San Francisco -- Brandon Lee, a United States citizen and San Francisco native, was shot four times in the back and spine outside of his house on August 6 in the Ifugao province in the Philippines, in what is believed to be an assassination attempt by the Philippine military or state agents. He remains in critical condition.

“This attack on Brandon is an attack on advocates for human rights and freedom everywhere,” said Supervisor Mar. “I join Brandon’s friends and family in their grief and anger over this injustice, and in condemning the unconscionable human rights abuses of Philippine President Duterte’s regime.”

The attack is part of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s extrajudicial war against human rights advocates, critics of his administration, and alleged drug users that has claimed over 20,000 lives since 2016, and the first such attack known to be committed against a United States citizen.

Lee has been living in the Philippines since 2010 with his wife and daughter and among the indigenous communities in Ifugao. Prior to the August 6th attack, Brandon was labeled an “enemy of the state” by the Philippine
military in 2015, and subjected to different threats and harassment for his advocacy to protect the land and rights of indigenous people in the Cordilleras.

Lee, 37, works as a journalist, indigenous and environmental rights advocate, and volunteer paralegal with the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance. He previously volunteered with the San Francisco Chinese Progressive Association when Supervisor Mar served as its Executive Director, and was a student of former Supervisor Eric Mar, Gordon’s twin brother, at San Francisco State University.

"We at the Chinese Progressive Association are heartbroken that our former volunteer Brandon Lee, a young Chinese-American born and raised in San Francisco, is now fighting for his life simply because he dared to speak out to protect our environment and to defend the human rights of indigenous communities," said Shaw San Liu, Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association. "Brandon volunteered with CPA to support the rights of immigrant workers and the fight against environmental racism here in San Francisco. His commitment to the global struggle for the rights of the poor, working people, and indigenous led him to the Philippines because he understood that the struggle against pollution and toxics in San Francisco was connected to the fight against destruction of indigenous peasants land in the Cordilleras. We urge our Congressional representatives to do everything in their power to protect Brandon and other human rights defenders like him - especially when US military aid is a key support to the Philippine President Duterte regime's campaign of extrajudicial killings and human rights violations."

At 10:00am tomorrow, Friday August 9th, Supervisor Gordon Mar will host a press conference and rally on the steps of San Francisco City Hall with members of the Filipino and Chinese American communities in San Francisco to stand in solidarity with Brandon, call attention to and condemn this and similar instances of violence, and call for a moratorium on U.S. aid to the Philippine military.
The San Francisco Board of Supervisors previously unanimously passed a resolution condemning Duterte’s extrajudicial killings, and supporting a Congressional hearing to review US aid funding to the Philippines. While Duterte’s human rights abuses are well known and internationally condemned, the United States continues to provide millions in military aid to the Philippines every year.

“We demand justice and protection for Brandon and others like him,” said Pam Tau Lee, chairperson of the United States branch of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines. “If we are serious about this then we must not only put pressure on the US Embassy to ensure the safety and protection of Brandon and his family and peers, but we must act together and call for a through investigation into how US tax dollars that are funneled to the Philippine Army and Philippine National Police is being used. With the Malaya Movement, we must demand an investigation into Brandon’s case and the human rights situation that led to the attack on him. Until such an investigation happens—until the civil, political, economic and environmental rights of the Filipino people are upheld—ICHRP- US stands by our call to End US Support of the Duterte Regime and withhold aid to the Philippine military and police.”

“Brandon Lee is integral to the community of San Francisco, as he has inspired, and continues to inspire so many to fight for what is right and just,” said Pyxie Castillo, an organizer with the Malaya Movement. “It is our duty to continue to help protect people like Brandon Lee, and we urge everyone to demand an independent investigation into Philippine Human Rights Violations and for a moratorium on aid to the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.”

“By all appearances, a foreign power has tried to assassinate a United States citizen for human rights advocacy—a foreign power that we continue to provide military aid to, even as that military is responsible for tens of thousands of extrajudicial civilian deaths,” said Supervisor Gordon Mar. “Brandon was the first U.S. citizen targeted in these attacks—and we must all stand together to ensure he is the last.”