

Chileans call for new protests even as Piñera changes cabinet



Santiago de Chile, October 28 (RHC)-- Despite President Sebastian Piñera's cabinet reshuffle, Chileans angry at inequality called for more demonstrations this week in the biggest political crisis since the country's return to democracy in 1990.

President Piñera replaced eight cabinet members Monday including his interior and finance ministers, a house-cleaning aimed at taming the biggest political crisis since Chile's return to democracy in 1990.

Piñera sacked interior minister Andres Chadwick, his cousin and longtime confidant who came under fire last week for calling protesters "criminals." He replaced Chadwick, a right-wing politician, with Gonzalo Blumel, a presidency minister and liaison with the legislature.

Piñera also appointed Ignacio Briones, an economics professor, to replace finance minister Felipe Larrain.

"Chile has changed, and the government must change with it to confront these new challenges," Piñera said in a televised speech from the La Moneda presidential palace. However, protests in different cities around the country continued to take place with police deploying repression tactics of water cannon and tear gas.

Piñera, a billionaire businessman, has promised higher taxes on the rich to help boost the minimum wage and pensions, lower the prices of medicines and assure proper health insurance.

But a new Cadem poll found that 80 percent of Chileans did not find his proposals adequate. On social media, Chileans were calling for more protests over the coming week.

Support for Piñera has plunged to just 14 percent, the lowest approval rating for a Chilean president since the country's return to democracy three decades ago.

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