

SAMSUNG SICKENS AND KILLS THOUSANDS OF LITHIUM ION BATTERY WORKERS FROM TOXIC POISONING

Samsung Electronics apologized Friday for illnesses and deaths of some of its workers, saying it failed to create a safe working environment at its computer chip and display factories.

The announcement by the South Korean technology giant came weeks after the company and a group representing ailing Samsung workers agreed to accept compensation terms suggested by a mediator and end a highly-publicized standoff that went on for more than a decade. The company's apology was part of the settlement.

Kinam Kim, president of Samsung's device solutions division, said the company failed to "sufficiently manage health threats" at its semiconductor and liquid crystal display manufacturing lines. As detailed in Associated Press reporting over the past decade, dozens of employees who worked there have experienced grave illnesses such as leukemia and brain tumors.

"We offer our sincere apology to our workers who have suffered with illnesses and their families," Kim said during a news conference in Seoul, which was also attended by activists and relatives of the workers.

But while cutting a deal and loosely admitting to lapses in safety standards, Samsung has yet to fully acknowledge its workplace environment as the direct cause of the illnesses.

Samsung apologizes over sicknesses, deaths of some workers
Kinam Kim, President & CEO, Device Solutions, Samsung
Electronics apologizes in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, Nov. 23,
2018. Samsung Electronics has apologized for the sickness and
deaths of some of its workers, saying it failed to create a ...more

The standoff began in 2007 when taxi driver Hwang Sang-gi refused to accept a settlement after his 23-year-old daughter died of leukemia after working at a Samsung factory. Hwang's efforts to clarify the cause of Yu-mi's death and hold Samsung responsible for problems related to working conditions galvanized a broader movement to hold businesses and the government accountable for safety lapses in the chip and display industries, which use huge amounts of chemicals.

"No apology would be enough when considering the deception and humiliation we experienced (from Samsung) over the past 11 years, the pain of suffering from occupational diseases, the pain of losing loved ones," Hwang said at the news conference. "But I take today's apology as a promise from Samsung Electronics," to improve the safety of its workplaces, he said.

According to the settlement, Samsung will compensate for various illnesses of employees who have worked at its chip and LCD factories since 1984, including as much as 150 million won (\$132,000) for leukemia. The compensation also covers miscarriages and congenital illnesses of the workers' children such as child cancer.

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Hwang Sang-gi, right, father of former Samsung semiconductor
factory worker Hwang Yu-mi who died from leukemia in 2007,
Kinam Kim, left, President & CEO of Samsung Electronics Device

Solutions and Kim Ji-hyung, center, a chairman of the ...more

Since 2008, dozens of workers have sought occupational safety compensation from the government. Few won compensation, mostly after years of court battles. Half the remaining claims were rejected and half remain under review.

Families of the victims often have depleted their savings and sold their homes to pay hospital bills. Some workers end up incapacitated and unable to work.

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Hwang Sang-gi, right, father of former Samsung semiconductor factory worker Hwang Yu-mi who died from leukemia in 2007, shakes hands with Kinam Kim, left, President & CEO of Samsung Electronics Device Solutions after Kim apologized in ...more

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