

Flood Advisory for Shabelle River!

Issued: 27 May 2016

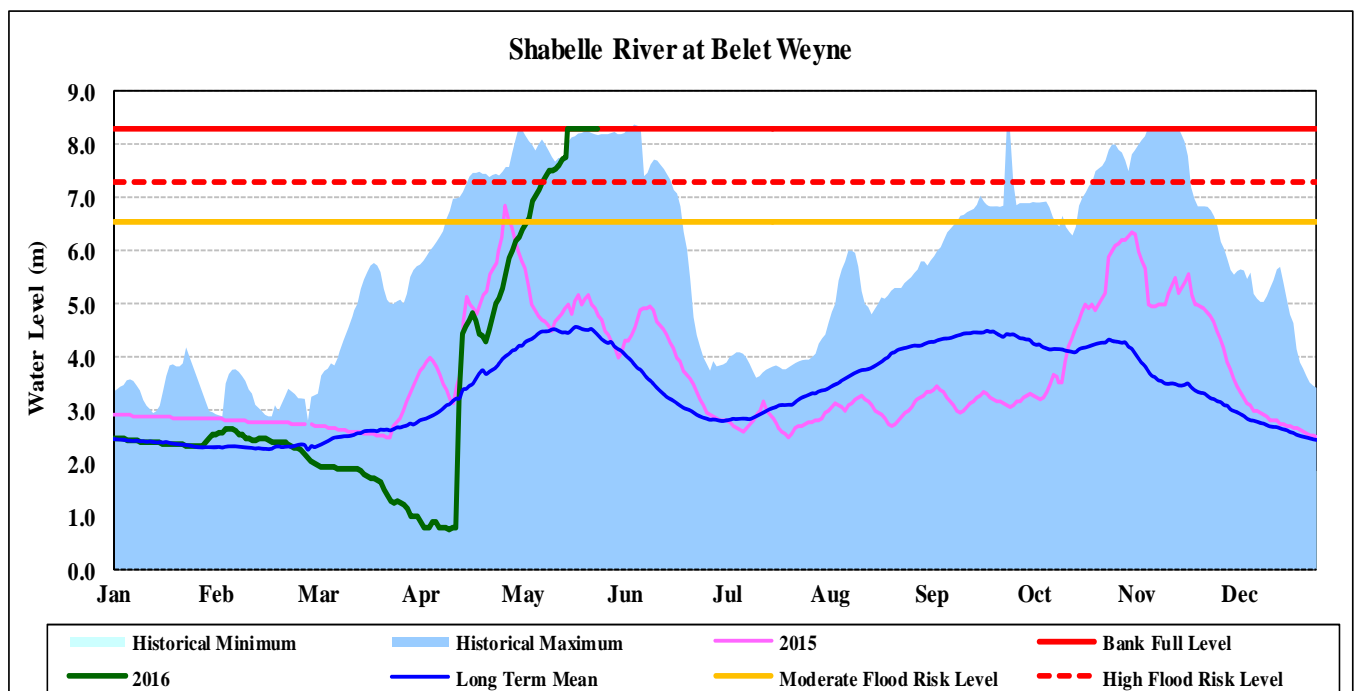


Observed river levels of the Shabelle River in Somalia have remained high for the last few weeks. This has been attributed to heavy rains in the upper parts of the Ethiopian highlands during the months of April and May. The River level at Belet Weyne in Hiran is currently at bank full and has remained so for the last one week as seen in Figure 1. This has resulted in over bank spillage leading to riverine floods in Belet Weyne town and the surroundings. There has been a significant reduction of rainfall activities both in Somali and the Ethiopian highlands. The high river levels being observed in Belet Weyne currently are due to the large amount of water coming from the upstream reaches in Ethiopia. Unofficial reports from Ethiopia indicate that there has been flooding in some areas and the flood water is now getting back to the river. In addition to this, there are minimal water abstractions in Ethiopia for irrigation and other purposes following the heavy rains in the highlands since April.

It is expected that the flood wave will be transmitted downstream of Belet Weyne in the coming days. Currently the river levels at Bulo Burti are very high and in less than five days this high levels will be reflected in Jowhar. There is therefore **high risk of flooding** in the coming few days in the Middle and lower reaches of the Shabelle river given the current situation. Areas to watch include Jowhar town and its environs; where the river level is currently high and other riverine towns in the lower Shabelle region. The situation could be further exacerbated by weak river embankments and open river banks.

For more information on this and related issues please visit: <http://systems.faoso.net/frims/rivers/floods>

Figure 1: Current river levels at Belet Weyne along Shabelle River compared to bank full and historical means



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