

Given the unsettling level of cruelty being orchestrated these days by both elected and unelected oligarchs and their supporters, I wanted to lift up a truly joyful experience today in Immigration Court at 100 Montgomery St.: a Central American mother victimized by domestic and gang violence, and her eldest daughter, were granted asylum! Huge thanks to a fair-minded judge, a tireless pro bono lawyer, and organizing by activists at [Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity](#) and accompaniment teams from the First Congregational Church of Berkeley church and the [Buena Vista Methodist Church](#) in Alameda.

Thanks Julie for forwarding the request to attend this hearing to our list; when I arrived this morning, it was joyfully announced that I was there from Kehilla! Made me proud. And the lawyer insisted that the 25 of us who were silent witnesses /emotional supporters in the courtroom had a huge impact on the judge.

The mother's testimony was intense, tear-filled, moving -- so much so that the lawyer asked that her daughter leave the courtroom so as not to hear it. And then many many more tears, and hugs, after the judge granted asylum! I know many of you do this all the time -- thank you. Including soooo many of you who have served on accompaniment teams for years. This victory just flooded me with joy, I was flying high!

So just to encourage all of us, in these days especially, about how absolutely crucial our presence can be -- and how when these victories happen, they can give us vital juice -- HOPE -- to fight harder than some of us have ever fought before. I feel so grateful to get to do this with all of you at Kehilla. Thank you.