



Dr. Merel Ekelhof

Merel Ekelhof is a Foreign Exchange Officer with the Strategy and Policy Team of the U.S. DoD Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC), where she deals with topics related to AI governance, law & ethics, and international partnerships. She has been seconded by the NL MOD, where she held a position as AI innovation manager at the Defence Materiel Organization.

Before joining the Defense Department, Dr. Ekelhof was the lead researcher on Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy at UNIDIR's (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research) Security and Technology Programme, a government adviser on issues related to Autonomous Weapons, and a visiting researcher at the Harvard Law School Program on International Law and Armed Conflict. She holds a Ph.D in Law and an LL.M in Law and Politics of International Security from the VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Her doctoral research is titled "The Distributed Conduct of War: Reframing Debates on Autonomous Weapons, Human Control and Legal Compliance in Targeting". Dr. Ekelhof is a NATO JFAC certified targeteer and completed various specialist courses on weapons law and responsible AI. She also serves on NATO's Maritime Unmanned Systems Innovation Advisory Board.