# Eurovision voting system under scrutiny after Israel’s public vote surge sparks manipulation fears



Broadcasters across Europe are grappling with the efficacy and integrity of the Eurovision Song Contest voting system after Israel’s entry, "New Day Will Rise," performed by Yuval Raphael, garnered overwhelming public support but ultimately fell short of victory in a gripping finale. While Austria’s JJ emerged as the contest winner with "Wasted Love," the aftermath has ignited heated debates among participating nations about the potential for voting manipulation, particularly regarding the apparent discrepancies between public enthusiasm and overall song popularity.

Following the contest, Finnish broadcaster Yle Entertainment expressed its intention to consult the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) regarding a potential review of the voting process, suggesting that the current system may be susceptible to abuse. This sentiment was echoed by public broadcasters in Spain, Ireland, and the Netherlands, all of whom raised concerns about external influences skewing voter behaviour. Martin Green, director of the competition, confirmed that the concerns are being taken seriously and that updates to the rules are under consideration.

Israel's compelling public vote performance saw it top the public vote in 34 of the 38 national and international phone polls. However, the song lagged in pre-contest streaming metrics, ranking only 19th on Spotify in the week leading up to the event. This divergence has led critics to question the authenticity of the support, especially given the Israeli government’s active encouragement for citizens to cast votes multiple times, as highlighted by the Israeli embassy in London’s social media campaign during the final. Such behaviour, while not against the rules, raises ethical questions about the integrity of voting practices in an ostensibly artistic competition.

The disparate voting statistics have drawn scrutiny beyond Israel, with Belgian broadcaster VRT reporting a striking increase in votes cast from their country while actual viewership had halved compared to the previous year when Belgium failed to qualify for the final. This inconsistency has sparked discussions about the overall transparency of the voting system across participating nations and the potential for manipulated voter engagement through organised campaigns.

The controversy surrounding Israel's participation isn't new; a similar situation played out during the 2024 contest where Israel's representative, despite receiving significant public backing, faced backlash due to allegations of vote manipulation involving automated "bot" voting and the Israeli government mobilising resources to encourage international support.

These developments come against a backdrop of heightened political tension over Israel's actions in the region. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has called for Israel's expulsion from the contest, drawing parallels to Russia's recent exclusion from international events due to geopolitical issues. Such political dynamics inevitably spill into the cultural sphere of Eurovision, stirring reactions from both fans and broadcasters. The Dutch broadcaster AvroTros articulated a commitment to the apolitical nature of Eurovision, lamenting the contest’s growing vulnerability to social and geopolitical pressures.

Within this complex landscape, some factions of the Eurovision community have voiced concerns over the EBU's adjustments aimed at accommodating Israel's participation. Audience management strategies, including measures to lower crowd noise that could disrupt broadcasts, have been implemented to shield artists from backlash. Notably, during Raphael’s performance, an incident occurred where a Eurovision staff member was hit with paint in a protest context, showcasing the contentious atmosphere surrounding the event.

Ewan Spence, a senior editor at ESC Insight, underscored the potential challenges any future Israeli victory might face, particularly in hosting obligations. The prospect of hosting Eurovision under the prevailing circumstances in Israel brings with it significant security considerations and reputational risks for both the contest and any co-hosts involved.

As the EBU considers the growing chorus of calls for reassessment of the voting process, Israel’s Eurovision journey continues to serve as a focal point for wider discussions about politics, culture, and the implications of modern broadcasting practices. The delicate interplay between public sentiment and geopolitical realities is poised to shape the Eurovision landscape for years to come, as stakeholders seek to balance artistic expression with national narratives.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/21/eurovision-public-vote-israeli-near-win-social-media-campaigns), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/21/eurovision-public-vote-israeli-near-win-social-media-campaigns)
2. Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/21/eurovision-public-vote-israeli-near-win-social-media-campaigns)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/21/eurovision-public-vote-israeli-near-win-social-media-campaigns), [[3]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-gets-top-public-vote-from-14-countries-in-eurovision-plus-rest-of-the-world/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[5]](https://www.themusicstarshiphub.com/2025/04/israel-at-eurovision-2024-politics.html), [[6]](https://www.vtforeignpolicy.com/2024/05/israel-astroturfed-eurovision-vote-but-lost-anyway-govt-admits/)
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6. Paragraph 6: [[7]](https://www.cyprus-mail.com/2025/05/07/israels-inclusion-at-eurovision-2025-sparks-backlash-in-switzerland-and-beyond)
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11. Paragraph 11: [[6]](https://www.vtforeignpolicy.com/2024/05/israel-astroturfed-eurovision-vote-but-lost-anyway-govt-admits/)
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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/21/eurovision-public-vote-israeli-near-win-social-media-campaigns> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/21/eurovision-public-vote-israeli-near-win-social-media-campaigns> - This article discusses the controversy surrounding the Eurovision Song Contest 2025, where Israel's entry, 'New Day Will Rise' by Yuval Raphael, received overwhelming public support, narrowly missing victory. Broadcasters from Finland, Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Iceland have called for a review of the voting system due to concerns over potential abuse and external interference. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is taking these concerns seriously and is considering updates to the rules to prevent such issues in the future.
3. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-gets-top-public-vote-from-14-countries-in-eurovision-plus-rest-of-the-world/> - This article reports on Israel's strong performance in the Eurovision Song Contest 2024, where the country's representative, Maya Alkulumbre, received top public votes from 14 countries and the rest of the world. Despite the jury vote placing Israel lower, the public vote propelled the country to a respectable fifth place overall. The article highlights the political tensions surrounding Israel's participation and the varying reactions from fans and officials.
4. <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2024/04/10/european-broadcasting-union-calls-out-abuse-and-harassment-of-artists-over-israels-partici> - This article covers the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) condemnation of online abuse and harassment directed at artists due to Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest 2024. The EBU emphasizes the importance of freedom of speech while opposing any form of online abuse. The article also discusses the EBU's stance on the inclusion of broadcasters like Israel's Kan in the contest, stating that such decisions are made by the EBU's governing bodies and not individual artists.
5. <https://www.themusicstarshiphub.com/2025/04/israel-at-eurovision-2024-politics.html> - This article examines the political controversies surrounding Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest 2024. It discusses allegations of vote manipulation, including organized voting campaigns and potential automated 'bot' voting in favor of Israel. The article also highlights the Israeli government's involvement in mobilizing support for their representative, Eden Golan, and the broader implications of such actions on the integrity of the contest.
6. <https://www.vtforeignpolicy.com/2024/05/israel-astroturfed-eurovision-vote-but-lost-anyway-govt-admits/> - This article reports on the Israeli government's admission of orchestrating a campaign to boost votes for their Eurovision representative, Eden Golan. The campaign included advertisements in multiple languages targeting 35 countries, urging viewers to vote for Golan. Despite these efforts, Israel did not win the contest, leading to discussions about the effectiveness and ethics of such influence campaigns in international competitions.
7. <https://www.cyprus-mail.com/2025/05/07/israels-inclusion-at-eurovision-2025-sparks-backlash-in-switzerland-and-beyond> - This article discusses the backlash against Israel's participation in the Eurovision Song Contest 2025, particularly in Switzerland. Palestinian organizations and human rights groups have opposed Israel's inclusion, accusing the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) of double standards. The article also includes statements from EBU officials and highlights the broader political tensions surrounding the contest.