

# American hostage found dead in Iraq

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**By Robert Marus**

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WASHINGTON (ABP)—The lone American among four Christian peace activists who have been held captive in Iraq since November was found dead in Baghdad March 9, multiple news sources reported.

The body of Tom Fox, 54, was found in a garbage dump in the western part of the city. His hands were bound, and he had a single gunshot wound to the head.

Fox's kidnappers had demanded the release of all Iraqis detained by United States and British forces and Iraqi police in exchange for the four hostages' lives. In one of the story's bitterest ironies, Fox and the other activists had opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq, as well as the detainment of Iraqi prisoners who have not been formally charged with crimes.

The news came only three days after a videotape showing Fox's British and Canadian colleagues still alive had buoyed hopes for the group's loved ones and supporters. But Christian Peacemaker Teams, the group under whose auspices Fox traveled to Iraq, hinted at the time that they took Fox's absence from that video as an ominous sign.

“In grief we tremble before God, who wraps us with compassion,” Christian Peacemakers leaders said in a statement released after Fox’s death. “The death of our beloved colleague and friend pierces us with pain.... We mourn the loss of Tom Fox, who combined a lightness of spirit, a firm opposition to all oppression, and the recognition of God in everyone.”

Fox was abducted Nov. 26 in Baghdad, along with Norman Kember, 74, who is a British Baptist; and Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32. An Islamic group calling itself the Swords of Righteousness, previously unknown in Iraq, claimed responsibility for the kidnappings.

Gary Percesepe, director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, sent his group’s leaders an alert shortly after Fox’s death was announced.

“We continue in prayer for Norman Kember, Harmeet Singh Sooden, and James Loney, and call for their safe release—these who went peacefully to Iraq, on a mission of peace, who bear good will in their hearts for all men and women upon this earth,” he said.

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