

Prayer Diary:

International Women's Day

3-9 March 2024

As this week marks International Women's Day (8 March), let us take a moment to remember the women around the world who are targeted because of their beliefs. Women and girls from religious minorities face violations such as forced marriage, sexual violence, and lack of access to education and jobs.

We remember, too, the advocacy and activism of women around the world who champion the cause of justice. Many risk their own freedom to stand up for the freedoms of others.



Maria Francisca (l), Angelina (r), and their mother (c) creating 'Hope for the future artwork'

Maria Francisca & Angelina Martínez Hernández

Maria Francisca and Angelina live in an indigenous community in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico. Protestant families in their community have been under pressure since 2007, and the situation worsened in 2019.

After the sisters and their husbands refused to sign an agreement renouncing their religious beliefs, the local authorities removed their access to water and other services for over a year. During this time, Maria Francisca and Angelina suffered the physical toll of collecting water from the river, and also underwent significant medical procedures. The removal of water services has a disproportionate impact on women, who tend to be responsible for household tasks that rely on water, such as cooking and washing.

Despite having reached an agreement with the local authorities, Maria Francisca and Angelina continue to be pressured to participate in the religious traditions of the majority.

Please pray for an end to this harassment and for peace in the community.



Michelle visiting affected families in Jaranwala, 2023

Michelle Chaudhry

Michelle is President of the Cecil and Iris Chaudhry Foundation; one of our partners in Pakistan. She is pictured here among the rubble in Jaranwala, comforting families after a mob attack in August. Many were left without homes and jobs.

Pray for Michelle and her team as they continue to support this community, and many others who are vulnerable because of their beliefs. She has previously told us:

'We in Pakistan live under very trying circumstances, religious persecution, and intolerance at every level... It is at that time that we feel so encouraged and strengthened to know that we have wonderful people out there who care and are praying for us.'