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## Philippines Cybersecurity Profile

### Introduction

The Philippines can be characterized as an up-and-coming cyber actor in our modern world. The country has proactively implemented a range of domestic cybersecurity frameworks, from defensive to offensive, and is increasingly involved in global cyber governance. Despite these efforts, the full potential of these frameworks is not yet realized, partly due to challenges with geopolitical tensions such as disputes with the South China Sea, along with inconsistent policy enforcement and infrastructural limitations. These complexities manifest a cybersecurity profile that displays robust international engagement with pressing domestic challenges, marking the Philippines as a nation with significant capabilities but critical vulnerabilities in cyberspace.

### Internet Landscape

The internet is integral to the Philippines' infrastructure, particularly emphasized in urban areas, with a notable shift to online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic that persists today. The internet penetration rate stands at 73.6%, demonstrating widespread accessibility (Kemp, 2024). However, this growth is tempered by a significant urban-rural divide, where internet access in rural areas lags considerably behind, posing a challenge to equitable digital inclusion (Clapano, 2023).

### Domestic Cybersecurity Policies

The Philippines has established comprehensive cybersecurity policies, such as the Data Privacy Act and the Cybercrime Prevention Act, aiming to enhance data security and protect individual digital rights. However, the effectiveness of some of these policies is often compromised by inconsistent enforcement and increased state surveillance measures, which have recently seen technological advancements like AI to monitor online activities closely (Freedom House, 2023; BenarNews Staff, 2023), raising public concerns about digital freedoms and trust in online spaces. These domestic frameworks demonstrate the Philippines' capacity for robust cybersecurity but also bring awareness to critical areas for improvement. As such, it presents as an ideal candidate for capacity-building assistance from external entities to fully realize its cybersecurity potential, especially through supporting efforts to dispute geopolitical tensions, strengthen policy enforcement and infrastructure development.

### International Internet Governance

Internationally, the Philippines aligns with the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance, actively participating in forums like the IGF, OEWG, Paris Call, ASEAN, and abiding by agreements such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. This involvement highlights the country's orientation toward enhancing both local and regional cyber resilience and its commitment to collaborative cybersecurity measures that adhere to international standards of the digital age.

### Conclusion

The Philippines' cybersecurity profile is characterized by significant advancements in international cooperation and an ongoing evolution of domestic policies. This profile reveals a nation that is not only increasing its cyber capabilities but also facing challenges, currently characterized by external geopolitical tensions, that require balanced approaches to governance and freedom. The country's active participation in international dialogue, combined with its struggles with policy implementation at home, paints a picture of a cyber actor on the world stage that is far more complex and proactive than one would initially think.

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