

Philippines



Form of Government: Presidential republic; power is equally divided among executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Principle of separation of powers: legislation belongs to Congress, execution to the Executive, and settlement of legal controversies to the Judiciary.

Women's Participation: Women constitute 25.4 percent of the national government and hold important roles in both the executive and legislative branches. Since 2010, women have been appointed to top-level official posts in the cabinet, including the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, the Secretary of Justice and the Secretary of Labor and Employment. The Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process is a woman.

Population: 107,668,231

Ethnic groups: Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligayno Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4%, other 25.3%

Religion: Catholic 82.9%, Muslim 5%, and others

Context & Background

The Philippines has experienced armed conflict since the 1960's. The two main active insurgent groups are the Muslim separatist movement and the Communist Party, whose National Democratic Front and armed wing - the New People's Army - have employed armed struggle to liberate the country from elite leadership and foreign oppression. Due to allegations of corruption, human rights violations, and lack of land reform and development in rural communities, the resistance intensified during the dictatorship of former President Ferdinand Marcos (1965–1986). In addition, the Muslim separatist movement emerged in reaction to discrimination and oppression of the Moros, indigenous Muslims residing in Mindanao in the Southern Philippines, who suffered from poor governance and widespread poverty. An alleged 1968 massacre of the Moro recruits of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) instigated an uprising, leading to the establishment of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The Government of the Philippines (GPH) has been negotiating with armed groups in various regions to seek peaceful settlement of the conflicts. The peace process between the GPH and the MILF began in 1997 but stalled repeatedly due to policy shifts and/or regime changes. The Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB, 2014) encompasses the major agreements since the start of the negotiations in 1997, including the Framework Agreement (2012). These two landmark accords serve as a road map to political and structural reforms in the Muslim Province of Mindanao, such as the creation of a new autonomous political entity called 'Bangsamoro'. Under the CAB, in exchange for broader autonomy, the Moro rebels agreed to end violence and their demand for a separate state.

The Philippine peace process is unique in that efforts have been made to reach out to and include all armed groups in the talks. Since 2001, the government of Malaysia has served as facilitator of the peace talks and head of the International Monitoring Team (IMT), deployed since 2005. The IMT includes representatives from Malaysia, Libya, Brunei, Japan, Norway and the EU. Its Civilian Protection Component (CPC) is comprised of the Mindanao Human Rights Action Center, Mindanao People's Caucus, Moslem Organization of Government Officials and Professionals, and Nonviolent Peaceforce. In addition to formal peace negotiations, two peace tables are in the process of implementing closure agreements. In 2012, a closure agreement was drafted between the GPH and the *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa–Pilipinas* (Revolutionary Proletarian Army)/Alex Boncayao Brigade Tabara Paduano Group which transformed into an unarmed, socio-economic organization. The same year, the GPH and the Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army/ Cordillera Bodong Administration (CPLA-CBA) marked the first year of the implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement, which had transformed CPLA-CBA into a mechanism for peace and development.

Inclusion of Women

Neither the rebels nor the government have made extensive efforts to include women in the formal peace process, and no official mechanism exists for women's inclusion. However, the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 would institutionalize women's participation when fully implemented. The Communist Party of the Philippines - National Democratic Front and the New People's Army boast of abiding by gender principles, but in reality, women participating in the negotiating panels are limited to the wives of the organizations' leaders, and cultural sensitivities also play a significant role. Some high-level women, such as Secretary Teresita Quintos Deles, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, and Annabelle Abaya, who held the same post previously, have championed the inclusion of women in the peace process in their individual capacity. In the formal peace processes, women have actively engaged as negotiators, consultants, observers, and as part of legal and technical support staff. The Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process is a woman. Additionally, women are active in monitoring emerging conflicts and facilitating dialogues to prevent them.

Timeline of Recent Events

1993	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) created
July 1997	Agreement for the General Cessation of Hostilities
Aug 1998	General Framework of Agreement of Intent between GPH and MILF
June 2001	Agreement on Peace between GPH and MILF
Aug 2009	Magna Carta of Women signed into law - Contains section on Peace and Development, which calls for an increase in the number of women participating in decision-making in peace processes and inclusion of women's welfare and concerns in the peace agenda
Jan 2011	Closure agreement between GPH and CPLA-CBA; 25 women engaged
Oct 2012	Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) - In the Basic Rights section, gender-related provisions include the "right of women to meaningful political participation and protection from all forms of violence" and equal opportunity in socio-economic activities and public service. The Normalization Program, which focuses on the "return to normal life affecting combatant and non-combatant elements of the MILF, indigenous peoples, women, children, and internally displaced persons."
Dec 2012	Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer appointed first female chief negotiator to lead talks with the MILF
Feb 2013	Annex on Transitional Arrangements and Modalities - transitional justice, including human rights, women's rights and other gender concerns to be a part of the programs to be finalized in line with the closure agreements with armed groups.
April 2013	Three female representatives from GPH and one from MILF; three of these are members of the Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325) network that engages in the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Their involvement is crucial in ensuring that women's agenda, concerns and rights are represented and upheld in the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which will serve as the foundation of the new Bangsamoro political entity.
March 2014	Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

Key Players

Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front
New People's Army (armed wing of Philippines-National Democratic Front)
Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)
Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)
Government of the Philippines (GPH)
Government of Malaysia (facilitator)
Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army/ Cordillera Bodong Administration (CPLA-CBA)
Cordillera Peoples Alliance (civil society involved here) – are also part of negotiations

Relevant Documents

2009 Magna Carta of Women
2011 Philippine National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2011
2012 Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (www.opapp.gov.ph)
2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (www.opapp.gov.ph)