

“Cop Cities” in America: U.S. Domestic Militarization of Police Departments

By [Black Alliance for Peace](#)

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As the United States’ imperial hegemony deteriorates around the globe, the ruling elite has stepped up its domestic militarization of police departments while continuing to install U.S. military bases across the Global South. City and state governments are allocating more funding to create police training facilities, while decreasing funds for necessary things like education, housing, healthcare, and public infrastructure. Baltimore, MD, San Pablo, CA, Atlanta, GA, and Nashville, TN are some of the most recent sites where fascism is intensifying.

These facilities, deemed “Cop Cities” are being created, notably, in proximity to cities with substantive populations of Black people. For example, Baltimore is developing a cop city on the campus of Coppin State, an HBCU. Increased police militarization is a key sign of rising levels of fascism in the United States, but the state also relies on the targeted repression of dissent. [The state execution](#) of Tortuguita is a harrowing example of how far the U.S. settler state will go in attacking anyone who dares to oppose its global military expansion. Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, also known as Tortuguita, was an unarmed Stop Cop City activist shot 57 times and killed on January 18, 2023 by Georgia police during a raid of the Stop Cop City encampment.

In Atlanta, several organizers of the Stop Cop City movement have been charged with racketeering, corruption, and money laundering, for opposing domestic militarization. This, along with espionage charges against members of the African People’s Socialist Party, make it clear that we must continue to expose the linkages and oppose the domestic war tactics against African peoples also used to exploit our people abroad. As BAP noted in our [statement](#) on Baltimore’s activities, “What was once a fixation on a ‘war on drugs,’ is now being slated as a ‘war on crime’ to justify the approval of bloated budgets for more policing ‘to healing the wounds of the past,’ while ignoring the ongoing plight of the poor, working-class residents of the city that includes a lack of sufficient basic human needs, and any

semblance of People(s)-Centered Human Rights.”

This month’s newsletter discusses the various campaigns to end pig cities in Atlanta, Baltimore, and San Pablo and provides updates on efforts to eradicate the 1033 program.

No Compromise, No Retreat!

Baltimore

- BAP-Baltimore’s Citywide Alliance released a [statement](#) strongly opposing “the proposal for a new \$330 million joint training facility for Baltimore’s police and fire departments on West Baltimore’s Coppin State University campus.”
- “Routinely half of Baltimore’s discretionary annual budget is allocated to police such that Baltimore spends the most per capita of any major city in the United States on policing.” – [BAP Baltimore statement](#) on the ongoing water crisis
- [Proposed Baltimore police and fire training facility has hefty price tag: \\$330 million](#)
- Baltimore PD has maintained a [relationship](#) for some years with Coppin State, going so far as to offer “career advancement” opportunities in the form of internships with Coppin State.

San Pablo

- San Pablo is set to build [a new police training facility](#) with estimated costs at \$43.6 million, while their city annual budget is just \$66.4 million.
- Currently, the coalition “[Stop Cop Campus](#)” is leading organizing on this issue and has been putting together actions against the development.
- [Groundbreaking set for San Pablo police headquarters and training center](#)
- [Small East Bay City To Build \\$43.6M Regional Police Training Center](#)
- The pig city forewent any public announcement of a groundbreaking ceremony for the creation of the facility and still has yet to break ground. BAP plans on meeting with the coalition to continue trying to organize in a way that centers African/Black concerns in this expansion of domestic militarization in the Bay.

Atlanta

- Thanks to the hard work of local Atlanta organizations like Community Movement Builders and other BAP Citywide Alliance members, Atlantans are becoming increasingly aware and opposed to using city funds for the \$90 million police training facility.
- Legal repression is a key tool for Atlanta’s ruling elite against its residents: Despite the fact that the Cop City Vote Coalition successfully gathered over 100,000 votes to put forward a referendum on Cop City, city councilmembers are dragging their feet on putting the issue to a vote.
- Organizers in Atlanta are working to defend the sixty-one people who have been indicted on racketeering and terrorism charges.

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Featured image: A row of militarily equipped police, clad in black armored gear with "police" across their chests. (courtesy slate.com)

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