

Chile Apologizes to Indigenous Mapuches For Taking Their Lands



Santiago de Chile, March 14 (RHC) -- The government of President Michelle Bachelet on Thursday apologized in the name of the Chilean state to the indigenous Mapuche tribe “for taking their lands” and said it has a pending debt in terms of public policies that will allow the Araucania region, where 600,000 of this Amer-Indian people live, to emerge from poverty.

According to a report by Mercopress news agency, the statement was made by the new governor of the area, Francisco Huenchumilla, who was appointed by newly-inaugurated President Michelle Bachelet.

The Araucania region has recently witnessed protests by indigenous militants as part of a century-old struggle to reclaim lands the Mapuches lost during a 19th century “pacification” campaign. Those lands are now largely occupied by lumber and agricultural interests.

“The state's payment of this debt is pending and for more than 130 years it has implemented public policies that have not managed to bring this region out of poverty,” the governor said.

“To achieve this, I express, in the name of President Michelle Bachelet, the political will to do something different. No more of the same,” emphasized Huenchumilla, who himself is a Mapuche.

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