
Gaza unemployment reaches 45 per cent, says UNRWA

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Gaza

UNRWA has called on the leaders of European countries to work collectively to bring an end to the suffering of the people of Gaza, as new figures revealed unemployment levels in the Strip to be at an all-time high.

Speaking to members of the press in Gaza yesterday, spokesperson Chris Gunness said that the rate of unemployment in the Strip had reached 44.5 per cent by the end of 2010, and had increased by a further 0.5 per cent since the start of 2011.

Real monthly earnings in Gaza had gone down by 9.5 per cent between the first half of 2009 and the first half of 2010, he said.

"We are monitoring the situation in the region, in the hope that the world is looking to develop new strategies to end the humanitarian crisis," Gunness told journalists. He warned that the crisis would deepen without immediate international intervention to halt the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Responding to a question about the likelihood of another Israeli military assault on the Strip, Gunness said that Gaza was still struggling to recover from the onslaught of Operation Cast Lead in 2008/2009.

"Any further action taken by Israel would exacerbate the devastation that already exists," he added.

Pointing out that the region has become a "real test" for the global community, Mr Gunness said that the real measure of the success or failure of world leaders will be whether they assist or abandon the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

A version of this article originally appeared on the news site Middle East Monitor.