

Battling Political Scandals, Chilean President Asks Her Cabinet to Resign



Santiago de Chile, May 7 (NNN-RHC)-- Battling a series of political scandals, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet has asked all her ministers to resign and says she will soon choose a new cabinet.

Ms Bachelet's approval ratings have recently slumped amid a series of political scandals. In February her son resigned as head of a government charity over allegations of influence-peddling.

"A few hours ago I requested the resignation of all the ministers, and I will take 72 hours to decide who will stay and who will go," the Chilean president said on Wednesday evening. "This is the time for a cabinet change."

Ms Bachelet's son, Sebastian Davalos, was accused by the opposition of using his influence to get a \$10 million bank loan for his wife. His wife's company used the money to buy plots of land in central Chile which her company then resold for profit. Although Chile's national bank regulator cleared him of any wrongdoing, the issue has become a scandal.

Ms Bachelet always maintained she had not been aware of the deal but during the TV interview she acknowledged she had made "important mistakes" in not returning from holiday or commenting on the case sooner.

President Bachelet, a member of the Socialist Party, is Chile's first woman president and ruled the country between 2006 and 2010 -- enjoying approval ratings of over 80 percent.

After a period working for the United Nations in New York, she returned to the presidency for a second term last year.

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