

What is the first republic in Philippine history?

The Malolos Republic

The Malolos Republic was the culmination of the Philippine Revolution, which began with the Katipunan and led to the creation of the First Constitution and Republican Government of Asia. To commemorate this, President Benigno S. Aquino III, by virtue of Proclamation No. 533, s.

When was the 1st Philippine Republic?

January 21, 1899

It was formally established with Emilio Aguinaldo as president by proclamation of the Malolos Constitution on **January 21, 1899**, in Malolos, Bulacan, succeeding the previous Revolutionary Government of the Philippines. It endured until 1901.

Is Malolos Republic the first republic in Asia?

But the government Aguinaldo led in 1899 in Malolos was **Asia's first proper constitutional republic**, duly approved by a national congress, which aimed to be representative of each province of the country.

THE FIRST PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC

Though short-lived, the First Philippine, nonetheless catapulted the Filipino nation onto the world's consciousness carving not only a place among the family of nations but also a distinct niche as the first republic in Asia. While much of the world was oblivious to its birthing, the First Republic proved that Filipinos were capable of self-rule and deserved their longed-for freedom after more than 300 years of colonial bondage- a bondage shaken time and again by sporadic revolts, whose disparateness precluded ultimate victory.

After the failure of the reformist movement led by Rizal and Del Pilar, Andres the 1896-98 Philippine Revolution, culminated with the inauguration of the Republic on January 23, 1899 at Barasoain Church in Malolos, Bulacan. Though besieged and eventually thwarted by the United States army, the Republic had earned the loyalty of the Filipino people and deserved the recognition of foreign nations.

When General Emilio Famy Aguinaldo returned to the country from his exile in Hong Kong in May 1898, the truce signed between Filipino revolutionists and Spaniards at Biak-na-Bato, San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan in December 1897 had been broken in many parts of the country. Upon advice of Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista Aguinaldo, established a dictatorial government of the Philippines on May 24. Four days later, the Filipino rebels routed the Spaniards in Alapan, Cavite, a victory celebrated by Aguinaldo with the first, albeit informal, waving of the National Flag on Philippine soil. The event preempted the May 31st launching of the second phase of the revolution. By July 1898, the Filipinos liberated the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Pampanga, most of Bulacan and the suburbs surrounding Manila.

On June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo proclaimed Philippine independence from the window of his house in Kawit, Cavite, and waved the Philippine Flag officially for the first time to the martial strains of the new national anthem.

Mabini's plan to establish a grassroots government was realized towards the latter half of June 1898. Aguinaldo issued several important decrees reorganizing the government in the liberated provinces: the decree of June 18 reorganized municipalities and provinces, through the election of Popular Assemblies, whose heads the town chiefs then elected the provincial councils. The decree also provided for the election of delegates to the Revolutionary Congress by the town chiefs. To Mabini, the latter were Aguinaldo's direct link to the masses and on August 1, 1898, these town officials assembled at Bacoar, then the seat of the Revolutionary government, and ratified the newly proclaimed Philippine independence.

On June 20, Aguinaldo issued a decree organizing the judiciary, and on June 23, again upon Mabini's advice, major changes were promulgated and implemented: change of government from Dictatorial to Revolutionary; change of the Executive title from Dictator to President; the establishment of four major departments including that of foreign affairs, navy and commerce; war and public works, police and internal order; and finance, agriculture and manufacture industries (this was later expanded to six departments with addition of welfare and treasury departments); the appointment of delegates to the Revolutionary Congress from the non-liberated provinces, to ensure wider representation, and the creation of the Executive Board of the Revolutionary Committee at Hong Kong, which served as the diplomatic and international propaganda arm of the Republic. Two underlying principles motivated the establishment of a revolutionary government: to help the country achieve true independence and pave the way towards the formation of a "true republic".

As Mabini envisioned it, the Revolutionary Congress created by the June 18 decree had several aims: to promote the interest of the Filipinos through the passage of relevant laws and to serve as the Executive's advisory body. On September 15 Aguinaldo formally opened the revolutionary congress at the church of Barasoain in Malolos. Later the representatives elected their officers: Pedro Paterno, president; Benito Legarda, Vice President; Gregorio Araneta, First Secretary and Pablo Ocampo, Second Secretary. It was not long after their first convening that the Malolos Representatives ran into conflict with Mabini, who believed that the times demanded not the writing of a supreme law, which required the luxury of time, but an executive made strong by congressional support. In the end Congress prevailed over Mabini, and began their constitutional work. There were three draft constitutions presented: one authored by Mabini, another by Paterno and a third drafted by Felipe Calderon, a Cavite lawyer. The latter's draft, influenced by constitutions of various South American nations, was eventually chosen.

Despite its brief existence, the Malolos Congress earned its place in Philippine history if only for two achievements: the ratification of the declaration of independence on September 29, 1898 and the framing of the Malolos Constitution, which was promulgated by President Aguinaldo on January 21, 1899. To its eternal credit, the Malolos Congress, transcended its elite background by producing a supreme law distinguished for its democratic and pluralist ideals. These were embodied in the following provisions: the distribution of power in three separate branches of government: a legislature

which was unicameral- the “Assembly” of elected representatives; the Executive branch, represented by the President supported by a Cabinet; and the Judiciary composed of the Supreme Court, headed by a Chief Justice to be elected by the Assembly, and lower courts. The Constitution likewise protected the people against the abuse of power with a registry of individual and national rights. Most important, it was imbued with the principle that sovereignty resides in the people.

The Republic was inaugurated on January 23, 1899 at Barasoain Church, Malolos, in ceremonies marked by the reading of the whole Constitution, by Secretary Ocampo; proclamation of the Republic of the Philippines by Congress president Paterno, followed by the proclamation of Aguinaldo as the elected President of the new Republic, and speeches by Aguinaldo and Paterno.

The Central government of the new Republic was constituted in part as follows:

President- Emilio Aguinaldo

Department Secretaries- War – Baldomero Aguinaldo

Interior- Leandro Ibarra

Foreign Affairs- Cayetano Arellano (later replaced by Mabini)

Finance- Mariano Trias

Justice- Gregorio Araneta

Welfare- Felipe Buencamino

Even as it battled a new enemy disguised by US President William McKinley’s “Benevolent Assimilation” proclamation, the new government suffered dissension within its ranks. The Mabini Cabinet was replaced by the Paterno Cabinet around May 9, 1899.

Meanwhile, Felipe Agoncillo, foremost Filipino diplomat, exerted all efforts to obtain European and American recognition of Philippine independence and sovereignty, especially after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in December 1898 ceded the Philippines to the United States. In January 1899 he tried every means to prevent the ratification of the Treaty of Paris by the US Senate, knowing this would seal the fate of the Filipinos, again to no avail.

Post Script to the Republic. February 4, 1899, less than two weeks after the Republic’s inauguration, an American soldier on Sociego corner Silencio Streets in Santa Mesa, Manila, fired a shot against Filipino patrols in the area, sparking the Filipino-American War. The outbreak of hostilities between Filipino and American forces caused the imperialist agenda in the US Senate to gain the upper hand, resulting in the ratification of the Treaty of Paris on February 6, thus justifying the United States all-out pursuit of war against the fledgling Philippine Republic.

On March 31 Malolos, seat of the Philippine Republic, fell into enemy hands, followed on April 26 by Calumpit, where the Filipino forces led by over-all commander Gen. Luna were also routed.

On May 9, the Central government moved to Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, only four days after Congress convened at neighboring San Isidro town. As the American army closed in on him Aguinaldo moved the government to Tarlac, and then to Bayambang, Pangasinan. The latter fell on November 13. In a final bid to swing the odds in their favor, Aguinaldo ordered the shift from regular to guerrilla

warfare even as he began his exodus to the north. It did not take long before the government of the Filipinos disintegrated with the capture of its officials Buencamino in November and Mabini in December 1899, Paterno in April 1900. Aguinaldo himself was captured in Palanan, Isabela, on March 23, 1901, a day after his 32nd birthday. When he took the oath of allegiance to the United States nine days later, the First Philippine Republic came to an end.

What kind of government did the US establish in the Philippines?

Establishment of civil government

Until then, the President had been administering the Philippines by virtue of his war powers. On July 1, 1901, civil government was inaugurated, with Taft as the Civil Governor. On February 3, 1903, the US Congress changed the title of Civil Governor to Governor-General.

United States Military Government of the Philippine Islands

The United States Military Government of the Philippine Islands was a military government in the Philippines established by the United States on August 14, 1898, a day after the capture of Manila, with General Wesley Merritt acting as military governor. During military rule, the U.S. military commander governed the Philippines under the authority of the U.S. president as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces. After the appointment of a civil Governor-General, the procedure developed that as parts of the country were pacified and placed firmly under American control, responsibility for the area would be passed to the civilian.

General Merritt was succeeded by General Elwell S. Otis as military governor, who in turn was succeeded by General Arthur MacArthur. Major General Adna Chaffee was the final military governor. The position of military governor was abolished in July 1902, after which the civilian office Governor-General became the sole executive authority in the Philippines.

.S.-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS

The United States established diplomatic relations with the Philippines in 1946.

On November 15, 1935, the Filipino people took the penultimate step to independence with the inauguration of the Commonwealth of the Philippines. Only two months prior, on September 16, a million Filipinos had [trooped to the polls](#) to elect their two highest officials—the President and Vice President. This was the first time in the history of the nation that a Filipino would finally sit as Chief Executive and hold office in Malacañan Palace.{{1}}

Senate President Manuel L. Quezon and his running mate Senate President pro tempore Sergio Osmeña were elected as President and Vice President, while voters [elected representatives](#) for the new unicameral National Assembly and for local positions.

Inauguration of the Commonwealth of the Philippines.

The Commonwealth was the culmination of efforts to secure a definitive timetable for the withdrawal of American sovereignty over the Philippines.

Early on, at the start of the American occupation, the United States had established local governments with local elected town and provincial officials. Afterward came a gradual expansion of national legislative representation, beginning with the Philippine Assembly (or Lower House) in 1907.^{2}

It was not until the Jones Law of 1916 that the pledge of eventual independence—once Filipinos were ready for self-governance—was made. The Jones Law led to the creation of an all-Filipino legislature composed of the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives. However, the position of Chief Executive—the Governor-General—and what was considered the most important cabinet portfolio—Public Instruction (precursor to the Department of Education)—were reserved for American officials appointed by the President of the United States. Half of the Philippine Supreme Court was reserved for Americans as well.

Independence Missions from 1919 onwards were periodically sent to the U.S. Congress and the White House to lobby for and negotiate independence. In 1931, the OsRox Mission (which stands for “Osmeña and Roxas”) successfully lobbied for the enactment of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, which was passed over President Herbert Hoover’s veto in 1932. This was, however, rejected by the Philippine Legislature. In 1934, a new mission (the QuAQuAl Mission, made up of Quezon, Benigno Aquino Sr., and Rafael Alunan) negotiated the Tydings-McDuffie or the Philippine Independence Act, which set a ten-year transition period to be known as the Commonwealth of the Philippines, followed by the recognition of the independence of the Philippines by the United States.

The Tydings-McDuffie Act established the parameters for the preparatory period. Some powers of supervision were reserved to the United States, as well as foreign diplomacy and currency. In all other respects, the Philippines became self-governing.

Among the provisions was the election in 1934 of a Constitutional Convention to draft the constitution of the incoming commonwealth government. Its was presided over by Claro M. Recto with 202 elected Filipino delegates who decided that the constitution to be written would cover not only the transitional Commonwealth, but would apply to the Republic as well. The convention finished its work on February 8, 1935 and submitted it to the President of the United States for certification that its provisions complied with the Philippine Independence Act. It was certified on March 25, 1935 and it was subsequently ratified by the Filipino people in a [plebiscite on May 14, 1935](#).

Aside from the certification by the President of the United States of the draft constitution for the Commonwealth of the Philippines, the United States government also reserved certain powers: currency, coinage, imports, exports, and immigration laws would require the approval of the President of the United States. The United States could also intervene in the processes of the Commonwealth of the Philippines via Proclamation by President of the United States. All decisions of the courts of the Philippines were also subject to review by the Supreme Court of the United States. However, these powers were exercised rarely.

The [Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Philippines](#) provided for a presidential system of government with a unicameral legislature. It had the power to enact laws for the Philippines, known as [Commonwealth Acts](#), through the National Assembly.

The Commonwealth was meant to lay down the foundations for an independent, fully-functional state. Its priorities could be seen in the first laws enacted by the new National Assembly: [Commonwealth Act No. 1](#) established the Philippine Army and a national defense policy; Commonwealth Act No. 2 established the National Economic Council; Commonwealth Act No. 3 created the Court of Appeals. The 1935 Constitution was amended in 1940 to permit the reelection of the president and the vice president, to restore the Senate and thus shift the legislature back to the bicameral system, and to establish a national electoral authority, the Commission on Elections. The proposed amendments were ratified in a [plebiscite held on June 18, 1940](#).^{3}

Quezon and the WWII Pacific War Council

With war looming over the world following German aggression in Europe and the Japanese annexation of Manchuria, the National Assembly conferred emergency powers on the government. The Philippine Army was placed under the command of the United States Armed Forces Far East (USAFFE), headed by Field Marshal Douglas MacArthur, who was recalled to active service after having served as military adviser to the Commonwealth since 1935.

Filipinos [reelected Quezon, Osmeña](#), and legislators to fill seats in [the newly created bicameral congress](#) on November 11, 1941. War in Asia broke out on December 8, 1941 following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the American naval fortress in Hawaii, and Axis military advances throughout Southeast Asia.

USAFFE, composed of Filipino and American personnel, held off the Japanese war machine that had routed the French, British, and Dutch colonial governments in the region. But lack of reinforcements, disease, and obsolete armaments due to the “Europe First” policy adopted by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, hampered any real progress.

On December 24, 1941, President Quezon and his war cabinet evacuated to the island stronghold of Corregidor in Manila Bay and two months later left for Australia, en route to the safety of the United States. There the Commonwealth Government continued to function in exile, gaining recognition from the world community as a member of the United Nations. President Quezon continued to represent the Commonwealth of the Philippines in Washington, D.C. He would serve in the same capacity, with an extended term in 1943 by virtue of Joint Resolution No. 25 of the United States Congress, until his death on August 1, 1944, resulting in Osmeña’s ascension to the Presidency. Osmeña gave [his inaugural address](#) in Washington, D.C., making him the only Philippine President thus far to deliver an inaugural address outside the Philippines.

On October 20, 1944, Allied forces under the command of Field Marshal Douglas MacArthur [landed on the shores of Leyte](#) and began the campaign to liberate the Philippines. He was accompanied by President Osmeña, whose return formally reestablished the Commonwealth Government on Philippine

soil. With the nullification of all acts of the Second Republic, President Osmeña convened the Congress, elected in November 11, 1941, on June 9, 1945.

On April 23, 1946, the first postwar election was held, in which Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino were elected President and Vice President over re-electionist Osmeña and his running mate, Eulogio Rodriguez, Sr.

Roxas took his oath of office on May 28, 1946 as the third and last President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in front of the ruins of the Legislative Building in Manila. In the succeeding weeks, pursuant to the provisions of the Philippine Independence Act, the Commonwealth of the Philippines became the Republic of the Philippines—the Third Republic.

President Osmeña and President-elect Roxas descend the steps of Malacañan Palace. They are followed by Vice President-elect Elpidio Quirino, who will become a president of the Third Republic.

Thus, on [July 4, 1946](#), Roxas would again take his oath as President, this time as President of the newly-inaugurated and independent Republic of the Philippines. The Congress of the Commonwealth then became the First Congress of the Republic, and international recognition was finally achieved as governments entered into treaties with the new republic.

Many of today's institutions in our government trace their origins to the Commonwealth. These include:

- Executive Office (1935)
- Court of Appeals (1935)
- Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office
- Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino (1936)
- National Bureau of Investigation (1936)
- Department of Budget and Management (1936)
- Government Service Insurance System (1936)
- [Department of National Defense](#) (1939)
- Department of Health (1940)
- New Bilibid Prisons (1940)
- Presidential Communications Operations Office (from the Department of Information and Public Relations, 1943)
- Boy Scouts of the Philippines
- Girl Scouts of the Philippines
- National Food Authority
- National Economic Development Authority (originally National Economic Council, 1936)
- Bureau of Immigration and Deportation
- ROTC system
- Bureau of Aeronautics (1936 ;now the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines)
- [Philippine Military Academy](#)
- [Philippine Air Force](#)

- Articles of War (AFP)
- Comelec
- [Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines](#)

Chartered Cities:

- Cebu City (1937)
- Bacolod (1938)
- Quezon City (1939)
- Davao City (1936)
- Cavite City (1940)
- Iloilo City (1937)
- San Pablo City, Laguna (1940)
- Zamboanga City (1936)

Policies:

- All Filipino [Supreme Court](#) (1935)
- [State of the Nation Address](#) (1935)
- Minimum Daily Wage (1936)
- National Language (1939)