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VLADIKAVKAZ, North Ossetia - Stanislav Ilyasov, the Cabinet minister in charge of Chechnya, told a senior UN official on Monday that the government would not force refugees from Chechnya to return home. Ilyasov told UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland that 49,000 Chechen refugees are currently living in neighboring Ingushetia, about 5,000 of them in tent camps. "No one will be forced to move to Chechnya," Ilyasov said during their meeting in Moscow, adding that about half of the Chechen refugees now staying in Ingushetia are expected to remain there. At the same time, Ilyasov said that the government would encourage residents of the tent camps to return to Chechnya. He said those who agree to resettle will receive security guarantees and housing and be eligible for a government compensation for the housing and property lost during the two wars in the province. The compensation amounts to a total of 350,000 rubles ($12,300) per family. Egeland, who arrived Sunday, is to visit refugee camps in Ingushetia later this week and meet with local authorities. Meanwhile, at least 10 federal troops have been killed and 11 others wounded in rebel raids and landmine explosions across Chechnya in the past 24 hours, an official in the Kremlin-backed Chechen administration said Monday on condition of anonymity.

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<<< zurück zu: News