AEU statement on the conflict in Iran and the Middle East



The Australian Education Union (AEU) asserts that as teachers, school leaders and education support workers and advocates for public education, we hold a deep responsibility to speak out when global events threaten peace, human rights, and the future of the students, families and members we represent.

AEU members teach the next generation to value critical thinking, international understanding and the dignity of all people. We therefore will not remain silent when rising tensions and military escalation places innocent civilians, children and working people at risk.

The AEU notes with grave concern the dangerous escalation of armed conflict in Iran and across the region, including further conflict involving Lebanon and the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Palestine. Working people and their families everywhere bear the cost of these conflicts, which are the result of geopolitical competition, resource interests and entrenched power, not the aspirations of ordinary families who want safety, stability and opportunity.

The AEU strongly condemns the irresponsible and illegal bombing carried out by Israel and the United States against Iran and calls for an immediate end to these operations. Such actions violate international law, undermine diplomacy and are predictably plunging the region into a wider, devastating war.

The subsequent retaliation by Iran across the region, including attacks on Bahrain, Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, further endangers civilian lives and deepens instability. Escalation by any side will not bring security, peace or democracy.

The AEU affirms:

- That every child has the right to learn in peace. Classrooms cannot flourish in a world where communities live under the threat of violence, displacement or economic blockade.
- People across the Middle Eastern region are bearing the human cost of this conflict. Like AEU members, they want secure jobs, quality education, safe homes and a future free from fear for their children.
- That aggression and military intervention worsen instability, deepen humanitarian crises and divert public funds away from education, health, housing and essential services.

- That we reject the use of military force which fuels cycles of violence and undermines the foundations of peace, justice and multilateral cooperation.
- That public education is a foundation for peace. Our classrooms teach cooperation, democracy, respect and the skills that build resilient, inclusive societies, not division or militarisation.
- That Australia's foreign and defence policy must prioritise diplomacy, human rights and long-term peace, not the interests of arms manufacturers or external powers seeking strategic advantage.

The AEU resolves to:

- Call on the Australian Government to pursue immediate ceasefire and deescalation strategies to;

  o Reject any steps that would draw Australia into further military conflict.

  o Make appropriate diplomatic approaches to ensure that critical public infrastructure such as all education settings, hospitals and community centres are safeguarded during conflict.

  o Uphold human rights, international law, labour rights and democratic freedom of association across the region.

  o Strengthen the role of the United Nations in the region.

- Support international efforts for a permanent, just peace in Palestine grounded in human rights, humanitarian law and the protection of civilians.
- Advocate for transparent, peaceful diplomacy with Iran and oppose military threats or actions that endanger regional and global stability.
- Stand against the misuse of public money for aggressive military expansion.
- Defend the right of all who work in education and their students to teach and learn free from fear, here and around the world.

The AEU reaffirms its long-held commitment to peace, justice and international solidarity. We stand with workers, families and children everywhere whose futures depend on the world choosing social dialogue over destruction and investment in people and communities over investment in war.

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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