CLW response to Samsung on issue of child labor

Monday, December 17, 2012

After CLW discovered child labor during an investigation of HTNS Shenzhen Co., Ltd., which produced Samsung cell phones, we contacted Samsung’s headquarters. We told Samsung that we discovered child labor and that if they agreed to support the study and living expenses of these children until 18 years of age, CLW would give Samsung these workers’ names. Samsung responded that they would agree to such terms as long as they confirmed that the workers were in fact underage. We provided the names of the girls to Samsung while also telling them that we would publish our report on December 14.

On December 13, CLW’s investigator confirmed some information with two of the three girls in question. At the time, they were both still working at HTNS. But on the morning of December 14, the factory suddenly demanded that these two girls leave the factory. Samsung arrived at the factory in the afternoon of December 14 (Beijing time) to investigate the situation.

Samsung says that the personal identification of these three girls shows that they are not underage. But Samsung never mentioned that the dispatch labor companies that sent the girls to work at the factory used other people’s IDs in order to get the underage girls into the factory. Samsung also never mentioned that its representative that went to the factory was unable to meet with the two girls who had been made to leave the factory.

The two girls who left the factory used the names Lai Xiaomin and Wu Xiaolan to enter the factory. These are the names on their IDs that Samsung saw. However, we learned of their real names and have them admitting their real ages on audio recordings. Their real information is as follows:

- Lai Xiaomin’s real name is Li Xiaolin. Born in 1997, she is 15 y.o.a.
- Wu Xiaolan’s real name is Lan Huiping. Born in 1998, she is 14 y.o.a.

The third worker, Liu Tiantian, also used a fake ID to get into the factory. In its original report, CLW provided Tiantian’s picture ID as well as her real picture (which was used to fill out the factory application). These images reveal two people that look very different in appearance. (See the photos below.)

Our investigator was present in the meeting with Samsung and Liu Tiantian, and the investigator told Samsung at the time that the information and photo on Liu Tiantian’s ID was not really hers. Despite seeing her ID as well as meeting her in-person, Samsung still maintained publically that Tiantian did not use someone else’s ID to enter the factory.

If CLW had never obtained Tiantian’s fake ID as well as her real photo, then this might make people question CLW’s reporting. However, CLW did in fact obtain both documents, and the documents show that the girl in question is different from the one pictured on her ID.

If Samsung wants to deny the fact that these three girls are underage, then it would have to first explain two things. First, why does Liu Tiantian’s ID photo and her actual appearance differ so greatly? Second, why did the two other girls leave the factory right before Samsung arrived at the factory to meet them?
Liu Tiantian's factory registration form and photo ID. The girls in the two photos are obviously different people.