



Country Intelligence Brief

Philippines

Overall Risk Rating

3.00 - Moderate

Table of Contents

Ratings Overview	3
Factbox	4
Overview	5
Security	6
Infrastructure	10
Environment	15
Health and Medical	17
Political	20
LGBTQ Security	29
Active Alerts	32

Ratings Overview

Security

3.25 - Moderate

Civil Unrest	2.75
Crime	3.50
Kidnapping	4.00
Terrorism	3.50
Armed Conflict	3.00
Security Services	4.00

Infrastructure

3.00 - Moderate

Ground Transport	3.25
Cyber	3.50
Maritime	4.00
Air Travel	3.25
Utilities	3.25

Environment

3.00 - Moderate

Man-Made Hazards	1.75
Seismic	3.50
Storm Systems	3.50
Natural Hazards	2.50

Health and Medical

2.75 - Moderate

Disease and Health Threats	2.00
Medical Facilities and Services	3.50
Mental Health	3.00
Food and Water Safety	3.00

Political

2.50 - Moderate

Corruption	3.25
Government Stability	2.50
Rule of Law	3.50
Sanctions	1.00

LGBTQ Security

3.00 - Moderate

LGBTQ Legal Environment	3.00
LGBTQ Enforcement	2.00
LGBTQ Social Environment	3.00

FactBox

Location	Philippines
Location	Southeast Asia, western Pacific archipelago, Philippine Sea, South China Sea, Sulu Sea, between Taiwan, Malaysia, and Indonesia.
Government Type	Presidential republic with a multi-party democratic system
Population	~117.7 million (est. 2026)
Languages	Official Language(s): Filipino (Tagalog-based), English. Other widely spoken languages: Regional languages such as Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, and others, depending on the region. Languages that should only be used discreetly: None
International Country Code	+63
Time Zones	UTC+8
Traffic	Drives on the right
Drinking Water	Not Safe to Drink

Overview

3.00 - Moderate

Overview

The Philippines presents a moderate security and operational risk for international businesses and travelers. Terrorism, insurgent activity, crime, political demonstrations, maritime tensions, and cybercrime can cause localized disruption. Manila, Cebu, and other major commercial centers generally support routine business activity, while parts of Mindanao and the Sulu region carry higher security risks. Tensions with China in the South China Sea present an additional strategic concern.

- **Trend:** Security conditions will likely remain broadly stable, but maritime tensions with China, militant activity in the southern Philippines, political demonstrations, and cyber threats will probably remain the main sources of short-notice disruption.

Current Situation

Metro Manila, Cebu, Davao, and other major commercial centers generally support normal operations. Political demonstrations can disrupt roads, government districts, and commercial areas, particularly in Metro Manila. Domestic political tensions can also generate rallies or security measures around government institutions without significantly affecting nationwide business activity.

The government has reduced the capabilities of several Islamist militant organizations and communist insurgent groups through sustained security operations. However, militant networks remain active in parts of Mindanao and retain the ability to conduct bombings, kidnappings, and attacks against security forces or local targets. Armed clashes between security forces and insurgent groups can also restrict movement in affected areas.

Cybercrime presents a persistent operational concern. Businesses face phishing, ransomware, financial fraud, data theft, and network intrusion. Financial services, telecommunications, government-linked organizations, technology companies, and critical infrastructure operators face greater exposure.

Elevated Risk Areas

Parts of western and central Mindanao and the Sulu region carry the country's highest security risks because of terrorism, kidnapping, insurgent activity, and localized armed conflict. Security conditions can vary considerably between provinces and municipalities, requiring close monitoring before travel outside major urban centers.

The South China Sea presents a separate strategic risk. Confrontations between Philippine and Chinese vessels around disputed features have involved collisions, water-cannon use, blocking maneuvers, and other coercive activities. These incidents primarily affect government and fishing vessels but create escalation risks for maritime operations.

Metro Manila, Cebu, and most established tourism centers remain broadly accessible, although crime and demonstrations can cause localized disruption.

Outlook

Manila will likely continue to strengthen defense cooperation with the United States and regional partners while expanding its maritime capabilities and maintaining its territorial claims in the South China Sea. China will likely continue to challenge Philippine activities in disputed waters, keeping the risk of a maritime confrontation elevated.

Domestic security forces will likely maintain pressure on militant and insurgent groups, limiting their ability to threaten major commercial centers. A broader deterioration would become more likely if a South China Sea confrontation causes fatalities or significant vessel damage, militant attacks increase in major cities, or political tensions generate sustained nationwide unrest.

Triggers

- A confrontation between Philippine and Chinese forces causes fatalities, weapons fire, major vessel damage, or sustained disruption to commercial maritime activity.

- The Philippines or the United States significantly expands military deployments following a South China Sea incident, increasing regional tensions.
- Militant groups conduct a major attack against transportation, tourism, government, religious, or commercial locations.
- Armed violence or kidnapping increases significantly in Mindanao or the Sulu region and restricts commercial or personnel movement.
- Political demonstrations spread across major cities and cause sustained violence, road closures, transportation disruption, or security restrictions.

Security

3.25 - Moderate

Crime remains the primary threat faced by foreign nationals in the Philippines. The majority of incidents are petty and opportunistic, including theft, pickpocketing, scams, and occasional robberies, particularly in urban centers and crowded public areas. While serious violent crime exists, it is less common and tends to be geographically concentrated in specific urban districts and certain rural areas rather than nationwide.

Credible security threats from insurgent activity and terrorism persist, but they are primarily concentrated outside the National Capital Region, particularly in parts of Mindanao and selected peripheral provinces. These threats include occasional attacks, kidnappings, and militant activity, although intensity varies significantly by location and group activity.

Public demonstrations can escalate rapidly and may turn violent with little or no warning, particularly when politically sensitive issues are involved or when security forces intervene. Although strike actions are less frequent than protests, they can have a disproportionate operational impact when they occur, at times disrupting entire transport or utility sectors.

Hoax bomb threats represent a recurring operational disruption across the Philippines, targeting government offices, courts, schools, universities, and other public institutions. While most incidents do not involve actual explosive devices, they routinely result in precautionary evacuations, class suspensions, court closures, and temporary lockdowns. These threats are more common during periods of heightened public activity, such as examinations, major political events, and peak administrative hours. Authorities typically respond with security sweeps, perimeter controls, and temporary suspensions of operations, resulting in localized disruption and access restrictions, even in non-credible cases.

Periods of elevated security risk often coincide with politically and religiously significant events. National and local elections, corruption investigations, legislative debates, and major policy announcements can all trigger protest activity, particularly in Metro Manila and other major urban centers. Religious observances, including Holy Week, Christmas, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, typically result in increased crowding in transport hubs, religious sites, and public spaces, raising situational risk due to density rather than targeted threats.

In southern Mindanao, developments linked to the Moro conflict, the peace process, or the anniversaries of past attacks can trigger localized security incidents or militant activity. Although less frequent, labor strikes and industrial disputes can cause temporary but significant disruption to transport networks, supply chains, and business operations. Authorities generally increase security presence during these periods, and movement restrictions or operational delays should be anticipated in affected areas.

Civil Unrest

● 2.75

Current Situation

The Philippines presents a moderate risk of civil and labor unrest driven by socio-economic pressures, governance issues, and localized political disputes. Demonstrations occur regularly in Metro Manila and other major urban centers, including Cebu and Davao. They are primarily related to inflation, corruption allegations, public service delivery issues, labor rights disputes, fuel and food price increases, and concerns about transparency in governance.

Recent months have seen recurring protest activity related to cost-of-living pressures, transport fare adjustments, public utility pricing, including electricity and water rates, and public sector wage and benefit disputes. Additional demonstrations have emerged in response to foreign policy issues, especially tensions in the South China Sea and domestic security incidents involving law enforcement conduct and counterinsurgency operations in Mindanao.

Most demonstrations are generally peaceful and organized by student groups, labor unions, church-based organizations, and civil society networks. Large-scale gatherings in central Manila, including areas near Mendiola and the EDSA corridors, result in significant transport disruption and road closures, and confrontations are generally limited. Still, they may occur during dispersal operations and unauthorized assemblies. A unified force is routinely deployed. Confrontations are generally limited but may occur during dispersal operations, unauthorized assemblies, or when demonstrations block key infrastructure.

Labor unrest is present but sector-specific. Transport, public sector, employment, utilities, education, and logistics are the most frequently affected sectors. Strike actions are typically pre-announced but can still generate localized disruption, especially in Metro Manila and regional economic hubs.

Triggers

- Sharp increases in fuel prices or electricity prices, which frequently act as immediate catalysts for protests and transport strikes.
- Allegations of corruption or misuse of public funds involving national or local government officials.
- High-profile incidents involving police conduct, including deaths in custody, allegations of excessive force, or anti-drug enforcement operations.
- Court rulings, legislative proposals, or policy changes affecting labor rights, transport modernization programs, or public utility reforms.
- Major insurgency-related incidents in Mindanao, including clashes involving ISIS-affiliated factions or government security operations.
- South China Sea maritime incidents involving Philippine and Chinese vessels, which can trigger nationalist demonstrations, particularly in Metro Manila.
- Election periods and post-election disputes, which historically increase protest frequency, political mobilization, and street activity.

Background

Protests are primarily organized by labor unions, student movements, left-leaning political organizations, religious networks, including Catholic groups, and sectoral advocacy organizations. The Communist Party-affiliated movement and its organizations continue to influence segments of rural and urban protest activity, particularly on labor rights, land reform, and anti-government policy positions.

Manila remains the primary protest hub, with recurring demonstrations along EDSA, the Mendiola Bridge, and the areas surrounding Malacañang Palace, Congress, and major government buildings. Cebu and Davao also experience periodic protests, but at a lower frequency and scale.

Most demonstrations remain peaceful, but a heavy security presence is standard, and dispersal operations can generate localized tension, particularly in dense urban environments. Violence levels remain generally low but increase during politically sensitive events or when protests overlap with strikes affecting essential services.

Strikes occur periodically across the transport sector, education utilities, and public sector unions. Transport sector disputes, particularly related to jeepney modernization programs, have historically triggered repeated nationwide stoppages and protest cycles. These actions can significantly disrupt urban mobility in Metro Manila and other major cities.

Crime
 3.50

Crime risk in the Philippines is assessed as high. Petty theft, including pickpocketing and snatch-and-grab incidents, represents the most common threat to foreigners, particularly in Metro Manila and other major urban centers. However, both travelers and expatriates may also be exposed to incidents of violent crime in urban and rural areas. Criminal actors are often armed and may escalate to violence when confronted or resisted.

Street crime is prevalent in crowded public spaces, including markets, shopping malls, tourist areas, and venues frequented by foreigners. Areas with nightlife activity, including entertainment districts in Metro Manila, tend to have higher levels of opportunistic crime. Scams, confidence tricks, ATM and credit card fraud are common in major cities, while impersonation of police officers or government officials for extortion purposes occurs in various locations nationwide. Taxi-related overcharging is also frequently reported, particularly affecting foreign nationals. Residential burglaries and vehicle theft remain persistent concerns.

Armed robberies targeting commercial establishments, banks, cash-in-transit vehicles, pedestrians, ATM users, and public transport passengers can occur at any time. In some cases, exchanges of gunfire between criminal groups and responding law enforcement may pose additional incidental risks to bystanders. Kidnapping-for-ransom remains a threat in certain urban and rural areas.

Reports of extra-judicial killings related to anti-drug operations have been documented in recent years, with human rights organizations raising concerns about associated risks. At the same time, authorities maintain differing accounts of the circumstances surrounding these incidents.

Kidnapping
 4.00

The threat of kidnapping in the Philippines is assessed as high and is severe in parts of Mindanao. Kidnapping-for-ransom incidents are more likely to target local populations, although foreigners and expatriates can also be affected depending on location and perceived wealth. In southern areas, some kidnapping networks are linked to former separatist insurgent groups and criminal organizations operating in remote and maritime zones, including waters near the Tawi-Tawi region and adjacent maritime borders.

Elsewhere in the country, kidnappings are typically opportunistic or financially motivated, with victims often selected based on perceived affluence, including Chinese nationals, Filipino citizens, and other Asian expatriates. Some cases have been associated with gambling-related disputes, including debt recovery. There have also been occasional incidents involving insurgent groups such as the New People's Army (NPA), although these are less frequent.

Common kidnapping typologies in the Philippines include opportunistic ransom kidnapping, high-net-worth individual abductions, and politically motivated kidnappings. Victims may be held for extended periods and may face threats of violence or harm during captivity, with outcomes often dependent on negotiation and operational response by authorities.

Terrorism
 3.50

Terrorism remains a persistent but geographically concentrated threat in the Philippines, primarily affecting parts of Mindanao and adjacent maritime areas. A mix of designated terrorist organizations, insurgent factions, and criminal groups with overlapping financing and recruitment networks shapes the operational environment.

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which has aligned elements with Islamic State (IS) ideology, continues to represent a significant threat in the southern Philippines. Its activities have historically included kidnapping-for-ransom operations, targeted attacks on security forces, and improvised explosive device (IED) incidents, with occasional spillover into maritime domains including waters bordering Sabah and the Sulu archipelago. Despite sustained counterinsurgency pressure, remnants of the group remain active in fragmented cells.

Other IS-affiliated or inspired factions, including elements associated with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Ansar al-Khilafa Philippines (AKP), and the Maute Group (Daulah Islamiyah), continue to operate at reduced but non-negligible capacity. These groups have demonstrated the ability to conduct coordinated attacks, particularly during periods of reduced security presence or local instability, though large-scale operations have diminished since the Marawi siege.

State security forces maintain an active and sustained counterterrorism posture, combining military operations, intelligence-led interdiction, and local security cooperation. Engagement processes with major insurgent movements such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) have reduced the intensity of large-scale rebellion in some areas. Still, fragmentation within splinter factions continues to generate localized security risks. Overall threat dynamics remain uneven, with most incidents concentrated in specific southern provinces rather than nationwide.

Armed Conflict

 3.00

The risk of armed conflict in the Philippines is moderate. The primary threats are concentrated in specific geographic and maritime areas rather than nationwide.

A combination of leftist insurgency and residual Islamist militancy primarily drives armed conflict in the Philippines. The New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), remains active at reduced but persistent levels. While significantly weakened by sustained military pressure, fragmentation, and declining mass support, NPA cells continue to operate in isolated rural areas across parts of Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao. Their activity is generally characterized by low-intensity asymmetric tactics, including ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and occasional raids targeting security forces and infrastructure. The group also continues to rely on so-called "revolutionary taxation" and extortion in areas where it retains limited influence.

In the south, armed conflict dynamics are shaped by a fragmented ecosystem of Islamist and separatist actors. The 2017 Marawi siege, led by ISIS-aligned factions including the Maute Group, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and allied Dawlah Islamiyah elements, marked the peak of coordinated urban militant capability in recent years. Although the Islamic State-linked network has since been significantly degraded, residual cells remain active in parts of Mindanao, particularly in rural and coastal strongholds. These groups continue to engage in opportunistic violence, including kidnappings, improvised attacks, and limited engagements with security forces.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) now plays a political role within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) following the 2019 peace process. However, fragmentation persists, with breakaway factions such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and residual ISIS-aligned elements continuing localized insurgent activity. These incidents are generally lower in scale but remain a source of instability in specific provinces of central and western Mindanao.

At the strategic level, the Philippines also faces recurring maritime tensions in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea), particularly around contested features such as Scarborough Shoal and Second Thomas Shoal (Ayungin Shoal). These disputes involve overlapping territorial claims by the Philippines, China, and other regional actors. Operational encounters between the Philippine Coast Guard and the China Coast Guard have included close-range maneuvering, the use of water cannons, and vessel-to-vessel contact. While these engagements have not escalated into open armed conflict, they present a persistent risk of miscalculation, localized escalation, or broader diplomatic and economic consequences.

Security Services

 4.00

The effectiveness and responsiveness of security services in the Philippines are assessed as inconsistent, with overall risk considered high due to capability gaps, uneven resourcing, and varying institutional performance across regions.

Law enforcement is primarily carried out by the Philippine National Police (PNP), with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) supporting in higher-risk areas, particularly in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. In urban centers, local police units are the most commonly encountered authority, while tourist police units operate in major commercial and travel hubs. English is widely spoken among officers, particularly in metropolitan areas, facilitating basic interaction with foreign nationals.

Operational effectiveness varies significantly between urban and rural environments. In major cities, police presence is visible but often overstretched, with limited investigative capacity and a focus on reactive rather than preventive policing. In more remote or conflict-affected areas, response times can be delayed by geography, infrastructure constraints, and competing security priorities related to insurgency and criminal activity.

Corruption remains a documented concern within segments of law enforcement, including allegations involving bribery, abuse of authority, and, in isolated cases, involvement in criminal activity such as narcotics trafficking or extortion. While most interactions with foreign nationals are routine and do not involve misconduct, the risk of solicitation for informal payments exists, particularly during traffic stops or document checks.

Human rights organizations have reported concerns regarding past and ongoing abuses in certain policing contexts, including allegations of extrajudicial conduct associated with anti-drug operations and counterinsurgency activities. These issues contribute to a complex operating environment in which accountability mechanisms exist but are unevenly enforced.

Foreign nationals may encounter situations in which coordination among security agencies is inconsistent, particularly during incidents involving overlapping criminal and insurgent activity. In such cases, response coordination can vary, and jurisdictional overlap between local police, national units, and military forces may affect operational clarity.

Infrastructure

3.00 - Moderate

The Philippines has a developing infrastructure base that continues to improve through sustained public and private investment, particularly in urban and high-growth regions. Transport, utilities, and communications infrastructure are most developed in Metro Manila and other major cities such as Cebu and Davao. At the same time, rural and geographically isolated areas continue to experience infrastructure gaps.

Road infrastructure remains uneven in quality. Major highways and urban arterial roads are generally functional but frequently affected by congestion, maintenance issues, and variable driving standards. Secondary and rural roads are often less developed and may be impacted by poor surface conditions and limited maintenance capacity, particularly during adverse weather events.

Public transport systems are concentrated in major urban centers. Rail infrastructure is limited and primarily serves Metro Manila, where capacity constraints, aging systems, and high passenger volumes contribute to congestion and periodic delays. Bus and jeepney networks provide widespread coverage but vary significantly in safety standards and operational reliability.

Air transport plays a critical role in domestic connectivity, with multiple airports serving inter-island travel. Major international gateways generally operate with adequate capacity, though congestion and delays can occur during peak travel periods and during adverse weather conditions.

Maritime transport remains essential for inter-island movement, particularly in remote regions. Port infrastructure varies in quality, with major ports operating at commercial capacity while smaller regional ports often face limitations in modernization and safety standards.

Utility infrastructure, including electricity and water supply, is generally reliable in urban areas but less consistent in rural regions. The country remains vulnerable to natural disasters, including typhoons, flooding, and earthquakes, which can cause significant disruption to transport, utilities, and supply chains.

Ground Transport

 3.25

Fatal traffic accidents occur in the Philippines and are linked to factors including reckless driving, mechanical vehicle failures, inconsistent enforcement of traffic regulations, and limited road safety infrastructure. Road conditions in many parts of the country, including sections of Metro Manila and provincial highways, are below international standards, contributing to a higher incidence of traffic collisions, particularly in high-density traffic environments.

The Philippine railway network remains limited in scope and coverage. In addition to the light rail systems operating within Metro Manila, a small number of commuter rail lines connect the capital region with surrounding suburbs and parts of southern Luzon. These systems are generally aging, with capacity constraints and recurring technical disruptions that can affect reliability and service continuity.

Local Buses

 Unrated

Intercity buses operate between most major cities in the Philippines. The safety record of intercity bus services is generally poor, with incidents linked to reckless driving, inadequate vehicle maintenance, and limited enforcement of safety standards. Petty theft and other opportunistic crimes occur on some routes, posing a risk to passengers. Bus services in the Philippines have also been targeted in past terrorist incidents.

City bus services operate in major urban areas, but their safety record is similarly inconsistent. Overcrowding, variable driving standards, and limited regulatory enforcement contribute to operational risks. Petty theft and opportunistic crime may occur on board, particularly on congested routes and at terminals. City buses have also been targeted in isolated security incidents in previous years.

Minibusses and similar shared transport services operate within and between urban areas. These services are widely used but are associated with variable safety standards, including vehicle maintenance issues and inconsistent driving practices.

Mass Transit

 Unrated

Metro rail systems operate in several major urban centers in the Philippines, with the most extensive network in Metro Manila, which includes light rail and metro lines connecting key commercial, residential, and transport hubs. These systems experience consistently high passenger volumes, particularly during peak commuting hours, leading to crowding at stations and on trains. Operational reliability is affected by aging infrastructure, maintenance constraints, and intermittent technical disruptions, leading to service delays and reduced capacity during peak demand periods.

Security risks within the metro system include frequent incidents of petty theft, particularly pickpocketing and bag snatching in crowded carriages, station platforms, and entry and exit points. The risk is elevated during peak hours when passenger density is highest. Security measures such as uniformed police presence, CCTV coverage, and bag screening are deployed at major stations, although enforcement consistency may vary by location. Public transport infrastructure in the Philippines has been identified as a target in past security incidents, and authorities maintain heightened vigilance at key transit nodes. However, the overall threat level is generally assessed as variable depending on location and time of day.

Taxis

 Unrated

Taxis are widely available in most major cities in the Philippines. Instances of fare overcharging are frequently reported, particularly involving street-hail taxis at transport hubs, commercial areas, and airports. Meter refusal, route manipulation, and inflated fixed fares are among the commonly reported practices affecting passengers. Taxis arranged through reputable hotels or trusted business contacts generally have a lower risk profile than those hailed directly on the street.

Ride-hailing services and app-based transport platforms operate in several major urban centers, including Metro Manila and other key cities. These services typically offer greater fare transparency and vehicle tracking than conventional street taxis, though availability may vary by location, demand, and regulatory conditions.

Train Travel

● Unrated

The Philippines has a limited rail network concentrated primarily in Metro Manila and selected corridors. Train services operate on fixed schedules, though reliability varies depending on line conditions and operational constraints. Service disruptions, delays, and occasional technical failures occur due to aging infrastructure, maintenance limitations, and operational challenges.

Safety performance on the rail network is inconsistent. Incidents involving technical faults and operational errors have been reported, reflecting variability in maintenance standards and system oversight. Passenger safety and security at stations and onboard trains are uneven, with increased exposure to petty theft in crowded conditions, particularly during peak commuting hours and in high-density urban stations.

Vehicles and Roads

● Unrated

Road safety conditions in the Philippines are generally poor. Traffic flows on the right-hand side of the road. Road infrastructure quality varies significantly, with many roads in both urban and rural areas poorly maintained, including uneven surfaces, inadequate signage, and limited lighting.

Driver behavior is often inconsistent with formal traffic regulations, with frequent disregard for lane discipline, speed limits, and right-of-way rules. Serious traffic accidents occur regularly, particularly in high-density urban traffic environments and along major intercity highways. Traffic congestion is persistent in major cities, especially Metro Manila, where prolonged delays are common during peak hours.

Foreign nationals intending to drive in the Philippines must hold a valid driving license and an International Driving Permit (IDP). Vehicle rental services are available in most major cities and at international airports.

International road connections do not exist. The Philippines is an archipelagic state with no land borders or cross-border road links with neighboring countries.

Cyber

● 3.50

Geostrategic Concerns

The cybersecurity environment in Philippines presents an overall high threat level shaped by increasing digital adoption, threat activity, and vulnerability in government and business infrastructure. The Philippines faces moderate exposure to state-linked cyber espionage, with frequent targeting of government websites and systems involved in maritime security. Broader risks include digital disruptions including internet connectivity shutdowns as well as censorship of social media platforms and restrictions on websites hosting political, religious, and social speech.

The legal and regulatory environment in the Philippines is evolving, with key measures including the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and the Cybercrime Prevent Act of 2012. These laws impose the requirements for lawful data handling and online conduct and incident response; however, their effectiveness is assessed as moderate, reflected by consistent application and a decrease in cybercrimes reported. However, limited training, lack of skilled personnel, and under-resourcing limit robust enforcement. Institutional capacity is provided by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and its subsidiary, the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC),

which ensures limited coordination between government, private sector, and critical infrastructure providers. Overall, domestic digital infrastructure is vulnerable, with the strongest protections in the Business Process Outsourcing industry, finance, telecommunications, government, and critical infrastructure while the weakest in the healthcare, supply chain and manufacturing sectors.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime in the Philippines is assessed to have a high threat level. The country experiences a multitude of cybercrimes including malware, ransomware, spyware, viruses, phishing and password breaches as the most common. Financial institutions, namely banks and insurance, healthcare and government institutions are most vulnerable to compromise. The Philippines also experiences trends such as AI-driven attacks, data breaches amplified by rise of remote work, social engineering, and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) prompting service delivery and supply chain disruptions.

Law enforcement capacity is limited, with authorities under-resources in addressing cybercrime, and regulatory enforcement is uneven. Cooperation with international partners is emerging, as the Philippines pursues inter-state cooperation. Systemic resilience depends heavily on factors such as institutional resources and training, public awareness, public-private coordination, and international partnerships.

Maritime

● 4.00

Port Overview

The Philippines has at least 70 ports along its South China, Celebes, and Philippine Sea coasts. The most significant Philippine ports are Batangas City, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Manila, San Fernando Harbor, and Subic Bay. The Port of Manila is the Philippines' main port, largest passenger port, and one of the world's largest container ports. The Port of Cebu is the country's largest domestic port, while the Port of Batangas is the Philippines' second largest port. The Port of Subic is a significant large commercial port and was initially a base for the United States Navy. The Port of Cagayan de Oro has modern equipment to handle substantial cargo. Additionally, there are ferry services from the Port of Cagayan de Oro. The Port of Davao is one of the busiest container ports in the Mindanao and Visayas Provinces. One of the main concerns relating to Philippine ports is congestion, causing shipping traffic, particularly in the Port of Manila. Many ports have old infrastructure, contributing to heightened congestion. Petty crime, piracy, and disruption from civil unrest are also possible in Philippine ports.

Ferries

Ferry travel is available between many of the Philippines' 7,600 islands (approximately) and is an important transport system for goods, local people, and tourists. Most ports have facilities for ferry services. The most common ferry types are Ro-Ro ferries for transporting wheeled cargo, fastcraft ferries for fast passenger routes between islands, and lantás, which are passenger boats commonly used in remote areas. Ferry travel is generally not considered safe due to threats from overcrowding, piracy, petty crime, storms, and infrastructural issues. Ferry accidents are common in the Philippines. Ferries from reliable companies with suitable safety equipment are considered safer.

Maritime Threats

Piracy is a significant threat in the Philippines. Piracy incidents involve the boarding and robbing of anchored vessels, but hijacking, armed attacks, and kidnappings also occur. Philippine coastal waters are vulnerable to piracy due to their proximity to busy shipping routes in the South China Sea and ineffective law enforcement in many areas due to the vastness of the maritime zone. The Sulu and Celebes Seas have a particularly high rate of piracy, and militant groups based in Mindanao, the Sulu Archipelago, and in Malaysia's Sabah State have carried out attacks on and illegally boarded vessels to kidnap passengers and crew. The militant threat in the Sulu and Celebes Seas has significantly reduced since its peak in the 2010s, following Malaysian and Philippine-led counter-insurgency operations on land. Terrorism acts can also be carried out at seaports.

The Philippines is engaged in territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Recent disputes have centered around the Second Thomas Shoal, Scarborough Shoal, and Sabina Shoal, which China has claimed as its territory, though the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled

these claims as baseless. As such, the Philippines has continued to patrol these areas and bring supplies to outposts at or near these shoals. China views these attempts as trespassing in its territory and has reacted with aggressive tactics, such as using water cannons and deliberately colliding with Philippine ships. Tension between China and the Philippines continues to increase, which could lead to increased clashes and conflict. Military drills occur regularly in the South China Sea, which may threaten shipping operations.

Smuggling occurs regularly in the Philippines. Human smuggling is carried out between the Philippines and Malaysia. Drug trafficking also occurs in the Philippines, often involving international drug syndicates. The Philippine Coast Guard has intensified maritime patrols in the Philippines' coastal waters due to the presence of vessels carrying illicit drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF) also occurs in the Philippines' coastal waters. Vessels engaged in illicit activities are unlikely to utilize their GPS /AIS signal, posing a navigational hazard to ships.

High shipping traffic could lead to vessel collisions, and several shipping incidents have occurred in the South China Sea and the waters of the Philippine archipelago. China has previously placed floating barriers in the South China Sea, posing a navigational hazard to ships. Typhoons impact the Philippines throughout the year, particularly between June and September. Typhoons cause heavy rains, flooding, and rough waves, threatening shipping operations. Additionally, earthquakes occur in the Philippines, which may lead to tsunamis. The country is also vulnerable to volcanic eruptions.

Air Travel

● 3.25

Ninoy Aquino International Airport (MNL) in Manila is the main aviation facility in the Philippines and primarily serves the National Capital Region (NCR). In September 2024, the government transferred airport operations to the New NAIA Infrastructure Corporation (NNIC), which has since begun upgrading terminals and security infrastructure. According to the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA), MNL continues to meet its required security standards and there are no active security advisories against the airport. While major airports generally meet international safety and security standards, smaller provincial airports rely more heavily on manual screening and local enforcement.

Philippine civil aviation authorities maintain compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards. Philippine airlines currently operate without restrictions in European Union (EU) airspace following earlier regulatory reforms. Philippine Airlines (PAL) is the country's flag carrier, supported by Cebu Pacific (CEB), AirAsia Philippines (AAP), and other regional airlines.

Major volcanic eruptions in the Philippines have the potential to disrupt flights with little warning as ash clouds covering a wide area can restrict visibility and pose a risk to aircraft. Technical failures with air traffic management systems have also periodically resulted in nationwide flight disruptions.

Utilities

● 3.25

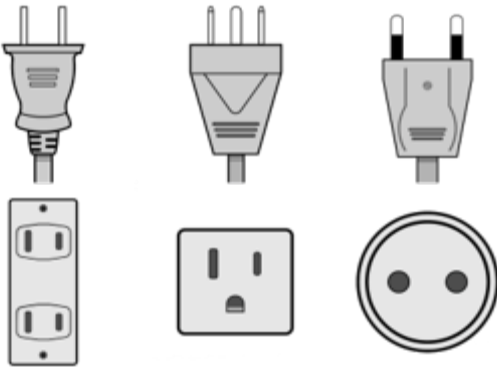
A large majority of the Philippine population now has access to electricity. Recent investments in energy infrastructure have improved supply stability, especially in major urban and industrial areas. However, the country remains highly dependent on imported fuel, and electricity prices remain among the highest in Southeast Asia. As a result, the Philippines remains exposed to global energy price volatility and potential supply disruptions.

Electricity

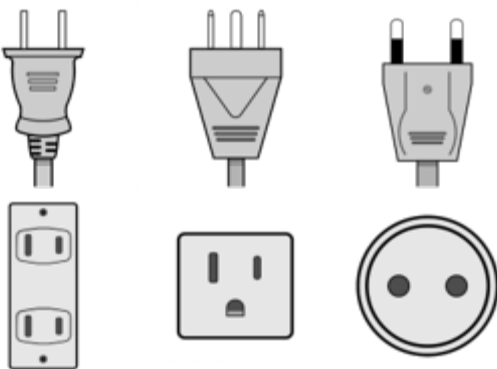
● Unrated

Electricity in the Philippines is supplied at 220 V, 60 Hz. The Philippines use Type A, B, and C plugs.

Plug Types



Types de prises



Internet and Telecommunications

● Unrated

Internet service in the Philippines is widely available in major urban areas and is commonly provided in hotels, shopping malls, cafés, and dedicated internet shops. Coverage becomes less reliable in rural and remote regions, where connectivity can be intermittent and service quality may vary significantly by location and provider.

Network speeds are generally lower than regional averages, and service interruptions can occur, particularly during peak demand, adverse weather, or infrastructure disruptions. Mobile data is widely used as a primary means of internet access, although signal strength and data performance fluctuate outside major population centers.

Public Wi-Fi networks are commonly available but vary in quality and security. Travelers should assume that public or shared networks may present privacy and cybersecurity risks, including potential interception of unsecured communications. Travelers should avoid conducting sensitive transactions or accessing confidential information over unsecured networks and should use secure connections where possible.

The telecommunications infrastructure is generally functional in urban areas, supporting widespread mobile communication and messaging services. However, rural coverage gaps persist, and signal reliability can be inconsistent in geographically isolated areas.

Environment

3.00 - Moderate

The Philippines is highly vulnerable to storm systems during the typhoon season June-November, whilst episodes of heavy downpours can affect the country throughout the year. Furthermore, there is a credible threat of powerful earthquakes and major volcanic eruptions in several provinces. It is worth noting that the lack of adequate preparedness measures and response credibility increases the risk of human casualties and destruction resulting from the aforementioned natural disasters.

Man-Made Hazards
 1.75

Landmines and other explosive ordnance planted by leftist militants to ambush security forces can pose a threat in some areas of the Philippines. Air and plastic pollution are also an area of concern due to a lack of legislation and enforcement of industrial regulations, as well as poorly managed waste management policies.

Seismic
 3.50

The Philippines is prone to earthquakes as it lies in a seismically active area. According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHILVOCS), some of the active fault lines that can trigger major earthquakes include the West Valley Fault that cuts through Metro Manila. Although earthquakes are commonly low-to-moderate in intensity, powerful and devastating earthquakes have hit central and southern Philippines in the past recent years. There is also a prevailing threat of a powerful earthquake hitting Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon in the near future.

In addition, there is a credible threat of volcanic eruptions due to the presence of several active volcanoes, including Mount Mayon and Taal Volcano in southern Luzon. The impact varies depending on the eruption's intensity, although common threats include human casualties and displacements, structural damage, and travel disruptions. Large eruptions, which typically occur once a century in each active site, can cause significant devastation with little warning.

Despite the threat of potentially destructive earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, it is worth noting that the country lacks adequate quake-related preparedness measures, including strict adherence to building codes and safety zones. The government also lacks necessary vehicles and equipment to respond swiftly to victims of such disasters.

Storm Systems
 3.50

Tropical depressions, storms, and typhoons typically hit Eastern Visayas as well as southern, central, and northern Luzon during the typhoon season between June and November. However, a number of storm systems in the past years have also affected Central and Western Visayas, as well as eastern, northern, central, and western Mindanao, and have reached the country outside the typhoon season. Local meteorologists attribute these changes to climate change. In general, approximately 19 storms and typhoons enter the country's area of responsibility every year, and the government-run Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) states that on average at least six weather systems make a direct landfall.

These storm systems have the potential to unleash heavy downpours and powerful winds, as well as trigger a major storm surge that poses considerable hazards to human life and infrastructure. Despite a credible risk, the Philippines has inadequate preparedness and crisis response that increases the impact of storm systems on human communities, strategic infrastructure as well as on travel and service delivery.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) is predicting average tropical activity with 9-17 storms likely to form May-October, with 1-2 tropical systems forming May and June, 2-4 forming July and August, 2-3 forming September, and 1-2 forming October. Since the season runs all year round, officials release forecasts every three months compared to a complete season forecast.

Tropical Storm Risk (TSR) is predicting above-average activity of around 25 percent in 2026 due to moderate to strong El Nino conditions.

Forecast Parameter	Average (based on historical activity 1991-2020) Tropical Storm Risk	
Number of Named Storms	25.5	27
Number of Typhoons	16	18

Number of Intense Typhoons 9.3

11

Natural Hazards

 2.50

The Philippines usually has a relatively cool season between December and February and a hot, humid, and rainy season from May to November. In eastern regions rainfall typically persists through the winter months. Because of the soil type and its inability to absorb precipitation and heavy seasonal rainfall, floods and/or flash floods are common, especially in coastal areas. Flooding in low-lying areas and landslides on unstable slopes can cause casualties, large-scale evacuations, transport disruptions, and property damage. Urban flooding is also relatively common during periods of intense downpours due to poor stormwater management infrastructure.

Air Quality

 Unrated

Air pollution routinely exceeds recommended thresholds in urban areas. Individuals with asthma or chronic cardiorespiratory conditions should consult with a healthcare provider and carry necessary medications. On days when air quality is particularly poor, affected individuals should take personal precautions to reduce respiratory stress.

Health and Medical

2.75 - Moderate

The Philippines has several diseases and health threats, including dengue. Vaccines before travel are also required. Decent-quality private medical facilities can be found in major cities; however, healthcare is lacking in rural locations. Tap water is not considered safe for drinking unless otherwise directed.

Disease and Health Threats

 2.00

- **Altitude Sickness:** Some locations in the Philippines are above 2,440 meters (8,000 feet). Some people may experience adverse health effects at such altitudes. Ascend gradually to allow acclimatization and remain watchful for signs of altitude sickness or more severe manifestations.
- **Chikungunya:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, mostly during daytime hours. Bite prevention is essential. Symptoms commonly include fever, joint pain, muscle pain, headache, and rash. People usually develop symptoms three to seven days after being bitten. Most people recover within a week, but joint pain can sometimes persist for months. The risk of infection is likely nationwide. Risk is typically highest from May to November; however, the risk is highest from November to February along the eastern coast near the Philippine Sea.
- **Cholera:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Raw fish and shellfish from contaminated waters are likely to be infected. Most people infected with cholera have no symptoms or only mild diarrhea. However, approximately one in 10 infected patients develop severe cholera, which causes symptoms including profuse, watery diarrhea, vomiting, rapid heart rate, low blood pressure, muscle cramps, restlessness or irritability. Symptoms typically appear two to three days after exposure.
- **Dengue Fever:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, mostly during the day. Bite prevention is essential. Symptoms of dengue fever include a sudden onset of fever and at least one of the following: severe headache, severe pain behind the eyes, muscle and/or joint pain, rash, easy bruising, and/or nose or gum bleeding. Fever and other symptoms generally appear abruptly four to seven days after being bitten. Some people have reported experiencing no symptoms. The risk of infection is likely nationwide. Risk is typically highest from May to November; however, the risk is highest from November to February along the eastern coast near the Philippine Sea.

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- **Hepatitis A:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Hepatitis A does not always cause symptoms. If they occur, symptoms appear two to six weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice. Low risk in the Philippines.
 - **Hepatitis B:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids and effectively prevented with vaccination. An unexpected medical or dental emergency may place the unvaccinated traveler at risk. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice. Intermediate risk in the Philippines.
 - **Hepatitis E:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Symptoms appear two to eight weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, joint pain, and jaundice.
 - **HIV/AIDS:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Within two to four weeks of HIV infection, many people, but not all, experience influenza-like illness, including fever, swollen glands, sore throat, rash, fatigue, muscle and joint pains, and headache. These symptoms, also called acute retroviral syndrome (ARS), can last from days to weeks. Without treatment, the infection can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
 - **Japanese Encephalitis:** Transmitted through mosquito bites. Fewer than 1 percent of individuals infected develop symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they usually develop four to 14 days after being infected. Most individuals develop mild, influenza-like symptoms. However, some infections may progress to encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), which can be life-threatening. Risk is greatest for extended time in rural endemic areas and for those involved in agriculture. The risk of infection is nationwide.
 - **Leishmaniasis:** Transmitted through the bites of sandflies. Risk is greatest from dusk to dawn. Cutaneous leishmaniasis is the most common form of *Leishmania* infection, causing skin sores that are usually painless. Visceral leishmaniasis is the second most common; typical symptoms include high fever, substantial weight loss, swelling of the spleen and liver, and anemia. If left untreated, this form of leishmaniasis is nearly 100 percent fatal within two years.
 - **Malaria:** Transmitted through mosquito bites. Symptoms of malaria most commonly include fever, chills, headaches and body aches, nausea and vomiting, and general malaise. These symptoms usually develop 10-28 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. However, there are reports of symptoms beginning as early as seven days to as late as one year. Preventative medications (prophylaxis) are available. The risk of infection is low and exists in rural areas, particularly in the province of Palawan and the Mindanao group of islands. There is no risk in the city of Manila or other urban areas.
 - **Rabies:** Transmitted through the saliva of infected wild or domesticated mammals, usually by a bite or scratch. Do not approach unfamiliar animals. Wild and domestic animals pose a threat.
 - **Schistosomiasis:** Transmitted via small parasite larvae through exposure to contaminated freshwater bodies. Symptoms include an itchy rash, fever, muscle soreness, and cough. Without treatment, schistosomiasis can persist for years, causing abdominal pain, blood in the urine, problems passing urine, blood in the stool, and an enlarged liver.
 - **Traveler's Diarrhea:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. This is the most common illness in travelers. People who become ill by an infectious agent that causes traveler's diarrhea most often experience nausea, vomiting, fever, bloody stools, and/or the urge to constantly pass stools despite an empty gastrointestinal tract. High risk in the Philippines.
 - **Tuberculosis:** Transmitted through respiratory droplets released by coughing or sneezing. Individuals planning an extended stay should consider obtaining a PPD skin test to reference against future suspected infections. Symptoms commonly include chest pain, a bad cough lasting three weeks or longer, and coughing up blood and/or sputum. Some people also experience chills, weight loss, fever, weakness, night sweats, and loss of appetite. Very high risk in the Philippines.
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- **Typhoid Fever:** Transmitted by contaminated milk, water, and food. Raw fish and shellfish from contaminated waters are likely to be infected. Symptoms of typhoid fever usually include fever, abdominal pain or discomfort, chills and body aches, weakness, and loss of appetite.
- **Zika Virus:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, mainly during the day, or sexually through an infected partner. Mosquito bite prevention and practicing safe sex are essential. In many cases, the Zika virus is asymptomatic; however, in some, it may cause symptoms similar to dengue and chikungunya, including fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. Significant birth defects have been associated with Zika virus infection in pregnant women. Partners of women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika virus circulation are encouraged to use condoms for at least six months or the duration of a partner's pregnancy. The risk of infection is likely nationwide. Risk is typically highest from May to November; however, the risk is highest from November to February along the eastern coast near the Philippine Sea.

Health Requirements

● Unrated

Yellow Fever: Vaccination Required

The Philippines is not considered at risk for **yellow fever**. Nevertheless, vaccination is **required** upon arrival for all travelers aged nine months or over who have visited or transited through an airport in a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Single dose, full-strength yellow fever vaccine is valid for life.

Health Recommendations

● Unrated

Recommended Immunizations for Travel to the Philippines

Travelers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. You should visit a healthcare professional at least four to six weeks before the trip. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and the annual flu vaccine. Travelers should consider obtaining COVID-19 vaccination where available, even if the destination country does not require it.

- **Cholera:** Unless contraindicated, it is recommended for individuals staying in endemic areas or where there are current outbreaks. Cholera vaccine is not a substitute for thorough hand washing with soap and water, observing good personal hygiene, and taking food and water precautions. Three WHO pre-qualified oral cholera vaccines (OCV) exist: Dukoral, Shanchol, and Euvichol. All of these require two doses for full protection.
- **Hepatitis A:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Two doses, administered at least six months apart, are required for long-lasting protection. It is recommended that all susceptible people traveling for any purpose, frequency, or duration to countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity be vaccinated or receive immune globulin before departure. A booster is recommended for partially vaccinated travelers.
- **Hepatitis B:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Widely used formulations require three doses administered over the course of six to 18 months, depending on the recipient's age and vaccination history. Booster doses after a complete series are usually not required to maintain immunity. If exposed before finalizing the full series, individuals may receive a special booster within 24 hours for short-term protection.
- **Japanese Encephalitis:** Unless contraindicated, it is recommended for individuals who are moving to or planning stays of one month or longer in endemic areas, especially in rural areas with rice fields or marshland during the transmission season. The transmission season varies, with West Luzon, Mindoro, Negros, and Palawan occurring between April-November and all other areas reporting all year round with the highest risk between April-January. It is also recommended for travelers engaging in activities that increase the

risk of infection, such as visiting rural areas, hiking or camping, or staying in places without air conditioning, screens, or bed nets. Widely used formulations require two doses administered 28 days apart. An accelerated series may be available, with the first dose required at least two weeks before travel.

- **Rabies:** Unless contraindicated, the WHO and CDC recommend vaccination for individuals who will be performing occupational or recreational activities that increase the risk for exposure to potentially rabid animals, such as animal handlers, field biologists, cavers, missionaries, veterinarians, and some laboratory workers. It is also recommended for travelers who might have difficulty getting prompt access to safe post-exposure prophylaxis. The Philippines has reported rabies in domestic and wild animals, thus most travelers are at risk. Bats are likely to carry bat rabies.
- **Typhoid Fever:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated, especially those staying with friends or relatives in endemic areas or visiting smaller cities or rural areas. Widely used formulations require between two and four doses, depending on the formulation and the recipient's vaccination history. Booster vaccination is required every two or five years depending on the formulation. The last dose should be taken at least one week before travel.

Medical Facilities and Services

● 3.50

Healthcare facilities in large cities are adequate for most basic medical needs but are of varying quality. Those in smaller towns or more rural areas will find facilities lacking, though they may still be adequate for essential health services in some moderately sized towns. Hospitals and clinics can lack adequate equipment, supplies, and specialists for treating serious illnesses and injuries. Payment at healthcare facilities is typically done up-front, and patients with international healthcare coverage should apply for reimbursement from their carriers. Ambulance and emergency medical response services are also limited and generally lack proper equipment and trained staff. Severe or complicated medical emergencies will likely require evacuation to another country for adequate treatment.

Medications and Pharmacy

● Unrated

Pharmacies across the Philippines are readily available in urban areas, but access is more limited in rural areas. Supply of most medicines needed by travelers is variable, and shortages of medicines are common. Prior to travelling confirm the status of your "over the counter" medicines with accredited foreign government offices of the Philippines in your country. Always carry your prescription medication in its original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription and any other relevant documentation.

Mental Health

● 3.00

Mental health service availability is limited, and conditions are moderately managed.

Food and Water Safety

● 3.00

Drinking water may be unsafe in the Philippines, especially in rural areas. Use only bottled, boiled, or otherwise purified water for drinking and cooking. Do not use ice cubes made from unpurified water sources. Eat only thoroughly cooked food served hot or fruits and vegetables that you have cleaned and peeled; avoid salads. Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products, or use powdered or canned milk and cured cheeses. Avoid street vendors and unregulated food establishments.

Political

2.50 - Moderate

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. won the May 2022 presidential election with a strong majority, marking the Marcos family’s return to national leadership. Sara Duterte, former mayor of Davao City and daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte, won the vice presidency in a separate nationwide vote. The Philippines continues to operate under a presidential system with a multi-party democratic framework, characterized by coalition-based governance and shifting political alliances.

The political environment remains broadly stable at the national level, with functioning democratic institutions and regular elections. However, political competition remains highly personalized and dynastic, with influence concentrated among established political families at both the national and local levels.

Corruption and uneven rule of law continue to affect governance performance and public trust in some institutions, despite ongoing reform efforts and periodic anti-corruption campaigns. Administrative efficiency and enforcement capacity vary significantly between urban and rural areas, as well as between national and local government units.

Political violence remains a risk primarily during election periods and in localized contexts, particularly in areas with strong clan-based competition or historical electoral disputes. These incidents are generally geographically limited but can include intimidation, sporadic armed clashes, and election-related violence at the local level.

Corruption

● 3.25

Despite ongoing efforts to strengthen state institutions and improve transparency and accountability mechanisms, corruption remains a persistent governance challenge in the Philippines. Institutional capacity constraints, political patronage networks, and clientelism continue to influence public administration at both national and local levels. Low public-sector remuneration and uneven enforcement of regulations further increase corruption risks in certain sectors.

Weak checks and balances and inconsistent oversight mechanisms have historically limited the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks. While enforcement actions and reform initiatives have increased in recent years, outcomes remain uneven, with variability in implementation across agencies and regions. Corruption risks are generally more pronounced in permitting processes, public procurement, and interactions involving regulatory compliance.

Government Stability

● 2.50

The Philippines is a presidential constitutional republic with a multi-party democratic system. Executive authority is held by the president, while legislative power is exercised by a bicameral Congress consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The judiciary operates formally independently, with the Supreme Court holding authority over constitutional interpretation and judicial review.

Government institutions remain broadly stable and functional, with regular elections, peaceful transfers of power, and an active political opposition. Governance continues to be shaped by coalition-building and shifting alliances among political parties and influential political families at both national and local levels.

Political stability is supported by established democratic processes, although institutional performance varies across agencies and regions. Key governance challenges include uneven administrative capacity, political patronage networks, and ongoing gaps in anti-corruption enforcement. These factors continue to affect public confidence in some institutions and the consistency of policy implementation.

Recent administrations have prioritized economic development, infrastructure expansion, and foreign investment, while maintaining generally pragmatic foreign relations, including continued cooperation with Western partners and regional actors. Political competition remains active but is typically managed within institutional and electoral frameworks rather than through systemic instability.

Rule of Law

● 3.50

The Philippine legal system blends civil law inherited from Spanish rule, common law introduced during the American period, and Islamic law in parts of Mindanao. The judiciary is formally independent, with the Supreme Court exercising constitutional review.

In practice, the rule of law is unevenly applied. Corruption risks, political influence, and institutional capacity constraints influence outcomes. Enforcement tends to be stronger in urban areas and less consistent in rural jurisdictions.

Access to justice is often shaped by socioeconomic status and political connections. Individuals with greater resources or influence generally secure more favorable outcomes, while lower-income defendants face longer proceedings and a higher risk of conviction. Reports of bribery, case manipulation, and informal influence over judicial processes continue, particularly at the local level.

Concerns also persist in some contexts about connections between political actors, law enforcement officials, and criminal networks, though the scope and nature of these connections vary. Authorities do pursue accountability in high-profile cases, including through domestic and international legal mechanisms, but enforcement remains inconsistent in practice.

Sanctions

● 1.00

The Philippines is not currently subject to any international sanctions.

Legal

Unrated

Visitors to the Philippines are subject to local laws, which may differ significantly from those in their home country. Individuals found in violation of local legislation, including unintentionally, may face fines, detention, prosecution, imprisonment, or expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense. In some cases, legal proceedings may also occur in absentia under Philippine law.

Local authorities generally notify the relevant foreign embassy or consulate when a foreign national is detained, allowing consular officials to provide limited assistance. Where applicable treaties or agreements are in place, notification and access are typically facilitated more systematically; where they are not, access may depend on bilateral diplomatic arrangements and local discretion.

Consular officials can provide welfare support and monitor detention conditions, but cannot intervene in judicial proceedings, provide legal representation, or influence court outcomes. They also cannot pay fines, legal fees, or other costs on behalf of detained nationals using government funds.

Dual nationals are treated under Philippine law primarily as Philippine citizens while in the country, which may limit or alter the level of consular access and assistance available from their other nationality.

Emergency Contacts

● Unrated

Emergency Contacts

Ambulance 911

Fire 911

Police 911

Embassies and Consulates

● Unrated

Australian Embassy

Address Level 23-Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, P.O. Box 1071, Manila

Phone (63-2) 7757 8100

Email australianembassy.manila@dfat.gov.au

Website <http://www.philippines.embassy.gov.au>

British Embassy

Address 120 Upper McKinley Road, McKinley Hill, Taguig City 1634, Philippines

Email ukinthephilippines@fco.gov.uk

Website <https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-manila>

British Honorary Consul

Address 18-6 Concepcion Drive, Villa Teresa, Angeles City, Pampanga 2009, Philippines

Phone (63-2) 8858 2200

Email Cons.Manila@fcdo.gov.uk

Website <https://www.gov.uk/world/philippines>

Canadian Embassy

Address RCBC Plaza Yuchengco Tower, 6th-8th Floor, 6819 Ayala Ave, Makati City, 1227 Metro Manila, Philippines

Phone (63-2) 8857 9000

Website <https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/philippines/manila-manille.aspx?lang=eng>

French Embassy

Address 16th floor Pacific Star building-corner Sen. Gil Puyat Ext. and Makati avenues, 1200 Makati City, Manila

Email chancellerie.ambafrance.manille@gmail.com

Website <https://ph.ambafrance.org/-English->

German Embassy

Address 25 / F Tower II, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave. 1200 Makati City, Metro Manila

Email info@manila.diplo.de

Website <http://www.manila.diplo.de>

US Embassy

Address 1201 Roxas Boulevard, Manila 1000, Philippines

Phone (63-2) 5301-2000

Email acsinfomanila@state.gov

Website <https://ph.usembassy.gov/>

US Consulate in Cebu

Address Waterfront Hotel, Lower Ground Floor Lahug, Cebu City,

Phone (63-2) 32 231-1261

Website <https://ph.usembassy.gov/us-consular-agency-cebu/>

Entry/Exit

Unrated

Travelers can obtain specific information about visas and other entry-exit requirements at: <https://entry-exit.crisis24horizon.com>.

Entry and exit procedures in the Philippines are generally straightforward for most short-term visitors, with requirements depending on nationality and purpose of travel. Travelers are typically required to present a valid passport with sufficient remaining validity, onward or return travel documentation, and proof of accommodation or travel plans when requested by immigration authorities. Visa-free entry or visa-on-arrival arrangements are available for many nationalities for limited durations, subject to immigration assessment at the point of entry.

Immigration officers may conduct routine questioning regarding the purpose and length of stay, financial means, and travel itinerary. Entry is ultimately discretionary and may be denied if the documentation is incomplete or the traveler cannot satisfy the entry requirements. Exit procedures are generally efficient, though additional screening may occur in response to security alerts or irregularities in travel documentation.

Certain categories of travelers, including those with overstays, prior immigration violations, or incomplete documentation, may be subject to fines, delays, or additional processing requirements upon departure. Airport security screening is standard and may include baggage inspection and electronic device checks in line with international aviation security standards.

Pre-Departure

Unrated

- There are credible and persistent threats from crime, conflict, and terrorism in the Philippines. Travelers should undertake a pre-travel security briefing covering the operating environment, current threat landscape, and regional risk variations. Annual travel security training is recommended, and anti-corruption and bribery awareness training is also advised due to continued exposure risks in certain administrative and commercial environments.
- Travel to central, southern, and western Mindanao, as well as the Sulu Archipelago, requires enhanced security precautions and may involve additional mitigation measures. High-risk areas include the provinces of Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Jolo, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat. These areas present elevated risks of kidnapping, improvised explosive devices, insurgent activity, and extremist-related violence, particularly in rural and coastal zones.
- Medical infrastructure varies significantly across the country, with high-quality healthcare concentrated in private hospitals in Metro Manila and more limited capacity in provincial and rural areas. Travelers should identify medical support options prior to travel, including hotel-based physician services for minor conditions, and maintain comprehensive travel insurance with medical evacuation coverage. Contingency planning, business continuity arrangements, and crisis response procedures should be reviewed before travel.
- Travelers should share their itinerary with trusted contacts and maintain copies of key travel and identity documents. They should obtain required visas, where applicable, prior to arrival and confirm entry requirements in advance. Information on accommodation, local contacts, embassy details, and emergency numbers should remain accessible throughout travel.

- The Philippines remains highly exposed to natural hazards, including typhoons, flooding, and seismic activity. Travelers should familiarize themselves with local evacuation procedures and follow official guidance issued by local authorities. Key monitoring sources include the Joint Typhoon Warning Center, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

On Arrival

● Unrated

- Travelers should establish a pre-arranged meet-and-greet procedure before arrival, including verified host contact details and clear instructions for onward movement from the airport. Travelers should move through arrivals efficiently, avoid unnecessary delays in the terminal, and leave the airport area as soon as practically possible. Travelers should use only pre-arranged transport or verified licensed services and should avoid accepting unsolicited offers of transport or assistance.
- Travelers should continuously reassess the local security environment upon arrival using multiple reputable sources of information. Travelers should identify nearby evacuation routes, designated evacuation areas, open public spaces, and essential facilities such as hospitals, police stations, community halls, and 24-hour commercial outlets. Travelers should maintain heightened awareness in major urban centers where demonstrations, congestion, or security operations can occur with limited notice.
- Travelers should carry copies of key travel documents at all times, while keeping the originals separately. Travelers should exercise heightened caution in crowded areas such as airports, transport hubs, and commercial districts due to the risk of opportunistic crime, including theft and scams targeting arriving passengers. Travelers should maintain situational awareness throughout arrival procedures, particularly during baggage claim and ground transport transitions.

In Transit

● Unrated

- Travelers should avoid using street taxis and should instead use low-profile hotel-booked taxis or locally vetted transport providers. Travelers should plan routes in advance and should avoid isolated areas and potential choke points where practical.
- Travelers traveling to central, southern, and western Mindanao, as well as the Sulu Archipelago, should apply additional security measures, including comprehensive journey management and the use of a security coordinator. Travelers should minimize movement in these areas and avoid travel after nightfall.
- Travelers should carry only minimal non-essential valuables and should avoid displaying valuables in public at any time. Travelers should maintain situational awareness throughout all stages of movement, particularly during boarding, disembarkation, and transfers between transport modes.

At Your Hotel

● Unrated

- Travelers should stay at reputable hotels that maintain strong international-level security standards, including controlled access points, CCTV coverage, and trained security personnel. Travelers should select accommodation in stable, well-secured areas and avoid hotels hosting high-profile conferences during their stay to reduce potential security exposure. Travelers should avoid hotels located in areas with a history of protests, demonstrations, or politically or ethnically sensitive tensions. Travelers should also avoid hotels near choke points or those surrounded by other high-profile targets, such as foreign embassies, government buildings, or venues that regularly attract large foreign crowds.

- In central, southern, and western Mindanao, as well as the Sulu Archipelago, where risks from kidnapping, bombings, and insurgent or extremist-related violence remain elevated, travelers should only use hotels that demonstrate robust security controls and proven international-standard protection measures. Travelers should ensure accommodation is located in lower-risk areas of towns and avoid properties near known security incidents or high-risk infrastructure.
- Upon arrival at the hotel, travelers should ensure the driver remains on site until check-in is fully confirmed. Before departing for the airport, travelers should ensure the driver remains available until flight check-in is confirmed and onward movement is secured.
- Travelers should monitor weather updates issued by local authorities and trusted media sources, including official government advisories. During the monsoon season, travelers should prepare for disruptions and maintain an emergency kit that includes bottled water, non-perishable food, a battery-powered radio, essential medications, and copies of critical travel documents. Travelers should also review emergency procedures and instructions provided in hotel rooms and should familiarize themselves with evacuation routes and assembly points.

In the Street

● Unrated

- Travelers should avoid leaving secure accommodation alone after dark and should minimize non-essential movement during nighttime hours. Travelers should plan all movements in advance and should prioritize safe, pre-arranged transport options rather than walking or using informal transport services at night.
- Travelers should maintain heightened situational awareness at all times and should continuously assess their surroundings for surveillance, loitering individuals, or coordinated distraction attempts. Travelers should avoid walking in isolated, dimly lit, or poorly monitored areas and should remain on well-trafficked, well-lit routes where movement is necessary.
- Travelers should keep a low profile and should avoid displaying signs of wealth, including jewelry, electronics, or large amounts of cash. Travelers should adapt clothing and behavior to the local environment and should avoid actions that draw attention in crowded urban areas.
- Travelers should avoid involvement in local political discussions or sensitive topics in public and should not engage with demonstrations, protests, or rallies under any circumstances. Travelers should avoid areas where protests have occurred or where security forces are deployed, as these environments can change rapidly and escalate without warning. Travelers should also avoid sensitive infrastructure locations such as police stations, government buildings, financial institutions, and transportation hubs during periods of tension.
- Travelers should exercise caution in crowded environments due to the risk of opportunistic theft, including pickpocketing and distraction-based theft. Travelers should secure personal belongings at all times and assume that criminal actors may use coordinated distraction techniques, such as verbal engagement or physical jostling, to facilitate theft. Travelers should remain alert to individuals loitering or standing behind them in crowded areas.
- Travelers should avoid engaging with strangers who attempt unsolicited conversation or provocation and should disengage from verbal interaction immediately. Travelers should not respond to verbal provocation, should avoid prolonged eye contact with unknown individuals, and should prioritize moving to a secure location if confronted or unsettled.
- Travelers should carry a fully charged mobile phone with emergency contacts programmed and should keep identification and emergency medical information readily accessible. Travelers should ensure cash is carried in small denominations and should separate cash, cards, and valuables across different secure locations on their person. Travelers should limit the use of credit or debit cards to reputable establishments where necessary.

Culture

Unrated

Standard Hours of Operation

Business: Monday-Friday, 0800-1700; Saturday 0900-1200

Government: Monday-Friday, 0800-1700

Banking: Monday-Friday, 0900-1500

Business attire in the Philippines is generally semi-formal. For men, a lightweight business suit or a professional shirt with a tie is appropriate. For women, conservative dresses or lightweight business suits are standard. Dress is often adapted to the tropical climate, with an emphasis on neat and professional appearance rather than heavy formal wear.

Appointments are generally scheduled during standard working hours and should be arranged in advance. Punctuality is expected in professional contexts, although minor delays may occur in practice. Informal conversation is common at the start of meetings, and relationship-building is often an important part of business interactions. When meetings include meals, the host typically offers to pay. Alcohol consumption during business lunches or dinners is generally accepted in many professional settings, but varies depending on company culture and participants.

English is widely used in business and government settings. Use of local language phrases is appreciated but not required. Business cards are commonly exchanged and are typically presented with both hands or the right hand. Formal titles such as Mr., Ms., or professional honorifics should be used until otherwise indicated. Seniority is respected in introductions, and the most senior person should be greeted first. Handshakes are standard at the beginning and end of meetings, with formality depending on the context and level of familiarity.

Gestures

Unrated

Business cards are widely used in the Philippines and should be presented and received with both hands, or with the right hand, as a sign of respect. Cards are generally treated with care, and it is considered courteous to take a moment to acknowledge and read a card upon receipt rather than immediately putting it away.

At the beginning of a meeting, handshakes are standard when greeting each participant. Upon departure, it is also customary to repeat handshakes with attendees. In cross-gender interactions, it is generally appropriate for men to wait for women to initiate a handshake, while following the other party's lead regarding physical greetings. In more formal or hierarchical settings, the most senior individual is typically greeted first.

Eye contact is generally maintained in professional and social interactions, as it signals attentiveness and respect. However, prolonged or intense staring may be perceived as confrontational or uncomfortable, particularly in unfamiliar or hierarchical contexts. A balanced level of eye contact is therefore expected, adjusted to the nature of the relationship and setting.

Certain gestures and behaviors should be avoided as they may be considered disrespectful or inappropriate in the local context. Pointing directly at individuals using the index finger is generally discouraged, as it may be perceived as rude or confrontational. Prolonged staring at strangers can also be interpreted as intrusive. Standing with hands on hips may be viewed as aggressive or confrontational in some situations, particularly during disagreements or interactions with authority figures. More generally, restrained and polite body language is preferred in both professional and public environments.

Religions

Unrated

Catholic 83%; Muslim 5%; Others, including Evangelical, Iglesia ni Kristo, other Christian, 12%

Ethnicities

● Unrated

Tagalog 28%; Cebuano 13%; Ilocano 9%; Bisaya/Binisaya 8%; Hiligaynon Ilonggo 8%; Bikol 6%; Others, including Waray 28%

Significant Dates

● Unrated

2026 Significant Dates

Jan. 1 New Year's Day

Feb. 17 Chinese New Year

Feb. 25 EDSA People Power Revolution Anniversary

April 2 Maundy Thursday

April 3 Good Friday

April 4 Black Saturday

April 9 Day of Valor (Araw ng Kagitingan)

May 1 Labor Day

June 12 Independence Day

Aug. 21 Ninoy Aquino Day

Aug. 31 National Heroes' Day

Oct. 31 All Saints' Day Eve

Nov. 1 All Saints' Day

Nov. 2 All Souls' Day

Nov. 30 Bonifacio Day

Dec. 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

Dec. 25 Christmas Day

Dec. 30 Rizal Day

Dec. 31 New Year's Eve

Financial

Unrated

Financial systems in the Philippines vary significantly depending on location, infrastructure development, and level of financial inclusion. Acceptance of cash, debit cards, and credit cards is uneven, with cash remaining the dominant form of payment in many rural areas and smaller establishments. In major cities, including Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao, electronic payments are widely accepted at hotels, shopping centers, and larger commercial establishments, though smaller vendors may still operate on a cash-only basis due to limited payment infrastructure.

Banks and licensed money changers generally provide official exchange rates, and travelers are advised to use regulated providers for currency exchange. The import and export of both local and foreign currency is permitted; however, amounts exceeding the legal declaration threshold must be declared on entry and exit in accordance with customs regulations.

Currency

● Unrated

Currency Name/Code

The official currency of the Philippines is the Philippine peso (PHP), locally referred to as the *peso*. One Philippine peso is divided into 100 centavos (*sentimos*). While PHP is the sole official legal tender for domestic transactions, US dollars (USD) are accepted at select establishments, such as international hotels, major airports, and high-end commercial venues, though often at unfavorable private exchange rates. Euros and other major foreign currencies are rarely accepted directly for transactions.

Currency Convertibility

Banks and licensed money changers generally offer the most reliable and regulated exchange rates in the Philippines. Larger commercial banks may offer more competitive rates than smaller institutions. Although informal or unlicensed money changers may operate in some areas, their services are illegal and may expose travelers to financial fraud or unfavorable exchange rates.

Travelers may bring in or take out up to PHP 50,000 (approximately USD 890) in Philippine currency without prior authorization. Amounts exceeding PHP 50,000 require prior written authorization from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and must be declared.

Credit Card

● Unrated

Major credit cards are widely accepted in shops, restaurants, hotels, and businesses, particularly in urban areas such as Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao. Acceptance is more limited in rural areas and smaller establishments, where cash remains the preferred or only payment method. Some merchants may impose minimum transaction amounts or additional processing fees for card payments.

Taxes and Tipping

● Unrated

Tipping is not strictly mandatory in the Philippines, and practices vary by establishment type. Many hotels and restaurants already include a 10% service charge in the bill, in which case additional tipping is not expected but may be given for good service. Where no service charge is included, a small gratuity of around 5–10% is appreciated but not compulsory. Taxi drivers are generally not tipped, although rounding up the fare is common.

Bank and ATM

● Unrated

ATM Availability

Automated teller machines are widely available in major urban centers such as Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao, especially in the commercial districts, shopping malls, hotels, and transport hubs. Availability decreases in smaller towns and rural areas, where access may be limited, and machines are less frequently maintained. For security reasons, ATMs located inside banks, malls, or well-monitored establishments are generally preferred over standalone machines in isolated areas.

Bank Availability

Banking services are broadly accessible in major cities and regional centers, offering standard services such as cash withdrawals, foreign exchange, and account services. In rural areas, branch coverage is more limited, and services may be restricted to basic transactions. Cash advances on major international credit cards are generally available through participating banks and financial institutions.

LGBTQ Security

3.00 - Moderate

The security environment in the Philippines is moderate and the trend is slowly improving but remains uneven across regions and LGBTQ subgroups. Same-sex sexual acts are legal, and major urban centers such as Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao host visible LGBTQ nightlife, Pride events, and advocacy networks that can provide some protective visibility for travelers. However, monitoring by human rights groups and regional organizations indicates at least dozens of murders of transgender and gender-diverse individuals since 2010, with Asia Pacific Transgender Network data attributing 30 killings in 2020–2024 alone, underscoring persistent exposure to targeted violence. Security incidents disproportionately affect transgender women, gender-nonconforming individuals, and those working in informal economies or sex work, while short-term visitors who remain in commercial areas and avoid confrontations with authorities generally face lower but non-negligible risk.

LGBTQ Legal Environment

3.00

The legal environment in the Philippines poses a moderate threat and the trend is slowly improving through piecemeal protections rather than comprehensive reform. Non-commercial, consensual same-sex sexual acts are legal nationwide, and the age of consent is equal regardless of sexual orientation. National legislation such as the Anti-Bullying Act, Safe Spaces Act, and financial-consumer protection law explicitly reference sexual orientation and, in some cases, gender identity, providing targeted protections in schools, public spaces, and certain services. However, the Family Code restricts marriage to a man and a woman, same-sex civil unions are not recognized, joint adoption by same-sex couples is not available, and there is no straightforward administrative process for legal gender recognition, which generally requires a court order. The long-debated SOGIESC Equality Bill, intended to create comprehensive anti-discrimination protections, again failed to pass before the 19th Congress adjourned in 2025 and has been refiled in the 20th Congress, extending a legislative stalemate that has lasted more than 25 years. In response, at least nine provinces and dozens of cities and municipalities—including Quezon City, Cebu City, Davao, Manila, and Zamboanga—have adopted local anti-discrimination ordinances, creating a patchwork of protections that are strongest in major urban centers and tourist hubs.

LGBTQ Enforcement

2.00

The legal enforcement environment in the Philippines poses a high threat to LGBTQ individuals, as implementation of protections is inconsistent and accountability for anti-LGBTQ violence is limited. Police have established LGBTQ or “gender and development” desks in some stations and participate in Pride-related outreach, but there is no systematic national tracking of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes, and a 2023 freedom-of-information response confirmed the absence of consolidated data even for Metro Manila. Investigations into killings of transgender women and other LGBTQ individuals often proceed slowly or stall entirely, and advocacy groups highlight impunity as a structural feature of the environment. High-profile cases—such as the killing of transgender woman Jennifer Laude by a US Marine, followed by the perpetrator’s presidential pardon—have reinforced perceptions that justice outcomes are unreliable when victims are LGBTQ individuals. At the same time, enforcement of existing protective measures—such as anti-bullying regulations that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in schools—remains uneven, with Human Rights Watch documenting ongoing bullying, harassment, and discriminatory school policies despite the legal framework. For inbound travelers, this means that recourse after an incident may depend heavily on the location, the specific police unit involved, and support from local civil-society partners or consular officials.

LGBTQ Social Environment

3.00

The social environment in the Philippines poses a moderate threat and the trend is slowly improving, though risks remain elevated for transgender women and gender-nonconforming individuals. Survey data from the Pew Research Center show that 73 percent of Filipinos believe that LGBTQ people should be accepted by society—the second-highest level of acceptance recorded in Asia-Pacific and stable between 2013 and 2019—placing the Philippines among the more socially accepting countries in the region. More recent analysis indicates that many Filipinos view gays and lesbians as equally trustworthy and recognize LGBTQ contributions to society, aligning with highly visible LGBTQ figures in media, entertainment, and local politics. At the same time, conservative religious leaders and allied legislators continue to mobilize against the SOGIESC Equality Bill and marriage equality, often framing LGBTQ advocacy as a threat to family or religious values, and public debate around the bill periodically triggers spikes in online harassment and offline hostility. Human Rights Watch and local NGOs report that LGBTQ students experience bullying and exclusion in schools, while community-level violence and harassment most acutely affect

transgender women, especially those who are perceived LGBTQ individuals in lower-income neighborhoods or engaged in informal work. For visitors, this environment generally allows discreet same-sex couples and gender-conforming travelers to navigate urban spaces with relatively low day-to-day interference, but it warrants heightened caution around public displays of affection, participation in protests, and travel in unfamiliar nightlife districts, particularly for transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals. For organizations sending staff or travelers to the Philippines, risk management should focus on itinerary-specific assessments (including whether destinations have local anti-discrimination ordinances), proactive engagement with local LGBTQ organizations, and clear guidance on interacting with authorities, reporting incidents, and accessing medical or legal support.

Active Alerts

No Alerts

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