

## **STATEMENT : BERGHAIN x ARABIAN PANTHER**

*Note : I am issuing this statement independently of my booking agency.*

**Summary :** I was supposed to make my Berghain debut tonight for a Ritmo Fatale label's night.

Berghain decided to cancel my appearance as Arabian Panther due to my pro-Palestine stance.

In order to avoid any negative publicity, Berghain has chosen to cancel the party & close the club this Friday, October 12, 2024 and provided "renovation work" as the official reason to all the booking agencies.

They communicated over the phone the true reason to Kendal, the label manager, leaving it up to him to decide whether to disclose the true reason or to adhere to the 'renovation work' excuse.

**July 2023 :** I received confirmation from Kendal that I will be playing for the first time at Berghain on 12/01/24, at the Panorama Bar for an "Italorama" night dedicated to Ritmo Fatale.

**September 2023 :** My booking agency confirmed this arrangement, engaging in email correspondence with the Berghain bookers and signing a contract for the gig.

**7 December :** Ritmo Fatale at Panorama Bar on Friday, January 12th, was announced on the Berghain website, Resident Advisor (RA picks), several websites and on all our social networks, with me included in the lineup.

**14 December :** The head booker of Berghain directly called Kendal, head of Ritmo Fatale and co-curator of the party, to inform him about the cancellation of my booking due to "my global communication on my networks" and it was mentioned that, given the current "context" it would be complicated to cancel only my appearance.

Kendal explained that my commitment to the Palestinian cause has been part of the soul of my musical project since the beginning of it, five years ago and is inseparable from it. I've always played with a black kūfiya on my head visible on all my photos, videos. My first tracks were signed on the first palestinian techno label, Harara in 2018). All my communications were already public when he submitted my artist profile to them last summer.

Berghain thoroughly checked, confirmed, and formalized my booking five months ago with my agent. And they never get back with concern until a week after the public announcement.

Berghain conveyed to Kendal that they want to avoid any negative publicity for canceling me and are considering canceling the entire event, suggesting announcing a postponement due to 'unforeseen work at Panorama Bar and the club closing that day.' They even recommended not revealing the true reason to me.

**15 December :** On the phone again, the booker confirmed to Kendal that they would stick to the 'construction story' and left it 'up to him' to disclose the real reason. Kendal informed them that he refused to be complicit in that decision and insisted that they should at least inform the artists.

**20 December** : After a week of no news, Kendal asked them to decide. The label community and we were still making arrangements to come, booking hotels and flights, potentially losing a lot of money. He informed them that he had kept everything on hold, telling no one, in case they changed their minds and allowed the party to proceed.

Immediately after, Berghain deleted the event from all online platforms, informing all the artists' agents that the event was postponed due to construction work at the club would remain closed, but their fees would be paid. Events on Thursday and Saturday remain open that weekend. Kendal was left to decide whether or not to disclose the true reason.

Kendal made me aware of the entire situation and suggested to the Berghain's booker to have a direct conversation with me to address their concerns, as I am the principal party involved.

As Berghain made no public communication and deleted everything, Ritmo Fatale had to announce a 'postponement for reasons beyond our control' to quickly inform its community. The label did not publicly specify the reason, allowing for the possibility of a postponement and giving Berghain time for a proper discussion with the artists.

Upon my request, we responded via email through my agency, acknowledging Berghain our understanding of the situation in Germany concerning the Israel/Palestine issue. We proposed a meaningful discussion with me to address the matter appropriately.

**28 December** : After a week without response, I emailed them professionally to request a discussion. They replied, almost immediately stating they were too busy due to a big NYE event. I expressed understanding but emphasized the urgency of obtaining answers to all my questions, particularly regarding my invitation to engage in a thoughtful and peaceful conversation.

I informed them that I would await their response until January 10th, as I needed to communicate the situation to my audience and friends.

**9 January** : Regarding the postponement, they told my agent (in another mail loop) that all Fridays are already booked and optioned for 2024.

**12 January** : No answer to my questions, avoiding the main topic in all the exchanges (except by phone with Kendal). Despite my follow-ups, they did not accept our outstretched hand.

### **Conclusion :**

After all our attempts to get an explanation they left us with only two difficult options:

- Play Berghain's game, let it go as if nothing happened, and compromise our values.
- Expose the situation with all the potential repercussions.

Apparently, there is a new controversial law in Germany stating that a cultural institution like Berghain could lose public funding if they promote artists criticizing the Israeli government and politics but they never mentioned it or used it as an excuse.

However, their silence, the way they handled the situation, and their suggestion to Kendal not to reveal the true reasons have created controversy. The fact they refused to talk to me directly, led me to believe that they may also hold their own political stance...but it's a private club, they can think and do whatever they want. They should at least take responsibility for their own decision.

To be honest, as an artist, it was a big goal for me to play at Berghain and I was excited about this party as were many of you.

The aim of my project is to highlight Arabic-rooted music that conveys messages of peace and freedom. I also intend to raise awareness through the use of my keffiyeh and the symbol it carries. Playing in this institution was a significant symbol for Arabic producers and the community and I'm so sad that it ends like this.

I would like to thank Kendal for his honesty and support during this whole situation. Some would have, maybe, decided not to stand up against big institutions like Berghain.

Something much more important is happening in Palestine, and deserves more attention than my own problems but I hope you understand that remaining silent would make me complicit in Berghain's coverage of the situation.

My fee, that they paid according to our contract, will be donated to Medical Aid for Palestinians.

**Arabian Panther**  
**12th of January 2024**