

## Week 4: Pray for Y Put Bya (Vietnam)



Y Pum Bya (61) is a leader of the Montagnard Evangelical Church of Christ in Dak Lak province in Vietnam's Central Highlands. He was arrested in 2018 and is serving a 14-year prison sentence for promoting religious freedom and human rights for his fellow Montagnard people. Y Pum Bya ministers in an unregistered house church and its members have suffered police raids and pressure to renounce their faith. Vietnam's ruling communist party strictly controls religion and while many churches operate freely, especially the majority Roman Catholic Church, unregistered churches are banned and registration is difficult to obtain.

In April 2018, six armed police officers raided a church gathering and arrested Y Pum Bya on accusations of spreading false information about minority and religious rights in Vietnam and recruiting people to join him in establishing an independent Montagnard state. They took him to the police station where he was interrogated, beaten and shocked with electric batons and forced to sign a pledge to stop worshipping with the unregistered Gospel Missionary Church. In January 2019 he was sentenced to 14 years in prison and four years' probation for "*undermining national unity policy*". Other church members have also been arrested, interrogated, and ordered to sign a commitment to stop attending.

Y Pum Bya was previously arrested in 2002 and sentenced to eight years in prison and four years' probation on the same charge after he requested permission to register religious activities. He was subjected to hard labour in prison until his release in 2009 and during his probation period police monitored and interrogated him and threatened to arrest him again if he continued his church ministry. In 2017 he again requested permission to register religious activities but the authorities rejected the request and police threatened him with prison if he continued his religious activities.

### Family

Y Pum Bya is married to H'Bleng Nie and they have seven adult children. The family has been monitored since Y Pum Bya's arrest in 2018 and police interrogated his wife and youngest son Y An Dri Nie four times, warning them that their religion was prohibited, pressurising them to renounce their faith and allegedly subjecting them to physical abuse.

### Latest News

In December 2020 H'Bleng Nie and Y An Dri Nie fled to Thailand to seek asylum. They were arrested at the Thai border and held in Bangkok's Immigration Detention Centre until March 2022, when they were released on bail.

## Prayer Diary

<b>Sunday</b>	Ask God to keep Y Pum Bya safe and well in prison.
<b>Monday</b>	Pray for spiritual encouragement for Y Pum Bya.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Pray that Y Pum Bya would be released early.
<b>Wednesday</b>	Ask God to comfort and sustain H'Bleng Nie.
<b>Thursday</b>	Ask God to protect and bless the seven adult children.
<b>Friday</b>	Ask God to support and encourage Y Pum Bya's church.
<b>Saturday</b>	Pray for freedom for house churches in Vietnam.

