegations
9	about the extensive physical and sexual abuse to
LO	which she was subjected, the court concluded
L1	that that abuse directed to Monasky was not
L2	sufficient to create a grave risk of harm to
L3	A.M.T.
L4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
L5	counsel.
L6	Mr. Joshi.
L7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF SOPAN JOSHI
L8	FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
L9	SUPPORTING NEITHER PARTY
20	MR. JOSHI: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
21	it please the Court:
22	Habitual residence is a flexible,
23	fact-intensive concept. That's precisely why
24	the drafters and ratifiers of the Hague

Convention picked it over the alternatives, like

1 domicile or nationality. It asks a very 2 straightforward question: Where does the child usually live? Where's the child at home? 3 Answering that question requires 4 5 looking at the case-specific facts on the ground, unencumbered by rigid, mechanical, 6 per se tests. That includes Petitioner's rigid, 7 8 mechanical, per se test about a shared -- or, I'm sorry, a subjective agreement or a meeting 9 10 of the minds. That is not necessary to establishing 11 12 a child's habitual residence. It's not even 13 necessary to establishing a shared parental 14 intent, which itself is not necessary to 15 establishing habitual residence. And that test applies equally to 16 infants and to older children. Nothing in the 17 18 Convention's text or structure suggests that 19 habitual residence carries a different 20 definition depending on the age of the child. 21 So that takes care of one question presented. 22 On the other one, because determining 23 habitual residence is primarily a factual 24 inquiry and involves factual work, this Court's

framework in U.S. Bank or Lakeridge applies, and

- 1 there's no reason to deviate from that rule.
- In fact, that rule would also provide,
- 3 we believe, the most consistent results,
- 4 including consistency of outcome, as Petitioner
- 5 asks for, because the best way to be consistent
- is to be right, and the best way to be right on
- 7 a fact-intensive question is to trust the
- 8 district judge.
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, this is what --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: When --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: -- puzzles me about
- 12 your position, which does seem to reflect the
- decisions of foreign courts, and maybe something
- 14 has just been lost in -- in translation.
- But it's -- it's fine to say take
- 16 everything into account and be flexible. But
- 17 that's not very helpful unless one knows the
- 18 question to be answered after taking everything
- into account and being flexible. And so the --
- 20 the -- the critical point is what is meant by
- 21 habitual residence.
- Now you said it's where the child
- 23 usually lives. If that's the test that Judge
- 24 Boggs had, I understand it. But, if it's
- something more than that, then I really don't

- 1 know what habitual residence means.
- 2 MR. JOSHI: So we think where a child
- 3 usually lives is the test. And it's sort of
- 4 hard to explain it more than that. In most
- 5 cases, it's going to be quite easy to tell where
- 6 the child usually lives, including for infants.
- 7 I mean, I -- I would wager if you walk
- 8 down the streets of D.C. and found parents with
- 9 infants and said where does your infant child
- 10 usually live, they'd say with us at home.
- 11 And it's oftentimes when these cases
- 12 are in dispute, when habitual residence is in
- dispute, and it's a very small fraction even of
- 14 Hague Convention cases, in those situations,
- it's going to be very hard to come up with an ex
- ante rule or test that's going to be useful in
- 17 that circumstance.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what if the
- 19 parents live, from the time of the child's birth
- 20 until the time when the issue comes up, in a
- 21 particular country, but it was never their
- intention to stay there permanently? Would that
- 23 country be where the child usually lives?
- 24 MR. JOSHI: It -- that -- that's a
- 25 very difficult question. And I -- I can imagine

- 1 many factors that might push you one way or the
- 2 other.
- For example, if that's where they had
- 4 been living for guite some time but just had
- 5 some future plans to move, that might well be
- 6 where the child was usually living on the date
- of the -- or, you know, immediately before the
- 8 -- the wrongful retention or removal, as Article
- 9 III calls for.
- 10 On the other hand, if you're telling
- 11 me that, in fact, they have a permanent
- 12 residence in another country and they were, you
- 13 know, in the country of birth just on vacation
- 14 and she went into early labor and the child was
- born there, but all their connections are back
- in the other country, it might be a much more
- 17 difficult question.
- The point is where habitual residence
- is disputed in those small fraction of cases,
- there's very little ex ante guidance that's
- 21 going to be useful, except to say the question
- is, where does the child usually live or, if it
- 23 helps to think of it this way, where is the
- 24 child at home? And so --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel --

1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's 2 kind of a meaningless concept, where the child usually lives, if you're talking about somebody 3 4 who's eight-weeks-old. 5 MR. JOSHI: Again, as I --CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I mean, it's 6 not as if they'd laid down roots. 7 8 MR. JOSHI: That -- that's --9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Eight-year-old -- eight-week-old infants don't have habits, 10 well, other than one or two, but --11 12 (Laughter.) 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- but it 14 doesn't seem to me that that's the notion that 15 the Convention drafters were looking at. MR. JOSHI: It -- it isn't. And --16 17 and I think it's important to realize that, 18 although the word is habitual, the -- the term habitual residence and the use of the word 19 20 habitual originated in the Hague Convention in 21 French. 22 And the English copy here is official, 23 but, nevertheless, the term habitual residence 24 began as -- I'm not even going to attempt to 25 pronounce it in French -- but -- but habitual in

- 1 that context translated means usual or
- 2 customary. It doesn't necessarily mean as a
- 3 habit.
- 4 And I think it's important that in the
- 5 ordinary case, even an infant, as I said, I
- 6 think, ask the parents of any newborn, and I
- 7 think if you ask where do you usually live, they
- 8 would have an answer, just like --
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, does that mean
- 10 Judge Boggs is right, that the place where an
- infant usually lives is the place where the
- infant has lived since birth with both parents?
- MR. JOSHI: Judge Boggs may well be
- 14 right, and he did add the qualification for
- 15 absent unusual circumstances.
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: Absent unusual
- 17 circumstances, right.
- 18 MR. JOSHI: And -- and I think that's
- 19 perfectly fine. I think the problem, though, is
- 20 if -- if there's any sort of quidance like that
- 21 coming from this Court, lower courts will tend
- 22 to rigidly follow it instead of answering the
- 23 ultimate question, which you asked about
- 24 earlier, which is, where does the child usually
- 25 live?

1 As a practical matter and as a -- you 2 know, and in theory, the judge can consider facts that are relevant to that question. And, 3 of course, that itself is a constraint, and --4 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: There's a -there's a problem with your solution. On the 6 two questions presented, I take it you agree 7 8 with Respondent. But you said the bottom line 9 should be a remand, not a determination. 10 And this child is now four-and-a-half-years-old. To remand to do 11 12 what? What factor didn't the district court take into account that the district court should 13 14 have taken into account? 15 You say totality of the circumstances, not shared intent as a single factor, but it 16 seems to me that the district court did have 17 18 everything before it. 19 What -- if -- if we remanded, what should the district court do that it hasn't 20 21 already done? 22 MR. JOSHI: So, Justice Ginsburg, we 23 don't take a position on the outcome of this 24 case. The Court's usual practice, when 25 announcing a new standard, is to remand.

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1
                The only thing I'll say is that both
 2
      the court of appeals and the district court
      appeared to view the facts through the lens of a
 3
      -- a notion that shared parental intent was the
 4
 5
      only thing that mattered. And probably the
     parties briefed the case that way in the court
 6
      of appeals, all to shared parental intent.
7
 8
                To the -- to the extent there are
9
      other facts that might have been germane to
10
      determining where the child usually lives that
      the parties didn't bring forward, you know, we
11
12
      -- we just don't --
13
                JUSTICE GINSBURG: What would they be?
14
                MR. JOSHI: I -- I don't know, and
15
      it's hard to predict. You know, I would -- as
      an example, I'll give you a -- a very recent
16
17
     case that's posted on the Hague Convention site
18
      that tracks cases under the Convention.
19
                It's called X against Y -- those are
20
     pseudonyms obviously -- from the court of
21
      appeals at the Hague. Mom alleged that the
22
      apartment in the Netherlands was where they
23
     usually lived. Apartment in Spain was a
24
     vacation home. Dad alleged exactly exactly the
25
      opposite.
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1 The court had to decide who was right, 2 looked at a lot of facts on the ground. But the most compelling one that the court decided would 3 tip the issue was that the mom had deregistered 4 5 herself from the municipal persons database and put Spain as her forwarding address, and 6 7 deregistered the company she ran from the Dutch 8 Chamber of Commerce. 9 It's impossible to predict that that 10 was going to be the fact ex ante. But, when you're looking at where the family in that case 11 12 or the child usually lives, it's the parties who 13 are going to come forward with evidence, and the 14 judge is going to assign -- decide whether it's 15 relevant and, if it's relevant, assign weight to 16 it. 17 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So -- so 18 would you agree then with Lady Hale's 19 observation in terms of a young child, infant 20 and parent intent, shared parent intent, she 21 says that these common-sense observations are 22 best seen as helpful generalizations of fact 23 which will usually but not invariably be true, 24 not as propositions of law.

So Hale -- Boggs may be right, except

- 1 that he's calling it a proposition of law.
- 2 MR. JOSHI: I would agree with that.
- 3 And I would just -- again, I would -- I would
- 4 caution this Court from laying down principles
- 5 like that because, when this Court says it,
- 6 lower courts usually take it as proposition of
- 7 the law --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Then why --
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, then, if that's
- 10 so, then is -- is it the less risky path to send
- it back? If we say it and don't send it back,
- more likely to be taken as laying down
- 13 propositions of law?
- MR. JOSHI: That may well be true, but
- 15 --
- JUSTICE BREYER: What do you think?
- 17 MR. JOSHI: So we -- we -- we
- don't take a position on it, other than to say,
- 19 you know, ideally, this Court's opinion will say
- 20 that habitual residence is a --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: No, you don't have to
- take a position, but I find it rather difficult.
- 23 So can you help me?
- 24 (Laughter.)
- MR. JOSHI: Again, as I said, it's --

- 1 it's where the child usually lives. And with
- 2 the facts we know --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry, where
- 4 did you get that standard? I look at the
- 5 European court and it had a different standard.
- 6 It says some degree of integration by the child
- 7 in a social and family environment. That's the
- 8 definition the Bates Court, Lady Hale, adopted.
- 9 I think, once we say where a child
- ordinary live -- ordinarily lives, we fall into
- 11 the trap that you had, which is, I think, courts
- will be focusing on ordinary out of context.
- 13 Are you disavowing what the other
- 14 courts are doing?
- MR. JOSHI: No, we're not.
- If I may, Mr. Chief Justice.
- We think they are looking at the right
- 18 question, which is where the child ordinarily
- 19 lives. In difficult cases, oftentimes --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, that's a
- 21 translation. They didn't use those words.
- 22 MR. JOSHI: We -- we think the words
- 23 they used are certainly relevant to that
- 24 ultimate determination, and, in any event, that
- is what the text of the Convention says. And we

- 1 think that's what the Court should apply here.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 3 counsel.
- 4 Mr. Pincus.
- 5 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ANDREW J. PINCUS
- 6 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- 7 MR. PINCUS: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 8 Justice, and may it please the Court:
- Just to pick up on Justice Sotomayor's
- 10 question, I -- I think the -- the European and
- 11 U.K. courts have talked about the family and
- 12 social environment in which the child's life has
- 13 developed. I think that, to me, is not that
- 14 different from where the child usually lives.
- 15 It may avoid the problem of duration.
- 16 I think a lot of the problems in these cases
- 17 sometimes result from the fact that habitual
- 18 residence to a U.S. ear may connote some degree
- of permanence, but the courts, the foreign
- 20 courts, have made clear that that actually isn't
- 21 the case. It doesn't require permanence. It's
- 22 -- it's just what's usual during the period
- 23 before the allegedly unlawful return.
- We agree with the SG regarding the
- 25 test. And I just wanted to start by saying a

- 1 few words about Petitioner's actual agreement
- 2 test. As Justice Ginsburg pointed out, it would
- 3 largely eliminate the Convention's protection
- 4 for very large -- for very young children
- 5 because they would have no habitual residence
- 6 and because one of the spouses in the cases
- 7 where there is marital discord during the
- 8 pregnancy and the birth could simply say I
- 9 withhold agreement on where the child should
- 10 live, and that would mean there was no habitual
- 11 residence as long as there was no agreement.
- 12 That's obviously a significant gap.
- 13 Petitioner cites some cases saying
- that a child may not have a habitual residence,
- but I think it's important to point out that
- 16 those statements were made in a very different
- 17 context, which is actually the one presented in
- the very large majority of decided Convention
- 19 cases, and that's the situation where the child
- and the parents live together in country A, then
- 21 the child moves to country B with one or both
- 22 parents -- it could be a temporary stay with
- 23 grandparents, could be for a job -- and then the
- 24 parent who was with the child in country B says,
- 25 I'm not sending the child back. And so the

- 1 question is, what is the child's habitual
- 2 residence, country A or B?
- And courts have said in that
- 4 circumstance it's possible to lose the habitual
- 5 residence in A before gaining it in B. Whether
- 6 that's true or not, that's obviously a very
- 7 different situation from the one presented here,
- 8 where the parents are in one country and the
- 9 child is born there and stays there until the
- 10 challenged removal.
- 11 And we agree with Judge Boggs as a
- 12 factual matter, not as a legal principle, that
- 13 those facts are very likely to lead to the
- 14 conclusion that the child's habitual residence
- is that country, absent unusual circumstances.
- 16 There can be different facts. The child is born
- on vacation. The child is born at a place of
- 18 birth selected for medical benefits that were
- 19 provided. But that also makes sense.
- The reason for identifying the child's
- 21 habitual residence is to determine which country
- 22 should make the custody determination. And if
- 23 the parents of child -- and the child have lived
- in only one place, it's logical for that country
- 25 to make the determination, again, absent unusual

- 1 circumstances.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Which -- which, as you
- 3 say, is what Judge Boggs said. And so I'm
- 4 curious as to why you're not just accepting that
- 5 as a formulation of the legal standard. Judge
- 6 Boggs was careful to say, absent unusual
- 7 circumstances. And I suppose I would say that
- 8 the benefit of doing that is, you know, if you
- 9 take the solicitor general's test -- this is on
- 10 page 26 and 27 -- I'm not going to read it
- 11 because it would take too long to --
- 12 (Laughter.)
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- to do all the
- 14 factors that they think ought to go into this
- 15 inquiry. And I'm -- I guess I'm a little bit
- 16 afraid. I mean, I -- I don't mind totality of
- the circumstances tests when they make sense,
- but I guess I'm a little bit afraid that by the
- 19 time you get through all those factors,
- 20 everybody's going to have forgotten what the
- 21 ultimate question is.
- 22 And if the ultimate question is just
- 23 where does the child usually live, then why not
- 24 just sort of say that when it comes to an infant
- or a very small child, the child usually lives

- 1 where the child has lived with both parents all
- 2 her life?
- 3 MR. PINCUS: Well, I don't want to
- 4 resist a rule that would be beneficial to my
- 5 client, but -- but I guess I will say that the
- 6 -- the courts, especially in the U.K., have had
- 7 a lot of experience with subsidiary legal
- 8 principles like that being developed. And I
- 9 think the -- the result, and I think Chief
- 10 Justice Hale mentions this as one decision, is
- 11 that they do get too much credence in how lower
- 12 courts approach the case.
- 13 And so I think the danger of adopting
- 14 subsidiary legal rules is that they will end up
- 15 being applied, as the solicitor general said, in
- 16 a broader sense -- in a broader context that --
- 17 than they should be.
- 18 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Wouldn't all the
- work be done on "absent unusual circumstances,"
- 20 though? And so you would still have the out, as
- 21 Justice Kagan points out, for people to argue
- 22 that it's --
- MR. PINCUS: I think so, and I'm not
- 24 sure, Justice Kavanaugh, that there's much
- 25 difference between saying that as a legal

- 1 principle or framing it the way Justice Breyer
- 2 did, which is, when the facts are that the child
- 3 has lived in one country with her parents for --
- 4 for her whole life, absent some unusual facts,
- 5 that is going to lead to this decision.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what this "take
- 7 everything into account and be flexible"
- 8 standard seems to mean in practice -- and you
- 9 tell me if this is wrong -- is there are a lot
- of different considerations and they may --
- 11 particular considerations may be more important
- in one case than in another case, so we're just
- going to dump this in the hands of a particular
- judge to make a decision that that particular
- 15 judge thinks is fair in accordance with that
- 16 particular judge's value judgments, and we're
- 17 not going to make it -- we're going to make it
- 18 very hard to get that reversed. That's what
- 19 this all seems to boil down to, with a lot of
- 20 highfalutin language by the foreign courts.
- 21 Am I wrong on that?
- 22 MR. PINCUS: I'm not sure that that's
- 23 right, Justice Alito. I think there is an
- 24 ultimate inquiry: Where does the child usually
- 25 live? Or -- or, in the European version, the --

- 1 the family or -- and social environment in which
- the child's life has developed? I think that
- 3 gives you a north star.
- 4 I think the problem is there are a lot
- of different facts in these -- in these cases.
- 6 You know, it's one reason why, in family law,
- 7 best interests of the child is a very broad
- 8 standard because there are a lot of different
- 9 facts.
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah, but there I know
- 11 what --
- MR. PINCUS: And so I think you can
- 13 lay out --
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: I --
- MR. PINCUS: -- as we -- as this
- 16 colloquy indicates, you can say, for example,
- 17 when you have a -- a child who has lived only in
- one place, there is a pretty clear factual
- 19 result that's going to obtain, absent something
- 20 odd.
- 21 The -- the difficult cases really are
- these multiple country cases. Those are the
- 23 cases where there are a myriad of fact patterns:
- 24 Why did the child move? What were the parents'
- views when the child moved? Did the child get

- 1 acclimated to the new country?
- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, in the case
- 3 of --
- 4 MR. PINCUS: Those are very
- 5 complicated cases.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: -- in the case of an
- 7 infant, why does it matter that the -- the
- 8 infant has lived all of his or her life in a
- 9 particular country? That -- it wouldn't matter
- 10 to that infant what country the infant was
- 11 living in or whether the infant was living on
- 12 the moon. The -- the infant's world is the home
- 13 with the parents or a parent. So why does it
- 14 matter?
- 15 MR. PINCUS: Well, it matters that the
- infant has lived in the same country with the
- 17 parents. That's the critical, I think,
- 18 additional fact. And I think --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: But what is the
- 20 interest that is served by that?
- 21 MR. PINCUS: The interest -- there are
- 22 two interests that are served. One is the
- 23 theory of the Convention is that's the -- the --
- 24 finding habitual residence is important for two
- 25 reasons. One is to identify the place where the

- 1 custody determination should be made, as opposed
- 2 to leaving it to the unilateral decisions of one
- 3 parent or another.
- 4 The second is to deter these
- 5 abductions, which are not only harmful in that
- 6 they allow the gaming of jurisdictional rules,
- 7 but they're harmful because they take the child
- 8 away from both parents. One parent is
- 9 unilaterally taking the child away from the
- 10 other.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: So you --
- MR. PINCUS: And so what the --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- in this case --
- 14 and it's a troublesome case because she alleged
- that she was abused, so you're putting that
- 16 mother in the position of, if she wants to
- 17 escape domestic violence, she has to leave her
- 18 child behind.
- 19 MR. PINCUS: Well, she doesn't -- she
- 20 doesn't have to -- she can escape domestic
- violence by separating from her husband and
- 22 staying in the country. She -- before she left,
- 23 she spent two weeks under the protection -- in
- safe houses under the protection of the
- 25 mechanisms that Italy has for that purpose. So

- 1 I don't think that -- that the test requires
- 2 that she stay with the husband.
- I think one of the unusual facts could
- 4 be in a situation where it was clear that the
- 5 abused parent wanted to get away, was determined
- 6 to get away, and the evidence is the husband
- 7 thwarted her at every turn.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: Now --
- 9 MR. PINCUS: That's not what the
- 10 district court found here, however, because the
- 11 district court found -- and just to -- to quote
- 12 two findings, on Petition App. 98a, she
- 13 continued after the birth of her child to live
- in Italy and had no definitive plans to bring
- 15 her to the United States until the last
- 16 altercation, which precipitated her departure.
- 17 And at 94a, most of the steps that Monasky took
- in March 2015 seemed to reflect a settled
- 19 purpose and intent to remain in Italy at least
- 20 for an undetermined period of time.
- 21 So the district court looked at all
- this and said that wasn't the case here. And I
- 23 think those are actually factual findings. That
- 24 -- those aren't even mixed questions --
- JUSTICE BREYER: What do we do --

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1
               MR. PINCUS: -- of fact and law.
 2
               JUSTICE BREYER: -- about -- I mean, I
      think in their brief they said she doesn't speak
 3
      Italian and doesn't have a job. And what do you
 4
 5
     do about -- and -- and this standard that I
 6
     read, she didn't mention this, but it says you
7
     can't place the child in an intolerable
 8
      situation.
9
               MR. PINCUS: Well --
10
                JUSTICE BREYER: You'd think where the
      mother is being beaten up, that would be an
11
12
      intolerable situation.
13
               MR. PINCUS: And --
14
               JUSTICE BREYER: What do you do if the
     mother is in a country where there are
15
      difficulties with abused women finding adequate
16
17
     care and she's got to get out of there?
18
               MR. PINCUS: Well, I think that --
19
               JUSTICE BEYER: All right. What do we
     do about that?
20
21
               MR. PINCUS: As I say, I think that
22
      could be a -- a relevant fact that might lead
23
      the general rule that we're talking about --
24
               JUSTICE BREYER: Do we put it --
25
               MR. PINCUS: -- to be superseded.
```

1 JSUTICE BREYER: -- in here, or do you 2 say in dicta or something that it was raised, an intolerable situation includes that, or do we 3 4 say nothing at all? MR. PINCUS: Well, there are two 5 options for addressing that, right? One -- one 6 is to say that, if the district court were to 7 8 find that the mother was trying to get away and 9 her -- she had a -- at the guickest possible 10 moment, but she was thwarted because the father was preventing it through abuse or otherwise, 11 12 then that might well mean that there's no habitual residence. 13 14 That is not, as I -- the findings that 15 I read, that's not the case here. You could also look to the Article 13 16 17 exception and talk about the possibility that --18 that those facts may be relevant. As I -- as my 19 colleague --20 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that --21 MR. PINCUS: -- noted, that was --22 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- isn't Article 13 23 about abuse of the child? 24 MR. PINCUS: It is about abuse of the child, and so that is -- that requires a broader 25

- 1 finding, that the -- so it may be that the --
- 2 the first approach is a better one.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Can I --
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Let me ask you a
- 5 question about the difference between you and
- 6 the government.
- 7 You -- you, I thought, urged that
- 8 shared parental intent is relevant but not
- 9 dispositive, one factor among others to be
- 10 weighed.
- But, if that is the case, doesn't that
- 12 suggest the government's position, a remand,
- 13 because at least the majority of the Sixth
- 14 Circuit seems to focus on this shared parental
- 15 intent?
- MR. PINCUS: Well, let me -- let me
- 17 answer that in two ways if I may, Justice
- 18 Ginsburg.
- 19 First of all, I think it's important
- 20 to unpack the phrase "shared parental intent."
- 21 I think the way the lower courts, as we discuss
- 22 in our brief, the low -- the way the lower
- 23 courts of the United States have applied that is
- 24 what's the intent of each parent that can be
- proven by words, deeds, objectively, what's the

- 1 -- what is the parents' intent with respect to
- 2 the location of the child?
- 3 That none -- there's perhaps one case
- 4 in which a -- a federal court of appeals
- 5 indicated that -- that a meeting of the minds
- 6 might be necessary, and even that court relied
- 7 on an alternative ground.
- 8 So I think the -- the question is, is
- 9 the intent of the parents with respect to where
- 10 the child lives relevant? I think, yes, it can
- 11 be proved they don't have to have jointly
- 12 agreed. They can each have the same intent.
- In terms of this case, I think, if --
- if we prevail on the legal issues, then that
- issue is determined because there's no clear
- 16 error in the -- in the district court's
- 17 determination.
- So the question would be: Are there
- other facts that would be cognizable under the
- 20 habitual residence standard that the lower
- 21 courts didn't address? And our submission is
- those other facts are all facts that weigh in
- favor of Italy because they're principally the
- fact that the child has been located in Italy
- 25 for her whole life before she was removed.

Τ	And that's not something that was
2	relevant necessarily to intent, but that's
3	clearly a highly important fact that she was
4	there with both parents.
5	And so we don't see any other facts
6	that could be adduced in this record. The
7	four-day trial was quite comprehensive. We
8	don't see any other facts that could be relevant
9	that would require or even permit a different
10	determination on on the habitual residency
11	determination, which is why we think a remand
12	isn't necessary.
13	JUSTICE KAGAN: When you and, to the
14	extent you know it, the SG, talk about totality
15	of the circumstances, for older children, does
16	that mean rejecting the view of most of the
17	circuit courts that the key thing is
18	acclimatization?
19	MR. PINCUS: No, I think
20	acclimatization, as children get older, can be
21	highly relevant. And the the the courts
22	that have adopted this test, the foreign courts
23	have said that.
24	I think the problem
25	JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but I think most

- 1 courts have done more than just say that's
- 2 highly relevant. Most courts have said that's
- 3 the question that we're trying to answer.
- 4 And -- and that provides a kind of
- 5 anchoring mechanism for courts, right? Okay,
- 6 now I understand what the question is. It's a
- 7 kind of embeddedness in a particular country's
- 8 life.
- 9 So, you know -- but, if it's just like
- 10 one thing that gets thrown in along with
- 11 everything else, that seems sort of different to
- 12 me.
- MR. PINCUS: I -- I think the problem
- is there's no bright line between when you might
- 15 think the young child standard applies and when
- 16 you might think acclimatization becomes
- 17 relevant. There probably are crossing lines at
- one point. It's really about the young child
- 19 and -- and is he or she with her parents. And
- then, at some point later, when the kids are 15
- 21 years old, it may be much more about them than
- 22 about parental intent.
- I think most courts have been
- 24 reluctant to say the parents' intent becomes
- 25 irrelevant. I think they -- the courts

- 1 generally say acclimatization becomes much more
- 2 relevant.
- 3 So I wish I could help you with saying
- 4 that -- that there's --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Isn't that what
- 6 the European --
- 7 MR. PINCUS: -- a dividing line there.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- isn't that what
- 9 the European court said with respect to infants?
- 10 It didn't say that you put parental intent or
- 11 agreement as being the most important. It used
- 12 the word just an important factor I think was --
- MR. PINCUS: I think that's --
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- was their
- 15 language.
- MR. PINCUS: -- that's exactly right,
- 17 Your Honor.
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So how do I
- 19 discern that the mother's intent was to stay in
- 20 Italy or that the child had acclimated to Italy
- 21 or integrated into Italy when the child was
- 22 being -- during those eight weeks, she was moved
- 23 from one spot to another. She didn't live
- 24 consistently with the father. There were
- 25 separate --

1 MR. PINCUS: Well, she moved between 2 two places. JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Between two 3 places, but the father wasn't in the first 4 5 Then the mother went for a couple of 6 weeks with the father and then brought her back into the -- the shelter. 7 8 The mother, I think, had some fairly 9 potent evidence that she was making plans to 10 leave Italy. Everything about the entire 11 situation surrounding this child was simply up 12 in the air. MR. PINCUS: Well, I think those --13 14 sorry. 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So why couldn't a 16 court reasonably conclude that no settled 17 place --18 MR. PINCUS: Well --19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- no ordinary 20 place had yet been formed for this child? 21 That's a possibility we haven't talked about. 22 But I have to presume that if we tell 23 a court that it's the totality of the

circumstances, that is, in fact, one of the

24

25

options it has.

1 MR. PINCUS: I -- I think it is. 2 this case, I think the -- the portions of the 3 district court's opinion that I read on page 94a 4 and 98a preclude that in this case because the district court rejected those -- that as the 5 6 mother's intent. I -- I -- I think for the reasons that 7 8 we've been talking about -- and I'd also say the 9 movement from place to place is something that 10 lower courts have rejected, if it's within one 11 country, because the idea here is to find the 12 country of habitual residence. And if those movements, the Second 13 14 Circuit said, speaking through Judge Cabranes, 15 if -- if those movements are within the country, 16 they don't -- they don't really count with them 17 -- when they're within two places. 18 I -- I -- I wanted to mention the --19 Justice Breyer raised a question about Italy and what the proceedings might be there. There is a 20 -- a proceeding in Italy, a custody proceeding, 21 22 that a petitioner actually this past October has 23 filed a custody petition. 24 She filed some prior petitions. They

were rejected on jurisdictional grounds. As I

- 1 understand it, this petition is in the right
- 2 Italian court and raises the custody question.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But what about the
- 4 -- the -- this ex parte declaration depriving
- 5 her of her parental rights? That's still
- 6 standing.
- 7 MR. PINCUS: I think that's one of the
- 8 issues that will be adjudicated in this Italian
- 9 proceeding. And as -- as Justice
- 10 Sotomayor pointed out, the current status is
- 11 that the -- the legal custody of the child is
- 12 with the Italian authorities.
- The father has generally physical
- 14 custody. The mother has visitation rights.
- There are periodic reports being filed by the
- 16 Italian social services authority about what's
- 17 going on. So the Italian authorities are pretty
- 18 seized of -- of -- of this matter.
- 19 So just to -- to return to the -- the
- 20 question of the -- of the remand, I think our
- view is, for the reasons I was discussing, that
- the district court's findings really deal with
- 23 the intent issue, his -- his factual findings,
- 24 let -- putting aside his ultimate determination
- on habitual residence.

1 All of the other facts that could 2 possibly be relevant under the Judge Boggs standard, framed as a -- a -- a factual 3 presumption, we think weigh in favor of Italy as 4 5 the place of habitual residence. And we agree that -- that it would be 6 great to cut off these proceedings. Tomorrow 7 8 will be the three-year anniversary of A.M.T. 9 being returned to Italy, and it would certainly 10 be good for the -- this uncertainty to be lifted 11 so that she could then -- the Italian 12 authorities could proceed with the custody determination without this issue being raised. 13 14 And -- and I do think, as several members of the Court said, that there would be 15 significant problems with the issuance of a 16 17 re-return order, both in terms of a U.S. court's 18 ability to issue such an order, given the equitable considerations, and also the extent to 19 20 which such an order would be accepted by the 21 Italian authorities. 22 Unless the Court has any further 23 questions, thank you. 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, 25 counsel.

1	Two minutes, Mr. Tayrani.
2	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF AMIR C. TAYRANI
3	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
4	MR. TAYRANI: Thank you. Three
5	points, Your Honor.
6	With respect to the standard applied
7	by foreign courts to cases involving infants, I
8	would point the Court to paragraph 55 in the
9	European Union Court of Justice's decision in
LO	the Mercredi case.
L1	The Court there stated that an infant
L2	necessarily shares the social and family
L3	environment of the circle of people on whom he
L 4	or she is dependent. Consequently, where the
L5	infant is, in fact, looked after by her mother,
L6	it is necessary to assess the mother's
L7	integration in her family and social
L8	environment.
L9	That is the standard that Lady Hale
20	adopts in the A versus A case at paragraph 54,
21	sub (6): Applying that standard in this case
22	leads to one clear inextricable conclusion, that
23	Monasky was not integrated into a family and
24	social environment in Italy and that, therefore,
25	A.M.T. did not have a habitual residence in

- 1 Italy.
- 2 This Court need look no further than
- 3 the parties' stipulation at JA 28 and JA 29
- 4 that, as early as August of 2014, Monasky was
- 5 already laying the groundwork for her return to
- 6 the United States by looking for U.S. healthcare
- 7 and child care options, U.S. employment, and
- 8 U.S. divorce lawyers.
- 9 This Court need look no further than
- 10 JA 200 and JA 217, which are emails between the
- 11 parties sent in the critical days preceding and
- 12 following A.M.T.'s birth, where Monasky
- 13 reiterated her intent to return to the United
- 14 States and to divorce Taglieri.
- 15 And this Court need look no further
- 16 than Pet. App. 94a, where the district court
- found that Monasky intended to return to the
- 18 United States with A.M.T. as soon as possible.
- 19 That's precisely what she did. The day A.M.T.'s
- 20 U.S. passport arrived, when A.M.T. was eight
- 21 weeks old, Monasky fled the dangerous situation
- in which she found herself and returned to the
- 23 United States.
- 24 This Court can and should make that
- 25 determination and it should order A.M.T.'s

Τ	return to the United States for a full and fair
2	child custody hearing, which is the only venue
3	in that in which that hearing can take place
4	Thank you.
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
6	counsel. The case is submitted.
7	(Whereupon, at 11:10 a.m., the case
8	was submitted.)
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