



U.S. Embassy Oslo, Norway

July 2022



UKRAINE-RELATED OVERSIGHT

Diana Shaw (fourth from right in photo above), Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Inspector General, and USAID OIG recently toured a Ukrainian border facility. They visited the border to observe firsthand how U.S. funding is protecting and assisting refugees. They also toured a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facility and met with Ukrainian refugees who described their experiences. The visit emphasized the importance State OIG and USAID OIG place on effective oversight of assistance programs to benefit those in need.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Department of State (Department) made numerous improvements in response to 19 recommendations from two reports that assessed management of occupational safety, health, and fire protection programs for overseas operations. *Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management (ISP-I-21-21)* and *Inspection of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Fire Protection (ISP-I-21-22)* were both issued in 2021. The Department improved its compliance with the requirement for post occupational safety and health officers (POSHOs) to certify that residences meet safety standards. Specifically, at the time of an inspection in

RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS

as of July 31, 2022

1,015*

Open Recommendations

41

Recommendations Closed During July

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* Includes 45 recommendations associated with U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission.

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October 2020, just 61.8 percent of residences worldwide had a POSHO certification, but that rate improved to 91 percent in late July 2022. Additionally, chiefs of mission are now required to certify in their annual statement of assurance that the mission has an effective fire protection program. Finally, the Department revised and clarified guidance in certain sections of the Foreign Affairs Manual to reduce confusion and increase compliance with occupational safety, health, and fire protection program requirements.

In July 2022, a former locally employed staff (LES) member was sentenced to 5 years in prison and ordered to pay approximately \$2 million in restitution for using his position of trust for personal gain. OIG and Diplomatic Security special agents determined the former Cultural Affairs Assistant embezzled grant money by falsifying documents issued by the U.S. Embassy and nongovernmental organizations, resulting in overpayments. The organizations unknowingly returned the funds directly to the LES, who used the money to purchase a condominium and new cars. The former employee had been terminated from his position at the U.S. Embassy in July 2018.

NOTABLE OPEN RECOMMENDATION

In our June 2021 report, *Management Assistance Report: Department Can Take Further Steps to Improve Executive Direction of Overseas Missions* ([ISP-21-14](#)), we recommended that the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent conduct annual surveys of U.S. direct-hire employees and locally employed staff to provide feedback on chief of mission performance.

OIG made similar recommendations in 2010, 2012, and 2017. However, it was determined that the Department conducted only one survey, in 2014. Without such surveys, chiefs of mission lack the regular feedback

necessary to help improve their performance as directed by the Department's leadership and management principles.

NEW WORK STARTED

- *Evaluation of Whistleblower Protection Notifications to Contractor and Grantee Employees*

REPORTS ISSUED

- *Audit of Internal Controls Managing the Procurement of Goods at U.S. Embassy Freetown, Sierra Leone* ([AUD-MERO-22-31](#))
- *Inspection of Embassy Oslo, Norway* ([ISP-I-22-23](#))



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