

PINOCHET IN STABLE CONDITION AFTER HEART ATTACK

The New York Times
December 4, 2006

SANTIAGO, [Chile](#), Dec. 3 — Gen. [Augusto Pinochet](#), the former dictator of Chile, suffered a serious heart attack on Sunday morning and underwent angioplasty and, later in the day, another surgical procedure, hospital officials and his family said.



Gen. Augusto Pinochet celebrated his 91st birthday last month.

General Pinochet, who turned 91 on Nov. 25, underwent the angioplasty in the morning, said his son Marco Antonio Pinochet, who added that the procedure had “virtually rescued him from death.” Hospital officials said he was to have bypass surgery that afternoon.

Later, a news release from the Military Hospital of Santiago, where he is being treated, said that the second procedure was instead an evaluation of the angioplasty, and that his condition was “stable.”

Dr. Juan Ignacio Vergara, leader of the medical team treating General Pinochet, said that the general was conscious and communicating with his family and doctors. He said that treatment so far had progressed “satisfactorily,” that the lung edema that General Pinochet had when he was admitted “has been resolved” and that a bypass “will probably not be necessary” for now.

He said, though, that General Pinochet’s condition “continues to be serious,” and that the next 24 to 48 hours are “critical.”

Marco Antonio Pinochet said his father had received last rites in the morning.

The commander in chief of the army, Gen. Óscar Izurieta, met with General Pinochet's wife, Lucía Hiriart, and children at the hospital.

Government officials had no comment on General Pinochet's health or on what might happen when he dies, but Ricardo Lagos Weber, a spokesman and the son of a former president, said the government "was prepared" for whatever the outcome of his illness might be.

In an interview on Chilean television in August, President Michelle Bachelet said that General Pinochet would not be entitled to a state funeral, given that he had been indicted for crimes. "The conscience of Chileans would feel violated" were he given official honors, she said.

General Pinochet had been suffering from several ailments, including diabetes, and has had several strokes in recent years. His faltering health and what doctors have diagnosed as "mild dementia" have allowed him to evade trials for human rights violations and other crimes committed during his 17-year rule, which began after a military coup toppled the democratically elected president, Salvador Allende, in 1973.

Last week, General Pinochet was indicted on charges of kidnapping and murdering two Allende bodyguards after the 1973 coup, and was placed under house arrest. In recent years, he has also been indicted in cases involving the disappearance of opponents in 1975, the kidnapping and torture of political prisoners in the mid-1970s, and on charges of tax fraud, falsifying public documents and fabricating and using false passports in connection with an investigation into his illicit fortune, hidden abroad.

In 2004, a [United States Senate](#) report disclosed that General Pinochet had stashed up to \$8 million in secret accounts at the Riggs Bank in Washington. A human rights report issued in 1991 by a government-appointed commission established that during the military dictatorship, almost 3,200 people were killed or disappeared. In 2004, a commission on political prisons and torture found that at least 28,000 people had been victims of torture.