

A Loving Challenge to Archbishop Sarah Mullally

3 July 2026

*Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.
(1 John 3:13)*

Dear Archbishop Sarah,

As fellow British Christians, we followed your recent ‘five-day pilgrimage in the Holy Land’ with interest. The Anglican Church has had an active presence in Jerusalem since 1842, and for the first half-century it was based in Christ Church Jerusalem, before St George’s Cathedral was built. Together these centres still represent enduring Anglican care for both the Jewish and Christian Arab communities, spiritually and practically, and we hoped that your visit would continue this noble legacy. The Jewish people here in Britain are eight times more attacked than any other minority, and your words about the Jewish people and Jewish state have a direct impact on their well-being.

Your ‘pastoral visit’ was at the invitation of Archbishop Hosam Naoum, so it was only to be expected that its primary if not sole focus was on Palestinian Christians in the land. Their hardships and ministries are certainly deserving of attention and support. But following the example of the father in our Lord’s parable of the prodigal son, surely both the younger and older sons should hold a place in your affection? Sadly it seems Christ Church was ignored, even though its congregation faithfully models reconciliation between Arabs and Jews.

Even among your chosen people group, your advisors failed to give you a balanced picture, suggesting that the greatest threat to Palestinian Christians is Israel and its “settler violence” (rightly condemned by most Israelis), rather than the Muslim Palestinian majority and attacks by local Muslim neighbours (with popular approval). Even Daoud Nassar whom you visited has [suffered](#) at their hands. It bears emphasising that throughout the whole Middle East, only in Israel is the Christian population [growing](#). Your pastoral letter went further, blaming Israel’s fear of “potential danger” for the suppression of the Palestinian population, as if anti-Jewish terrorism is only imagined. You made no call upon wider Palestinian society to reject violence; on the contrary, you tacitly defended it. [Others](#) have [already](#) drawn attention to the serious lack of wisdom by your advisors, arranging visits with two young women who are both reported to have personal associations with terrorist groups.

The reality of antisemitic terror by Israel’s neighbours is undeniable in the “atrocities of 7 October”, which you [witnessed](#) at the Nova Exhibition in London shortly before your trip to the Holy Land. But if you take an extreme pacifist position, “We hold that war is never the answer”, this raises the question of how Israel might be expected to react to Hamas and other groups. Hamas always refused the “patient diplomacy” and “negotiation” you propose, so in such cases using “military force to resolve disputes” for self-defence (UN Charter, Article 51) is not “abandonment of international law”. On the contrary, Israel is now conducting “a vigorous defence of the rules-based international system” against Islamist regimes and their proxies “across the Middle East”, who are hell-bent on destroying both Israel and that system.

Your compassion for those suffering in Gaza is shared by all, and you rightly urge the international community to “relieve this agony”. Yet despite the UN Security Council Resolution 2803 agreeing a path for this, no country is willing to disarm Hamas except Israel, for the sake of Gaza’s civilians as much as for Israel’s. As long as Hamas rules Gaza, a “two-

state solution” will not be possible. Likewise in the former ‘West Bank’, the Palestinian Authority shows no regard for the security of Israel, continuing to incite terrorism through school [textbooks](#) and ‘pay-for-slay’ [handouts](#). If they truly desired to live in peace alongside the Jewish state, they might already have accepted serious offers of statehood made in 2000, 2008, 2014 and 2020. You call Israel’s presence in the former ‘West Bank’ an “occupation” on the basis of an advisory opinion by a heavily [biased](#) UN court. However, this runs counter to the internationally recognised Oslo Accords that gave legal force to Israel’s full control over Area C, pending final-status negotiations. The proper term is “disputed territory”.

Coming to the heart of the political and spiritual dispute, your pastoral letter implies that only when Jerusalem becomes a “shared capital” will “the religious rights of all faiths” be “fully respected”, citing the “Hashemite custodianship of the holy sites in Jerusalem”. Religious freedom should certainly be a high priority for Christians. But this statement confuses heroes and villains. It should be recalled that the Hashemite Jordanians destroyed nearly every synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem, expelling all Jews and denying them access to the Western Wall, their holiest site, for 19 years from 1948 to 1967. Only restored Israeli authority in 1967 granted complete freedom of worship to all religions in the reunited holy city, which remains the case up to the present day.

Your pastoral letter began and ended with an invocation of God’s grace and peace. The church does indeed have a responsibility to act as a peace-maker. But this will be impossible if it presumes to make political pronouncements on the complex and religiously sensitive dispute in the Holy Land, without even allowing itself to listen to the perspectives and feel the pain of those on the other side too. Jesus, our Jewish Messiah, showed love and respect for Samaritan, Jew, and Roman alike, and refused to allow His message to be co-opted by any side, including His own. His representatives today bear a sacred duty to follow in His footsteps. May God grant you ‘wisdom from above’ as you seek His path.

[Love Never Fails](#), an alliance of 25 British Christian ministries