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HOPE FLICKERS AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF AUTOCRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES IN “AND SO IT BEGINS,” PREMIERING ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON MAY 12

Documentary Follows Key Figures in the Philippines' No-Holds-Barred Race for President in 2022 as the Nation Fights for Its Soul

(San Francisco, CA) March 27, 2025— The feature documentary chronicling the ascent of Philippine President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., “And So It Begins,” premieres May 12, 2025, on INDEPENDENT LENS. Award-winning filmmaker Ramona S. Diaz offers vibrant cinematic access to key players in the months leading up to the country’s 2022 presidential election and depicts the new resistance movement against deepening threats to truth and democracy.

In the latest chapter on her homeland of the Philippines, Diaz presents the existing political rhetoric as the reign of autocratic President Rodrigo Duterte comes to an end. She sets the film decades after the People Power Revolution ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his legacy of martial law, a period of violence that lasted for 21 years, despite many Filipinos remembering that time as idyllic. Now, Marcos’ eldest son Marcos Jr. is the frontrunner for president.

“And So It Begins” follows up Diaz’s 2020 documentary “A Thousand Cuts,” which earned Peabody and Emmy® Awards for portraying the escalating war between the government and the press in the Philippines during Duterte’s presidency. Maria Ressa, co-founder of *Rappler*, an independent online news service, won a Nobel Peace Prize for the reporting Diaz captured in “A Thousand Cuts.” A voice of conscience, Ressa continues her reporting as Marcos Jr. wages an unrelenting social media campaign against his opponent, Leni Robredo.

A new people’s power movement rises in Robredo’s name, with masses of working-class citizens praising the socially conscious attorney and performing renditions of pop songs in the streets. “And So It Begins” showcases the collective joy of the resistance movement against the specter of increasing autocracy. The film was selected as the Philippines’ entry into

the 2025 Academy Awards, marking the first time the country has put forth a documentary for Best International Feature Film.

“The recent arrest by the International Criminal Court of Philippine President Duterte, a key figure in ‘A Thousand Cuts’ and ‘And So It Begins,’ gives me hope that a rules-based world order still exists,” said director Ramona S. Diaz. “Maria Ressa’s fearless journey, as she shines a light on the threats to democracy and the free press in the Philippines, has been a privilege to witness. In a world where 72 percent of the population lives under authoritarian rule, and elections are threatened by disinformation, historical revisionism, and collective amnesia, ‘And So It Begins’ serves as a cautionary tale and an inspiring testament to the collective power of people everywhere.”

“Ramona S. Diaz has once again captured important history unfolding in real-time,” said Lois Vossen, INDEPENDENT LENS executive producer. “Through her expert lens and deep history covering the Marcos family, she tells the story of this campaign with the access and research only she could offer.”

The documentary received funding via ITVS’ Series and Special Projects Initiative. “And So It Begins” premieres on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on May 12, 2025, at 10 p.m. ([check local listings](#)). The film will also be available to stream on the [PBS app](#).

Visit the “[And So It Begins](#)” page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Ramona S. Diaz, Director/Producer

Ramona S. Diaz is a Peabody, Gotham, IDA, and Emmy Award-winning Asian American filmmaker, and a PGA and Independent Spirit Award-nominee, known for her compelling, character-driven documentaries. Ramona is both a Guggenheim Fellow and a USA Fellow. She was named the inaugural McGurn Family Trust Resident in Film by the American Academy in Rome.

CREDITS

Director	Ramona S. Diaz
Producer	Ramona S. Diaz



Executive Producers

Carrie Lozano
Lois Vossen
David J. Cornfield
Linda A. Cornfield
Stephen Gong
Donald Young

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning PBS documentary series. With founding executive producer Lois Vossen, the series has been honored with 10 Academy Award nominations and features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Park Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. Stream anytime on the PBS app. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org

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