



PHILIPPINES



PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

The Philippines is located approximately 800 km from the southeast coast of Mainland Asia, east of Vietnam and southeast of China. It is comprised of more than 7,000 islands, although many are very small and uninhabited. The Philippines is divided into three main geographical island groups: Luzon in the North, Visayas in the centre, and Mindanao in the South.

The Philippines has mountains, rainforests and a tropical maritime climate with rainy and dry seasons. It is prone to many types of natural disasters, such as active volcanoes, earthquakes, and intense storms and flooding.

BASIC FACTS

POPULATION: 104,256,076 (percentage under 25 years: 53%)

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 69 years

LITERACY RATE (AGE 15 AND OVER CAN READ & WRITE): 96%

OFFICIAL AND MAJOR LANGUAGE(S): Filipino (official; based on Tagalog) and English (official); eight major dialects: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan

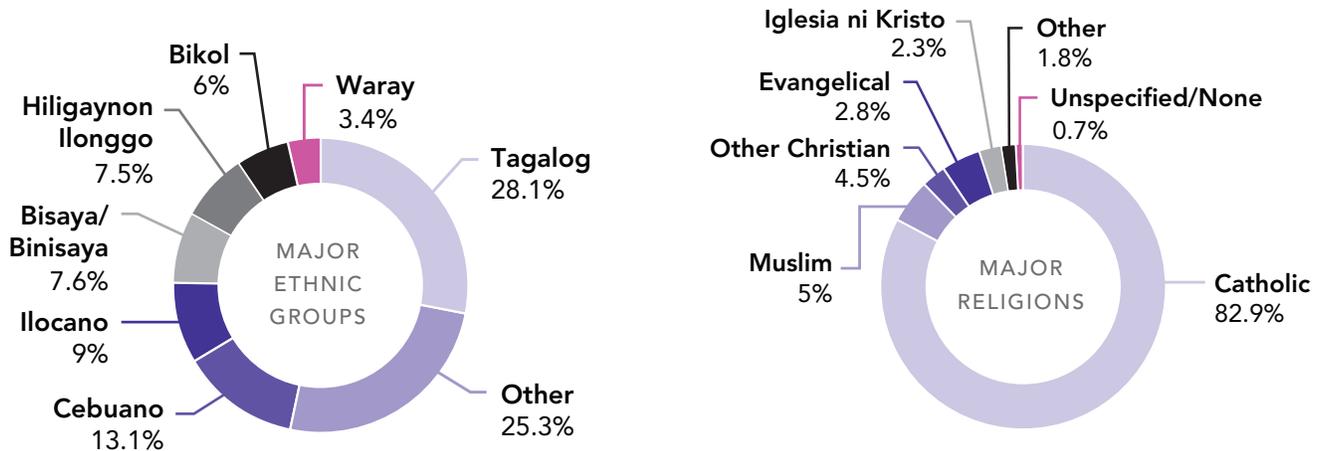
TYPE OF GOVERNMENT: Presidential republic

CURRENT LEADER: President Rodrigo Duterte

Source: CIA World Fact Book

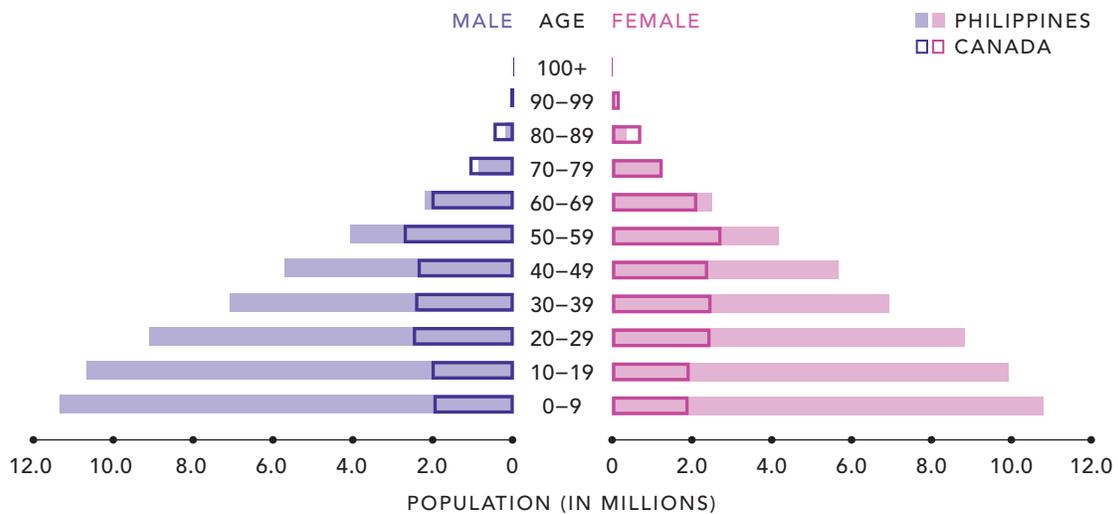


PEOPLE & CULTURE



Source: CIA World Fact Book

POPULATION PYRAMID



Source: CIA World Fact Book

INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

ACTIVE INTERNET USERS: 63% of population

ACTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USERS: 63% of population

AVERAGE DAILY INTERNET USE: 9.48 hours

AVERAGE DAILY SOCIAL MEDIA USE: 3.95 hours

Source: We Are Social



ECONOMY

GDP: C\$407.04 billion

GDP PER-CAPITA: C\$3,865

CURRENCY: Peso

MAJOR EXPORTS & IMPORTS:

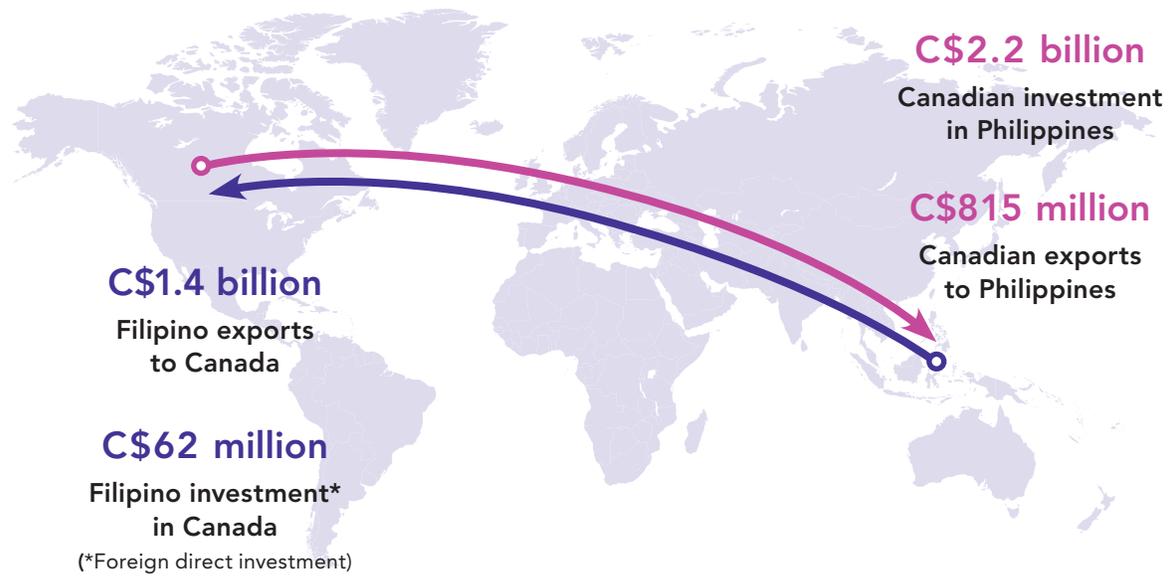
Exports: semiconductors and electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, fruits

Imports: electronic products, mineral fuels, machinery and transport equipment, iron and steel, textile fabrics, grains, chemicals, plastics

Source: Embassy of Canada in the Philippines & CIA World Factbook

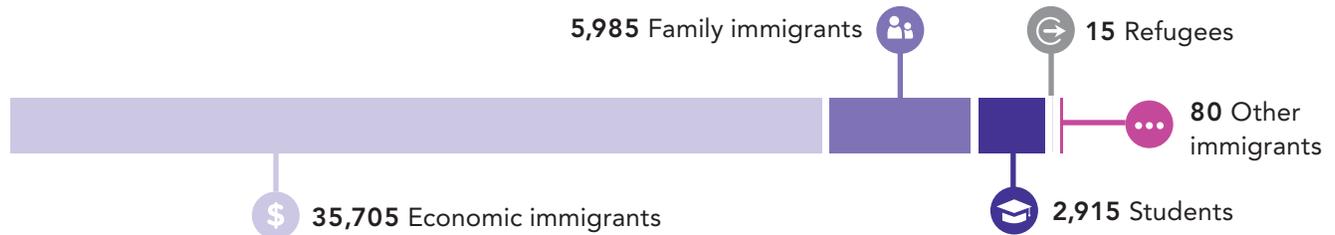
LINKS TO CANADA

TRADE, INVESTMENT IN 2017:



Source: Embassy of Canada in the Philippines

FILIPINOS COMING TO CANADA IN 2016*: (*does not include tourists)



Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



NOTABLE DATES

HISTORICAL

Araw ng Kasarinlan (Independence Day)

June 12 marks the day in 1898 when the Philippines declared its independence from Spain during the Spanish-American War. The leader of the independence movement was 29-year-old General Emilio Aguinaldo. However, independence was short-lived; the Americans quickly claimed the Philippines as a U.S. territory, which Aguinaldo continued to fight against. In 1946 the Philippines gained full independence. Filipinos celebrate this national holiday with official ceremonies and parades.

More on Independence Day:

June 12, 1898: Philippine Independence Declared, *History.com*, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/philippine-independence-declared>

CULTURAL HOLIDAY

Easter Week

In the Philippines, where 83% of the people are Catholic, Easter is a major holiday. Also known as Holy Week, it begins on Palm Sunday, the week before Eastern Sunday. During much of the week, many businesses either close or have reduced hours. On Palm Sunday, some Filipinos take palm leaves to mass to be blessed by a priest and then take them home. The ceremonies include cross processions and reenactments of the crucifixion.

More on Easter:

Overview: Holy Week Traditions in the Philippines, *Rappler*, <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/88704-holy-week-rituals-philippines>

CURRENT EVENT

Typhoon Haiyan

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines), swept across central Philippines. It was the strongest storm ever recorded to hit land, with winds of up to 315km/h and 7-metre storm surges. It led to the death of over 7,000 people and displaced more than four million people from their homes. Many communities are still recovering.

More on Typhoon Haiyan:

5 Facts You Need To Know About Typhoon Haiyan, *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, <http://news.trust.org/slideshow/?id=d47d92ea-f6d8-475f-93c6-4629528e5695>

Typhoon Haiyan, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-24901032>

HONOURABLE MENTION

Anniversary of the People's Power Revolution

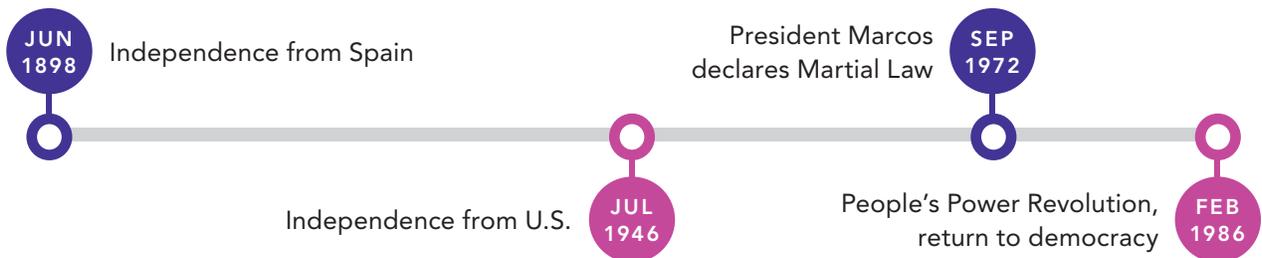
Every year from February 22 to 25, Filipinos celebrate the anniversary of the People's Power Revolution. This event happened in 1986, when four days of peaceful demonstrations resulted in the overthrow of President Ferdinand Marcos and his corrupt and authoritarian regime. It also marked the country's return to democratization. The event is also referred to as the EDSA Revolution Anniversary. EDSA stands for Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the place where many of the demonstrations took place.

More on People's Power Anniversary:

People Power at 25, *BBC*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12567320>

Philippines Celebrates 30th Anniversary Of Revolution, *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2016/02/philippines-celebrates-30th-anniversary-revolution-160225075334366.html>

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS



Source: Public Holidays & BBC



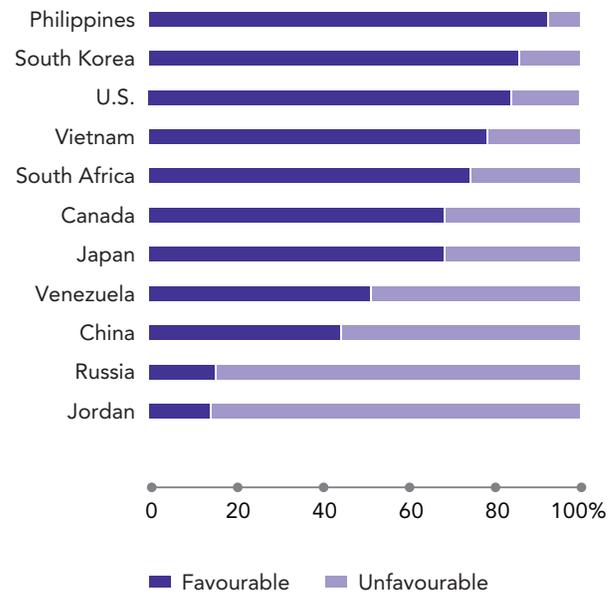
THE PHILIPPINES–U.S. RELATIONSHIP (IT’S COMPLICATED)

A 2015 survey asked people in different countries about their view of the U.S. The Philippines was more favourable towards the U.S. than any other country included in the survey—including the U.S. itself! These feelings have been positive for several years, ranging from 85% to 92% favourable.

But behind these numbers is a more complicated story. The relationship between the two countries goes back more than 100 years, when the U.S. seized the Philippines at the end of the Spanish-American War (1898). The U.S. gradually introduced more self-government, and the Philippines gained full independence after World War Two. But the U.S. maintained a naval base and an air base there because of the country’s strategically important location in the Pacific Ocean. This military presence has been a source of ongoing local resentment.

In recent years, tensions between the Philippines and another major power, China, have risen over territorial disputes in the South China Sea. That seems to have drawn the Philippines and U.S. closer together. That is, until the election of President Rodrigo Duterte in 2016. President Duterte has signaled that he is thinking of “breaking up” with the U.S. and building stronger relations with China, which would likely impact the Filipino-American relationship.

Favourable vs Unfavourable Attitudes towards the U.S., by Country



Source: Pew Global Attitudes, 2015

Want to learn more?

- Filipinos Like the US Even More than Americans Do, *Rappler*, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/56085-philippines-usa-pew-research>
- Here’s the Backstory on Why the US Has Such Close Ties to the Philippines, *Public Radio International*, <http://www.pri.org/stories/2013-11-12/heres-backstory-why-us-has-such-close-ties-philippines>
- Old Frenemies: A Timeline of US-Philippine Relations, *Foreign Policy*, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/29/old-frenemies-a-timeline-of-us-philippine-relations/>
- Background: The U.S.-Philippines Defense Alliance, *Council on Foreign Relations*, <http://www.cfr.org/philippines/us-philippines-defense-alliance/p38101>
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- Philippines President Duterte Seeks to Cut U.S. Military Ties While Wooing China, *CBS News*, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/philippines-president-duterte-seeks-to-cut-us-military-ties-while-wooing-china/>



REMITTANCES: ECONOMIC BOOST FROM FILIPINOS ABROAD

The Philippines economy is one of the fastest-growing in Asia. But some Filipino families still rely on money from family members working in other countries. These payments are called remittances, and the Philippines is the third-largest country in the world in terms of the dollar value of its remittances, behind only India and China. In 2015, these remittances totaled US\$27 billion, or about 10 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

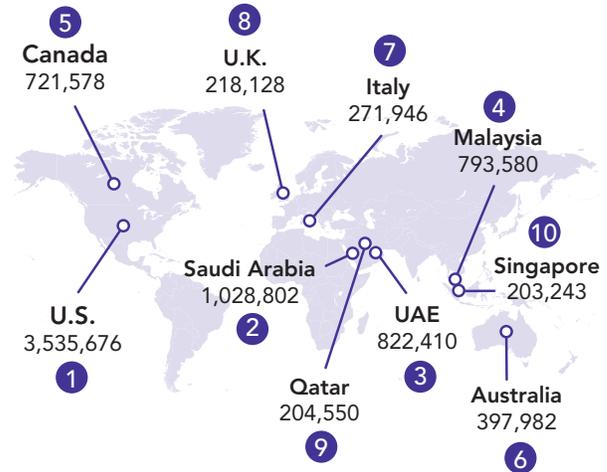
Currently, more than 10 million Filipinos are working abroad. Remittances from the U.S. are the highest among overseas Filipino workers, followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East. Canada is in eighth place. According to the Philippines Statistics Authority, the most common careers among overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) are unskilled labour (33%), service and market sales workers (18%), and plant and machine operators and assemblers (13%).

In 2014, the Philippines was the largest source of immigration to Canada, welcoming approximately new 40,000 permanent residents. Filipino immigrants to Canada work a wide range of jobs, depending on the province they reside in. Two of the most common professions are nursing and care giving. It is estimated that families in the Philippines receives approximately C\$2 billion in remittances from Canada every year.

Want to learn more?

- Remittances: \$24 Billion a Year Sent Home from Canada, *Vancouver Sun*, <http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Remittances+billion+year+sent+home+from+Canada/10080290/story.html>
- Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP), *World Bank*, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=PH>
- INFOGRAPHIC: Where \$26.92B of OFW Remittances Come From, *GMA News*, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/500918/money/infographic-where-26-92b-of-ofw-remittances-come-from>
- Smarter Remittances Supporting Smarter Students in the Philippines, *USAID*, <https://www.usaid.gov/div/portfolio/remittances>
- 2015 Survey on Overseas Filipinos, *Philippines Statistics Authority*, <https://psa.gov.ph/content/2015-survey-overseas-filipinos-0>

Where Filipinos Live and Work (2013)



Sources: Commission on Filipinos Overseas, CNBC, World Bank



THE RISKS OF REPORTING IN THE PHILIPPINES

“In the Philippines, journalists carry guns and know how to use them because they are in constant danger.” That 2015 statement was made by Reporters without Borders, an organization committed to freedom of information and expression around the world. Another group, the Committee to Protect Journalists, ranks the Philippines the fourth-worst on its Impunity Index based on how many murders of journalists in the past decade have been unsolved and/or unpunished.

The Philippines is a vibrant democracy with a free media. But it has a lot of corrupt politicians, and many believe the murderers are hired by politicians who are under investigation. Of the reporters killed, 61 per cent covered politics and 43 per cent covered corruption (and some covered both).

The most serious example of Philippines journalists under threat was the Maguindanao Massacre, also known as the Ampatuan Massacre. In November 2009, a group of 57 civilians, 30 of them journalists, were kidnapped and killed while on their way to a political event on the southern island of Mindanao. The suspects are the politically-connected Ampatuan family. So far, prosecutors have filed murder charges against 95 suspects, although none of them have been convicted yet. In October 2016, the Justice Secretary set up a new task force to speed up the process.

Strong Freedom of Expression in the Philippines, but High Risk for Journalists



Sources: Freedom House Country Reports, 2015; Committee to Protect Journalists, Global Impunity Index, 2015

Want to learn more?

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- 77 Journalists Killed in Philippines since 1992/Motive Confirmed, <https://www.cpj.org/killed/asia/philippines/>
- Philippines, *Freedom House*, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/philippines>
- Maguindanao Massacre Threatens Press Freedom in the Philippines, *The Media Project*, <https://themediaproject.org/news/index.php/2009/12/28/maguindanao-massacre-threatens-press-freedom-in-the-philippines?rq=Philippines>
- Philippines (see section on Legal Environment), *Freedom House*, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/philippines>
- Task Force on Media Slays to Prioritize Maguindanao Massacre, *The Philippine Star*, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/10/15/1633806/tf-media-slays-prioritize-maguindanao-massacre>



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The Media Project, <http://themediaproject.org/page/maguindanao-massacre-story-index>

Reporters without Borders, <https://rsf.org/en/philippines>

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ABOUT ASIA PROFILES

Asia Profiles introduces you to some basic facts, background, and points of interest of the countries and territories of the Asia Pacific. It is part of the Asia Pacific Curriculum initiative by the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

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