

UK Green Parties demand BBC withdraw from Eurovision coverage if Israeli state broadcaster participates

For immediate release

The Green Parties across the UK, the Scottish Greens, the Green Party of Northern Ireland, the Green Party of England and Wales, and the Welsh Green Party have today issued a rare joint call on the BBC to withdraw from the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest coverage if Israel's state broadcaster is permitted to participate.

In a letter to BBC Director-General Tim Davie, the four Green Parties warn that Israel's assault on Gaza since October 2023 has left more than 64,000 Palestinians dead, over 160,000 injured, and entire neighbourhoods reduced to rubble. UN officials have repeatedly said Israel's actions bear the hallmarks of genocide. British Green Parties have repeatedly called on the British state to act in line with the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The leaders also highlighted Gaza as the deadliest conflict for journalists ever recorded, with more reporters killed there in the last two years than worldwide in the three years before combined.

Zack Polanski, Leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, said:

"Eurovision is supposed to stand for peace, shared humanity and a lot of fun. Those values cannot coexist with complicity in genocide. By standing alongside Israel's state broadcaster, the BBC would not just be ignoring the mass killing of civilians, it would also be turning its back on journalists being silenced and murdered for telling the truth. That is indefensible."

Broadcasters across Europe are already taking action. Ireland's RTÉ and Slovenia's RTVSLO have pledged to withdraw if Israel participates, while Spain's Culture Minister has raised the same, and Iceland is consulting the public. The BBC cannot stay neutral in genocide."

Ross Greer, Co-Leader of the Scottish Greens, said:

"We've been here before. In the fight against apartheid South Africa, cultural boycotts were vital in telling oppressive regimes they would not be normalised. The same principle applies today. Israel must not be allowed to use Eurovision as a platform to launder its reputation while committing atrocities."

Malachai O'Hara, Leader of the Green Party of Northern Ireland, said:

"This is a moment for moral clarity. Either the BBC stands on the side of peace, justice and international law – or it lends legitimacy to a state

committing mass human rights abuses. The choice could not be starker.”

Anthony Slaughter, Leader of the Welsh Green Party added:

“The UK cannot look away while children starve, while families are bombed from their homes, while an entire people are brutalised. The BBC has a responsibility to act, and the time to act is now.”

The joint letter concludes:

“The Eurovision Song Contest is supposed to celebrate peace, unity, and shared humanity. Those values cannot coexist whilst arming a genocide. We therefore call on the BBC, in the strongest possible terms, to withdraw from the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest if Israel’s state broadcaster is permitted to participate. In the face of genocide, we urge you to act.”

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FULL TEXT OF LETTER

Dear Mr Davie,

As leaders of the Green Party of England and Wales, Scottish Greens, and the Green Party of Northern Ireland, we are writing to urge the BBC to take a principled and urgent stand regarding the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest.

Since October 2023, Israel has killed at least 64,656 and wounded 163,503 Palestinians in Gaza. Entire neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble. Families have been, and are being starved, displaced, and traumatised on an unimaginable scale. International experts, including UN officials, have warned repeatedly that Israel’s actions bear the hallmarks of genocide.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Israel’s War in Gaza is the deadliest conflict for journalists ever recorded. More press members have been killed there in the past two years than were killed worldwide in the prior three years combined. This matters particularly for the BBC: to stand alongside Israel’s state broadcaster at Eurovision would be to ignore an unprecedented assault on journalism itself, an assault that has sought to silence those documenting the suffering.

Other broadcasters are already showing leadership. Ireland’s RTÉ and Slovenia’s RTVSLO have announced they will not take part in Eurovision if Israel participates. Spain’s Culture Minister has also raised this as a possibility, and Iceland is consulting on withdrawal. The BBC now faces a choice: will you make a bold and principled stance for peace, justice, and the defence of international law, or will you help legitimise a state that is committing atrocities against a trapped civilian population?

We have been here before. In the global struggle against apartheid South Africa, cultural and sporting boycotts were vital in sending a clear message: states that systemically oppress, kill, and dispossess cannot be normalised as members of the international community. The same principle must apply today.

The Eurovision Song Contest is supposed to celebrate peace, unity, and shared humanity. Those values cannot coexist whilst arming a genocide.

We therefore call on the BBC, in the strongest possible terms, to withdraw from the 2026 Eurovision Song Contest if Israel's state broadcaster is permitted to participate.

In the face of genocide, we urge you to act.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Greer, Co-Leader, Scottish Greens

Malachai O'Hara, Leader, Green Party Northern Ireland

Zack Polanski, Leader, Green Party of England and Wales

Anthony Slaughter, Wales Green Party

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