Ninth Suicide at Chinese Plant

GUANGZHOU, China (AP) — A worker at Foxconn Technology Group, which makes iPhones and iPads, jumped to his death Friday from a building in the southern Chinese boomtown of Shenzhen — the ninth suicide this year at the world's largest contract maker of electronics, state-run media reported.

The latest victim, logistics worker Nan Gang, 21, leapt from a four-story factory building about a half hour after finishing his shift at 4 a.m., reported the Xinhua News Agency, quoting a city police spokesman, Huang Jianwei. Nan, a migrant from central Hubei province, landed on his head and died at the scene, Xinhua said, without providing further details.

A total 11 Foxconn workers have jumped off buildings this year, and two of them survived.

Also Friday, Xinhua said that another worker, Rong Bo, leapt off a building and killed himself on Jan. 8 at a Foxconn plant in the northern city of Langfang in Hebei province. His death went unreported until Friday when it was finally confirmed by officials after relatives reported it to the media, Xinhua said.

The deaths have raised more questions about working conditions at Foxconn's massive complex, which labor activists allege has a long history of mistreatment of workers. They claim workers — which total about 300,000 — are pushed hard, toil under tremendous pressure and face harsh discipline for making mistakes.

There was no immediate comment about Friday's death from Foxconn, owned by Taiwan's Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. The corporate behemoth has also produced computers for Hewlett-Packard Co., PlayStation game consoles for Sony Corp. and mobile phones for Nokia Corp.

After a suicide earlier this month, Foxconn said its workers enjoyed world-class treatment. Company spokesman Arthur Huang said in an e-mail to The Associated Press that Foxconn carried out social responsibility programs to ensure the welfare of its employees.

Recent suicides include a 24-year-old male factory worker surnamed Lu who jumped from a building inside the factory complex earlier this month.

The highest-profile death happened last July when Sun Danyong, 25, jumped to his death after being interrogated over a missing iPhone prototype. Sun was responsible for sending the device to U.S.-based Apple Inc.

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