

CHILE

SOCIAL PROTEST

STARTING DATE: 18 OCTOBER 2019

- TRIGGERS**
- Government announcement of increased public transportation fares.
 - Wider economic issues (privatization of water distribution companies, rising living costs and electricity prices) and social inequalities.

- GOALS**
- Drafting of a new constitution by an independent multi-sector constituent assembly to replace the Magna Carta inherited from Pinochet's dictatorship.
 - Social reforms: overhaul of the pension system (totally privatized), greater funds allocated to the public health sector and increased minimum wage.

STATE OF PLAY

- Civil unrest started in Santiago, before spreading nationally to cities such as Valparaiso (around Congress) and Concepcion. Marches and rallies have been occurring on a weekly basis, mainly staged on weekends, on Plaza Italia (Santiago) and now in wealthier parts of the capital, and around Congress in Valparaiso, gathering from thousands of people up to a million.
- 18-26 October : Countrywide state of emergency (deployment of the army to maintain public order) and night curfews in various cities.
- Frequent sackings and lootings, including arsons, on the fringes of protests as well as violent confrontations between anti-riot forces and demonstrators have been recorded.
- Despite the cabinet ministers' reshuffle and the enactment of social measures by Pinera, the protest movement shows little signs of weakness, as the 12 November national strike was successfully followed by around 2 million people.
- Nonetheless, on 15 November, an agreement was reached between the opposition and the government to organize a referendum in April 2020 on the revision of the Constitution.

IMPACTS: IMPORTANT



- At least 20 people dead, more than 2,500 injured.
- More than 5,000 arrested and detained.
- Alleged cases of torture committed by police officers.



- Deterioration of public infrastructures, metro stations and businesses (banks, restaurants, hotels, shops) in lootings, sackings and arsons (6,800 firms affected).
- Devaluation of the GDP (-0,5 points) and currency (lowest value of the Peso since 2003).



- Deterioration of the entire metro stations network.
- Temporary suspension of public transport services.
- Traffic disrupted on major roads (roadblocks, barricades).
- Some flights delayed and cancelled at the international airport of Santiago.



POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR ESCALATION

- None of the protesters' demands met by the government, particularly regarding the creation of a constituent assembly in order to draft the constitution.
- Renewed curfews or temporary state of emergency.
- Criminalization of protesters despite stricter security measures.
- Arbitrary detentions of protesters / absence of trials for the detainees.



POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR DE-ESCALATION

- Pinera agrees to the creation of a constituent assembly and allows further social measures.
- Deeper investigations into police violence.
- Financial compensation effectively granted to the victims.