

UN Denounces Israeli Policies Against Palestinians



United Nations, September 4 (RHC)-- The United Nations has decried the Israeli regime for policies that stifle economic growth in the beleaguered Gaza Strip, including a seven-year-old siege.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said in a report on Wednesday: "Even before the latest military operations, Gaza's local economy was in a state of total collapse, chiefly because of the accumulated impact of a tightly maintained seven-year blockade and two previous devastating Israeli military operations in November 2012 and December 2008."

According to the report, which was issued more than a week after the Israelis and Palestinians reached a truce that ended 50 days of offensive against Gaza, gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed from 5.9 percent in 2012 to 1.5 percent in 2013.

Gaza also has a 36-percent unemployment rate while 22 percent of those in the occupied West Bank are jobless. Only a quarter of Palestinian households have reliable access to food.

The UNCTAD also slammed Israel for violating Palestinians' rights in the West Bank, including blocking their access to farmland, irrigation water, stone quarries and minerals. The UN report says hundreds of Palestinians are also displaced every year in the West Bank after Tel Aviv destroys their buildings.

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