

Information Note on Flood-affected Municipalities in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

Between 13 and 18 May 2014, a low-pressure cyclone designated Tamara and Yvette, affected a large area of Southeastern and Central Europe, causing floods and landslides in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia. Three months' worth of rain fell in only three days, making this the heaviest rainfall in the region since records began in 1894. The floods came at a high cost of human lives: in Serbia there were 60 casualties, of which twenty six were as a result of drowning (including one fire-fighter), while 23 people lost their lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The United Nations, World Bank and European Union supported the assessment of post-disaster recovery needs in BiH, working with governments at all levels. The floods were estimated to have caused the equivalent of nearly 15 percent of GDP in damages (9.3 percent of GDP) and losses (5.6 percent). In sum, the total economic impact of the disaster (destruction or severe damage to property, infrastructure and goods as well the effects of destruction on livelihoods, incomes and production, among other factors) is estimated to have reached 2.04 Billion EUR. Most of it impacted the private sector; families, small, medium and large businesses, and agricultural producers, including an undefined number of vulnerable sectors of the population. The hardest hit economic sectors were agriculture, transport and productive activities. 74 municipalities were identified ‘as affected’ based on secondary reports, municipal documentation and field visits. In total floods caused the displacement of 89,981 persons, while a total of 43,249 housing units were partially damaged or completely destroyed. In the case of BiH, an additional security hazard is linked to the fact that landmines contaminated over 70% of the flood affected zone.

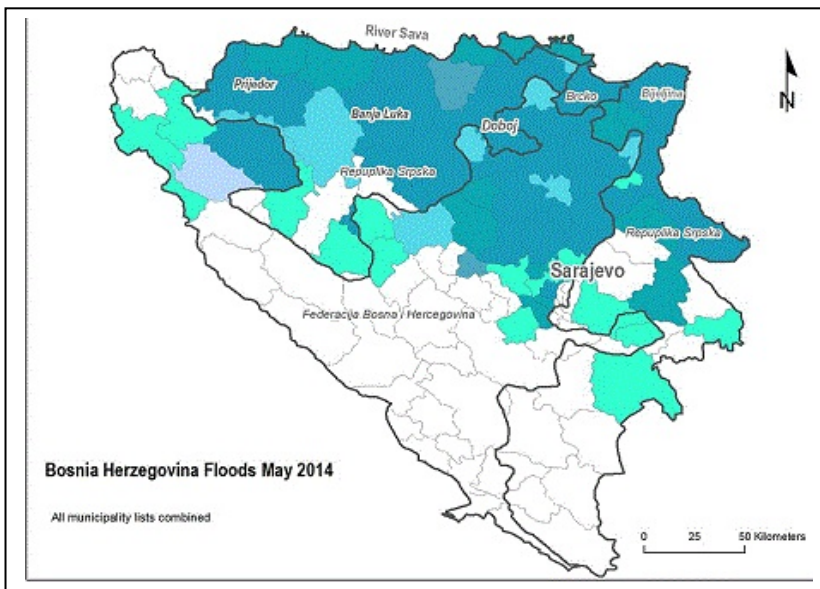


Figure 3 Map of affected areas in BiH

Bijeljina. The city of Bijeljina was among the nine most affected areas during May 2014 floods. Some 35,000 – 40,000 inhabitants were directly under threat, of whom approximately 10,000 inhabitants were evacuated (some 1,500 people were housed in collective centres). The floods did not result in any fatalities, injuries or epidemics. Approximately 7,300 households, with approximately 6,700 housing units were inundated. 102 houses were totally destroyed. Also, 539 companies were under water, as well as two-thirds of arable land. Approximately 190 tons of carcasses of dead farm animals were removed during the clean-up operation. Overall, damages in Bijeljina were estimated to close to 10 million EUR.



Figure 4 Bijeljina under water

Serbia

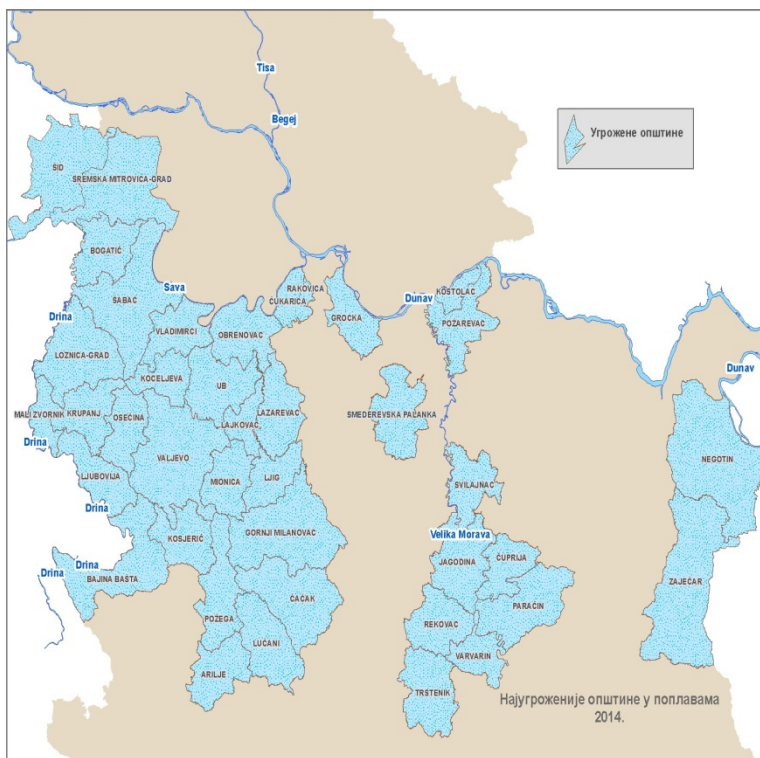


Figure 3 Map of Affected Areas in Serbia

The Government of the Republic of Serbia conducted a post-disaster needs assessment after the floods and landslides that occurred at the end of May 2014. The European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, provided financial and expert support to conduct the assessment. The assessment revealed that the total effects of the disaster in the 24 affected municipalities amounts to EUR 1,525 billion, of which EUR 885 million (57% of the total effects) represent the value of destroyed physical assets, and EUR 640 million (43% of the total) refer to losses in production. When considering the additional

affected municipalities, the total value of disaster effects would rise to EUR 1.7 billion. Because of the flooding, some 32,000 people were evacuated from their homes, out of which 25,000 were from Obrenovac. The majority of evacuees found accommodation with relatives, but some 5,000 required temporary shelters in camps established by the Government and the Serbian Red Cross.

Obrenovac. The city of Obrenovac was hit hardest by the floods, with an estimated 90% of the town flooded. During the night between 15 and 16 May, nearby Kolubara river, collecting waters from southerly mountains, suddenly rose several meters above its banks and flooded the city, catching the residents by surprise. The entire city was evacuated. During 18 May, the water level dropped, which enabled the evacuation of the citizens of Obrenovac to be carried out by trucks instead of boats. As of 20 May, the total number of evacuated persons exceeded 30,000. During the flooding period, an estimated 300,000 households were left without power. The largest thermoelectric power plant in Serbia, TPP Nikola Tesla, which supplies close to 50% of electricity in Serbia, lies in the vicinity of Obrenovac, but was saved from danger.



Figure 4 Map of Obrenovac under water

Šabac. Peak flood waters from Sava River hit Šabac on 18 May, but the embankments survived, strengthened by efforts of the army and several thousand volunteers. Flood waters reached 6.3 metres (above the usual level of the river), the highest on record, endangering Šabac and Sremska Mitrovica on the left bank. In anticipation of the floods, a 7.3-metre (24 ft) dam was erected.