# Eurovision 2025 sparks uproar over alleged censorship of booing during Israeli performance



At the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest, the performance by Israeli singer Yuval Raphael has ignited significant controversy following allegations of audience censorship during the broadcast. During her rendition of "New Day Will Rise" in the semi-finals, viewers expressed concerns that the audience's booing was deliberately minimised or drowned out, creating a disparity between the live experience and the televised version. Many took to social media to voice their frustrations, claiming that the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) had altered the audio to obscure dissent. One critical commentator noted, "Eurovision adding crowd noise over Israel's performance so viewers can't hear the booing," highlighting a sentiment echoed by numerous observers.

Despite these accusations, the EBU has firmly denied the claims. A spokesperson asserted, “We heard no booing during Yuval’s performance tonight and we have had no reports of booing either. The atmosphere stayed positive and celebratory throughout!” Martin Green CBE, the director of the Eurovision Song Contest, added that fans had shown commendable enthusiasm, indicating an overall supportive atmosphere in the arena.

This year's Eurovision has unfolded against a backdrop of international scrutiny and political tensions, particularly regarding Israel's actions in the ongoing Gaza conflict. Palestinian health authorities report that over 52,800 people, primarily women and children, have lost their lives since the escalation began following a Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, which resulted in approximately 1,200 Israeli fatalities. This context has stirred profound backlash against Israel's participation in the contest, with calls from over 70 former contestants urging the disqualification of Israel and its national broadcaster, KAN, from the event.

The protest atmosphere escalated at a recent rehearsal, where six audience members were ejected for their vocal dissent, brandishing Palestinian flags and whistles. Swiss broadcaster SRG SSR confirmed that these individuals were swiftly removed to maintain the show’s integrity, emphasising their commitment to a neutral, safe environment for all participants.

Raphael, a survivor of the attacks that have sparked international outrage, had anticipated opposition during her performance. “I am expecting to be booed. But we are here to sing and I'm going to sing my heart out for everyone,” she told the BBC prior to taking the stage, showcasing her resilience amid adversity. Her song is infused with messages of hope, intending to transcend the turmoil surrounding the competition.

The setting for Eurovision in Basel has heightened the contest's complexities, with local Swiss groups rallying against Israel's involvement. The presence of organisations such as Basel for Palestine underscores the growing movement calling for increased sensitivity regarding Israel's actions amid allegations of human rights violations. The overall sentiment has been one of division, with protests occurring alongside supportive demonstrations aimed at addressing issues of antisemitism.

As the competition progresses toward the Grand Final, scheduled for May 17, the atmosphere remains charged. While some artists and public figures continue to advocate for boycotts and disqualification of Israel from Eurovision, the EBU maintains that the event should remain apolitical, arguing that the competition represents a platform for cultural expression and unity.

The juxtaposition of music and politics at Eurovision 2025 reflects the increasing intersectionality of cultural events with global issues, leaving organisers to navigate the complexities of performance, audience sentiment, and political advocacy in a fraught international landscape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: Article 1, Articles 2, 6
2. Paragraph 2: Article 1
3. Paragraph 3: Articles 3, 4, 5
4. Paragraph 4: Article 1, 5
5. Paragraph 5: Article 2
6. Paragraph 6: Article 1, 4
7. Paragraph 7: Articles 6, 7

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/eurovision-2025-israel-yuval-raphael-booing-censored-b2752118.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/life/seis-espectadores-expulsados-por-abuchear-a-israel-en-un-ensayo-oficial-de-eurovision-2025.html> - During an official rehearsal for Eurovision 2025, six spectators were ejected for booing and whistling during Israeli representative Yuval Raphael's performance. The individuals, some from the same family, displayed a large Palestinian flag and used a whistle, disrupting the event. Swiss broadcaster SRG SSR emphasized its commitment to a neutral, safe, and inclusive environment. Raphael, a survivor of the October 2023 Hamas attacks, performed 'New Day Will Rise,' a song conveying messages of hope amid the ongoing Gaza conflict. This incident reflects the increasing political tensions surrounding the festival.
3. <https://as.com/tikitakas/musica/polemica-en-el-ensayo-de-israel-la-television-suiza-obligada-a-intervenir-n/> - During Eurovision 2025 rehearsals, six individuals were expelled by Swiss broadcaster SRG SSR for disrupting Israeli singer Yuval Raphael's performance with whistles and Palestinian flags. The incident occurred shortly before the second semifinal in Basel and was recorded by journalist Luis Mesa. This adds to other protests during the contest, including a pro-Palestinian message broadcast by Belgium's public Flemish television: 'Israel has a vote, the Palestinian people do not.' Additionally, 79 artists, including Blanca Paloma and Salvador Sobral, signed a petition urging the European Broadcasting Union to disqualify Israel, accusing its broadcaster KAN of complicity in alleged crimes against humanity in Gaza. SRG SSR reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a neutral environment at the event.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/44e0c8fd8d3b4240c5928aaea6bf64c4> - The final lineup for the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest was confirmed following Thursday’s semifinal in Basel, Switzerland, where six of the 16 competing acts were eliminated. Advancing to Saturday’s final are Austria’s JJ with the operatic 'Wasted Love,' Israel’s Yuval Raphael with 'New Day Will Rise,' Malta’s Miriana Conte with her performance of 'Serving,' and entries from Luxembourg, Denmark, Armenia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Greece. These join Tuesday's semifinal winners, such as Sweden's KAJ, the Netherlands’ Claude, and Ukrainian band Ziferblat. Eliminated countries include Australia, Montenegro, Ireland, Georgia, Czechia, and Serbia. Of the 37 acts at the contest, 26 now remain—20 chosen by public vote and six automatically qualified (Switzerland as host, and France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the U.K. as major financial contributors). Basel is hosting Eurovision due to Swiss artist Nemo’s victory in 2024. However, the event has faced controversy for a second consecutive year over Israel's participation, sparking protests in Basel. A rehearsal by Israel's Raphael was briefly disrupted by demonstrators but was quickly contained by organizers.
5. <https://elpais.com/television/2025-05-15/israel-llega-este-jueves-a-eurovision-ante-las-protestas-de-agrupaciones-suizas.html> - Israel’s participation in the second semifinal of Eurovision 2025 in Basel has sparked protests from various Swiss citizen groups, particularly concerning the situation in Palestine. Organizations like Basel for Palestine and the newly formed ESC.alate4Palestine strongly criticize Israel's inclusion in the contest, alleging that the European Broadcasting Union legitimizes the Israeli state despite alleged violations of international law in Gaza. While the demonstrations are less numerous than those in Malmö the previous year, they have intensified in Basel, where the police prohibited a usual vigil due to festival-related activities. Israeli representative Yuval Raphael, a survivor of a Hamas attack in 2023, performs 'New Day Will Rise,' a song with metaphorical messages about the conflict. Meanwhile, artists like Blanca Paloma and Salvador Sobral have signed a letter demanding Israel's expulsion from the event. The EBU has increased security measures and restricted access for artists and press, interpreted by some as an attempt to avoid further controversies. New protests are planned in the Swiss city in the coming days.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/e484340e9d33ba5fb3926e10a668c86a> - Israel’s participation in the 2025 Eurovision Song Contest in Basel, Switzerland, has sparked ongoing controversy and protests, primarily due to its military actions in Gaza following Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack. Israeli singer Yuval Raphael, a survivor of that Hamas attack, has maintained a low profile during the competition but successfully qualified for the final with her song “New Day Will Rise.” Despite her personal connection to the violence, anti-Israel demonstrations have been held, with protesters questioning why Israel is allowed to compete when Russia was banned after invading Ukraine. Security measures were enforced after activists attempted to disrupt Raphael’s rehearsal, and there are continued calls from former contestants and some national broadcasters for Israel’s exclusion. The European Broadcasting Union defends Israel’s participation, emphasizing the contest’s apolitical stance and that Israel is represented by its national broadcaster, not its government. Supportive demonstrations for Israel and against antisemitism have also taken place. The controversy highlights growing tensions over political issues within ostensibly non-political cultural events like Eurovision.
7. <https://www.eurovisionlive.com/israel-2025-yuval-raphael/> - Yuval Raphael’s song, 'New Day Will Rise,' is an uplifting ballad performed in English, Hebrew, and French. Drawing from her harrowing experience during the massacre, the song conveys a message of hope, resilience, and love, emphasizing the belief that brighter days will come. As with last year’s Israeli contestant, Eden Golan, Yuval and the Israeli delegation are expected to face some backlash. Despite the European Broadcasting Union stepping in to maintain fairness, some fans are likely to express their disapproval through gestures such as wearing headphones or even covering their ears. However, while audience reactions cannot be controlled, strict rules at the ESC prohibit discrimination and harassment among participants. It is concerning that certain artists in Finland have actively called for a boycott of Israel’s participation in the contest.