

Hundreds of people have protested against the ordination of a Catholic bishop in the Chilean city of Osorno. They've accused him of covering up a priest's sexual abuse of children.



Juan Barros was ordained on Saturday in the cathedral of Osorno amid the shouts of hundreds of protesters who accuse him of covering up a priest's sexual abuse of young boys. Fifteen of the country's 35 bishops and many priests from the diocese also shunned the ordination of the new bishop.

While Barros himself has not been accused of molestation, at least three victims of sexual abuse claim he was present when they were molested by one of Chile's most prominent priests, Father Fernando Karadima, in the 1980s and 1990s. A Vatican investigation found Karadima guilty of sex abuse in 2011 and sentenced the now 84-year-old man to a life of "penitence and prayer."

In a letter sent to priests in the diocese on Monday, Barros stated that he did not know about Karadima's abuses when they happened.

More than 1,000 Catholics, along with about 30 priests from the diocese and 51 of Chile's 120 congress members, sent letters to Pope Francis last month urging him to revoke the appointment of Barros. However, the pope confirmed his decision to appoint Barros after recently meeting with him.

"I hold the pope responsible," Juan Carlos Cruz, a 51-year-old journalist who is one of the accusers, told news agency AP. "As victims, we had become used to the slaps in the face by the Chilean

hierarchy, but we never expected a slap in the face from the pope."