



## Michelle Bachelet

POLITICIAN · SOCIAL IMPACT LEADER

Trailblazing Leader, Human Rights Advocate, and Champion for Social Justice

[VISIT MICHELLE'S WEBSITE](#)

### About:

- **Gender:** Female
- **Nationality:** Chile
- **Languages:** English, Spanish
- **Travels from:** Chile

### Engagement Types:

- Speaking

### Topics:

- DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)
- Gender Equality
- Geopolitical Impact
- Health & Wellbeing
- Leadership & Management
- Political Trends

## Biography Highlights

- **Pioneering Leadership:** First female President of Chile, serving two non-consecutive terms (2006–2010, 2014–2018), leading progressive social and economic reforms.
- **Global Advocate:** United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2018–2022), addressing global human rights challenges, including humanitarian crises and gender-based discrimination.
- **Champion for Equality:** Inaugural Executive Director of UN Women (2010–2013), spearheading initiatives to advance gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

## Biography

### Michelle Bachelet: Early Life and Education

Born in Santiago, Chile, Michelle Bachelet is the daughter of Air Force Brigadier General Alberto Bachelet and Ángela Jeria, an archaeologist and activist. Her early years were shaped by a strong sense of public service and resilience, particularly after her father was imprisoned and tortured for opposing the 1973 military coup led by Augusto Pinochet. She pursued medical studies at the University of Chile, where she also became active in the Socialist Youth movement, reflecting her early commitment to social justice and political activism.

## Websites:

- [Website](#)

## Political Imprisonment and Exile

The 1973 military coup profoundly altered Michelle Bachelet's life. Her father, Brigadier General Alberto Bachelet, was detained by the Pinochet regime for opposing the coup and died in custody in 1974 due to torture.

In 1975, Michelle and her mother, Ángela Jeria, were arrested and detained at Villa Grimaldi and Cuatro Álamos, where they were interrogated and tortured. After their release, they fled Chile, first seeking refuge in Australia before settling in East Germany (German Democratic Republic), where Bachelet continued her medical studies at Humboldt University in Berlin.

## Return to Chile and Medical Career

Bachelet returned to Chile in 1979 and resumed her medical studies at the University of Chile, earning her medical degree in 1982. Although she did not complete a formal medical specialty, she trained in pediatrics and public health before shifting her focus to health policy.

She worked with NGOs supporting children affected by political repression, particularly at PIDE (an organization assisting children of detained and disappeared individuals). This demonstrated her deep commitment to human rights, social welfare, and public health.

## Entry into Politics

With the restoration of democracy in 1990, Bachelet took on various public health roles, including positions at the Ministry of Health and as a consultant for the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Her growing interest in civil-military relations led her to study military strategy at Chile's National Academy of Political and Strategic Studies and later at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C.

In 2000, she was appointed Minister of Health, where she worked to reduce wait times in the public health system and improve healthcare access.

In 2002, she became Minister of Defense, making history as the first woman in Latin America to hold that position.

## Presidency

In 2006, Bachelet made history as Chile's first female president and the first woman in Latin America to be elected without a husband's political backing. Her administration focused on social protection, gender equality, and economic stability, introducing programs such as the "Chile Crece Contigo" initiative, which expanded early childhood development and social security measures.

Re-elected in 2013, her second term emphasized major structural reforms, including:

Educational reform, making university education tuition-free for low-income students.

Tax reform, increasing corporate taxes to fund social programs and reduce

inequality.

Constitutional change, initiating a process to replace Chile's dictatorship-era constitution with a more democratic framework.

### **International Roles**

After her presidency, Bachelet continued her advocacy on the global stage.

In 2010, she became the inaugural Executive Director of UN Women, where she led efforts to advance gender equality, strengthen women's political participation, and combat gender-based violence worldwide.

From 2018 to 2022, she served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, addressing major global human rights challenges, including China's treatment of Uyghurs, the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, and abuses in Venezuela and Afghanistan.

### **Current Engagements**

After completing her second presidential term, Bachelet resumed her global advocacy work and was appointed United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Her foundation, Horizonte Ciudadano, established in 2018, continues to promote citizen engagement in public policy, focusing on climate resilience, children's rights, decentralization, and social equity.

### **Speaking Engagements**

Michelle Bachelet is a highly sought-after speaker, known for her insights on leadership, democracy, human rights, and social equity. Drawing from her historic presidency, global advocacy, and policy expertise, she engages diverse audiences with compelling narratives and a compassionate approach.

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## **Videos**



## Speaker Bureaus And Talent Agencies

Michelle Bachelet is available to book via these agencies

✔ Recommended



Speaking Agency