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Communist Leader Says 43 Russian Regions Are on Brink of Bankruptcy

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Gennady Zyuganov **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP**

The leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Gennady Zyuganov, has warned Finance Minister Anton Siluanov that 43 of Russia's regions are on the verge of bankruptcy.

"You piled all the social programs on the regional budgets ... if you take all of the regional budgets, 43 are on the verge of bankruptcy," Zyuganov said at a meeting of his party which the finance minister attended.

According to Zyuganov, 60-70 percent of the regional budgets go toward salaries.

"They have no money left," he said. "That's the tragedy."

In 2012, Russia's federal government shifted some of the responsibility for social spending, in particular for health care and education, to the regions. Since then, a number of regions have been burdened with spiraling debt, risking default if they are not bailed out by the federal government.

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