1. Critical Issues for Children

Bosnia and Herzegovina is faced with the worst floods due to the heaviest rains seen in the region for more than a century.

Map of flooded areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina; OCHA May 22, 2014
Northern, eastern and central parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) have received heavy rainfall, with some areas receiving more than 250 liters of rain per square meter which is the highest ever recorded. This caused extreme water levels of rivers Bosna, Sava, Vrbas and their tributaries. Latest news reports estimate that this has caused more than 2,000 landslides across the country.

According to the official reports over 1 million people have been affected directly or indirectly by the floods requiring evacuation of 40,000 people¹. So far, 32 deaths have been reported. About 250,000 children are affected, out of which 70,000 children under the age of 5. There are about 40,000 persons displaced within the country. 2192 persons are placed in 59 collective centres (34 in Federation of BiH (FBiH), 24 in Republika Srpska (RS), 1 in Brcko District (BD). More than 800 Roma families have been affected by floods, and they were identified as one of the most vulnerable groups even before the floods.

In most areas, the water levels went down and most rivers have receded to their riverbeds. In Posavina Canton the state of emergency continues, but the situation is slowly normalizing and water levels are going down. The most critical situation is in Vidovica, Kopanica, Lepnica and Jenjic, which are still flooded, although the water level is slowly going down. The most affected areas in the FBiH are: Sarajevo Canton (most affected municipalities: Novi Grad, Ilidža, Vogošća), Zenica-Doboj Canton (most affected municipalities: Maglaj, Doboj Jug, Zavidovići i Olovo), Tuzla Canton (in total 13 municipalities of which the most affected are: Srebrenik, Tuzla, Lukavac, Gračanica i Doboj Istok), Central Bosnia Canton (Travnik and Vitez surrounding areas), Posavina Canton (most affected municipalities: Orasje, Domaljevac, Ožak).

Over 40 municipalities have been directly affected and 14 declared the State of Emergency (no longer the state of the emergency on the entity levels). The most affected municipalities in the RS are Banja Luka, Kotor Varoš, Laktasi, Ribnik, Kostajnica, Prijedor, Jezero, Novi Grad: Bijeljina, Bratunac, Vlasenica, Zvornik, Lopare, Milići, Osmaci, Uglevik, Srebrenica, Šekovici; Doboj, Modriča, Šamac, Brod, Donji Žabar, Vukosavlje, Petrovo. More municipalities were affected but were not covered by the report of the MoS². A few settlements are still out of reach in the RS in the areas surrounding Bijeljina, Šamac, Donji Žabar as well as in Brcko District and FBiH. Most of residents have been evacuated, with the exception of few people who refused but are regularly visited by the Civil Protection.

Infrastructure is being re-established in multiple locations, but access to potable water is still an issue. Electricity is being brought back on line in most locations. Some isolated settlements remain, however, without electricity and water. Main roads are increasingly functional. However, side roads and over 20 bridges have been destroyed and damaged. Roads are still closed around Bijeljina and Brcko, while circulation is limited to one way or passenger vehicles only on several other highways and regional roads.

The cleaning process is progressing, most solid waste has been cleaned, with the exception of Maglaj where large debris remain, thereby requiring heavy machinery for removal. A large number of homes remain uninhabited/vacated (in Maglaj 1600 houses and apartments remain empty). Temporary collective centres in Maglaj are almost empty, as most of displaced are hosted by families.

About 800km² of mine-suspected areas were impacted by floods. 70% of flood-affected areas are suspected to contain mines and UXOs representing a huge concern in particular for children. Doboj, Maglaj, Olovo, Una-Sana Canton and Posavina regions at the basin of Bosna, Krivaja and Usora rivers have been identified as mine and UXOs suspected areas.

Agricultural lands (approximately 3,000 hectares) in all the affected areas of northern, eastern and central parts of the country are flooded with green houses, supplies and crops largely destroyed and livestock endangered representing a challenge for future food security. More than 100,000 residential buildings are destroyed or are under threat. Dozens of industrial buildings in affected areas have been severely damaged by the floods. According to official data, more than 230 public institutions such as schools and health centers have been affected.

In most affected areas, schools (preschools, primary and secondary) are closed and will not reopen until September. The data is still being gathered on the exact number of schools affected but initial records indicate that at least 65 primary schools have been damaged. Rural schools seem to be the most affected. 

In most affected areas, health centres have been affected by the floods. Field observations point to a potential shortages in supplies and medicines but the main concern remains unsafe water. The first floor of the health center in Maglaj, a severely affected area, for example, was completely destroyed and rooms are filled with mud. Ambulances were ruined along with laboratory equipment. Some municipalities have undertaken much better preventive measures than the others and were able to save all the medicine and medical machinery from the floods. Others have lost most of it and do not have even the basic medicine to provide to the people in need. Mobile health teams are concentrating their work on the ‘prevention of the epidemics’ and there are some positive practices in this field - such as the regional cooperation that is crossing the entity line between Tuzla and Bijeljina for example, where epidemiologists from Tuzla are also reaching the most vulnerable in Bijeljina and working with the local authorities there on the prevention

¹ These are estimates as exact numbers are still unknown
² Source: MoS (27 May 2014). The data is reported as incomplete and not covering all affected areas.
activities. These mobile health teams are currently ‘replacing’ the health centers in the most affected areas, where the actual health centers were literally wiped out.

Preliminary data shows that more than 800 Roma families have been affected by floods, and all the collective centres visited have a Roma population. According to Roma NGOs, Roma families are reporting discrimination by the municipal authorities, since many of them are told to contact their local NGOs and are not being able to access the aid that is provided to the non-Roma families. In Tuzla, for example, they were put in a collective centre, but when non-Roma families started coming, they were moved two times in order to accommodate the non-Roma and at the end some of them decided to return to their homes, although they are still unsafe for living.

In affected areas, most Centres for Social Welfare (CSW) have been affected and they urgently need IT equipment to perform their work. Social work are trying to support venerable families. There are some positive practices of outreach field work to approach the most affected families. According to initial data gathered in particular in the RS, the “new poor” are elderlies, families with children with disabilities, families with one or no employed member and families that were depending on agricultural work.

Five sessions of the International Community Coordination Meeting have been hosted by UN Regional Coordinator. Sessions will continue every other day until further notice.

A joint UN-EU-Wold Bank recovery needs assessment will be deployed on May 31. The assessment teams will consist of experts from different UN agencies and other international organizations, among which: Swiss Cooperation, EU ECHO, WFP, Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, EUFOR, UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM, UN Women, OHCHR, World Vision, UK / DFID, ICRC, UNEP, UNDP, etc.

2. UNICEF’S EMERGENCY RESPONSE

UNICEF immediately coordinated with the Ministry of Security, other authorities, local NGOs, international organizations and other partners to provide essential humanitarian assistance to those most affected by the disaster.

As a UNCT member, UNICEF is supporting emergency coordination for WASH, education and child protection in close cooperation with other stakeholders.

UNICEF teams continue to systematically visit affected areas to collect information and assess the level of the disaster impact on families and children.

As part of the immediate response, UNICEF has been undertaking following actions:

- Immediate supply of 300 hygienic kits as requested by the Ministry of Security delivered to the Associations of Red Cross. Special focus on distribution of HK to Roma families through Roma NGOs (48 hour response, purchase made on 17 May)
- Additional supply of 1,000 hygienic kits as per request from RS Ministry of Health
- Supply and distribution of 1,300 kg of chlorine for household water treatment as per request and instruction from the Ministry of Security, distributed to Associations of Red Cross (24 hour response)
- Supply of 500 kg of chlorine for cleaning schools, preschools, health centres and other services (400 for RS and 100 for FBiH Ministries of Health – as per their requests and instruction for delivery)
- 500 additional kg of chlorine powder purchased and delivered yesterday as per request from FBiH MoH
- Development and distribution of educational messages and materials on hygiene, breastfeeding, optimal nutrition of infants and young children, and on importance of early stimulation and responsive parenting
- Purchase of 40,000 doses of OPV vaccines (for both Entities)
- Provision of psycho social support
- Initial refurbishment of schools and preschools (1 kindergarten in RS starting to be refurbished)

The country office immediately reprogrammed USD 87,315 Regular and Other Resources and mobilized USD 120,000 through the EPF loan.

The RC office, on behalf of the UNCT, submitted a joint CERF proposal to UNOCHA of USD 2,021,360, which has just been approved (USD 417,514 approved for UNICEF WASH and Child Protection components).

In addition, the office is liaising with partners to partly re-programme OR from existing agreements and to mobilise additional funding (mainly with SDC, SIDA, USAID, Dubai Cares, NL government etc). Natcoms have also been approached for funding through UNICEF office in Geneva.

In order to support the emergency response in the next three months, UNICEF is strengthening its human resources capacity in the areas of emergency coordination, child protection, WASH and supply and logistics.
3. UNICEF PLANNED ACTION IN BiH

UNICEF will continue to closely coordinate with relevant government counterparts (at all levels of governance) as well as with the UNCT, international organizations, local and international NGOs and other partners to provide assistance and early recovery of affected populations. Based on the initial assessments, the below listed interventions have been identified to protect children from the consequences of the floods. These interventions will be revised as more information on the impact of the floods becomes available.

UNICEF BiH will also support the EU/UN/World Bank Recovery Needs Assessment (PDNA) in particular in the areas of water and sanitation and education, and health.

A. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Actions
1. Support restoration of immunization programmes with a focus on the prevention of polio (according to WHO, BiH is at high risk for polio). This will include the procurement of OPV vaccines (40,000 doses already purchased), the procurement of cold chain equipment and the organization of catch up immunization campaigns for unimmunized children (with a focus on the most vulnerable ones);
2. Promote breastfeeding and optimal infant and young child feeding including through Communication for Development (C4D) initiatives and outreach services;
3. Support community nursing and outreach through integrated early childhood development services established within the health centres for parents and young children in the most affected areas (including outreach to Roma);
4. Supply furniture and didactic materials for damaged early childhood development services in primary health care centres.

Partners:
- BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA), Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), Federal Public Health Institute (FPHI), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska (MoHSW), RS Public Health Institute

B. EDUCATION: To ensure a normal start of school year as of early September

Actions:
1. Lead sector coordination (in coordination with Save the Children);
2. Support refurbishing of pre-schools and schools;
3. Supply school kits and/or supplies to the affected pre-schools and schools to ensure timely resumption of education activities;
4. Incorporate in pre-school, primary and secondary schools activities aiming at: 1) promoting healthy behaviours; 2) raising awareness on hygiene, prevention of injuries, poisoning and disease; 3) mine risk education; 4) prevention of use of small arms and light weapons; and 5) prevention of violence and abuse;
5. Incorporate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) within schools’ activities;
6. Train school and preschool teachers on how to provide adequate support and referral to children affected by the flooding, once they come back to school.

Partners:
- MoCA, Federal Ministry of Education (FMoE), Ministry of Education and Culture of RS (MoEC), Cantonal MoEs, municipalities etc
- Association of Psychologists, schools and Pedagogical Institutes
- Save the Children and other NGOs involved
- Teachers

C. CHILD PROTECTION: Safe and protective child-friendly environments with psychosocial support

Actions
1. Lead sector coordination;
2. Establish child friendly spaces in affected communities to ensure children have access to a safe environment with age-appropriate activities;
3. Provide psycho social care and effective referral mechanisms for children and youth affected by the flooding;
4. Development and distribution of C4D materials and campaign activities in particular on mine awareness, and prevention of violence;
5. Monitor any violation of girls, boys and women’s rights.

Partners:
- FMoSW, RS MoHSW and cantonal MoSW, Municipalities
- World Vision, Association of psychologists, NGOs and other partners
- BiH Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) and Civil Protection

D. WATER AND SANITATION: Drinking water and hygiene for affected children

Actions
1. Lead sector coordination during emergency response;
2. Continue with immediate response activities as appropriate;
3. Coordinate with partners to ensure safe water supply and appropriate sanitation facilities are restored in schools and health facilities.

Partners:
- MoCA, Federal MoH, Federal PHI, RS MoHSW, RS PHI
- Red Cross, National and international NGOs

E. SOCIAL PROTECTION AND INCLUSION

Actions:
1. Support the social protection and inclusion local systems (established through UNICEF and EU supported programme) to identify and support the most vulnerable families;
2. Supply furniture and equipment to affected centres for social welfare (estimated 10 centres)
3. Support, through procurement of material and capacity development, social workers in performing outreach work, especially in the most affected areas;
4. Supply furniture, equipment, medical and rehabilitation equipment, didactic materials to day-care centres and other local services;

Partners:
- Federal MoSW, RS MoHSW, Cantonal MoSW, Municipalities,
- Associations of parents
- Service providers

4. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR UNICEF PLANNED ACTION FOR THE FIRST 3 MONTHS

UNICEF BiH estimates that around 2.7 million USD will be required to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although some funds have already been raised, the funding gap is around 1.9 million USD.

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<th>Sectors</th>
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<th>Funds available (OR, RR, EPF)</th>
<th>In the pipeline (CERF and Dubai Cares)</th>
<th>Gaps</th>
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Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be obtained from:

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