

Reflections

Not all are Charlie

THE recent massacre on Wednesday, January 7 at Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket in Paris has shocked the civilised countries in the world with horror and grief.

Immediately after that, the phrase 'I am Charlie' has become a global symbol of solidarity with freedom of expression and display of courage against violent barbarism.

Three days later, world leaders holding their hands jointly marched on to the streets of Paris in defiance of the killing. Those of us who remotely joined the march shared their grief and concern.

The reason given for such a gruesome shooting was wholly unjustifiable.

It is a despicable abuse of the teaching of their God and religion.

The teachings of Jesus, Mohammed, Vishnu and Bhudda were neither offensive, sexist, racist nor homophobic.

They preached and lived on the ideals the modern civilised cultures enjoy as valuable tenets of democracy.

If so, how and why do individuals and groups, both in the past and present, continue violence



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and war in the name of religion?

The answer is obvious — that the self-serving religious extremists misinterpret and apply the teachings out of context.

They prey on vulnerable individuals and societies with radicalisation and intimidation.

Their gift of speech and influence allure the weak and promise false hope.

This influence extends into any extreme form of violence and war as the vulnerable are brain washed by the perpetrators.

It happens when our societies fail to write, draw and speak out values that promote peace, freedom, equality and tolerance.

As we continue to support our journalists to be free of fear and fatwa, let us be aware of the danger of the promotion of hatred.