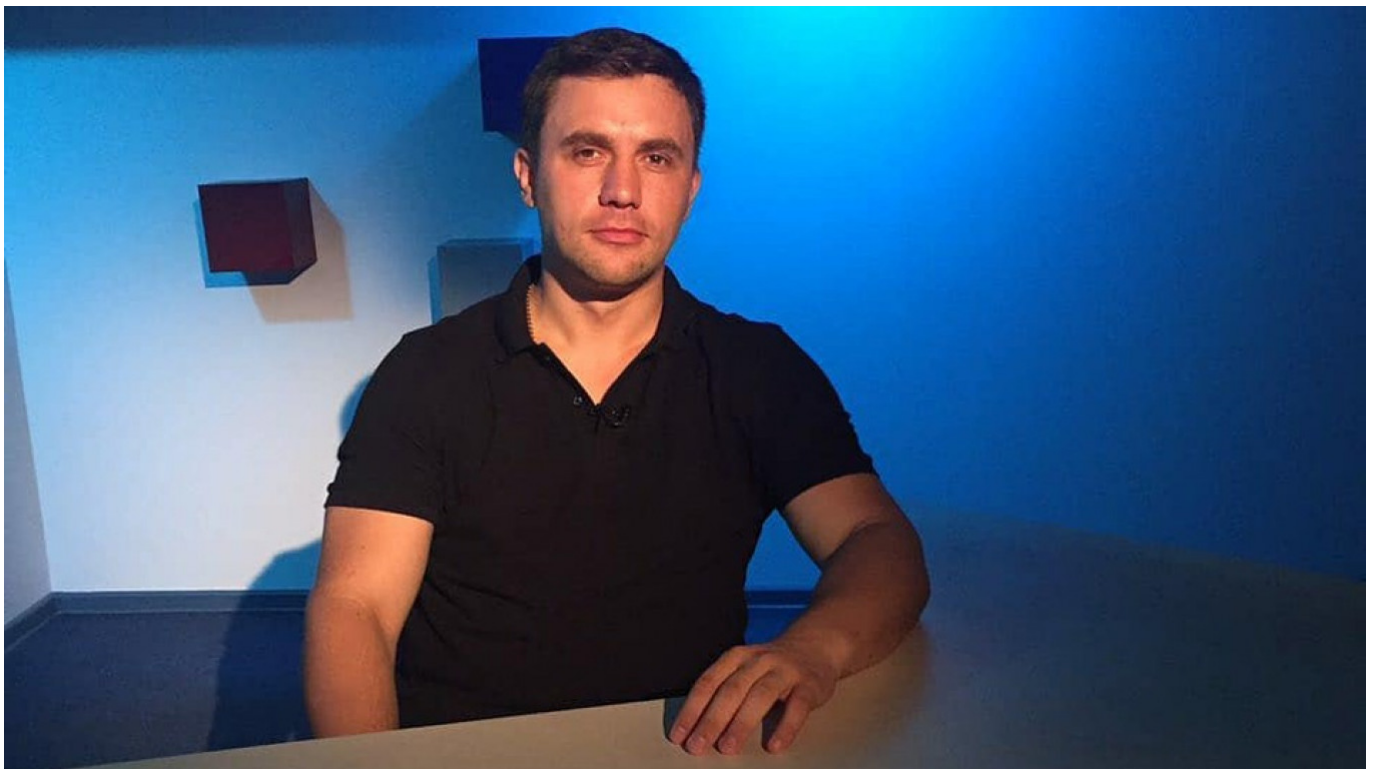


# Russian Lawmaker Tries to Survive on \$50 Pension, Calls It 'Genocide'

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**Nikolai Bondarenko / Instagram**

A local Russian lawmaker who staged an experiment trying to survive on a 3,500 rubles (\$52) monthly pension has equated the country's living wage policy to "genocide."

Nikolai Bondarenko, an outspoken Communist deputy in the Volga region of Saratov, brought about the [dismissal](#) of a local labor official last month after she was filmed claiming that \$52 per month was sufficient "for the minimal physiological needs" of retirees. Saratov region's living wage for retirees was [set](#) at 7,176 rubles (\$106) in August earlier this year, while statisticians [estimate](#) that the minimum consumer basket in the region is 3,163 rubles.

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"You can't call this policy anything other than genocide," Bondarenko, who reported [losing](#) 6 kilograms while trying to survive on the sum for 30 days, [told](#) the RBC news website

Wednesday.

“It’s not correct to call this an experiment, because it is the norm for tens of millions of people who are living in deep poverty,” he added.

He called on the country’s regions to raise the minimum wage to 20,000 rubles (\$295) and the consumer basket to 10,000 rubles.

“As for Moscow, life there is objectively more expensive. I can’t name an exact sum because going there is extremely rare for me,” Bondarenko was quoted as saying.

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