

QUESTION ON NOTICE / Spoken

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Topic: Philippines

Senator Janet Rice

Question

Senator RICE: You might need to take this on notice but did Australian development assistance or technical support contribute to the drafting of that law in any way?

Mr Connor: I don't believe so, but I will take it on notice.

Senator RICE: Could you also take on notice the details of development assistance provided by Australia in recent years to the Philippines—

Mr Connor: Certainly.

Senator RICE: and any assistance that Australia provides to the Philippines military, security or police forces and the nature of that assistance?

Mr Connor: I shall certainly do that but can I assure you, if there is any suggestion that assistance we provide to either military or the police has any kind of human rights implications, that we would have taken action on it.

Answer

**Q.** Did Australian development assistance or technical support contribute to the drafting of that law [the Anti Terrorism Act] in any way?

**A.** Australia has provided technical assistance over three years to assist with the development of the Anti Terrorism Act and its implementing rules and regulations. This assistance has sought to bring Philippine counter terrorism legislation to modern international standards, including consistency with UN guidance.

**Q.** Could you also take on notice the details of development assistance provided by Australia in recent years to the Philippines?

**A.** Current Australian development assistance to the Philippines is detailed in the *Philippines COVID-19 Development Response Plan*, which can be accessed from:

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/philippines-covid-19-development-response-plan>.

Information on development assistance provided to the Philippines in earlier years can be found at: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/philippines-aid-program-performance-report-2018-19>.

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**Q.** ...and any assistance that Australia provides to the Philippines military, security or police forces and the nature of that assistance?

**A.** Questions about specific ADF cooperation with the Philippines should be referred to the Department of Defence, police cooperation to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and security cooperation falling within the Home Affairs portfolio referred to the Department for Home Affairs.