# Crew member hit with paint amid protests targeting Israeli singer at Eurovision in Basel



A recent incident at the Eurovision Song Contest underscored the tumultuous intersection of culture and politics, as a crew member was struck with paint during a staged disruption aimed at Israeli singer Yuval Raphael while she performed her song "New Day Will Rise" in Basel. This occurred against the backdrop of escalating tensions surrounding Israel’s participation, which has sparked a wave of pro-Palestinian protests in response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Raphael's performance was briefly interrupted when two individuals attempted to breach security barriers. Although they were quickly subdued and escorted from the premises—one throwing paint that hit a crew member—no injuries were reported. A spokesperson for the Swiss broadcaster SRG SSR confirmed the swift response and stated that the two protestors were handed over to police, who later released them without charges. The tension was palpable, as scenes of protest unfolded just outside the St Jakobshalle venue. Demonstrators clashed with police, resulting in the use of tear gas and a water cannon to disperse crowds protesting Israel’s involvement amidst a backdrop of increased violence and military action in Gaza.

The atmosphere in Basel is not an isolated incident but part of a larger narrative concerning Israel’s participation in international cultural events. In the wake of the October 7 attack by Hamas, which resulted in substantial loss of life in Israel, and Israel's subsequent military response that has led to tens of thousands of casualties in Gaza, Raphael’s role as an Israeli representative is intensely scrutinised. Activists have questioned the ethics of Israel's inclusion in the contest, particularly when other nations, such as Russia, have been barred from participation due to geopolitical conflicts. This disparity raises concerns about the perceived double standards in the application of Eurovision’s apolitical stance.

Despite the tumult, Yuval Raphael has expressed her commitment to conveying positivity through her music. Speaking to media before her performance, she acknowledged the duality of her experience—surviving the horrific violence at the Nova music festival and facing protests against her participation. In her pursuit of hope and love with her song, she strives to connect with audiences worldwide, drawing attention to the power of music even in times of strife.

Previous related events, including protests during rehearsals, have intensified security measures and heightened the visibility of activists advocating for Palestinian rights. These developments have also spurred discussions within the Eurovision community itself, with some former contestants and national broadcasters advocating for Israel’s exclusion from future contests. The European Broadcasting Union, which oversees Eurovision, has defended its decision to allow Israel to compete, maintaining that the contest should remain a platform for uniting diverse cultures rather than a reflection of political conflicts.

As protests continue to be a fixture at Eurovision events, the contest finds itself grappling with the fine line between music and the political realities of the world. While the EBU has attempted to create a non-political space, the passionate responses of protesters reflect a growing discontent with the perceived complicity of cultural platforms in ongoing geopolitical struggles.

The unfolding drama around Eurovision serves as a reminder of how deeply music and politics can intertwine, eliciting strong reactions and sparking debates that transcend borders. As artists like Raphael continue to navigate these complexities, the conversation around art, representation, and accountability will remain crucial in understanding the evolving landscape of international cultural events.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: Sources 1, 2
2. Paragraph 2: Sources 1, 3
3. Paragraph 3: Sources 2, 4
4. Paragraph 4: Sources 3, 6
5. Paragraph 5: Sources 2, 5
6. Paragraph 6: Sources 3, 4, 6
7. Paragraph 7: Sources 1, 2, 4

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/17/eurovision-crew-member-hit-with-paint-amid-bid-to-disrupt-israeli-performance> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <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.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-eurovision-contender-says-she-is-mentally-prepared-despite-protests-2025-05-13/> - Israeli Eurovision contestant Yuval Raphael has expressed her determination to stay focused on positivity and support from global fans despite facing pro-Palestinian protests and security threats due to Israel's participation in the 2025 competition. Raphael, 24, survived the October 7 attack by Hamas at the Nova music festival, which resulted in 1,200 deaths and 251 hostages according to Israeli officials. Selected in January to represent Israel, she recently encountered a threatening gesture during the contest's opening ceremony in Basel, prompting a police investigation. The protests and Israel's military actions in Gaza, which have reportedly killed over 52,000 Palestinians, have led to calls from several countries for Israel's exclusion from the contest. Raphael remains optimistic and stated her aim is to spread love and hope with her song 'New Day Will Rise,' which features English, French, and Hebrew lyrics. She is scheduled to perform in the semi-finals on May 15, with the final taking place on May 17 in Basel's St. Jakobshalle arena.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/97a5c7c4-3596-44ed-9eca-1213cfbcc118> - Eurovision organisers are preparing for pro-Palestinian protests in Malmö, Sweden, in response to Israel's participation in the contest amidst its offensive in Gaza. Israel's contestant, Eden Golan, qualified for the finals, intensifying political tensions with thousands planning protests. Protests already included actions by climate activist Greta Thunberg. Heavily armed police are deployed to manage expected large crowds. Israel's participation has led to online abuse and social media backlash against artists, with incidents like Irish contestant Bambie Thug being asked to remove pro-Palestinian body paint. Controversies include historical exclusions and criticisms of allowing political motives, with Eurovision maintaining its stance as a unifying musical event. The EBU, defending its non-political stance, also remarked on the difficulty of comparing conflicts following Israel's exclusion calls similar to prior Russian bans. Malmö's local dynamics, including tensions from antisemitic incidents and anti-Islam activism, exasperate the situation further.
5. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/05/14/european-flag-ban-sparks-discord-at-eurovision_6671381_4.html> - The Eurovision Song Contest has faced significant controversy this year due to several incidents including protests against Israeli participant Eden Golan and the disqualification of Dutch contestant Joost Klein. Adding to the discord, Eurovision organizers banned the European Union flag from appearing at the event, which sparked backlash in Brussels. Margaritis Schinas, the Greek Commission vice-president, criticized this decision, emphasizing the importance of the EU flag as a symbol of European unity, especially with European elections approaching. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) explained that the flag policy aimed to minimize geopolitical tensions, allowing only the flags of participating countries and the rainbow flag. The decision was due to concerns over potential displays of Palestinian flags. In response to the backlash, the EBU indicated that they will reconsider the flag policy in future editions of the contest.
6. <https://time.com/6977225/eurovision-song-contest-2024-best-worst-moments/> - The 68th Eurovision Song Contest grand final took place at Malmo Arena in Sweden, where Swiss singer Nemo won with their song 'The Code,' marking Switzerland's first victory since 1988. The event, despite its usual glamor, was marked by significant controversies, including protests over Israel's participation due to the Israel-Hamas war. Dutch contestant Joost Klein was disqualified following an incident with a production crew member. The show featured a royal welcome from Crown Princess Victoria and was co-hosted by Hollywood actor Malin Akerman and Swedish comedian Petra Mede. Notable performances included Ireland's Bambie Thug who made a strong political statement, and Israel's Eden Golan who received mixed reactions. Swedish band Alcazar reunited, ABBA was honored with virtual avatars instead of a live performance, and 2023 winner Loreen performed ahead of passing the winner's baton. The UK's Olly Alexander received zero points from the public vote. Despite the controversies, the event maintained its festive atmosphere.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/2009-sweden-protest-video-shared-during-malmos-2024-eurovision-2024-05-10/> - An old video from a 2009 protest in Malmo, Sweden, has resurfaced and been miscaptioned to suggest it shows Muslims protesting Israel's participation in Eurovision 2024. The footage, originally from a violent disturbance during a Davis Cup tennis match between Sweden and Israel, is inaccurately claimed to depict recent events. In truth, the spark for the video's resurgence came as thousands of pro-Palestinian protestors in Malmo demonstrated against Israel's Eurovision entry amid its ongoing Gaza conflict. Malmo police confirmed no disturbances occurred during these peaceful protests. The viral video is thus misleading and contextually erroneous, as it dates back 15 years to a different incident.