

Chile Defence Report 2013

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Abstracts

Chile continued to experience widespread disaffection with government in 2012, leading to a number of protests that saw police forces resort to teargas and water cannons to disperse demonstrators. While the country's external security conditions remain relatively stable and benign, Chile's internal security environment continues to be threatened by the dissonance between Sebastián Piñera's rightist administration and large sections of society demanding social and economic changes.

Dissatisfaction with the government's education and energy policies intensified in early 2012. The government's credibility suffered major blows as clashes with students over reforms to the country's education system resumed, and new tensions emerged between the administration and residents of the remote Aysén region.

After a pause during the summer months, student demonstrations resumed in March 2012, with thousands of Chileans taking to the streets of Santiago demanding high-quality public education and the reinstatement of those who had been excluded from schools for protesting. Chilean police clashed with students in Santiago's main avenue, where anywhere between 2,000 and 7,000 students participated. Another student demonstration in May 2012 was claimed by organisers to have attracted some 100,000 people. Meanwhile, a mainly peaceful demonstration of between 3,500 and 5,000 people in late 2012 in honour of the victims of General Augusto Pinochet's military government also turned violent.

Social unrest has also intensified in the remote southern region of Aysén, where hundreds of people staged demonstrations, road blocks and fires to demand lower fuel costs, higher investment in key infrastructure, and the cancellation of the HidroAysén dam project. While local residents and environmental groups will likely continue to voice their opposition to the dam, Piñera has repeatedly underlined 'deep weaknesses' in the country's energy matrix, suggesting that the project will go ahead as planned.

As of mid-2012 there appears to be little President Piñera can do to boost his very low approval rating for the duration of his tenure. However, it does not appear that his current low popularity will have a significant impact on the outcome of the November 2013 presidential election, as the left-wing opposition is struggling to gain traction with the electorate.

BMI expects defence expenditure to grow by 8.062.04% to CLP3.884.41trn (US\$8.358.66bn) in 2012, as growth edges down from 19.2313.86% jump in the previous year and a much sharper 38.15% seen in 2010.

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Competitive Landscape

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Defence Industry

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