



**Australian Government**  
**Refugee Review Tribunal**

# Country Advice Philippines

Philippines – PHL36715 – Women –  
Elderly women – Police – State protection –  
Internal relocation – Aged care  
30 June 2010

1. Please advise of the general situation in Philippines, in particular whether an elderly woman would be able to access assistance from police.

## General Situation



Sources indicate that violent crime is a significant problem in the Philippines. According to travel advice by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade issued in May 2010, random acts of violence occur and gun ownership is widespread and poorly regulated, contributing to a higher incidence of violent crime.<sup>3</sup> A 2005 article by the *Los Angeles Times* explains that the increasing levels of crime are the result of growing poverty in the country. It claims growing economic hardship and widespread poverty have triggered a sharp increase in

<sup>1</sup> 'Philippines Map' 2008, Destination 360 website <http://www.destination360.com/asia/philippines/map> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 1.

<sup>2</sup> 'Map of Manapla' (undated), negros-island.com website <http://www.negros-island.com/negros-occidental/municipalities/manapla.htm> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 2.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2010, 'Travel Advice: Philippines' smartraveller.gov.au website, 8 May <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Philippines> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 3.

property crimes, particularly theft. The number of arrests for such petty crimes have soared and the 'volume of prisoners has skyrocketed far beyond the capacity of the jail system'.<sup>4</sup>

According to Bondoc Solidarity (a Filipino NGO devoted to agrarian reform) extra-judicial executions among common criminals are commonplace in the southern cities of Cebu (on the island of Cebu) and Davao City (on the island of Mindanao), in other major cities and the Metro Manila region. Vigilante killings also continue to be a serious problem. Davao City is known for the 'Davao Death Squads' who, with the complicity of the local police, execute petty criminals, gang members and poor street youths.<sup>5</sup> According to a 2009 report by Human Rights Watch, the number of targeted killings in these two southern cities has seen a steady rise over many years.<sup>6</sup> The 2009 *US Department of State Report on Human Rights Practices-Philippines* also confirmed that vigilante killings continue to occur in Cebu City, Cagayan de Oro, Tagum City, and General Santos City.<sup>7</sup>

Despite a recent ceasefire by one of a number of secessionist groups, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, sources indicate that Mindanao (the southern island that is home to most Philippine Muslims) and other southern islands such as Basilian continue to experience regular fighting and bomb attacks by other groups such as Abu Sayyaf (one of several Islamist groups seeking a separate Muslim homeland in the south) and the communist New People's Army.<sup>8</sup>

Numerous sources claim that civilians are often killed and kidnapped by these armed groups or as a result of violent clashes with government forces.<sup>9</sup> According to the 2009 *US Department of State Report on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, 'terrorist groups' killed and kidnapped NGO workers, teachers, and other civilians. The NPA also continued to kill political figures, military and police officers, and civilians, including suspected military and police informers. Citizens' groups complained that the government armed forces, in confronting Abu Sayyaf and the NPA, illegally detained citizens, destroyed houses, displaced residents, and shelled villages. The NPA and other extortion groups also harassed businesses and government offices, and burned farms, businesses, and private communication facilities to enforce the collection of 'revolutionary taxes'. The report also noted numerous kidnappings recorded in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago by various armed criminal and 'terrorist groups'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Paddock, R.C. 2005, 'Major price for petty crime in the Philippines' *Los Angeles Times*, 7 June [http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2002319742\\_jailed07.html](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2002319742_jailed07.html) – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 4.

<sup>5</sup> 'The Philippines: National Situationer' (undated), Bondoc Solidarity website <http://www.bondoc-solidarity.de/philippines.html> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 5.

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch 2009, 'You can die any time': *Death Squad Killings in Mindanao*, 6 April, Section 2 <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/82034/section/2> – Accessed 15 June 2010 – Attachment 6.

<sup>7</sup> United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, US State Department website, 11 March, Section 1 [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm) – Accessed 12 March 2010 – Attachment 7.

<sup>8</sup> 'Attack rocks south Philippines town' 2010, *Al Jazeera*, 13 April <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2010/04/201041354352341114.html> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 8; Onishi, N. 2009, 'In Philippines Strife, Uprooting Is a Constant' *The New York Times*, 22 November [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/23/world/asia/23phil.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/23/world/asia/23phil.html?_r=1) – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 9; United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, US State Department website, 11 March, Section 1 [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm) – Accessed 12 March 2010 – Attachment 7.

<sup>9</sup> United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, US State Department website, 11 March, Section 1 [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm) – Accessed 12 March 2010 – Attachment 7; Human Rights Watch 2010, *2010 World Report - The Philippines*, January <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87400> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 10.

<sup>10</sup> United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, US State Department website, 11 March, Section 1 [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm) – Accessed 12 March 2010 – Attachment 7; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2006, PHL101566.E – *Philippines*:

## ***Negros Occidental***

Though the majority of reports of armed conflict emerge from Mindanao and other southern areas, there has been limited reporting of clashes between government forces and the NPA in Negros Occidental.

In 2010, the Asian Legal Resource Centre claimed that in the last few years there were three extra-judicial killings in Negros Occidental, two of which were in the town of Manapla.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, one media source reported a clash between the government and the NPA, whilst another local media source reported that, in July 2009, heavily armed NPA rebels ambushed a cargo truck in Negros Occidental resulting in the death of three civilians and the wounding of three others.<sup>12</sup> Two recent local media articles also highlight that NPA extortion of local residents occurs in Negros Occidental.<sup>13</sup>

## ***2010 Elections***

Presidential elections, legislative elections and local elections in the Philippines were held on 10 May 2010. According to reports, prior to the elections, a number of bombs exploded in Maguindanao (on the island of Mindanao) and several candidates and campaign managers were killed, including a highly reported attack on one candidate's convoy in Maguindanao.<sup>14</sup> Due to election-related violence, the two provinces of Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and addition to Cotabato City were placed under a state of emergency, which is still in effect.<sup>15</sup> On 9 June 2010, the Philippine Congress proclaimed Senator Benigno "Noy" Aquino III

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*Reports of extortion and kidnapping of civilians by the New People's Army (NPA) or other armed groups; state response to extortion and kidnapping; extent of recruitment efforts by the NPA (2003 – 2006)*, 18 October <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/45f147963e.html> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 11.

<sup>11</sup> Asian Human Rights Commission and Asian Legal Resource Centre 2010, 'Ongoing impunity concerning hundreds of extra-judicial killings', 24 May

<http://www.ahrchk.net/statements/mainfile.php/2010statements/2577/> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 12.

<sup>12</sup> 'NPA rebels ambush civilian vehicle, killing three in Negros Occidental' 2009, balita.ph website, source:

Philippine News Agency, 13 July <http://balita.ph/2009/07/13/npa-rebels-ambush-civilian-vehicle-killing-three-in-negros-occidental/> – Accessed 16 June 2010 – Attachment 13.

<sup>13</sup> Aben, E.L, 2010, 'AFP neutralizes 20 NPAs involved in extortion' *Manila Bulletin*, 3 March

<http://www.mb.com.ph/node/245992/afp-neutralize> – Accessed 16 June 2010 – Attachment 14; Pamonay, R.L. 2009, 'Cops, NPAs clash in Negros Occidental' *The Philippine Star*, 22 February

<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=442319> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 15.

<sup>14</sup> 'Philippine general election, 2010' 2010, Wikipedia website, 21 June (last updated)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine\\_general\\_election\\_2010](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_general_election_2010) – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 16;

Amnesty International 2010, 'Philippines election marred by political killings' 7 May

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/philippines-election-marred-political-killings-2010-05-07> –

Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 17 ; 'Violence mars Philippines elections' 2010, *CNN News*, 10 May

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/05/09/philippines.election/index.html?iref=allsearch> – Accessed 18

June 2010 – Attachment 18; United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, US State Department website, 11 March, Section 1

[www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm) – Accessed 12 March 2010 – Attachment 7; Human Rights Watch 2010, *2010 World Report- The Philippines*, January

<http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87400> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 10; International Crisis Group 2009, 'Asia Briefing No 98: The Philippines: After the Maguindanao Massacre' 21 December, pp 6 & 10

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east->

[asia/philippines/b98%20The%20Philippines%20After%20the%20Maguindanao%20Massacre.ashx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/b98%20The%20Philippines%20After%20the%20Maguindanao%20Massacre.ashx) – Accessed

18 June 2010 – Attachment 19; Asian Human Rights Commission 2009, *The State of Human Rights in the*

*Philippines in 2009*, pp 4-5 <http://material.ahrchk.net/hrreport/2009/AHRC-SPR-007-2009-Philippines-HRReport2009.pdf> – Accessed 15 June 2010 – Attachment 20.

<sup>15</sup> US Department of State 2010, 'Travel Warning: Philippines' 2 April

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_2190.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_2190.html) – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 21.

(from the Liberal Party) as the country's new president and Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay as the vice president.<sup>16</sup>

## Police Protection for the Elderly

Elderly Filipinos receive the same level of police protection as other groups in society which sources indicate is inadequate and ineffective in regards to violent crimes.

Very limited information could be found on violence towards elderly people in the Philippines but some sources indicate that it exists but is often under-reported. A 2008 article by *The Manila Times* on senior citizens claimed that 'Senior citizens are too easily victimized by neighborhood gangs. The latest victim of such kind of violence was a group of caroling seniors. They were hacked with bolos (large cutting tool similar to the machete) by a group having a binge who did not like their singing'.<sup>17</sup>

There appear to also be a number of legislative Bills currently before parliamentary committees that specifically address the issue of protection for the elderly such as the *Seniors' Safety Act of 2008* which seeks to develop strategies for preventing and punishing crimes, including acts of domestic violence, against senior citizens and the *Older Filipinos' Protection from Violence Act*.<sup>18</sup> Proponents of these bills claim that recent studies show that elderly abuse is severely under-reported because of shame, privacy concerns or as a result of prior unsatisfactory experiences with individuals, agencies or others who lacked sensitivity to the concerns or needs of elder or disabled persons.<sup>19</sup> These legislative initiatives highlight the vulnerability of elderly Filipinos to violence.

The 2010 report by Freedom House, *Freedom in the World-Philippines* noted that rule of law in the Philippines is generally weak. A backlog of more than 800,000 cases in the court system contributes to impunity, and low pay encourages rampant corruption.<sup>20</sup> Other NGO reports corroborate the claim of a 'climate of impunity' that plagues the Philippines criminal justice system with the military and police being the perpetrators of human rights violations.<sup>21</sup> The constitutionally mandated Commission on Human Rights (CHR) described the Philippine National Police (PNP) as 'the worst abuser of human rights'.<sup>22</sup> In a 2009 report on death

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<sup>16</sup> Sisante, J.L & Legaspi, A. 2010, 'Congress proclaims Aquino as president, Binay as VP' *GMA News*, 6 September <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/193035/congress-proclaims-aquino-as-president-binay-as-vp> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 22.

<sup>17</sup> Bas, R.Q. 2008, "Special Report: Senior Citizens Devalued, Humiliated '20% discount bad for business' Nobody cares for the elderly anymore" *The Manila Times*, 13 January [http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/13/yehey/top\\_stories/20080113top1.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/13/yehey/top_stories/20080113top1.html) – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 23.

<sup>18</sup> Danao, E.L. 2008, 'Special Report: Senior Citizens, Devalued, Humiliated: Senate bills to create seat for seniors on local govt councils' *The Manila Times*, 14 January [http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/14/yehey/top\\_stories/20080114top6.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/14/yehey/top_stories/20080114top6.html) – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 24; Dela Cruz, J. 2007, 'Philippine Lawmaker Wants Elderly Protected From Violence' *All Headline News*, 30 November <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7009318365> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 25; 'Parliamentary Status of the *Older Filipinos' Protection from Violence Act*' (Undated) <http://www.congress.gov.ph> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 26; 'Parliamentary Status of the *Senior's Safety Act of 2008*' (Undated) <http://www.congress.gov.ph> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 27.

<sup>19</sup> Dela Cruz, J. 2007, 'Philippine Lawmaker Wants Elderly Protected From Violence' *All Headline News*, 30 November <http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7009318365> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 25.

<sup>20</sup> Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World 2010 – Philippines*, 3 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,...PHL..4c0ceadac.0.html> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 28.

<sup>21</sup> Asian Human Rights Commission 2009, *The State of Human Rights in the Philippines in 2009*, p 3 <http://material.ahrchk.net/hrreport/2009/AHRC-SPR-007-2009-Philippines-HRReport2009.pdf> – Accessed 15 June 2010 – Attachment 20; Human Rights Watch 2010, *2010 World Report- The Philippines*, January <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/87400> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 10.

<sup>22</sup> 'The Philippines: National Situationer' (undated), Bondoc Solidarity website <http://www.bondoc-solidarity.de/philippines.html> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 5.



squads in the Philippines, Human Rights Watch found evidence of complicity and at times direct involvement of government officials and members of the police in such killings.<sup>23</sup> An Amnesty International report from November 2009 notes that the combination of a lack of confidence in police impartiality, fear of reprisals and the lack of an effective witness protection program, contributes to the ineffectiveness of most police investigations.<sup>24</sup> The Asian Human Rights Commission and Asian Legal Resource Centre claim that there are no existing mechanisms that persons facing threats or serious risks to their lives can use to seek police protection, either temporary or long-term.<sup>25</sup> Whilst the newly elected President Aquino has promised to address government corruption, it appears that he intends to retain the former National Police Chief.<sup>26</sup> Maintaining the head of the highly criticized and allegedly corrupt police force raises doubts as to the commitment to and likelihood of achieving this goal.

## **2. Please provide general information on relocation.**

Sources indicate that there are no legal or cultural impediments to relocation. Practical considerations, however, such as a person's age and lack of familial support, may mean that relocation would be burdensome.

According to the 2009 *US Department of State Report on Human Rights Practices - Philippines*, the constitution provides for freedom of movement and the government generally respected these rights in practice.<sup>27</sup> The 2010 Report by Freedom House, *Freedom in the World-Philippines* also states that citizens may travel freely outside conflict zones and that there are no restrictions on employment or place of residence.<sup>28</sup>

## **3. Are there safe retirement homes or other services for older women in the Philippines, especially in Negros Occidental?**

Only a small number of aged care homes exist in the Philippines as, traditionally, elderly Filipinos relied on the support and care of their children, spouse or other relatives. With increasing emigration of young Filipinos who provide remittances to elderly relatives back home, the state has been forced to provide services to the elderly in absence of their familial support network.<sup>29</sup>

No information could be found on aged care homes in Negros Occidental. Only three state-run aged care homes exist in the Philippines. The state-run homes include the 'Golden Acres:

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Watch 2009, 'You can die any time': *Death Squad Killings in Mindanao*, 6 April, Section 2 <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/82034/section/2> – Accessed 15 June 2010 – Attachment 6

<sup>24</sup> Amnesty International 2009, *Witness protection needed to ensure justice for Philippines massacre victims*, 27 November – Attachment 29.

<sup>25</sup> Asian Human Rights Commission 2007, 'UN HRCouncil/ Philippines: Lack of Security and Protection Aiding and Abetting Extrajudicial Killings, Forced Disappearances and Impunity' 12 April (posted) <http://www.hrsolidarity.net/mainfile.php/2006vol16no02/2512/> – Accessed 15 June 2010 – Attachment 30.

<sup>26</sup> Galvez, J.K. 2010, 'Palace pleased with Aquino plan on Arroyo officials' *The Manila Times*, 2 June <http://www.manilatimes.net/index.php/top-stories/18635-palace-pleased-with-aquino-plan-on-arroyo-officials> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 31.

<sup>27</sup> United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-Philippines*, US State Department website, 11 March, Section 2 [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/eap/136006.htm) – Accessed 12 March 2010 – Attachment 7.

<sup>28</sup> Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World 2010 – Philippines*, 3 May <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,...PHL..4c0ceadac,0.html> – Accessed 18 June 2010 – Attachment 28.

<sup>29</sup> Ogena, N.B. 2006 'The Low and Slow Ageing in the Philippines: Auspicious or Challenging?' 30 June, p. 4 <http://www.univie.ac.at/impactofageing/pdf/ogena.pdf> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 32; Bas, R.Q. 2008, "Special Report: Senior Citizens Devalued, Humiliated '20% discount bad for business' Nobody cares for the elderly anymore" *The Manila Times*, 13 January [http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/13/yehey/top\\_stories/20080113top1.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/13/yehey/top_stories/20080113top1.html) – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 23.

Haven for the Elderly' in Tanay, Rizal (57 km east of Manila which accommodates up to 300 people) and regional homes in Talon-Talon, Zamboanga City (island of Mindanao) and in Visayan Village, Tagum City, Davao Oriental.<sup>30</sup> The local Coalition of Services for the Elderly, however, claims that Golden Acres has reached maximum capacity.<sup>31</sup>

There are also numerous NGOs concerned with women's rights and development operating in the Philippines, some of which address issues relating to elderly women and provide aged care homes.<sup>32</sup> An example is the Deborah Foundation (based in Bulacan) which operates a home for elderly women.<sup>33</sup> The Bahay Puso Apostolate Foundation also operates a small home for elderly women in Bataan.<sup>34</sup> Other privately-run non-gender specific nursing homes include the:

- Asilo De Molo Home for the Aged (Asilo De San Vicente De Paul) (Molo, Iloilo City);
- Hospicio De San Jose De Barili (Home for the Aged) (Barili, Cebu Province);
- Ladies of Charity Home for the Aged Calbayog Unit (Calbayog City);
- St. Vincent's Home for the Aged (Tangub, Bacolod City);
- Villa Marillao Home for the Aged (Naga City, Bicol) and;
- Kanlungan Ni Maria home for the elderly in Antipolo, Rizal.<sup>35</sup>

No information was found to indicate that these homes have previously been the target of violence but, as noted earlier, the overall security situation in the southern islands is more precarious than other regions.

There does not appear to be a sufficient number of elderly homes to meet demand. Due to the growing trend of labour migration, and therefore increasing concerns of care for the elderly, the Philippine government recently called on the private sector to assist in developing more homes.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ogena, N.B. 2006, 'The Low and Slow Ageing in the Philippines: Auspicious or Challenging?' 30 June, p. 14 <http://www.univie.ac.at/impactofageing/pdf/ogena.pdf> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 32; 'Residential Care Services for Older Persons' 2010, Republic of the Philippines Department of Social Welfare and Development website, 6 January <http://dswd.gov.ph/index.php/programs-and-services/43-residential-care-services/1932-older-persons> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 33; 'Background on the Transfer and Closure of the Golden Acres From Quezon City To Tanay, Rizal' 2010, savegoldenacres.blogspot.com website, 1 May <http://savegoldenacres.blogspot.com/2010/05/information-paper-on-transfer-of-golden.html#more> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 34.

<sup>31</sup> Jimenez-David, R. 2008 'At Large: Pension For Seniors' Global Action on Ageing website, source: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 March <http://www.globalaging.org/pension/world/2008/socialpension.htm> – Accessed 17 June 2010 – Attachment 35.

<sup>32</sup> 'Directory of NGOs working on women' (undated), National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women <http://www.ncrfw.gov.ph/index.php/directory-women-ngos> – Accessed 22 June 2010 – Attachment 36.

<sup>33</sup> 'Projects' (undated), Deborah Foundation website <http://www.deborahfoundationphilippines.org/projects.html> – Accessed 22 June 2010 – Attachment 37.

<sup>34</sup> 'Extension of the Home for Abandoned Elderly Women with the Bahay Puso Apostolate Foundation Inc.' 2002, Embassy of Japan in the Philippines website <http://www.ph.emb-japan.go.jp/bilateral/oda/2002/15.htm> – Accessed 22 June 2010 – Attachment 38.

<sup>35</sup> 'Directory of Facilities for People with Disabilities in Asia & Pacific: Facilities in Philippines' (undated), National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities (Japan) website <http://www.rehab.go.jp/english/whoclbc/DoF/FacilitiesinPhilippines.html> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 39; 'Kanlungan Ni Maria Home for the Elderly in Antipolo, Philippines' (undated), Kanlungan Ni Maria Home website <http://www.kanlunganimaria.com/> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 40.

<sup>36</sup> dela Cruz, F. 2010, 'DSWD urges private sector to help build homes for elderly' *GMA News*, 5 May <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/190098/dswd-urges-private-sector-to-help-build-homes-for-elderly> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 41.

A number of laws exist in the Philippines which grant privileges to senior citizens. *The Republic Act of 1991* grants discounts on services, entertainment and medicines, exemptions on individual income taxes.<sup>37</sup> *The Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003* grants additional benefits and privileges to senior citizens.<sup>38</sup> The implementation of these benefits, however, has not been consistent and has been widely criticized. The exception is the city of Makati which receives regular press about its generous treatment of its senior citizens such as free movie admissions, annual cash gifts and parking exemptions.<sup>39</sup> In 2010, the Philippines Parliament passed the *Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010* which exempts senior citizens from the 12% value added tax in their purchase of medicines and services in order that they enjoy a full 20% discount.<sup>40</sup> This Act also includes the introduction of a new non-contributory pension of 500 pesos per month (approximately US\$11) which will be targeted at the 'poorest of the poor' over the age of 60. It is limited to 'indigent senior citizens' who are defined as 'any senior citizen who is frail, sickly or with disability and without permanent source of income, compensation, pension or financial assistance from relatives to support his basic needs'.<sup>41</sup> However, it is unlikely that people would qualify for this scheme if they already receive a pension.

A number of government-sponsored support services for the elderly also exist. The 1995 *Senior Citizens Center Act of the Philippines* aimed to establish senior citizens centres in every city and municipality of the Philippines which were intended to be used as venues for the delivery of social services.<sup>42</sup> Though a number of municipalities have been unable to set up such centres due to lack of funding, the local government website for Negros Occidental claims that 'Out of 32 LGUs (local government units), 25 have Senior Citizen Centres serving 53,100 registered senior citizen members as of 2007'. In 2010, in response to a growing need for community support and care for the elderly, the Department of Social Welfare and Development also established a program titled 'Home Care Support Services for Senior

<sup>37</sup> Ogena, N.B. 2006 'The Low and Slow Ageing in the Philippines: Auspicious or Challenging?' 30 June, p. 14 <http://www.univie.ac.at/impactofageing/pdf/ogena.pdf> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 32.

<sup>38</sup> Ogena, N.B. 2006 'The Low and Slow Ageing in the Philippines: Auspicious or Challenging?' 30 June, p. 14 <http://www.univie.ac.at/impactofageing/pdf/ogena.pdf> – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 32.

<sup>39</sup> Jimenez-David, R. 2008 'At Large: Pension For Seniors' Global Action on Ageing website, source: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 March <http://www.globalaging.org/pension/world/2008/socialpension.htm> – Accessed 17 June 2010 – Attachment 35; Barcia, R.B 2008, 'Special Report: Senior Citizens, devalued, humiliated: Senior citizens in Albay denied benefits' *The Manila Times*, 17 January

[http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/17/yehey/top\\_stories/20080117top7.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/17/yehey/top_stories/20080117top7.html) – Accessed 16 June 2010 – Attachment 42; Lopez, A. 2009, 'Cash gift, goodies await Makati's senior citizens this Christmas' *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 19 November <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/metro/view/20091119-237111/Cash-gift-goodies-await-Makatis-senior-citizens-this-Christmas> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 43; 'Parking exemptions for senior citizens, PWDs okayed' 2009, *Sun Star Manila*, 24 August

<http://67.225.139.201/manila/parking-exemptions-senior-citizens-pwds-okayed> – Accessed 21 June 2010 – Attachment 44; Bas, R.Q. 2008, "Special Report: Senior Citizens Devalued, Humiliated '20% discount bad for business' Nobody cares for the elderly anymore" *The Manila Times*, 13 January [http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/13/yehey/top\\_stories/20080113top1.html](http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/jan/13/yehey/top_stories/20080113top1.html) – Accessed 11 June 2010 – Attachment 23.

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