

Berlusconi likens quake to camping trip

by UPI

L'AQUILA, Italy -- Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi says homeless earthquake victims should view living in temporary shelters as a "weekend of camping."

Speaking to German television station N-TV as he toured the hard-hit Abruzzo region of central Italy on Monday, Berlusconi appeared to dismiss the discomfort of victims forced to live in tents or their cars in freezing overnight temperatures, The Daily Telegraph reported Wednesday.

"They have everything they need, they have medical care, hot food â€" Berlusconi told N-TV. "Of course, their current lodgings are a bit temporary. But they should see it like a weekend of camping."

As the death toll from Monday's quake passed 250, more than 200 people were turned away Tuesday night from fully occupied tent encampments around L'Aquila, the newspaper said. It reported that guests at the city's Federico II Hotel opted to spend the night in their cars when they saw floor-to-ceiling cracks in the walls.

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