Communist Party of the Philippines/ New People's Army (CPP/NPA)

OVERVIEW

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2026

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), seek to overthrow the Philippine Government, establish a communist state, and expel US influence from the Philippines. The CPP/NPA primarily attacks the Philippine Government and security forces; those attacks have resulted in thousands of deaths since the group's founding in 1968. Since 2001, the CPP/NPA has not attacked US citizens or facilities, despite its history of attacking US interests in the Philippines and killing several US military servicemembers. The CPP/NPA's personnel strength has decreased since its peak of around 25,000 armed members in the 1980s. As of 2025, the group's capability had been further diminished after Philippine security operations removed several leaders.

Operating Area

Based in the Philippines; operates mostly in rural areas of central and southern Luzon, Palawan, the Visayan Islands, and eastern and northwestern Mindanao; maintains cells in Manila and other cities; recruits both in and outside the Philippines, including in the United States

Members

Fewer than 1,0000

Tactics And Targets

The CPP/NPA uses guerrilla tactics, such as ambushes, bombings, assassinations, extortion, and kidnappings. It targets Philippine military and security forces; government officials and facilities; local infrastructure, including power facilities, telecommunication towers, bridges, plantations, and mines; and foreign enterprises. CPP/NPA fighters use small arms, light weapons, grenades, IEDs, and landmines.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US Department of State designated the CPP/NPA as a foreign terrorist organization on 9 August 2002. The United States designated founder and former leader Jose Maria Sison as a terrorist on 12 August 2002.

Communist Party of the Philippines/ New People's Army (CPP/NPA) *(continued)*

KEY LEADERS

Jose Maria Sison [DECEASED]
Founder; died in 2022

Benito Tiamzon [DECEASED]
Philippines-based leader; died in 2022

NOTABLE ATTACKS

19 April 2026

Toboso, Negros Occidental, Philippines

Two US citizens are killed during a battle between the NPA and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

15 December 2021

Visayan Islands and Mindanao, Philippines

NPA terrorists ambush Philippine civilians and government personnel conducting humanitarian and disaster missions in preparation for Super Typhoon Odette; the ambush kills three civilians and wounds several others.

13 May 1990

Angeles City, Philippines

NPA terrorists kill two US servicemembers in an attack near Clark Air Base.

21 April 1989

Quezon City, Philippines

NPA terrorists ambush and kill a US Army colonel serving as chief of the Ground Forces Division of the Joint US Military Assistance Group.

28 October 1987

Angeles City, Philippines

NPA terrorists kill three US servicemembers in coordinated attacks near Clark Air Base.