

# SHABELLE RIVER FLOOD UPDATE

Issued: 15th May, 2023

## River Shabelle remains bankful at Belet Weyne with a high risk of flooding at Bulo Burti

Since bursting its banks on May 9th, 2023, the Shabelle River's water level at Belet Weyne (figure 1) has remained at a bankful height of 8.30 meters up to the current date of May 15th. Over the past week Belet Weyne town and its surrounding regions, has witnessed widespread and devastating floods (map 1). These floods have resulted in the destruction of homes, crops, and roads, as well as the displacement of numerous families and have impacted heavily on the transportation network.

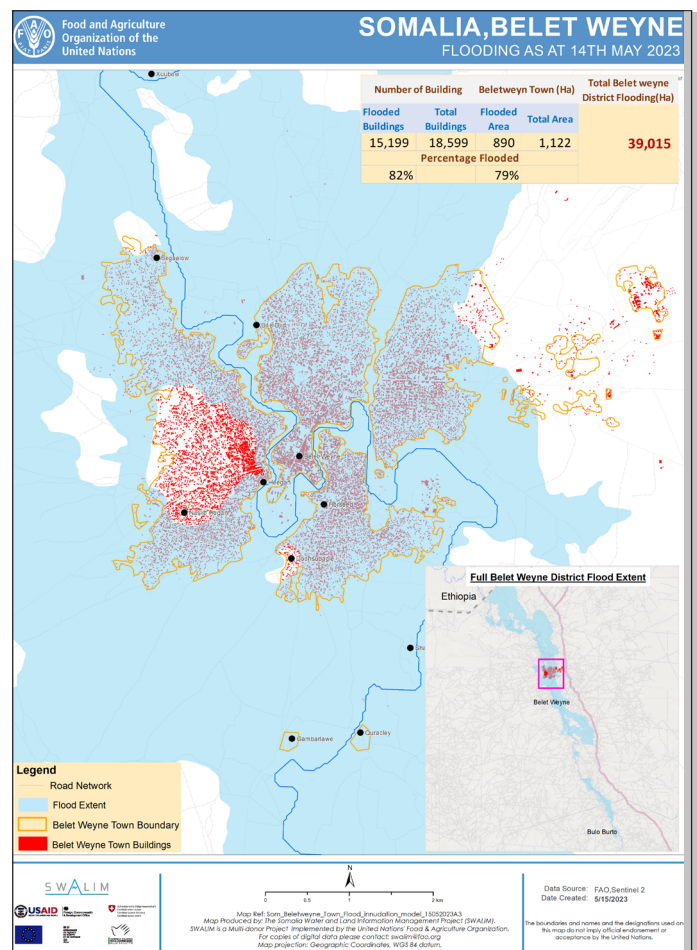
The river levels at Bulo Burti (figure 2), located about 100 km downstream of Belet Weyne, have shown a consistent increase from 5.74 meters on May 5th to 6.66 meters as of today, May 15th, 2023. The current reading at Bulo Burti (6.66 metres) surpasses the moderate flood risk threshold (put at 6.50 metres) by 16 centimetres. In contrast, at Jowhar, the reading today (3.75 metres) is more than 1 metre below the moderate risk level. However, **it is anticipated that the water level at Bulo Burti will reach the high flood risk level in approximately two days, as the flood wave continues its downstream movement from Belet Weyne.**

Nevertheless, the presence of multiple river breakages downstream of Belet Weyne could mean that some water may escape the channel before reaching Bulo Burti. This scenario reduces the magnitude of flooding in the town compared to the situation witnessed in Belet Weyne. It is important to note that the floodplains located upstream of Bulo Burti remain highly susceptible to flooding.

No rainfall has been reported in both Belet Weyne and Bulo Burti over the past week. The weather forecast for the next three days, from May 15th to 17th, 2023, predicts dry conditions across Somalia. Only a light cumulative rainfall of approximately 10 mm is expected much farther upstream in the Ethiopian Highlands, within the Shabelle River catchment area.

Despite the absence of recent rainfall, flooding persists in Belet Weyne. There still remains a high risk of flooding in Bulo Burti and the surrounding floodplains.

It is crucial for communities residing near riverbanks and low-lying areas to exercise utmost caution and take all necessary precautions to ensure their safety.



Map 1: Beletweyne town flood inundation as at 14th May 2023, Data source FAO, Sentinel 2

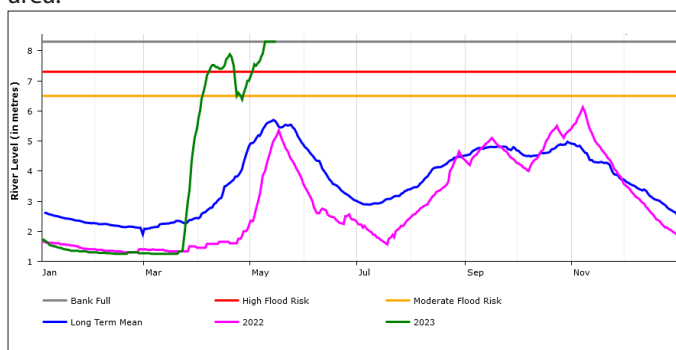


Figure 1: Shabelle river level at Belet Weyne gauging station as at 15th May 2023

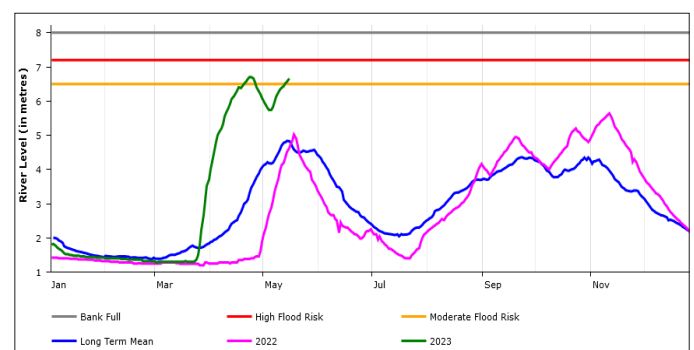


Figure 2: Shabelle river level at Bulo Burti gauging station as at 15th May 2023

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