# British activists arrested after storming Eurovision stage to protest Israel’s participation



Two British protesters made headlines during the Eurovision Song Contest held in Basel, Switzerland, when they attempted to storm the stage, shouting "Free Palestine" amid Israel's performance. Swiss police identified the individuals as David Curry, 22, from Manchester, and Meaghan Leon, 27, from London, both affiliated with the youth activist group Youth Demand. This group is known for its calls to cease UK arms sales to Israel while promoting climate action. Their demonstration coincided with singer Yuval Raphael's performance of "New Day Will Rise," during which the protesters tried but ultimately failed to breach the security barrier. Video footage captured the dramatic moment, including one protester throwing paint, which hit a crew member, prompting their removal from the venue and subsequent arrest.

This incident is part of a broader wave of demonstrations against Israel's participation in Eurovision, driven by the country's ongoing military operations in Gaza, which have reportedly resulted in over 50,000 casualties. The presence of Israel in such a high-profile event has reignited debates about international complicity in the ongoing conflict, with activists advocating for the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to reconsider Israel's inclusion. Just days before the final, substantial protests unfolded in Malmö, Sweden, where over 10,000 people rallied against the contest. Notable figures, including climate activist Greta Thunberg, participated in these demonstrations, amplifying calls for a boycott of Israel linked to its actions in Gaza.

The tensions surrounding this year's contest have spurred further protests across various European cities, illustrating how cultural events like Eurovision can intersect with global political issues. In Malmö, demonstrators echoed the sentiments seen in Basel, showcasing a united front that comprised a diverse demographic, including many with Middle Eastern roots. This participation highlighted a collective desire to confront what activists describe as ongoing human rights violations amidst a backdrop of artistic celebration.

Moreover, the EBU has faced mounting pressure regarding its stance on Israel, following warnings aimed at broadcasters, particularly Spain’s RTVE. They were cautioned against making overt references to the Gaza conflict during the event. Despite this, Spain showcased significant bravery, displaying a poignant message advocating for justice in Palestine prior to the final, while Belgian broadcasters reversed their initial boycott and chose to air Israel’s performance, igniting criticism from various activism circles.

Raphael, a survivor of the trauma following the October 7 attacks, found herself under scrutiny throughout the contest. Prior to her performance, she described the experience as both intimidating and empowering. Ultimately, she finished as the runner-up, receiving substantial support despite the fierce controversy surrounding her nation's participation.

The depth of opposition to Israel’s involvement in Eurovision resonates throughout Europe, with numerous musicians and industry figures expressing their disapproval. A letter signed by around 4,000 artists from the Nordic countries condemned Israel's entry as an effort to "whitewash" its actions in Gaza, arguing that Eurovision should not serve as a platform to obscure ongoing humanitarian crises.

The intersection of music and politics has become increasingly evident, leading to calls for a broader discussion about the implications of cultural events in light of global issues. The role that Eurovision plays in shaping public perception and dialogue around international conflicts remains a critical point of contention, evidenced by the passionate protests and diverse responses from countries participating in the contest.

As the final results were revealed, British hopes of success were dashed yet again, with the UK's entry receiving zero points from the public for the second consecutive year. In this politically charged atmosphere, the Eurovision Song Contest serves not only as a celebration of musical diversity but also as a battleground for voices calling for justice and awareness amidst ongoing global crises.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725401/British-protesters-arrested-Eurovision-yelling-Free-Palestine-storm-stage-Israel.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725401/British-protesters-arrested-Eurovision-yelling-Free-Palestine-storm-stage-Israel.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/11/eurovision-final-pro-palestinian-protests-israel-participation), [[3]](https://www.dw.com/en/thousands-protest-israels-eurovision-participation/a-69038273)
4. Paragraph 4: [[4]](https://www.thedailybeast.com/greta-thunberg-arrested-at-eurovision-palestinian-protest), [[5]](https://www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2024/05/09/eurovision-greta-thunberg-among-thousands-protesting-against-israel-competing-in-contest/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[6]](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/09/eurovision-israel-protests-eden-golan/), [[7]](https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/eurovision-song-contest-in-gazas-shadow-as-israel-competes-in-final-5642937)
6. Paragraph 6: [[2]](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/11/eurovision-final-pro-palestinian-protests-israel-participation)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725401/British-protesters-arrested-Eurovision-yelling-Free-Palestine-storm-stage-Israel.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14725401/British-protesters-arrested-Eurovision-yelling-Free-Palestine-storm-stage-Israel.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/11/eurovision-final-pro-palestinian-protests-israel-participation> - Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters gathered in Malmö, Sweden, to demonstrate against Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. The protests were fueled by Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, with demonstrators chanting slogans and waving Palestinian flags. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) faced calls to exclude Israel from the contest due to the conflict. The protests highlighted the deep divisions within Malmö's population, many of whom have Middle Eastern roots, and underscored the intersection of international politics and cultural events like Eurovision.
3. <https://www.dw.com/en/thousands-protest-israels-eurovision-participation/a-69038273> - In Malmö, Sweden, over 10,000 protesters, including climate activist Greta Thunberg, marched against Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. The demonstration was a response to Israel's military actions in Gaza, with protesters chanting slogans and waving Palestinian flags. The EBU had previously resisted calls to exclude Israel from the contest, leading to heightened tensions and security measures. The protests underscored the complex interplay between international politics and cultural events, with Malmö's diverse population playing a significant role in the demonstrations.
4. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/greta-thunberg-arrested-at-eurovision-palestinian-protest> - Climate activist Greta Thunberg was detained by Swedish police in Malmö during a pro-Palestinian protest against Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. Thunberg, wearing a keffiyeh, was escorted away from the event by authorities. The demonstration was organized to protest Israel's involvement in the contest amid ongoing military actions in Gaza. Thunberg expressed her outrage over Eurovision's decision to allow Israel's participation, highlighting the contentious nature of the event in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/europe/2024/05/09/eurovision-greta-thunberg-among-thousands-protesting-against-israel-competing-in-contest/> - Greta Thunberg joined thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters in Malmö, Sweden, to oppose Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. The demonstration was a response to Israel's military actions in Gaza, with protesters chanting slogans and waving Palestinian flags. Swedish police estimated between 10,000 to 12,000 people took part in the protest march. The event highlighted the intersection of environmental activism and international politics, with Thunberg's involvement drawing significant attention to the protests.
6. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/09/eurovision-israel-protests-eden-golan/> - Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters marched in Malmö, Sweden, to oppose Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. The protests were fueled by Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, with demonstrators chanting slogans and waving Palestinian flags. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) faced calls to exclude Israel from the contest due to the conflict. The protests underscored the complex interplay between international politics and cultural events, with Malmö's diverse population playing a significant role in the demonstrations.
7. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/eurovision-song-contest-in-gazas-shadow-as-israel-competes-in-final-5642937> - Thousands of protesters gathered in Malmö, Sweden, to demonstrate against Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The protests were marked by chants of 'Free Palestine' and the waving of Palestinian flags. Police were deployed to manage the demonstrations, which were largely peaceful but led to confrontations outside the arena. The event highlighted the intersection of international politics and cultural events, with Malmö's diverse population playing a significant role in the protests.