

Press release:

Activists stage rival “genocide-free” song contest in response to Eurovision’s refusal to ban Israel

FalastinVision is set to take place at the same time as Eurovision, with 15 artists participating from 8 different countries

8 May, 2024, Malmö – A group of Swedish activists are fighting back against Eurovision’s decision to keep Israel in its famous song contest, despite the killing of over 34,000 people in Gaza, by staging a rival singing competition on the same night.

FalastinVision will bring together artists from Palestine, Sweden, Ukraine, Scotland, Norway, USA, Iceland, Ireland, and Spain to compete in the contest as well as guest star in the festival, including some surprise performances in the intermission. In keeping with the format of Eurovision, the organisers held a formal submission process for artists and their songs, as well as a semi-final to determine who will perform at the final song contest.

The final round of FalastinVision, scheduled for the same time as the Eurovision final on Saturday 11 May, will be held at the Plan B concert venue in Malmö, Sweden. Organisers are expecting hundreds to attend the live show, and thousands more to tune in to the livestream.

Eurovision has faced a major backlash to its decision to keep Israel in the song contest, even though Eurovision banned Russia the day after it invaded Ukraine.

One of the artists set to perform at FalastinVision is Bashar Murad, a Palestinian pop artist who competed to represent Iceland in this year’s Eurovision contest. Murad was a fan favourite and made it to the semi-finals but was cut in favor of Hera Björk. He will join FalastinVision as a guest star and perform a 40 minute set, including his Eurovision submission song Wild West.

On FalastinVision, Murad said: “I’m happy to be a part of this festival – now more than ever we need a positive celebration of Palestinian culture and solidarity, and that’s exactly what FalastinVision aims to do. Palestine is blocked from major events around the world – including Eurovision – so it’s difficult for Palestinian artists to showcase our culture and art globally. FalastinVision is a beautiful way to address that. It’s a way for us to say, we are here, we aren’t going anywhere, and we want to share our art with the world.”

While this is the activists’ first year organizing FalastinVision, they hope to keep it going every year.

Ellen Hansson Khorsand, the lead project manager for FalastinVision said: “It’s abhorrent that Eurovision continues to allow Israel to compete while the IDF slaughters and starves Palestinians in Gaza. As an artist and activist, I’m honored to help organize an event like FalastinVision that is fighting back against the Israeli government’s abuses through the power of art and music. And better still that we get to do it by celebrating Palestinian culture at the same time.”

Activists in Malmö are also planning protests leading up to the Eurovision final, with organisers for the group Stop Israel expecting tens of thousands to attend.

Beyond Sweden, over 155,000 people around the world have signed the [Ekō petition](#) calling on Eurovision to ban Israel.

Rewan Al-Haddad, Campaign Director at Ekō said: “For the first time in history, we are seeing a major global moment against the Israeli government’s abuses against Palestinians. And this is not a blip – the student encampments as well as boycotts like this one are showing that this is a powerful, sustained movement that isn’t dying out anytime soon.”

Al-Haddad continued: “Time will tell – will institutions like the European Broadcasting Union heed the call of millions of people and finally ban Israel from participating in these events until it stops the genocide, illegal occupation, and apartheid system against Palestinians? Or will Eurovision continue to whitewash genocide?”

Plan B, the punk rock music venue hosting FalastinVision has donated the space for the evening and is supporting with helping to put on the show.

Its manager Carlo Emme said: “Plan B was born as an alternative to the unsustainable and in most cases unfair Plan A. We created a space that organizations could use as a meeting room and for collecting money for their causes through events with concerts and parties. Supporting the FalastinVision idea with our venue and our production, and donating our nightclub profits from this Saturday to Palestinagrupperna were decisions very easy to make. I’ll leave you with a quote from a song by Norwegian band Honningbarna, an act with a long history with Plan B: “Fri palestina for 1967 for alle gangene”.

Hansson Khorsand said: “It takes a village to pull something like this off. We started as just 3 people that met on a Facebook thread. Now we’re a group of 30 volunteers working day and night to organise this event. It’s been truly incredible watching everyone coming together to make FalastinVision a reality.”

FalastinVision organisers are expecting the song contest to be a peaceful event and hope to use the power of music to help stop the ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza as well as Israeli apartheid.

Hansson Khorsand added: “We want an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to stop the immense suffering, but we also want to see an end to Israeli apartheid. We will keep organizing artists to fight back against Israel’s abuse and injustice until the day we see a free Palestine.”

The organisers and artists are available for interviews upon request. For press accreditation for the event, [please fill out this form](#). For inquiries please contact Rewan Al-Haddad and Andrea Desky: rewan@eko.org, adesky@eko.org