



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
of Philadelphia

Philippines

Republic of the Philippines



Key Facts



World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall): Ranked 134 (43.91)

Head of State / Head of Government: President Rodrigo DUTERTE (since 30 June 2016)

Capital city: Manila

Population: 105,893,381 (July 2018 est.)

Official Language(s): unspecified Filipino (official; based on Tagalog) and English (official)

Ethnic Groups: Tagalog 28.1%, Bisaya/Binisaya 11.4%, Cebuano 9.9%, Ilocano 8.8%, Hiligaynon/Ilonggo 8.4%, Bikol/Bicol 6.8%, Waray 4%, other local ethnicity 26.1%, other foreign ethnicity .1% (2010 est.)

Currency: Philippine peso

Gross domestic product (PPP): 313.6 billion USD (2017)

Internet penetration: 62%

Most trusted medium of information: Television

Legal System: mixed legal system of civil, common, Islamic (sharia), and customary law

Political system: Presidential Republic

Journalists Killed/Jailed 2019: 3

Media Environment: multiple national private TV and radio networks; multi-channel satellite and cable TV systems available; more than 400 TV stations; about 1,500 cable TV providers with more than 2 million subscribers, and some 1,400 radio stations; the Philippines adopted Japan's Integrated Service Digital Broadcast – Terrestrial standard for digital terrestrial television in November 2013 and is scheduled to complete the switch from analog to digital broadcasting by the end of 2023 (2019). According to the Media Ownership Monitor (2017), Philippines is "not a nation of newspaper readers" and print media (newspapers and magazines) is "losing its relevance" as a source of information as it lags behind television, radio, and even the Internet by rate of exposure. The national and major regional newspapers have

already invested in online presence, as more and more Filipinos get their news and other content from digital media. However, community and regional press have seen growth in the past few decades and in many rural areas, community press groups on its reputation, the collective participatory interest of its audience and its perceived role in social unity.

Media Issues: When sworn in as president in June 2016, Rodrigo Duterte issued this mysterious but grim warning: “Just because you're a journalist, you are not exempted from assassination, if you're a son of a bitch. Freedom of expression cannot help you if you have done something wrong.” Three Philippine journalists were killed in 2019, most likely by agents working for local politicians, who can have reporters silenced with complete license. The government, for its part, has developed several ways to pressure journalists who dare to be overly critical of the summary methods adopted by “Punisher” Duterte and his notorious “war on drugs.” After targeting the Daily Philippines Inquirer and the TV network ABS-CBN in 2017, the temperamental president and his staff waged a judicial harassment campaign against the news website Rappler and its editor, Maria Ressa, in 2018. The persecution was accompanied by online harassment campaigns waged by pro-Duterte troll supporters, which also launched cyber-attacks on alternative news websites and the site of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines in order to block them. In response to all these attacks, the Philippine independent media have rallied to the call to “Hold the line.”

Popular Forms of Media Consumption

Television: Television is the most used and trusted media in the Philippines, according to the most recent publicly available data (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2013). Around 81 percent of the population watch television, of which 71.6 percent at least once a week. In a Nielsen survey in 2016, television is the most trusted source of political information (58 percent of the sample). Cable/satellite technologies offer subscriptions to Filipinos based in other parts of the globe, although cable/satellite subscriptions are limited to only 12 percent of urban Philippines as of 2017.

Digital Media: When we talk about digital media in the Philippines, we refer largely to Internet communication platforms. As of 2018, 67 million out of 104 million Filipinos (63 percent) use the Internet – a staggering 3,350 percent increase from year 2000s’ figures, based on the data from Internet World Stats (2018), which combined the figures published by Facebook, International Telecommunications Union, and other sources. With these figures, the Philippines is ranked 12th worldwide in terms of number of Internet users, this despite having the slowest average Internet speed in Asia-Pacific as of 2017. Filipinos are also at the top spot worldwide when it comes to the amount of time spent on Internet: An average 10 hours and two minutes every day.

Social Networks: For three consecutive years since 2015, Philippines has been at the top spot worldwide in terms of the amount of time people spend on social media, based on the report published by advertising agency We Are Social and social media management platform company Hootsuite in 2018. Filipinos spend an average of three hours and 57 minutes on social media in any device every day, hence the label “social media capital of the world.” According to the same study, the Philippines has 67 million active social media users. This figure stands more significance if contextualized – the total population as of 2018 is roughly 104 million. About 62 million access social media through their smartphones. These figures are higher than the numbers in some highly developed countries like Japan and South Korea. Facebook is the most widely used platform – 94 percent of Internet users use the network, 40 percent higher than the US figure.