

Yahoo! | My Yahoo! | Mail | More

New User? Sign Up Sign In | Help

Search:

Home U.S. Business World Entertainment Sports Tech Politics Elections Science Health Most Popular

World Video Middle East Europe Latin America Africa Asia Canada Australia/Antarctica Kevin Sites

Search: All News

Severed fingers of 5 hostages delivered to U.S. officials in Iraq

McCLATCHY
WASHINGTON BUREAU

McCLATCHY
WASHINGTON BUREAU

Severed fingers of 5 Iraq hostages delivered to U.S. officials
China claims to have foiled hijacking, but did it?
Do Obama's 'red-state' wins matter for November?
Israel to boycott Al Jazeera
China closes down climbing Mt. Everest

WORLD VIDEO



Muslims protest over Danish cartoon reprint
AP



Iran's reformists
CNN

» All news video

SPECIAL TO YAHOO! NEWS

CHINA RISES
First-hand accounts of life in the Middle Kingdom.

» Read the blog

ELSEWHERE ON THE WEB

CNN.com: Mummy smugglers arrested, official says

McClatchy Newspapers: Mexico: Students killed at guerrilla camp weren't in training

ABC News: Mother of Dead U.K. Teen Alleges Cover-Up

By Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers

1 hour, 28 minutes ago

BAGHDAD _U.S. authorities in Baghdad have received five severed fingers belonging to four Americans and an Austrian who were taken hostage more than a year ago in Iraq , U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The FBI is investigating the grisly development, and the families of the five kidnapped contractors have been notified, American officials said on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the case publicly.

Authorities confirmed that the fingers belonged to hostages Jonathan Cote , of Gainesville, Fla. ; Joshua Munns , of Redding, Calif. ; Paul Johnson Reuben , of Buffalo, Minn. ; Bert Nussbaumer of Vienna, Austria ; and Ronald J. Withrow , an American who was kidnapped separately from the others.

No information was available on when or how the fingers were delivered to U.S. authorities. Some relatives of the missing men said that they'd heard weeks ago that the DNA of the hostages had been obtained, but they'd been given no details.

The first four men were security contractors with Kuwait -based Crescent Security and were captured in a brazen ambush of their 43-truck supply convoy in the southern Iraqi town of Safwan, near the Kuwaiti border, on Nov. 16, 2006 .

There was no word on a fifth contractor who was seized with them, John Young , of Kansas City . Contrary to Austrian news reports, none of the fingers belonged to him, authorities said.

"The government is in touch with us, but they said nothing has been verified yet," said Sharon DeBrabander , Young's mother. "I certainly don't understand why my son's wasn't found. What does that mean?"

Withrow, a computer specialist who worked for JPI Worldwide, was kidnapped separately at a phony checkpoint near the southern Iraqi city of Basra on Jan. 5, 2007 , according to news reports. Very little information is publicly available about his abduction; the bodies of his Iraqi translator and driver were discovered the next day. His employer is a Las Vegas -based company that provides Internet and technological support to remote or war-torn areas around the globe, according to the company's Web site.

The Austrian weekly magazine News first reported the delivery of the five fingers in Wednesday's edition, citing unnamed authorities working on the case.

Austrian officials said at a news conference in Vienna that U.S. officials had provided

ADVERTISEMENT

Don't you love a good travel deal?
(How about 20?)

Check out these deals from our Top 20* list:

Bahamas: Weekend Beachfront Getaway incl. **\$289**

Air
BookIt.com

96-Hour Sale for 8 Upscale Resorts **\$96**

RockResorts

JetBlue Slashes Fares into May 2-Day Sale **\$49**

JetBlue Airways

Release Date: 03/12/08

*Taxes & fees may apply

TRAVELZOO Top 20

Sign up!



ADVERTISEMENT



KEVIN SITES IN THE HOT ZONE

**'A World of Conflict'**

The documentary is being shown exclusively online in its entirety, one chapter each week.

Add headlines to your personalized My Yahoo! page
(About My Yahoo! and RSS)

World - McClatchy Newspapers

Iraq

» [More news feeds](#)

NEWS ALERTS

Get an alert when there are new stories about:

- Vienna, Austria
- Buffalo, Minn
- Minneapolis police officer
- Gainesville, Fla
- State Department representatives

» [More alerts](#)

information about "fingerprints and DNA traces that were positively matched to Nussbaumer," the Austrian hostage. They didn't confirm that the sample was a severed finger.

Relatives of the American hostages said they received phone calls from U.S. authorities early Wednesday, though initially they were told only that fingerprints or DNA had been obtained. Later, at least one father said he'd been notified that his son's finger had been delivered by the hostage-takers, but there still was confusion among the relatives about the development.

"All we have right now is prayers," said Mark Munns, the father of former Marine Joshua Munns, 25, who has spent his past two birthdays in captivity. "I don't know how to make head or tails of what's going on. Are they still alive? A whole bunch of stuff goes through your head."

State Department representatives check in with the families in a telephone conference call every Monday, though several relatives have complained that they're being kept in the dark about the investigation. The FBI has told them that the information is classified to preserve the integrity of the investigation— little solace for families who've gone 18 months with scant news.

"I know we're in a war on terror, but to not tell the families anything and let us sit out here for 18 months just isn't right," Mark Munns said.

The Crescent contractors appeared in two hostage videos released in December 2006 and January 2007 in which they pleaded for the United States to withdraw troops from Iraq and to free all Iraqi prisoners. In the videos, they appeared in good condition and said that they were being treated well.

No financial demand has been made public, and it's unclear what group is holding the men. All of the hostages were seized in southern Iraq, where powerful Shiite Muslim militias operate with relative freedom.

"I'm hoping this may be a sign that the hostage-takers sent the fingers to prove they have the guys and may want to deal. I'm trying to look at the positive of this," said Mark Koscielski, a Minnesotan who is in close contact with the families of the hostages and maintains a Web site, www.Save5.net, dedicated to the abducted men. One of the hostages, Reuben, is a former Minneapolis police officer.

READ EARLIER STORIES ABOUT THE HOSTAGES:

Abducted contractors appear in videotape: [http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/Hannah\(underscore\)allam/story/15282.html](http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/Hannah(underscore)allam/story/15282.html)

Coalition forces launch search for missing security contractors:

[http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/Hannah\(underscore\)allam/story/15043.html](http://www.mcclatchydc.com/staff/Hannah(underscore)allam/story/15043.html)

[Email Story](#) [IM Story](#) [Printable View](#) [Yahoo! Buzz](#)

RECOMMEND THIS STORY

Recommend It:

Average (19 votes)

» [Recommended Stories](#)**[Full Coverage: Iraq](#)**

OFF THE WIRES

[Commander's departure spotlights US divisions](#) AFP, 24 minutes ago

[Three U.S. soldiers killed in southeastern Iraq: military](#) Reuters, 1 hour, 21 minutes ago

NEWS STORIES

[U.S. sees long fight to oust Al Qaeda in Mosul](#) The Christian Science Monitor via Yahoo! News, Mar 12

FEATURE ARTICLES


[Toddler Returns to Iraq After Life-Saving Surgery](#) at The New York Times, Mar 10

[Plane engines, explosives, and another grave](#) at Independent Online, Mar 10

OPINION & EDITORIALS

[Intelligence failures past, and present?](#) at The Los Angeles Times, Mar 10

[The Audacity of Hopelessness](#) at The New

Iraq Attacks Lower, but Steady, New Figures Show  at The New York Times, Mar 12

York Times, Feb 28

World News

- [Hong Kong shuts schools in flu outbreak](#) AP
- [Afghan detainee wants to boycott trial](#) AP
- [Cardinal: Olympics chance for rights](#) AP
- [Russia slams US report as biased](#) AP
- [Hamas sets terms for Israel cease-fire](#) AP

Most Viewed - World

- [UK-ordered air strike kills four Afghan civilians](#) Reuters
- [3 US soldiers die in Iraq rocket attack](#) AP
- [Woman tries to bring skeleton on plane](#) AP
- [Dolphin appears to guide whales to sea](#) AP
- [Russia slams US report as biased](#) AP

World Video

- [Muslims protest over Danish cartoon reprint](#) AP - Wed Mar 12, 4:40 AM ET
- [Iran's reformists](#) CNN - Wed Mar 12, 11:46 AM ET
- [Exiled Tibetan explains march](#) CNN - Wed Mar 12, 10:46 AM ET
- [How British view themselves](#) CNN - Wed Mar 12, 1:01 AM ET

Sponsored Links

([What's this?](#))

- [Refinance and Save \\$1,000S](#)
\$150,000 Mortgage for \$483/month. Compare up to 4 free quotes.
www.pickamortgage.com
- [Fed Cuts Interest Rates Again](#)
Mortgage Rates Hit 26 Month Lows. Calculate Your New Mortgage Payment.
www.LowerMyBills.com
- [Refinance \\$300,000 for Only \\$965/Month](#)
\$300,000 Mortgage for only \$965/month. Save \$1,000's - No obligation.
www.HomeLoanHelpLine.com

Search: All News Advanced [Yahoo! - My Yahoo!](#) - [Mail](#)

[Home](#) | [U.S](#) | [Business](#) | [World](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Sports](#) | [Tech](#) | [Politics](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Travel](#) | [Most Popular](#) | [Odd News](#) | [Opinion](#)

Copyright © 2007 Yahoo All rights reserved. [Copyright/IP Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Help](#) | [Feedback](#)
NOTICE: We collect personal information on this site. To learn more about how we use your information, see our [Privacy Policy](#)