



Five fingers sent in hostage drama

From correspondents in Vienna

March 12, 2008 11:16pm

Article from: Reuters

US authorities have reportedly been sent five fingers that could come from men who were kidnapped in Iraq.

Austrian Bert Nussbaumer, 26, was seized with Americans Josh Munns, Jonathon Cote, Paul Johnson Reuben and John R. Young near Basra in November 2006 while they worked as security guards.

The weekly magazine *News* reported on Wednesday that five fingers had been received and that DNA analysis had shown them to come from the five hostages.

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

A fingerprint and DNA sample from Nussbaumer has been received by US authorities, Austria's Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle told a news conference.

"We have reached no confirmed conclusions about the fate of Nussbaumer," he said.

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.

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