

Chilean Protesters Return to the Streets Against Education Reform



Santiago de Chile, June 11 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Chileans marched again in various cities of the country on Wednesday to protest against the education reform promoted by the government of Michelle Bachelet and to defend their "Program of Student Movement."

They planned to hand to the Ministry of Education a document listing various strategic demands they want to have included in the reform. "Seven points deal with what we want to obtain, as public funding, the need for stable work conditions and a career that dignifies the teacher's career," Valentina Saavedra, spokeswoman of the Confederation of Students of Chile (Confech), told teleSUR.

The protesters, mainly students and professors, burned barricades in front of Chile's University in Santiago, paralyzing traffic in the main streets for several minutes. Although the demonstration received the green light from local authorities, police were reported to be repeatedly dispersing them with water cannons and tear gas.

In recent weeks, demonstrations have ended in violent confrontations between the police and the protesters. On June 3rd, university students joined the teachers in an indefinite strike, a measure approved a few days earlier by the Confech, while secondary students agreed to join the mobilization on Monday.

The government announced in 2014 that university education will be free beginning in 2016. The measure was confirmed with the approval of the tax reform in September, which plans to collect \$8.3 billion every year to fund the education reform and other social expenses.

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