



Alameda County Board of Supervisors

October 10, 2016

Supervisors Haggerty, Valle, Chan, Miley, and Carson:

We are writing to you today to express our deep concerns about the controversial Urban Shield training and weapons expo held in Alameda County. We have learned that funding proposals to the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative will be due on October 14. We feel strongly that the Board of Supervisors should *exclude* Urban Shield from any funding proposals for Fiscal Year 2017. Alameda County has an opportunity to seek funding for emergency response resources that prioritize health and wellbeing and not militarized policing. We strongly urge the Board to take this opportunity to defund Urban Shield now.

Anakbayan East Bay represents Filipino youth and students who are organizing for better services and opportunities for our families in the US, abroad, and back home in the Philippines. While our organization is extremely supportive of Alameda County increasing its capacity to respond to emergencies, we are not supportive of divisive and dangerous programs such as Urban Shield. While Urban Shield is billed as an emergency preparedness activity, the war games perpetuate racist and xenophobic stereotypes, increase the use of militarized weaponry and tactics in everyday law enforcement, and cost taxpayers millions of dollars. Since 2007, most funding that could be supporting emergency preparedness in the Bay Area has been poured into increasing the militarization of local law enforcement. The climate of increased police killings, militarized SWAT raids and sweeps, and surveillance technologies including drones has frayed already tattered community/police relations, destabilized neighborhoods, and broken up families across the Bay Area.

We know the impacts of prioritizing programs like Urban Shield over programs and initiatives that actually support the health and wellbeing of our communities, in times of emergency and everyday. As Filipino young people, many of us come from immigrant families who are already criminalized here in the United States. Furthermore, we are concerned about the impacting of militarization in the Philippines and other countries. Urban Shield does not only affect communities within the county lines of Alameda. In its design, the program facilitates exchanges between police forces and military internationally, resulting in increasing militarization and violence. Urban Shield is failing our communities when it comes to preparing ourselves for the emergencies to

which we are particularly vulnerable. The time has come for the Bay Area to shift its orientation toward preparing for emergencies. We insist that the health and wellbeing impacts of such preparation lead our efforts rather than go left unaddressed. UASI funding could be mobilized to support that shift. As young people and immigrants, our members would benefit from increased funding for education and youth development programs, affordable housing, community health programs, and other social services.

Alameda County decision makers play an important role in determining the nature, form, and implementation of the county's emergency preparedness. Shifting disaster preparedness priorities toward community strength and resilience and away from war games and militarization is an important way to demonstrate a commitment to shoring up preparedness without making the county's communities vulnerable. We ask the Board of Supervisors to use its power to restrict or approve the resources for which the Sheriff's Department applies and receives, and reject or pull any proposal for UASI funds that include Urban Shield.

Thank you for your attention and action on this important matter. As always, we would be happy to meet with you and discuss these issues further. Please contact us at nrmanzana@gmail.com with any follow-up questions.

Sincerely,

Anakbayan East Bay Executive Committee:

Nicole Manzana,
Chairperson

Megan Zapanta
Vice Chairperson

Roberta Ryan
Secretary General

Mari Medrano
Finance Officer

Shina Robinson
Educational Officer

Alexa Zapanta
Cultural Officer