

Pinochet out of danger

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SANTIAGO, Chile - (AP) -- Gen. Augusto Pinochet's condition is no longer life-threatening, but doctors Tuesday dismissed claims that the former dictator's heart attack was exaggerated to allow him to avoid prosecution for abuses during his 1973-90 regime.

A priest administered last rites to the 91-year-old Pinochet on Sunday after he suffered an acute heart attack and surgeons performed emergency angioplasty to enlarge an artery and restore the flow of blood to his heart.

On Tuesday, doctors said Pinochet was out of danger but that he must remain for at least 10 days at the Santiago Military Hospital.

"He is no longer in critical condition," said Dr. Juan Ignacio Vergara, spokesman for the medical team treating Pinochet. "His life is no longer at risk."

Vergara added that Pinochet would be allowed to leave his bed Tuesday to perform some exercises.

Doctors dismissed comments by some lawyers and Pinochet foes that the former dictator's condition may have been exaggerated to allow him to duck charges he faces for human rights violations during his regime.

"The recovery of Gen. Pinochet is the result of a timely, efficient medical treatment," Vergara said.