

Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven)
European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation
A.Y. 2014/2015

**Third-party states' responsibility for
violations of International Humanitarian
Law during a non-international armed
conflict within another state:
A case study of Syria**

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Abstract

This thesis will focus upon third-party states' responsibility for violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in an internal conflict of another state, with the on-going Syrian conflict as the case study. Third-party states' responsibility is derived from one of the general norms of established international law: responsibility arising from involvement by a third-party state in an internal conflict of another state. Such involvement can take the form of aid and assistance to combatants or direction and control of the combatants. Since the norms of international law were instituted only somewhat recently, there is not yet a lot of precedent in international law for third-party states' responsibility.

In this thesis, we will examine how third-party state responsibility can be argued for within the framework of established IHL. We will begin with a presentation of the justifications and the legal basis for holding third-party states responsible, i.e., the substantive laws that are violated and for which the third party state can be held accountable. Subsequently, a brief overview will be given of IHL conventions, the main point of focus will be upon Common Articles 1 through 4 of the Geneva Conventions. Thereafter, disarmament treaties and conventions will be examined, all of which expand the foundation, in that violations of treaty obligations can be defined to include "*transferring, aiding or assisting, encouraging or inducing, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under its international agreements.*" Finally, the application will be made to Syria to demonstrate how third-party state responsibility might work in practice.

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