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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-13

Office of Inspections

May 2025

Inspection of Embassy Harare, Zimbabwe

BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

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HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-13

What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Harare.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 17 recommendations to Embassy Harare. In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with all 17 recommendations. OIG considers all 17 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.

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What OIG Found:

- The Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission led Embassy Harare in a professional and collaborative manner.
- Department of State and interagency stakeholders praised Embassy Harare's reporting on human rights and civil society repression, sanctions, and strategic competition as being particularly strong.
- The embassy paid its locally employed staff in cash with U.S. dollars for more than a decade without the required approvals from the Department of the Treasury. The payment in U.S. dollars resulted in additional transaction costs of \$276,000 over 2 fiscal years.
- The Consular Section had some deficiencies in employee orientation and training, fraud prevention program management, and recordkeeping.
- The embassy lacked systematic processes for the approval of foreign assistance proposals and for the coordination of foreign assistance programs across agencies.
- Embassy Harare had deficiencies in property management, the fire protection program, and time and attendance procedures.
- The financial management office did not have standard procedures to track and process employee accounts receivables.

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CONTEXT



Figure 1: Geopolitical map of Zimbabwe (Source: 2024 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.)

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in south-central Africa. The administration of President Mnangagwa has been in power since November 24, 2017.¹ The President controls the ruling party and government institutions, including the judiciary, and has marginalized the opposition. He has used violence against peaceful protesters, civil society, labor leaders, and members of the political opposition.

In 2001, in response to the Zimbabwean government's undemocratic practices, human rights abuses, and economic mismanagement, the U.S. Congress enacted the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act.² Beginning in 2003, the U.S. government enacted a series of financial and other sanctions against Zimbabwe. In March 2024,

the U.S. government replaced the existing sanctions with a more targeted package of sanctions on Zimbabwean individuals and entities using the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.³ Media sources describe U.S.-Zimbabwe relations as “strained,” “deteriorating further,” and “worsening,” citing disappointment that the sanctions were not abolished entirely.

China has significant economic and political influence in Zimbabwe, as well as access to the country's natural resources, enriching ruling party elites without pushing for difficult economic and political reforms.

Embassy Harare's Integrated Country Strategy (ICS), approved on March 24, 2022, describes Zimbabwe's importance to the United States as a “potential growth hub for southern Africa.”

¹ Zimbabwe elected Robert Gabriel Mugabe as the country's first prime minister in 1980. Mugabe became president in 1987 after changes to the constitution created an executive presidency. He remained in power for 37 years, however, in November 2017, amid building military pressure, public demonstrations calling for his removal, the ruling party's vote of no confidence, and impeachment proceedings led to President Mugabe's resignation. On November 24, 2017, he was replaced by former Vice President and Minister of Defense Emmerson D. Mnangagwa who was sworn in to serve the remainder of Mugabe's term. Mnangagwa won the presidency in his own right in July 2018 in an improved election, compared to Zimbabwe's previous elections, but still very flawed according to international election observers.

² Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001, Public Law 107-99, codified at 22 U.S. Code § 2151 note.

³ The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act authorizes the U.S. government to sanction foreign government officials worldwide that are human rights offenders, freeze their assets, and ban them from entering the United States. See Public Law 114-328, codified at 22 U.S. Code § 10102.

Because many of Zimbabwe's developmental and economic challenges stem from poor governance, corruption, and a failure of the rule of law, the ICS focuses on investments in health, inclusive economic growth and resilience, improved governance, and a strong civil society as steps towards fulfilling its potential. The embassy's four goals, as outlined in the ICS, are:

- Zimbabwe improves accountable, democratic governance that serves an engaged citizenry and respects fundamental human rights.
- Zimbabwe has a market-oriented economy that provides an opportunity for all Zimbabweans to prosper.
- Zimbabweans live longer, more productive, and healthier lives.
- Zimbabwe becomes a responsible member of the global community and a reliable partner for addressing bilateral, regional, and global challenges.

In FY 2023, U.S. bilateral foreign assistance to Zimbabwe was more than \$261 million, with embassy programs supporting democracy and the governance, agriculture, demining, and health programming sectors. The U.S. government also contributed \$71.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe in FY 2023.

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Harare had 90 authorized U.S. direct-hire positions of which 46 were Department of State (Department) U.S. direct hires, including 19 eligible family members positions. The remaining 44 positions were filled by other U.S. government agency employees, including staff from the Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Embassy Harare also had 290 locally employed (LE) staff members.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated Embassy Harare's executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.⁴ A related classified inspection report includes discussion of the embassy's security program and issues affecting the safety of embassy personnel and facilities.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed leadership based on interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of embassy meetings and activities during the onsite portion of the inspection.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The Ambassador, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Harare in July 2024. She previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires (Chargé) at Embassy Stockholm, Sweden. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) arrived in Harare in August 2022 and

⁴ See Appendix A.

served as Chargé for 2 years until the Ambassador's arrival. The DCM previously served as DCM at Embassy Freetown, Sierra Leone.

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM generally led Embassy Harare consistent with the Department's leadership and management principles in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b.⁵ Embassy staff described the Front Office, particularly since the Ambassador's arrival, as focused on empowering staff, boosting morale, and improving communication. After 3 years without an accredited Ambassador, staff embassy-wide told OIG they welcomed the Ambassador's clear strategic focus—expressed in town hall meetings and in public remarks—as well as her increased visibility and engagement with the Zimbabwean government and civil society. Staff also told OIG the DCM's leadership while Chargé, particularly her role in shaping adjustments to U.S. policy towards Zimbabwe, including the reform of the sanctions regime, gave needed focus to the work of the embassy team.

Embassy staff told OIG that Zimbabwe's difficult economic situation and antagonistic host government policies, as well as the extended period without an accredited ambassador, negatively affected morale in the past. However, embassy staff broadly agreed that the Ambassador's approach and relationship with the staff had improved morale and community building. Staff noted numerous events the Ambassador hosted soon after her arrival, as well as her participation at community events, which helped her to become familiar with staff and family members and improved morale.

Staff told OIG the Ambassador's visibility and engagement with personnel throughout the embassy also reflected her commitment to improved communication. Many embassy staff told OIG they were impressed with the town hall meetings the Ambassador held on her first and her ninetieth days in country, during which she outlined not only policy priorities but her personal values. Staff were particularly impressed with the Ambassador's request for honest feedback from her team, and many praised her as an active and engaged listener.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

OIG found the Ambassador fulfilled her responsibilities to oversee the embassy's strategic planning and activities, as defined in 2 FAM 113.1b. Although embassy staff lacked ready access to senior government officials due to strained U.S.-Zimbabwe relations, the Ambassador and staff took advantage of U.S. assistance and other programs of interest to the government of Zimbabwe to advocate for U.S. priorities at the highest levels. Department and interagency officials praised the embassy's advocacy and reporting. Specifically, Washington stakeholders noted the embassy's leadership in reforming U.S. sanctions policy and the embassy's reporting on Zimbabwe's 2023 national elections. OIG's review of the Ambassador's and DCM's calendars confirmed an increase in high-level government engagement following the Ambassador's arrival

⁵ The Department's leadership and management principles outlined in 3 FAM 1214b are (1) model integrity, (2) plan strategically, (3) be decisive and take responsibility, (4) communicate, (5) learn and innovate constantly, (6) be self-aware, (7) collaborate, (8) value and develop people, (9) manage conflict, and (10) foster resilience.

as well as an increased number of meetings with U.S. businesses, engagements with civil society, media interactions, and other outreach.

Embassy Harare's ICS was dated March 2022. Embassy staff told OIG that internal efforts to update the ICS began in early 2024 but work on the update slowed pending the Ambassador's spring confirmation and summer arrival. The Ambassador scheduled a November 2024 offsite meeting of embassy leadership to review and finalize the ICS update.

Adherence to Internal Controls

OIG determined the embassy prepared the FY 2024 Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance in accordance with Department guidance in 2 FAM 022.7 and 2 FAM 024d, which requires chiefs of mission to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management controls and to submit an annual statement of assurance. The DCM and Management Officer both told OIG they coordinated closely on the internal control assessments and provided a detailed briefing for the new Ambassador prior to her approval on the Statement of Assurance.

During the inspection, OIG confirmed the DCM began carrying out regular reviews of the Consular Section chief's nonimmigrant visa adjudications, as required by 9 FAM 403.12-1 and 9 FAM 403.12-2a and b. OIG confirmed the Front Office and Management Officer maintained a gift registry that generally met the requirements of 2 FAM 964.

Security and Emergency Planning

OIG found the Ambassador and DCM oversaw the embassy's security and emergency preparedness programs consistent with 2 FAM 113.1b(5) and 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-762. At the time of the inspection, the emergency action plan met Department requirements and security directives were up to date. Furthermore, while serving as the Chargé from 2022 to 2024, the DCM regularly participated in embassy drills.⁶ In advance of the August 2023 national elections, the DCM—as the Chargé—and the Regional Security Officer, reviewed security practices and bolstered embassy security. Additionally, the Ambassador initiated a monthly mini-crisis management exercise for the Country Team. Embassy staff told OIG the Ambassador and DCM regularly reinforced the Regional Security Officer's security policies and programs.

Equal Employment Opportunity

OIG found the embassy's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program complied with Department standards in 2 FAM 1511.1a. The embassy EEO team included one EEO counselor and two LE staff EEO liaisons. Additionally, both the Ambassador and DCM used town hall meetings and Country Team meetings to issue clear statements underlining their zero tolerance

⁶ At the time of the inspection, the Ambassador—who arrived in July 2024—had not yet had an opportunity to participate in an emergency drill.

for any form of harassment, discrimination, or similar behavior. Several newly arrived staff told OIG the Ambassador emphasized this message during their initial courtesy calls with her.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

OIG determined Embassy Harare generally maintained a professional development program for First- and Second-Tour (FAST) employees, as required by 3 FAM 2713b. Separately, but complementary to the FAST program, Embassy Harare launched an embassy-wide limited duration mentoring program in March 2024. Approximately one-third of all embassy staff participated as either mentors or mentees. At the time of the inspection, the embassy planned a second round of embassy-wide mentor-mentee pairings to launch on January 30, 2025, with the program running from February to April 2025.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Harare's policy and program implementation work performed by the Political-Economic Section, Public Diplomacy Section, and Consular Section. OIG also assessed the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)⁷ program, grants management, and the coordination of U.S. foreign assistance to Zimbabwe. OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. However, as discussed below, OIG made recommendations to address deficiencies in the Public Diplomacy Section, Consular Section, and in foreign assistance coordination and management of federal assistance awards.

Political-Economic Section

OIG reviewed the Political-Economic Section's leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting and advocacy, commercial promotion, and Leahy vetting.⁸ OIG found the section generally complied with Department standards, with the exception of federal assistance awards. Specifically, OIG found deficiencies in three areas of awards management: award file documentation, grants officer roles, and awards overdue for closeout, which are detailed further in the Foreign Assistance section of this report.

Department and interagency stakeholders told OIG the section was responsive to requests, supported official visits, and advanced policy goals. Stakeholders also praised the section's work

⁷ The Department's Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy manages and leads PEPFAR. Seven U.S. government departments and agencies implement the program. Implementing partners include nongovernmental organizations and government of Zimbabwe entities.

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. Code § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). Leahy vetting is the process of determining whether 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. Code § 362.

on a sanctions transition effort and on elections as particularly noteworthy. In addition, stakeholders told OIG the section performed well given the strained bilateral relationship and repressive environment. Through interviews in Washington and at Embassy Harare, and by observing embassy meetings and email exchanges, OIG determined the Political-Economic Section coordinated well with other agencies and sections. Leahy vetting users reported the section's process for vetting worked smoothly.⁹

Stakeholders Relied on Political-Economic Reporting

Department and interagency stakeholders told OIG they relied on the Political-Economic Section's reporting and analysis to inform interagency policy decisions. Stakeholders praised section reporting on human rights and civil society repression, sanctions, and strategic competition as particularly strong. Stakeholders also appreciated that reporting on economic issues provided a helpful reality check, particularly on investment challenges and debt clearance. In addition, OIG reviewed 138 cables drafted from September 1, 2023, through October 8, 2024. OIG found reporting to be high quality, well sourced, and relevant to policy priorities.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning, reporting, resource and knowledge management, federal assistance awards, educational and cultural programs, media engagement, and American Spaces. OIG found public diplomacy efforts were well integrated with the whole mission and supported the embassy's ICS goals. The Public Diplomacy Section was represented in appropriate embassy working groups and coordinated with USAID and other sections on messaging and complementary lines of programmatic action. Washington stakeholders especially noted the quality of the section's reporting. Overall, OIG determined the embassy's public diplomacy activities met Department standards and guidance, with the exception noted below.

Public Diplomacy Grants Were Not Documented as Required

OIG found the Public Diplomacy Section did not document grants in accordance with the Federal Assistance Directive¹⁰ (FAD) which requires federal award files to include evidence of monitoring grant activity.¹¹ OIG reviewed 20 grant files that were initiated from FY 2022 through FY 2024, with a total value of \$1.65 million¹² and found grants officer representatives did not document monitoring as required by each grant's risk assessment and monitoring plan. All 20 official grant files lacked evidence of performance monitoring,¹³ 17 were missing grantee

⁹ The embassy's standard operating procedures for Leahy vetting were last updated in 2022. The standard operating procedures were slated to be updated in 2024; however, the Department advised the embassy to wait until a new Department Leahy Vetting Guide becomes available.

¹⁰ Federal Assistance Directive (October 2022, and later versions), Chapter 4, Section D.

¹¹ Ibid, Chapter 4, Section D and Chapter 5, Section C.

¹² Sample grant files included four expired, six closed, and ten open grants.

¹³ FAD Chapter 4, Section D.

financial and narrative reports, and all closed and expired files were missing a final assessment by the grants officer representative to close out grants.¹⁴ Documentation lapses were due to a lack of clear standard operating procedures, which were subsequently instituted during the inspection. Although OIG did not find evidence grants funds had been misused, failure to properly document grant files can affect the section's ability to identify and mitigate risk, monitor implementation, evaluate results, and ensure accountability for public diplomacy resources.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Harare should monitor and document public diplomacy grants in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Harare's consular operations, including section leadership, U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, outreach, and fraud prevention programs. From September 2023 through November 2024, consular LE staffing increased from four to six staff in response to significant workload growth.¹⁵ OIG found the new team generally worked together well and, under the leadership of the section chief, successfully reduced the average tourist visa interview appointment wait times from 89 days to 5 days.

During the inspection, Embassy Harare addressed four deficiencies identified by OIG:

- Added signage with consular section hours and contact information, updated the posted schedule of fees, and posted required signage about female genital mutilation (7 FAH-1 H-263.8, 7 FAH-1 H-713b, 9 FAM 504.10-4(A)(1)).
- Initiated compliance with quarterly inventory audit requirements (7 FAH-1 H-655.2).
- Initiated compliance with the requirement to run the immigrant visa end-of-day report on all immigrant visa processing days (9 FAM 601.4-4).
- Updated the designation letter for the Fraud Prevention Manager (7 FAH-1 H-933).

OIG determined Embassy Harare's consular operations generally complied with guidance contained in 7 FAM, 8 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH-1, applicable statutes, and other Department policies, with the exceptions noted below.

Consular Section Lacked Required Orientation and Training Program

OIG found no written orientation and training program for new consular employees, as required in 7 FAH-1 H-645.2a, which states each overseas post should have a written orientation and training program for new arrivals. One staff member told OIG the lack of access

¹⁴ Ibid, Chapter 5, Section C.

¹⁵ The embassy's immigrant visa workload increased by 102 percent in the first 6 months of FY 2024, compared to the same period during the previous fiscal year, and its nonimmigrant visa workload grew by more than 30 percent, from 5,911 applications to 8,383 over the same 6-month period.

to job-specific training was their greatest challenge. Another said they frequently encountered problems they did not know how to handle due to a lack of training and reference materials. The section chief told OIG his focus since his arrival had been to reduce the nonimmigrant visa backlog and hire new staff, leaving little time to develop a formal orientation program, a training continuum for employees, or to update local standard operating procedures. Given that only one of Embassy Harare's LE staff had more than 16 months of job-related experience at the time of inspection, OIG found the lack of a codified, written orientation and training program, as well as a lack of updated local operating procedures, negatively affected the section's efficiency.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Harare should implement a consular orientation and training program, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Consular Section's Records Management Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found Consular Section staff did not maintain files and records in a systematic and organized manner so information could be accurately and quickly retrieved, as required by 7 FAH-1 H-451. Documents had not been consistently stored in the consular shared files since 2021 and, instead, were routinely stored on personal drives. Consular staff told OIG they were unaware of the 7 FAH records management requirements. Without systematic, organized, and accessible files, staff cannot quickly access necessary information to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Harare should bring its Consular Section records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Consular Section Did Not Have Written Fraud Prevention Strategy

OIG found the Consular Section did not have written strategies or standard operating procedures for fraud prevention programs. Department standards in 7 FAH-1 H-921 require Fraud Prevention Managers establish and manage fraud prevention programs at overseas posts. The section attributed its noncompliance to the primary visa adjudicator also serving as the Fraud Prevention Manager, mitigating the need to develop and communicate a fraud prevention strategy. However, the absence of an overall strategy and established procedures for fraud prevention increases the risk individual cases of fraud, as well as fraud trends, will not be identified.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Harare should implement a written fraud prevention strategy and accompanying standard operating procedures in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Consular Section Did Not Manage Asylee Records According to Department Standards

OIG found the Consular Section did not manage all asylee records in accordance with Department standards. At the time of the inspection, Embassy Harare retained case files for

spouses and children of asylees, known as Visa 92 and Visa 93 cases, on which no action had been taken for at least 2 years. Guidance in 9 FAM 203.5-6(3) requires consular sections to give Visa 92 applicants two opportunities to appear for an interview. If the applicant does not appear or is otherwise found ineligible for a visa, 9 FAM 203.5-6b(3) requires the return of the case to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Consular staff told OIG they were unclear about the processing requirements for these cases and therefore had not returned any cases to USCIS. Failure to manage these records according to Department standards can create confusion between USCIS and the Department as to the status of the cases and create potential delays for applicants.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Harare should manage asylee records in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Foreign Assistance

As noted earlier, in FY 2023, the United States provided more than \$261 million in bilateral assistance and \$71.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe. The embassy was broadly responsible for directing and supervising foreign assistance in the country, while specific embassy sections, as well as some bureaus and agencies in Washington, managed specific foreign assistance programming.¹⁶ USAID, CDC, and several Department bureaus¹⁷ managed most foreign assistance programming. The Political-Economic Section directly managed grants funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund, PEPFAR small grants,¹⁸ and the Africa Regional Democracy Fund. The PEPFAR Coordination Office worked with embassy stakeholders to advance the PEPFAR program and make progress toward achieving epidemic control goals.¹⁹ OIG assessed the embassy's management, oversight, and coordination of foreign assistance programs and determined Embassy Harare generally complied with Department policies and other foreign assistance-related guidance, with the exceptions noted below.

Embassy Did Not Have a Mechanism To Coordinate Foreign Assistance

OIG found the embassy did not have a process for coordinating the range of its foreign assistance programs. As previously noted, four Department bureaus and three other U.S. agencies (USAID, CDC, and the U.S. Forest Service²⁰) managed assistance programming in

¹⁶ Management of foreign assistance programs includes funds management, program design, implementation, and oversight.

¹⁷ These include the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement; and the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

¹⁸ The Political-Economic Section's grants officer also oversaw PEPFAR awards while the PEPFAR office had grants officer representative responsibilities for them.

¹⁹ By 2025, these goals aim for 95 percent of people living with HIV to know their status, 95 percent of those who know their status to be on antiretroviral treatment, and 95 percent of those on antiretroviral treatment to be virally suppressed and thus less able to transmit the virus.

²⁰ The U.S. Forest Service did not have a permanent presence at the embassy. Programming was managed from Washington.

Zimbabwe. According to 1 FAM 013.2K(6) and the President's Letter of Instruction to Chiefs of Mission, the Ambassador has a role in directing and supervising foreign assistance. In addition, guidance for the development of an embassy's operational plan²¹ states embassies must have internal procedures in place for chief of mission review and approval of foreign assistance and identify appropriate personnel to coordinate with the responsible government organizations. OIG found the Ambassador provided guidance through the formal planning and budgeting processes for programs managed by embassy staff. Additionally, on the Ambassador's behalf, Political-Economic Section staff provided feedback in response to assistance program proposals from Department bureaus. However, the embassy did not have a systematic process to receive, review, or approve such proposals before programs were implemented. Furthermore, OIG found the embassy did not have a formal process to coordinate or deconflict foreign assistance programs across agencies. Instead, program implementers relied on ad hoc coordination mechanisms. Embassy staff told OIG they were not aware of the requirement to have a systematic coordination process, and they did not see any problems with the ad hoc mechanisms. Without a coordination process for foreign assistance that is inclusive of all programs and entities, the embassy cannot ensure alignment of assistance programs in support of ICS foreign policy objectives, which can result in duplication of effort, waste, and monitoring challenges for the embassy staff.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Harare should implement a process to coordinate its foreign assistance programming in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Did Not Manage Federal Assistance Awards in Accordance With Department Requirements

OIG found the Political-Economic Section did not manage its federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found deficiencies in three areas of awards management: award file documentation, grants officer roles, and awards overdue for closeout.

OIG reviewed 14 of the section's active and expired federal assistance awards²² with a total value of \$898,184 and found 13 award files lacked required documentation, such as merit review, quarterly financial and program reports, and monitoring and evaluation reports. According to the FAD, complete documentation supporting the issuance and management of federal awards must be recorded in the official award file.²³

During its review of awards, OIG noted, in some cases, the grants officer also served as a voting member on the merit evaluation panel. According to the FAD, to ensure transparency, as well

²¹ The operational plan is the formal, annual approval process for foreign assistance funds managed by an embassy.

²² OIG reviewed a selection of 14 of 89 awards from FY 2020 through FY 2024 that were managed by embassy staff in the Political-Economic Section.

²³ FAD (October 2019 and later versions), Chapter 2, Section I.

as an objective review and funding recommendation, grants officers and grants officer representatives assigned to execute or manage an award should not be voting members of the panel.²⁴ This separation of roles is necessary to avoid potential conflicts of interest and ensure the integrity of the funding recommendation process. Section staff told OIG they were not aware of this requirement, and OIG observed this guidance was not reiterated in the section's award standard operating procedure.

Finally, OIG determined the Political-Economic Section had 20 awards totaling \$208,659 that were overdue for closeout; staff closed out 70 other overdue awards before the inspection. According to the FAD, within 1 year after the award end date, an award must be fully closed in all financial and grant systems.²⁵ Closing out a federal assistance award is crucial because it signifies the completion of all required work and administrative actions on a grant, ensuring the recipient has properly accounted for all federal funds, submitted necessary final reports, and returned any unused funds that can be put to better use. Section staff told OIG they were previously unaware of the unclosed awards²⁶ and learned of the requirement to close them out during a training course. By not closing out federal assistance award files according to required procedures, the embassy was unable to demonstrate the effectiveness of its assistance projects and appropriately manage foreign assistance funds, increasing the risk of waste or fraud.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Harare should update standard operating procedures to assist staff in managing federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Harare should manage federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Harare's operations and internal controls in human resources, facility management, general services, and financial management including the employee association, health unit, and Community Liaison Office. During the inspection, the embassy corrected six internal control issues OIG identified. Specifically, the embassy:

- Submitted the overdue education allowance survey to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Allowances (Department of State Standardized Regulation, Sections 072.12).
- Reclassified non-furniture and appliance pool²⁷ assets that were originally misclassified as furniture and appliance pool assets, such as safes (6 FAH-5 H-513c).

²⁴ Ibid, Chapter 2, Section H-2.

²⁵ Ibid, Chapter 5, Section A.

²⁶ The awards were issued prior to the current grants officer and grants officer representative's arrival at post.

²⁷ The furniture and appliance pool program furnishes overseas housing through the purchase, replacement, refurbishment, maintenance, inventory control, warehousing, pickup and delivery, and eventual disposal of nonexpendable residential furniture, furnishings, appliances, and equipment. Pooled furniture programs can

- Removed furniture and appliance pool assets that were incorrectly placed in office spaces or designated residences²⁸ (6 FAH-5 H-514.1d(2) and 6 FAH-5 H-514.2-3c(1)).
- Updated the employee association's licensing agreement with the embassy to include the use of embassy fuel tanks (6 FAM 525).
- Completed four cables requesting a correction to overpayments of post hardship differential for four employees who had been away from the embassy longer than 30 consecutive days (Department of State Standardized Regulations 533c).
- Cleared Suspense Deposit Abroad²⁹ transaction balances that remained uncleared for more than 30 days, such as Zimbabwe's tax authority overpayment of \$124,000 to the embassy that remained uncleared for 392 days (4 FAM 322c(2)).

OIG found the embassy's Management Section generally implemented processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance, except as described below.

Human Resources

Locally Employed Staff Payroll Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Since 2015, the embassy paid its LE staff in cash with U.S. dollars without the required approvals. Specifically, OIG found the embassy:

- Paid its LE staff salaries in cash, instead of through electronic funds transfer, without the required authorization from the Department of the Treasury (4 FAM 391.5a and c, 31 Code of Federal Regulations § 208.4, and 31 U.S. Code § 3332(a)(1)).
- Paid its LE staff in U.S. dollars, instead of local currency, without authorization from the Department's Bureau of African Affairs. Although the Bureau of African Affairs required the embassy to request this authorization annually, during the inspection, the embassy was unable to provide documentation that the annual requirement was waived or that it had requested authorization after 2015 (4 FAH-3 H-512c and 4 FAH-3 H-556.2-2a-c).³⁰

Because the embassy paid its LE staff in cash with U.S. dollars totaling almost \$25 million from FY 2023 to FY 2024, it incurred additional costs for cash replenishment purposes.³¹ Specifically, from FY 2023 to FY 2024, according to documentation provided by the embassy to OIG, the

achieve economies of scale and greatly reduce the time and effort required to oversee and manage residential furnishings.

²⁸ Designated residences include the Chief of Mission Residence. Furniture and furnishings for designated housing and offices are funded through other allotments.

²⁹ Suspense deposit abroad transactions are official collections for payments on behalf of and as directed by the depositors. The U.S. government is responsible to each such depositor for ensuring amounts received are appropriately disbursed or returned.

³⁰ Cable 15 STATE 87650, "Approval of Annual Extension for USD Salary Payments and USD Salary Allotment for LE Staff – Harare," July 23, 2015.

³¹ According to 4 FAM 393.4-6b, the cashier supervisor, typically the financial management officer at an embassy, is expected to reduce the frequency and amounts of cash being transported to the lowest level possible.

embassy incurred \$276,000³² in bank fees for cash replenishments. Staff told OIG the embassy paid its LE staff in cash with U.S. dollars for more than a decade due to the instability of the local currency and unpredictable actions of the Zimbabwean government. As such, the embassy did not believe paying LE staff via electronic funds transfer was a viable option. However, OIG found approximately 84 percent of LE staff already received a portion of their salary in U.S. dollars, through electronic funds transfers, to banks in Zimbabwe and internationally. In April 2023 when financial management staff inquired with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS) about alternatives to cash payroll, CGFS was unable to provide a long-term solution. Maintaining the volume of cash needed to pay LE staff salaries increases both the U.S. government's administrative burden and transaction costs that could be put to better use and can lead to increased operational risks associated with maintaining and accounting for those funds.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Harare should bring its payroll for locally employed staff into compliance with Department standards and coordinate with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to determine whether alternatives to cash payroll exist so funds used to pay for cash replenishment fees could be put to better use. (Action: Embassy Harare, in coordination with CGFS)

Embassy Time and Attendance Procedures Did Not Meet Department Standards

The embassy's time and attendance procedures did not meet Department standards. Specifically, OIG found:

- Embassy Harare's supervisors did not ensure timekeepers were adequately trained in accordance with 4 FAH-3 H-525.2-1. Four of the embassy's 20 timekeepers (20 percent) had not received timekeeper training, and 6 other timekeepers (30 percent) had not received periodic refresher training, as required by 4 FAH-3 H-525.1-3.
- Embassy Harare's employees did not submit overtime authorization forms in advance,³³ in accordance with 3 FAM 2332.5(2) and 4 FAH-3 H-523.2, which states employees may only work overtime when approved in writing, in advance, by their supervisors. OIG found employees only submitted 13 (20 percent) authorization forms in advance and supervisors only approved 7 (11 percent) in advance. Additionally, OIG found employees did not submit overtime requests to supervisors before overtime was accrued, and an average of 10 calendar days elapsed from the first day overtime was worked to when the supervisor approved the requests. In FY 2024, Embassy Harare incurred approximately \$472,000 in LE staff overtime.

³² Additionally, in the first month of FY 2025, the embassy spent \$26,000 on cash replenishment fees.

³³ OIG reviewed 65 overtime submissions for three pay periods in FY 2024, selected at random, to determine the embassy's overall compliance with relevant overtime standards. OIG reviewed overtime forms submitted April 21 to May 4, 2024 (pay period 8), July 14 to July 27, 2024 (pay period 14), and September 8 to September 21, 2024 (pay period 18).

OIG determined these issues were caused by a lack of oversight of the embassy's time and attendance procedures by both supervisors and embassy timekeepers. Failure to provide adequate oversight can lead to fraud, waste, and abuse of embassy resources.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Harare should bring its time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Facility Management

Embassy Did Not Perform Required Workplace Hazard Inspections

Embassy Harare did not perform the semi-annual workplace hazard inspections of high-risk work areas, as required. OIG found the facility management staff did not perform inspections of high-risk work areas³⁴ in the chancery, such as the mail handling areas and the medical laboratory, as required in 15 FAM 962a. Additionally, staff did not document the inspection of high-risk work areas by specific maintenance shops such as the carpentry, welding, or automotive work areas, as required. Staff told OIG they were not aware of all workplace hazard inspection requirements and therefore had overlooked some of the areas for inspection, as well as the required timelines for the inspections. Failure to perform regular workplace hazard inspections increases the risk some workplace hazards will not be identified and mitigated.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Harare should perform workplace hazard inspections of high-risk work areas in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

OIG found Embassy Harare's fire protection program did not fully comply with Department standards. During the inspection of the Chief of Mission Residence, Deputy Chief of Mission Residence, and three embassy staff residences, OIG found all fire extinguishers had missing inspection tags, contrary to the requirements in 15 FAM 843c. OIG also found the embassy did not properly place the required fire extinguishers in the Diplomatic Technology (DT) workspaces as required by 15 FAH-2 H-009.7-3a. Embassy staff attributed the missing inspection tags at residences to a failure to track the fire extinguishers. Staff also told OIG new fire extinguishers for the DT-related spaces were ordered and awaiting delivery. Failure to comply with the Department's fire protection standards increases the risk of injury, loss of life, and damage to property.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Harare should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

³⁴ High-risk work areas include maintenance shops (e.g., carpentry, welding and automotive), printing operations, pouch handling areas, warehouses, and medical laboratories.

General Services

Property Management Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

OIG found the embassy's property management program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG identified two issues:

- The embassy did not conduct or record its periodic, unannounced spot counts of expendable property.³⁵ According to 14 FAM 411.2-2b(8), the accountable property officer must conduct quarterly, unannounced spot check inventories to verify the accuracy of property records in the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System³⁶ and reconcile any discrepancies. The embassy told OIG that staff conducted the expendables spot check once in the previous three quarters in 2024 and once in 2023.
- The embassy transferred \$1.4 million in nonexpendable property to different locations from 2021 to 2024,³⁷ but the transfers were not documented in the inventory system using the DS-584 Nonexpendable Property Transaction form, as required by 14 FAM 425.3-6.

Staff told OIG the embassy did not comply with Department guidance for management controls of expendable and nonexpendable property because of a lack of management oversight and review of property management reports. Failure to identify and correct deficiencies weakens internal controls and places the U.S. government at greater risk of waste, fraud, or mismanagement of property resources.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Harare should bring its property management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Financial Management

Embassy Did Not Have Standard Operating Procedures To Track or Process Its Outstanding Employee Accounts Receivables

OIG found the financial management office did not have standard operating procedures to track or process outstanding employee accounts receivables³⁸ and did not provide oversight of

³⁵ Expendable property includes items consumed by normal use, such as office supplies, as well as items that become an integral part of another item of property, such as replacement parts and facilities equipment.

³⁶ The Integrated Logistics Management System is an integrated web-based system that encompasses all Department supply chain functions into one system. The system is designed to upgrade Department supply chain management by improving operations in areas such as purchasing, procurement, warehousing, transportation, property management, personal effects, and diplomatic pouch and mail.

³⁷ Embassy Harare's transfers that were not documented using the DS-584 Nonexpendable Property Transaction form included \$378,000 from 2021, \$186,000 from 2022, \$619,000 from 2023, and \$214,000 from 2024.

³⁸ According to 4 FAM 033.2-2(3), the Department has several types of accounts receivable that must be tracked, one of which being employee receivables. Receivables are established for employees for various debts such as the

the process to ensure funds owed to the government were repaid. According to 4 FAM 033.2-5 and 6, and 4 FAM 232.1-1c, embassies are responsible for developing procedures to accurately track and record known accounts receivable in a timely manner. The financial management office also did not consistently use its employee accounts receivables tracker to track receivables, send initial bills of collection in a timely manner, or send follow-up notices to employees reminding them of their delinquent debts. For example, for receivables related to employees' personal use of official cellphones,³⁹ OIG found the embassy documented only 5 of 185 of these employee receivables as paid in full. Additionally, there was no documented follow up for the remaining 180 receivables, with a total value of more than \$39,000. For motor pool home-to-office services, the embassy recorded 289 transactions from FY 2022 to FY 2024, of which 71 (25 percent) remained unpaid going back to April 2022, totaling more than \$2,800. Of the 71 unpaid transactions, only 13 (18 percent) had a comment noting financial management staff followed up with the debtor, and some of these receivables remained unpaid for more than a year before financial management staff followed up with the debtor.

According to 4 FAM 493.1-3a, the embassy's Management Officer or the Financial Management Officer must forward all debts to the Department's Accounts Receivable office for collection prior to the debts reaching 91 days of delinquency. However, Embassy Harare did not forward the debts for any of the delinquent receivables it tracked.⁴⁰ OIG found several factors contributed to this problem. First, the Financial Management Officer did not generally send follow-up notices of indebtedness as required in 4 FAM 493.1-1 and 2a. Additionally, embassy staff told OIG there were no standard operating procedures to track or process employee receivables and it was unclear whose responsibility it was to document and follow up on unpaid accounts receivable. As a result, financial management staff failed to track and follow up on the status of receivables already maintained in the accounts receivable file. Failure to keep an accurate accounting of employee receivables increases the risk that funds owed to the U.S. government will not be recovered.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Harare should establish and implement a standard operating procedure for tracking and processing employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department requirements. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Cashier Operations Did Not Adhere to Department Standards

OIG found internal controls in Embassy Harare's cashier operations did not meet Department standards. Specifically, OIG found:

overpayment of a salary or a travel advance that has not been repaid. These become employee receivables when they exceed the Department criteria of 30 days for timely repayment.

³⁹ Data as of October 17, 2024, for personal cellphone usage on official phones from FY 2023 through 2024.

⁴⁰ Accounts Receivable is an office within CGFS that manages and collects debts owed to the Department. See 4 FAM 491.3, "Definitions."

- Unannounced subcashier verifications⁴¹ did not always occur at the required intervals. In calendar year 2023, supervisors who supervised subcashiers with authorized advances under \$1,000, did not conduct the required subcashier verifications 10 times (4 FAM 397.2-3a and the CGFS Cashier User Guide, Chapter 13.5.2.2(1-2)).
- Embassy alternate cashiers did not act as the principal cashier two to three times a quarter as required by the CGFS Cashier User Guide, Chapter 3.3.5. This procedure helps to ensure the alternative cashier has the necessary skill to allow for continued cash operations during the absence of the principal cashier, thereby reducing errors due to inexperience.

OIG determined these issues occurred because of insufficient oversight by the cashiers' U.S. direct-hire supervisors. Failure to ensure adequate management oversight of cashiering operations increases the risk of errors, loss of funds, fraud, and misuse of embassy cashier services.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Harare should bring its cashiering operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Had Overdue Travel Advances

As of October 2024, the Department's travel management system, E2, indicated Embassy Harare had 34 overdue travel advances totaling \$22,712.⁴² Of these, 18 were outstanding between 30 and 59 days, 5 were outstanding between 60 and 89 days, and 11 were outstanding for more than 90 days. Department standards at 4 FAM 493.1-3 require the Management Officer or Financial Management Officer at an embassy to refer any debt delinquent for more than 90 days to the Department's Accounts Receivable office for collection, which financial management staff did not do. Additionally, according to 4 FAM 464.2-5, travel advances must be repaid before financial management staff can approve additional advances. However, the embassy's financial management staff were not checking for prior advances before approving additional advances. Financial management staff told OIG they improperly issued travel advances because of a heavy workload and higher priority tasks that needed to be completed. Overdue travel advances represent a loss of funds to the Department if they remain uncollected.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Harare should clear outstanding travel advances in accordance with Department standards and put overdue travel advance funds of up to \$22,712 to better use. (Action: Embassy Harare)

⁴¹ Also known as a cash count, an unannounced subcashier verification is required, generally by one's American supervisor, at least monthly when a subcashier's cash advance is \$1,000 or greater, or quarterly if the advance is less than \$1,000. The verification requires a physical count of a subcashier's funds and a review of supporting documentation that make up the subcashier's operating accountability (e.g., cash, collections, checks on hand, cash advances, etc.).

⁴² According to 4 FAM 464, "The purpose of a travel advance is to provide an employee authorized to travel at U.S. Government expense with funds to meet authorized travel expenses."

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Harare's information management and information security operations, including unclassified and classified operations and non-enterprise networks,⁴³ telephone and radio programs, mail operations, emergency preparedness, and cybersecurity responsibilities. The embassy's DT office, which included 4 direct hires and 13 LE staff members, provided information management and information security support to more than 400 users.

As part of their responsibilities, DT staff provided the full range of support to embassy personnel as required by International Cooperative Administrative Support Services standards. This included network support, landline and mobile services, emergency and satellite communications, mailroom services, and liaising with local internet service providers for embassy support. During the inspection, DT staff corrected three deficiencies identified by OIG. Specifically, the staff:

- Equipped the alternate command center with copies of the updated emergency action plan as required by 12 FAH-1 H-261e(5).
- Supplied personal protective clothing and eyewear for use in the mailroom screening facility as required by 15 FAM 9576a.
- Developed a standard process and procedures to verify access to embassy files and folders given to personnel on a regular basis was still valid in accordance with 12 FAH-10 H-112.1a(3) and 12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3b.

OIG determined DT staff generally implemented information management and security requirements in accordance with Department standards, with the following exceptions.

Records Management Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found Embassy Harare's records management program did not comply with Department standards in 5 FAM 418.8, 5 FAM 418.10, and 5 FAM 435 regarding the retirement of files and records, and archiving WhatsApp⁴⁴ messages as official records. For example, reports from the Department's records management dashboard showed Embassy Harare had not retired program files for political, economic, public diplomacy, and senior officials since 2016. Additionally, embassy staff used WhatsApp to communicate with their counterparts, but OIG found staff did not capture those messages as official records as required by Department standards. Embassy staff told OIG that a lack of familiarity with overseas records management requirements led to their failure to perform required records management responsibilities. OIG found a lack of accountability from embassy leadership on records management contributed to noncompliance. The lack of an effective records management program increases the risk of loss

⁴³ The Department defines a non-enterprise network as an internet connection from a commercial or government internet service provider on a Department-owned and -operated discrete non-sensitive unclassified local area network that is not connected to any other Department system.

⁴⁴ WhatsApp is a free electronic application that lets users send end-to-end encrypted messages, photos, and videos.

of information and historical records that affect the embassy's ability to conduct policy analysis, decision-making, and archival research.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Harare should bring its records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

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 Harare. The embassy's complete response can be found in Appendix B. The embassy also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Harare should monitor and document public diplomacy grants in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025,¹ response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of July 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare monitored and documented public diplomacy grants in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Harare should implement a consular orientation and training program, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of May 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare implemented a consular orientation and training program, in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Harare should bring its Consular Section records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare's Consular Section records management program complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Harare should implement a written fraud prevention strategy and accompanying standard operating procedures in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

¹ OIG received Embassy Harare's official response, which is not dated, on April 17, 2025.

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare implemented a written fraud prevention strategy and accompanying standard operating procedures in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Harare should manage asylee records in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare managed asylee records in accordance with Department guidance.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Harare should implement a process to coordinate its foreign assistance programming in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of August 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare implemented a process to coordinate its foreign assistance programming in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Harare should update standard operating procedures to assist staff in managing federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of October 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare updated standard operating procedures to assist staff in managing federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Harare should manage federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare managed federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Harare should bring its payroll for locally employed staff into compliance with Department standards and coordinate with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to determine whether alternatives to cash payroll exist so funds used to pay for cash replenishment fees could be put to better use. (Action: Embassy Harare, in coordination with CGFS)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare brought its payroll for locally employed staff into compliance with Department standards and coordinated with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to determine whether alternatives to cash payroll exist so funds used to pay for cash replenishment fees could be put to better use.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Harare should bring its time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare's time and attendance procedures complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Harare should perform workplace hazard inspections of high-risk work areas in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare performed workplace hazard inspections of high-risk work areas in compliance with Department standards.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Harare should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare's fire protection program complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Harare should bring its property management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare's property management program complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Harare should establish and implement a standard operating procedure for tracking and processing employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department requirements. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare established and implemented a standard operating procedure for tracking and processing employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department requirements.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Harare should bring its cashiering operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare's cashiering operations complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Harare should clear outstanding travel advances in accordance with Department standards and put overdue travel advance funds of up to \$22,712 to better use. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare cleared outstanding travel advances in accordance with Department standards and put overdue travel advance funds of up to \$22,712 to better use.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Harare should bring its records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Management Response: In its April 17, 2025, response, Embassy Harare concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Harare's records management program complied with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Pamela Tremont	7/2024
Deputy Chief of Mission	Elaine French	8/2022
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	Anthony Pagliai	8/2023
Political-Economic	Benjamin Pierce	8/2023
Management	Jacob Choi	10/2023
Public Diplomacy	Laurence Socha	9/2023
Regional Security	Matthew Reilly	9/2022
Diplomatic Technology/Information	Timothy Harrison	10/2023
Diplomatic Technology Chief	Bryan Carroll	8/2024
Other Agency Representatives:		
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Kiren Matruka	7/2024
Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché	Jacob Day	8/2023
U.S. Agency for International Development	Janean Davis	11/2023

Source: OIG generated from data provided by Embassy Harare.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from September 3, 2024, to January 17, 2025, 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.

Methodology

OIG used a risk-based approach to prepare for this inspection. OIG conducted portions of 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 discussed the substance of this report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the inspection. OIG used professional judgment and analyzed physical, documentary, and testimonial evidence to develop its findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



Embassy of the United States of America

UNCLASSIFIED

TO: OIG – Lisa Rodely, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: U.S. Embassy Harare, Ambassador Pamela Tremont

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – U.S. Embassy Harare

U.S. Embassy Harare has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

Recommendation 1: Embassy Harare should monitor and document public diplomacy grants in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy will upload monitoring and evaluation information from individual grants officer representatives to the MyGrants system and ensure all public diplomacy grants are current with Department standards by July 2025.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Harare should implement a consular orientation and training program, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by developing an orientation and training program for new officers. The embassy is also developing a formal training program for local staff. This program will be completed by May 2025.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Harare should bring its Consular Section records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by merging several Teams channels into one consular channel and loading all documents into the Department-mandated Office 365 website. All staff have access to these resources and all consular documents are now saved in the same place.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Harare should implement a written fraud prevention strategy and accompanying standard operating procedures in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy is implementing the recommendation by collaborating with the Office of Fraud Prevention Programs in the Bureau of Consular Affairs to draft the strategy. The written strategy will be complete by July 2025.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Harare should manage asylee records in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by contacting all pending V-92 cases to request updates from the beneficiaries. The embassy has closed and returned to U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services any cases in which the beneficiaries had been given two opportunities to come for an interview and never appeared. All V-93 cases were returned to the National Visa Center in February 2025 per Department guidance.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Harare should implement a process to coordinate its foreign assistance programming in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy will create a working group and a standard operating procedure to coordinate its foreign assistance programming by August 2025.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Harare should update standard operating procedures to assist staff in managing federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy will update the Political-Economic Section's standard operating procedures for federal assistance awards by October 2025.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Harare should manage federal assistance awards in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy will update the Political-Economic Section's award file documentation by September 2025. The Political-Economic Section has amended its grants officer roles in accordance with Department guidelines and closed out all overdue awards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Harare should bring its payroll for locally employed staff into compliance with Department standards and coordinate with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to determine whether alternatives to cash payroll exist so funds used to pay for cash replenishment fees could be put to better use. (Action: Embassy Harare, in coordination with CGFS)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy will coordinate with the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services to determine whether alternatives to cash payroll exist.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Harare should bring its time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by conducting training sessions for all timekeepers.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Harare should perform workplace hazard inspections of high-risk work areas in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by creating semi-annual standing work orders in the Global Maintenance Management System (GMMS) for automatic work, carpentry, electricity, masonry, painting, plumbing, and welding as well as for the health unit and mail handling area.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Harare should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by putting a magnet QR code in each house to remind residents of inspections and allow them to document their inspections of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. The embassy also sent out a management notice detailing the inspection process.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Harare should bring its property management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the required quarterly spot checks for expendables and non-expendables property. Furthermore, new property is now received using the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS).

Recommendation 14: Embassy Harare should establish and implement a standard operating procedure for tracking and processing employee accounts receivables in accordance with Department requirements. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the ATLAS Financials Accounts Receivables Module as of March 2025 and is now able to raise bill of collections and track payments.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Harare should bring its cashiering operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by having two alternate cashiers work in the cashier booth for five consecutive days. The embassy has also completed cash verification for all sub-cashiers for the first and second quarters of FY 2025. The embassy will ensure strict control of funds verification for sub-cashiers by July 2025.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Harare should clear outstanding travel advances in accordance with Department standards and put overdue travel advance funds of up to \$22,712 to better use. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by increasing reviews and follow ups. As of April 15, 2025, the balance of overdue outstanding advances have been reduced to \$5,434.00. The embassy will continue to follow up on all outstanding Travel advances.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Harare should bring its records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Harare)

Embassy Harare concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by updating section records delegates. Each delegate was given access to refresher documentation and training as well as the link to the records management distance learning course and links to bureau and post records management policy. In addition, the post records coordinator held hands-on training sessions open to all staff on WhatsApp export requirements and procedures. In total, three sessions were conducted, and approximately 30 U.S. direct hires and LE staff attended. Finally, the post records coordinator created a monthly automated email to all staff on exporting WhatsApp messages. The email links to an online form which staff can use to self-certify compliance.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Management Counselor Jacob Choi.

ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CGFS	Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DT	Diplomatic Technology
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAD	Federal Assistance Directive
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and Second-Tour
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
LE	Locally Employed
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



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