# Artists withdraw from Manchester Pride in solidarity with Palestine over sponsorship controversies



Several artists have decided to pull out of Manchester Pride in support of Palestine due to the event's primary sponsors' connections to Israel. The initial acts to announce their withdrawal included BollyWitch, Felix Mufti, and Dan Chan. Following suit, Drag Race alumni Bimini [pictured from Instagram] and Ginger Johnson have also opted out, with more performers joining them in recent days.

Scheduled to run from August 23 to 26, this year's Manchester Pride festival will bring back the annual Parade and host various stages in the Gay Village. However, concerns have arisen over the involvement of travel site Booking.com and Barclays as key sponsors, both of which have ties to Israel's ongoing conflict with Gaza.

The sponsorship controversy has led numerous scheduled performers to cancel their appearances at Manchester Pride 2024, standing in solidarity with Palestine. Drag performer BollyWitch and British actor and musician Felix Mufti were among the first to withdraw, followed shortly by drag artist and DJ Dan Chan.

RuPaul’s Drag Race UK contestant Bimini expressed their difficult decision to withdraw due to Booking.com's sponsorship of the festival. In a statement, Bimini emphasised their commitment to justice and accountability, saying, "as an artist and activist, I stand for justice and accountability."

Similarly, RuPaul’s Drag Race UK winner Ginger Johnson announced their withdrawal on social media, aligning with the No Pride in Genocide movement. Ginger highlighted their dissatisfaction with Manchester Pride's attempts to resolve the issue and criticised the perceived use of Queer joy to pinkwash companies involved in profit from conflict. Ginger succinctly echoed Marsha P. Johnson, stating, "no Pride for some of us without Liberation for all of us."

Other artists, such as DJ Xzan, Bitten Peach, Lill, and Val the Brown Queen, have also pulled out of the event.

The No Pride in Genocide movement calls on Manchester Pride to end partnerships with any company that profits from conflicts, supports deportations, or contributes to climate change. They are particularly pressing Manchester Pride to sever ties with all sponsors identified by the global, Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aims to combat Israel’s occupation of Palestine through economic means.

Activists from No Pride in Genocide have launched an online petition, which has gathered over 1,300 signatures thus far. Additionally, members of the LGBTQ+ community plan to protest during Manchester Pride weekend.

Since Israel's military actions in Gaza escalated last October 7, more than 39,000 Palestinians have reportedly lost their lives. As outlined in the petition by No Pride in Genocide, the devastating strikes, the displacement of Palestinian people, and the decades-long occupation and apartheid by Israel are sustained through international corporate and governmental support.