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**Renowned Syrian Couple Discuss Ongoing Crisis and Life as Refugees in America,
Jihad in Hollywood: An Evening of Film, Music, and Art**

Columbia, S.C. (April 11, 2017)—The Columbia World Affairs Council (CWAC) and the Columbia Museum of Art (CMA) present, Jihad in Hollywood, an evening with Syrian film star Jihad (Jay) Abdo and his wife Fadia Afashe, a visual artist and a women's rights activist at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 20, at the CMA. The event is free and open to the public.

The evening begins with a screening of "[Jihad in Hollywood](#)," a short documentary (25 min. View trailer in the link) on Abdo and Afashe's plights as refugees from the crisis in Syria resettling in America, followed by a question and answer discussion with the couple moderated by Heather Williams, a senior international/defense policy researcher at the RAND Corporation. The program also includes a violin performance by Abdo and a viewing of selected artworks by Afashe.

"We are excited to co-host this timely event with the CMA," says Dickson Monk, CWAC executive director. "It is a great opportunity to learn about the current global crisis in Syria, its impact on human lives, and America's response at home and abroad directly from this distinguished couple."

Abdo left his home country in 2011, as his unwillingness to endorse Bashar al-Assad's regime put him in personal danger. Assets frozen, property confiscated, and with a name many Americans equate with militant Islam, one of Syria's most prominent actors—having starred in 23 plays, 43 movies, and more than 1,000 TV episodes—found himself working as a Domino's pizza delivery driver. Since the documentary was filmed, Jay starred in "Queen of the Desert" with Nicole Kidman, and in 2016 he starred in "A Hologram for the King" with Tom Hanks. His movie "Bon Voyage" was short-listed for Best Live Action Short Film for the 2017 Academy Awards.

Afashe graduated from the Ismail Institute of Art in 2000. She also has a degree in Criminal Law from the University of Damascus and a master's degree from the Syrian-French Institute for Public Administration (l'ena). With the help of the Geneva Institute for Human Rights, she wrote

and produced "Suspended" (2011), a short film about women exposing how the laws of rape in the Arab world leave women unprotected and disenfranchised. At the rise of the Arab Spring in the Middle East, Fadia left Damascus for the United States to pursue a fellowship at the Humphrey School for Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, which she completed in May 2012. Fadia works at the RAND Corporation, and shows her art in Los Angeles.

For more information, visit columbiaworldaffairs.org.

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About the Columbia World Affairs Council:

Founded in 1993, the Columbia World Affairs Council (CWAC) is a private, non-profit, non-partisan organization that serves as the bridge between our local community and its global counterparts. In recent years, South Carolina has experienced rapid growth in international business, politics, and culture. Devoted to promoting intercontinental awareness in South Carolina, the CWAC exists for the benefit of its citizens by enhancing their opportunities to engage with the international community.