# Eurovision 2025 marred by political protests and deepening geopolitical rift



The Eurovision Song Contest, once heralded as a celebration of cultural vibrancy, has tragically devolved into a stage for political discord in its 2025 edition held in Basel, Switzerland. The recent uproar surrounding British protesters David Curry and Meaghan Leon, who were arrested for attempting to storm the stage shouting “Free Palestine” during Israel's performance, starkly illustrates the underlying tensions surrounding this event. As the singer Yuval Raphael belted out her song "New Day Will Rise," the protest only deepened the rift between the contest and the pressing geopolitical crises of our time.

The protest, orchestrated by the UK-based activist group Youth Demand, called for an end to arms sales to Israel while intertwining social issues with cultural events. These actions resonate with a growing discontent among the public, as thousands gathered in Barfüesserplatz to decry what they labeled "Israeli apartheid." Against a backdrop of the devastating Gaza conflict, where health officials report over 50,000 casualties, such protests merely reveal how detached the Eurovision has become from the sentiments of the public.

Compounding this tension was Raphael’s background as a survivor of the October 7 Hamas attacks, making her participation a loaded political statement in itself. Although her performance garnered impressive public support, coming in second in the competition, it underscores how artistic merit is often overshadowed by the political ramifications of participation in such events.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has attempted to suppress dissenting voices, even warning broadcasters like Spain's RTVE against addressing the Gaza conflict during the contest. RTVE, however, defied those restrictions by advocating for Palestinian rights during the final, igniting a fierce debate over whether the voting system truly reflects musical talent or is merely a reflection of political sympathies.

The results of the public vote further illuminate this disconnect. Spain's enthusiastic support for Israel's entry, awarding it the coveted 12 points, stands in stark contrast to the larger political queries about the contest’s integrity. This disconnect has been perceived by Israeli officials as a rebuke of Spain’s position on the ongoing conflict, thereby raising eyebrows about how institutional policies align (or fail to align) with public sentiment.

The overall outcome of the contest, including Austria’s victory with performer JJ, whose operatic flair captivated audiences, does little to bridge the chasm between geopolitics and cultural representation. Pro-Palestinian advocates argue vigorously that the contest serves only to "whitewash" human rights violations, exposing the fragility of the relationship between art and activism.

In an event designed to cultivate unity through music, the stark divergence of political allegiances and public support highlights the growing challenges that international gatherings face. With growing dissatisfaction around Eurovision’s mishandling of geopolitical narratives, calls for reform in participation policies are likely to gain traction. The necessity for a more discerning approach to cultural dialogue in a world increasingly riddled with conflict is vital now more than ever.

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.cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/05/18/estos-son-los-paises-que-han-votado-a-israel-en-la-final-de-eurovision-2025-cadena-ser/> - In the 2025 Eurovision final, Israel's participation amid the Gaza conflict sparked controversy. Despite this, Israel's representative, Yuval Raphael, secured second place with 357 points, 297 of which came from the public televote, making it the most voted country by the public. Spain awarded Israel the maximum 12 points in this category. Israel received votes from 13 of the 37 participating countries, including 12 points from Azerbaijan, 7 from France and Ireland, and lower scores from the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ukraine, Denmark, Croatia, Greece, Finland, Germany, Albania, Georgia, and Cyprus. While many countries refrained from voting for Israel due to the ongoing conflict, the country achieved a notable position thanks to popular support.
3. <https://as.com/tikitakas/musica/la-queja-de-jordi-evole-sobre-el-puesto-de-israel-en-eurovision-no-amansara-a-las-fieras-n/> - The 2025 Eurovision Song Contest was marked by controversy due to Israel's participation amid its conflict with Palestine. Israel's contestant, Yuval Raphael, a survivor of a Hamas attack, secured second place with 357 points, behind Austria's winner, JJ. Spain's broadcaster RTVE faced threats of sanctions from the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for mentioning the conflict during the semifinal, intensifying the debate. Spanish journalist Jordi Évole criticized the outcome, stating, "Israel, 2º en Eurovisión. La música no amansará las fieras," reflecting public sentiment that the event's political relevance overshadowed its musical aspect.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/swedens-sauna-song-is-hot-favourite-swiss-eurovision-2025-05-17/> - Austria clinched its third Eurovision victory with JJ's operatic performance of "Wasted Love" in Basel, Switzerland. JJ, a 24-year-old Filipino-Austrian countertenor, captivated both juries and a global audience of over 160 million by blending opera, techno, and soprano elements. Israel's Yuval Raphael, a survivor of the October 7 Hamas attacks, secured second place with "New Day Will Rise." The contest was marked by protests demanding Israel's exclusion due to the Gaza conflict, and brief disruptions during Raphael's performance. Despite Austria's victory, the event highlighted the intersection of music and geopolitics.
5. <https://www.cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/05/18/israel-agradece-el-apoyo-del-publico-espanol-en-el-televoto-de-eurovision-y-envia-un-mensaje-a-sanchez-la-bofetada-la-hemos-escuchado-en-jerusalen-cadena-ser/> - During the 2025 Eurovision final in Switzerland, the Spanish public showed strong support for Israel's representative, Yuval Raphael, awarding her 12 points in the televote, leading to a second-place finish with 357 points. This public backing contrasts with Spain's institutional stance, as RTVE had previously expressed support for Palestine. Israeli Minister Amichai Chikli responded sarcastically on social media, addressing Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, interpreting the televote as a public critique of Spain's foreign policy towards Israel. RTVE has requested the European Broadcasting Union to debate the appropriateness of the voting system in conflict contexts.
6. <https://elpais.com/television/2025-05-18/tres-dudas-sobre-el-futuro-de-espana-en-eurovision.html> - Spain's future in Eurovision is uncertain due to three key factors: the voting system, the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) policies, and RTVE's relationship with the organization. The current televote system favors patterns unrelated to music, as evidenced by Israel's massive support in 2024 and 2025, linked to political and digital campaigns. Additionally, RTVE's critical stance on Israel's actions in Gaza has strained relations with the EBU, especially after a message supporting Palestine was broadcast during the 2025 final. This could lead to sanctions, despite Spain's significant financial contribution as part of the Big Five.
7. <https://as.com/tikitakas/musica/asi-funciona-el-voto-del-publico-el-motivo-por-el-que-israel-saco-mas-puntos-que-ningun-pais-n/> - The 2025 Eurovision Song Contest concluded with Austria's victory, but Israel's second-place finish was notable, as it received the highest number of public televote points. This outcome has been controversial due to the geopolitical context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The televote system allows each person to vote up to 20 times via phone, message, or internet, and some experts suggest that support for Israel was driven by political sympathies and campaigns from its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This phenomenon demonstrates how geopolitical factors can influence cultural events like Eurovision, transcending the musical realm.