

Eurovision Song Contest party in London cancelled in protest at Israel

London's biggest screening party for the Eurovision Song Contest has been cancelled in protest at Israel's inclusion in the competition.

In a move condemned by Jewish representatives, the Rio Cinema in east London said this year's event would not take place but that the cinema would organise fundraising for the Palestinian aid effort.

The European Broadcasting Union EBU, which organises the contest, said in response that Eurovision is a "non-political" event, and is "not a contest between governments".

Earlier this month Israel's public broadcaster agreed to the lyrics of its song, October Rain, which was taken by some to be a reference to the Hamas attack of October 7, after an intervention by President Isaac Herzog called for "necessary adjustments". The song is due to be performed by Eden Golan at this year's contest.

However, the amendments appeared not to have been good enough for the Rio Cinema and Eurovision Party London, which described the decision not to screen the Grand Final in May as "collective".

Following discussion with the organisers of Eurovision Party London, we have collectively decided not to screen the Grand Final of the Eurovision Song Contest this year while Israel remains in the competition.

The Eurovision Party London has been a beloved partner of The Rio Cinema for many years, and we will continue to work with them in the future.

We firmly believe that the Eurovision Song Contest has the power to bring people together across the world, and when its core values of inclusivity, equality and universality are upheld, it can be a genuine force for good. With its own slogan in mind, we hope that we can all be United By Music again soon.

We will continue to organise fundraising events for the charities we support, including Doctors Without Borders and Medical Aid for Palestine.



This was [announced last week](#) but it escaped my notice. In the meantime the [X account of the Rio Cinema](#) which published the statement has 'disappeared'. Oh dear.

The move comes despite around 400 celebrities and industry executives signing an open letter supporting inclusion in this year's Eurovision.

A spokesman for the National Jewish Assembly said the body "vehemently condemns the Rio Cinema's decision to cancel its Eurovision Song Contest screening, a move that undermines the

values of inclusivity, equality, and universality that the event stands for. By succumbing to pressure and boycotting the competition due to Israel's participation, the Rio Cinema is perpetuating divisiveness and discrimination rather than fostering unity and understanding."

Israel has qualified for every final since 2015. It came third last year, with its most recent win coming in 2018 with Netta Barzilai's song Toy.

The Rio cinema is one of the few left in the area; it has a reputation for 'community' showings and arty films. I have no childhood memories of ever attending, unlike the now demolished Colosseum further up Kingsland Road and the Odeon at the junction with Stamford Road.