



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **Philippines: Women fearing domestic violence**

**Version 1.0**

**March 2023**

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# Executive summary

Updated on 28 March 2023

Women, including those who have experienced domestic violence (DV) do not form a particular social group under the Refugee Convention.

The prevalence of domestic violence against women is difficult to assess, although DV is reportedly common. Figures from the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) from 2017 noted that 1 in 4 of women sampled, aged between 15-49, had experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence by their husband or partner at some point in their lives.

DV includes psychological, physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse, any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. DV varies between socio-economic groups and by region. However, DV contains a wide spectrum of behaviour much of which is not likely to be sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition to reach the high threshold of persecution or serious harm. Each case must be considered on its facts.

The authorities are generally willing and able to provide effective protection to victims of DV. The government operates a generally effective criminal justice system, has legislation to combat DV and measures for protection in place at the lowest administrative level (the barangay) through to the courts. There are government run shelters across the Philippines, DV helplines and NGO support. The onus is on the person claiming asylum to explain and substantiate why the 'layers' of protection available – that is, by the state and NGOs, shelters, support and re-integration services – would be unavailable to them.

The Philippines consists of over 7,000 islands with a population of over 114 million people. Internal relocation is generally available but is likely to be more viable in urban areas such as Manila, Davao or Cebu City. Each case must be considered on its facts.

A refused claim is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers still need to read the assessment in full and use relevant country information as the evidential basis for decisions.

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# Assessment

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is information in the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general**:

- a woman is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution/serious harm by non-state actors because the woman is a victim of domestic violence.
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within the Philippines
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

- 1.1.4 The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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## 1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.

- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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**Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section**

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## 2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Women are not considered to form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the Refugee Convention. While they do share an innate characteristic, or a common background that cannot be changed – being a woman – they do not have a distinct identity in the Philippines because the group is not perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.1.2 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee Convention grounds necessary for the grant of refugee status, the question is whether the particular person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).
- 2.1.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on gender issues, see the [Asylum Instruction on Gender Issues in the Asylum Process](#); and on HP, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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## 3. Risk

### 3.1 Risk from non-state actors

- 3.1.1 Domestic violence although reportedly widespread includes a wide spectrum of behaviour, much of which is not likely to be sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition to reach the high threshold of persecution or serious harm. However, it is for the woman to show she faces persecution or serious harm, with each case considered on its facts.
- 3.1.2 Despite gender equality being recognised in the constitution and legislation, and a strong women's rights movement, patriarchal socio-cultural norms on gender roles still exist in some areas of society. Traditional attitudes on the role of women in the home and family also remains pervasive, which affects socio-economic outcomes with women less likely to be the main wage earner in households (see [Social, economic and political status of women](#)

and [Cultural, family and religious attitudes](#)).

- 3.1.3 The prevalence of domestic violence against women is difficult to assess. According to the most recent Demographic Health Survey (DHS) carried out between 14 August to 27 October 2017 1 in 4 women sampled aged between 15-49 stated they had experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence by their husband or partner at some point in their lives. The DHS reported that only 35% of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence sought help, therefore cases are likely to be under-reported. The DHS also found that the frequency of domestic violence varied by socio-economic status and region, with women from poorer backgrounds more likely to experience harm. During COVID-19 related lockdowns sources reported GBV generally increased, although the national police recorded a decrease in domestic violence incidents from 7,093 in January to July 2020 to 5,282 for the same period in 2021 (see [Prevalence](#)).
- 3.1.4 Violence against women is often considered a 'family problem' and there is some reluctance to discuss family issues in public for social, cultural and religious reasons (see [Cultural, family and religious attitudes](#) and [Stigma faced by victims of violence](#)).
- 3.1.5 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 3.1.6 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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#### 4. Protection

- 4.1.1 The authorities are in general willing and able to provide effective protection for women experiencing domestic violence. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise. Each case will need to be considered on its particular circumstances. A person's reluctance to seek protection does not mean that effective protection is not available.
- 4.1.2 The government operates a generally effective criminal justice system, including laws that criminalise violence against women and institutions capable of enforcing the law, specifically the Philippine National Police, and punishing crimes against women through an independent judiciary (see [General effectiveness of police](#) and [Independence of the Judiciary](#)).
- 4.1.3 The Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act, 2004 includes but is not limited to acts of physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse against women and children. The Act provides penalties ranging from one to 6 months in prison for attempting to cause physical harm or placing a woman or child in fear of imminent threat of harm, to 6 to 12 years in prison for causing serious physical injuries (see [Legal framework](#)).
- 4.1.4 The Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) run a yearly campaign, lasting 18 days, to raise awareness of violence against women although the Philippine broadsheet paper the Philippine Star reported that many women, particularly those from low-income households, are unaware of laws protecting them from domestic violence (see [Strategies to raise awareness of violence against women](#)).

- 4.1.5 Every administrative district ('barangay') should have a Violence Against Women (VAW) desk for women to report violence and there are clear guidelines and established processes on how these should operate. In 2019 the PCW noted that not all barangays had set up VAW desks, although it is unclear from available information whether numbers have increased since that period. The Commission on Human Rights told the UK Home Office Fact-Finding Team (UK HO FFT) that the approach to gender-based violence/intimate partner violence was not consistent across the islands, especially in more isolated areas. According to the United States State Department gender sensitivity training was provided to law enforcement officers in 2021 on how to deal with women reporting domestic violence (see [Barangay](#) and [Police and specialised units](#)).
- 4.1.6 Women and Children Protection Units (WCPU) have been established in 95 healthcare settings across the country, mainly concentrated in urban areas. These units are staffed by a medical doctor, social worker and police officer, and provide women and children affected by gender-based violence support and medical services within one department (see [Government shelters and support](#)).
- 4.1.7 Women are able to obtain a Barangay Protection Order (BPO) from the barangay captain in their area. The BPO can be issued without the need for an investigation and is valid for 15 days, within the area of the barangay. Some women may experience issues seeking assistance from the barangay, such as confusion over processes, familiarity of the Barangay Captain to the accused and a tendency to seek a settlement between parties. However, the UK Home Office Fact-Finding Team (FFT) were told that this is the most accessible method for women survivors of violence and is one of the most effective and easy ways to tackle violence against women at the community level (see [Barangay](#) and [Protection Orders \(PO\)](#)).
- 4.1.8 Women can also apply for a Temporary Protection Order (TPO) and a Permanent Protection Order (PPO) through the court. Women can seek a TPO/PPO without having to seek charges under the VAWC Act. TPO/PPOs can be obtained with the help of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) and is free for VAWC cases. According to the 2021 Judiciary Annual Report there were 229 involving petitions for protection orders filed in 2021. Attorneys at the PAO and Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines told the UK HO FFT that in their experience TPO/PPOs when requested, are nearly always issued (see [Protection Orders \(PO\)](#) and [Legal aid](#)).
- 4.1.9 Government statistics on the number of investigations, arrests and prosecutions under the domestic violence law are not available. A report compiled by UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA note that the judicial system could be slow which, along with a reliance on victim participation in providing testimonials, can lead to victim withdrawal and collapsed prosecutions (see [Prosecutions](#)).
- 4.1.10 The government runs shelters across the Philippines and offers services to those affected by domestic violence. Shelters offer medical and psychological assistance and services to aid women living independently. According to a report compiled by UN Women, UNICEF and UNFPA, these

shelters do not accept repeat visits and are generally unable to accommodate boys over the age of 7. There are also services offered by non-government organisations (NGOs) and community-based programs (see [Government shelters and support](#) and [NGO shelters and support](#)).

- 4.1.11 Several helplines exist for assistance with women victims of violence, including an online portal. In December 2021 online news site Rappler reported that women and children in domestic violence related emergencies were able to access assistance by calling the 911 national emergency hotline (see [Government shelters and support](#) and [State protection](#)).
- 4.1.12 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **5. Internal relocation**

- 5.1.1 In general, there are parts of the country where a woman would not face persecution or serious harm, and it would be reasonable for her to relocate there. Women may be able to relocate to another area such as Manila Davao, Cebu City or Zamboanga and even where a woman is from the capital Manila, she may still be able to relocate within the city as it is densely populated. Each case must be considered on its facts.
- 5.1.2 The Philippines is archipelago of over 7,000 islands covering a total area of over 300,000 sq. km, a large population of over 114 million people and several large town and cities. Women are not restricted from relocating within the Philippines although an absence of family connections may make moving to another area difficult for some (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.3 Government and NGO support and shelters exist throughout the Philippines, mainly in larger cities. Internal relocation is likely to be more viable if a person can access accommodation and a support network in the place of relocation.
- 5.1.4 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **6. Certification**

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

## About the country information

This contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content of this section follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

Decision makers must use relevant country information as the evidential basis for decisions.

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Section updated: 31 January 2023

## 7. Geography

- 7.1.1 The estimated population of the Philippines was over 114 million in 2022 the ratio of men to women equal<sup>1</sup>.
- 7.1.2 The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report of August 2021 noted that: 'The Philippines consists of over 7,000 islands, which are divided into three major groups: Luzon (North), the Visayas (Central) and Mindanao (South).'<sup>2</sup>
- 7.1.3 The USSD 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom stated: 'The [Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao] BARMM is a Muslim-led autonomous region established by the central government in January 2019 following the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, with jurisdiction over five provinces and three major non-contiguous cities.'<sup>3</sup>
- 7.1.4 [This UN map](#) shows the different regions and regional capitals<sup>4</sup>.

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Section updated: 21 March 2023

## 8. Prevalence

### 8.1 Domestic violence

- 8.1.1 Sources often refer generally to sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, without specifying its nature and circumstances. Where possible, CPIT has sought to differentiate between information that relates to domestic violence and that which includes domestic violence under the umbrella term of gender-based violence.
- 8.1.2 The World Bank explained that intimate partner violence (IPV) is known as 'violence against women and their children' (VAWC) in the Philippines and that it '...is the most prevalent and documented form of GBV in the country.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CIA World Factbook '[Philippines](#)', Last updated 18 January 2022

<sup>2</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 2.5), 21 August 2021

<sup>3</sup> USSD, '[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Philippines](#)' (section 2), 2 June 2022

<sup>4</sup> UN Geospatial, '[Philippine's map](#)', 1 September 2020

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank, '[Philippines- Gender-Based Violence Policy And Institutional...](#)' (pg 15), June 2020

8.1.3 The Demographic Health Survey of 2017 (DHS 2017) provides the most detailed dataset on the prevalence of domestic violence based a sample of 25,074 women<sup>6</sup>. In its key findings the DHS found:

'... In the 12 months preceding the survey, 5% of women age 15-49 experienced physical violence and 2% experienced sexual violence.

'... 9% of ever-married women report that their husbands/partners have exhibited at least three specified types of controlling behaviors.

'... 24% of ever-married women have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their current or most recent husband/partner, and 15% experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

'... 40% of ever-married women who experienced spousal physical or sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the survey sustained an injury.

'... Only one out of three (34%) women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence have sought help.

'... Older women age 40-49 are more likely (18%) to have experienced physical violence since age 15 than younger women age 15-19 (13%). In contrast, women age 15-19 (6%) are more likely to have experienced physical violence in the 12 months preceding the survey than women age 40-49 (3%).

'By region, women's experience of physical violence since age 15 ranges from 5% in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to 25% in Eastern Visayas, 28% in Caraga, and 29% in Bicol. Recent physical violence in the 12 months preceding the survey is highest in Caraga (14%).

'Divorced, separated, or widowed women (33%) are more likely than never-married women (12%) and currently married women (19%) to have experienced physical violence since age 15.

'Women with 3-5 children (22%) are more likely to have experienced physical violence since age 15 than women with no children (12%).

'Experience of physical violence varies by wealth: 21% of women in the lowest wealth quintile have experienced physical violence since age 15, as compared with 12% of women in the highest wealth quintile. Women's experience of sexual violence declines with increasing wealth, from 7% among those in the lowest and second wealth quintiles to 3% among those in the highest quintile.'<sup>7</sup>

8.1.4 The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in an undated article on violence against women stated that: 'Since the onset of COVID-19 quarantine restrictions in March 2020 to August 2021, a total of 18,945 [violence against women] VAW cases have been reported to the [Philippines National Police] PNP Women and Children Protection Center.'<sup>8</sup> Although it is worth noting that this article does not breakdown the number of cases which were directly related to domestic violence.

8.1.5 The 2021 DFAT report stated that: 'Violence against women is widespread in

<sup>6</sup> Philippines Statistics Authority, '[Demography Health Survey 2017](#)' (page 4), October 2018

<sup>7</sup> Philippines Statistics Authority, '[Demography Health Survey 2017](#)' (page 219 & 221), October 2018

<sup>8</sup> PCW, '[2021 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women](#)', undated

the Philippines... While data is scant, gender-based violence is thought to have worsened significantly during COVID-19, with UNFPA estimating an additional 12,000 cases per month during lockdowns.<sup>9</sup>

- 8.1.6 Information from the Philippine National Police attached to a 4 July 2022 freedom of information request provides details of the number of cases reported under the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (RA9262). The information states that in 2019 there were 15712 cases, in 2020 there were 11,184 cases and in 2021 there were 8430 cases reported under RA9262<sup>10</sup>.
- 8.1.7 The US State Department's (USSD) '2022 country report on human right practices' noted that: 'Domestic violence against women remained a serious and widespread problem. According to the national police, reported acts of domestic violence against women decreased from 6,082 in January to July 2021 to 4,099 for the same period in 2022.'<sup>11</sup>

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## 8.2 Rape

- 8.2.1 The 2021 DFAT report, not exclusively referring to rape in a domestic context, stated that: 'It is likely that many cases of rape go unreported.'<sup>12</sup>
- 8.2.2 In a 2022 news article GMA News Online, a Philippines news and entertainment network, reported that:
- 'At least 22 rape cases are being reported in the Philippines every day from January 1 to November 13 this year, Jun Veneracion reported on "24 Oras" on Friday.
- 'Citing data from GMA News Research culled by Philippine National Police, the report said a total of 7,197 rape cases were monitored in the country during the said period — lower than the figures recorded in 2021.
- 'Police Region Office (PRO) Region 11 said 413 rape cases were recorded in Davao Region. The highest incidence was in Davao City where 123 cases were monitored. Of the figure, 94 are minor victims. At least 90% of the incidents, happened in the victims' residences and involved their relatives.'<sup>13</sup>

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Section updated: 21 March 2023

## 9. Legal framework

### 9.1 International human rights instruments

- 9.1.1 The Philippines has ratified, the following conventions:
- Convention against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
  - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

<sup>9</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.46), 21 August 2021

<sup>10</sup> Freedom of Information Philippines, '[FOI request #PCW-266225816023](#)', 4 July 2022

<sup>11</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines](#)', 20 March 2023

<sup>12</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.46), 21 August 2021

<sup>13</sup> GMA News, '[22 rapes a day recorded from Jan 1 to Nov 13, 2022 —PNP data](#)', 18 November 2022

## Women (CEDAW)

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OP-SC)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)<sup>14</sup>.

9.1.2 Section 14 of the constitution states ‘The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.’<sup>15</sup>

9.1.3 The Philippine National Demographic and Health survey published in 2017 noted that: ‘The Philippines has made improvements in elevating awareness of gender equality and promoting empowerment of women. In 2009, the government ratified the Magna Carta of Women (MCW), a landmark piece of gender equality legislation that increases the government’s thrust to protect and promote Filipino women’s human rights as it continues to institutionalize gender concerns in the mainstream development process.’<sup>16</sup>

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## 10. Domestic violence

### 10.1 Republic Act 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act)

10.1.1 The Republic Act 9262, also referred to as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, at section 3, definition of terms as used in this act, states that:

‘Violence against women and their children refers to any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. It includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- A. “Physical Violence” refers to acts that include bodily or physical harm;
- B. “Sexual violence” refers to an act which is sexual in nature, committed against a woman or her child. It includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Rape, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, treating a woman or her child as a sex object, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim’s body, forcing her/him to watch obscene

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<sup>14</sup> OHCHR, ‘[Ratification Status for the Philippines](#)’

<sup>15</sup> [The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines](#), 1987

<sup>16</sup> PSA, ‘[National Demographic and Health Survey \(NDHS\)](#)’, 2017

publications and indecent shows or forcing the woman or her child to do indecent acts and/or make films thereof, forcing the wife and mistress/lover to live in the conjugal home or sleep together in the same room with the abuser;

b) Acts causing or attempting to cause the victim to engage in any sexual activity by force, threat of force, physical or other harm or threat of physical or other harm or coercion;

c) Prostituting the woman or child.

C. "Psychological violence" refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the victim such as but not limited to intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, repeated verbal abuse and marital infidelity. It includes causing or allowing the victim to witness the physical, sexual or psychological abuse of a member of the family to which the victim belongs, or to witness pornography in any form or to witness abusive injury to pets or to unlawful or unwanted deprivation of the right to custody and/or visitation of common children.

D. "Economic abuse" refers to acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent which includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Withdrawal of financial support or preventing the victim from engaging in any legitimate profession, occupation, business or activity, except in cases wherein the other spouse/partner objects on valid, serious and moral grounds as defined in Article 73 of the Family Code;

2. Deprivation or threat of deprivation of financial resources and the right to the use and enjoyment of the conjugal, community or property owned in common;

3. Destroying household property;

4. Controlling the victims' own money or properties or solely controlling the conjugal money or properties.<sup>17</sup>

10.1.2 Section 5 of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 lists actions which constitute a crime under the Act, which includes causing physical harm, threatening to cause physical harm, placing the woman or her child in fear of imminent physical harm, attempting to compel or compel them to engage in conduct they have the right to avoid, and restricting their freedom of movement or conduct. Section 6 lists the available penalties for committing crimes under the Act. Those who have caused serious harm to a woman or her child are subject to 'prision mayor' the available sentence ranging from 6 years and one day up to 12 years in prison. Those attempting to cause harm or place a woman or her child in fear of imminent physical harm can result in punishment of one to 6 months in prison<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> PCW, '[Republic Act 9262: Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act...](#)' 8 March 2004

<sup>18</sup> [Revised Penal code of the Philippines](#), 8 December 1930

- 10.1.3 A description of the penalties can be found under chapter 3, section 1 (page 11) of the [Revised Penal Code of the Philippines](#)<sup>19</sup>.
- 10.1.4 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report 'SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia', published on 30 March 2021 noted that '...in the Philippines, the law allows perpetrators to escape prosecution if they marry the victim.'<sup>20</sup>
- 10.1.5 In November 2022, Home Office officials conducted a fact-finding mission (FFM) to the Philippines to gather information from a range of sources about the situation regarding domestic violence (Home Office FFM 2022). The Prosecutor General told the UK HO FFT that: 'If the courts have proven that the offender is guilty of the crime, he will be penalized with imprisonment ranging from one month and one day to twenty years and will be obliged to pay 100,000 PHP to 300,000 PHP in damages. The length of imprisonment depends on the gravity of the crime.'<sup>21</sup>
- 10.1.6 The USSD '2022 country report on human right practices' noted that:  
'Rape, including spousal rape, is illegal with penalties ranging from 12 to 40 years' imprisonment with pardon or parole possible only after 30 years' imprisonment. Conviction may also result in a lifetime ban from political office. The law applies to both men and women. Penalties for forcible sexual assault range from six to 12 years' imprisonment. The law criminalizes physical, sexual, and psychological harm or abuse to women (and children) committed by spouses, partners, or parents. Penalties depend on the severity of the crime and may include imprisonment or significant fines.'<sup>22</sup>

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## 10.2 Sharia law

- 10.2.1 The USSD 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom stated:  
'The government recognizes sharia in all parts of the country through a presidential decree. Sharia courts are organized into five sharia districts, all located in the south of the country; Muslims residing in other areas must travel to these districts to pursue an action in a sharia court. Sharia courts handle only cases relating to personal laws affecting family relations and property. Sharia does not apply in criminal matters and applies only to Muslims. The state court system hears cases involving Muslims and non-Muslims, and national laws apply in those cases.'<sup>23</sup>

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## 11. Social, economic and political status of women

- 11.1.1 The Philippine National Demographic and Health survey published in 2017 key findings noted that:

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<sup>19</sup> [Revised Penal code of the Philippines](#), 8 December 1930

<sup>20</sup> OECD, '[SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia](#)', 30 March 2021

<sup>21</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 42) February 2023

<sup>22</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines](#)', 20 March 2023

<sup>23</sup> USSD, '[2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Philippines](#)' (section 2), 2 June 2022

'58% of currently married women age 15-49 were employed in the 12 months before the survey. The majority of those employed are paid in cash only (75%).

'Over half (54%) of currently married women age 15-49 with cash earnings decide jointly with their husbands how their own earnings are used, and 43% decide on their own how their earnings are used

'Nearly one-third of women (32%) own a house, either alone or jointly with someone else, while 12% own land alone or jointly with someone else

'The majority of currently married women (85%) participate, either alone or jointly with their husband, in decisions regarding their own health care, major household purchases, and visits to their relatives or family.'<sup>24</sup>

11.1.2 The report went on to note that: 'Women's ownership of a house or land, either alone or jointly, is more common in rural areas than urban areas. Forty percent of rural women and 23% of urban women own a house, and 15% of rural women and 8% of urban women own land.

'... The percentage of women who have and use a bank account ranges from 3% in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to 36% in NCR.'<sup>25</sup>

11.1.3 The 2021 DFAT report noted that:

'Women in the Philippines have equal access to education, including higher education, and women graduates outnumber men at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. While women do not face legal barriers to equal participation in the economy, politics and society, social attitudes and power imbalances undermine gender equality in practice. According to UNFPA, Filipina women and girls suffer disproportionately from gender stereotyping, stigmatisation and sexual shaming.'<sup>26</sup>

11.1.4 The World Economic Forum report 'Global Gender Gap report 2022- insight report' published in July 2022 noted that:

'Philippines... is the home of roughly 54 million women. While the country has improved upon its first gender parity score by 4.2 percentage points, since 2013 progress has hovered between 0.783 and 0.799. In 2022 the Philippines records a gender gap of 21.7%, similar to last year. As a result, Philippines dropped two spots in the general ranking, from 17th to 19th, with minor variations across subindexes. No significant changes, positive or negative, occurred on Health and Survival or Political Empowerment. However, on Educational Attainment, gender parity decreased at the level of enrolment in primary education, with a notably larger share of boys than girls in growing enrolment numbers overall. On the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex, while the entire labour force was impacted, in 2022 the share of women participating in the workforce was still 24.5 percentage points lower than the share of men. Gender parity for legislative, senior

<sup>24</sup> Philippines Statistics Authority, '[Demography Health Survey 2017](#)' (page 201 - 205), October 2018

<sup>25</sup> Philippines Statistics Authority, '[Demography Health Survey 2017](#)' (page 201 - 205), October 2018

<sup>26</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.45), 21 August 2021

officers and managers, as well as for professional and technical workers, remains constant.’<sup>27</sup>

11.1.5 Arlene Brosas, a representative of Gabriela Women’s Party, Member of Parliament, Philippines, told the UK HO FFT that: ‘In our country we are more patriarchal/feudal. Here we are still pursuing legislation that will equalise men and women. Its feudal because most of those employed are in agricultural areas- the women work in fields in ploughing the lands. Some of the women are in service work.’<sup>28</sup>

11.1.6 A representative from the EU Delegation told the UK HO FFM team that:  
‘The cultural attitudes [towards women] in Philippines indicate that it is one of the more progressive countries in the region in terms of the gender gap. There is domestic violence in country which increased during pandemic. In terms of policies and legalisation they are quite progressive but there is still some work to be done on legislation, abortion is still illegal. As in all parts of the world there is still work to be done but compared to other areas in the region there is quite a good attitude towards women especially in the professional sphere. In terms of legislation there are some initiatives in place in country- they have legalisation in place the problem is often the implementation. They come up with a list of initiatives, but the implementation is more difficult.

‘... women are active in all levels of professional life but over-represented in professions that are under paid. Many go abroad because they are not well paid in country. In terms of treatment in other parts of life, not aware of any issues. One area where it might be bigger problem is the BARMM- the transitional authority has fewer women, and they are a more patriarchal society.’<sup>29</sup>

11.1.7 The USSD 2022 human rights report noted that:

‘No laws limit participation of women or members of minority and historically marginalized groups in the political process, and they did participate.

‘Men dominated the political scene. Media commentators expressed concern that political dynasties limited opportunities for female candidates not connected to political families.

‘...In law although not always in practice, women have most of the rights and protections accorded to men and the law seeks to eliminate discrimination against women. The law accords women the same property rights as men. In Muslim and Indigenous communities, however, property ownership law or tradition grants men more property rights than women.

‘The law prohibits sex discrimination in employment but not in hiring. Women continued to face discrimination on the job as well as in hiring.’<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> World Economic Forum, ‘[Global Gender Gap report 2022- insight report](#)’ (page 29), July 2022

<sup>28</sup> Home Office ‘[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)’ (page 28) February 2023

<sup>29</sup> Home Office ‘[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)’ (pages 45 & 46) February 2023

<sup>30</sup> USSD, ‘[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines](#)’, 20 March 2023

## 12. State protection

For information on the situation for women from the BARMM please see the UK Home Office [‘Report of a Fact-Finding Mission- Domestic Violence’](#).

### 12.1 General effectiveness of police

12.1.1 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Country Information Report on the Philippines, published on 23 August 2021 noted:

‘The Philippine National Police (PNP) is structured as a national police force with specialist commands that cover geographic areas and specific kinds of crime, including child sex abuse, crimes involving women, and counter-terrorism operations. Recruits receive one year of initial training, followed by three to six months of additional training in a specific area. While police are generally competent, they lack resources and capacity, and have poor coordination with other agencies.

‘...The PNP has systemic problems with corruption and impunity, including petty corruption. Local sources report the extent to which police are corrupt varies throughout the force and depends on the individual officer. Sources note senior police may be more likely to be involved in serious corruption, due to the patronage-driven nature of Philippines politics.’<sup>31</sup>

12.1.2 The Australian Embassy in the Philippines told the UK Home Office FFT

‘I would say it [police effectiveness] varies depending on where you are. Depends on the level of influence within those neighbourhoods, because it comes down to the mayor, the relationship with the police chief in that district. If you go to Quezon City, they have a very progressive mayor, who believes in gender equality, LGBTIQ rights, and her police force then reinforce that message. In others, where it is not so, they tend to only go to the police for life threatening cases.’<sup>32</sup>

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### 12.2 Independence of the Judiciary

12.2.1 The Australian Embassy in the Philippines, when asked whether the judiciary is fair and independent, told the UK HO FFT that:

‘To a certain extent, yes, but there is an overloading of the cases, the system is there, but the resolution of the cases takes a long time and is often stretched out. We are working with the Supreme Court to modernise the court system and increase access to the judicial system. It’s a 60-70% that people can still bring their grievances to court and then it depends on your connection. As with any system, unfortunately, the Philippine court system is not adequately resourced to provide free legal assistance to all indigent litigants. If you are a poor person who cannot get representation, that will reflect greatly on your ability to access justice in the court system.’<sup>33</sup>

12.2.2 The USSD 2022 report on human right practices published in March 2023 noted that:

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<sup>31</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report the Philippines’](#) (paragraphs 5.4 & 5.6), 21 August 2021

<sup>32</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (pages 47 & 48) February 2023

<sup>33</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 48) February 2023

'The law provides for an independent judiciary; although the government generally respected judicial independence, NGOs and others reported pressure, threats, and intimidation directed at the judiciary from various sources.

'... Corruption through nepotism, personal connections, and bribery continued to result in relative impunity for wealthy or influential offenders. Insufficient personnel, inefficient processes, and long procedural delays also hindered the judicial system. These factors contributed to widespread skepticism that the criminal justice system delivered due process and equal justice.

'... Complainants have access to local trial courts to seek civil damages for, or cessation of, human rights abuses. There are administrative as well as judicial remedies for civil complaints, although overburdened local courts often dismissed these cases. The government generally did not comply with court orders for relief of human rights abuses. Civil cases are subject to the same delays and corruption as criminal proceedings.'<sup>34</sup>

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### 12.3 State attitudes

12.3.1 President Rodrigo Duterte, who retired in May 2022, has been reported over the years, as having made various sexist remarks which commentators have said encourages violence against women<sup>35 36 37</sup>.

12.3.2 The 2021 DFAT report stated that:

'President Duterte has made widely reported misogynistic, derogatory and demeaning public statements about women, including condoning rape and encouraging sexual mutilation of female insurgents by soldiers. Such statements may contribute to an environment of impunity for security forces. Leaders of women's rights groups have been singled out for judicial harassment and red-tagging, and women journalists and activists are often targeted by online trolls.'<sup>38</sup>

12.3.3 On 25 July 2022 in a State of the Nation address President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. vowed '... to strengthen programs on violence against women and their children (VAWC). ... Marcos Jr. also said his administration will ensure that there are enough funds for about 70 residential care centers and seven non-residential care centers for the vulnerable sectors and persons with disabilities.'<sup>39</sup>

12.3.4 In November 2022 Manila Times reported that President Marcos had:

'... urged women legislators to break barriers for women and help his administration end violence against women. Marcos made the call as he led the oath-taking of the newly elected officers of the Association of Women Legislators Foundation Inc. (AWLFI) in Malacañang on Tuesday. In his

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<sup>34</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines](#)', 20 March 2023

<sup>35</sup> Rappler, '[From 'fragrant' Filipinas to shooting vaginas: Duterte's top 6 sexist...](#)', 14 February 2018

<sup>36</sup> The Guardian, '[Rodrigo Duterte calls women at gender-equality event "bitches"](#)', 12 March 2019

<sup>37</sup> Rappler, '[Sexist Duterte says Philippine presidency not a job for women](#)', 14 January 2021

<sup>38</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.55), 21 August 2021

<sup>39</sup> Office of the Press Secretary '[Marcos Jr. vows to strengthen programs on violence...](#)', 25 July 2022

speech, Marcos expressed hope that the AWLFI would support his administration's efforts in protecting and promoting the welfare of Filipino women and children. The President also gave his assurance to the members of the AWLFI of his strong support for their advocacies.<sup>140</sup>

12.3.5 Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, Officer in Charge, Centre for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that: 'The Duterte government did not help in addressing the culture of misogyny. It normalised that kind of thinking.' Adding, in information provided after the meeting, that: 'This makes it difficult for women to access remedies in cases of GBV when high level officials have normalized the acts in their words and deed.'<sup>141</sup>

12.3.6 The same source further noted that: 'We continue to work on breaking that, we are already seeing changes in the more recent change in government. There is less misogyny in press conference, but we still have to see if there are changes in GBV response.'<sup>142</sup>

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## 12.4 Strategies to raise awareness of violence against women

12.4.1 The Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) run a yearly 18-day campaign to raise awareness of violence against women. Information on current and previous years activities can be found on the [Philippine Commission on Women webpage](#)<sup>43</sup>.

12.4.2 The Philippine Commission on Women told the UK HO FFT that:

'PCW organizes various activities for the 18-Day Campaign to End VAW. This includes fora, webinars/seminars, and exhibits among others. We also encourage other agencies and LGUs to come up with their own activities to synergize the campaign across the country. Funding would be sourced from their respective Gender and Development budgets. LGUs often conduct barangay-level lectures for women and men.

'This year [2022] we are doing a social experiment on VAWC, sexual harassment, and trafficking. These were conducted in the major island regions (Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao) together with PETA (PH Educational Theater Association). We staged scenarios of sexual harassment and intimate partner violence in public places, schools, and transport terminals to see how the public would react to such incidents. The video will be released during the Campaign, and we will also issue a press release on that. Aside from the social experiment, we also did a series of interviews with victims who shared their stories of reporting and getting justice against their abusers. The videos not only shed light on the experiences of victims, but also aim to inspire others to seek help.'<sup>44</sup>

12.4.3 The same source noted, in additional information provided after the meeting, that 'During the 18-Day Campaign to End VAW in 2018, PCW conducted the

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<sup>40</sup> The Manila Times '[Marcos' appeal to Filipina lawmakers](#)', 17 November 2022

<sup>41</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 27) February 2023

<sup>42</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 27) February 2023

<sup>43</sup> PCW, '[18-Day Campaign to End VAW](#)', undated

<sup>44</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 58) February 2023

Male Advocates Assembly participated by male groups such as the Men Opposed to Violence against Women Everywhere (MOVE), KATROPA of Population Commission, Gender Watch against Violence and Exploitation (G-WAVE). The Assembly aimed to further promote the crucial role of men in eradicating violence against women and girls.<sup>145</sup>

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## 12.5 Barangay

12.5.1 World Bank noted in their report 'Philippines- Gender-Based Violence Policy and Institutional Mapping Report', published in June 2020 that:

'The barangay, the smallest political unit in the country, is the most accessible to women. By law, each barangay should establish a women's desk that takes the lead in addressing cases of gender-based discrimination and violence in the community. Its functions include facilitating access of GBV survivors to needed interventions such as a barangay protection order (BPO) against the perpetrator, medical treatment, temporary shelter, and police assistance. The Anti-VAWC Law gives barangays the authority to issue a protection order to ensure that the woman is not further harmed by her abuser while longer-term interventions are being arranged for her. The BPO is issued without court decision and without awaiting the results of investigation of the case. It is effective for 15 days and can be renewed multiple times without prejudice to the woman. The Anti-VAWC Law also prohibits the barangay from mediating in cases of intimate partner abuse and influencing the woman to reconcile with her abuser, although in many communities this is still being done by barangay officers as an intervention.'<sup>146</sup>

12.5.2 The 2021 DFAT report stated that: '... Some women who turn to Barangay Captains for assistance with domestic violence may be provided effective protection in this way in the form of "Barangay Protection Orders", which are analogous to Apprehended Violence Orders. However, other women report that Barangay Captains refuse to intervene or insist on trying to reconcile the victim and her abuser, exposing her to further violence.'<sup>147</sup>

12.5.3 PhilStar noted in November 2021 that: 'There have also been complaints of barangay personnel, who are tasked by law to assist victims of domestic violence, refusing to interfere in what they consider to be family problems.'<sup>148</sup>

12.5.4 The British Embassy team who shared insights drawn from policy research and engagement with local contacts told the UK HO FFT that: 'Application at barangay level for a PO is quite easy, however there can be confusion. For example, a person can be turned away as staff at barangay or the person doesn't understand the law / process. Women can get passed between the Barangay and police.'<sup>149</sup>

12.5.5 Jelen C. Paclarin, Executive Director of the Women's Legal and Human

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<sup>45</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 58) February 2023

<sup>46</sup> The World Bank, '[Philippines-Gender-Based Violence Policy And Institutional...](#)' (pg 26), June 2020

<sup>47</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.46), 21 August 2021

<sup>48</sup> PhilStar, '[End Violence Against Women](#)', 25 November 2021

<sup>49</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 8) February 2023

Rights Bureau, told the UK HO FFT that:

‘...Since the Philippines is close-knit, they look at the barangay as someone in authority and we thought that intervention of barangay captain between couples would be more effective than going to the police since women can have little funds.

‘But there are negative consequences. Since they know each other, there is a tendency to convince them to settle in the barangay. We fought really hard to stop settlement at all levels.’<sup>50</sup>

12.5.6 Asked whether the approach to gender based violence/intimate partner violence was consistent across the islands Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that ‘No, very different. For example, there is the 1 stop shop in QC, they have a protection centre/shelter which is near the hospital and the police are nearby. Complete service can be provided in one venue, it is very different areas. For instance, in areas that are geographically isolated / disadvantaged it might mean several hours walk to the barangay or the nearest police station or hospital.’<sup>51</sup>

12.5.7 The UK HO FFT asked Ma. Rosalyn G. Mesina, UN Women Country Program Coordinator for the Philippines, about the effectiveness of the barangays in dealing with violence against women, she noted that:

‘They are the very first refuge of women, especially if they are familiar with what they need to do. We’ve seen some very successful local government units campaigning about VAWC. They could be a source of protection for the victim to warn/threaten/scare the perpetrator to stop the violence but that does not give you assurance it would not happen again. A lot of women go there initially, with our conversations with barangay captains and local officials, women come in very angry and want to file a case but then when they calm down, they often just want someone they can air their grievances to. The barangays can play a role and if they had the resources, equipment, and facilities, they could also offer counselling. There are different partnerships between LGUs and organisations to deploy volunteers to listen to the women when they report violence. If they see the woman is ready to file the case, then they can support. That is one of the most effective and easy ways of tackling IPV, at the community level. It’s that area they live in and need to feel secure.’<sup>52</sup>

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## 12.6 Police and specialised units

12.6.1 The World bank report published in June 2020 noted ‘All police stations in the country have a Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), which is mandated by law (RA 8551). The WCPD personnel are, by default, female police officers. However, in instances when this is not always possible in all work shifts, male officers can be assigned as long as they have completed the basic training on women’s human rights and gender-responsive case

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<sup>50</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 29) February 2023

<sup>51</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 24) February 2023

<sup>52</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 53) February 2023

management.<sup>53</sup>

12.6.2 According to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Magna Carta of Women provides that every barangay, an administrative district, establish a violence against women (VAW) desk. These desks are intended to assist victims/survivors of physical, sexual, psychological, economic and other forms of abuse. The PCW noted that: 'As of June 2019, 37,686 out of 42,045 barangays have established VAW Desks.'<sup>54</sup>

12.6.3 The Commission on Human Rights Philippines (CHRP) in a 2021 report noted that:

'The Commission's Mapping of Gender Based-Violence Legal Referral Mechanisms last 2019 has documented the continuing gaps in accessing justice in cases of gender-based violence, the gaps include lack of information and knowledge of the laws, and of protection and referral mechanisms, accessibility of and availability of services specially for women with disabilities, women in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDA) and other women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Other gaps included the difficulty of referrals for psychosocial and shelter support, lack of support for women survivors' livelihood and economic independence, as well gaps pertaining to the insensitivity of service providers. These initial reports were also echoed in the Commission's 2019 National Inquiry on the Reproductive Health of Women with Disabilities. The inquiry highlighted physical, communication, and attitudinal barriers faced by women with disabilities in reporting and seeking justice in cases of GBV.'<sup>55</sup>

12.6.4 The 2021 DFAT report stated that 'Police stations have "women's desks" for women to report violence and a specialist police command dealing with women's issues exists within the police force. The effectiveness of these services varies.'<sup>56</sup>

12.6.5 In December 2021 online news site Rappler reported that: 'Filipinos who find themselves in emergencies related to violence against women and children (VAWC) gender-based violence (GBV) can now seek immediate help when they call the 911 national emergency hotline.'

12.6.6 '...The 911 hotline is free, and available 24/7. These are examples of crimes related to VAWC and GBV that can be reported to the 911 hotline:

- Physical/domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Economic abuse
- Verbal abuse

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<sup>53</sup> The World Bank, '[Philippines-Gender-Based Violence Policy And Institutional...](#)' (pg 26), June 2020

<sup>54</sup> Philippine Commission on Women, '[Barangay VAW Desk](#)', undated

<sup>55</sup> CHRP, '[Gender Ombud Situationer for 2nd and 3rd Quarter...](#)' (page 2), 8 January 2021

<sup>56</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.46), 21 August 2021

- Hate crimes.<sup>57</sup>

12.6.7 The UK HO FFT asked Ma. Rosalyn G. Mesina, UN Women Country Program Coordinator for the Philippines, about the effectiveness of the VAW desks, she noted that:

‘Our women’s desks have very clear processes and guidelines on what should be done and what should be in a testimony so the victim would have a strong case. It’s just that there are so many other issues in terms of resources that would stop them delivering on that mandate. For example, very seldom would you see a computer in a police station, a lot of documentation is handwritten, and documents pile up and they need to submit documents to different areas, they would be more effective if they had necessary equipment and resources. Capacity wise the government, the PNP and the PCW has built capacity for those who are supposed to be working on the women’s desks. There is gender sensitivity training, learning about the law and how to implement it. It’s a balancing act between the intention to help and carry out the mandate and the decision of survivor to pursue their case. Plus, there are the external factors, especially if the perpetrator is powerful. We see this. We see women who do not feel they have any recourse other than media attention and they see that as the only way to get justice.’<sup>58</sup>

12.6.8 The USSD 2022 human rights report stated that ‘Police operated 115 Women and Children Protection Units in health facilities across the country, to provide comprehensive medical and psychosocial services to survivors of sexual violence.’. It added ‘... The government did not effectively enforce the domestic violence law.’ And that ‘...The PNP and the social welfare department both maintained help desks to assist survivors of violence against women and to encourage reporting.’ And that

‘...With the assistance of NGOs, the CHR, and the Philippine Commission on Women, law enforcement officers received gender sensitivity training to deal with victims of sexual crimes and domestic violence. The national police increased by over 12 percent – to approximately 2,000 – the number of women and children’s units in police stations throughout the country, focusing on areas where additional police visibility was needed. The PNP assigned 4,882 officers to these units nationwide, almost 98 percent of them women.’<sup>59</sup>

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## 12.7 Protection Orders (PO)

12.7.1 Three types of protection orders (15 days, 30 days or permanent) are available from the barangay (administrative district) or court to prevent violence against women and their children<sup>60</sup>. Information on protection orders and who can apply for them, as well as information on some of the actions which constitute violence against women can be found on the

<sup>57</sup> Rappler, [‘911 emergency hotline now caters to gender-based violence’](#), 7 December 2021

<sup>58</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (pages 53-54) February 2023

<sup>59</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines’](#), 20 March 2023

<sup>60</sup> Official Gazette of the Republic of Philippines, [‘Republic Act No. 9262’](#), adopted 8 March 2004

[factsheet on Republic act 9262](#)<sup>61</sup>.

12.7.2 In information provided after the meeting with the HO FFT Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines noted that:

‘The protection orders under the Anti-VAWC Law are as follows:

1. **Barangay Protection Orders (BPO)** refer to the protection order issued by the Punong Barangay and shall be effective for 15 days.
2. **Temporary Protection Orders (TPO)** refers to the protection order issued by the court on the date of the filing of the application after ex parte determination that such order should be issued. The court may grant in a TPO any, some or all of the reliefs mentioned in R.A. 9262 and shall be effective for thirty (30) days. The court shall order the immediate personal service of the TPO on the respondent by the court sheriff who may obtain the assistance of law enforcement agents for the service.
3. **Permanent Protection Order (PPO)** refers to the protection order issued by the court after notice and hearing. The court shall not deny the issuance of protection order on the basis of the lapse of time between the act of violence and the filing of the application. PPO shall be effective until revoked by the court upon application of the person in whose favour it was issued.’<sup>62</sup>

12.7.3 Jelen C. Paclarin, Executive Director of the Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau told the UK HO FFT that:

‘... its mandatory that the barangay should issue a BPO. The barangay captain is not the adjudicator, judge, executor. He cannot change it. Sometimes they would issue a BPO, sometimes they wouldn't saying there is not enough to issue a BPO.

‘The barangay are the only authorities allowed to issue BPOs, but sometimes its VAW desk. There is sometimes a need to remind the barangay that they aren't the judge, they just have to issue the BPO. Otherwise, a woman can file an administrative complaint against the barangay.’<sup>63</sup>

12.7.4 Asked to confirm whether it mandatory to issue a BPO the same source stated that:

‘Yes, she doesn't have to provide anything. It's just a Protection Order, they don't need to investigate there is no violation of law to issue one if she is lying. It can be extended, but depends on the interpretation of the law, but for us, we believe the BPO should not be extended, because the woman should be encouraged to file for a Temporary Protection Order (TPO). The 15 days BPO should be to prepare for a place to live, to file a case, for a TPO. The reason for this is because a BPO is only applicable to the barangay itself and that area, not to the entire city. A TPO or PPO protects a woman all over the country. That is why we encourage a victim to file for a TPO.

‘A TPO should be given on the day of its application but because of the

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<sup>61</sup> DBP, ‘[RA-9262 Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children VAWC Act of 2004](#)’, undated

<sup>62</sup> Home Office ‘[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)’ (page 60) February 2023

<sup>63</sup> Home Office ‘[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)’ (page 60) February 2023

processes in the prosecutor's level it is not always given straight away. That's why some people go back to the barangay to get justice because it's easier to extend the BPO rather than get a TPO. This can happen even if the victim is talking about the same, original crime. If you ask for a new BPO, it should technically be for a new crime. These are some of the adjustments that the barangay will do, they should not cover child support as part of the BPO, but sometimes the barangay will include these forms of settlements, even though it shouldn't.<sup>64</sup>

12.7.5 The team at Bahay Kanlungan Quezon City Protection Center told the UK HO FFT that: '...The BPO for 15 days you cannot go near the victim, and this is for the 4 types of violence - sexual, physical, emotional and financial. The BPO violation is you can be imprisoned for 30 days. But they are not being followed.'<sup>65</sup>

12.7.6 Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, Officer in Charge, Centre for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights at the Commission on Human Rights, told the UK HO FFT that: 'In cases of breach of BPO, the barangay should initiate a complaint regarding the violation, but this seldom happens.'<sup>66</sup>

12.7.7 In information provided after the meeting with the HO FFT the Prosecutor General noted that the following information was required in order to apply for a Protection Order:

- (a) names and addresses of petitioner and respondent
- (b) description of relationships between petitioner and respondent
- (c) a statement of the circumstances of the abuse
- (d) description of the reliefs requested by petitioner as specified in Section 8 herein
- (e) request for counsel and reasons for such
- (f) request for waiver of application fees until hearing; and
- (g) an attestation that there is no pending application for a protection order in another court.'<sup>67</sup>

12.7.8 Quezon City Police District Officers told the UK HO FFT that:

'A PO contains some or all of the following-

- Prohibition of threatening or actually committing violence
- Harassing, annoying, telephoning or otherwise contacting
- Removal of the person from residence
- Directing respondent to stay away from petitioner and family
- Directing lawful possession and use by petitioner of an automobile and other essential personal affects, regardless of ownership.'<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 32) February 2023

<sup>65</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 13) February 2023

<sup>66</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 26) February 2023

<sup>67</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 43) February 2023

<sup>68</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 18) February 2023

- 12.7.9 Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, Officer in Charge, Centre for Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that: ‘...PO can be obtained with the help of the public prosecutor’s office, if it’s for VAW, then it is free.’<sup>69</sup>
- 12.7.10 The UK HO FFT asked the Prosecutor General whether POs can be issued without separate VAWC offence proceedings, they noted that:
- ‘Yes, you can just file a case only for protection or it’s part of the main case. It can stand independently or as a part of your case. It may be filed as an independent action or as incidental relief in any civil or criminal case the subject matter or issues thereof partakes of a violence under the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act. There is a trial just for that. The defendant can make representations as he is given his day in court.’<sup>70</sup>
- This was also confirmed by the Attorneys at the Public Attorney Office who stated that: ‘There are some cases where victims can apply for PO without criminal cases. A client can choose whether they file a criminal case and a PO or she can apply for a PO only.’<sup>71</sup>
- 12.7.11 The UK HO FFT asked the Attorneys at the Public Attorney’s Office whether it was possible PO order to be issued if a defendant is acquitted under VAWC charges, they said: ‘Yes, because for criminal cases they need to be guilty beyond reasonable doubt, but for civil case and granting of the PPO it is not really necessary.’<sup>72</sup>
- 12.7.12 Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines noted, in additional information provided after the meeting with the UK HO FFT, that: ‘Based on the 2021 Judiciary Annual Report, there are a total of 229 cases involving petitions for protection order filed in 2021.’<sup>73</sup>
- 12.7.13 Asked whether TPOs/POs are ever refused, the Attorneys at the Public Attorney’s office told the HO FFT: ‘Not in our experience (all 5 lawyers said they have not seen any)’.<sup>74</sup> Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines also noted: ‘My personal experience, I sat for a year as a family court judge, every time I issued a TPO, I issued a PPO. The judges must carefully and thoroughly study the allegations. It is an intimate relationship; we are very careful not to intrude into that relationship and I’m sure my experience is the same as other judges.’<sup>75</sup>
- 12.7.14 The UK HO FFT asked the Prosecutor General what happens if a man breaches a PO and they noted that: ‘He can go to jail.’<sup>76</sup> The same source also noted in additional information provided after the meeting with the UK HO FFT that: ‘Violation of any provision of a TPO or PPO issued shall constitute contempt of court punishable under Rule 71 of the Rules of Court, without prejudice to any other criminal or civil action that the offended party

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<sup>69</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 26) February 2023

<sup>70</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 43) February 2023

<sup>71</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 38) February 2023

<sup>72</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 40) February 2023

<sup>73</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 62) February 2023

<sup>74</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 40) February 2023

<sup>75</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 62) February 2023

<sup>76</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 44) February 2023

may file for any of the acts committed.<sup>77</sup> Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines also noted that: ‘... Anytime an offender violates the PPO, the victim can go to court and ask for remedial measures and if we see he has violated, we can send him to prison. It’s a direct court order. We can also fine him or require to stay away from the offended party or her family members, within a distance of 100 metres, for example. Other than foreign and overseas obviously.’<sup>78</sup>

12.7.15 The UK HO FFT asked Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, Officer in Charge, Centre for Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights at the Commission on Human Rights, whether POs were effective, she noted that:

‘Yes, the law was informed by women’s experience and with input from women. The most accessible method for women survivors of intimate partner violence is the BPO. Women want the BPO, not necessarily the court proceedings. However, there are challenges still with respect the BPO. For example, in cases where the captain of the barangay is friends with the husband or family and would influence the case or be biased in the intervention. Still, the BPO is often the more accessible / successful form of intervention.’<sup>79</sup>

12.7.16 The UK HO FFT asked Arlene Brosas, a representative of Gabriela Women’s Party, Member of Parliament, Philippines whether POs were effective and whether they worked well, she said that:

‘When we had a review of 15 years implementation of VAW law- we reviewed three municipalities and found that sometimes the PO is not being implemented well, the police tend to try to reconcile the preparator and victim. We believe it is not being implemented well. There are cases where the victim has no privacy in police station- the police keep jeering/sniggering there is no privacy for victim. Those are the results. Also, during the pandemic, in the community when violence ensues, the PO is not given to the victim, they were not able to do anything.

‘Women are sometimes pushed to charge their husband but because they are economically insecure, they had to go back to husband- we have many cases like that.’<sup>80</sup>

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## 12.8 Prosecutions

12.8.1 According to a report published in November 2020 and compiled by UN Children’s Fund, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund:

‘Many stakeholders in [violence against children] VAC and [violence against women] VAW noted that the justice system is very slow, which means that many survivors get fatigue and drop out of the case. Often such cases are dropped because there is a high reliance on testimonial evidence from victims. This reliance puts a lot of pressure on victims within the justice process.

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<sup>77</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 44) February 2023

<sup>78</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 62) February 2023

<sup>79</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 25) February 2023

<sup>80</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 29) February 2023

'... Study participants [who were a variety of stakeholders] reported that it was relatively rare for a case to go to court because women do not drive the process forward due to the numerous barriers involved to doing so. A lot of cases are dismissed because women do not have money to get through the complex system; they have to gather a lot of evidence from different places which is expensive because of the transport needed to go to the right place with the right provider and for some they have to pay for the provider too.

'Further, there are few support systems available to women that ensures their safety and facilitates the reporting and leaving process.

'...There was some lack of clarity on whether adolescents can access justice on their own – it appears they need a parent or guardian to accompany them or find an organization (an NGO/CSO) to support their case. Adolescent girls suffering domestic violence or intimate partner violence (including those who are mothers already) are even less likely to have their case taken forward because a social worker or lawyer has to pursue it on their behalf'.<sup>81</sup>

- 12.8.2 Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, Officer in Charge, Centre for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that while:

'Many women complain of economic abuse, but economic abuse is difficult to prosecute' adding in information provided after the meeting that: '...there is a prevailing thinking that when we speak of violence it has to leave marks or it has to be physical. This can affect women's access to remedies. This challenge is also present in cases of psychological violence, where often acts of violence are trivialized or dismissed and most prosecutors and courts would require psychological reports before the report can proceed.' Noting in the meeting with the HO FFT that: 'Psychological evaluations are expensive with current rate of sessions at PhP3,500.'<sup>82</sup>

- 12.8.3 Based on the 2021 Judiciary Annual Report in 2021 6,760 new cases under the VAWC (R.A 9262) were filled with the lower courts. At the end of 2021 10,883 cases remained pending<sup>83</sup>.

- 12.8.4 The same report also reported that: 4,476 cases under Rape (R.A. 8353) were filled with the lower courts, with 11,662 cases remaining pending at the end of 2021. Whilst 9,351 new cases under Rape (with minor victims &/or accused) were filled with the lower courts and 20,398 cases remained pending at the end of 2021<sup>84</sup>.

- 12.8.5 The USSD 2022 human rights report, in the section on rape and domestic violence, stated that:

'The government did not effectively enforce the laws on rape. NGOs noted that in smaller localities perpetrators of abuse sometimes used personal relationships with local authorities to avoid prosecution.

'As of August, the PNP's Women and Children Protection Center recorded 4,810 cases of rape involving women and children, a drop from the number

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<sup>81</sup> UNICEF etc. ["Ending Violence against Women and Children in..."](#) (pgs 17 &18), 27 November 2020

<sup>82</sup> Home Office ["Report of an FFM Domestic Violence"](#) (page 23) February 2023

<sup>83</sup> SC Public Information Office, ["2021 Judiciary Annual Report"](#) (page 47)

<sup>84</sup> SC Public Information Office, ["2021 Judiciary Annual Report"](#) (page 49)

recorded during the same period of 2021. Of these, 2,351 were referred to prosecutors, 1,073 were filed in court, 1,353 remained under investigation, and 32 were referred to another agency.<sup>85</sup>

- 12.8.6 In sources consulted no statistics on convictions for domestic violence offences could be found (see [Bibliography](#)).

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## 12.9 Legal aid

- 12.9.1 According to the Public Attorney's Office 'PAO accomplishment report for the year 2021' in 2021 PAO handled 4,083 cases involving women clients (VAWC), and of those cases 2,042 were pending at the end of December 2021<sup>86</sup>.

- 12.9.2 Family Attorney's at the Public Attorney's Office told the UK HO FFT '...We assist in the filing of cases of abuse. Before the filing of cases in court we can assist the women, the complainant. But in court, we represent the accused. If we represent the complainant, we cannot represent the accuser. In VAW cases we don't only assist indigent [destitute] clients. One of the peculiarities of the VAWC is we can assist whether they are indigent or not.'<sup>87</sup>

- 12.9.3 The UK HO FFT asked Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines, whether victims were entitled to legal support she confirmed they were and went on to state that:

'... One of the things I believe is a big factor in women not coming forward is that they do not have monetary means or resources. Most women will be those taking care of the home, they are not financially dependent. If they pursue a case against the husband, who is usually the breadwinner, they won't have money. What we do have is the Public Attorney's Office (PAO), which is an attached agency of the DOJ and provides free legal assistance to indigent litigants. VAWC cases need handholding and require lawyers to be present 24/7. Unfortunately, the PAO is overwhelmed with cases. The ratio is about 4,000 cases per public attorney. As you can imagine as much as they want to do more for the clients, they can't. I think that is why there aren't more legal cases for VAW.'<sup>88</sup>

- 12.9.4 Jelen C. Paclarin the Executive Director of the Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau told the UK HO FFT 'Sometimes the victim will file a case with the police, and then she will find she doesn't have a lawyer and the perpetrator already has the help of the Public Attorney Office (PAO). The PAO should only be for victims, but if the perpetrator goes first, the victim will not get the help of the PAO. Then who will prepare all the documents? If the LGU doesn't have a legal office to help the victim, the victim will be left with no help at the prosecutorial level.'<sup>89</sup>

- 12.9.5 The UK HO FFT asked Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, at the Commission on

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<sup>85</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines](#)', 20 March 2023

<sup>86</sup> Public Attorney's Office, '[2021 PAO Annual Accomplishment Report](#)', 2021

<sup>87</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 41) February 2023

<sup>88</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 62) February 2023

<sup>89</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 33) February 2023

Human Rights, whether women were able to access legal aid, she noted:

‘Criminal case is handled by prosecutor (free). Some women might want to seek independent advice too on a criminal case (if they don’t understand, or don’t feel supported.) Many women need someone to just to explain the process while they are in the process of deciding what remedy to pursue. PO can be obtained with the help of the public prosecutor’s office, if it’s for VAW, then it is free. Other civil matters such as annulment are not free and also not a priority in the Public Attorney’s Office.’<sup>90</sup>

12.9.6 The same source provided further information after the meeting:

‘To avail of Public Attorney’s Office, a certificate of indigency is required. This certificate is issued at the barangay level. However, in most cases men survivors who are employed are already disqualified from availing of services from PAO. This is also problematic as women could be employed but it is often the case that their income is barely enough to support her and her children. Supporting a legal action is more difficult to sustain. In the experience of many women survivors, the limited availability of legal aid is a continuing barrier to women’s access to justice. In cases where the public prosecutor or the public attorney’s office handles the cases its free, there are still many barriers’.<sup>91</sup>

12.9.7 During the meeting with the UK HO FFT Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin from the Commission on Human Rights also noted that:

‘The woman would need support for transportation and food. It is good that the Anti-VAWC law provides that you are entitled to 7 days of leave from work if you are a VAW victim but there is no provision for financial support. Women have to shoulder miscellaneous expense. The only financial support you can access is from the ministry of social welfare where they provide financial support of a one-off payment of P5,000 PHP for women in especially difficult circumstances. You would also need to be indigent to avail of this.’<sup>92</sup>

12.9.8 When asked about the cost of a lawyer the British Embassy team who shared insights drawn from policy research and engagement with local contacts told the UK HO FFT that: ‘In Metro Manila it’s more expensive around 500,000 (PHP) in legal fees. In the provinces 100,000-300,000 (PHP) Minimum wage is around 13,000 per month so would take around 38 months to pay.’<sup>93</sup>

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## 12.10 Avenues of redress

12.10.1 The UK HO FFT asked Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin, at the Commission on Human Rights whether the Commission was the main body that women go to if they are dissatisfied with the barangays or police, she noted that: ‘It is one of the agencies that the public can go to complain against erring public officials. Other agencies include the Office of the Ombudsman. If the police

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<sup>90</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 24) February 2023

<sup>91</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 24) February 2023

<sup>92</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 24) February 2023

<sup>93</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 9) February 2023

and other duty bearers are doing their job, victim survivors of GBV would not feel the need to seek the Commission's assistance.<sup>94</sup>

- 12.10.2 The same source went on to noted that: '...Complaints received by the Commission are complaints of human rights violations. But in cases of GBV, we often receive complaints as well due to the insensitivity of duty bearers.'<sup>95</sup>

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Section updated: 22 March 2023

### 13. Support and reintegration

#### 13.1 Government shelters and support

- 13.1.1 A list of service providers located in Region 7- Central Visayas who are able to assist victims of violence can be found on the [Philippine Commission on Women](#) website.
- 13.1.2 The factsheet on '[No to Violence Against Women](#)' provides basic information including Anti-VAW laws, tips and details of several helplines for victims of violence<sup>96</sup>.
- 13.1.3 The Department of Health has established Women and Children Protection Units (WCPU) in all Department of Health hospitals<sup>97</sup>.
- 13.1.4 An undated document on 'An Overview of Violence Against Women (VAW)' published on the Office of the Solicitor General's webpage noted that 'Many community-based programs to assist women victims of violence initiated by NGOs have now been adopted and replicated by national government agencies and local government units such as the Community-based Approach to Violence Against Women (COMBAT-VAW) pioneered by the Women's Legal Bureau and the HASIK. The Lihok Pilipina's Bantay Banay or "community watch" is the backbone of Cebu City's anti-domestic violence program.'<sup>98</sup>
- 13.1.5 In April 2020 the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) launched an online system so people could report incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) occurring while the Philippines was in lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. The portal can be accessed through the website <https://www.gbvcovid.report/><sup>99</sup>.
- 13.1.6 The Commission, however, urged the public to report immediately to the Philippine National Police's Women and Children Protection Center if they are already in immediate danger<sup>100</sup>.
- 13.1.7 Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that:

'The online portal is not specific to complaints against the police, it is a portal

<sup>94</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 22) February 2023

<sup>95</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 24) February 2023

<sup>96</sup> Development Bank of the Philippines, '[No to Violence Against Women](#)', undated

<sup>97</sup> Department of Health, '[Women and Children Protection Program](#)', updated 17 October 2018

<sup>98</sup> Office of the Solicitor General, '[VAW](#)' (page 4), undated

<sup>99</sup> Rappler, '[CHR launches online reporting portal for gender-based violence during...](#)', 27 April 2020

<sup>100</sup> Rappler, '[CHR launches online reporting portal for gender-based violence during...](#)', 27 April 2020

to report and seek assistance for cases of GBV, this includes those committed by the police as well as instances where the police or other duty bearers fail to act in a case of GBV. The portal was only developed during the pandemic as services weren't as accessible because of the restrictions on mobility. Our protection office also developed a remote reporting service via calls through the E-lawyering service.<sup>101</sup>

13.1.8 Asked whether the portal was accessible to all the same source added:

'Yes nationally, but connectivity can be an issue (internet access) and use of /access to technology especially for those living in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. We intended to develop a component of the portal that would allow reporting via SMS but this has not been established yet. Other government agencies have also developed online portals during the pandemic as they realise the challenges in mobility / accessibility. Most offices have phones lines too. The 911 hotline, which includes cases of GBV was developed during the lockdown. They can process and respond to cases of GBV as an emergency. That is a welcome development.'<sup>102</sup>

13.1.9 According to a report published in November 2020 and compiled by UN Children's Fund, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund: 'There are 95 WCPUs nationwide, and some of them include a "one stop shop" suite of services that allows access to a range of services and referrals required for women and children who have experienced violence within one centre or department rather than referring survivors to various places. Typical WCPUs are staffed by a medical doctor, a social worker, and a police officer.'<sup>103</sup>

13.1.10 The same report went on to note that '...the WCPU do not have the facilities or necessary kits to complete forensic rape examinations so if this service is needed then the patient is transferred such as to the Philippine National Police or the WCPU. It was reported that outside of Manila, services are fewer and more difficult to access. Services were reported to be concentrated in highly urbanized areas, with the poorest communities getting the smallest share.

'The safety planning that they conduct with women focuses on how women "can avoid violence from their husband." However, they will also counsel women on "how to escape" which will include thorough preparation such as gathering key documents, planning where to go (e.g., family member, neighbor, friends), compiling emergency phone numbers, and getting relevant bank account information. Even though the WCPU asserts that they will probe for possible VAC in VAW cases it does not seem to be formalized and there is does not seem to be consideration for VAW in presenting VAC cases'<sup>104</sup>

13.1.11 In November 2020 Quezon City, located northeast of the capital Manila, opened one of the first local government run shelters for abused women and children. The shelter has 60 beds and provides medical assistance, legal

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<sup>101</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 22) February 2023

<sup>102</sup> Home Office ['Report of an FFM Domestic Violence'](#) (page 23) February 2023

<sup>103</sup> UNICEF etc ["Ending Violence against Women and Children in..."](#) (page 20), 27 November 2020

<sup>104</sup> UNICEF etc. ["Ending Violence against Women and Children in..."](#) (page 20), 27 November 2020

assistance and counselling for victims of gender-based abuse and violence<sup>105 106</sup>.

13.1.12 The team at Bahay Kanlungan Quezon City Protection Center told the UK HO FFT that: 'Bahay Kanlungan – temporary shelter for VAWG victim survivors. We are open 24/7. Victims are processed here and then admitted to the shelter. One-stop-shop services – All services we provide are free of charge. In terms of our psychiatric services, this is provided in the main hospital, and we refer clients to them. Counselling and consultation to clients 18 years and above.'<sup>107</sup>

13.1.13 In compiling a report on 'Ending Violence against Women and Children in the Philippines', published in November 2020, the UN Children's Fund, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund researchers visited and conducted interviews at a shelter run by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The report noted that:

'Women survivors of violence are usually brought to a shelter by local government units, barangay, police, or other [civil society organisations] CSOs. There are very few walk-in clients. The women's shelters offer services to domestic violence or intimate partner violence survivors and trafficking survivors together.

'...The shelters are over full so to accommodate all the cases that are brought to them staff have turned living rooms and staff rooms into dormitory style accommodation for survivors. While this is an innovative solution to try to meet the urgent needs of survivors, some consideration should be given to whether the safety and well-being of residents is adequately assured when the facility is over capacity. Social workers at the shelters are not all permanent staff and carry caseloads of at least 35-50 cases each (instead of the standard 25 cases) indicating that the staff are overburdened.

'According to interviewees, residents typically stay 6-12 months on average. The shelters provide a variety of "rehabilitation services" for residents including psychological, livelihood strengthening, social services, medical and dental, dietary services, and orientation to the laws that protect women in the hopes that the women will be able to live independently and seek help if they experience violence again. According to interviewees, shelters will not accept repeat visits; for example, if a woman goes back to her husband repeatedly after staying at the shelter then they will stop accommodating her.'<sup>108</sup>

13.1.14 The report also noted that:

'The shelters are not designed for children. However, in some cases women arrive with their children and the shelters are forced to accommodate them. They generally do not accommodate boys over age 7. There are Havens for Children (separate ones for girls and for boys) but these homes are also for children in conflict with the law, trafficking victims, or orphans thus are not ideal for children having to leave violent homes with their mother. There are

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<sup>105</sup> Quezon City, '[Bahay Kanlungan: Shelter for Abused Women...](#)', last updated 14 March 2022

<sup>106</sup> PhilStar, '[QC opens shelter for abuse survivors](#)', 28 November 2020

<sup>107</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 11) February 2023

<sup>108</sup> UNICEF etc. '[Ending Violence against Women and Children in...](#)' (page 20), 27 November 2020

no recovery or support services for children within the women's shelter.'<sup>109</sup>

13.1.15 Information from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), attached to a 4 July 2022 freedom of information request from the Philippine Commission on Women to Freedom of Information Philippines, provides details of the [DSWD Centers and Residential Care Facilities \(CRCF\)](#) as of 20 May 2022<sup>110</sup>.

13.1.16 The UK HO FFT asked the representatives from the Philippine Commission on Women whether there was financial assistance available to VAWC victims, they stated that:

'The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provides financial assistance; however these are not sufficient to sustain the needs of VAW victim-survivors for the long haul. They have to be given skills training to prepare them for employment or venture into income generating activities that would sustain them for life. The Department of Justice (DOJ) gives 10,000 PHP to victims of violent crimes, but it can only go so far and victims also have to meet certain criteria to avail it.'<sup>111</sup>

13.1.17 The USSD 2022 report on human right practices noted that:

'The social welfare department operated residential centers and community-based programs to assist women and children who were victims of rape, domestic violence, and other abuse. By the end of June, the department reported it had assisted 41 women and girls who were specifically victims of sexual abuse, of whom 17 were victims of rape.

'... The government provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence and protection for rape victims, including emergency contraception.'<sup>112</sup>

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## 13.2 NGO shelters and support

13.2.1 The World bank report published in June 2020 noted that:

'Promoting social justice and gender equality is ingrained in many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines, regardless of their sectoral or thematic focus, albeit in varying degrees. This can be attributed to the visibility of women's human rights organizations, starting in the martial law period in the 1970s which pushed for stronger State accountability for gender-based discrimination and violence. Although the number of organizations providing specialized direct assistance to GBV survivors (such as professional counseling and psychosocial support, legal representation, medical assistance, temporary shelters) has waned over the years, their advocacy and lobbying work has resulted in a more gender-sensitive environment than before: There are now established community-level mechanisms to address GBV and a wider social awareness of women's human rights and laws. Thus, many NGOs would be aware of women's desks in the barangays and police stations, if not have general knowledge

<sup>109</sup> UNICEF etc. ["Ending Violence against Women and Children in..."](#) (page 7), 27 November 2020

<sup>110</sup> Freedom of Information Philippines, ["FOI request #PCW-266225816023"](#), 4 July 2022

<sup>111</sup> Home Office ["Report of an FFM Domestic Violence"](#) (page 59) February 2023

<sup>112</sup> USSD, ["2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines"](#), 20 March 2023

on how to navigate GBV referral pathways.<sup>113</sup> The report went on to detail several organisations that offer support to victims of gender-based violence<sup>114</sup>.

13.2.2 The 2021 DFAT report noted that: ‘The Department of Social Welfare and Development, local specialist NGOs and some churches provide shelter and counselling services, which are more accessible in large cities. Local NGOs told DFAT these services were too few in number to meet demand. These services generally target the poor, but women from wealthier backgrounds may be accepted.’<sup>115</sup>

13.2.3 An undated document on ‘An Overview of Violence Against Women (VAW)’ published on the Office of the Solicitor General’s webpage noted that ‘The first crisis center for victims/survivors of VAW in the country, the Women’s Crisis Center (WCC) launched its National Family Violence Prevention Program in 1997 with 18 cities and municipalities all over the Philippines. The program is a community-based strategy of preparing family members to protect themselves against violence and manage peaceful resolution of conflict within the context of family relations. It aims to organize and mobilize multi-agency action groups in the prevention of family violence from the regional down to the barangay level.

‘Other notable women NGOs that have been at the forefront of the crusade against VAW are [SALIGAN](#) (a legal group), KALAKASAN (Women Against Violence, an NGO providing shelter and counselling) and [Women’s Legal Bureau](#) (legal group). These women’s groups implement research projects dealing with violence and maintain a network of services dedicated to helping VAW survivors. These NGOs have also conscientiously tried to maintain records of their clients and services to help establish data on the extent and nature of violence committed against women.’<sup>116</sup>

13.2.4 The NGO SALIGAN deal with cases of gender-based violence and advocate for women’s rights. They are also able to assist litigants in the courtroom and in the community<sup>117</sup>.

13.2.5 The Women’s Legal and Human Rights Bureau, composed of women’s rights activists and advocates, work in feminist legal advocacy and development work. It is unclear from their website whether they offer support to litigants in individual cases<sup>118</sup>.

13.2.6 The UK HO FFT asked Ma. Rosalyn G. Mesina the UN Women Country Program Coordinator for the Philippines, whether there are any skills or education programs for victims of intimate partner violence, she told the FFT: ‘They are integrated in the shelters to upskill for life after the shelter. We have seen interventions from private sector in providing help for example manicure kits, hairdressing tools etc to allow them to earn money afterwards. There are some livelihoods in existing shelters such as bag making, but not

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<sup>113</sup> The World Bank, ‘[Philippines- Gender-Based Violence Policy And...](#)’ (page 30), June 2020

<sup>114</sup> The World Bank, ‘[Philippines- Gender-Based Violence Policy And...](#)’ (page 30), June 2020

<sup>115</sup> DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)’ (para 3.48), 21 August 2021

<sup>116</sup> Office of the Solicitor General, ‘[VAW](#)’, undated

<sup>117</sup> Saligan, ‘[Gender Equality](#)’, undated

<sup>118</sup> Women’s Legal ad Human Rights Bureau, ‘[Homepage](#)’, undated

to the scale we want to see, just at a basic level. Day care centres are another factor, childcare is lacking for the women who want to work. We still think we need to strengthen that.<sup>119</sup>

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### 13.3 Family support

13.3.1 The 2021 DFAT report stated that: ‘Some women who are victims of violence may be supported by their extended family. Whether or not this is effective depends on the family. Women’s rights workers in the Philippines told DFAT that some women who seek protection from their extended family may be stigmatised and abused for leaving their husbands. Single women with children are particularly stigmatised.’<sup>120</sup>

13.3.2 The team at Bahay Kanlungan Quezon City Protection Center told the UK HO FFT that:

‘Before we release women from the shelter, we ensure that the family are going to support them, before we integrate them to the family in the community.

‘...We don’t encourage women to live alone – we promote family support. Sometimes we talk to the elder members of the family to help them understand the situation and what the victims need so the family provides it for them. Family first.

‘...It is not common in the Philippines to have no family. Everyone knows family is really close, and close-knit. It is ok to live with your parents.’<sup>121</sup>

13.3.3 The UK HO FFT asked Arlene Brosas, a representative of Gabriela Women’s Party whether there was support for lone women: ‘Lone women with no family- we have no cases, I’m not familiar with any case of single women who have suffered domestic violence. In the Philippines culturally we have extended family always, support comes from any relative or any family. You can ask extended family. That is what happens to victims of Domestic Violence.’<sup>122</sup>

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### 13.4 Cultural, family and religious attitudes

13.4.1 The PCW noted in an article about Violence Against Women (VAW) that:

‘VAW is deemed to be closely linked with the unequal power relation between women and men otherwise known as “gender-based violence.” Societal norms and traditions dictate people to think that men are the leaders, pursuers, and providers, and take on the dominant roles in society while women are the nurturers, men’s companions and supporters, and take on the subordinate roles in society. This perception leads men to gain more power over women. Hence, VAW becomes a form of men’s expression of

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<sup>119</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 55) February 2023

<sup>120</sup> DFAT, [‘Country Information Report- The Philippines’](#) (para 3.47), 21 August 2021

<sup>121</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (pages 12, 13 & 14) February 2023

<sup>122</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 29) February 2023

control over women to retain power.<sup>123</sup>

- 13.4.2 Rorie Fajardo-Jarilla, who is the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Asia and Eurasia programmes coordinator and Philippine's country director, noted in an interview that:

'...Philippine society still largely regarded domestic abuse as a "family problem" which can be settled in the confines of the home and did not see it as very urgent to rescue and protect the victims of abuse. Having a [former] president [Duterte] infamous for his rape jokes and other anti-women remarks and being a predominantly Catholic country, which frowns upon divorce as a way for some women to end abusive marital relationships, further added to the problem.

'... Unfortunately, the public still generally views domestic violence as a personal problem – "away mag-asawa" (a petty quarrel between the wife and husband) – which can easily be patched up as soon as the couple goes back home and talks it over.

'...Religion also plays an influential role in this persistent public attitude on domestic violence... But for now, the church and its millions of followers – and even the president himself – believe that marriages should remain intact at all costs...'<sup>124</sup>

- 13.4.3 World Bank noted in their report 'Philippines- Gender-Based Violence Policy and Institutional Mapping Report', published in June 2020 that:

'Social and cultural norms around keeping family and community harmony, and the woman's role in society also make it possible for mediation to thrive as a VAWC intervention even when the law explicitly prohibits this. Apart from the barangay, many local cultural practices on seeking justice for violations are built on mediation and reconciliation of parties, for instance among indigenous peoples and Islamic communities. These processes are applied in cases of GBV involving members of their community.'<sup>125</sup>

- 13.4.4 In an opinion piece by Ana Marie Caspe, the manager of Oxfam Pilipinas' Creating Spaces Project, in the online news site Rappler it was noted that their: '... research has shown that norms around gender roles and responsibilities are interlinked with discriminatory practices around child marriage and violence against women and girls. These harmful social norms include men's decision-making authority and control over partners, family size that shapes fertility desires, and standards around chastity that deny women and girls' access to sexual and reproductive health services.'<sup>126</sup>

- 13.4.5 PhilStar, which houses content from The Philippine STAR an English broadsheet in the Philippines, reported in November 2021 that: 'Many women in the country are still unaware of tough laws protecting them from domestic violence and various forms of gender-based harassment, discrimination and exploitation. The lack of awareness of the laws is highest among low-income households where women and girls have limited

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<sup>123</sup> PCW, '[Violence Against Women](#)', undated

<sup>124</sup> IWPR, '[Philippines: Sweeping Violence Under the Carpet](#)', 27 May 2020

<sup>125</sup> The World Bank, '[Philippines- Gender-Based Violence Policy And...](#)' (page 27), June 2020

<sup>126</sup> Rappler, '[OPINION- Changing the untold narrative of child brides](#)', 25 November 2021

education. Among higher-income families, however, women's rights advocates have noted a reluctance of victims to report domestic violence.<sup>127</sup>

13.4.6 The UK HO FFT asked the British Embassy team, who shared insights drawn from policy research and engagement with local contacts, what happens if someone is assaulted after obtaining a BPO. They noted that: 'There are family / cultural aspects that play into it, the older generation are more forgiving than younger of the perpetrator. To get round the temporary restraining orders sometimes the family intervene to reconcile.'<sup>128</sup>

13.4.7 In regard to cultural attitudes towards those who have pursued a Protection Order Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that:

'In areas where awareness of the law is high and barangay desks are well trained then it's easier and more acceptable to obtain a PO. In other areas where there are cultural influences such as family, i.e. don't air private matters in the barangay but reconcile instead. Even in QC there is that thinking, but to a lesser extent due awareness campaign and programmes. GBV is hidden in BARMM as it's not reported. There is also the fact that someone might not report it as they do not know that what they have experience is already a form of violence.'<sup>129</sup>

13.4.8 Maria Filomena D. Singh Associate Justice, at the Supreme Court of the Philippines told the UK FO FFT that:

'When we speak of domestic violence, our culture is different. There is a tendency to hide it, because even police officers, and sometimes court officials, look upon it as a domestic issue, family issue, and it shouldn't be brought out in public. The mere fact of going to a barangay or the police, that is a big step for a woman, and can be seen as turning your back on family. When barangay say you need to bring this to court, they stop. They think, at least I have been to a barangay, and they don't want to go further.'<sup>130</sup>

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## 13.5 Stigma faced by victims of violence

13.5.1 The PCW noted in an article about Violence Against Women (VAW) that: '...In the Philippines, some realities that contribute to the vulnerability of Filipino women to VAW are being accused as "naggers" or neglectful of their duties as wife that is why they are being beaten by their spouses, or being raped due to her "flirtatious" ways; in some instances, filing for a sexual harassment is interpreted by her employer as being malicious on the appreciation of her good looks.'<sup>131</sup>

13.5.2 The PCW also noted 'Moreover, an even greater problem is the lack of concrete information to show the extent of VAW in the country as many cases of violence against women often go unreported due to women victims' "culture of silence." Many of the victims are ashamed to relate their

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<sup>127</sup> Philstar, '[End Violence Against Women](#)', 25 November 2021

<sup>128</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 10) February 2023

<sup>129</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 25) February 2023

<sup>130</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 61) February 2023

<sup>131</sup> PCW, '[Violence Against Women](#)', undated

experiences while others tend to dismiss their ordeal as a result of their lack of faith in the country's justice system caused by frustrations over the lack of results in filing complaints.<sup>132</sup>

- 13.5.3 The UN Children's Fund, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund joint report 'Ending Violence against Women and Children in the Philippines' noted that: 'There is significant stigma associated with airing family problems in public and thus to avoid bringing shame to the family many VAC [Violence Against Children] and VAW [Violence Against Women] cases are not reported.'<sup>133</sup>
- 13.5.4 The report also noted that: '... it is widely believed among stakeholders that pervasive victim blaming and not wanting to bring shame on the family are the driving factors in addition to the economic factors.'<sup>134</sup>
- 13.5.5 The 2021 DFAT report noted that: '...Victims of domestic violence may be stigmatised; there is a taboo about family violence. Some women are reluctant to leave abusive partners for religious or moral reasons.'<sup>135</sup>
- 13.5.6 The UK HO FFT asked the team at Bahay Kanlungan Quezon City Protection Center how women victims of violence were treated by their family following reporting, they noted that: 'They do treat them negatively, but we encourage or talk to the family and explain before we let the victim go from the shelter, but as for the community it's hard for us to manage. We do give aftercare, check how are they doing, is everything ok with them, that's what we do.'<sup>136</sup>
- 13.5.7 Quezon City Police District Officers told the UK HO FFT that '9 out of 10 cases are settled by compromise. In the Philippines there is stigma against broken families. The victim is dependent on her husband. They prefer that the family remains intact because of reputation and other cultural aspects. Even if beaten and faces are bruised for example, once the husband approaches and apologises she will no longer file the case.'<sup>137</sup>
- 13.5.8 Krissi Shaffina Twyla Rubin at the Commission on Human Rights told the UK HO FFT that: '... victim survivors often retract cases when they experience victim blaming or feel that they are not supported by the police. It has also been the experience of women that when they retract their cases and then decide to subsequently, they are often lectured regarding their indecision. This makes it all the more difficult for women to obtain justice.'<sup>138</sup>
- 13.5.9 Jelen C. Paclarin Executive Director, Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau told the UK HO FFT:
- 'Stigma in southeast Asia against women is high. Especially because we have this notion of 'good or bad' women. To be good, you should be able to choose the right husband. If you aren't able to, it says a lot about you personally and your success. It's "See, you didn't listen to me, I told you not

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<sup>132</sup> PCW, '[Violence Against Women](#)', undated

<sup>133</sup> UNICEF etc. '[Ending Violence against Women and Children in...](#)', (page 16) 27 November 2020

<sup>134</sup> UNICEF etc. '[Ending Violence against Women and Children in...](#)', (page 17), 27 November 2020

<sup>135</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 3.47-48), 21 August 2021

<sup>136</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 15) February 2023

<sup>137</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 18) February 2023

<sup>138</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 24) February 2023

to marry him.” It says a lot, and that’s why women are silent and don’t report the case, because they don’t want to be judged or labelled for choosing the wrong person who committed violence against them.

‘Second, they cannot believe the person they love chose to make those acts against them. They’re afraid if they share that information with others, there will be gossip and stigma and talk about them in the community. Communities are small at barangay level. With a lot of education, there are more women who are no longer afraid of that stigma, but there is still a lot.’<sup>139</sup>

13.5.10 The Australian Embassy in the Philippines, in information provided after the meeting with the UK HO FFT that noted that: ‘Domestic/intimate partner violence and sexual abuse remain politically controversial and culturally sensitive given the country’s overwhelmingly Catholic population.’<sup>140</sup>

13.5.11 The same source noted in the meeting with the UK HO FFT that:

‘We have to look at VAW as still quite a taboo topic in the Philippines, where generationally, younger women would have no problem reporting VAW, but older women reporting VAW could bring shame to the family. Geographically as well, more women are empowered to report violence in Manila, but in Mindanao for example there are cultural reasons that prevent reporting but also knowing where to report.’<sup>141</sup>

13.5.12 The UK HO FFT asked Ma. Rosalyn G. Mesina the UN Women Country Program Coordinator for the Philippines, what the main reasons are for women not reporting violence, she noted that: ‘A combination of cultural attitudes and being judged as someone who would shame the family. There is so much burden on the victim, and not the same for the perpetrator. The practicalities of pursuing a case and the financial burden impact on the decision to pursue.’<sup>142</sup>

13.5.13 The USSD 2022 human rights report stated that: ‘NGOs reported that cultural and social stigma deterred many women from reporting rape or domestic violence.’<sup>143</sup>

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Section updated: 21 March 2023

## 14. Freedom of movement

### 14.1 Demography and geography

14.1.1 The Philippines is an archipelago of around 7,640 islands<sup>144</sup>, with a diverse population of approximately 114 million people<sup>145</sup>.

14.1.2 According to the CIA World Factbook the most populous areas are ‘...

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<sup>139</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 35) February 2023

<sup>140</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 49) February 2023

<sup>141</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 49) February 2023

<sup>142</sup> Home Office [‘Report of an FFM Domestic Violence’](#) (page 52) February 2023

<sup>143</sup> USSD, [‘2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines’](#), 20 March 2023

<sup>144</sup> National Geographic [‘Know before you go: the Philippines’](#), undated

<sup>145</sup> CIA, [‘World factbook- people and society’](#), last updated 14 February 2023

northwest and south-central Luzon, the south-eastern extension of Luzon, and the islands of the Visayan Sea, particularly Cebu and Negros; Manila is home to one-eighth of the entire national population.<sup>146</sup> The same source noted that the populations for the major urban areas were- '14.667 million Manila, 1.949 million Davao, 1.025 million Cebu City, 931,000 Zamboanga, 960,000 Antipolo, 803,000 Cagayan de Oro City, 803,000 Dasmaringas.'<sup>147</sup>

#### 14.1.3 According to World Atlas:

'Up to one-third of the Philippines, population resides within Metro Manila. The metropolitan area comprises 16 cities, including the three most populous cities in the country, namely Quezon, Manila, and Caloocan. Metro Manila is particularly populous because it is the seat of government as well as the country's cultural, educational, and economic hub. Besides the three cities above Davao and Cebu cities complete the list of the five biggest cities in the Philippines.'<sup>148</sup>

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## 14.2 Internal movement

14.2.1 The 2021 DFAT report noted that: 'Filipino citizens face no legal impediments to relocating within the Philippines... Internal relocation options can be limited by the absence of family connections or the lack of financial resources.'<sup>149</sup>

14.2.2 Ma. Rosalyn G. Mesina the UN Women Country Program Coordinator for the Philippines, was asked by the UK HO FFT if a woman could internally relocate to another city, she stated that:

'In relation to safety, there is that provision in the law. But I don't think many victims would be aware they could ask for that. If they have stayed in a shelter, and then move elsewhere. Again, it's the co-ordination of the system and the capacity of the LGUs to support the women. There is also the capacity, for those with resources and work they could, if they have families in other places, they could seek refuge there. Not many families would be able to keep and sustain the support needed for the women survivors, if the women have skills, then that shouldn't be a problem but for those who are low skilled it can be hard.'<sup>150</sup>

14.2.3 The USSD 2022 country report on human rights noted that: 'The constitution provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these related rights.'<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> CIA, '[World factbook- people and society](#)', last updated 14 February 2023

<sup>147</sup> CIA, '[World factbook- people and society](#)', last updated 14 February 2023

<sup>148</sup> World Atlas, '[Biggest Cities In The Philippines](#)', undated

<sup>149</sup> DFAT, '[Country Information Report- The Philippines](#)' (para 5.20-1), 21 August 2021

<sup>150</sup> Home Office '[Report of an FFM Domestic Violence](#)' (page 54) February 2023

<sup>151</sup> USSD, '[2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Philippines](#)', 20 March 2023

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

All the COI included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s). Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used, and the COI compared and contrasted to ensure that it is accurate and balanced and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information section](#).

The Home Office uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal status
  - Domestic violence
  - Rape
- Prevalence
  - Domestic violence
  - Divorce
- State protection
  - Hotlines
  - Reporting police effectiveness
  - Strategies to address domestic violence
- Shelters
  - Government run
  - NGO
  - Hotlines
- Support and reintegration
  - a. Social housing
  - b. Support accessing criminal justice
- Freedom of movement

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **28 March 2023**

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### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

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### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section**

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## Changes from last version of this note

First publication of a CPIN on this topic for the Philippines

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## Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

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The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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