Brandon Lee Successfully Airlifted to San Francisco Following Assassination Attempt, Supervisor Mar Hosts Welcome Back Rally

San Francisco native, journalist, and human rights advocate has safely returned to San Francisco following an assassination attempt in the Philippines, five gunshot wounds and eight cardiac arrests

San Francisco -- On Monday, Supervisors Gordon Mar and Matt Haney joined community and faith leaders in a rally welcoming home Brandon Lee, the San Francisco native who was targeted in an assassination attempt in the Philippines in August.

Lee’s return to his hometown came after suffering 5 gunshot wounds and 8 cardiac arrests, requiring an international medical airlift that touched down at San Francisco International Airport early Saturday morning. From there, Lee was transported by ambulance to Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, where he was greeted by friends, family, and Supervisors Gordon Mar and Matt Haney.

“Brandon’s here because of his strength, and the strength of the community and movement that’s lifted up him and the power of his example over these last few months,” said Mar. “An outpouring of love and support moved mountains to make this transport happen, but we have mountains yet to move. There’s ways to go still to cover the costs of Brandon’s care, and much more to be done to address the underlying injustices that led to his attack.”

Lee worked as a journalist and advocate for indigenous and environmental rights in the Cordillera region of the Philippines, where he was shot outside his home multiple times in an assassination attempt on August 6th by Philippine military forces. The attack galvanized elected officials and community members in San Francisco and across the world, prompting a resolution authored by Supervisor Mar condemning the attack and calling for a moratorium on U.S. aid to the Philippine military pending a Congressional investigation.

Rallies, vigils, protests, and fundraisers were held in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, and New York City on behalf of Brandon, and Supervisor Haney visited Brandon while still in critical care in the Philippines as part of a fact-finding mission.

In addition to Supervisors Mar and Haney, speakers at the rally included Brandon’s mother Louise Lee, who returned with him on Saturday morning after spending months by his side; Dr.
Susan Ehrlich, the CEO of San Francisco General Hospital; Rev. Norman Fong, Executive Director of the Chinatown Community Development Center; representatives from the Malaya Movement, BAYAN-USA, and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, among others.

Louise Lee joined in the call to end U.S taxpayers’ role in subsidizing the violence that nearly claimed her son’s life, while thanking all those who stepped forward to support Brandon: “My heart is full, and I am grateful.”

“While we are ecstatic that Brandon has come back to San Francisco alive, we are dismayed that he returned with bullets still lodged in his body -- bullets that were shot by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, but supplied by the over $193.5 million in so-called aid that the U.S. provides to the Philippine military and police,” said Rhonda Ramiro, Chair of BAYAN-USA. “As Filipinos in the United States, we must hold accountable both the Duterte regime, which is hunting down environmental activists and human rights defenders like Brandon, and the U.S. government, which is funding, equipping and training the death squads of Duterte.”

Brandon’s return to San Francisco was facilitated by a loan through the U.S State Department following advocacy from Supervisors Mar and Haney, as well as Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senators Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein.

Brandon’s family continues to raise funds to cover the cost of the medical transport, and contributions can be made to a GoFundMe established on his behalf: https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-brandon-lee.