

100 significant events in Philippine history

Philippine history is made up of thousands of events that happened from the earliest period ever documented to the present. This list includes only 100 major events that influenced Philippine history from the 14th century to the end of the 20th century. Interestingly, the events included on this list represent major areas where the life of the nation revolves like trade and commerce, religion, culture, literature and arts, education, various movements, wars and revolutions, laws and government, and military. Moreover, the events mentioned here are crucial in understanding the present and future of the Philippines as a nation.

1. Trading with the Chinese. 10th century. They dominated Philippine commerce from then on.
2. Arrival of Arab traders and missionaries. Mid-14th century. They conducted trade and preached Islam in Sulu that later spread to other parts of the country.
3. Arrival of Ferdinand Magellan. March 1521. It marked the beginning of Spanish interest in the Philippines as several Spanish expeditions followed.
4. First Mass in the Philippines. March 31, 1521. It was held in Limasawa, an island in Southern Leyte. Symbolized the conversion of many Filipinos to Roman Catholicism.
5. Death of Ferdinand Magellan. April 27, 1521.
6. Landing of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in Cebu. 1565. This marked the beginning of Spanish dominion in the Philippines as Legazpi later established the seat of Spanish colonial government in Manila.
7. Blood Compact. March 1565. Spanish Captain General Legazpi and Rajah Sikatuna performed the blood compact in Bohol as a sign of peace agreement between their parties.
8. First agreement for peace in the Philippines. June 4, 1565. Rajah Tupas and Legazpi signed this treaty of peace. Through the treaty, Cebu would recognize the Spanish government, which, on the other hand, would provide protection to Cebu in times of wars.
9. Construction of the Church and Convent of Santo Niño, the first Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, in Cebu by Rev. Father Andres de Urdaneta. 1565. This marked the beginning of Roman Catholicism in the Philippines as Spanish priests from other religious orders followed. The priests played significant roles in developing the country as a Spanish colony.
10. Shipbuilding. Early 1600s. Ships were built on Biliran Island and later in Cavite.
11. Longest Revolt in history. 1744-1829. Francisco Dagohoy led this longest uprising in Bohol against the Spanish government.
12. British invasion of Manila. September 23, 1762. The British invaded and occupied Manila until March 1764, when the Seven-Year War in Europe ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. The treaty compelled the British to return Manila and its environs to Spain.
13. Tobacco Monopoly. 1781. The Spanish government established this for business purposes. It served as a big source of revenue for the Spanish government until it was closed in 1882. During the period, tobacco farms and cigarette plants in the country increased and employed many Filipinos as farmers and factory workers.
14. Surnames for Filipinos. November 21, 1849. Governor Narciso Claveria y Zaldua issued a decree that

provided for the use of Spanish surnames by Filipinos to facilitate census, tax collection and administration.

15. Cofradia de San Jose. 1832-41. Founded as a religious cult which attracted many members and alarmed the government. It was disbanded after one of its prominent leaders, Apolinario de la Cruz or Hermano Pule, was killed by the government forces on November 4, 1841.

16. Quarantine Station. 1850s. The Spanish government established the Lazareto de Mariveles in Bataan as a way of checking and sanitizing passengers and cargoes of foreign ships from contagious diseases before they could enter Manila. The Americans continued this practice in 1902 by establishing quarantine services in ports of entry.

17. Sugar industry in the Philippines. 1859. Nicholas Loney from England pioneered the sugar industry that contributed to the economic growth of Iloilo and Panay.

18. Cavite Mutiny. January 20, 1872. Sergeant Lamadrid led artillery regiments and some naval crews in capturing the arsenal of Fort San Felipe in Cavite. The event was local in scope and easily quelled, but Spanish priests used it to implicate their enemies in the clergy, resulting in the execution of Fathers Mariano Gomes, Jose Burgos and Jacinto Zamora.

19. Execution of Burgos, Gomes and Zamora. February 17, 1872. The three priests, known in history as Gomburza, were garroted by the Spaniards in connection with the Cavite Mutiny.

20. Founding of La Solidaridad. 1889. The Filipino propagandists in Spain established this as the organ of the Propaganda Movement. Graciano Lopez Jaena and Marcelo H. del Pilar served as editors. It published essays and articles in Spanish expressing the Filipino demands for reforms in the Philippines. One of the writers was Jose Rizal.

21. Telephone system. 1890. The first telephone system in the Philippines is inaugurated. In 1906 the government put provincial telephone systems. In 1928 PLDT was granted franchise for the entire Philippines.

22. Establishment of Masonic Nilad Lodge or "Logia Central y Delegada." 1891. Pedro Serrano Laktaw, Moises Salvador and Jose Ramos established this Masonic lodge that was approved by Grande Oriente Español on March 10, 1892. Other lodges followed. Many Katipuneros were members of the Masonry.

23. Construction of Manila-Dagupan Railroad. 1892. It hastened transportation from Manila to Dagupan. Used by revolutionists and by American soldiers during the revolution. Another railroad was constructed in Iloilo in the early 1900s.

24. Founding of the Katipunan. July 7, 1892. Andres Bonifacio, Ladislaw Diwa and Teodoro Plata composed the first triangle of the secret society.

25. Exile of Dr. Jose Rizal. July 17, 1892. Rizal arrived in Dapitan to serve his exile. This agitated many Filipinos to fight the Spanish colonial government. The hero contributed much to the development of Dapitan during his exile.

26. Discovery of the Kati-punan. August 19, 1892. Its discovery led to the government's crackdown on suspected members and Bonifacio's immediate declaration of war against the Spanish government.

27. Cry of Pugad Lawin. August 23, 1892. The Katipuneros gathered in Pugad Lawin, tore their cedula and declared war against Spain.

28. Battle of Pinaglabanan. August 31, 1896. The first battle between the Katipuneros and Spanish forces in San Juan, Rizal. Over a hundred Katipuneros were killed.

29. Battle of Zapote Bridge. February 19, 1897. One of the major battles of the Philippine Revolution.

30. Tejeros Convention. March 22, 1897. The Kati-puneros belonging to the Magdaló and Magdiwang councils changed the Kati-punan into a revolutionary government and elected its officers. Subsequent events resulted in the execution of Andres Bonifacio in Maragondon.

31. Acta de Tejeros. March 24, 1897. Bonifacio nullified the results of the elections during the Tejeros Convention.

32. Naic Military Agreement. April 20, 1897. Bonifacio signed this document declaring the results of the elections during the Tejeros Convention null and void and established its own army separate from the Revolutionary Army formed during the convention. This led to his capture and later his execution in May of the same year.

33. Pact of Biyak-na-Bato. December 14, 1897. Signed by the Spanish government and the Filipino revolutionary leaders. This provided for the secession of hostilities between the two parties and the voluntary exile of revolutionary leaders in Hong Kong.

34. Uprising of Leon Kilat in Cebu. April 2, 1898. Leon Kilat (Pantaleon Villegas) led the uprising against the Spaniards in Cebu, which was suppressed after a week with the arrival of reinforcements from Iloilo and Manila. Leon Kilat continued his cause through guerrilla campaigns.

35. Battle of Manila Bay. May 1, 1898. The American naval fleets led by George Dewey fought against the Spanish fleet under General Patrocinio Montojo. This signaled America's colonization of the Philippines.

36. Proclamation of Philippine Independence. June 12, 1898. General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed Philippine Independence in Kawit, Cavite. During the event, Marcha Nacional Filipina, which would become the National Anthem composed by Julian Felipe, was played by the band of San Francisco de Malabon and the Philippine national flag was hoisted in public.

37. Bates Treaty Agreement. August 20, 1898. Signed in Mindanao between US Representative John C. Bates and the Filipino Muslim leaders Rajah Muda, Datu Calbi, Datu Joakanain and the Sulu Sultan, the agreement signified noninvolvement of the Muslims in the Filipino-American War.

38. Republic of Negros. November 5, 1898. Revolutionary forces under General Juan Anacleto Araneta proclaimed the Republic of Negros.

39. Cry of Santa Barbara. November 17, 1898. The revolutionists led by General Martin Delgado waved the Filipino flag and established the revolutionary government in Iloilo.

40. The Treaty of Paris. December 10, 1898. This was signed between the United States and Spain ceding Spanish colonies, including the Philippines, to America. The Americans received the right to colonize the Philippines after paying Spain \$20 million.

41. Benevolent assimilation of the Philippines. 1898. President William McKinley proclaimed this as there was nothing left to do with the Philippines after the Spanish-American War but to take it as a colony.

42. Assassination of General Antonio Luna. June 5, 1899. General Luna and his aide Col. Paco Roman were assassinated by fellow revolutionists in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija. This event is considered one of the tragedies of the Revolution.

43. La Independencia newspaper published Jose Palma's poem. September 3, 1899. The poem became the lyrics for the Marcha Nacional Filipina of Julian Felipe, thereby completing a national anthem for the Philippines. On September 22, 1943, the Commonwealth government adopted the flag and the anthem as national symbols.

44. Arrival of the Presbyterian Missionaries. April 21, 1899. They were the first group of Protestant missionaries to arrive and established missions in the Philippines. They established the first Protestant

University in the Philippines, Silliman University, in August 1901.

45. Battle of Tirad Pass. December 2, 1899. General Gregorio del Pilar died in action while defending Tirad Pass from the Americans soldiers.

46. Balangiga Massacre. September 28, 1890. About 180 Filipinos attacked 72 American soldiers and killed many of them. Soon after, the Americans retaliated by killing every Filipino who refused to surrender and were capable of carrying arms, including 10-year-old boys. America's pacification policy turned Samar into a "howling wilderness."

47. Capture of General Emilio Aguinaldo in Palanan, Isabela. March 23, 1901. The American colonial government considered this the end of the Revolution.

48. Public education system. 1901. The Philippine Commission passed Act 74 providing for the public education system, which includes the use of English as the medium of instruction, free primary education and a normal school for the training of teachers. The Thomasites arrived in the Philippines to serve as teachers. The normal school on Taft Avenue in Manila is now known as the Philippine Normal University.

49. Antisediton Law. October 1, 1901. The American colonial government passed Act 292 to quell armed nationalist sentiments during the era.

50. Founding of Union Obrero Democratica. 1902. This first labor federation in the country was established at Teatro Variedades in Sampaloc, Manila, with Isabelo de los Reyes as president and Hermenigildo Cruz as secretary. The organization celebrated Labor Day the following year.

51. Establishment of civil government. July 2, 1902. The US Congress signed the Cooper Bill that provided for the establishment of a civil government in the Philippines.

52. Iglesia Filipina Independiente (Philippine Independent Church). August 3, 1902. The first Filipino church independent of Rome to be established with Gregorio Aglipay as the first bishop. It was a result of the disparagement and prejudice felt by nationalistic priests.

53. Manila Electric Railway and Light Co. (Meralco). March 24, 1903. Granted franchise by the government to supply Manila and its environs with electricity and the electric street-railway system.

54. Pensionado Law. August 27, 1903. Act 854 provided for scholarship of Filipino students to universities in the United States and their return to the Philippines to serve in various fields, including government.

55. The first Labor Day rally in the Philippines. May 1, 1903. Organized by the Union Obrero Democratica de Filipinas. Thousands of participants marched to Malacañan to publicly demand for working conditions.

56. Philippine Constabulary School. February 19, 1905. It was first established at the Santa Lucia Barracks in Intramuros, transferred in 1908 in Baguio City as the Philippine Military Academy, and developed into a premier military school.

57. Inauguration of the first Philippine Assembly. October 16, 1907. It served as the lower house of a bicameral legislature with the Philippine Commission as the upper house.

58. Creation of the University of the Philippines. June 18, 1908. The country's premier state university was created by Act 1870.

59. First court case of libel. October 30, 1908. El Renacimiento published in its editorial "Aves de Rapina" (Birds of Prey) about a man who preyed on his enemy the way an eagle, vulture, owl and a vampire do. American Secretary of the Interior Dean C. Worcester felt alluded to in the article and sued the paper's editor and publisher Teodoro M. Kalaw and Martin Ocampo. Worcester won the case and the newspaper was closed.

60. Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas. February 28, 1909. The first indigenous evangelical church in the Philippines founded by Nicolas Zamora as a result of the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
61. Iglesia ni Cristo. 1914. An indigenous church founded by Felix Manalo. Its leaders are often wooed by politicians who are aware of the church's tendency to vote by block.
62. Founding of Congreso Obrero de Filipinas. May 1, 1913. Organized by Hermenegildo Cruz, the organization battled for an eight-hour working day, abolition of child labor, just labor standards for women and liability of capitalists.
63. Flag Day. October 31, 1919. Proclaimed by the National Assembly.
64. National Federation of Women's Clubs. 1921. It was organized primarily to advance the political rights of Filipino women and later on developed into an organization of women leaders for national development. Among its prominent members were Pilar Hidalgo Lim, Josefa Llanes Escoda and Trinidad F. Legarda.
65. Radio stations. June 1922. First serviced Manila and Pasay before they expanded to the provinces. Most of the stations were confiscated by the Japanese during the war.
66. Communist Party of the Philippines. August 27, 1930. Crisanto Evangelista established the Party, which later merged with the Socialist Party of Pedro Abad Santos and composed the Hukbalahap during the Second World War. The government declared it illegal.
67. Inauguration of Rizal Monument. December 29, 1930. The monument to Jose Rizal was inaugurated at the Luneta (now Rizal Park).
68. Sakdalista movement. 1931. Underground socialist reform movement whose members were mostly peasants against the antinationalist policies of the government.
69. Tydings-McDuffie Law. March 25, 1934. This law, signed by Theodore Roosevelt, provided for the establishment of the transition period before America would eventually recognize Philippine Independence.
70. Inauguration of Commonwealth government. November 15, 1935. Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmeña took the oath as President and Vice- President.
71. Commonwealth Constitution. 1935. Used to guide the Commonwealth government, cut off during the Japanese period and was restored after the war until 1973, when President Marcos ratified a new one.
72. Law on Women's Suffrage. December 14, 1937. For the first time, Filipino women were given the right to vote during elections.
73. Japanese invasion. December 8, 1941. Japanese bombers attacked Clark Air Base and other American camps in Baguio City, Manila and Davao. This signaled the beginning of the Japanese Occupation in the Philippines.
74. Oath-taking at Malinta Tunnel, Corregidor. December 30, 1941. Manuel Quezon took his second term of office as President of the Commonwealth government.
75. New government under the Japanese. December 3, 1942. The Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas (Kalibapi) was established and elected Jose P. Laurel as President of the Philippines. This party, however, lasted only until 1945.
76. Tagalog as official language. June 7, 1940. President Manuel L. Quezon proclaimed Tagalog as one of

the official languages in the Philippines starting July 4, 1946. Tagalog later became known as the Filipino language.

77. Fall of Manila. 1942. The Japanese forces led by Masaharu Homma occupied Manila.

78. Fall of Bataan. April 9, 1942. General Edward P. King surrendered to spare the lives of battle weary and outnumbered Filipino and American soldiers who were defending Bataan. They ran out of ammunition, supplies and had no reinforcements.

79. Fall of Corregidor. May 6, 1942. General Jonathan Wainwright surrendered the entire USAFFE in the Philippines to General Masaharu Homma of the Japanese Imperial Army.

80. Leyte landing. October 20, 1944. General Douglas MacArthur landed in Leyte Gulf with Sergio Osmeña Sr. and Carlos P. Romulo. This signaled the retaking of the Philippines from the Japanese soldiers. It was also a fulfillment of MacArthur's promise in 1942 when he said "I shall return."

81. Sergio Osmeña succeeded President Quezon as President of the Commonwealth. August 1, 1944. President Quezon died of Tuberculosis while he was in the United States.

82. Makabayang Kalipunan ng mga Pilipino (Makapili). December 8, 1944. The Japanese used its members, composed of Filipinos, to inform on guerrilla sympathizers. Many of its members were prosecuted after the war for the atrocities they committed against the people.

83. Establishment of the Congress of Labor Organizations (CLO). March 16, 1945. The CLO, first called Committee of Labor Organizations, was a federation of labor organizations organized by former leaders of the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon (Hukbalahap), which was forced to go underground when the government declared it illegal.

84. Liberation of Manila. 1945. The Americans entered Manila and liberated many Filipino and American internees at the University of Santo Tomas. Manila was devastated after the war. General Douglas MacArthur turned over the civilian government to Sergio Osmeña Sr.

85. United Nations membership. September 1945. The Philippines joined the United Nations.

86. Philippine Independence from America. July 4, 1946. America eventually let go of the Philippines.

87. Alto Broadcasting Network and DZXL-TV Channel 9. 1953. The first commercial television station that developed into what is now ABS-CBN.

88. Death of President Ramon Magsaysay. March 17, 1957. The President's plane crashed in Manunggal, Cebu. His death grieved the Filipino people and caused an immediate transition of leadership in government.

89. Reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines. December 27, 1968. Jose Ma. Sison reestablished the old communist party.

90. Martial law. September 21, 1972. President Ferdinand Marcos signed Proclamation 1081 declaring martial law to "save the Republic" from crime and violence. Marcos abolished the Congress and created the semiparliament Batasang Pambansa. It caused the takeover of many private businesses by the government, exile, disappearances and imprisonment of individuals critical of the government.

91. Assassination of Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino. August 21, 1983. The senator was assassinated at the Manila International Airport, now named in his honor.

92. COMELEC Employees' Walk-Out. February 9, 1986. Thirty computer technicians of the Commission on Elections walked out of their jobs after they were ordered to cheat the election returns in favor of President Marcos.

93. Military mutiny. February 23, 1986. Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and AFP Vice Chief of Staff Fidel V. Ramos defected from the Marcos administration. People gathered at EDSA to protect them from pro-administration soldiers. Two days after, President Marcos went on exile to Hawaii.

94. Oath-taking of Corazon C. Aquino, the senator's widow, and Salvador H. Laurel as President and Vice-President of the Philippines. February 25, 1986. They were sworn into office after the snap elections.

95. Return of presidential government. 1987. President Aquino appointed 48 members of the constitutional convention to draft the Constitution that restored democracy and abolished the Batasang Pambansa.

96. Military coup. August 28, 1987. The Reform the AFP Movement (RAM), led by Col. Gregorio Honasan, staged the coup, demanding the surrender of the Aquino government. The troops penetrated Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Crame but were repulsed by government forces. There were other failed coup attempts by the RAM (one in 1986, three attempts in 1987), Nationalist Army of the Philippines (NAP) in 1986, and the combined forces of RAM and NAP on December 1, 1989.

97. Inauguration of President Fidel V. Ramos and VP Joseph E. Estrada. June 30, 1992. President Ramos and VP Estrada were sworn in by Chief Justice Andres Narvasa at the Luneta Grandstand. FVR is the first president who comes from the Protestant faith.

98. Biggest case of corruption. September 24, 1993. Former first lady Imelda Marcos was convicted for the first time of corruption and sentenced to 24 years in prison. Few days earlier, the remains of former President Marcos who died in 1989 in Hawaii was finally entombed at their family mausoleum in Batac, Ilocos Sur.

99. First actor President of the Philippines. June 30, 1998. President Joseph Ejercito Estrada, best known as Erap, took his oath as the 13th President of the Philippines in Barasoain Church, Malolos, Bulacan.

100. End of the 20th Century and Millennium Watch. December 31, 2000. The Filipino Nation led by President Joseph Ejercito Estrada joined the whole world in welcoming the new millennium. The President called on Filipinos "to pray for global peace and brotherhood and to world as one in facing the challenges of the 21st Century."

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