

Samsung denies using child labour

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA: South Korea's Samsung Electronics has refuted fresh allegations by a labour protection watchdog that one of its suppliers in China is using child workers.



Samsung says it investigated allegations that one of its suppliers, HEG Electronics used underage labour and student workers in its manufacturing plants and found no evidence to support the claim. Image: [Philosophers Stone](#).

New York-based China Labour Watch (CLW) claimed in a report last week that Samsung supplier HEG Technology had hired people under the age of 16 at its facility in Huizhou, China.

The report said the factory, where components for Lenovo are also built, had hired new workers, and neglected to check their identification.

The youngest worker was found to be 14, the report said, adding the factory had also hired 117 college students, many of whom averaged 12.5 hours of work each day.

According to the report, the student workers eventually quit their jobs, but complained that the factory owed them money.

No evidence to support the allegations

Samsung, however, insisted that a recent onsite investigation found no underage or student workers at the facility.

"The investigation found that there were no child workers or student workers working in the Samsung Electronics production line at HEG," the company said in a statement e-mailed to AFP.

The world's largest mobile phone manufacturer said it had called for a joint investigation with the labour group to verify the results before its report was issued.

"We find it regrettable that CLW issued the allegations without any mention of our statement," it said.

Samsung stressed again that it has a zero tolerance policy regarding child labour, and actively works with its Chinese suppliers to screen out underage workers.

"We deeply care about the health and safety of all our employees, and employees at our suppliers and strictly maintain a zero tolerance policy on child labour," the company said.

This is the second case where the rights monitoring group has accused HEG of hiring underage workers.

In 2012, the group claimed HEG had violated child labour regulations.

Samsung rejected the claim but acknowledged "inadequate" controls including excessive overtime.

The labour group, however, said its latest investigation showed that "conditions at HEG failed to improve".

Samsung has more than 200 suppliers in China and there have been repeated allegations over working practices in recent years.

In July, Samsung temporarily suspended business with Dongguan Shinyang Electronics following criticism that its monitoring of illegal labour practices was ineffective.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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