

Strong quake hits Italy, at least 92 dead

by UPI

ROME -- At least 92 people died and another 1,500 were injured in a strong earthquake Monday in the L'Aquila area northeast of Rome, officials said.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said a tent city with 2,000 tents that can house 8-10 people was being set up for people who have been left homeless by the quake reported as 6.3-magnitude quake by the U.S. Geological Survey.

"At the moment 4,000 rescuers are at work and concentrating on extracting people from the rubble," said Berlusconi, who canceled a trip to Moscow to travel to L'Aquila to survey the damage by helicopter, the Italian news agency ANSA reported. "The fundamental thing I want to say is that nobody will be left alone."

The camp should be ready by nightfall, Berlusconi said during a news conference.

Interior Minister Roberto Maroni said some of the thousands left homeless would be put up in hotels as well, the Italian news agency said.

U.S. missionary Joshua Brothers told CNN the damage in L'Aquila was in the city's center.

"Most of the buildings in the city center are more than a 100 years old and so they have walls that are a lot weaker than other palazzi that are made of reinforced concrete," Brothers said. "So there (was) a lot more damages actually inside the city."

Tremors from the quake were felt as far away as Rome, where people reported being awakened as buildings shook. At least 26 towns and villages were affected around L'Aquila, capital of the Abruzzo region.

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