

Labor Minister Topilin: 500,000 Russians Face Unemployment

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A visitor looks for job vacancies during an employment fair in Moscow.

Half a million Russians stand to lose their jobs this year, Labor Minister Maxim Topilin said, while arguing the number does not amount to a “serious outbreak” in unemployment, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday.

“The risk of layoffs today is hanging over about 500,000 people,” Topilin was quoted as saying. The number includes about 301,000 people who hold part-time jobs, he said, RIA Novosti reported.

Individual industries, such as car manufacturing, may see sharper increases of unemployment, Topilin said. But overall, “I don't expect serious outbreaks” of joblessness, he was quoted by RIA Novosti as saying.

Russia's economy is in a downturn amid Western sanctions against Moscow for its annexation

of the Crimean Peninsula and its presence in eastern Ukraine. Even employed Russians have seen their incomes shrink, as some employers slashed wages, while the depreciation of the ruble eroded the value of the remaining pay.

The number of Russians living below the official poverty line increased to 20.3 million by September, 2015, according to data released by state statistics service Rosstat late last year.

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