



CANCER CARE IN TIMES OF CRISIS: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE INSTITUTE OF CANCER AND CRISIS (ICC)

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The intersection between oncology and crisis response represents a growing frontier in global health and emergency medicine. The Institute of Cancer and Crisis (ICC), established in 2021 in Yerevan, Armenia, with the support of the City of Smile Charitable Foundation, emerged in direct response to the profound disruptions cancer patients face during wars, natural disasters, and large-scale emergencies. As an independent, not-for-profit organization, the ICC aims to ensure that every cancer patient continues to receive appropriate, equitable, and uninterrupted care—regardless of crisis conditions.

The establishment of the ICC was motivated by evidence from conflict and disaster settings, where oncology services are among the first to be compromised. Patients frequently encounter delays in diagnosis, interruptions in treatment, and psychological distress, all of which worsen outcomes. Recognizing this gap, the ICC brings together experts from oncology, public health, behavioral sciences, and crisis management to address these multifaceted challenges through research, advocacy, and partnership.

Since its establishment, the ICC has led several initiatives, including the *Global Summit on War and Cancer (2023)*, which convened international experts to share strategies for safeguarding cancer care in conflict-affected regions and resulted in publishing the a manifesto on improving cancer care in conflict-impacted populations. The Institute also conducts applied research on the direct and indirect effects of crises on cancer care systems, aiming to inform both humanitarian and policy responses. In parallel, ICC's advocacy efforts promote the inclusion of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and oncology within emergency preparedness and response frameworks.

The ICC's mission—"Every cancer patient should receive appropriate care, regardless of any crisis they may face"—reflects a commitment to human dignity and clinical continuity even under the most adverse conditions. Through its work, the ICC seeks to strengthen the niche between emergency medicine, oncology, and health systems resilience, contributing to a future where cancer care remains accessible and compassionate in times of crisis.

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