Secretary Mayorkas, FEMA Administrator Criswell Visit Devastated Areas of Mississippi

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WASHINGTON -- Today, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell?visited the devastated areas of Mississippi following Friday evening's deadly tornadoes.

Earlier today, President Biden approved Mississippi's request for an expedited major disaster declaration, making federal disaster assistance available to supplement recovery efforts. The declaration authorizes federal assistance to disaster survivors in Carroll, Humphreys, Monroe and Sharkey counties. This assistance may include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, crisis counseling, low-interest loans and other programs to help recovery efforts.

"It is inspiring to see people, not just the people in Mississippi, but the people of this country, assisting those in such dire need," said Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "In disasters like this, there are no strangers: everyone comes together, everyone is a neighbor, everyone is family. They cannot do it alone, and the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA will be here as long as it takes. The entire federal family is here to support these communities."

"FEMA is here. We remain committed to the people of Mississippi," Administrator Criswell said during a news conference in Rolling Fork. "We will be here for you now, we will be with you next week, we will be here long after these cameras are gone to make sure we are assisting you with all your recovery needs."

Free crisis counseling services are also available for survivors in the affected areas. These services are available 24 hours a day by calling (800) 985-5990 or by visiting SAMHSA.gov.

?The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has coordinated multiple resources to help those impacted. Those resources include bottled water, potable

water tankers, tarps, portable restrooms, hand washing stations, batteries, bank chargers and fuel for critical infrastructure generators. Three shelters remain open in the state and the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and other nonprofit organizations continue feeding and providing other services for survivors.

FEMA deployed Disaster Survivor Assistance teams, an Incident Management Assistance Team and several other staff to the state emergency operations center and affected areas. Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams will help gather detailed information on immediate disaster survivor needs. These teams will provide disaster survivors with on-site registration, applicant status checks, on-the-spot needs assessments, requests for disability-related accommodations and access to partners offering survivor services.??

The devastation is extensive in several communities. If you are looking to volunteer time or resources, please do not self-deploy. Trusted organizations?operating in the affected areas know where volunteers are needed and will ask for additional support and volunteer resources over the next few weeks and months. A list of agencies with volunteer opportunities can be found at VolunteerMississippi.org.

ROLLING FORK, Miss. -- DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell and other emergency management officials speak with a survivor of the devastating tornadoes that impacted Mississippi. (FEMA photo)

ROLLING FORK, Miss. -- DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell meet with federal, state and local officials at Mississippi Emergency Management Agency regarding recent tornadoes that swept across the state. (FEMA photo)

ROLLING FORK, Miss. -- FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell provides an update on FEMA's response and recovery efforts following the recent tornadoes that impacted Mississippi at a press conference with other federal, state and local officials. (FEMA photo)