

ILO: Israeli restrictions stagnating Palestinian economy

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Palestinian economy will not grow unless the Israeli imposed restrictions are lifted; according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In its annual report on the situation of workers in the Occupied Arab territories, the ILO says the Palestinian economy is grappling with stagnating growth, higher unemployment, poverty and food dependency.

The report says the continuing occupation and expanding settlement activity are blocking the Palestinian economy, particularly its private sector, from significant progress.

Lack of donor support and failure by Israel to remit revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian government are also cited as factors impeding growth.

Kari Tapiola is a Special advisor to the ILO Director-General.

"Israel should not only lift the application of restrictions, on people and businesses, but lift these all together so that the Palestinian economy could grow and generate decent jobs. The continuing occupation and the settlement economy in the way that it functions blocks particularly the private sector from significant progress. And if this double weight of the occupation and the settlement economy continues to constraint efforts at growth, of the Palestinian economy the belief in the promise of the two states for two peoples will be seriously jeopardized."

The report says overall unemployment in Palestine stands at 23 per cent, although the situation is worse in the Gaza Strip where unemployment is over 30 percent with nearly half of all women being unemployed.