

TELEPERFORMANCE

→ Formal notice served

18 JULY 2019

THE ISSUE

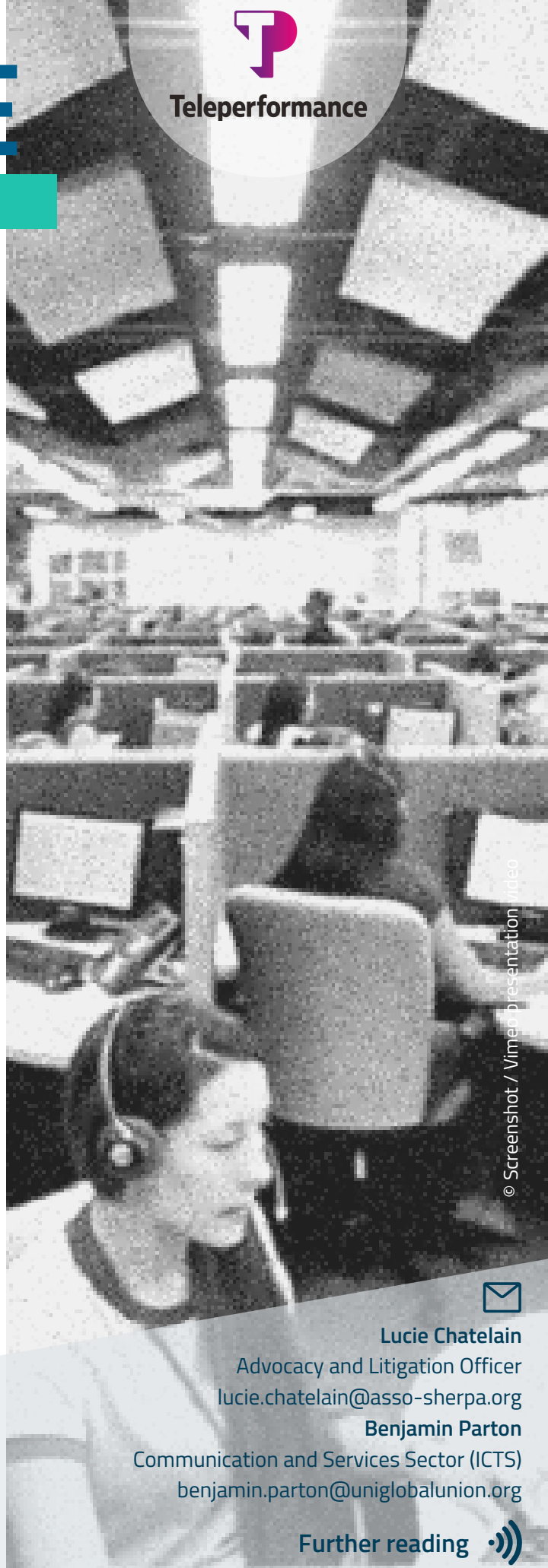
On 18 July 2019, Teleperformance, a global leader in call centres and one of France's largest employers, was served with a formal notice under the French law on the duty of vigilance. As a specialist in customer relations outsourcing, the French company employs more than 300 000 people in its call centres around the world. Their job is to respond to the requests that come in from customers of the giants of the digital and distance selling markets (Apple, Amazon, Netflix, Uber, etc.). Teleperformance also processes visa applications for France in countries such as Egypt, Gabon and Uzbekistan. However, risks of serious violations of workers' rights have been flagged in its subsidiaries in Colombia, Mexico and the Philippines, but have not been included in its vigilance plan. This is the first time that a formal notice has been served on these grounds to defend the rights of workers of a French multinational firm abroad.

ACTORS

The legal action against Teleperformance was filed by the Sherpa organisation and the international trade union UNI Global Union.



*Sherpa



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Further reading A small icon of a speaker with sound waves, indicating audio content or a video link.

[Teleperformance: Issues, context and due diligence plan for 2019](#), Syndex, April 2019

[Teleperformance Faces Allegations of Human Rights Abuse](#), The Wall Street Journal, July 2019

CASE DESCRIPTION

When French consumers call these telephone helplines, they are oblivious to the often deplorable working conditions on the other end of the line. For Teleperformance operates primarily where labour is cheap, including in countries where basic labour rights and freedom of association are under threat, such as the Dominican Republic, Colombia, India and the Philippines.

In April 2019, UNI Global Union published a report in which it described threats to the fundamental rights of Teleperformance employees in Colombia, including possible infringements of the freedom of association and compulsory pregnancy tests for female workers.

Despite numerous warnings from UNI Global Union, Teleperformance failed to publish a vigilance plan in its 2018 annual report, and only published a two-page plan in 2019, without even involving trade unions. No effort has been made to identify and prevent the risk of violations of workers' rights in its foreign subsidiaries.

For **Sandra Cossart, Director of Sherpa**: *"The law on the duty of vigilance requires much more than the mere formality of publishing a plan: it is about taking appropriate steps to identify and prevent the risks of serious violations. This law does not only concern French multinationals known to consumers, but also less visible companies, such as Teleperformance, which also operate in countries of concern. Teleperformance must now do everything in its power to prevent abuses of its workers' rights, otherwise it will be held accountable before the courts."*

Christy Hoffman, UNI Global Union General Secretary, states, *"Teleperformance has chosen to operate in countries that often have a poor human rights record, particularly workers' rights. In this context, it has a responsibility to adopt a credible and holistic plan to prevent these risks from becoming a reality. The plan published by Teleperformance does not meet these requirements. The company should also resolve the issues that have already been reported by workers, to prevent them from becoming widespread."*

