

# British Woman Surgeon Says Chileans Tortured Her

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LONDON, Dec. 30—A British woman surgeon who had been held prisoner in Chile for 59 days returned here today and said she had been tortured for having treated a wounded man accused of being a leftist guerrilla.

As the surgeon, Dr. Sheila Cassidy, who is 37 years old, made her statement at an airport news conference, the Foreign Office announced that the British Ambassador to Chile, Reginald Secondé, had been withdrawn indefinitely in protest over the "uncivilized, brutal treatment" to which she had been subjected.

Speaking in a quiet, controlled manner, Dr. Cassidy said her captors had tied her naked to a bed and tortured her three times with electric shocks "for up to an hour at a time."

She said she had then been placed in solitary confinement for three weeks, released and soon re-arrested. Dr. Cassidy, who had been in Chile as a permanent resident, working for a local health service, was released yesterday following strong protests from London.

#### Denial by Chilean Embassy

The Chilean Embassy here denied her assertions "absolutely."

The British Government was understood to be considering submitting the case of Dr. Cassidy to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

A Foreign Office official, sitting with her at the news conference, read a statement from Foreign Secretary James Callaghan to the Chilean Government, saying that Britain con-



United Press International

Dr. Sheila Cassidy arriving yesterday in England

demned terrorism, violence and "flagrant abuses of human rights."

"Now that Dr. Cassidy is safely out of Chile I can state what we have up to now delib-

erately refrained from publicizing," Mr. Callaghan declared.

"This is that Dr. Cassidy was tortured by the Chilean security police. In order to obtain information from her, they stripped her and gave her severe electric shocks. No British Government can accept such uncivilized, brutal treatment of a British subject at the hands of a foreign government."

In another message, a personal protest to Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean President, Mr. Callaghan asked that he conduct a full inquiry.

#### Incident Described

Dr. Cassidy, who told reporters that she would like to become a nun, said the incident that led to her arrest occurred in mid-October. She received a telephone call from a priest, asking her to treat a seriously wounded man who, she said, had "three bullet wounds in his leg."

She was arrested Nov. 1 while visiting a house belonging to missionary priests on the outskirts of Santiago. While she was there, she said, Chilean policemen attacked the house, spraying gunfire all around and wounding a maid.

Dr. Cassidy was taken blindfolded to a building where, she said, she was tortured during interrogation on why she had treated the wounded man. Initially she invented a story, Dr. Cassidy said, and when the interrogators found it to be false they tortured her again.

"They thought I knew where the head man of the organization was," she said, "but they were completely mistaken."