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Austria says U.S. has DNA of Iraq hostage

Wed Mar 12, 2008 7:44am EDT

VIENNA (Reuters) - A fingerprint and DNA sample of an Austrian hostage in Iraq have been received by U.S. authorities, an Austrian official said on Wednesday after a magazine reported that fingers of five westerners had been obtained.

Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle told a news conference U.S. authorities in Baghdad had told Austria the samples belonged to Austrian Bert Nussbaumer, 26, who was seized with four American colleagues near Basra in November 2006 while they worked as security guards.

The weekly magazine News said on Wednesday that five fingers had been received and that DNA analysis had shown them to come from Nussbaumer and Americans Josh Munns, **Jonathon Cote**, Paul Johnson Reuben and John R. Young.

It said U.S. authorities supplied the information to Austria but gave no other information about its source.

"We have reached no confirmed conclusions about the fate of Nussbaumer," said Kyrle, a member of the country's National Security Council.

The magazine quoted "authorities involved" as saying there was no certainty the hostages were alive when the fingers were removed.

The magazine said three messages had been sent by kidnappers but no financial or political demands had been received by Austria.

(Reporting by Alexandra Zawadil and Paul Bolding; Editing by Dominic Evans)

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