

Philippines: Government Overview

The Republic of the Philippines is a representative democracy with a presidential system based largely on the U.S. system. The similarities root in the colonial history of the country, which after centuries of Spanish sovereignty was governed by the United States for nearly half a century before gaining independence.

The principal constitutional bodies are the president, vice-president, and the cabinet; the bicameral legislature, known as Congress and consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and the judiciary, including a Supreme Court responsible for safeguarding the constitution. Constitutional commissions—the Civil Service Commission, Commission on Elections, and Commission on Audit—are significant as well. The "people" itself may in some respect be seen as a "constitutional body" in the Philippine constitution. The president is the dominating political figure. Legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separated. Fundamental rights are guaranteed.

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