



# Yuval's Song of the New Day

A reminder of pain and destruction, a sign of hope

Israel's Eurovision Song Contest Entrant 2025

By Brigitte B. Nussbächer

*Yuval survived the incomprehensible horror of the Hamas massacre on October 7, 2023 on the grounds of the Nova Festival. Out of deep pain, the loss of beloved friends and the courage to go on living, a special song has emerged: The song of the new day. It is an outcry against the darkness, a commitment to life - and a shining sign of hope.*



***I choose the light  
I have nothing to lose,  
  
And even  
when you say goodbye -  
you stay with me,  
lift me up, carry me into the light.  
  
A new day will dawn  
The darkness will fade,  
all the pain will pass...***

Official photo ESC

It is impossible to imagine what it costs Yuval to sing these lines. It sounds like a melancholy love song and yet radiates so much hope. Not a word reveals anything about the singer's story, not a word hints that perhaps more than the break-up of a personal relationship is meant. The unspecific words give the ESC officials no reason to reject the song because of its political content.

And yet there is an almost unbelievable [story of survival](#) behind it. Because Yuval hold out the terrible Hamas massacre on October 7, 2023, which was called the "Al Aqsa Flood". And when you know that, the following words take on a deeper meaning.

***Life will go on  
Everyone cries - don't cry alone  
We will stay  
Even when you say goodbye.  
Many waters cannot extinguish love  
Even the floods cannot drown it ...***

They stand for the will of the Israelis to rise from the rubble once again, to stay and to rebuild the land of their fathers even after this stroke of fate.



They stand for Yuval's will to give her life special depth, precisely because she had to face death that day, because she had to witness how the people around her were murdered by the hundreds - and succeeded to stay alive that morning at the music festival

## The Music Festival

The first Israeli edition of the open-air Supernova Sukkot Gathering festival, founded 20 years ago in Brazil, began on the eve of the Jewish festival of Simchat Torah in October 2023. A celebration of “friends, love and infinite freedom”. The artistically decorated grounds were designed to look like a magical world. The site is five kilometers from the border fence to the Gaza Strip and was protected only by private security forces and police officers. But no one gave it a second thought - until the music suddenly stopped at 6:39 in the morning and a red alert was sounded, countless rockets fell and Hamas terrorists broke through the improvised defenses with paragliders, pick-up trucks and motorcycles and conquered the site. Festival attendees tried unsuccessfully to hide under bushes, in garbage containers and toilet facilities, or sought to flee to their cars.

What followed was apocalyptic: hostage-taking and looting, rapes, murders! Burnt cars and corpses everywhere on the streets an festival site, nothing but desert and dead bodies all around.

## The Road of the Lost

Numerous fugitives tried to reach the surrounding communities. But the terrorists were also on the roads.



[Route 232](#) is the street to the south that connects all the Israeli towns on the border with Gaza.

It is a [picturesque roadway](#). Sand dunes that remind you that you are in the Negev desert and cultivated green fields alternate to the left and right.

The horizon is wide, the view sweeps unhindered into the distance. It was a landscape to enjoy - until October 7.

[Sand dunes and green fields near road 232. Private photo](#)

On that day, it became a road of terror on which hundreds tried in vain to flee from Hamas. Yuval and her friends had also initially tried this option after the party was broken up and the call to evacuate was made. They didn't get very far. The road was completely jammed, some cars were turning around. They stopped an automobile going the other way and asked what was going on. They were told that the next junction was occupied by terrorists who were shooting at anyone who was approaching. There are countless videos from this day of death, which were recorded on the way by the attackers and posted online. Both revelers from the Nova Festival who tried to escape to the communities and residents of the targeted kibbutzim who were fleeing were brutally massacred. More than 110 people were murdered here, their bodies lined the roadside.



Today, this road is more or less deserted, as life has not yet returned to the heavily destroyed kibbutzim. It has become a memorial street - many yellow flags here commemorate the hostages still held in Gaza.

Road 232 remembers the hostages. Private photo

## A Cemetery that Cannot be Silent



The Nova Memorial April 2025. Private photo.

And the site next to the Re'im kibbutz, where the [NOVA FESTIVAL](#) took place, has been turned into a memorial. This blood-soaked ground, which was covered with around 400 corpses on October 7, still cries out to heaven. No other place where the killings took place on this scale, no other place where people were so defenseless.



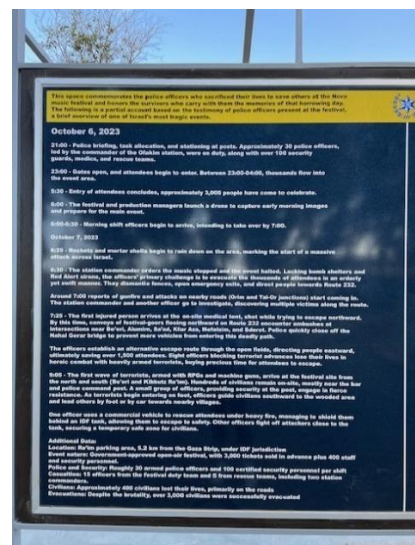


The Nova Festival Site after October 7, 2023. Privat photos of plaques.

A memorial plaque has been erected for everyone who was murdered here, a tree has been planted for each one as a sign of the continuation of life. And when you stand here and see these plaques close together with the pictures commemorating those murdered, when you watch these young, cheerful faces that looked forward to the future with such confidence, you get a faint idea of what a horrific mass crime was committed here. But it is only an inkling.

For we, who were not there, will never understand the extent of the atrocities committed here. We will never be able to comprehend the agony felt by those who tried to save their lives, the fear of death felt by those who smeared themselves with the blood of others in order to be presumed dead or who hid under the corpses of others. Who desperately begged for help that never came. Who had to watch others being massacred, raped, mutilated and kidnapped. Many of them could not go on living with these images and later committed suicide.

Today, the large, quiet site lies under a radiant sun. Visitors walk quietly from picture to picture. Some have tears running down their cheeks - even today. Chairs are set up around the place, where relatives can come and try to be close to their deceased loved ones. Soldiers also visit this place regularly - to understand what happened and to know what they are fighting for: so that a 7th October can never happen again, even if this remains the central goal of the terrorist organization Hamas, which it likes to repeat loud and clear.



Plaques telling the individual stories of the lost ones. Private photo.



Information plaques have been erected that attempt to record in meagre words what happened. And meanwhile, many of the [individual memorial plaques](#) not only show a face and a name, but also tell a short story. In this way, the memory of all these victims remains alive and it is not just numbers and information, but the individual fates behind them become tangible when you read the content.

However, the serenity is deceptive. As we stand here in April 2025, the silence is suddenly shattered by deafening detonations. You want to take cover, but it's already too late. In this site, you have 15 seconds to seek refuge. 15 ridiculous seconds until the rocket hits. And the bomb shelters here offer protection from missiles at best, but they were ineffective against approaching terrorists. On the contrary, they became death traps in which dozens were murdered at once on October 7.

## Yuval

Yuval had also danced at this music festival. After finding out that the escape routes were occupied, she too joined many others in trying to take refuge in a public bomb shelter on the side of the road, but it was discovered by the terrorists and attacked with hand grenades. The shots and explosions killed 16 people inside. She only survived because she hid under the bodies of others and remained motionless - for hours! For a terrible eternity. How heavy is a corpse lying on you? What does it feel like to have someone else's blood dripping on you? Only just under a dozen of the 40 young people crammed in here survived.



Official photo ESC

How do you go on living after such an experience? How do you deal with it? Yuval sought therapeutic help to learn to live with the inner wounds and the cruel memories. But where do you find the courage to not just carry on somehow, but to step into the limelight and be a voice for Israel? She will never be able to forget October 7, but trauma and pain cannot stop her. Despite all the horror, Yuval found the inner strength to stand up again.

And more than that. The fact that she reports and speaks about what happened on October 7 is her way of fighting. She was helpless in the situation back then - but now she is trying to use her words and messages to ensure that something like this never happens again. Talking about it gives her strength. Her life, her survival, should be a message of hope. And so, around a year and a half later, she will be representing Israel at the Eurovision Song Contest in Switzerland on May 15 and 17, 2025, in front of the whole world. What resilience!

Even though it's not over yet, even though 59 hostages are still being held in Gaza and the war is therefore still going on, she sings about a new day dawning, the beginning of a new future. People like her are the ones who help Israel rise from the ashes after every catastrophe. Am Israel Chai – The people of Israel live!

*"A new day will dawn, life will go on! ...*

*The darkness will fade, all the pain will pass away*

*And we will remain, even if you say goodbye"*



Yuval's Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3BFLu4z6-U>

**Yuval Raphael achieved the 2nd place at the ESC in Basel on May 17, 2025.**

**Although the juries denied Israel the appreciation it deserved and relegated it to 15th place with only 60 points.**

**But Yuval's beautiful, allegorical ballad performed with a crystal-clear voice, great warmth of heart and touching confidence in front of an exquisite, dramatic stage set, moved and convinced listeners from all countries. Israel won the public vote with 297 points - despite the fact that opinion-forming news channels have showered Israel with criticism and condemning comments in recent days, fueling the anti-Israel protests taking place in Basel around the ESC.**

**But even more compelling than Yuval's outstanding musical performance is her determination to stand up to Israel's enemies worldwide with a message of love and hope and the courage to end her performance with the words "Am Israel Chai - Israel lives", despite the Swiss police having to use force to prevent 700-800 masked people from entering the venue on the night of the final and despite an attempted attack on stage. People like her have stood for Israel's survival for 77 years and are the ones who help the country rise from the ashes after every catastrophe.**

**Yuval, we consider it an honor to tell your story!**

*Brigitte Nussbächer and her husband Harald Bottesch regularly visit Israel and support families who were directly affected by the Hamas massacre on October 7, 2023: Widows and orphans, traumatized people and evacuees. They report on current topics from Israel on their website [www.arc-to-israel.org](http://www.arc-to-israel.org)*

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