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Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 1 - Philippines

Overview: The Government of the Philippines (GPH) continued to dedicate significant resources to countering threats from terrorist groups that operate primarily, but not exclusively, in the country's southern regions. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and civilian law enforcement units remained engaged in CT operations. AFP, law enforcement, judicial authorities, and corrections participated in numerous U.S. capacity building programs, using received training and donated logistics to detect, degrade, prevent, and respond to terrorist incidents.

Under the Kapit Bisig agreement, the U.S. military continues to partner with the AFP in an "advise and assist" capacity in Mindanao focused on the threat from ISIS-East Asia (ISIS-EA) and affiliated groups. ISIS affiliates, in addition to ISIS-EA, that remained active in 2022 included elements of the following groups: Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), Ansar al-Khalifa Philippines, and rogue elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MILF accepted a peace plan that created the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (or BARMM) in 2019 and formally renounced terrorism. The attacks listed in the Statistical Annex (Appendix A) attributed to MILF are presumably carried out by rogue elements of that organization.

The Communist Party of the Philippines/The National People's Army (aka the New People's Army) carried out the most terrorist attacks in the Philippines during this reporting period. The National People's Army (NPA) continued to recruit, fundraise, and stage attacks on security forces and civilians alike.

In 2022 the GPH continued plans to recast the AFP from an agency responsible primarily for combating terrorism, to one focusing on territorial defense / external security. Eventually, the lead CT agency will be the Special Action Force (SAF) of the Philippine National Police (PNP). SAF has received numerous trainings and logistical donations for several years, including in 2022.

SAF primarily works with the U.S. military in the Mindanao region. As a result of the upcoming transition, the Bureau of Counterterrorism Programs Office has conducted several assessments of the Mindanao region's civilian rule-of-law units, to include police, justice, and corrections. Because of the continued pressure by Philippine authorities, the number of arrests and surrenders of individuals facing terrorism charges increased in 2022.

Human rights organizations continued to raise concerns over security forces' "red tagging" of civil society advocates and human rights defenders as communists or terrorists or both, which has led to threats, harassment, and killings of the red-tagged individuals.

2022 Terrorist Incidents: Terrorist attacks using explosive devices and firearms continued to target civilians, critical infrastructure, and security forces. Significant attacks in 2022 included these three:

- On August 10, rogue elements of the MILF carried out an assault in Cotabato using small arms against an unidentified target. Four civilians were killed.
- On October 15 the ASG assaulted the AFP in Basilan. One soldier died, and two soldiers were wounded.
- On November 10, rogue elements of the MILF attacked the AFP in Basilan, killing three soldiers and injuring 17.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Antiterrorism Act (ATA) was signed into law in 2020 and was developed with assistance from the United States. The GPH maintains that that the ATA is one of the most important pieces of legislation that addresses security and protection of its citizens from potential terrorist acts. In addition to numerous police, justice, aviation security, and border programs, a corrections pilot program was resumed by Philippine authorities post-COVID in a Manila jail that holds the most terrorist detainees. The goal is better management of high-profile detainees while maintaining human rights and best practices. With international assistance and interagency cooperation, the GPH has made significant progress in 2022 by increasing its ability to identify, investigate, and prosecute terrorist actions.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: The Philippines is a member of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering and its FIU, the Anti-Money

Laundering Council, is a member of the Egmont Group. The Philippines remained on the FATF “gray list” in 2022.

In 2022, FATF reported the Philippines had taken steps toward improving its Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism regime, including by increasing the resources of its FIU, using its targeted financial sanctions (TFS) framework for terrorist financing (TF), implementing registration requirements and applying proportionate and dissuasive sanctions to unregistered and illegal remittance operators, increasing TF investigation and prosecution capacity, demonstrating that appropriate measures are being taken with respect to the non-profit sector, and implementing supervision for TFS. The Philippines has until the end of 2023 to resolve all strategic deficiencies.

Philippine units working on TF have also increased their capabilities in proportion to the number of cases. In 2022 an additional four TF cases were filed for prosecution, involving 60 criminal counts and 20 defendants. During TF investigations, five additional money laundering cases, not related to terrorism, were opened against nine defendants.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2022 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume 2, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*.

Countering Violent Extremism: The GPH has a National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and has developed and implemented CVE training for security forces and civil servants. Local governments, NGOs, and the private sector partner on CVE programs. The AFP and the PNP work with local stakeholders to encourage surrenders from the NPA, ASG, BIFF, and the ISIS-East Asia, as well as to reintegrate former terrorist fighters and family members.

International and Regional Cooperation: The Philippines continued to support CT efforts in several regional and multilateral organizations, including the United Nations, ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting, and APEC.

Associated documents

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Malaysia, Philippines

**Brief description of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
(Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on
terrorism 2022)**

Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) (Periodical Report, English)

en

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Philippines

Brief description of the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA) (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army \(CPP/NPA\)](#) (Periodical Report, English)

en

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Philippines

Brief description of the ISIS-Philippines (ISIS-P) (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - ISIS-Philippines \(ISIS-P\)](#) (Periodical Report, English)

en

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Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines

Brief description of the Jemaah Islamiya (JI) (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2022)

[Country Report on Terrorism 2022 - Chapter 5 - Jemaah Islamiya \(JI\)](#)

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Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
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(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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F.A.Q.
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