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**Protecting the Internally Displaced in Armed Conflict:
Do International Models of Intervention for Humanitarian Purposes Assist?**

Elizabeth Cossor
An APCML Monograph
February 2007

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Internal displacement as a result of armed conflict is an issue that affects some 50 countries across the international community. In this monograph, Elizabeth Cossor examines in detail the international protection mechanisms currently available to the specific context of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in armed conflict.

Cossor first examines the *normative* or *legal* protection framework, which draws on international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. She recognises that while all three bodies of law provide some safeguards for IDPs, inadequacies in these existing regimes have led to the emergence of a body of 'soft law' in the form of guiding principles and declarations to fill the protection gaps. Second, Cossor examines the *institutional* protection framework, which similarly spans a broad range of sources, including international organisations, national bodies and non-governmental organisations. She provides a detailed explanation of the potential — and also the limitations — of each of these entities, as well as national governments, in providing protection to IDPs.

Third, Cossor addresses the concept of protection *by intervention*. For the purposes of this monograph, the concept of 'intervention' encompasses the broad range of actions that have the capacity to significantly challenge traditional state sovereignty, including military and non-military (or 'humanitarian assistance') activities. She explores what is meant by intervention for humanitarian purposes, the kinds of intervention models that have been used in the context of IDPs in armed conflict, and considers the legitimacy of each. Three case studies — civil–military coordination, protection areas, and international prosecution — are considered in detail as models particularly pertinent to IDP protection.

In the final part of the monograph, Cossor considers briefly the effect of intervention models of protection on broader issues of refugee protection and sovereignty. She concludes with an assessment of the adequacy of the overall protective framework for IDPs in armed conflict, and expresses the need for an integrated and coordinated response to internal displacement in the future.

Elizabeth Cossor has considerable experience working in the field of human rights and refugee law, having worked with refugees in Australia, northern India and Nepal, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Laws (Hons), and a Master of Laws from The University of Melbourne.