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## **Christian jailed for holding prayer meeting in his home**

[CSW](#) (01.02.2024) - **A Vietnamese Montagnard Christian was [sentenced](#) to four-and-a-half years in prison on charges of 'succession and incitement' for holding prayer meetings in his home.**

Nay Y Blang, 48, a member of the Central Highlands Evangelical Church of Christ, was sentenced on 26 January. Local media reported that Mr Blang was not given access to legal representation, and he was found guilty of inciting others to 'infringe upon the interests of the State'.

Mr Blang has been previously fined and imprisoned for practicing his faith. In April 2005 he was sentenced to five-and-a-half years in prison by Phu Yen province for 'undermining the unity policy,' and in September 2022 he was fined four million Vietnamese Dong (approximately GBP £130) by the People's Committee of Song Chinh district for 'abusing democratic freedoms and belief freedoms.'

The Central Highlands Evangelical Church of Christ members belong to the Montagnard minority ethnic group which consists of approximately 30 indigenous tribes. The majority of Montagnards are Christians and live in Vietnam's central highlands, where they have a long history of conflict with the Vietnamese government.

On 22 January authorities in the Central Highlands concluded a four-day trial in which over 100 Montagnards were [convicted](#) on various terrorism-related charges. The trial took place after an attack on provincial Communist party offices in Dak Lak, Vietnam on 11 June 2023 that left nine dead, including local party officials and police.

Ten Montagnards were sentenced to life in prison, while other sentences ranged from three-and-a-half to 20 years in prison. Several Montagnard human rights activists based overseas were also charged in absentia. The charges specifically highlighted US-based Vietnamese-American activists as having masterminded and coordinated the attacks; they deny all allegations.

The speed of the trial for such a large group has drawn criticism from human rights observers as evidence of predetermined charges and lack of judicial due process. Family members of the convicted have reported that the charges were based on confessions made under duress. The defendants were given limited access to defence lawyers who were state-appointed.

Since the June attacks the Vietnamese government has arrested Montagnard pastors, illegally confiscated land owned by Montagnards, demolished churches, and has declared human rights groups such as Montagnards Stand for Justice as terrorist organisations. Several prominent Montagnard leaders and pastors have fled the country due to fear for their safety. Christian and Buddhist groups are reluctant to gather for church services due to fear of government interference and harassment.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: ***'CSW is deeply concerned at the lack of due process in the court hearings of Mr Blang and over 100 Montagnards. The Vietnamese government views the simple act of prayer as a direct threat to***

*their power and legitimacy. No person should fear jail for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief. These recent developments show that the human rights situation in Vietnam continues to deteriorate. We emphasise that this is part of a wider pattern of the targeting of religious and ethnic minorities across Vietnam that is often more severe in rural areas, and we urge the Vietnamese authorities to cease all harassment of religious and minority ethnic groups across the country.'*

**HRWF List of 76 FORB Prisoners in Vietnam: Click on the names for details**

**Christians – Catholics (11)**

[A JEN](#)  
[A KUIN](#)  
[A TACH](#)  
[A TIK](#)  
[DINH KUH](#)  
[HO DUC HOA](#)  
[JU](#)  
[KUNH](#)  
[LUP](#)  
[RUN](#)  
[RUNH](#)

**Christians – Protestants (28)**

[A DAO](#)  
[DINH NONG](#)  
[DINH YUM](#)  
[KPUIH KHUONG](#)  
[KSOR KAM](#)  
[KSOR PHIT](#)  
[KSOR PUP](#)  
[KSOR RUK](#)  
[PUIH BOP](#)  
[RAH LAN HIP](#)  
[RAH LAN RAH](#)  
[RMAH BLOANH](#)  
[RMAH KHIL](#)  
[RO LAN KLY](#)  
[RO MA DAIH](#)  
[RO MAH PLA](#)  
[RO MAH THEM](#)  
[SIU CHON](#)  
[SIU DIK](#)  
[SIU DOANG](#)  
[SIU HLOM](#)  
[SUNG A KHUA](#)  
[Y HRIAM KPA](#)  
[Y MIN KSOR](#)  
[Y PUM BYA](#)  
[Y TUP KNUL](#)  
[Y WO NIE](#)

Y YICH

**Buddhists – Hoa Hao (5)**

BUI VAN THAM

BUI THI BICH TUYEN

BUI VAN TRUNG

LE THI HONG HANH

NGUYEN HOANG NAM

**Buddhists – Unspecified (28)**

CAO THI CUC

DO THI HONG

DOAN DINH NAM

DOAN VAN CU

LE DUC DONG

LE DUY LOC

LE PHUC

LE THANH HOAN NGUYEN

LE THANH NHAT NGUYEN

LE THANH NHI NGUYEN

LE THANH TRUNG DUONG

LE TRONG CU

LE TUNG VAN

LUONG NHAT QUANG

NGUYEN DINH

NGUYEN KY LAC

NGUYEN THAI BINH

PHAN THANH TUONG

PHAN THANH Y

PHAN VAN THU

TA KHU

TRAN PHI DUNG

TRAN QUAN

VO NGOC CU

VO THANH LE

TU THIEN LUONG

VO TIET

VUONG TAN SON

**Duong Van Minh Religion (4)**

DUONG VAN LANH

DUONG VAN TU

LY VAN DUNG

LY XUAN ANH