Inspection of Embassy Pristina, Kosovo

BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS
What OIG Inspected
OIG inspected the executive direction, program and policy implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Pristina.

What OIG Recommends
OIG made 10 recommendations to Embassy Pristina.

In its comments on the draft report, Embassy Pristina concurred with 9 recommendations and neither agreed nor disagreed with 1 recommendation. OIG considers all 10 recommendations resolved. The embassy’s response to each recommendation, and OIG’s reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The embassy’s formal response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

What OIG Found

- The Ambassador and the Chargé fostered resilience and integrity in accordance with the Department of State’s leadership and management principles.
- Embassy leadership’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic was consistent with Department guidance on risk management.
- Embassy Pristina returned $788,065 in canceled foreign assistance funds to the Department of the Treasury between FY 2019 and FY 2021 instead of reclassifying the funds so they could be used for other purposes.
- To facilitate vehicle registration for U.S. direct-hire staff, the embassy obtained dual diplomatic accreditation in both Kosovo and North Macedonia without Department approval.
- Forty-four percent of the mission’s residences had not been assessed for seismic risk despite Pristina being rated as “high” for the occurrence or frequency of earthquakes.
- The embassy’s Information Systems Security Officers were not performing their duties in accordance with Department standards.
- Spotlight on Success: Embassy Pristina successfully piloted a new oversight model for bilateral Fulbright academic exchange programs that required less administrative infrastructure without sacrificing strong binational stakeholder engagement.
## CONTENTS

CONTEXT ....................................................................................................................................... 1

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION .................................................................................................................. 2
  Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct ............................................................................... 2
  Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives ................................................................. 3
  Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic ............................................................................................... 4
  Adherence to Internal Controls ............................................................................................. 5
  Security and Emergency Planning .......................................................................................... 5
  Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals ..................................................... 6

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION .................................................................................. 6
  Political-Economic Section ....................................................................................................... 6
  Public Diplomacy ....................................................................................................................... 7
  Consular Operations .................................................................................................................. 8
  Foreign Assistance ..................................................................................................................... 10
  General Services ....................................................................................................................... 12
  Human Resources ...................................................................................................................... 13
  Facility Management ................................................................................................................ 14

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ................................................................................................... 14

RECOMMENDATIONS .................................................................................................................. 17

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS ................................................................................................................... 20

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY .................................................. 21

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE ................................................................................. 23

ABBREVIATIONS .......................................................................................................................... 27

OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS .......................................................................................... 28
The Republic of Kosovo has been a sovereign nation for 14 years following its declaration of independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. Kosovo became an autonomous part of the province of Serbia within Yugoslavia following World War II, after which Albanian nationalism eventually gave rise to a resistance movement calling for independence. In 1998, then-Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic initiated a violent police and military campaign against the resistance movement, which included widespread atrocities against civilians. When international attempts to mediate the conflict failed, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) conducted a 3-month bombing campaign against Serbia beginning in March 1999 that forced Serbia to withdraw its forces from Kosovo. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, approved on June 10, 1999, placed Kosovo under a transitional administration, while a United Nations-led process determined its status, but after negotiations failed, Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in February 2008. The International Court of Justice subsequently affirmed the legality of Kosovo’s independence declaration. More than 100 countries now recognize Kosovo, although Russia, China, and five European Union member states are among those countries that maintain a policy of non-recognition.

Kosovo is a landlocked nation located in the center of the Balkan Peninsula. It is bordered by North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, and Montenegro. With a surface area of 4,203 square miles, it is slightly smaller than Connecticut.

The United States strongly supports a multiethnic, democratic Kosovo, fully integrated into the international community. This policy remains a key pillar of U.S. efforts to enhance stability in the Balkan region as part of a Europe that is free and at peace. The United States continues to encourage Kosovo and Serbia to reach a comprehensive normalization agreement through European Union-facilitated dialogue talks, launched in 2010 with U.S. backing. The NATO-led Kosovo Force, staffed by troops from 27 countries, including 600 largely National Guard troops from the United States, supports international efforts to build regional peace and security.

From 2011 to 2020, Kosovo’s economic growth outperformed its neighbors and led to improved living standards. However, Kosovo’s economy remains hampered by poor infrastructure, unreliable electricity, a narrow industrial base, corruption, and heavy reliance on remittances from citizens living outside the country. Kosovo’s citizens have the second lowest
incomes in Europe, and a high rate of unemployment has led to an increasing number of citizens leaving the country.

Embassy Pristina’s FY 2018 to FY 2022 Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) identified three priority areas: rule of law, economic development, and regional stability. These priorities include:

- Normalizing the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia.
- Supporting the transition of the Kosovo Security Force to a multiethnic, professional defense force capable of operating directly with NATO forces.
- Advocating for economic reforms and improving the investment climate, energy supply, and trade linkages to the West.

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Pristina had 92 authorized U.S. direct-hire staff positions, 7 eligible family member positions, and 384 locally employed (LE) staff positions. Of the 92 U.S. direct-hire positions, 58 worked for the Department of State (Department) and 34 worked for other U.S. Government agencies, including the Departments of Defense and Justice. In September 2019, the embassy moved into a modern embassy compound in which all agencies are co-located, except for the Peace Corps, which maintains an office outside the embassy compound.

OIG evaluated the embassy’s policy implementation, resource management, and management controls consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, OIG conducted the inspection remotely.¹

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed Embassy Pristina’s leadership based on video interviews, staff questionnaires, and a review of documents.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

During the inspection, the Ambassador departed Embassy Pristina and the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) assumed the role of Chargé d’Affaires, ad interim (Chargé), on September 17, 2021. A member of the Senior Foreign Service, the Chargé arrived in September 2019. His previous assignment was DCM in Montevideo, Uruguay. The Management Counselor, who arrived in July 2020, became acting DCM in September 2021.

OIG found that the former Ambassador and the Chargé fostered resilience in accordance with the Department’s leadership and management principles set forth at 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b(10). During the COVID-19 pandemic, they proved attentive to the needs of the community, hosting 40 virtual town halls from March 2020 to May 2021 to disseminate medical, statistical, and management information to staff and eligible family members. In

¹See Appendix A.
addition, in February 2021, the Front Office asked the embassy Community Liaison Office to take a “pulse” survey of employees and eligible family members when delays in the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines from the Department resulted in lower morale. The Front Office proactively briefed the embassy community on the survey results and sent a cable calling for the Department to expedite delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to the embassy.

Based on interviews with staff and embassy documentation, OIG determined that the former Ambassador and the Chargé modeled integrity in accordance with 3 FAM 1214b(1). For example, the Front Office embraced the goal of expanding the number of LE staff from under-represented Kosovan minority groups. When a position opened at the embassy or the Chief of Mission residence, in addition to its customary public notices, the embassy placed advertisements in written publications that targeted local minority populations. Separately, in messages to staff, the Chargé emphasized the embassy’s commitment to teamwork and professionalism, human rights, and the need to end gender-based violence. OIG also confirmed that the Front Office maintained a comprehensive gift registry that met the requirements of 2 FAM 964.

However, OIG found that the Chargé, during his tenure as both DCM and Chargé, at times did not meet 3 FAM 1214b(4) and (6) principles on communication and self-awareness. For example, staff reported that the Chargé often gave taskings after working hours, which negatively impacted morale because they felt obligated to respond. In addition, staff expressed frustration over the number of meetings, sometimes without clear agendas, and extensive use of back-and-forth emails to complete tasks, which they felt hindered, rather than helped, achieve embassy goals. According to staff, the embassy would have benefited from a strategic vision from the Chargé instead of meetings and emails on details. To address these concerns identified by OIG, the Chargé and acting DCM held two embassy-wide meetings on priorities of the mission, moderated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director, with both Department and outside agency staff. Embassy staff told OIG that the meetings produced constructive suggestions to improve embassy operations to be considered with the arrival of a new Ambassador and the return of the Chargé to the DCM role.

**Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives**

In accordance with 18 FAM 301.2-4d, the Front Office articulated its key foreign policy objectives and incorporated these goals in its ICS. The former Ambassador, the Chargé, and the Country Team annually reviewed progress on the ICS to ensure that their efforts remained on track. This review took place via an interactive process that included the entire Country Team, with two facilitators reviewing the material in advance and leading a structured discussion. Similarly, OIG found that the Chargé, assisted by the acting DCM, fulfilled his responsibility

---

2 Guidance in 3 FAM 1214b(4) states that with regard to the leadership principle of communication, “Be cognizant of the morale and attitude of your team.” Additionally, 3 FAM 1214b(6) states that with regard to self-awareness, “Be tuned in to the overall attitude and morale of the team and be proactive about understanding and soliciting varying points of view.”

3 The new Ambassador presented his credentials on January 10, 2022, shortly after the inspection had concluded.
under 2 FAM 113.1b to oversee the mission’s strategic activities, following up on the three strategic goals contained in the ICS—regional stability, rule of law and governance, and sustainable, inclusive economic growth—through regularly scheduled internal embassy issue-oriented meetings.

OIG found that the former Ambassador and the Chargé engaged at the highest level of the Kosovan Government and interacted regularly with policymakers, civil society, and other foreign missions. Leveraging this access, the former Ambassador, and the Chargé, in coordination with agencies in Washington, D.C., negotiated an agreement with the Kosovan Government for Kosovo to shelter Afghan evacuees for up to 1 year. Evacuees are housed at Camp Liya located inside U.S. Camp Bondsteel in southern Kosovo. Embassy staff told OIG that Kosovo is the only nation to allow Afghan evacuees to remain in country for up to 1 year while being vetted for onward resettlement. The Chargé told OIG that establishing Camp Liya was an embassy-wide effort, with Political-Economic, Public Diplomacy, Consular, and Regional Security Office staff, as well as embassy Department of Defense elements, contributing to this key U.S. Government priority.

**Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic**

OIG found that embassy leadership’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic was consistent with 2 FAM 031d and 2 FAM 032.6g guidance on risk management. As discussed above, the former Ambassador and the Chargé emphasized their commitment to the health and safety of the embassy community through town halls and an embassy-wide survey. As of August 30, 2021, the Embassy Pristina community registered approximately 150 COVID-19 infections, including 127 cases among LE staff members, 12 among U.S. direct-hire employees, and 11 among eligible family members. Most of the cases occurred during the first 12 months of the pandemic. Between March and August 2021, after the vaccine became available, the embassy reported four cases. Because of the declining number of reported infections in Kosovo, in October 2021 the embassy allowed employees who so desired to reenter embassy facilities to work. Additionally, OIG identified several long-term staffing gaps which were the result of voluntary curtailments due to COVID-19. These are discussed in more detail in the Resource Management and Information Management sections of this report.

Based on interviews with staff and embassy reporting, OIG found that the COVID-19 lockdowns imposed by the Kosovan Government, along with the lack of early access to vaccines due to delays in the Department shipping them to the embassy, adversely affected both employee morale and their ability to perform their jobs. According to both embassy staff and the former Ambassador, who was Chief of Mission when the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, the embassy experienced initial problems with remote access technology that slowed employees’ work and often led to lost documents. Although the former Ambassador judged enhanced telework as a success and urged the Department to build on it by improving remote communications, he noted that it was important to balance telework with opportunities for staff to come together in person for collaboration.
Adherence to Internal Controls

The Front Office oversaw the timely preparation of the FY 2021 Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance in accordance with 2 FAM 022.7(1) and (5), which require chiefs of mission to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management control of their organizations. OIG review of embassy documentation showed that embassy sections reviewed internal controls as required and did not find any significant deficiencies or weaknesses. However, OIG found management control deficiencies, discussed later in this report, related to timekeeping, records management, the archival of diplomatic notes, driver duty time, and information security. The former Ambassador and the Chargé met weekly with the Management Counselor to review management controls. The Chargé and the acting DCM told OIG that staffing gaps and the combination of the human resource and financial management functions in one position hindered the embassy’s management control efforts.

OIG confirmed that the Chargé carried out regular reviews of the Consular Section chief’s nonimmigrant visa adjudications, as required by 9 FAM 403.12-2b.

Security and Emergency Planning

OIG determined that the Chargé’s leadership of the embassy’s security and emergency preparedness programs, as both Chargé and in his earlier capacity as DCM, complied with Department guidelines in 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-762a. The Chargé and the acting DCM chaired embassy Emergency Action Committee meetings covering a variety of security-related topics, and the former Ambassador and the Chargé regularly participated in embassy radio checks. In addition, the Chargé chaired an August 2020 crisis management exercise and a November 2021 tabletop crisis simulation. The embassy documented both exercises in “lessons learned” cables to Washington. OIG determined that both the embassy’s Emergency Action Plan and security memorandum of agreement between the Chief of Mission and Department of Defense geographic combatant commander were up to date.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Embassy staff told OIG the Front Office consistently supported Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles and activities, in accordance with 3 FAM 1514c(2) and cable 21 STATE 60514. Specifically, in June 2021, the acting DCM conducted an embassy-wide town hall centered on both EEO and COVID-19 related issues. Later, in July 2021, the EEO Counselor conducted two

---

4 Because of COVID-19, embassy security drills were principally virtual during the first half of 2021 but transitioned to in-person drills from July to December 2021.

5 The Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of State and Department of Defense assigns security responsibility for Department of Defense personnel in foreign areas. Under the terms of the agreement, the chief of mission is responsible for providing security to all Department of Defense personnel in country who are not under the command of a Geographic Combatant Commander. The agreement is required to be reviewed and signed annually. See 2 FAH-2 H-116.4, COM Security Responsibility and the Department of Defense.

EEO training sessions at the embassy. The former Ambassador and the Chargé encouraged Country Team members to attend the training, which they, along with U.S. direct-hire and LE staff from a variety of sections and agencies, attended as well. In addition, the Chargé met with the EEO Counselor as needed, and key EEO program information was publicly displayed at the embassy. In July 2021, the former Ambassador and the Chargé participated in the virtual opening of the Balkan Regional Diversity and Inclusion Council. Finally, the embassy’s Diversity and Inclusion Council collaborated with the EEO Counselor on program briefings.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

Based upon document reviews and staff interviews, OIG found that Embassy Pristina’s Front Office fulfilled its 3 FAM 2242.4 obligations to supervise entry-level Foreign Service personnel. Embassy Pristina initiated an embassy-wide mentoring program in September 2021, following 3 months of preparation. The Diversity and Inclusion Council managed the program that focused on entry-level employees yet was open to all embassy personnel. The program matched five pairs of volunteer mentors and mentees, with the acting DCM serving as one of the volunteer mentors.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Pristina’s policy and program implementation through a review of the advocacy and analysis work of the Political-Economic and Public Diplomacy Sections, and the U.S. citizens and visa services provided by the Consular Section. OIG also assessed the embassy’s foreign assistance management, oversight, and coordination conducted by the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section (INL Pristina) and Political-Economic Section. OIG determined that the Political-Economic Section generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. The Public Diplomacy Section, Consular Section, and foreign assistance management generally met requirements, with the exceptions discussed below.

Political-Economic Section

OIG reviewed the Political-Economic Section’s leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting and advocacy, Leahy vetting, commercial promotion, and end-use monitoring functions. OIG found these functions generally met Department standards. During

---

7 Embassy Pristina, along with U.S. embassies in Skopje, Zagreb, Podgorica, Ljubljana, Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Tirana, established the Balkan Regional Diversity and Inclusion Council.

8 The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the United States from furnishing certain assistance to a unit of a foreign security force if the Department has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. See 22 U.S.C. § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). Leahy vetting is the process of determining if the Department has credible information that units or individuals proposed to benefit from certain assistance have committed a gross violation of human rights. The Department helps implement a similar law applicable to “amounts made available to the Department of Defense” for assistance to foreign security forces. See 10 U.S.C. § 362.
the inspection, the embassy updated its Leahy vetting standard operating procedure and initiated plans for training on the software used for Leahy vetting requests.

Department offices and interagency stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the section’s political and economic reporting. Department stakeholders praised the section’s reporting on religious freedom, including the annual International Religious Freedom Report, for its high quality. In addition, the Department of Commerce positively highlighted the Political-Economic Section’s commercial work and its participation in the Commercial Service-State Department Partner Post Program, which allows embassies without a U.S. Commercial Service presence to offer selected commercial services to U.S. businesses. Finally, the section received praise for its two proposals for the Embassy Science Fellow Program, both of which were approved and used as models.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section’s strategic planning and reporting, resource and knowledge management, media engagement, policy programming and exchanges, and grants administration. Most Kosovans have a highly positive view of the United States. This offers a favorable environment for public diplomacy efforts, and the section’s enhanced budget, supplemented by more than $2 million per year in foreign assistance funds, supported programs focused on education and skills building, anti-corruption, innovation, and media literacy to counter disinformation efforts by malign actors. LE staff members told OIG that section officers modeled an inclusive, empowering management style, which helped ensure a smooth implementation of the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative during FY 2021. OIG found that the section’s activities closely aligned with ICS goals, and it consistently contributed to embassy reporting, especially on topics relating to Kosovo’s media and education sectors. Overall, OIG found the embassy’s public diplomacy activities met Department standards and guidance, with the exception noted below which was corrected during the inspection.

---

9 The Embassy Science Fellows Program provides U.S. embassies access to U.S. experts in science and technology fields. Embassies request fellows to assist with recommended projects that promote the security the prosperity of the United States while strengthening cooperation with international partners.

10 Because of the pandemic-related travel restrictions, OIG was limited in its ability to review operations at the section’s three American Corners. These embassy-supported public diplomacy facilities, which are located in public libraries in Pristina and two other cities, serve as venues for on-site and virtual programmatic engagement with target audiences, especially youth.

11 Polling conducted by the Gallup Global Leadership Center in 2020 found that 82% of Kosovans had a positive view of U.S. leadership, the highest of any European country and among the highest in the world.

12 The Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative is a comprehensive review of overseas public diplomacy functions and structures, including new framework job descriptions for LE staff positions to reflect changes in the public diplomacy environment. Initial rollout began in September 2018. Embassy Pristina implemented its transition to the new staffing model during FY 2021.
Public Diplomacy Grants Administration Generally Complied With Department Standards

The section administered a large public diplomacy grants program, approximately $5.3 million in FY 2021, generally in accordance with Department standards. However, OIG found that the section did not consistently upload all required documentation to the Department’s online grants database. OIG reviewed all grants from FY 2020 and FY 2021 of $100,000 or greater; a total of 20 grants valued at about $4.6 million. Fifteen of the 20 grant files lacked documentation of each grant’s pre-award merit review process, as required by the Department’s Federal Assistance Directive (Chapter 2, Section H). Only 1 of the 20 files included all required documentation of post-award monitoring in accordance with the Federal Assistance Directive, Chapter 4, Section D. During the inspection, the section uploaded the missing documentation. Based on the added documentation, OIG was able to determine that the grants were competed and awarded in accordance with Department standards and therefore did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Spotlight on Success: Innovative Fulbright Program Management

Embassy Pristina’s Public Diplomacy Section successfully piloted a new oversight model that offered a lighter administrative footprint without sacrificing strong binational stakeholder engagement. As the Department no longer supports the creation of new binational Fulbright Commissions to oversee bilateral academic exchange programs, Embassy Pristina needed a new approach. The section worked with the Kosovan Ministry of Education and other partners to create the U.S.-Kosovo Educational Exchange Board composed of embassy and ministry representatives and three volunteers from academia, civil society, and Fulbright alumni who serve rotating two-year terms. The board oversees program policies and candidate selection, while the Public Diplomacy Section enlisted an American education nongovernmental organization to manage program logistics. During the inspection, the embassy and Kosovan Government signed an updated Fulbright memorandum of understanding through which Kosovo was to double its program contribution to $3 million over the next 5 years. At the time of the inspection, this represented the largest per capita investment in Fulbright by any government worldwide, and—demonstrating the effectiveness of this new program oversight model—the largest annual contribution by a partner government in a non-Fulbright Commission country.

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Pristina’s consular operations, including U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, outreach, and fraud

---

13 The Department of State Federal Assistance Directive establishes internal guidance, policies, and procedures for all domestic and overseas grant-making bureaus, offices, and posts within the Department administering Federal financial assistance. It is updated annually by the Department’s Bureau of Administration (Office of the Procurement Executive/Office of Acquisitions Policy/Federal Assistance Division). The figure of $5.3 million covered all open public diplomacy grants at the time of inspection in September 2021, including multiyear grants with initial funding from previous fiscal years. The FY 2021 spending on public diplomacy grants included $333,292 in core public diplomacy funding, supplemented by $2,417,309 in foreign assistance (Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia/ Economic Support Fund) funding.
prevention programs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, embassy consular staff began teleworking and providing only emergency services. The section began offering limited consular services in June 2020, working in two teams on alternating days, and returning to the office full-time in April 2021. At the time of the inspection, the section was offering most consular services except for first-time tourist visas. During the inspection, the Consular Section corrected three issues identified by OIG. Specifically, the section:

- Completed an annual evaluation of the panel physician clinic\textsuperscript{14} and lab sites as required by 9 FAM 302.2-3.
- Updated special immigrant visa procedures\textsuperscript{15} to reflect the guidance in 9 FAM 502.5-3.
- Established nonimmigrant visa referral and priority appointment request procedures\textsuperscript{16} in accordance with 9 FAM 601.8.

Overall, OIG found the embassy’s consular operations generally complied with the guidance contained in 7 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies, except as described below.

**Consular Information on Embassy Website Was Out of Date**

Embassy Pristina’s public webpage contained out-of-date information on nonimmigrant visa fee validity, Presidential Proclamation travel restrictions, and Bureau of Consular Affairs-mandated visa service prioritization. Department standards in 5 FAM 722.6(7) and 7 FAH-1 H-833a require consular sections to coordinate closely with the public diplomacy and information management sections to maintain their sites and ensure the information provided remains up-to-date, clear, and accurate. Consular management told OIG they had prioritized other work over making regular updates to consular information. Inaccurate public information can contribute to consular applicants misunderstanding their eligibility to apply for visa services, failing to pay the appropriate fees, or being unprepared to attend their visa interviews.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Pristina should update its consular website pages to ensure the information complies with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

\textsuperscript{14} As defined in 9 FAM 302.2-3(E)(3)f(1), panel physicians, under agreements with consular sections, conduct the medical examinations of U.S.-bound immigrants and refugees.

\textsuperscript{15} As defined in 9 FAM 502.5-3, U.S. Government LE staff members and retirees may apply for special immigrant visas based on exceptional circumstances with a recommendation from their principal officer and the approval of the Secretary of State.

\textsuperscript{16} As defined in 9 FAM 601.8, the nonimmigrant visa referral program is the approved program for officials under Chief of Mission authority to advocate for the issuance of a nonimmigrant visa. A priority appointment request is a formal request by a qualified U.S. Government official for an earlier interview when U.S. national interest would be served by expediting an individual’s appointment.
Foreign Assistance

In FY 2020, Kosovo received $53.3 million in bilateral foreign assistance resources.\textsuperscript{17} INL Pristina managed $10.5 million\textsuperscript{18} of the $53.3 million. The remainder of the foreign assistance resources were managed by other agencies at the embassy including the Department of Defense, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and USAID, who managed $37.8 million in foreign assistance. Also, the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, in close coordination with the embassy, managed $5 million. The acting DCM, with support from the Political-Economic Section, led the coordination of all foreign assistance resources across the embassy.

OIG reviewed Embassy Pristina’s management, oversight, and coordination of foreign assistance programs. The review focused primarily on programs managed by INL Pristina and the coordination efforts of the Political-Economic Section.\textsuperscript{19} Overall, OIG found the embassy facilitated effective communication and coordination amongst stakeholders to avoid duplication of foreign assistance programming. Specifically, the embassy enabled frequent and consistent communication with stakeholders through the Assistance Working Group and the Rule of Law Working Group. The embassy used the ICS to guide foreign assistance programming. OIG also found that INL Pristina adhered to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs’ Standard Operating Policy/Procedure for End Use Monitoring. INL Pristina staff told OIG they received good cooperation from the Kosovan Government on end-use monitoring and had no issues.\textsuperscript{20} Additionally, OIG found the embassy’s interagency agreements and contract files included all required monitoring documentation, with the exceptions described below.

Grant Files Lacked Required Monitoring Documentation

OIG reviewed four interagency agreements, 10 grant agreements, and one contract, with a total value of $7.85 million, all managed by INL Pristina. OIG found that although the interagency agreements and contract files included all monitoring documentation, as required by 14 FAH-2 H-500 and the Federal Assistance Directive, some grant files lacked required

\textsuperscript{17} Foreign assistance resources for Kosovo include Assistance for Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia; International Military and Education Training; International Narcotics and Law Enforcement; and Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs funds.

\textsuperscript{18} INL Pristina managed $10.5 million of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement funds.

\textsuperscript{19} The scope of this inspection includes foreign assistance funds managed by the embassy’s Political-Economic, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and Public Diplomacy Sections. Because the Political-Economic Section does not directly manage any foreign assistance funding, OIG reviewed the section’s coordination of foreign assistance across interagency counterparts. The portion of foreign assistance funds deployed by the Public Diplomacy Section as small grants are covered in the Public Diplomacy section of the report.

\textsuperscript{20} The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs’ Standard Operating Policy/Procedure for End Use Monitoring (effective January 6, 2021) requires that certain property purchased with foreign assistance funds be monitored to ensure it is used for its intended purposes. In general, equipment valued at more than $2,500 or items designated as defense articles or dual-use items are subject to this requirement. End-use monitoring fulfills the requirements of Section 484(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act. See 22 U.S.C. § 2991(c) and 22 U.S.C. § 2785.
monitoring documentation, including financial and performance reporting and grants officer representative analyses of reporting and designation letters. Because the section was able to provide all missing documentation by the close of the inspection and is in the process of hiring a monitoring and evaluation specialist to bolster its monitoring and evaluation function, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Embassy Lacked Procedures to Minimize Foreign Assistance Funds Returned to the Treasury

OIG found that Embassy Pristina returned $1.7 million in canceled foreign assistance funds\(^{21}\) to the Department of the Treasury from FY 2019 to FY 2021. Of the $1.7 million, $788,065 was eligible for reclassification\(^{22}\) under INL’s statutory reclassification authority, which would extend the time these funds would be available. Funds eligible for reclassification were returned primarily because INL Pristina lacked procedures to systematically identify and reclassify INL funds allocated to interagency agreements with the Department of Justice. INL Pristina told OIG that by the time the Department of Justice said they would not spend the funds, it was too late to reclassify the monies. The remaining $945,849 in canceled foreign assistance funds were returned due to a decision to cease support to the European Union Rule of Law Mission.\(^{23}\) As outlined in 4 FAM 084.2, allotments must be managed to provide for effective and efficient funds management in carrying out the intent of Congress. In the absence of a systematic process to reclassify canceling funds, Embassy Pristina is unable to make full use of its foreign assistance resources.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Pristina should implement a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance.

(Action: Embassy Pristina)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed operations and internal controls in general services, human resources management, facility management, financial management, the health unit, and the community liaison office. At Embassy Pristina, USAID manages motor pool operations as the Alternate Service Provider.\(^{24}\) During the inspection, the embassy corrected one management control issue by completing all outstanding residential and non-residential post occupational health and safety certifications, as required by 15 FAM 971.

---

\(^{21}\) Appropriations expire if unobligated at the end of their period of availability. Consistent with 31 U.S.C. § 1552, the appropriations are canceled on September 30 of the fifth fiscal year after the period of availability for obligation ends. At that time, any unexpended balances are returned to the Treasury general fund.

\(^{22}\) Most foreign assistance appropriations contain a statutory authority enabling the Department to extend the period of availability using a process called reclassification. If used fully, reclassification can minimize or eliminate the need to return foreign assistance funds to the Treasury, allowing for more efficient use of funding.

\(^{23}\) These funds had been reclassified once and therefore could not be reclassified again.

\(^{24}\) According to 6 FAH-5 H-012.9, “Occasionally, another U.S. Government agency will have a sufficiently large administrative support capability at a location that it will step forward and agree to provide services as the Alternate Service Provider (ASP).”
The Management Section faced several staffing challenges. At the time of the inspection, the Management Counselor was serving as acting DCM. The General Services Officer served as the acting Management Counselor until the arrival of the Human Resources/Financial Management Officer in the beginning of October 2021, who then assumed those duties. The Human Resources/Financial Management Officer position had been vacant since November 2020, with the General Services Officer covering the bulk of the two portfolios during the 11-month gap. The previous incumbent went on global authorized departure and then curtailed.

Overall, OIG found the embassy’s Management Section generally implemented processes and procedures in accordance with Department guidance, with the exceptions discussed below.

**General Services**

*Embassy Driver Shifts Exceeded Operator Duty Limits*

OIG reviewed time and attendance records for 21 pay periods in 2021 for 33 of the embassy’s 39 drivers and found that drivers frequently exceeded the 10-hour daily duty shift maximum. Specifically, there were driver duty-time violations in 12 out of the 21 pay periods that OIG reviewed, with drivers exceeding the 10-hour maximum by up to 8 hours. According to 14 FAM 433.8a, drivers should not normally be required to perform more than 10 hours on duty. OIG determined drivers regularly exceeded the duty limit because of a lack of management oversight and because the embassy failed to follow Department guidelines and its own motor vehicle policy. Failure to enforce these standards increases the risk of injury to drivers, passengers, and the public, as well as damage to U.S. Government property.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Pristina should enforce driver duty limits for embassy drivers in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

*Driver Medical Certifications Had Expired*

OIG found that more than half of the embassy’s 157 chauffeurs and incidental (self-drive) operators had expired medical certifications. According to 14 FAM 433.4a, the Mission Vehicle Accountable Officer must ensure that all chauffeurs and incidental operators are medically certified for driving official vehicles. OIG determined this issue occurred because of miscommunication between the motor pool and the health unit regarding who was responsible for tracking drivers with expired certificates and initiating the medical clearance check process for such drivers. Failure to enforce motor vehicle safety requirements increases the risk of injury to drivers, passengers, and the public, as well as damage to U.S. Government property.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Pristina should complete medical certifications for all drivers in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Pristina)
Human Resources

**Embassy Did Not Receive Department Approval for Dual Accreditation Procedures**

OIG found that, in addition to their official accreditation to Kosovo, the embassy routinely requested that its U.S. direct-hire employees be accredited by the Government of North Macedonia without Department approval. This dual accreditation enabled Embassy Pristina’s U.S. direct hires to register their personal vehicles in, and receive license plates from, North Macedonia. Embassy staff told OIG this arrangement facilitated unrestricted personal travel to neighboring countries, as many neighboring countries did not recognize Kosovo license plates. Embassy staff were unable to provide documentation showing Department approval for this arrangement. According to 2 FAM 221.2a, the Office of the Assistant Legal Adviser for Diplomatic Law and Litigation and the regional bureau executive office are responsible for decisions regarding accrediting individuals at more than one embassy. Embassy staff told OIG this practice had occurred since the embassy opened in 2008 and that all foreign missions in Kosovo followed similar procedures. Failure to properly vet and request approval from appropriate Department offices could create legal and diplomatic issues for assigned embassy personnel.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, should document and request approval for dual accreditation of its staff in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with L and EUR)

**Time and Attendance Controls Were Insufficient and Not Followed**

OIG reviewed 250 of 448 (56 percent) of Embassy Pristina’s time and attendance records for the first 21 pay periods in 2021 and found multiple instances of non-compliance with Department standards. Of the 250 records reviewed, 147 (59 percent) had one or more of the following issues:

- Incomplete, unsigned, or missing documentation, contrary to 4 FAH-3 H-523.3, 4 FAH-3 H-524.3, and 4 FAH-3 H-526.1-4.
- Lack of documentation of prior approval for leave or overtime, as required by 4 FAH-3 H-525.4-1b and 4 FAH-3 H-523.2.
- Incorrect crediting of premium compensation for part-time employees, as outlined in 3 FAM 2337.3-1d.

Additionally, 8 of the 32 timekeepers could enter and adjust their own time and attendance records, contrary to 4 FAH-3 H-525.3-4a, which requires that timekeepers not post their own time and attendance data. Finally, three timekeepers had both main timekeeper and system administrator roles, which is contrary to the Department’s Post Access Security Controls Guide.
A lack of management oversight and training as well as poor communication contributed to this issue. Failure to comply with Department standards for time and attendance increases the risk for waste, fraud, and mismanagement of Government resources.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Pristina should implement and monitor controls to ensure compliance with Department standards for time and attendance. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

### Facility Management

#### Embassy Did Not Evaluate the Seismic Safety of All Residential Properties

OIG’s review of the Department’s Real Property Application\(^{26}\) found the embassy did not assess 32 out of 73 residences (44 percent) for seismic risk. According to 15 FAM 252.6f(3), embassies in high-seismic areas, such as Pristina, are required to evaluate the seismic safety of their residential buildings using one or more approved methods. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) rates the occurrence or frequency of earthquakes in Pristina as “high.” Embassy Pristina told OIG the seismic assessments for the 32 residences were not a high priority because the embassy expected these residences to be rated as poor, which was the case for almost all residential dwellings in Pristina, including those embassy residences already reviewed by OBO. Embassy Pristina further noted to OIG that it would review the unassessed residences but would need funding from OBO to do so. Failure to conduct seismic evaluations and mitigate identified deficiencies risks the life safety of residential occupants and could result in fatalities or serious injuries in an earthquake.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should evaluate all residential properties for seismic risk in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with OBO)

### INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed information management (IM) operations in Embassy Pristina, including unclassified and dedicated internet network computer operations, emergency communications preparedness, mail and pouch services, and telephone operations. Due to security concerns raised by the Regional Security Office, OIG did not use video walkthroughs of the embassy’s IM facilities. Instead, OIG conducted a limited review of physical and environmental controls protecting IT assets through interviews and photos submitted by Embassy Pristina’s IM staff.

---

\(^{25}\) WinT&A is a Microsoft Access based application that is used for recording and reporting time and attendance to the servicing payroll center.

\(^{26}\) The Department designed the Real Property Application system to meet the requirements of Executive Order 13327, Federal Real Property Asset Management. As defined by this executive order, Federal real property is any real property owned, leased, or otherwise managed by the Government, both within and outside the United States. This application provides users with the ability to manage all aspects of their real property holdings more effectively in an automated, web-based environment that is centrally managed in Washington, D.C.
Curtailments during the COVID-19 pandemic created months-long staffing gaps in the IM Section, including in the Information Systems Officer position, which was vacant from November 2020 to September 2021. In addition to his regular duties, from March to July in 2020, the Information Management Officer served as acting Management Counselor and performed financial management and human resource duties until mid-November 2020.

OIG found the section’s leadership and staff performed most required IM and security responsibilities in accordance with Department standards, with the exceptions noted below. During the inspection, section staff corrected issues related to access controls, contingency planning, incident response, dedicated internet network registration and authorization, and information systems security officers (ISSOs) designation.

**Information Systems Security Officers Did Not Perform All Duties**

OIG found that Information Systems Security Officers had not performed ISSO duties in accordance with Department standards. While the ISSOs performed some duties, they did not document them using the ISSO checklist as required by 5 FAH-11 H-116a(1). Also, ISSOs did not routinely review audit logs or network shared data as required by 12 FAH-10 H-122.5-2 and 12 FAH-10 H-112.8-3. OIG issued a management assistance report in December 2020 that highlighted continued widespread Department failures to perform information systems security officer duties. The Information Management Officer told OIG the curtailment of one of the designated ISSOs resulted in the ISSO deficiencies. Failure to perform required ISSO responsibilities leaves Department networks vulnerable to potential unauthorized access and malicious activity.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Pristina should perform information systems security officer duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**General User Accounts Granted Privileged Access to Shared Files**

OIG found Embassy Pristina’s IM staff administered the embassy SharePoint site using general user accounts with elevated privileges. These privileges gave the IM staff access to all embassy section files (i.e., Executive, Human Resources, Medical, Regional Security, etc.) when performing non-administrative functions, contrary to Department and industry standards. Guidance from the National Institute of Standards and Technology Special Publication 800-53 provides a catalog of security and privacy controls for information systems and organizations to protect organizational operations and assets, individuals, other organizations, and the nation from a diverse set of threats and risks, including hostile attacks, human errors, natural disasters, structural failures, foreign intelligence entities, and privacy risks.

---


28 The Department defines general user access as “access to applications and data files based on supervisor-defined user profiles.” Additionally, “[this] level of access must not permit ISSO, system administrator or programmer [or] developer privileges.” See 12 FAH-10 H-112.1-2a, “Account Management – System Administrator Responsibilities.” This category of access is referred to as non-privileged.

29 National Institute of Standards and Technology Special Publication 800-53 provides a catalog of security and privacy controls for information systems and organizations to protect organizational operations and assets, individuals, other organizations, and the nation from a diverse set of threats and risks, including hostile attacks, human errors, natural disasters, structural failures, foreign intelligence entities, and privacy risks.
AC-6(2) states that general user accounts (non-privileged) should not be used for security functions. Furthermore, 12 FAH-10 H-112.1-2a(5) prohibits granting a general user account administrator, programmer, or developer privileges. Differences in administration permissions between shared folders and SharePoint led to this deficiency following a recent migration of embassy information to SharePoint. A general user account with elevated privileges increases the risk for unintentional, unwanted, or improper use of privilege and could be used by internal or external actors to gain unauthorized access to Department information.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should configure SharePoint administration permissions to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with IRM)

**Records Management Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards**

OIG found that Embassy Pristina’s records management program did not comply with Department standards. OIG’s review of files on SharePoint shared document libraries found that most sections’ electronic records contained files that should have been deleted as they were beyond their retention dates. In addition, Embassy Pristina did not comply with record retirement requirements outlined in 5 FAM 433. Finally, diplomatic notes were not consistently archived\(^{30}\) as required by both embassy policy and cable 18 STATE 50952.\(^{31}\) Embassy Pristina did not establish a records management policy required by 5 FAM 414.5a and 5 FAH-4 H-215.3-2, which contributed to the records management deficiencies. A deficient records management program can result in the loss of important data for historical insight into policy analysis, decision-making, and archival research.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Pristina should manage its records in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

---

\(^{30}\) State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART) is the Department’s cable and record email application. SMART enables users to send and receive organizational authority messages and other messages with long term value using Microsoft Outlook on the Department’s Sensitive But Unclassified and classified networks. These messages are stored and searchable in the SMART Archive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued the following recommendations to Embassy Pristina. The embassy’s complete response can be found in Appendix B.¹ The embassy also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Pristina should update its consular website pages to ensure the information complies with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Management Response: In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina updated its consular website pages and ensured the information complies with Department standards.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Pristina should implement a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Management Response: In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina implemented a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Pristina should enforce driver duty limits for embassy drivers in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Management Response: In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina enforced driver duty limits for embassy drivers in accordance with Department guidelines.

¹ OIG faced delays in completing this work because of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting operational challenges. These challenges included the inability to conduct most in-person meetings, limitations on our presence at the workplace, difficulty accessing certain information, prohibitions on travel, and related difficulties within the agencies we oversee, which also affected their ability to respond to our requests.
**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Pristina should complete medical certifications for all drivers in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of August 30, 2022.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina enforced driver duty limits for embassy drivers in accordance with Department guidelines.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, should document and request approval for dual accreditation of its staff in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with L and EUR)

**Management Response:** In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina did not agree or disagree with this recommendation. However, the embassy noted that it discontinued seeking dual accreditation of its staff in January 2022.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina documented and requested approval for dual accreditation of its staff in accordance with Department guidance.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Pristina should implement and monitor controls to ensure compliance with Department standards for time and attendance. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina implemented and monitored controls to ensure compliance with Department standards for time and attendance.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should evaluate all residential properties for seismic risk in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with OBO)

**Management Response:** In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

**OIG Reply:** OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina evaluated all residential properties for seismic risk in accordance with Department standards.
Recommendation 8: Embassy Pristina should perform information systems security officer duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Management Response: In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina performed information systems security officer duties in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should configure SharePoint administration permissions to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with IRM)

Management Response: In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina configured SharePoint administration permissions to comply with Department standards. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of June 30, 2022.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Pristina should manage its records in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Management Response: In its May 27, 2022, response, Embassy Pristina concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Pristina managed its records in accordance with Department standards.
## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Arrival Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chiefs of Mission:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador</td>
<td>Philip S. Kosnett(^a)</td>
<td>11/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Chief of Mission</td>
<td>Nicholas Giacobbe(^b)</td>
<td>09/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chiefs of Sections:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Charles Goodman(^c)</td>
<td>07/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consular</td>
<td>Ian Hayward</td>
<td>08/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/Economic</td>
<td>Amy Carnie</td>
<td>08/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Wendy Barton</td>
<td>09/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Security</td>
<td>Lisa Greenly-Doyle</td>
<td>08/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Narcotics and Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Shawn Waddoups</td>
<td>10/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Agencies:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Agency for International Development</td>
<td>Zeinah Salahi</td>
<td>06/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
<td>John Hanley</td>
<td>07/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Attaché/Senior Defense Officer</td>
<td>COL Stephen Rose</td>
<td>08/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Departed post September 17, 2021.
\(^b\) Assumed Chargé d’Affaires duties on September 17, 2021.
\(^c\) Assumed the role of acting Deputy Chief of Mission on September 17, 2021.

**Source:** Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Pristina.
APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from August 30, 2021, to February 18, 2022, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation**: whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved and U.S. interests are accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management**: whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy; and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls**: whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; and whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

In addition to these three broad areas, OIG had these additional specific objectives to determine whether:

- COVID-19 affected Embassy Pristina’s operations and internal controls, and if so, to what extent.
- COVID-19 related telework affected mission accomplishment, customer service to the public, and employee performance.

Methodology

OIG used a risk-based approach to prepare for this inspection. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and taking into consideration relevant guidance, OIG conducted the inspection remotely and relied on audio- and video-conferencing tools in addition to in-person interviews with Department and other personnel. OIG also reviewed pertinent records; circulated surveys and compiled the results; and reviewed the substance of this report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the review. OIG used professional judgment and analyzed physical, documentary, and testimonial evidence to develop its findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.
Because the inspection was conducted remotely, some elements of a standard, on-site OIG inspection could not be completed. Specifically, OIG did not review Embassy Pristina’s classified computer and communications security operations, or security program. Additionally, during the inspection, OIG found that it could not assess certain areas due to lack of access to local applications, limitations in audio- and video-conferencing tools, or the need to confirm information on-site. These areas included review of records maintained in paper files, controls over consular accountable items and inventory, consular cashiering functions, embassy cash counts, physical inspection of embassy motor vehicles, verification of compliance with housing safety requirements, adequacy of contract and contractor officer representative files, telephone operations, IT emergency preparedness, and the security programs managed by the Regional Security Officer.
APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Embassy of the United States of America
Pristina, Kosovo

May 27, 2022

UNCLASSIFIED
THRU: \EUR\ – Assistant Secretary Karen Donfried
TO: \OIG\ – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
FROM: Embassy Pristina – Ambassador Jeffrey Hovenier
SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Embassy Pristina, Kosovo

Embassy Pristina has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report and thanks the inspection team for all its efforts during the inspection process. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations by OIG, noting that some of the recommendations, e.g., on Time and Attendance as included do not apply to all of the agencies at Post such as USAID.

**OIG Recommendation 1:** Embassy Pristina should update its consular website pages to ensure the information complies with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina agrees. The Embassy has implemented the necessary modifications and the website is current and up to date. The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) provides support for updating information on Consular webpages when the Consular section is unable to make such changes directly, and PDS and Consular will continue to collaborate to ensure the site is maintained with current Consular information.

The point of contact for this recommendation is Consular Chief Ian Hayward.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Pristina should implement a process to identify and reclassify foreign assistance funds before they cancel, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina concurs with the recommendation. As noted in the context provided for the recommendation, not all sections and agencies with foreign assistance funding were noted for this recommendation. However, in all cases, Post’s sections and agencies with foreign assistance funding have already corrected this or mitigated against it via the following procedures: 1) quarterly review processes to ensure that all foreign assistance monies, including those controlled at headquarters but allocated to Post, are reviewed and funds are set to be fully utilized and spent as appropriate; 2) established mechanisms to regularly collaborate with financial offices to ensure records are “scrubbed” and they are able to reprogram any unspent money.
In reference to the “Grant Files lacked monitoring documentation,” Post concurs that for some parts of the Embassy assistance program some files were not in SAMS, they were in Post’s files. The problem has been corrected and now, where relevant or required, all SAMS files are up to date with monitoring documentation.

The points of contact for this recommendation are Financial Management Officer John Etcheverry and Assistance Working Group Chair Nicholas Giacobbe.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Pristina should enforce driver duty limits for embassy drivers in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina concurs with the recommendation. Embassy leadership is directing every section in the Embassy which manages government vehicles to ensure that the 10-hour driving rule is strictly enforced, and therefore, comply with 14 FAM 433.8a. The Post motor vehicle policy is updated regularly and the FAM guidance regarding the 10-hour rule is clearly mentioned. It is anticipated that Embassy Pristina supervisors will plan and staff trips so as to not exceed the 10-hour limit and, except for extenuating circumstances, will adhere to the rule. Such extenuating circumstances may include cases when a driver is on official duty away from Post and due to road closures or heavy traffic is unable to move. Even during such cases, Post will take all measures possible to relieve the driver from duty. In addition, every section with Government vehicles will ensure that schedules of drivers include rotating shifts to avoid any drivers from exceeding 10 hours on duty.

The point of contact for this recommendation is the Mission Vehicle Accountable Officer Gezim Hysenagolli.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Pristina should complete medical certifications for all drivers in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina agrees with the recommendation. The Embassy has implemented the necessary actions to complete action on this recommendation by August 30, 2022. Embassy Pristina has already taken rigorous steps to comply with 14 FAM 433.4a and ensure that all chauffeurs and incidental drivers/operators are medically certified for driving vehicles. The Mission Vehicle Accountable Officer is working closely with the Embassy medical unit to schedule all drivers to complete their required medical certifications. Key groups of drivers such as the motor pool and the Protective Security Unit drivers are medically certified, and the remaining drivers are already scheduled for certification with the medical unit.

The point of contact for this recommendation is the Mission Vehicle Accountable Officer Gezim Hysenagolli.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, should document and request approval for dual accreditation of its staff in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with L and EUR)
Management Response: Embassy Pristina discontinued seeking dual accreditation of its staff in January 2022. For those staff members who were dual accredited prior to January 2022, Embassy Pristina will seek approval to maintain that dual accreditation in accordance with Department guidance and in coordination with the Office of the Legal Adviser and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

The point of contact for this recommendation is Acting Management Counselor John Etcheverry.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Pristina should implement and monitor controls to ensure compliance with Department standards for time and attendance. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

Management Response: Embassy Pristina agrees with the recommendation as it applies to State Department timekeeping. The Embassy has reinforced the Management Policy on Time and Attendance and brought all Department of State timekeepers into training compliance. Further, the Embassy has implemented all security controls recommended by the WinT&A CGFS Oversight Committee. Post has conducted a complete system access review of systems managed by State, removed accounts of separated employees, and brought all required forms for active users into compliance. No timekeepers governed by the management section can post or edit their own data, and Post will separate the System Administrator and Main timekeeper roles beginning in June 2022. This action will limit access to each of those roles to a single user.

The point of contact for this recommendation is Acting Management Counselor John Etcheverry.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should evaluate all residential properties for seismic risk in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: Embassy Pristina agrees with the recommendation. Post will continue to work with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) to ensure that Post is seeking housing that is seismically the best available. In fact, Post has been made aware that OBO intends to organize another seismic survey trip using one of its U.S.-based contractors (anticipated award by end of fiscal year 2022). Post will support OBO’s planning effort for this trip over the next couple of months. (Note: In 19 STATE 74458 OBO has clarified the interpretation of 15 FAM 252.6. “When posts or OBO cannot arrange for a detailed technical evaluation prior to leasing, posts are expected to use best available information to guide decision-making when evaluating and comparing prospective properties for lease.” Absent appropriate resources (qualified engineers and/or funds), Post will follow the guidance given in the 2018 Seismic Assessment when selecting properties and will continue to seek out local engineering assistance (in collaboration with OBO) to assist in the selection of future properties.
The point of contact for this recommendation is Facilities Manager Adam Bliss.

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Pristina should perform information systems security officer (ISSO) duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina concurs with the recommendation. The Embassy has assigned ISSO designations for all Department owned networks. The ISSOs now perform all necessary requirements according to the Official ISSO Checklist, and they reach out to regional ISSOs for additional support when needed.

The point of contact for this recommendation is Information Systems Officer Heath Call.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Pristina, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should configure SharePoint administration permissions to comply with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina, in coordination with IRM)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina concurs with the recommendation. The Embassy will work with the proper offices in Washington, D.C. to ensure that the correct permissions are applied to the Embassy’s Section Shares in SharePoint. The anticipated completion date for this task is no later than June 30, 2022.

The point of contact for this recommendation is Information Systems Officer Heath Call.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Pristina should manage its records in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Pristina)

**Management Response:** Embassy Pristina concurs with the recommendation. A Management Policy was established to guide employees in December 2021 (Management Policy #021-020), referencing the appropriate FAM and FAH guidance. Embassy Pristina will publish a records retention schedule and work with relevant sections and individuals to assure compliance no later than ninety days from this response. Finally, the backlog of unarchived diplomatic notes has been eliminated, Post has updated archiving procedures and Post is in compliance with the archiving standards spelled out in 18 STATE 50952.

The point of contact for this recommendation is Information Systems Officer Heath Call.
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DCM</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEO</td>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAM</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>Integrated Country Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Information Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INL Pristina</td>
<td>Embassy Pristina's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSO</td>
<td>Information Systems Security Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Locally Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBO</td>
<td>Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>U.S. Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OIG INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

Bruce Williamson, Team Leader
Richard Sypher, Team Manager
Jay Biddulph
Jefferson Brown
Eric Carlson
Lisa Derrickson
Laura Hettinger
Gina Horn
Christine Kagarise
Kathryn Schlieper

Other Contributors
Dolores Adams
Caroline Mangelsdorf
Lisa Piascik
Rebecca Sawyer
HELP FIGHT
FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

1-800-409-9926
www.stateoig.gov/HOTLINE

If you fear reprisal, contact the OIG Whistleblower Coordinator to learn more about your rights.
WPEAOmbuds@stateoig.gov