

State of Catastrophe in Chile due to forest fire in Viña del Mar

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Chilean government has decreed the constitutional emergency State of Catastrophe due to dangers to the public.?

Santiago de Chile, December 24 (RHC)-- Given the large forest fire that has been raging in the coastal town of Viña del Mar, in the Valparaíso region, the Chilean government has decreed the constitutional emergency State of Catastrophe due to dangers to the public.

Chile's Undersecretary of the Interior Manuel Monsalve told the press that the State of Catastrophe implies the appointment of "a head of National Defense who will have the power to limit constitutional rights, possibly the right of assembly and movement, but who will also have the power to take control, to requisition all the necessary goods to be able to respond to the emergency."

According to Monsalve, the fire with three active outbreaks, all of them forestry in nature, has left two people dead, 135 houses burned and 110 hectares destroyed. The official also reported that so far, there are 30 people injured as a result of the fire in Viña del Mar.

"There was a very quick response to the start of this fire, but despite this, due to the location of this fire, the weather conditions, the wind and the presence of combustible material, it spread very aggressively and quickly," Monsalve said.

Regarding the response to the catastrophe, the Undersecretary of the Interior said that the State had identified the urgency of working in three areas: security, coordination of public services and direct firefighting.

Five shelters have been set up for evacuees, each with a capacity for 100 people, said Monsalve, who added that only two of them are hosting 70 people, so there are no plans to open new capacities. Once the damage assessment is completed, the Ministry of the Interior will respond quickly and then the Ministry of Housing will intervene to rebuild the sectors, Monsalve said.

Local media have reported that the Minister of the Interior, Carolina Tohá, the Minister of Social Development, Giorgio Jackson, and the Minister of Agriculture, Esteban Valenzuela, will remain in Valparaíso to coordinate aid to the population.

"From the Government, we will continue coordinating all the necessary support that has allowed us to be with the families affected by the fire, accompany them, and address their problems. You know that we are and will continue to be with you," said President Gabriel Boric via Twitter.

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