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News Release NEWS RELEASE

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American Red Cross Reaches Out to States Affected by Weekend Tornadoes

Recent tornado activity leaves widespread destruction.

Tallahassee, FL, April 26, 2010 – The American Red Cross is providing shelter, food, and comfort to people across the South as they deal with the aftermath of the deadly tornadoes that swept through the area over the weekend.

The severe weather hit several states, including Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina. Mississippi was hardest hit with numerous tornadoes touching down Saturday. Damage is widespread and thousands are without power. The governors of Louisiana and Mississippi issued States of Emergency for the affected areas.

Throughout the affected states, the Red Cross has numerous shelters open and is providing food and comfort items for those left homeless by the powerful storms. Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles are providing meals across the area. Red Cross Disaster Action Teams are also being deployed to offer casework services and assistance and visit families as they try to salvage some of their belongings.

In the aftermath of the tornadoes, the Red Cross offers steps people should take to stay safe. They should return home only when authorities say it is safe to do so. When they do, they should wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, and sturdy shoes. As they return, they should watch out for fallen power lines or broken gas lines and report them to the utility company immediately. Other safety steps include the following:

- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Use battery-powered flashlights when examining buildings—do NOT use candles.
- If someone smells gas or hears a blowing or hissing noise, open a window and get everyone out of the building quickly and call the gas company or fire department.
- Take pictures of damage, both of the building and its contents, for insurance claims.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Keep all family pets under your direct control.
- Clean up spilled medications, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids that could become a fire hazard.

For more information on how to be prepared for tornadoes, visit www.redcross.org

Help people affected by disasters like these tornadoes by donating to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. On those rare occasions when donations exceed Red Cross expenses for a specific disaster, contributions are used to prepare for and serve victims of other disasters. Your gift enables the Red Cross to prepare for disasters and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance to victims of all disasters. Call 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Contributions to the Disaster Relief Fund may be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013. Internet users can make a secure online contribution by visiting redcross.org.

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About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.