# Ncuti Gatwa’s last-minute Eurovision withdrawal sparks BBC controversy amid Israel-Palestine tensions



Speculation surrounding Ncuti Gatwa's recent withdrawal from his role as the UK spokesperson for Eurovision has stirred significant controversy and concern among BBC executives. The actor, renowned for his portrayal of the Doctor in the popular series Doctor Who, was expected to reveal the UK's jury votes during the Grand Final in Basel, Switzerland, on May 17. However, shortly before the announcement, he stepped back from his duties, sending producers into a state of uncertainty and frustration.

Reports suggest that this decision may have been influenced by recent geopolitical events, particularly the participation of Israeli contestant Yuval Raphael, who made headlines after surviving the October 7 Hamas attack. Sources indicate that some at the BBC feared Gatwa could change his mind, prompting them to have Sophie Ellis-Bextor on standby as a replacement. The last-minute nature of Gatwa's withdrawal has left many questioning the motivations behind his decision, especially in light of his vocal support for Palestinian causes. His Instagram posts, which included images of pro-Palestine graffiti and fundraising links, have drawn both admiration and criticism from fans, with some expressing dismay at his involvement in a contest viewed by many as politically fraught.

Demands to boycott Eurovision in light of its acceptance of Israel have gained traction within certain activist circles. Pro-Palestinian advocates have condemned the contest's decisions, including the ban imposed on Pride flags. In this context, some fans voiced their discontent, framing Gatwa's association with Eurovision as problematic. “I would usually be excited, but I'm boycotting until Israel is given the same treatment as Russia,” remarked one follower, highlighting the charged atmosphere around the event.

Initially appointed to chair the UK’s Eurovision jury, Ellis-Bextor had also stepped down due to "unforeseen circumstances," leading to the subsequent appointment of actor George Ure as her replacement. Ure, an accomplished figure within the theatrical landscape, now leads a panel that evaluates various performance metrics, contributing to 50% of the overall outcome for the UK's entry.

The BBC has attempted to clarify the disconnect between Gatwa's pro-Palestinian views and his withdrawal, asserting that it was merely a coincidence that his decision followed the qualifying results of Israel. Their official statement noted: “Due to unforeseen circumstances, unfortunately, Ncuti Gatwa is no longer able to participate as spokesperson during the Grand Final.” Nevertheless, the timing has invited scrutiny, and Gatwa has not publicly commented on the exact reasons for his exit.

This unfolding situation illustrates the complex interplay of celebrity, politics, and public sentiment within the realm of popular entertainment. As the date for Eurovision approaches, the implications of these controversies continue to resonate, creating a multifaceted dialogue spanning art, activism, and the media landscape.

Whether Gatwa's stance and the reactions it provoked reflect a broader cultural shift remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: the intersection of personal beliefs and public roles has sparked important conversations that are far from resolved.

### Reference Map

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

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/celebrity-news/bbc-bosses-sophie-ellis-bextor-35245141> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-48279682> - Sophie Ellis-Bextor stepped down from the UK's Eurovision Song Contest jury due to 'unforeseen circumstances'. She was initially set to chair the five-member panel responsible for determining the UK's scores. The BBC announced her departure and indicated that a replacement would be appointed shortly. Ellis-Bextor expressed her continued support for Eurovision, wishing all participants a successful show and good luck to the UK entry. The jury evaluates vocal capacity, performance, song composition, and overall impression, with the UK's votes contributing to 50% of the overall score.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-48300125> - Actor George Ure was announced as the replacement for Sophie Ellis-Bextor on the UK's Eurovision Song Contest jury. Ure, director of the Urdang Academy and experienced in stage productions like 'Wicked' and 'Sweeney Todd', will now chair the five-member panel responsible for determining the UK's scores. Ellis-Bextor had previously stepped down due to 'unforeseen circumstances'. The BBC confirmed Ure's appointment and noted that the jury evaluates vocal capacity, performance, song composition, and overall impression, with the UK's votes accounting for 50% of the overall score.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/ncuti-gatwa-eurovision-uk-votes-b1225574.html> - Ncuti Gatwa, known for his role in 'Doctor Who', was announced as the UK's spokesperson for the Eurovision Song Contest 2025. He is set to deliver the UK's jury votes during the Grand Final in Basel, Switzerland, on May 17. This announcement is part of the BBC's 'Super Saturday' event, which includes a Eurovision-themed episode of 'Doctor Who' titled 'The Interstellar Song Contest'. Gatwa's involvement marks a significant crossover between the BBC's popular sci-fi series and the annual music competition.
5. <https://www.gbnews.com/celebrity/ncuti-gatwa-bbc-doctor-who-eurovision-israel-boycott> - Ncuti Gatwa's appointment as the UK's Eurovision spokesperson has sparked controversy among 'Doctor Who' fans. Some fans have expressed disappointment over his involvement, citing recent decisions by the Eurovision Song Contest, such as allowing Israel's participation and banning Pride flags among competitors. These decisions have led to calls for boycotts from pro-Palestine campaigners. Fans have voiced their concerns on social media, with some questioning the timing of Gatwa's involvement in the contest amid these controversies.
6. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/showbiz/2025/05/02/doctor-who-star-ncuti-gatwa-announced-as-uks-eurovision-spokesperson/> - Ncuti Gatwa, star of 'Doctor Who', has been announced as the UK's spokesperson for the Eurovision Song Contest 2025. He will reveal the UK's jury votes during the Grand Final in Basel, Switzerland, on May 17. This announcement is part of the BBC's 'Super Saturday' event, which includes a Eurovision-themed episode of 'Doctor Who' titled 'The Interstellar Song Contest'. Gatwa's involvement highlights the BBC's efforts to integrate its popular sci-fi series with the annual music competition.
7. <https://eurovoxx.tv/ncuti-gatwa-confirmed-as-united-kingdoms-spokesperson-for-eurovision-2025/> - Ncuti Gatwa has been confirmed as the United Kingdom's spokesperson for the Eurovision Song Contest 2025. The 'Doctor Who' actor will announce the UK's jury points during the Grand Final in Basel, Switzerland, on May 17. This marks a significant crossover between the BBC's popular sci-fi series and the annual music competition. Prior to the Grand Final, a Eurovision-themed episode of 'Doctor Who' titled 'The Interstellar Song Contest' will air, featuring Gatwa's Doctor character.