



## **A CALL FOR PEACE AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE**

**By Rev Charissa Suli, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, 4 March 2026**

As President of the Uniting Church in Australia, I speak with deep concern as violence escalates across the Middle East and the death and suffering of innocent civilians multiplies. In this moment of global uncertainty, when the drums of war grow louder, the Church cannot remain silent.

War is never an abstraction. It is homes destroyed, children living in fear, and families and communities forced into displacement and refuge, carrying wounds that last for generations.

In recent days I have spoken with leaders from Middle Eastern communities within the life of our Church. Many are watching their homelands endure bombardment, displacement and uncertainty. Ministers, students and lay leaders within our congregations remain in constant contact with loved ones whose homes and churches now sit in the shadow of violence.

This is not a distant conflict for us. It is the suffering of our siblings in Christ and the suffering of innocent civilians whose lives are being torn apart by war.

Entire communities have been displaced. Churches are opening their doors to shelter families fleeing their homes, while schools and community buildings are becoming places of refuge for those forced to leave everything behind.

Many thousands of families now face the uncertainty of displacement and refuge, contributing to a growing humanitarian crisis affecting civilians across the region. We urge governments and the international community to ensure protection and humanitarian assistance for refugees and displaced people whose lives have been upended by this conflict.

Across the global Christian community, churches are raising their voices in prayer and moral concern for peace. As part of this wider ecumenical witness, the Uniting Church in Australia joins our partners around the world in urging restraint, dialogue and the protection of human life.

At this moment of escalating violence, we say clearly to the governments and powers of the world: the protection of human life must remain the highest priority in all political and military decisions.

The pursuit of security through escalating force risks drawing entire regions – and potentially the world – into deeper suffering. Political leaders carry a profound moral responsibility to choose the hard work of restraint and peacebuilding over more killing and destruction.

The Uniting Church in Australia has long affirmed that peace is at the heart of the gospel. The Assembly has declared that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace and calls Christians to be peacemakers, and that the burden of proof rests – on those who resort to military force as a means of resolving international disputes.

War is never simply a strategy. It is the violation of human dignity, the loss of human life, and the pain of grief that persists for generations. When militarism becomes the language of politics, it is always the innocent who ultimately pay the price.

As a Church shaped by the wisdom of Indigenous and Pacific peoples — communities who know the devastating legacy of militarisation and nuclear testing — we cannot accept a future where the security of powerful nations is built upon the suffering of vulnerable peoples.

The escalation of militarism and retaliatory violence across the region places millions of civilians at risk and threatens to draw the world into an even wider conflict.

### **A Call to Governments and World Leaders**

We therefore call on political leaders in Australia and around the world:

First, to pursue urgent diplomatic efforts to prevent further escalation of violence and to prioritise negotiation, dialogue and peaceful resolution over military confrontation.

Second, to uphold international law and ensure the protection of civilians, humanitarian workers, places of worship and essential infrastructure.

Third, to resist the dangerous logic of militarism which assumes security can be achieved through ever-increasing force.

Fourth, we urge the use of every diplomatic avenue available to promote restraint, de-escalation and the protection of human life across the region.

The pursuit of peace requires courage – the courage of leaders willing to step back from the brink of violence and choose dialogue, diplomacy and reconciliation.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe that the path of peace is not weakness but moral strength.

The crucified Christ stands not with the powerful but with the vulnerable, the wounded, the displaced and the grieving. In him we see the truth that peace cannot be built on violence, nor justice secured through the destruction of human life.

### **A Call to the Church**

At this time the Uniting Church in Australia invites our congregations and communities to respond in three ways:

- Pray for peace in the Middle East and for all whose lives are threatened by war.
- Support humanitarian assistance for displaced families and churches providing refuge.
- Advocate for peace, encouraging our leaders to pursue diplomatic and peaceful solutions.

In the coming days we will share a humanitarian appeal to support churches and communities providing refuge and care for displaced families.

On Monday 9 March 2026 at 8:30pm AEDT, I will host a National Online Service of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East, bringing together members of our Church and Middle Eastern communities across Australia in prayer and solidarity. (To participate, please [register here](#).)

At this critical moment the world does not need further escalation.

The world needs courage – the courage of leaders willing to choose peace over power, diplomacy over destruction, and the protection of human life over the so-called logic of war.

History will judge our generation not by the wars we were capable of fighting, but by the peace we had the courage to pursue.

**Rev Charissa Suli**  
**President, Uniting Church in Australia**