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**Three United Nations Experts Raise Concerns Regarding
Human Rights Violations Against Women Workers at Samsung Vietnam**

(<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22852&LangID=E>)

(Gothenburg, Sweden): UN human rights experts have raised concerns about human rights violations at Samsung Vietnam (20 March 2018) in [a joint statement](#). The three UN human rights experts; [Mr. Baskut Tuncak](#),¹ [Ms. Anita Ramasastry](#),² and [Mr. David Kaye](#),³ expressed concern that Samsung's intimidation and legal threats against workers and researchers who conducted a study into the lives of women workers constitute a breach of human rights.

Included among the concerns of the UN human rights experts are adverse health consequences associated with unhealthy working conditions at Samsung Vietnam mobile phone factories and intimidation and threats by the company to the workers and researchers who revealed them. Women comprise 80% of the workforce at the two Samsung factories, which produce half of the company's mobile phones globally, including the new Galaxy S9 and S9+.

The human rights experts cite health, safety and labor violations of women workers at two Samsung Vietnam factories which emerged from [recent research](#) by two organizations, the Hanoi-based Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED) and [IPEN](#) the global network for a toxics-free future. Based on in-depth, open-ended, confidential interviews with 45 women, researchers reported testimonies of dizziness or fainting at work from all study participants and high noise levels that violated legal limits. Miscarriages were reported to be common and workers reported pain in their bones, joints, and legs which they attributed to standing at work for 70 to 80 hours a week. Information about chemical use was lacking and workers did not think of cleaning products as containing chemicals or about exposure from chemical use in the open factory environment. Not a single worker interviewed for the study had received a copy of her work contract (a violation of Vietnamese labor law).

The UN expert statement stresses the responsibility of corporations to "to respect human rights in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights." CGFED and IPEN have [outlined](#) Samsung's violations of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights along with company efforts to suppress whistleblowers and [routinely hide information](#) on chemicals to conceal links between worker diseases and the company's working environment to prevent its sick workers from receiving government compensation. The UN expert statement asked Samsung for clarification "on the allegations received that workers in the factories were also threatened with lawsuits if they talked to people outside the company about working conditions" and noted that, "it

¹ UN Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes.

² Chairperson, UN Working Group on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

³ UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression



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is unacceptable that researchers or workers reporting on what they consider to be unhealthy and inadequate working conditions are intimidated...”

IPEN leaders emphasize that the report represents an opportunity for Samsung to take action to ensure safe working conditions for its mostly female labor force in electronics manufacturing. “Women are the first environment for their children,” said IPEN Co-Chair Olga Speranskaya, PhD. “Samsung has an obligation to protect them and the future of the countries where the company operates.”

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Interested editors and reporters can contact the IPEN Sr. Science and Technical Advisor, Joe DiGangi, PhD. who was a co-author of the report in question can reach him at Joe@IPEN.org. For other questions and information please contact IPEN Communications Director LauraVyda@IPEN.org.

[IPEN](#) is a public interest network of more than 500 NGOs in over 100 countries working for a toxics-free future.

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