

Berlusconi offers quake victims his homes

by UPI

L'AQUILA, Italy -- Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi said Friday he would offer his personal homes to those left homeless by the deadly Abruzzo earthquake.

Berlusconi said he would honor the charitable donations of homes to the nearly 40,000 people left homeless by the powerful quake by offering up his own houses, the Italian news agency ANSA said.

"Many people have offered their own houses to help refugees from the earthquake, and I will also do what I can by offering my houses," said Berlusconi, who owns a mansion outside Milan and a Sardinian coast villa. The premier did not specify which homes he would make available for quake victims.

Monday's earthquake, which had a magnitude of 5.6, killed 289 people when it struck the city of L'Aquila along with towns in Italy's Abruzzo region.

Berlusconi has estimated it may take a minimum of two months to adequately gauge the damage inflicted by the earthquake.

The Italian premier said his government has already tabbed \$131 million in government funds for disaster relief. The education ministry will spend an additional \$21 million to rebuild destroyed student housing in the region, ANSA said.

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