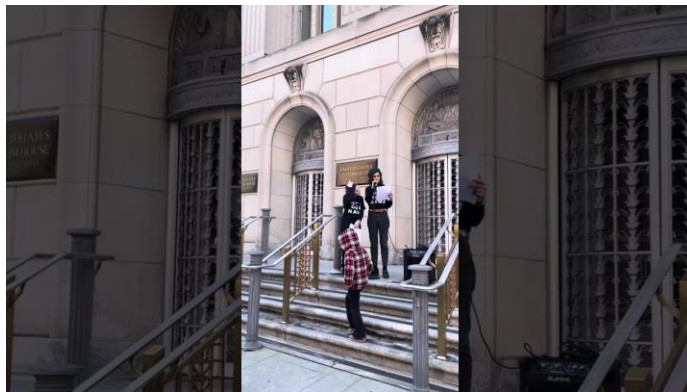


Hassan El-Tayyab, Legislative Director of Middle East Policy, Friends Committee on National Legislation provided a concise reason to actively support a permanent ceasefire in the Middle East: (1) to get humanitarian aid into Gaza and the West Bank; (2) to free the Israeli hostages, (3) to protect the over 2 million Palestinian civilians including 1 million children, (4) to support the collective liberation of Palestine, (5) to stop the spread of hate in the US; (6) to stop building a global war, and (7) to start addressing the roots causes of this decades long conflict. For more information on Hassan's work with FCNL in Washington, D.C. see: <https://www.fcnl.org/issues/middle-east-iran/israelpalestine>

Mike Merryman-Lotze, AFSC Just Peace Global Policy Director, spoke of AFSC's historic and continuing role providing humanitarian aid and educational and recreational programs for youth in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. He said that with all the years he has worked in conflict zones around the world, he has never seen such terrible, inhumane conditions as what is unfolding in Gaza under the Israeli military's continuing bombardment and siege of Palestinians there. He posed the question, 'How can the US propose to build a pier to enable aid to get to Gaza while the US completely undermines the chance of peace by supplying endless weapons to the genocidal Netanyahu government?' For more information on AFSC's work, see: [afsc.org/topics/gaza-israel](http://afsc.org/topics/gaza-israel)

During the teach-in, Rachel Betesh, a Jewish-American poet, read an excerpt of a poem by the Palestinian writer, Moses Abu Toha, "*Palestine A - Z*" ([https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/21940310.Mosab\\_Abu\\_Toha](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/21940310.Mosab_Abu_Toha)). During the vigil she read a poem about her experience on her *Birthright* journey to Israel which young Jewish adults are encouraged to undertake, painting a stark picture of the one-sided indoctrination she received during this experience (video).



Finally, we were lifted up by the beloved Anna Crusis Feminist Choir, who led us in "*Peace, Salaam, Shalom*" by Emma's Revolution and other moving songs.

Following the teach-in, we walked in pairs through the streets of Old City to Senator Fetterman's office at the U.S. Customs House at 200 Chestnut Street chanting "Ceasefire Now!" There we were privileged to

hear the testimony of Kinnan Abdelhamid, one of the three Palestinian students who were shot for wearing their keffiyahs while walking to a family member house over the Thanksgiving holiday in Burlington, Vermont. Kinnan, currently attending Haverford College and a graduate of the Ramallah Friends School grew up in the West Bank. His life could not have been more different than our own son's. Kinnan called on us to write to our legislators and to advocate for our places of work and worship to make public statements for a permanent ceasefire and the freeing of hostages and political prisoners.