

Philippines



Capital City: Manila.

Background: The Philippine Islands became a Spanish colony during the 16th century; they were ceded to the US in 1898 following the Spanish-American War. In 1935 the Philippines became a self-governing commonwealth. The islands fell under Japanese occupation during WWII, and US forces and Filipinos fought together to regain control. On 4th July 1946 the Philippines attained their independence from the US. The 20-year rule of Ferdinand Marcos ended in 1986 following a popular rebellion. Subsequent coup attempts hampered stability and economic development. The 1990s were marked by greater stability and progress on economic reforms. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was elected to a six-year term in May 2004.

Geography:

- **Location:** Southeastern Asia, archipelago between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, east of Vietnam.
- **Area comparative:** 4¼ times the size of Ireland.
- **Climate:** Tropical marine; northeast monsoon (November to April); southwest monsoon (May to October).
- **Natural resources:** Timber, petroleum, nickel, cobalt, silver, gold, salt, copper.
- **Natural hazards:** Struck by about six cyclones per year; landslides; active volcanoes; destructive earthquakes; tsunamis.
- **Environment issues:** Deforestation; soil erosion; air and water pollution in major urban centres; coral reef degradation; increasing pollution of coastal mangrove swamps that are important fish breeding grounds.

People:

- **Population:** 89,468,677
- **Birth rate:** 24.89 births per 1,000.
- **Infant mortality:** 22.81 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- **Life expectancy:** *Total population:* 70.21 years, *male:* 67.32 years, *female:* 73.24 years.



Religion: Roman Catholic 80.9%, Evangelical 2.8%, Iglesia ni Kristo 2.3%, Aglipayan 2%, other Christian 4.5%, Muslim 5%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.6%, none 0.1%.

Government:

- **Type of government:** Republic.
- **Administrative divisions:** 79 provinces and 117 chartered cities.
- **Independence:** 12 June 1898.
- **National holiday:** Independence Day, 12 June (from Spain); 4 July (from US).

Economy:

- **Unemployment:** 8.7%
- **Population below poverty line:** 40%
- **Agricultural products:** Sugarcane, coconuts, rice, corn, bananas, cassavas, pineapples, mangoes; pork, eggs, beef; fish.
- **Industries:** Electronics assembly, garments, footwear, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, wood products, food processing, petroleum refining, fishing.

Education:

- **Literacy:** *Definition:* age 15 and over can read and write. *Total population:* 92.6%, *male:* 92.5%, *female:* 92.7%.
- **Language:** Two official languages - Filipino and English; eight major dialects.

Communication:

- **Telephone lines:** Landlines: 3,437,500, Mobile lines: 32,935,900.
- **TV stations:** 225
- **Internet users:** 7.82 million

Asylum: According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statistics in 2005 there was less than 100 asylum claims by Filipino nationals in Ireland.

Internally Displaced Persons: The United Nations Development Program estimated in October 2005 that there were 60,000 internally displaced persons in the Philippines.

Migration: In the first ten months of 2006 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment issued 3,286 work permits to Filipino nationals.

Sources:

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