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Pope Francis named Spanish Archbishop Alberto Ortega Martin as the new apostolic nuncio to Chile, the Vatican announced.

Ortega, 56, served as nuncio to Jordan and Iraq prior to his appointment to the South American country, the Vatican said Oct. 7.

Ordained to the priesthood in 1990, Ortega entered the Vatican diplomatic service in 1997, serving in posts in Nicaragua, South Africa and Lebanon. He was ordained a bishop in 2015.

His appointment comes at a time when the Catholic Church in Chile is under continuous scrutiny over its handling of cases involving the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.

Ortega's predecessor, Italian Archbishop Ivo Scapolo, whom Francis transferred to Portugal in late August, often was criticized by survivors for his alleged inaction and complicity in covering up cases of abuse.

In July, Reuters news agency reported that Chilean government officials said they were investigating more than 150 cases of sexual abuse or cover-up in the church.

Among those currently being investigated for possible cover-up are senior members of the clergy, including the past two archbishops of Santiago: Cardinals Francisco Javier Errazuriz Ossa and Ricardo Ezzati.

In March, Francis accepted Ezzati's resignation and named Bishop Celestino Aos Braco of Copiapo as apostolic administrator of the archdiocese.

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