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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-05

Office of Inspections

February 2025

**Inspection of Embassy Kinshasa,
Democratic Republic of the Congo**

BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-05

What OIG Inspected

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

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 45 recommendations to Embassy Kinshasa. In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with 45 recommendations. OIG considers all 45 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 managed Embassy Kinshasa in a professional and collaborative manner.
- The embassy successfully advanced key U.S. foreign policy priorities, such as strengthening democracy, combating trafficking in persons, and addressing climate change, despite a non-permissive security environment that constrained travel by embassy staff.
- Chronic staffing challenges contributed to pervasive internal control issues and increased vulnerability to fraud, waste, and mismanagement in embassy operations. Twenty-three percent of Department of State U.S. direct-hire positions were vacant at the time of the inspection.
- Embassy Kinshasa's designated primary and alternate Information Systems Security Officers did not perform required duties for classified, OpenNet, and non-enterprise networks.
- Embassy Kinshasa did not manage its inventory of mobile devices, staff did not report lost or stolen cell phones and laptops to the property board, and the embassy did not require employees who had lost mobile devices to reimburse the U.S. government for the cost of the devices.
- Spotlight on Success: Embassy Kinshasa's Public Diplomacy Section shared cards with a QR, or quick response, code with contacts as a simple but effective means of highlighting U.S. engagement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The cards, with one side in English and the other in French, have a QR code, which when scanned by a smartphone, takes users directly to an embassy website that summarizes bilateral assistance.

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CONTEXT



Figure 1: Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (Source: CIA World Factbook.)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the second largest country in Africa, is located in central Africa and is roughly the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. The estimated population of 112 million is made up of more than 200 ethnic groups.

Under the rule of King Leopold of Belgium from 1885 to 1908, millions of Congolese died as a result of disease, inhumane treatment, and exploitation.

Experts believe the current degree of the DRC's anti-Western suspicion and continuing cycles of violence can be attributed in part to the country's particularly brutal colonial history. The United States established diplomatic relations with the DRC when it gained its independence from Belgium in 1960. Following independence, the DRC experienced a mix of unrest, rebellion, secession movements, a three-decade dictatorship, armed conflict, and foreign intervention. Much of eastern DRC is currently in conflict, where fighting among dozens of armed groups, including a militia backed by neighboring Rwanda, has displaced millions of people. In January 2019, opposition candidate Felix Tshisekedi became president in the first peaceful transfer of power since the DRC's independence. Tshisekedi was re-elected president in December 2023.

The DRC's domestic economy is based largely on small-scale agriculture and forest products, but the DRC also has an estimated tens of trillions of dollars in mineral reserves. The mining sector and petroleum industry generate the overwhelming bulk of the country's export earnings. The DRC is the world's largest producer of cobalt and one of the largest producers of copper and industrial diamonds. The Congo Basin is the world's second largest rainforest and is home to many endangered wildlife species.

Embassy Kinshasa's Integrated Country Strategy (ICS), approved in April 2022, identified four principal policy goals:

- Promote stability and durable peace, particularly in eastern DRC.
- Preserve the Congo Basin Rainforest, including through environmentally sound and sustainable economic growth.
- Support strengthening of democracy by promoting effective, accountable public institutions, as well as improved governance and educational opportunities that meet citizen needs.
- Improve health and humanitarian services.

U.S. foreign assistance to the DRC, totaling \$1.4 billion in FY 2023, is primarily humanitarian, development, and health-focused. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

manages most assistance to the DRC.¹ Additionally, the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is coordinated by the embassy's PEPFAR Coordination Office and implemented by embassy-based staff of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and USAID. The embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Section and the Department of Defense's (DoD) Office of Security Cooperation (OSC)² also manage small programs in the DRC. Other programs are managed by Department of State (Department) bureaus from Washington.³ Finally, the United States contributed \$313 million to the United Nations Organization for Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in FY 2023.⁴

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Kinshasa had the following Department positions: 78 U.S. direct-hire authorized positions, 18 eligible family member (EFM) employees, and 372 locally employed (LE) staff. Additionally, the embassy had 69 U.S. direct-hire positions, 190 LE staff positions, 1 EFM position, and 4 third country nationals working for three other U.S. government agencies: USAID, DoD, and the CDC.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated the embassy's operating environment, executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.⁵ A related classified inspection report includes discussion of the embassy's security program, issues affecting the safety of embassy personnel and facilities, and certain aspects of policy implementation.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

OIG noted Embassy Kinshasa regularly faced emergency threats due to civil unrest in Kinshasa, armed conflicts, volcanic and seismic activity in the eastern part of the country, and epidemic outbreaks of emerging and chronic infectious diseases throughout the country. Kinshasa is rated critical for crime by the Department. Armed robbery, armed home invasion, and assault are common, and local police lack resources to respond effectively. Although the DRC government and public generally view the United States positively, the embassy contends with anti-American sentiment resulting from widespread public misperceptions that the United

¹ The USAID mission in the DRC also has responsibility for USAID programs in the Republic of the Congo.

² DoD security cooperation activities in the DRC are led by OSC staff assigned to Embassy Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo and supported by an OSC staff member assigned to Embassy Kinshasa. There are currently no Title 10 DoD security assistance programs in the DRC. DRC security assistance is limited by restrictions in the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008, Public Law 110-457.

³ This includes the Department of State's humanitarian assistance program overseen by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

⁴ The United Nations deployed peacekeepers to the DRC in 1999 to monitor a ceasefire, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and help guarantee protection of civilians. The DRC government has negotiated a "disengagement plan" with MONUSCO for the phased withdrawal of the force starting in 2024.

⁵ See Appendix A.

States has favored Rwanda at the expense of the DRC's territorial integrity and, thus, shares the blame for continued violence in the east.

Travel inside Kinshasa is slow, hazardous, and unpredictable. Roads are in poor condition, most motorists do not observe traffic rules, and accidents are frequent. The commute to embassy housing can vary from less than half an hour on some days to more than 3 hours on others; for LE staff it can be 4 to 5 hours each way. Outside of Kinshasa and other main cities, travel is even more difficult as most roads are not drivable, even with an off-road vehicle. Road conditions also deteriorate significantly during the rainy season from October to May. Most principal towns are served by a variety of local air companies of varying reliability. Flights between Kinshasa and most other cities in the DRC are limited and sporadic. Internal flights frequently depart late and are sometimes canceled without notice, and the domestic airlines have a poor safety record. Additionally, the Department has advised U.S. citizens not to travel to certain areas of the country, including eastern DRC, due to the risks of crime, civil unrest, terrorism, armed conflict, and kidnapping. As discussed later in the report, these issues with in-country travel constrain the embassy's ability to engage host country partners, stay informed on developments in the east and elsewhere, and monitor embassy programs.

OIG determined the embassy had chronic staffing challenges. For example, at the time of the inspection, 18 of the 78 (23 percent) U.S. direct-hire positions for the Department were vacant. Staffing gaps were exacerbated by U.S. direct-hire absences from Kinshasa for rest and recuperation travel and medical evacuations to receive needed medical care.⁶ High LE staff turnover and the resulting vacancies—45 of the Department's 372 LE staff positions, or 12 percent were vacant at the time of the inspection—added an additional impediment to embassy operations and the ability of staff to sustain best practices.⁷

Finally, OIG noted embassy staff are spread across multiple buildings in three separate compounds. The chancery is a small and dated building. The separation of staff constrains collaboration, and productivity suffers due to the time required to move from one compound to another, which is worsened by the aforementioned traffic problems. The Department is building a new embassy compound, which is scheduled to be completed in 2028, that will allow staff to be co-located.

⁶ Department U.S. direct-hire assignments to Embassy Kinshasa are for 2 years with three rest and recuperation breaks. The Department provides rest and recuperation travel when conditions of life at an overseas post present distinct and significant difficulties of sufficient severity to justify temporary relief. Among the conditions considered are climate, isolation, inadequate transportation within the country, lack of adequate recreation facilities, housing conditions, unsanitary conditions, lack of essential services such as medical or dental care, prevalence of communicable diseases, unusual personal hazards, and excessive cost of transportation from the post to a suitable relief area. Additionally, from September 30, 2022, through the time of the inspection in May 2024, Embassy Kinshasa supported 32 medical evacuations.

⁷ During FY 2023, the embassy advertised 84 LE staff job openings. At the time of the inspection, an additional 29 LE staff were pending departure from their embassy positions following approval during 2023 for special immigrant visas to the United States.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed Embassy Kinshasa's 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 is a Senior Foreign Service Officer who, prior to her February 2023 arrival in Kinshasa, served as Chargé d'Affaires at Embassy Khartoum, Sudan. The Ambassador also served as U.S. Ambassador to the Central African Republic from 2019 to 2022 and U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Benin from 2015 to 2018. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), also a Senior Foreign Service officer, arrived in Kinshasa in July 2022. Her most recent assignment was as Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. She also served as Chargé d'Affaires in Morocco from 2017 to 2019, and as a Director for Iraq on the National Security Council staff from 2008 to 2009.

OIG determined the Ambassador and DCM acted in accordance with the Department's 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214 leadership and management principles.⁸ Consistent with 3 FAM 1214b(7), the Front Office encouraged productive collaboration, establishing constructive working relationships with all agencies and sections to further ICS goals. Both U.S. direct-hire employees and LE staff told OIG the Front Office created a supportive workplace environment, with staff from various agencies stating that information sharing was the norm and collaboration within the Country Team was excellent. Even in cases where Country Team members disagreed upon the best course of action, staff told OIG they were able to maintain positive working relationships.

In accordance with 3 FAM 1214b(1), OIG found the Ambassador and the DCM modeled integrity. For example, in embassy meetings, the Ambassador highlighted the need for supervisors and employees to provide feedback to each other and noted that she appreciated feedback on her performance as well. U.S. direct-hire staff told OIG they highly respected the Ambassador as a person and a leader. In addition, the Front Office met with newly arrived employees—U.S. direct hires and LE staff—emphasizing in these sessions the need for staff to do their best at work and respect their colleagues. In embassy town halls and other fora, the Ambassador made clear that bullying, harassment, and violations of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles would not be tolerated. LE staff told OIG that should they suffer abuse in the workplace, they would feel empowered to report such behavior to the DCM. Separately, consistent with 3 FAM 1214b(10), the DCM fostered resilience by proactively contacting embassy employees and family members to inquire about their welfare and ensure their inclusion in community activities.

⁸ 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.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

In accordance with 18 FAM 301.2-4d, the Front Office articulated Embassy Kinshasa's goals and objectives in an April 2022 ICS. In May 2023 and January 2024, the Front Office led in-person off-site discussions to follow up on that document and included a written status report in the embassy's annual Mission Resource Request for FY 2025. In addition, U.S. direct-hire employees told OIG that discussion of ICS goals and objectives took place in a variety of other embassy meetings, including the working groups the Ambassador and DCM established to coordinate day-to-day activities and facilitate cross-cutting discussions between multiple sections.⁹ The working groups addressed country-specific strategies to implement ICS goals and cross-cutting administration priorities¹⁰ and included discussions of diplomatic, assistance, security, and public diplomacy activities on issues such as democracy and government, stabilization in eastern DRC, health, and environment and climate. However, OIG found staffing gaps and staff being spread across multiple buildings in three separate compounds, as discussed in the Operating Environment section, at times limited the ability of working group members to meet in person. Some embassy staff told OIG there was a lack of clarity with respect to working group functions because, at the time of the inspection, only one working group had completed implementation of the Front Office's directive to formulate a written charter. Additionally, OIG observed working group membership and topics overlapped, which risked, in the absence of the requested charters, issues being dropped or the inefficient use of time with multiple groups covering similar issues. In recognition of the need for greater structure, prior to the close of the inspection, the embassy hired a staff member charged with day-to-day coordination of the working groups to better synchronize their efforts.

OIG found the Ambassador, assisted by the DCM, fulfilled her responsibility under 2 FAM 113.1b to oversee the embassy's strategic activities. For example, to further the ICS goal to promote stability in eastern DRC, in fall 2023, the Ambassador and her embassy team supported the U.S. government's efforts to bring about a cessation of hostilities between the DRC and neighboring Rwanda during the DRC's December 20, 2023, national elections. On December 11, the U.S. National Security Council announced a 72-hour ceasefire in eastern DRC, which had been negotiated between the two countries, a measure which was later extended to December 28 to cover the electoral follow-up period. In addition, prior to the election, in accordance with the ICS goal to support democracy and governance, the Ambassador and the DCM oversaw the delivery of USAID technical assistance to electoral authorities. The embassy released a joint statement, in coordination with third-country diplomatic missions, supporting the aspirations of the Congolese people and calling on the government and the National Independent Electoral Commission to operate in a transparent and even-handed manner. On

⁹ The embassy had working groups focused on anti-corruption, China, combating trafficking in persons, countering disinformation, the Deal Team, democracy and governance, environment and climate, health, and stabilization.

¹⁰ DRC factors prominently into several key administration strategies, including: the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa, climate (preservation of the Congo Basin), anti-corruption, and supply chain resilience (critical minerals). U.S. engagement in DRC also focuses on other areas of U.S. concern such as wildlife trafficking, pandemic surveillance and response, and global fragility.

election day, teams of U.S. election observers monitored the voting nationwide, again working in conjunction with other resident embassies in Kinshasa as well as local United Nations representatives. These efforts contributed to the first election in recent DRC history that was not marred by substantial violence and whose outcome was widely accepted by the public. Separately, OIG noted the Ambassador enjoyed access to high-level host country policymakers and engaged in active outreach to government and civil society on the ICS health and environment goals, highlighting these issues in numerous public statements. Interagency officials in Washington told OIG the Ambassador and her policy team provided exemplary support on a wide variety of key issues.

Adherence to Internal Controls

The Front Office oversaw the development of the FY 2023 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 reviewed the embassy's supporting documentation, which stated that embassy sections reviewed internal controls, as required. In its FY 2023 Statement of Assurance, Embassy Kinshasa identified deficiencies or material weaknesses in embassy staffing and compliance with required EEO and General Services Office training. However, the Statement of Assurance did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in embassy operations. During the inspection, OIG found internal control issues, which are discussed in the Resource Management and Information Management sections of this report.

During the inspection, OIG confirmed that 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 also confirmed the Front Office maintained a comprehensive gift registry that generally met the requirements of 2 FAM 964.

Security and Emergency Planning

The Ambassador's leadership of Embassy Kinshasa's security and emergency preparedness programs was consistent with the Department's guidelines in 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-762a. The Front Office held regular meetings with the Regional Security Officer to review security programs, with ad hoc sessions scheduled as necessary. The Ambassador and DCM also held broader planning meetings with the Regional Security Officer, the Consular Section chief, and the Management Section Counselor. The Ambassador signed 11 directives governing security issues upon her February 2023 arrival in the DRC, and links to these directives were posted on the embassy intranet site. The Ambassador's security directive on travel contained guidelines governing travel outside of Kinshasa and delegated approval of such requests to the DCM and the Regional Security Officer, in consultation with an embassy travel and transportation working group. Although some individuals and agencies within the embassy expressed disagreement with individual decisions, the adjudication of such requests was done in accordance with procedures outlined in the Ambassador's security directive.

OIG determined the embassy's Emergency Action Plan was updated on January 11, 2024, and responses to OIG's questionnaire showed that the majority of U.S. direct-hire employees knew where to find the plan and understood what to do in case of an emergency. However, only about one-third of the LE staff who responded to the questionnaire answered these questions affirmatively. Upon learning of this lack of awareness on the part of LE staff, the Ambassador told OIG she would work with the Regional Security Office to remedy the situation. Separately, embassy staff told OIG the Ambassador and the DCM regularly participated in security drills. For example, in February of 2023, Embassy Kinshasa, in conjunction with Embassy Brazzaville, conducted a tabletop exercise, discussion, and walkthrough of plans for sheltering in place and evacuation of Embassy Kinshasa employees from post if necessary. The Ambassador directed all embassy staff to participate in the drill—the Ambassador and DCM also participated—and recommended the adult family members of U.S. direct hires to do so as well.

Equal Employment Opportunity

OIG determined the Front Office supported EEO principles and activities, in accordance with 2 FAM 1510 and 3 FAM 1212. Embassy LE staff told OIG they believed the Front Office made clear that abuse or discrimination would not be tolerated, and the Ambassador emphasized this in meetings and town halls. Bulletin boards throughout the embassy displayed information on the EEO program and anti-harassment procedures. In addition to a Federal Women's Program Coordinator, the embassy had an EEO Counselor in place who had applied for enrollment in the Secretary's Office of Civil Rights EEO training course. The embassy also had a designated LE staff EEO Liaison.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

OIG found the Front Office oversaw the embassy's First- and Second-Tour (FAST) program, as required in 3 FAM 2242.4. Because the embassy included employees from USAID and CDC in its FAST program, the group had approximately 47 members, of whom 14 were Department employees.¹¹ The FAST program had two co-coordinators, one from the Department and the other from USAID. According to Department employees who responded to OIG questionnaires regarding their participation in the FAST program, most were generally satisfied with the program. In addition to introductory meetings with the Front Office upon a FAST employee's arrival at the embassy and monthly brown bag sessions, the DCM organized events at her residence at which FAST personnel could engage with their peers across the embassy or discuss topics such as pre-election security preparations. For example, in April and May 2024, the DCM sponsored small group receptions, and in November 2023, the DCM organized a session on authorized departure and ordered departure regulations. Spouses of FAST personnel have been welcomed at such events as well.

¹¹ As of May 2024.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Kinshasa's policy and program implementation work performed by the Political Section, Economic Section, Eastern Congo Unit, Public Diplomacy Section, and Consular Section. OIG also assessed the foreign assistance functions of INL, OSC, and the PEPFAR program, grants management, and the coordination of foreign assistance to the DRC. 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 Political, Economic, and Consular Sections, as well to address a foreign assistance grants management deficiency.

Political Section

OIG assessed the Political Section's leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting and Leahy vetting.¹² OIG reviewed 109 section cables from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, and found the reporting to be relevant to embassy strategic objectives, with coverage across a range of issues, most prominently the DRC elections in December 2023 and reforms in the national defense force. In interviews with OIG, Department and interagency stakeholders particularly praised the Political Section's work in support of the December 2023 elections. For example, the section led both the embassy's Elections Working Group, as well as the embassy's efforts on election reporting, messaging, coordination, and observation.

Also notable was the work of the section on the Department's annual Trafficking in Persons report. A change in the DRC government agency in charge of tracking trafficking in persons meant that crucial data had been lost. A new Trafficking in Persons Working Group, led by the Political Section and USAID, worked closely together to engage government and non-government interlocutors, obtaining the data necessary for the annual Trafficking in Persons report, the results of which significantly impact U.S. funding for assistance to the DRC.

OIG found the Leahy Vetting Coordinator for the Political Section worked with the Consular and INL Sections to complete Leahy vetting. The section completed 4,786 Leahy vetting checks from March 2023 to March 2024. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which is responsible for implementing Leahy vetting requirements for the Department, told OIG that the embassy's on-time record for submitting cases was very good and that only 16 percent of submitted cases were considered "short-fuse," which occurs when nominations are submitted closer than standard lead times for Washington approval.

¹² 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 (U.S.C.) § 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.C. § 362.

OIG found the Political Section's leadership team generally met management and leadership standards, with both U.S. and LE staff welcoming the leaders' attention on improving processes and ensuring that every member of the section received guidance and support.

During the inspection, the Political Section took action to correct an issue identified by OIG by beginning to archive electronic messages, such as those in the WhatsApp or Signal applications, in accordance with records management requirements in 5 FAM 435d. OIG determined the Political Section generally complied with Department standards. However, OIG found one area for improvement in Leahy vetting, as described below.

Leahy Vetting Practices Did Not Comply With Embassy's Standard Operating Procedure or Department Guidance

OIG found Embassy Kinshasa's practices for Leahy vetting did not comply with the embassy's standard operating procedure or Department guidance. The Political Section's standard operating procedure, last updated in 2024, listed DoD as a vetting office.¹³ However, at the time of the inspection, the section was not requesting or receiving vetting results from DoD. Embassy staff told OIG the section removed DoD from its formal requests for vetting because of DoD's low response rate. As a result, the section was not certain if DoD uncovered any derogatory information during its vetting checks or even if the DoD checks took place. However, in OIG's interviews with DoD staff at Embassy Brazzaville, who also had responsibility for the DRC, these staff told OIG that they conducted their own vetting,¹⁴ although the results were not communicated to Embassy Kinshasa's Leahy Vetting Coordinator. Furthermore, OIG determined the embassy Leahy Vetting Committee had not met for at least the year prior to the inspection, contrary to the embassy's Leahy vetting standard operating procedure.¹⁵

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's 2017 worldwide Leahy vetting guidance states the senior defense official should be part of the Leahy vetting team or committee. Additionally, any negative DoD findings should be shared with the embassy Leahy vetting team, the Ambassador, and the Consular Section for possible inclusion in the Consular Lookout and Support System¹⁶ and to ensure full visibility on potential gross violators of human rights. Furthermore, the worldwide Leahy vetting guidance states as a best practice to hold regular meetings between nominating agencies and vetting staff. DoD staff told OIG that they did not have any negative findings in recent years. Nonetheless, because the Political Section did not

¹³ Specifically, the embassy SOP said DoD "runs checks in DOD systems."

¹⁴ DoD's OSC staff in Brazzaville told OIG any OSC-nominated individual or unit for security assistance such as training is subject to the Leahy vetting process through DoD.

¹⁵ According to Embassy Kinshasa's Leahy vetting standard operating procedure, the "Post Leahy Vetting Committee [is] expected to meet twice per year to review ongoing issues and identify potential improvements in coordination."

¹⁶ The Consular Lookout and Support System (CLASS) supports the Bureau of Consular Affairs' mission requirements in assisting decisions for visa and passport issuance and to help establish a person's eligibility for overseas services. CLASS is used by Department of State passport agencies, posts, and Department of Homeland Security and other border inspection agencies to perform namechecks on visa and passport applicants to identify individuals who may be ineligible for issuance or require other special action.

request or receive vetting results from DoD, the embassy risked reducing the reliability of the Leahy vetting system to detect disqualifying information on security forces. In addition, because the embassy's Leahy Vetting Committee did not meet regularly, the embassy missed opportunities to coordinate with vetting offices, including DoD, to identify areas for improvement in the embassy's Leahy vetting practices.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the Bureau of African Affairs, should bring its Leahy vetting practices into compliance with the embassy's standard operating procedure and Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with DRL and AF)

Economic Section

OIG reviewed the Economic Section's leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting, and advocacy functions. OIG reviewed 65 embassy cables from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, and found the reporting to be relevant to embassy strategic objectives, with coverage across a range of pertinent issues, such as Chinese investment, mining, and health. Additionally, in interviews with OIG, Department and interagency stakeholders praised the Economic Section's reporting and advocacy for its quality, relevance, and usefulness, highlighting the section's work on climate change and mining, including critical minerals issues. Interagency stakeholders also noted the section's contributions to the DRC government's development of a "climate partnership" plan at COP28¹⁷ and support to a series of workshops there on renewable batteries.

Within the embassy, colleagues from other agencies, most notably USAID, told OIG the section's interagency collaboration was good. For example, the section led the embassy's China working group and the Deal Team,¹⁸ although the frequency of meetings, as well as attendance fluctuated with staffing. OIG found the section generally complied with Department standards, with one exception discussed below.

Economic Section's Records Management Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found the Economic Section's records management program did not comply with Department standards. First, the section used different filing structures, storing records across a variety of Microsoft platforms—a Teams channel, a section SharePoint site, and personal One Drives—which was inconsistent with Department standards in 5 FAM 431b(4). This deficiency was caused by the personal preferences of individual section staff for storing files and a gap in the section's administrative assistant position. Second, staff in the section did not archive WhatsApp or other electronic messages, contrary to 5 FAM 435d. Although the section began to archive such messages during the inspection, OIG did not receive evidence demonstrating all

¹⁷ COP28, or the 28th Conference of Parties, of the United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from November 30 to December 13, 2023.

¹⁸ Deal Teams are embassy working groups of interagency officers and staff focused on helping U.S. companies expand business in overseas markets.

staff complied with the requirement. Failure to use a consistent file structure for the Economic Section resulted in documents being harder to find, including for archiving purposes and to transfer knowledge during personnel turnover. Additionally, not archiving electronic messages risks the embassy failing to comply with Department record management requirements and federal regulations on the retention of federal records.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Kinshasa should bring the Economic Section's records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Eastern Congo Unit

OIG reviewed the Eastern Congo Unit's leadership and management, policy implementation, and reporting functions. OIG reviewed 16 embassy cables from June 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024, and found the reporting to be relevant to embassy strategic objectives. In interviews with OIG, Department and interagency stakeholders praised the unit's reporting and diplomatic engagement for its quality, relevance, and usefulness, highlighting reporting on increasing hostilities in the eastern part of the DRC and implications of the staged drawdown of MONUSCO. The unit also supported U.S. government efforts to de-escalate tensions in eastern DRC, including supporting an effort, led by the Director of National Intelligence, to conduct confidence-building measures. The unit also worked with colleagues in Washington and at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York to identify targets for U.S. and United Nations sanctions.

OIG noted that although security restrictions limited the unit's ability to gather information directly in the eastern DRC, it had a network of sources that ameliorated this deficiency. OIG found the unit was actively doing risk analysis, with input from other sections and agencies and the Front Office, for various scenarios, including different scenarios for MONUSCO's drawdown. OIG concluded that the section generally complied with Department standards.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning and reporting, resource and knowledge management, grants administration, program management and exchanges, media engagement, and oversight of six American spaces.¹⁹ The section completed the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative²⁰ in June 2023 with 17 LE staff positions organized in

¹⁹ American Spaces are Department operated or supported public diplomacy facilities designed to attract and engage targeted foreign audiences with activities such as English language programs, policy and cultural dialogues, and digital resources. Embassy Kinshasa directly administers an American Center on the embassy compound and supports American Corners in Kinshasa, Goma, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, and an American Shelf in Matadi (American Corners are partnerships with local host institutions offering a range of American Space programming, governed by a Memorandum of Understanding with the embassy; American Shelves, usually located in a public library, offer reference materials about the United States).

²⁰ The PD Staffing Initiative is a comprehensive reorganization of the Department's overseas PD sections that shifts PD practitioners to a policy-centered, audience-focused approach to advancing ICS objectives by replacing previous

three general clusters: resource coordination, public engagement, and strategic content coordination. OIG assessed that the new structure fostered teamwork, even as the section continued to adjust to significant changes to existing job portfolios and staff turnover, including seven new LE staff hires in FY 2024 (some still pending at the time of the inspection). The section had three U.S. direct-hire positions, of which one—covering the public engagement and American Spaces portfolios—had been vacant for 1 year at the time of the inspection.

OIG determined section activities supported ICS goals. The Public Diplomacy Section participated in appropriate embassy working groups and coordinated with USAID and other sections on embassy messaging and on complementary lines of programmatic action. The section held weekly coordination calls with the local directors of its American Spaces, ensuring that they were fully integrated in country-wide programming. Additionally, PD exchange program alumni participated in section activities, which helped extend the PD program footprint to parts of the country where travel for section staff was difficult.

OIG reviewed all FY 2023 and FY 2024 public diplomacy grants (through May 8, 2024) valued at \$10,000 or greater, for a total of 7 grants valued at \$398,688 out of a universe of 41 grants totaling \$519,895. OIG found the section was working to improve staff knowledge and overall grants administration. During the inspection, the section worked to close out 45 expired grants dating back to 2018. The section also was developing more comprehensive standard operating procedures and addressing documentation gaps with grants, mainly with respect to monitoring. Because of this progress, OIG did not make a recommendation to address the section's management of public diplomacy grants.

press and program silos with collaborative staff units organized around public engagement, strategic content coordination, and resource management. The reorganization began globally in 2014 and was completed in 2023.

Spotlight on Success: Embassy Kinshasa Highlighted Bilateral Assistance With QR Code Cards

Embassy Kinshasa devised a simple but effective means of combating a persistent public diplomacy challenge: local perceptions that other countries—especially the People’s Republic of China—are more engaged in the DRC and provide more bilateral assistance than the United States. In fact, the United States is the largest donor to the DRC, contributing around \$1 billion in humanitarian and development assistance. The Public Diplomacy Section provided embassy personnel with QR, or quick response, code cards to share with contacts. Once contacts scan the QR code with a smartphone, they go directly to the embassy website’s one-page summary of bilateral assistance in either English or French, depending on which side of the card they scanned. (See Figures 2 and 3, below, showing the card with one side in English and the other in French.) Embassy personnel told OIG that contacts generally received the cards with interest and reacted to the fact sheet by stating, “I had no idea the United States did so much!”



Figures 2 and 3. Two-sided QR code card in English and French developed by embassy to highlight bilateral assistance programs. (Source: Embassy Kinshasa.)

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Kinshasa’s consular operations, including U.S. citizen services, fraud prevention programs, nonimmigrant and immigrant visa services, training, management controls, communications and outreach, anti-fraud programs, consular cashing and fees, consular space, and crisis preparedness. The Consular Section dealt with difficult local conditions, including a high nonimmigrant visa refusal rate and a high percentage of third-country visa applicants. The Consular Section had five U.S. direct-hire staff, one eligible family member employee, and nine LE staff, two of which were vacant during the inspection. An additional adjudicator position had been authorized but not yet filled at the time of the inspection.

OIG assessed that the embassy’s consular operations were constrained by a lack of space because the section had outgrown the current facility. The lack of space in the current facility limited the number of staff who could work there, and the facility did not offer any easy modification options that would improve operations. The Department reported to OIG that it anticipates the new embassy compound, which is expected to be completed in September 2028, will provide sufficient space for the consular workload.

During the inspection, Embassy Kinshasa corrected five issues identified by OIG. Specifically, the embassy:

- Completed the voting action plan (7 FAM 1513a(2)).
- Updated the list of medical resources on the consular services section of Embassy Kinshasa’s website, which had contained out-of-date information (7 FAM 311.1(4)).
- Initiated a plan requiring Consular Section staff to archive communications conducted via non-government electronic messaging applications (5 FAM 435).
- Ensured the section’s processing of nonimmigrant visa referrals and priority appointment requests adhered to Department standards (9 FAM 601.8-3(E), 9 FAM 601.8-4(E), and 9 FAM 601.8-4(B)(2)).
- Ensured the section responded to congressional correspondence within 3 working days (9 FAM 601.7-1c).

OIG found Embassy Kinshasa’s consular programs generally complied with guidance in 7 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies. However, as described below, the embassy did not have a safe waiting area for consular applicants, and the Consular Section’s physical space did not meet Department standards for wheelchair accessibility.

Embassy Did Not Provide a Safe Waiting Area for Applicants for Consular Services



Figure 4: Consular Section outside waiting area.
(Source: Embassy Kinshasa.)

OIG found the embassy made insufficient accommodations for the safety and comfort of consular applicants and visitors waiting outside the embassy compound’s pedestrian gate, as prescribed in 7 FAH-1 H-281a. The entrance into the consular waiting room was on a road behind the chancery compound. As shown in Figure 4, the outside waiting area contained a small overhang that was too small to cover all visa applicants. As a result, overflow visa applicants had to wait across the street, where they were exposed to oppressive heat or heavy rains, depending on the season.

In August 2022, the Consular Section chief requested from the Department additional outdoor seating for 50 consular customers. The project was approved and is expected to be included in the embassy’s FY 2025 budget. Failure to provide consular applicants with a waiting area that protects them from the elements projects an inappropriate image of the United States to the public.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Kinshasa should provide consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Consular Section Physical Space Did Not Comply With Department Standards for Wheelchair Accessibility

The Consular Section's route linking the entrance to the consular waiting space, window areas, and restroom did not meet Department standards in 7 FAH-1 H-282(1)(a) for wheelchair accessibility. OIG determined that when Embassy Kinshasa's Consular Section was designed, the Department had not established standards to ensure accessibility. As noted in the Operating Environment part of this report, the Department is building a new embassy compound that will meet standards for consular space. Therefore, OIG did not make a recommendation to address the deficiencies in Embassy Kinshasa's consular space.

Foreign Assistance

U.S. foreign assistance to the DRC was \$1.4 billion in FY 2023. Assistance was managed by Department personnel and other agency staff assigned to the embassy, as well as staff from Department and agency offices in Washington, DC.²¹ OIG assessed the oversight of Department assistance programs directly managed by the embassy and the embassy's coordination of programs for other assistance managed from outside of the DRC and by other agencies.²²

OIG found the embassy generally coordinated on the wide range of foreign assistance programming, and OIG observed one area where working groups could improve their effectiveness as it relates to assistance coordination. OIG also determined security and safety conditions in the DRC, combined with staffing constraints, limited the embassy's ability to fully monitor foreign assistance programs. Additionally, OIG found some deficiencies in grants management. Finally, the embassy's PEPFAR office did not manage PEPFAR assistance awards according to Department standards and was unable to assess progress toward achieving Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS goals. OIG's findings and observations are discussed in more detail below.

Although Coordination of Foreign Assistance Was Generally Intentional, Embassy Could Improve Effectiveness of Working Groups

OIG found the Ambassador's and DCM's coordination of foreign assistance across embassy sections and through multiple fora was generally intentional. According to 1 FAM 013.2k(6), the chief of mission has a "significant role in directing and supervising" foreign assistance programs. At Embassy Kinshasa, OIG observed the Ambassador and DCM were involved in the formal processes for planning and approving foreign assistance programs

²¹ The Department's humanitarian assistance program is managed by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration from Washington and is overseen by a Refugee Coordinator at Embassy Pretoria, South Africa. Other programs for security assistance, democracy and governance programs, regional programs that include the DRC, and conventional arms destruction are managed from Washington by other Department bureaus, with a limited embassy role.

²² OIG reviewed the INL Section's responsibilities for the rule of law programs, OSC's responsibilities for security assistance, the Political Section's management of federal assistance awards, the PEPFAR program, and the overall coordination of foreign assistance by the embassy.

through the annual Mission Resource Request and annual Operational Plan.²³ Additionally, OIG assessed that embassy staff, across sections, communicated regularly through meetings, including through the working groups described in the Executive Direction section of this report; demonstrated awareness of assistance programming activities, including those managed from Washington or other locations; and generally welcomed opportunities for collaboration and information sharing.²⁴ Sections also showed awareness of and coordination with multilateral and international organizations and other “like-minded” governments that may be providing related assistance in DRC.²⁵ However, OIG observed that the working groups could improve their effectiveness by clarifying their roles related to the regular, annual planning and budgeting processes for foreign assistance. The Ambassador and DCM agreed with OIG’s observation, and during the inspection, the embassy started developing more guidance on working group functions to clarify how they will relate to assistance coordination.

Security and Safety Considerations, Combined With Staffing Constraints, Limited Embassy’s Ability to Monitor Foreign Assistance Programs

OIG assessed that security and safety considerations in DRC, combined with staffing constraints, limited the embassy’s ability to monitor foreign assistance programs.²⁶ All programs, including those managed from outside the DRC, required monitoring by either embassy personnel or staff traveling from the responsible bureau or agency. Monitoring is essential for effective management of foreign assistance programs, as required by 18 FAM 301.4-3, 18 FAM 301.4-6(C), and the Federal Assistance Directive.²⁷ Insufficient monitoring increases the risk that programs will not be aligned to embassy priorities, may not be effective in meeting objectives, and that waste, fraud, and abuse are not detected.

OIG determined there were foreign assistance programs at higher risk due to the embassy’s inability to visit sites for monitoring. For example, USAID spends approximately \$500 million in

²³ The annual Mission Resource Request is part of the Department’s annual budget formulation process and includes an embassy’s requests for bilateral foreign assistance funds as well as operations funds. The annual Operational Plan is the formal approval mechanism that authorizes bilateral foreign assistance programs for implementation by the embassy.

²⁴ These included section meetings, such as between the Political Section chief and the USAID Democracy and Governance Office Director; a security cooperation weekly meeting between OSC and the political officer; and a weekly meeting with Department bureaus that operate programs in the DRC.

²⁵ These include various UN organizations, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

²⁶ To consider security and safety, the embassy’s Regional Security Officer performed a risk assessment on each individual trip request. In addition to limitations of traveling to specific geographic areas, the embassy’s travel policy requires travelers to be accompanied by a security element that includes armed security support, using armored vehicles. Travel in certain zones outside of Kinshasa must always be conducted with a minimum of two vehicles with at least two employees under Chief of Mission authority together, unless expressly waived by the Regional Security Officer. Armed security support is required/provided for certain travel zones. Depending on a variety of factors, a minimum contingent would include two Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR) bodyguards. Trips determined to be higher risk often require an Assistant Regional Security Officer, a Foreign Service National Investigator, and anywhere from two to six SPEAR bodyguards.

²⁷ Federal Assistance Directive (October 2022), Chapter 4, Section D.

humanitarian assistance in the DRC annually, which includes funding, in part, for assistance to internally displaced persons camps. However, during 2023, USAID was unable to visit internally displaced persons camps due to safety concerns. In another example, INL Section staff told OIG they had been unable to visit a foreign assistance construction site, for which the section had received reporting from an implementing partner that the site was ready to be used. However, a later INL Section in-person visit revealed the facility had several deficiencies. Finally, staff told OIG that monitoring visits from Department bureaus and other agency staff²⁸ who manage assistance in the DRC from Washington required significant engagement from the overstretched Embassy Kinshasa staff. As a result, the embassy was unable to support many foreign assistance site visits from bureau and other agency staff.

As described earlier in this report, OIG assessed that Embassy Kinshasa generally coordinated foreign assistance in accordance with Department standards. However, the difficult circumstances of a non-permissive security environment, combined with staffing constraints, created challenges to the embassy's ability to fully monitor foreign assistance programs. Staff told OIG the embassy had secured certain staffing increases, which would increase capacity for monitoring and travel, use alternative monitoring methods, and provided additional transparency on the travel approval process to include reviewing security designations for certain locations. Although staffing increases may enable more site visits and improve monitoring, OIG observed that challenges to monitoring foreign assistance in DRC will likely continue due to the non-permissive security environment. Guidance in 2 FAM 030 requires that bureaus, offices, and embassies involved in awarding financial assistance must take a proactive approach to detecting potential risks and mitigating the impact. In its prior oversight work, OIG identified leading practices for monitoring and evaluation in non-permissive security environments, such as using third-party contract monitors to increase visibility into the performance of U.S. government-funded programs, and documenting and communicating post-specific monitoring and evaluation expectations.²⁹

Recommendation 4: Embassy Kinshasa should issue guidance to sections and bureaus implementing foreign assistance advising them on the travel policy and requiring that monitoring plans for proposed programs take into account limitations on travel and staff capacity. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Close Out Some Expired Federal Assistance Awards

OIG reviewed foreign assistance grants managed by the INL Section and the Political Section³⁰ and found some expired federal assistance awards were not closed out in accordance with Department standards. According to the Federal Assistance Directive, grant files must be closed

²⁸ These include but are not limited to the Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration, the Bureau of Energy Affairs, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and the Department of Labor.

²⁹ See OIG, *Information Brief: Oversight Observations to Inform the Department of State Ukraine Response* (OIG-23-01, December 2022).

³⁰ OIG reviewed a sample of 8 expired awards and found 2 were closed out. Public diplomacy grants are discussed separately earlier in this report.

out according to specified timelines.³¹ Some expired federal assistance awards were not closed out as required because the Political Section grants officer did not have access in the State Assistance Management System to close grants that had been initiated by staff no longer at the embassy. Lack of formal closeout of expired federal assistance awards prevents the embassy from using available funds for other purposes.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Kinshasa should close out expired federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Manage PEPFAR Federal Assistance Awards According to Standards

OIG found the embassy's PEPFAR Coordination Office did not manage federal assistance awards according to the Federal Assistance Directive. Specifically, PEPFAR issued approximately \$500,000 in five assistance awards during 2021 for community-led monitoring programs that were to be implemented in FYs 2022 and 2023.³² All five award files were missing quarterly reports from recipients³³ and evaluations by the grants officer representative,³⁴ annual evaluations,³⁵ and documentation from the grants officer justifying amendments to extend the period of performance after the awards had already expired.³⁶ Four awards were also missing final reports and evaluations required for closeout.³⁷ The PEPFAR Coordination Office staff also had not conducted quarterly site visits as called for in the risk assessment and monitoring plans (see discussion of monitoring challenges above).³⁸ However, the grants officer representative was able to conduct one site visit for four of the awards at the end of the award periods; for one award, the staff was unable to reach the site for even one site visit. As a result of the lack of visits for monitoring, the PEPFAR Coordination Office did not determine until after the award periods were complete that the objectives of the foreign assistance awards had not been successfully achieved. One of the award recipients failed to complete the program, and the grants officer declined to continue funding the recipient. The other four completed their award periods, and the grants officer declined to offer cost amendments to extend the programs after the site visits revealed significant issues with program management.

After speaking with staff and reviewing the documentation, OIG determined these deficiencies were due to a combination of inexperience with federal assistance awards management in the PEPFAR Coordination Office, limitations on travel, and a lack of guidance from the grants officer located in Washington. The PEPFAR Coordination Office also did not have written procedures

³¹ Federal Assistance Directive, Chapter 5, Section A.

³² These federal assistance awards are in addition to the majority of the PEPFAR funds, which are managed by USAID and the CDC.

³³ Federal Assistance Directive, Chapter 2, Section N.5, and Chapter 4, Sections D.1 and D.2.

³⁴ Ibid., Chapter 2, Section P, and Chapter 4, Sections D.1 and D.2.

³⁵ Ibid., Chapter 4, Section D.6.

³⁶ Ibid., Chapter 4, Section F.

³⁷ Ibid., Chapter 5, Sections A and B.

³⁸ Ibid., Chapter 4, Section D.5.

for managing its federal assistance award programs³⁹ or a risk management policy.⁴⁰ At the time of the inspection, the PEPFAR Coordination Office was soliciting proposals for another series of awards to continue the community-led monitoring programs. Failure to develop and implement monitoring and risk management policies and procedures based on the lessons learned from the first round of awards risks deficiencies in future programs and potential for wasted funds.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Kinshasa should implement standard operating procedures in the PEPFAR Coordination Office for the management of federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

PEPFAR DRC Could Not Assess Progress Toward Epidemic Control

OIG determined that PEPFAR DRC⁴¹ was unable to assess its progress toward achieving Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS goals⁴² for HIV testing, treatment, and viral suppression by 2030. To accurately report on progress toward these goals, PEPFAR programs must have timely and reliable data; this includes data from large population-based HIV impact assessments⁴³ as well as PEPFAR program data, such as lab testing results, records of patients on treatment, and utilization rates of medical supplies. However, baseline epidemiological and population data in the DRC are extremely outdated: the census data was from 1986, and the last population-based HIV survey was completed in 2014. PEPFAR DRC also discovered significant discrepancies in program data across multiple implementers and geographic areas in 2022 and 2023 regarding the number of patients receiving active treatment for HIV and the accuracy of lab results. Specifically, PEPFAR DRC found HIV rapid test records from multiple labs incorrectly labeled 23 percent of sampled lab specimens as HIV positive, and patient records could not be reconciled across data sources. PEPFAR DRC officials attributed these widespread data issues to pressure from both PEPFAR in Washington and the DRC government to meet higher targets based on policies that made funding contingent on the number of reported patients. OIG also determined the difficulties in traveling to conduct site visits in DRC contributed to PEPFAR DRC's failure to identify these data quality issues sooner.

PEPFAR DRC was also limited in its ability to assess progress towards meeting its goals due to its lack of a permanent presence in certain areas of the DRC. Dating back to an agreement between the embassy and the DRC government made in 2017, PEPFAR DRC invested \$400,000 to build a small facility in Lubumbashi where LE staff would work to improve their ability to

³⁹ Ibid., Chapter 1, Section D.2.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Chapter 2, Section K.

⁴¹ PEPFAR's DRC program team includes the PEPFAR Coordination Office, USAID, CDC, and OSC.

⁴² These goals call for ensuring that by 2030, 95 percent of people living with HIV know their status, 95 percent of those tested are on antiretroviral treatment, and 95 percent of those under antiretroviral treatment are virally suppressed and, thus, less able to transmit the virus.

⁴³ A population-based HIV impact assessment is a household survey that directly measures progress toward HIV epidemic controls, providing a better understanding of HIV trends at the national and regional level as well as population-wide program achievements. It also estimates the number of new HIV infections annually and viral load of known people living with HIV. The survey is usually conducted on a 3- to 5-year cycle.

monitor PEPFAR programs in Haut Katanga. Although the facility was completed in 2023, the embassy had not granted staff approval to occupy the facility due to security concerns. During the inspection, the embassy and PEPFAR DRC were discussing alternative options for using the location, including turning it over to a university for use in other PEPFAR-related programs.

Once the program data issues were identified in 2022 and 2023, PEPFAR DRC implemented several initiatives beginning in FY 2024 to improve data quality and program monitoring, including:

- A new 2-year population-based HIV impact survey to monitor the impact of the HIV response in the 3 provinces managed by PEPFAR and a survey of HIV prevalence in the DRC military to provide useable data available in early 2025.
- An ongoing data quality assessment to review the accuracy, timeliness, and completeness of data used in HIV treatment and patient monitoring, and, where necessary, fix the data and reconcile patient files by September 2024.
- New requirements and training for all implementing partners to delineate oversight and supervision strategies in their workplans, including frequency and designation of specific individuals for site-level oversight.
- An interagency data quality strategy to standardize data quality approaches across PEPFAR agencies, national counterparts, implementing partners, and supported health care sites.
- Technical support to the DRC Ministry of Health and other stakeholders for HIV data quality assurance activities, including updating and disseminating an HIV Strategic Information Plan.

Based on the preliminary results of the data quality assessment, PEPFAR DRC revised its 2023 and 2024 program targets for identification and treatment of patients down by roughly a third while they work to improve program and population data. Although these targets are more realistic, it makes it impossible to assess year over year progress toward the 2030 targets. Due to the ongoing activities initiated by PEPFAR DRC to resolve and mitigate the identified deficiencies, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Kinshasa's internal control systems in general management, acquisition management, general services, financial management, human resources, facility management, and the health unit's operations. During the inspection, Embassy Kinshasa corrected six issues identified by OIG. Specifically, the embassy:

- Had the Assistant Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer take the Management of Construction Safety and Occupational Health Programs training class, which allowed him to be qualified to monitor contractor activities (14 STATE 47662).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Cable 14 STATE 46762, "Oversight of Post Contractor Safety and Health Activities," April 22, 2014.

- Published a chief of mission memorandum for the justification of accommodation exchange services (4 FAM 361.5).
- Sent notification letters to high rise residential building occupants informing them their buildings did not meet fire requirements (15 FAM 813.7-5h).
- Commenced reporting to the Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer of mishaps in the workplace (16 FAM 133.2).
- Performed safety checks on its boat fleet in accordance with the Federal Requirements and Safety Tips for Recreational Boats,⁴⁵ contained in the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management’s generic embassy boat policy and boat safety notice.⁴⁶
- Performed and documented emergency lighting testing (15 FAM 844a).

OIG found the embassy’s Management Section implemented many required processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department standards; however, OIG also found pervasive internal control issues, as noted below. Embassy staff attributed these internal control issues to a lack of awareness of Department standards, a lack of management oversight, and a management platform with insufficient U.S. direct-hire staff at an embassy with both a heavy workload and a challenging operating environment.

General Management

Embassy’s Management Section Provided Insufficient Oversight of Staff in the Goma Unit

OIG found the embassy provided insufficient oversight of the LE staff resident in Goma, located in the eastern DRC. At the time of the inspection, the embassy had five Goma unit employees, four of whom—one administrative employee and three drivers—provided management support for official visits to the eastern DRC region and one reported directly to USAID. The four management staff performed a range of administrative work, provided transportation services in the region, and maintained a fleet of seven official vehicles.

The Government Accountability Office’s *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* state effective management of an entity’s workforce is essential to achieving results and an important part of internal control, and that management should provide continuous supervision.⁴⁷ In late 2022, the staff in Goma transitioned to report to the embassy’s General Services Officer, but the officer had not provided any supervision or oversight of these employees, and no one from the General Services Office had been to Goma since at least August 2022. In addition, because the embassy did not have an official office in Goma, the employees either worked from home or at the lock-and-leave warehouse where the seven official vehicles were kept. The lack of U.S. direct hires in Goma and Goma’s geographic

⁴⁵ U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Division, “A Boater’s Guide to the Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats” (November 2023).

⁴⁶ Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, Generic Embassy Boat Policy, August 2023.

⁴⁷ Government Accountability Office, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, pages 46–47 (GAO-14-704G, September 2014).

distance from Kinshasa hindered the embassy's ability to oversee the staff in Goma. The lack of adequate management oversight and failure to manage resources in accordance with Department standards increases the risk of inefficiency, waste, fraud, and mismanagement.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement a plan to supervise the locally employed staff in Goma on a regular basis. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Acquisition Management

OIG found the embassy's acquisition management function needed additional oversight and strengthening. OIG found multiple issues, some of which are detailed below, including persistent problems with unauthorized commitments, inadequate contract administration, a weak contracting officer's representative (COR) program, unauthorized purchases of official vehicles, and a lack of acquisition planning.

OIG found the General Services Office faced consistent resource issues, staffing gaps, and challenges. Embassy staff told OIG that procurement had been a challenge for the embassy for many years. For example, the General Services Office experienced one vacant Assistant General Services Officer position since at least August 2022, with the procurement function being overseen by a first-tour officer. The Department sent temporary duty staff to cover some staffing gaps, but those employees generally stayed for short periods of time and were unable to make much, if any, progress on systemic issues. Additionally, the embassy dealt with a difficult operating environment, with most local vendors not registered in the System for Award Management,⁴⁸ or simply not able to provide the goods and services required by the embassy.

OIG also found substantial knowledge gaps among both LE staff and U.S. direct hires, with many unaware of Department acquisition regulations. Embassy staff told OIG most of the procurement staff were relatively new and had not yet had the opportunity to take the required training. For example, at the time of the inspection, only the Contract Specialist had completed the contract administration course. OIG also found one of the LE staff contracting specialists had previously held a \$250,000 contracting officer's warrant, which is against Department policy.⁴⁹

The Bureau of Administration's Office of the Procurement Executive last conducted a staff assistance visit to the embassy in 2013. Although providing expert contracting advice through its staff assistance visits are one of the responsibilities of the office, there is no mandated schedule for regular visits. However, OIG assessed regular visits and procurement reviews from the office's procurement experts would have benefited the embassy's procurement staff and provided the staff with much-needed training and guidance.

⁴⁸ The System for Award Management is a system that collects data from suppliers, validates and stores this data, and disseminates it to various government acquisition agencies. Federal Acquisition Regulation 4.1102 requires vendors to be registered in SAM.

⁴⁹ According to 14 FAM 214b, LE staff may only be appointed as contracting officers for acquisitions with a value of \$25,000 or below.

All these issues created a culture of nonadherence to federal and Department acquisition policies and resulted in the deficiencies detailed below.

Embassy Had Persistent Issues With Unauthorized Commitments

The embassy had persistent issues with unauthorized commitments.⁵⁰ OIG found in FYs 2022 and 2023, the embassy reported eight unauthorized commitments, totaling approximately \$446,000. Of these, six were each below \$10,000 and were ratified or in the process of being ratified at the embassy, while two were over \$10,000 and were forwarded or in the process of being forwarded to the Bureau of Administration's Office of the Procurement Executive for ratification under the requirements in 601.602-3 of the Department of State Acquisition Manual.⁵¹ OIG determined the embassy did not ensure all acquisition agreements were made only by warranted contracting officers, as required by 14 FAM 215a. Additionally, OIG did not find any evidence the embassy was communicating and enforcing its internal controls in its procurement processes. By not taking action to prevent unauthorized commitments, the embassy risks potential violations of the Anti-Deficiency Act.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Kinshasa should require all acquisition agreements and procurements be authorized by a warranted contracting officer in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Purchased Multiple Official Vehicles Without Authorization

The embassy purchased multiple official vehicles⁵² without authorization. OIG found that, from July to September 2022, the embassy purchased 16 vehicles in 4 separate purchase requests with a total value of approximately \$1.14 million, without obtaining approval from the Bureau of Administration's Overseas Fleet Division, as required by 14 FAM 436.1a. In August 2022, the embassy purchased two additional vehicles from a vendor in Iraq, once again without approval from the Overseas Fleet Division and without requesting vetting through the Joint Contingency Contracting System as required by Department of State Acquisition Manual 625.8, which requires vetting of Afghan and Iraqi vendors for fraud, waste, abuse, and terrorist ties. In March 2023, the embassy received a memo from the Bureau of Administration stating it had violated Department policy by acquiring a vehicle without explicit approval of the Overseas Fleet

⁵⁰ An unauthorized commitment occurs when a contractual agreement is made that is not binding for the U.S. government solely because the U.S. government representative who made the agreement lacked the requisite authority to do so.

⁵¹ The Department of State Acquisition Manual is authorized by the Senior Procurement Executive to issue internal policy and guidance in accordance with Department of State Acquisition Regulation 601.301(a). The Department of State Acquisition Manual is not a standalone document. It implements and supplements the Federal Acquisition Regulation and Department of State Acquisition Regulation and must be read and followed in conjunction with those regulations.

⁵² These vehicles included 14 ICASS-funded vehicles made up of 10 passenger vehicles, one Land Cruiser used as an ambulance, and three facilities trucks, as well as two pickup trucks used specifically for the Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response team.

Division. In response to the memo, the embassy subsequently sought approval for the purchase of the vehicles in July 2023 along with a corrective action plan.

OIG attributed these errors to a high turnover of supervisory staff, lack of employee training, and the failure of supervisory staff to review major purchases. OIG also determined that, at the time of the purchases, the embassy did not have standard operating procedures to follow all Department requirements when purchasing official vehicles. By not following proper vehicle acquisition procedures, the embassy risks acquiring vehicles that cannot be adequately serviced and maintained in the country they will be used, resulting in the potential waste and loss of U.S. government funds.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement standard operating procedures for the purchase of official vehicles to adhere to Department acquisition rules for official vehicles. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy's Contract Administration Program Did Not Adhere to Department Standards

The embassy's contract administration program did not adhere to Department standards. The embassy's contracting officers (CO) executed 17 contracts valued at approximately \$18 million. OIG reviewed the files for seven of these contracts, with a total value of approximately \$17 million, and found:

- Although the contracts all listed an assigned COR, only one of the contracts had a COR who met the proper designations and qualifications, as required by 14 FAH-2 H-143a, and was actually serving as a COR.
- One contract listed a trained COR in the contract by name. However, there was no designation memo, and the COR told OIG they had never performed any of the COR functions.
- Five contracts stated CORs would assist the CO, but none of these CORs were officially designated nor actively participated in overseeing the contracts.
- Neither the CORs nor the COs completed mandatory performance reviews in the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System⁵³ for the three contracts above \$250,000, as required by 14 FAH-2 H-572d and Federal Acquisition Regulation 42.1502(a) and (b).

Management staff did not enforce these requirements and asserted the lack of trained personnel prevented the appointment of properly designated CORs. Failure to have a compliant contracting administration program increases the risk of contract mismanagement.

⁵³ The Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System is the government-wide evaluation reporting tool for all past performance reports on contracts and orders. An annual performance assessment must be completed in the system for each contract above the simplified acquisition threshold of \$250,000, according to Federal Acquisition Regulation 42.1502(a) and (b).

Recommendation 10: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its contracting administration program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Close Out Procurement Files Within Required Timeframes

The embassy did not close out procurement files in the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS)⁵⁴ within the required timeframes. Specifically, out of 1,857 open procurement files, the embassy had 872, with a value of approximately of \$6.35 million, that were ready for closeout but had not yet been closed. According to 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b, contracts under simplified acquisitions procedures should be closed out immediately after the CO receives evidence of receipt of property and final payment. Embassy staff told OIG this issue occurred because workload issues limited the amount of time available to perform contract closeout processes. Failure to close out procurement files within the required timeframe increases the risk of inaccuracies in procurement records and of internal control issues in procurement operations.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Kinshasa should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

General Services

Embassy Kinshasa Did Not Record or Track Operational Records of Its Boat Fleet

The embassy did not record or monitor the operational records of its boat fleet, such as trips, maintenance, and fuel costs. The embassy owned and operated four boats that were used for official purposes and “other authorized use” transport. Department standards in 14 FAM 126b require tracking maintenance history for capitalized property.⁵⁵ Embassy staff told OIG that, due to a lack of Department guidance regarding boats, they did not know how operational and maintenance data should be recorded. OIG, in its 2023 inspection of Embassy Abuja, recommended the Bureau of Administration update the FAM with specific guidance on the management and operation of watercraft.⁵⁶ In July 2024 correspondence with OIG on this open recommendation, the Bureau of Administration reported the FAM guidance for watercraft was in final review and clearance, and the bureau anticipated publishing it in the next few months. Failure to record and monitor operational and maintenance data and costs for boats creates a risk of misuse and loss of control of valuable and easily pilferable government assets including fuel and spare parts.

⁵⁴ The Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS) is an integrated web-based system that encompasses all Department supply chain functions in one system. ILMS 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.

⁵⁵ According to 14 FAM 411.4, capitalized property is “personal property with a useful life of two or more years and acquisition cost exceeds \$25,000 per item that is entered on the Department’s general ledger as a major investment or asset.”

⁵⁶ OIG, *Inspection of Embassy Abuja and Constituent Post, Nigeria* (ISP-I-23-09, June 2023). See recommendation 25.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Kinshasa should record all operational and maintenance data and costs for the embassy's watercraft in accordance with the Department's forthcoming Foreign Affairs Manual guidance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Fully Comply With Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

OIG found the embassy did not fully comply with the Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards. Specifically, OIG found:

- Sixty-one of the embassy's 111 LE staff professional and incidental drivers held expired driver safety training or did not have any training recorded, contrary to 14 FAM 433.4b and c.
- The embassy did not monitor and track driver safety training and medical certification requirements for U.S. direct-hire incidental drivers, as required by 14 FAM 431.6-1a and c, 14 FAM 433.4a, and 14 FAM 433.5a.
- The embassy did not track U.S. direct-hire incidental drivers' compliance with driver safety training and medical clearance requirements using the Department's Fleet Management Information System, as required in 14 FAM 433.4e and 14 FAM 433.5e.

Motor pool staff told OIG they did not have a safe driving instructor at the embassy until recently and they were not aware of the requirements for U.S. direct-hire incidental drivers. Failure to enforce Department motor vehicle safety standards increases the risk of injury to drivers and the public as well as damage to U.S. government property.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Kinshasa should adhere to all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers under chief of mission authority. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

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 record its periodic, unannounced spot counts of expendable and nonexpendable property in warehouses. According to 14 FAM 411.2-2b(8), the accountable property officer must conduct quarterly, unannounced spot check inventories of personal property to verify the accuracy of property records in ILMS and reconcile any discrepancies.
- The embassy maintained excess expendable property, contrary to Department property management standards. According to 14 FAH-1 H-112.2h, the accountable property officer should identify unneeded items and discard unserviceable and obsolete items. Additionally, 14 FAH-1 H-418.1(4) recommends inactive or slow-moving items be removed from the stock program. At the time of the inspection, 34 percent of Embassy Kinshasa's expendable supplies, including motor pool inventory, office supplies, and

maintenance and repair items, valued at approximately \$272,000, had not been issued in the previous year.

Embassy staff told OIG the busy property management portfolio, exacerbated by the General Services Office's vacant U.S. direct-hire position, hampered both the implementation of property management controls and the analysis of expendables management data. 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 14: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its property management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Furniture and Appliance Pool Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found the embassy's furniture and appliance pool⁵⁷ program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found:

- According to ILMS data, approximately \$106,000 of the embassy's furniture and appliance pool assets were flagged as potentially misclassified in the system. For example, 126 assets valued at approximately \$68,000 should have been classified as furniture and appliance pool assets but were classified under different agency codes, contrary to guidance in 6 FAH-5 H-514.1d(3). Additionally, the embassy incorrectly issued 96 furniture and appliance pool assets valued at \$36,000 to office locations or designated residences,⁵⁸ contrary to 6 FAH-5 H-514.1d(2) and 6 FAH-5 H-514.2-3c(1).
- The embassy had excess furniture and appliance pool stock inactive in the warehouse. The furniture and appliance pool warehouse stock was at 18.9 percent (valued at \$1 million) of total furniture and appliance pool assets, which is higher than the Department target of 15 percent for missions with difficult supply chains, as stated in 6 FAH-5 H-514.1d(5).
- The embassy's furniture and appliance pool policy had not been updated since March 2017. According to 6 FAH-5 H-512.2-2b, embassy management should prepare and update the policy at least every 2 years to ensure it remains current.

According to cable 17 STATE 58544,⁵⁹ overseas posts must take responsibility for their ILMS data, and general services officers must ensure the data is accurate and up to date. General Services Office staff told OIG these misclassifications were overlooked due to the property management unit's heavy workload involving the high number of new properties to furnish.

⁵⁷ The furniture and appliance pool program furnishes overseas housing through the purchase, replacement, refurbishment, maintenance, inventory control, warehousing, pick-up/delivery and eventual disposal of non-expendable residential furniture, furnishings, appliances, and equipment. Pooled furniture programs can achieve economies of scale and greatly reduce the time and effort required to oversee and manage residential furnishings.

⁵⁸ Designated residences include the Chief of Mission Residence. Furniture and furnishings for designated housing and offices are funded through other allotments.

⁵⁹ Cable 17 STATE 58544, "Furniture and Appliance Pool (FAP) and Budget Realities," June 8, 2017.

Failure to properly classify furniture and appliance pool assets in ILMS and manage these assets in accordance with Department standards risks mismanagement of the embassy's furniture and appliance pool holdings and incorrectly charging customers for the cost of participating in the program.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Warehouse Operations Had Multiple Safety Deficiencies

Embassy Kinshasa's warehouse operations had multiple safety deficiencies. Specifically, OIG found:

- The embassy's forklift drivers were last certified in 2019 and needed refresher training. In accordance with 14 FAH-1 H-313.6-2c and d and 14 FAH-1 H-313.4a(2), forklift operators must be properly trained in operating, maintaining, and storing forklifts or other powered industrial trucks and take refresher training at least every 3 years.
- Flammable products in and around the warehouse such as oil-based paints and roof tar paints were not secured in approved flammable liquids cabinets, as required by 14 FAH-1 H 313.2-15B(b).
- Stored furniture and appliances were located on the top racks, making it difficult to access the property easily and safely, contrary to 14 FAH-1 H-313.2-12d.
- The embassy did not fully implement access controls for warehouse. OIG found the main entrance to the warehouse office, which led to the warehouse, had a broken keypad, which would allow for unauthorized staff access. According to 14 FAM 413.7a(8), access to the warehouse must be limited to those persons who have a need to enter.
- The facility management expendable supply area had inadequate ventilation. According to 14 FAM 413.7a(6), warehouses must be properly ventilated.

OIG determined these hazards existed because embassy management staff did not perform regular walkthroughs of the warehouse. Failure to implement management controls and comply with life safety and fire program standards diminishes the protection of embassy personnel and increases the risk of injury and loss of life.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its warehouse operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Manage Its Armored Vehicles in Accordance With Department Standards

The embassy did not manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. OIG found the embassy's armored vehicles were not parked under a covered structure to prevent damage to the transparent armor. According to 14 FAM 435.3b, armored vehicles must be parked under a covered structure to prevent delamination and other damage to the transparent armor. However, the embassy did not have sufficient covered parking spaces to

ensure adequate protection from the sun. If covered parking is not available, the embassy must coordinate with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations for the construction of covered parking. Embassy staff said a heavy workload prevented them from coordinating with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to ensure sufficient covered parking was available. Failure to follow Department standards for managing armored vehicles increases the cost of vehicle operations and the risk of injury to vehicle occupants.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Kinshasa should manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Financial Management

Embassy Did Not Follow Department Guidelines for Reporting an Improper Payment

The embassy did not follow Department guidelines for reporting an improper payment. Guidance in 4 FAM 371.3(2) defines an improper payment as a fiscal irregularity.⁶⁰ Improper payments may result from fraud, forgery, alteration of vouchers, improper certifications, and other improper practices. OIG found and questioned an invoice the embassy paid in February 2023, to a shipping firm, totaling \$245,000, for the purchase of two official vehicles from a vendor in Iraq, as described earlier in this report. The vendor reported to the embassy that it had not received payment for the vehicles, even though the vehicles had been received by the embassy and placed into use. The embassy paid the shipping firm, rather than the vendor who sold the vehicles. The embassy attempted to recover the funds as soon as the mistake was detected, but OIG noted that at the time of the inspection, the shipping firm had not yet returned the improper payment and had not responded to communication from the embassy.

OIG determined the embassy had not yet notified the Department of the improper payment by unclassified cable or memorandum, in accordance with 4 FAM 373.1c. The embassy should have notified the Department as soon as it determined the improper payment was unrecoverable. Embassy staff told OIG the improper payment was due to an invoice sent to the embassy, which embassy staff realized may have been fraudulent after payment. Nonetheless, failure to appropriately report an improper payment prevents the Department's Committee of Inquiry into Fiscal Irregularities⁶¹ from being aware of the issue, from granting relief to an accountable officer for an improper payment, and from taking other appropriate actions to recover the payment. Due to the deficiencies described above, OIG questions the \$245,000 in vehicle purchase costs paid to the shipping firm.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Kinshasa should document its actions taken to recover the \$245,000 improper payment for two official vehicles. If the embassy determines the

⁶⁰ Guidance in 4 FAM 371.3(2), defines an improper payment as a fiscal irregularity, that is, a disbursement of public funds that is found by an appropriate authority to be illegal, improper, or incorrect in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

⁶¹ The Department's Committee of Inquiry into Fiscal Irregularities makes decisions concerning fiscal irregularities and functions as a reviewing and coordinating body to ensure compliance with the Department's policy stated in 4 FAM 374.

improper payment to be unrecoverable, Embassy Kinshasa should report it as a fiscal irregularity in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not De-Obligate Unliquidated Obligations in a Timely Manner

OIG found that, as of May 2024, the embassy had approximately \$12.4 million in unliquidated obligations, of which \$2.8 million had no activity in over 1 year. According to Department standards in 4 FAM 225d, unliquidated obligations with no activity in over a year must be targeted and de-obligated if they cannot be documented as valid obligations. During the inspection, OIG noted embassy staff prepared to de-obligate approximately \$989,000 of the \$2.8 million in unliquidated obligations. However, despite the fact the embassy had recently updated its standard operating procedures for processing and validating unliquidated obligations, it did not have a specific process to validate unliquidated obligations with no activity in over 1 year. Failure to review and de-obligate these unliquidated obligations in a timely manner results in an accumulation of funds that could be put to better use.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Kinshasa should review and de-obligate all unliquidated obligations without activity for more than one year in accordance with Department standards, so that funds of up to \$2.8 million can be put to better use. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Process Travel Advances as Required

OIG found that, as of May 2024, Department records showed Embassy Kinshasa had 94 open travel advances, totaling \$173,000. Of these, 73 advances totaling \$107,000 were more than 30 days overdue, and 59 advances totaling \$39,000 were outstanding for more than 90 days. According to 4 FAM 465.1a, each traveler is required to submit an expense report (voucher or claim) within 5 business days from the travel end date to account for the travel performed and for the related authorized costs. If travelers do not submit their vouchers on time, the embassy's financial management staff is responsible for debt collection, as outlined in 4 FAM 492.1a. According to 4 FAM 493.1-3a, in no case should a debt delinquent for more than 90 days remain with the embassy for collection and the debt should be referred to the Department's Accounts Receivable.⁶² Embassy staff told OIG the overdue travel advances occurred because travelers did not submit their vouchers on time despite receiving reminders. Additionally, turnover in the financial management staff and cash travel advances not being entered in E2, the travel system, resulted in challenges tracking advances for collections. Overdue travel advances represent a loss of funds to the Department if they remain uncollected. Clearing overdue travel advances would allow the embassy to put any funds collected to better use.

⁶² According to 4 FAM 493.2, Accounts Receivable is the office within the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services that manages and collects debts owed to the Department and is responsible for collection of debts referred by overseas posts and domestic bureaus and offices.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Kinshasa should bring the travel advance process into compliance with Department standards, including clearing overdue travel advances, and put funds of up to \$107,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Have a Process to Monitor and Collect Excess Employee Cell Phone Charges

The embassy did not have a process to monitor and collect reimbursements from employees who had exceeded the embassy's monthly allowed cell phone charge limit. Guidance in 4 FAM 033.2-6 states each organization is responsible for developing procedures to accurately track known accounts receivables and to record accounts receivables in a timely manner, and the procedures must ensure accurate records are maintained. According to the embassy's cell phone policy, released in March 2022, when charges reached a threshold limit of \$50 for an employee, bills would be examined for personal calls and employees would be responsible for reimbursing the U.S. government for these personal calls. OIG found that, although the embassy's Diplomatic Technology unit approved the payment of monthly cell phone invoices, no one in the unit regularly monitored or analyzed the bills to determine whether personal calls were above the threshold limits. In addition, OIG found the embassy did not have a designated COR for the cell phone contract, whose role would include monitoring the contract and examining invoices for accuracy. As a result, the financial management office could not collect any employee receivables for excess cell charges owed by embassy employees. Without a monthly analysis of the cell phone bills and a clear standard operating procedure to record and track these employee receivables, the embassy risks the loss of funds that should be reimbursed to the U.S. government and the possible misuse of government resources.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement a standard operating procedure to accurately monitor and collect employee receivables for excess cell phone charges in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Suspense Deposits Abroad Account Did Not Meet Department Requirements

The embassy's use of its suspense deposits abroad⁶³ account did not meet Department standards. OIG found approximately \$234,000 in the account as of May 2024, of which \$218,000 had been used for unapproved deposits. According to 4 FAM 326.2, the suspense deposits abroad account can only be used to deposit collections for specific purposes, including but not limited to the following:

- Collections and payments for approved consular services for U.S. citizens.
- Collections and payments involving international schools and employee associations or commissaries.
- Lump sum value-added tax reimbursements made by a host country government when the reimbursement payment includes refunds for both the U.S. government and individual employees.

⁶³ The suspense deposits abroad account (19X6809) is a restricted-use deposit account for collection from third parties. Collections to the suspense deposits abroad account are governed by special rules contained in 4 FAM 326.2.

OIG found deposits in the account for purposes such as travel of a non-serviced agency's staff,⁶⁴ U.S. citizen COVID-19 evacuation flights, and donations for Fourth of July events, which are not on the Department's list of approved deposits. Guidance in 4 FAM 326.2d states official collections that are designated at time of collection for credit to U.S. government funds should be recorded to the relevant agency's accounts and not to the suspense deposits abroad account.

In addition, OIG determined the balance in the suspense deposits abroad account was not being reconciled within the required timelines. According to 4 FAM 326.2-7b, suspense deposits abroad accounts may only be used to hold funds temporarily and the financial management officer should clear all amounts owed to the U.S. government and private individuals within 30 business days. Financial management staff told OIG that, because they did not have processes or policies in place for suspense deposits abroad collections, staff were not able to follow the guidance on the authorized uses for suspense deposits abroad accounts. Delays in the reconciliation process and reimbursement of collections could prevent the embassy from reimbursing the funds correctly or using them for other purposes.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Kinshasa should use the suspense deposits abroad account for authorized purposes only and reconcile the account's balance in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Human Resources

Local Compensation Plan Did Not Comply With Local Labor Law

The embassy's local compensation plan⁶⁵ for LE staff did not comply with local labor law or adhere to prevailing practice. Specifically, OIG found the local compensation plan did not:

- Adhere to local law or prevailing practice on separation, severance, or end-of-service and retirement benefits.
- Adhere to local law on child and spouse allowances and did not align with prevailing practice on housing allowances.
- Adhere to local law or prevailing practice on salary payments during maternity leave.
- Stipulate that it was applicable to the LE staff in Goma in addition to the LE staff in Kinshasa.

Standards in 3 FAM 7224.2-1a require that local compensation plans conform as closely as feasible to local law and prevailing practice but be based on and administered in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations. The embassy acknowledged it had not completed an annual

⁶⁴ Guidance in 4 FAH-2 H-743 defines a non-serviced agency as a government agency that maintains its own accounting functions for all its locations abroad.

⁶⁵ According to 3 FAM 7521, a local compensation plan forms the legal basis for all salary, bonus, and other payments to LE staff members.

review of the current local compensation plan, which is required by 3 FAH-2 H-131.3a(1). Human resources staff told OIG the local compensation plan was not revised due to the Bureau of Global Talent Management, Office of Overseas Employment's workload and understaffing, resulting in delayed responses to requests for revisions, and delays and challenges in the embassy obtaining legal opinions from local counsel. Without an updated local compensation plan, LE staff may not receive the benefits to which they are entitled, and the embassy may not be compliant with local labor law.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with GTM)

Locally Employed Staff Handbook Was Outdated

OIG found Embassy Kinshasa had not updated its LE staff handbook since 2004 and that the handbook contained inaccurate information. For example, the handbook detailed transportation and meal allowances that had been discontinued in 2018 and contained erroneous guidance on waiting periods for LE staff promotions that were eliminated in 2017. Department standards in 3 FAM 7155a require each overseas post to develop and maintain an LE staff handbook that documents the post's LE staff employment policies and procedures, LE staff responsibilities, and expected conduct. According to human resources staff, other work commitments prevented them from updating the handbook, and they wanted to review and revise the local compensation plan first to mirror that information when revising the handbook. Without an updated handbook with accurate policies and procedures, LE staff may receive erroneous information about the benefits to which they are entitled, and the risk of litigation may increase for the Department.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with GTM)

Embassy Did Not Authorize Locally Employed Staff Overtime in Advance

Embassy Kinshasa did not comply with requirements for authorizing LE staff overtime in advance. In 2023, the embassy incurred approximately \$960,000 of LE staff overtime. OIG reviewed Embassy Kinshasa's overtime records for two pay periods⁶⁶ for two units within the Management Section⁶⁷ and found only 11 of 637 overtime forms submitted were approved in advance. According to 4 FAH-3 H-523.2 and 3 FAM 2332.4(5), supervisors must approve overtime in writing and in advance. OIG determined the embassy did not comply with advance overtime approvals because it had not established management controls to monitor compliance with Department standards on overtime. Failure to approve overtime in advance may lead to fraud, waste, and abuse of resources.

⁶⁶ Pay periods 5 and 6 in 2024.

⁶⁷ Facility Management and Motor Pool units.

Recommendation 25: Embassy Kinshasa should require authorizing officials to approve staff requests for overtime in advance in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Locally Employed Staff Position Descriptions Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Kinshasa did not review all LE staff position descriptions for accuracy as required by Department standards. OIG discussed classification of position descriptions with human resources staff and reviewed position descriptions in personnel files and on the human resources shared drive and found at least 66 positions had yet to be classified via a regional classification center,⁶⁸ as required. According to 3 FAM 7313.1(4), supervisors of LE staff are responsible for ensuring position descriptions adequately and accurately reflect assigned duties and responsibilities. Moreover, according to 3 FAM 7312.2, all LE staff positions must be classified according to the standards and guidelines contained in 3 FAH-2 H-400, which is the foundation for the equitable compensation of LE staff. Human resources staff told OIG that although they reminded supervisors of the requirement to annually review their respective LE staff positions descriptions for accuracy, supervisors often did not have time to review or reclassify positions due to heavy workloads and competing priorities. Inaccurate position descriptions can directly affect LE staff members' level of compensation.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Kinshasa should review and revise locally employed staff position descriptions and classify them in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Locally Employed Staff's Annual Performance Evaluations Were Not Completed On Time

Embassy Kinshasa did not complete all LE staff performance evaluations on time in accordance with Department standards. These evaluations are the basis for processing within grade salary step increases and for determining eligibility for recruitment in other positions. As of May 2024, the embassy reported 26 late LE staff performance evaluations. In accordance with 3 FAH-2 H-135.5a(2), supervisors are required to submit LE staff evaluations by the date established in the embassy's annual rating cycle. Embassy Kinshasa repeatedly reminded supervisors of their responsibility to submit timely LE staff performance evaluations but did not hold the supervisors accountable to this requirement. Delays in preparing, submitting, and processing performance evaluations could have financial repercussions, affect promotion prospects, and negatively impact morale for the LE staff.

Recommendation 27: Embassy Kinshasa should require supervisors to complete locally employed staff performance evaluations on time and hold supervisors accountable for non-compliance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

⁶⁸ Classifiers at each bureau's Regional Classification Centers use the Mission Classification System to analyze and grade overseas LE staff and eligible family member positions.

Embassy Did Not Hire Health Unit Staff Member Through Human Resources Office

OIG found Embassy Kinshasa did not hire one of its health unit staff through the Human Resources Office. Instead, the embassy contracted through a nongovernmental organization for an LE staff healthcare provider. Embassy health unit staff told OIG the provider had worked under this contract for 15 years, working at the embassy's health unit 1 day per week. The cost of the last contract modification for the first option year, signed in August 2023, was approximately \$87,000. OIG also determined there was no trained COR overseeing the contract, a systemic issue for the embassy, as discussed earlier in this report. Due to the unusual hiring mechanism the embassy used, which was not managed by the Human Resources Office,⁶⁹ the employee's U.S. medical credentials were not verified in accordance with Department standards. In accordance with cables 24 STATE 15562⁷⁰ and 22 STATE 93346,⁷¹ the Bureau of Medical Services must be involved in the hiring of any LE staff or eligible family member positions for health units to ensure credential verification. This process is mandatory for medical positions, including physician assistants.

Embassy staff told OIG they did not know why the LE staff healthcare provider was contracted for through a nongovernmental organization rather than recruited and hired through the Human Resources Office. Failure to adhere to Department standards for the recruitment and hiring of embassy staff may result in higher costs for services provided. In addition, failure to adhere to the medical credential verification process results in the recruitment of staff who are not authorized by the Bureau of Medical Services to work in embassy health units.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Medical Services, should recruit all health unit staff members in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with MED)

Facility Management

Embassy Did Not Perform Workplace Hazard Inspections as Required by Department Standards

The embassy did not perform workplace hazard inspections as required. OIG found that although the facility management staff performed inspections of some of the embassy's high-risk areas such as the facility workshops and the warehouse, they did not inspect all high-risk

⁶⁹ According to guidance in the Bureau of Global Talent Management's Overseas Employment Recruitment Policy, human resources professionals should announce all employment opportunities in an open and consistent manner, maintain and follow human resources recruitment procedures, and apply screening criteria and evaluation standards consistently and fairly with all job applicants.

⁷⁰ Cable 24 STATE 15562, "Health Unit LE Staff, EFM Credentials, and License Verification," February 20, 2024.

⁷¹ Cable 22 STATE 93346, "Health Unit LE and EFM Credential Verification," August 22, 2022.

areas^{72,73} and did not inspect them semi-annually as required in 15 FAM 962a.⁷⁴ Additionally, the embassy did not perform inspections of all low-risk areas. For example, although staff inspected the Joint Administrative Office compound, OIG did not find any evidence staff had inspected the chancery building. Staff told OIG they were not aware of all the workplace hazard inspection requirements and therefore had overlooked some of the areas for inspection and timelines. Failure to perform regular workplace hazard inspections increases the risk that some workplace hazards will not be identified and mitigated.

Recommendation 29: Embassy Kinshasa should perform workplace hazard inspections of both high-risk and low-risk workplaces in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy's Swimming Pool Safety Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Kinshasa's swimming pool safety program did not comply with Department standards. OIG found the embassy could not provide documentation that staff had performed swimming pool safety checks at U.S. government-owned and leased residences. Such safety checks are required by 15 FAM 957.4 and the swimming pool safety standards of the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management. The standards define minimum requirements embassies must meet to ensure the protection and life safety of all pool users on Department-controlled properties.

OIG also found inadequate swimming pool safety standards at the embassy's leased residences at complexes that were not exclusive to Department employees. OIG visited several residential complexes and found swimming pools with no barriers or gates, no depth markings, and no emergency equipment. The Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management's guidance on swimming pools not under embassy control notes, although these swimming pools are not covered within the scope of the Department's swimming pool safety standards, the embassy needs to exert as much influence as possible to persuade landlords and building management to install barriers and work with them to lobby for safeguards to be put in place. OIG found no evidence the embassy had done this. Embassy staff told OIG they were aware of the deficiencies but had not had a chance to talk to the landlords. Failure to mitigate swimming pool deficiencies puts employees and their families' lives and safety at risk.

⁷² According to 15 FAM 962c, "high-risk activity involves the potential for serious injury, illness or fatality, or significant exposure to a physical, chemical, or biological hazard. This includes activities involving, but not limited to, construction, electrical work, work at heights above six feet, confined spaces, trenching or excavating, chemical use, materials storage and handling and maintenance work." For example, OIG found the embassy did not inspect the workshops for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, and plumbing.

⁷³ The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management provides checklists to assess workplace hazards. For example, the checklist on plumbing safety asked about the availability of personal protective equipment and appropriate labeling and storage of hazardous chemicals.

⁷⁴ For example, the embassy last inspected the welding and carpentry shops in January 2024, the motor pool shop in March 2023, and the warehouse in February 2023.

Recommendation 30: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its swimming pool safety program into compliance with Department standards and guidance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Have Published Watercraft Safety Policies and Guidelines

The embassy did not have published watercraft safety policies and guidelines related to its boat fleet. The embassy operated a fleet of four U.S. government-owned boats primarily for emergency evacuation purposes and for the transportation of travelers on official business between Kinshasa and Brazzaville, which is located across the Congo River from Kinshasa. In addition, when the vessels were not being used for emergency or official reasons, U.S. direct-hire employees were allowed to use the boats as “other authorized use” for recreational purposes. Although the embassy included general information on the boat transportation program and use of embassy boats as part of its embassy-wide government vehicle use policy, it did not include any specific guidelines or policy on boat safety.



Figure 5: One of the four embassy boats used for evacuations, transportation of staff between Kinshasa and Brazzaville, and employee recreational use. (Source: OIG.)

In a September 2023 memo to all facility and general services managers and a November 2023 newsletter to all post occupational safety and health officers, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations’ Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management released specific guidance related to watercraft safety, an updated generic post boating policy, and a template for a boat safety notice. OIG found the embassy did not review these boating safety guidelines nor had they communicated any boat safety policies or guidance information to embassy staff. Embassy management staff told OIG they had overlooked this guidance. Failure to inform staff of watercraft safety guidelines increases the risk of accidents and fatalities.

Recommendation 31: Embassy Kinshasa should publish boat safety guidelines for its boat program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

The embassy’s fire protection program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found:

- The office building that housed USAID did not meet Department fire requirements for high-rise buildings.⁷⁵ OIG found the embassy did not coordinate with the Bureau of

⁷⁵ Guidance in 15 FAM 813.7-5 defines a high rise building as a building with an occupied floor located more than 75 feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access.

Overseas Buildings Operations' Fire Protection Analysis Division to obtain a mitigation letter. According to 15 FAM 813.7-5h, such a letter provides property-specific risk management mitigation. Additionally, the embassy did not ensure occupants of the building were aware of the risks or were provided the specific risk mitigation strategies.

- The embassy did not perform and document annual emergency egress inspections, as required in 15 FAM 846.4.

Embassy staff told OIG they overlooked the deficiencies due to a heavy workload and competing priorities, such as dealing with work at multiple compounds. Failure to comply with all Department fire standards increases the risk of injury and loss of life.

Recommendation 32: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with OBO)

Embassy Did Not Have an Integrated Pest Management Program

Embassy Kinshasa did not have an integrated pest management program. In accordance with 15 FAM 957.1 and 15 FAM 957.2, embassies are required to implement an integrated pest management program for all U.S. government-owned and long-term leased properties. OIG observed multiple pest issues at the embassy, including rodents on the Joint Administrative Office compound, termites at various embassy compound locations, snakes on residential compounds, and mosquitoes throughout embassy premises and residences due to standing water. Although the embassy had tools to deal with some of these cases, such as a blanket purchase agreement⁷⁶ with a local snake catcher, the embassy lacked a comprehensive program to clearly identify and set out a plan to adequately assess and deal with these pest issues. Failure to implement an integrated pest management program may place employee health and safety at risk.

Recommendation 33: Embassy Kinshasa should implement an integrated pest management program in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy's SPEAR Unit Did Not Adhere to Department Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

The embassy's Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR)⁷⁷ Unit did not adhere to Department motor vehicle safety standards when using U.S. government-owned vehicles for its operations. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management told OIG the SPEAR Unit's vehicles were unsafe and it

⁷⁶ A blanket purchase agreement is a simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for supplies or services by establishing "charge accounts" with qualified sources of supply.

⁷⁷ The SPEAR program is a Department initiative in response to the September 2012 terrorist attack against the U.S. Special Mission in Benghazi and associated Accountability Review Board recommendations. The purpose of the SPEAR program is to enhance the capabilities of designated host nation security forces that are earmarked to respond to incidents involving U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel, provide personnel protective services (i.e., bodyguards) for U.S. diplomatic personnel, or both.

had provided the embassy with the Department's motor vehicle safety standards. The office told OIG it was concerned with two specific safety deficiencies:

- SPEAR Unit personnel did not use seatbelts in the vehicles, which is required for all occupants operating or riding in U.S. government vehicles (14 FAM 433.7a).
- The SPEAR Unit's pickup trucks had been modified with bench seating, which made the vehicles top heavy and increased the risk of rollover.

OIG found Embassy Kinshasa's Front Office signed a decision memo in October 2023 to exempt the SPEAR Unit from Department motor vehicle safety requirements. The decision memo included the SPEAR Unit and Regional Security Office's opinions that Department safety requirements did not apply because the unit's employees were not U.S. government employees and the requirements would hinder operational effectiveness. However, in February 2021, both the Office of Safety, Health, and Environmental Management and the SPEAR Branch Chief in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security issued guidance to overseas posts to reinforce Department safety requirements and noted that to maintain SPEAR drivers' authorization to operate U.S. government vehicles, it is imperative they strictly adhere to applicable sections of the FAM. The guidance in 14 FAM 433.1a states the Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program provisions shall be implemented to ensure all official vehicles are operated safely. Failure to adhere to safety requirements could expose the SPEAR Unit to the risk of serious injury or death and increase the risk of accidents involving official vehicles.

Recommendation 34: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should bring its Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response Unit into compliance with Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with OBO and DS)

Embassy Did Not Adequately Control or Account for Leftover Construction Materials



Figure 6: Loose materials left over from various construction projects on the Joint Administrative Office compound. (Source: OIG.)

The embassy did not adequately control or account for materials, including conduit, rebar, electrical cables, and loose construction materials such as floor and wall tiles, that had been left behind from recent construction projects. OIG found such materials on both the Joint Administrative Office and chancery compounds. Standards in 14 FAM 414.4(5)(a) require spare materials to be treated as expendable property and managed using the ILMS expendable management system. OIG found loose construction materials and items that had not been inventoried and had not been entered into the expendables system, as shown in Figure 6. The embassy was aware of these requirements but had not

prioritized tracking the materials and recording them in its expendable property inventory. The lack of property accountability and inventory controls increases the risk of waste and theft.

Recommendation 35: Embassy Kinshasa should control and account for all leftover construction materials in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Health Unit

Embassy's Disposal of Medications Did Not Comply With Department Guidelines

Embassy Kinshasa did not comply with Department guidelines for the disposal of medications. In accordance with 16 FAM 712.1b and 16 FAM 742.1b, the Foreign Service medical provider at an embassy or, in that person's absence, the regional medical officer, is responsible for ensuring inventory-related records of prescription drugs are properly maintained. MEDx⁷⁸ is the approved official inventory system and must be maintained to document an audit trail from receipt of the drug in the health unit to dispensing to the individual patient or disposal of the item. Specifically, OIG found the health unit did not:

- Use MEDx to track disposals of medications.⁷⁹ In accordance with section 351 of the Bureau of Medical Services' Standard Operating Procedures for Management of Medications in the Health Unit Pharmacy,⁸⁰ the disposal of any controlled substance must be documented in the electronic Controlled Substances Logbook in MEDx and must be witnessed, with both the disposer and witness electronically signing the dated log entry.
- Have a Pharmaceutical Disposal Plan. Section 270 of the Standard Operating Procedures for Management of Medications in the Health Unit Pharmacy states each health unit must develop a Pharmaceutical Disposal Plan that complies with host country laws governing medication disposals.

Embassy staff told OIG they recently started to use MEDx and added the embassy's pharmaceutical inventory to the system over the couple of months before the inspection. Failure to dispose of medications in accordance with Department standards may lead to fraud, waste, and abuse of resources.

Recommendation 36: Embassy Kinshasa should dispose of medications and controlled substances in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

⁷⁸ The Bureau of Medical Services uses the MEDx module, in ILMS, to properly account for the use of expendable medications and supplies. All health units must enter all medications received, distributed, and disposed into MEDx for proper accounting of government property.

⁷⁹ The health unit's most recent paper medication disposal forms included one from 2018, one from 2021, and one from 2022.

⁸⁰ Bureau of Medical Services, Standard Operating Procedures for Management of Medications in the Health Unit Pharmacy, December 2023.

Embassy Did Not Perform Periodic Inspections of the Cafeteria

Embassy Kinshasa did not perform cafeteria inspections in accordance with Department standards. At the time of the inspection, the embassy's health unit had not performed a cafeteria inspection in 15 months. The last two inspections occurred in September 2022 and February 2023.⁸¹ According to 16 FAM 145.3(10)(c), health unit teams, in coordination with their regional medical laboratory specialist, are expected to perform limited inspections of cafeterias and other food service areas within overseas posts to evaluate food safety. Furthermore, according to the Bureau of Medical Services' Food Service Sanitation Guide,⁸² inspections should be conducted quarterly or more frequently if problems exist.

The office space used by the OIG team during the onsite portion of the inspection shared the ceiling, walls, and an internal door with the cafeteria. During the inspection, OIG observed rats daily in the office space, including one which was dead. OIG also found rat droppings daily on desks and tabletops until the cleaning team increased the frequency of cleaning. OIG noted in the last inspection of the cafeteria in February 2023, the health unit found pest control was unsatisfactory but did not provide any directions or guidance to cafeteria staff on how to resolve these issues. Additionally, OIG determined the health unit did not resolve the issues identified in the 2023 inspection.

Health unit staff said they were unaware how frequently cafeteria inspections should occur. They also said they did not have the ability to test surfaces for rat droppings or other hazardous bacteria and microorganisms. Regarding pest control in cafeterias, all use of pesticides must be done in accordance with an integrated pest management program. However, the embassy did not have a pest management program in place, as discussed earlier in this report. Failure to conduct routine inspections of the cafeteria risks the embassy being unable to protect the health and safety of its employees.

Recommendation 37: Embassy Kinshasa should conduct inspections of the cafeteria in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Kinshasa's Diplomatic Technology (DT)⁸³ operations, including classified, unclassified, and non-enterprise network⁸⁴ computer operations, physical and environmental

⁸¹ In the 2023 inspection, comments and corrective action guidance were not provided for the unsatisfactory items identified in the checklist.

⁸² United States Department of State Office of Medical Services, Food Service Sanitation Guide 1999 (updated April 12, 2011).

⁸³ In May 2024, the Department changed the name of the Bureau of Information Resource Management to the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology. At the time of the inspection, Embassy Kinshasa had not yet updated the name of this unit and referred to it as the Information Resource Management unit.

⁸⁴ A non-enterprise network is a Department-procured and locally managed computing environment. Non-enterprise networks are used by a specific entity to meet their mission requirements that cannot be achieved using an enterprise managed solution.

protection of information technology resources, mobile device management, classified communications security, emergency communications preparedness, telephone programs, and pouch and mail services. OIG determined the embassy's DT operations generally complied with Department standards. However, OIG found DT managers did not focus on routine information management programs and management controls, which contributed to the deficiencies described below.

Information Systems Security Officers Did Not Perform All Required Duties

Embassy Kinshasa's designated primary and alternate Information Systems Security Officers (ISSO) did not perform the required oversight duties for classified, OpenNet,⁸⁵ and non-enterprise networks. Specifically, OIG found the ISSOs did not:

- Review user access annually to verify if access was still needed or had been updated (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3b and c).
- Brief users on cybersecurity responsibilities prior to granting access to the information system (12 FAH-10 H-212.1-3(1)).
- Review audit logs for security violations or unusual activities (5 FAM 724c(1)).

Additionally, the designated ISSOs did not have the required ISSO accounts⁸⁶ to perform their duties. During the inspection, DT staff created the required ISSO accounts but had yet to complete the associated responsibilities. OIG found these deficiencies occurred because of lack of management oversight. OIG issued management assistance reports in May 2017 and December 2020 that highlighted widespread Department failures to perform ISSO duties.⁸⁷ Failure to perform required ISSO responsibilities leaves Department networks vulnerable to potential unauthorized access and malicious activity.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Kinshasa should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Kinshasa Did Not Use Its Local Information Technology Configuration Control Board

Embassy Kinshasa did not use the local IT Configuration Control Board (ITCCB). According to 5 FAM 862.1, a local ITCCB is required to ensure locally procured hardware and software do not

⁸⁵ OpenNet is the Department's Sensitive But Unclassified network.

⁸⁶ ISSOs are required to use ISSO accounts to maintain separation of ISSO functions from systems management duties. According to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), separation of duties includes "ensuring security personnel who administer access control functions do not also administer audit functions." See NIST Special Publication 800-53, revision 5, "Security and Privacy Controls for Information Systems and Organizations," page 36 (September 2020).

⁸⁷ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017) and *Management Assistance Report: Continued Deficiencies in Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Responsibilities at Overseas Posts* (ISP-21-07, December 2020).

adversely affect the Department's and embassy's information security. Although embassy DT staff had established a local ITCCB on June 2, 2023, the DT chief did not prioritize scheduling local ITCCB board meetings to evaluate non-approved technology. Local ITCCBs are necessary to mitigate potential risks to the Department's networks from unapproved technology.

Recommendation 39: Embassy Kinshasa should schedule regular local Information Technology Configuration Control Board meetings to evaluate non-approved technology for use on Department networks. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Kinshasa Did Not Manage Its Inventory of Mobile Devices in Accordance With Department Standards

OIG found Embassy Kinshasa did not manage its inventory of U.S. government-issued mobile devices, such as cell phones, laptops, and radios. Although DT staff used the ILMS loanable property module, they did not report lost or stolen cell phones and laptops to the property survey board, as required by 14 FAM 426.2c. DT staff told OIG and provided documentation that 41 phones had been lost in the previous 10 months. However, they had not reported this to the Accountable Property Officer, as required in 14 FAM 428. Instead, DT staff recorded those phones in ILMS as "abandoned." Additionally, employees who had lost mobile devices were not held accountable for the depreciated value of the devices, as required by 14 FAM 416.5-3c. Lack of accountability of mobile devices increases the risk of waste, fraud, and mismanagement for the U.S. government.

Recommendation 40: Embassy Kinshasa should manage its inventory of mobile devices in accordance with Department standards, including holding employees accountable for lost or missing U.S. government-issued property. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Telecommunications Demarcation Point Was Improperly Located

OIG found the demarcation point⁸⁸ connecting the internet service provider's network connections to the embassy was located in the Sensitive But Unclassified server room, which was a limited access area. This placement is contrary to 12 FAH-6 H-651.5.2, which requires the demarcation points to be in a separate, locked building within the facility grounds or in a separate locked room. OIG determined this issue occurred because DT staff neglected to separate the internet service provider's equipment from Department equipment and place it in a separate location. Placing the telecommunications equipment in the Sensitive But Unclassified server room creates security vulnerabilities when non-cleared internet service provider employees access the room to work on the telecommunications system.

⁸⁸ A demarcation marks the point where communications facilities owned by one organization interface with that of another organization. In telecommunications terminology, this is the interface between customer-premises equipment and network service provider equipment.

Recommendation 41: Embassy Kinshasa should relocate the telecommunications demarcation point outside the limited access area server room in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Did Not Have an Operational High-Frequency Radio

Embassy Kinshasa did not have an operational high-frequency radio. Since March 2023, the embassy had been unable to conduct monthly high-frequency radio checks with net control⁸⁹ at Embassy Yaoundé, Cameroon, as required in 5 FAM 541c. Additionally, OIG found the embassy had not contacted the Regional Diplomatic Technology Center or the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology's Radio Program Branch for assistance to repair the high-frequency radio. A nonfunctioning high-frequency radio puts the safety and security of embassy personnel at risk in the event of an emergency.

Recommendation 42: Embassy Kinshasa should repair its high-frequency radio and conduct radio checks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Locally Employed Staff Lacked Information Assurance Training

Embassy Kinshasa's DT LE staff, responsible for managing OpenNet and non-enterprise networks, lacked mandatory role-based information assurance training, as required by 12 FAM 623.5a(2) and 12 FAH-10 H-212.2-1(d)2. One of the embassy's system administrators last completed information assurance training in 2015. Two other system administrators had not completed the required information assurance training at all. Additionally, the LE staff Information Systems Center supervisor, who had been a system administrator for 10 years, informed OIG his training kept getting canceled or that he could not find classes with availability. Lack of required, job-based training impedes the embassy's ability to effectively protect and secure technical resources, and to effectively perform essential duties.

Recommendation 43: Embassy Kinshasa should require locally employed staff to complete information assurance training in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Kinshasa Did Not Secure or Monitor Its Non-Enterprise Networks

Embassy Kinshasa did not secure or monitor its non-enterprise networks, as required by 5 FAM 872.1 and 5 FAM 872.3. OIG found unauthorized devices connected to two of the non-enterprise networks operating at Embassy Kinshasa. In addition, the non-enterprise networks did not have access control management, as required in 12 FAM 623.1, and did not have configuration management, as required by 5 FAM 861.1. DT managers told OIG they neglected to secure and monitor the non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards because they were not aware of the risk. Not securing and monitoring the non-enterprise networks increases the embassy's vulnerability to cyberattacks.

⁸⁹ Net control is a regional point of contact in Embassy Yaoundé to test high frequency radios for connectivity.

Recommendation 44: Embassy Kinshasa should install access control software and monitor its non-enterprise networks. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Embassy Lacked Updated Standard Operating Procedures for Managing Diplomatic Technology Programs

Embassy Kinshasa's DT unit did not have updated standard operating procedures to ensure reliable documentation and historical information for managing DT programs. The embassy had some standard operating procedures from 2019, but they were not accurate. For example, OIG observed these standard operating procedures mentioned devices no longer in use by the Department. In other instances, OIG found DT managers did not have procedures documenting operations, such as for the mailroom. Additionally, OIG found inconsistencies in systems maintenance recordkeeping. DT staff told OIG the unit will likely be significantly understaffed for the year after the inspection based on planned arrivals and expected departures and will have to rely on temporary duty personnel. OIG determined these temporary duty personnel will need access to reliable documentation of the unit's operations to be effective. According to 5 FAM 867, DT managers must maintain documentation for all aspects of computer support and operations to ensure continuity and consistency. DT staff told OIG they were aware the standard operating procedures were outdated, but they did not prioritize updating them to reflect Department technology changes. The absence of reliable standard operating procedures affects internal controls and diminishes the effectiveness of technical programs.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Kinshasa should develop, implement, and update standard operating procedures for capturing, sharing, transferring, and retaining information related to its Diplomatic Technology programs in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

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 Kinshasa. The embassy's complete responses can be found in Appendix B.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the Bureau of African Affairs, should bring its Leahy vetting practices into compliance with the embassy's standard operating procedure and Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with DRL and AF)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa's Leahy vetting practices complied with the embassy's standard operating procedure and Department guidance.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Kinshasa should bring the Economic Section's records management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 3: Embassy Kinshasa should provide consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa provided consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Kinshasa should issue guidance to sections and bureaus implementing foreign assistance advising them on the travel policy and requiring that monitoring plans for proposed programs take into account limitations on travel and staff capacity. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa issued guidance to sections and bureaus implementing foreign assistance advising them on the travel policy and requiring that monitoring plans for proposed programs take into account limitations on travel and staff capacity.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Kinshasa should close out expired federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa closed out expired federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Kinshasa should implement standard operating procedures in the PEPFAR Coordination Office for the management of federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa implemented standard operating procedures in the PEPFAR Coordination Office for the management of federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement a plan to supervise the locally employed staff in Goma on a regular basis. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa developed and implemented a plan to supervise the locally employed staff in Goma on a regular basis.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Kinshasa should require all acquisition agreements and procurements be authorized by a warranted contracting officer in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa required all acquisition agreements and procurements be authorized by a warranted contracting officer in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement standard operating procedures for the purchase of official vehicles to adhere to Department acquisition rules for official vehicles. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa developed and implemented standard operating procedures for the purchase of official vehicles to adhere to Department acquisition rules for official vehicles.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its contracting administration program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 11: Embassy Kinshasa should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date by the end of June 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa closed out procurement files in accordance with Department standards

Recommendation 12: Embassy Kinshasa should record all operational and maintenance data and costs for the embassy's watercraft in accordance with the Department's forthcoming Foreign Affairs Manual guidance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa recorded all operational and maintenance data and costs for the embassy's watercraft in accordance with the Department's forthcoming Foreign Affairs Manual guidance.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Kinshasa should adhere to all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers under chief of mission authority. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa adhered to all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers under chief of mission authority.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its property management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 15: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa's furniture and appliance pool program complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its warehouse operations into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 17: Embassy Kinshasa should manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa managed its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Kinshasa should document its actions taken to recover the \$245,000 improper payment for two official vehicles. If the embassy determines the improper payment to be unrecoverable, Embassy Kinshasa should report it as a fiscal irregularity in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa documented its actions taken to recover the \$245,000 improper payment for two official vehicles or determined the improper payment to be unrecoverable and reported it as a fiscal irregularity in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Kinshasa should review and de-obligate all unliquidated obligations without activity for more than one year in accordance with Department standards, so that funds of up to \$2.8 million can be put to better use. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa reviewed and de-obligated all unliquidated obligations without activity for more than one year in accordance with Department standards, so that funds of up to \$2.8 million can be put to better use.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Kinshasa should bring the travel advance process into compliance with Department standards, including clearing overdue travel advances, and put funds of up to \$107,000 to better use. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa's travel advance process complied with Department standards, including clearing overdue travel advances, and putting funds of up to \$107,000 to better use.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement a standard operating procedure to accurately monitor and collect employee receivables for excess cell phone charges in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa developed and implemented a standard operating procedure to accurately monitor and collect employee receivables for excess cell phone charges in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Kinshasa should use the suspense deposits abroad account for authorized purposes only and reconcile the account's balance in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa used the suspense deposits abroad account for authorized purposes only and reconciled the account's balance in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 23: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with GTM)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date by the end of September 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa updated the local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 24: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with GTM)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa updated the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 25: Embassy Kinshasa should require authorizing officials to approve staff requests for overtime in advance in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa required authorizing officials to approve staff requests for overtime in advance in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 26: Embassy Kinshasa should review and revise locally employed staff position descriptions and classify them in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date by the end of June 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa reviewed and revised locally employed staff position descriptions and classified them in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 27: Embassy Kinshasa should require supervisors to complete locally employed staff performance evaluations on time and hold supervisors accountable for non-compliance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa required supervisors to

complete locally employed staff performance evaluations on time and held supervisors accountable for non-compliance.

Recommendation 28: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Medical Services, should recruit all health unit staff members in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with MED)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa recruited all health unit staff members in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 29: Embassy Kinshasa should perform workplace hazard inspections of both high-risk and low-risk workplaces in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 30: Embassy Kinshasa should bring its swimming pool safety program into compliance with Department standards and guidance. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa's swimming pool safety program complied with Department standards and guidance.

Recommendation 31: Embassy Kinshasa should publish boat safety guidelines for its boat program in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa published boat safety guidelines for its boat program in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 32: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of January 2025.

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

Recommendation 33: Embassy Kinshasa should implement an integrated pest management program in compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa implemented an integrated pest management program in compliance with Department standards.

Recommendation 34: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should bring its Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response Unit into compliance with Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with OBO and DS)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa's Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response Unit complied with Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards.

Recommendation 35: Embassy Kinshasa should control and account for all leftover construction materials in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa controlled and accounted for all leftover construction materials in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 36: Embassy Kinshasa should dispose of medications and controlled substances in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa disposed of medications and controlled substances in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 37: Embassy Kinshasa should conduct inspections of the cafeteria in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa conducted inspections of the cafeteria in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 38: Embassy Kinshasa should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 39: Embassy Kinshasa should schedule regular local Information Technology Configuration Control Board meetings to evaluate non-approved technology for use on Department networks. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa scheduled regular local Information Technology Configuration Control Board meetings to evaluate non-approved technology for use on Department networks.

Recommendation 40: Embassy Kinshasa should manage its inventory of mobile devices in accordance with Department standards, including holding employees accountable for lost or missing U.S. government-issued property. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of June 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa managed its inventory of mobile devices in accordance with Department standards, including holding employees accountable for lost or missing U.S. government-issued property.

Recommendation 41: Embassy Kinshasa should relocate the telecommunications demarcation point outside the limited access area server room in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of November 2025.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa relocated the telecommunications demarcation point outside the limited access area server room in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 42: Embassy Kinshasa should repair its high-frequency radio and conduct radio checks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa repaired its high-frequency radio and conducted radio checks in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 43: Embassy Kinshasa should require locally employed staff to complete information assurance training in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa required locally employed staff to complete information assurance training in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 44: Embassy Kinshasa should install access control software and monitor its non-enterprise networks. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa installed access control software and monitored its non-enterprise networks.

Recommendation 45: Embassy Kinshasa should develop, implement, and update standard operating procedures for capturing, sharing, transferring, and retaining information related to its Diplomatic Technology programs in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: In its January 10, 2025, response, Embassy Kinshasa concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Kinshasa developed, implemented, and updated standard operating procedures for capturing, sharing, transferring, and retaining information related to its Diplomatic Technology programs in accordance with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

| Agency/Section/Title | Name | Arrival Date |
|---|--|--------------|
| Chiefs of Mission: | | |
| Ambassador | Lucy Tamlyn | 1/2023 |
| Deputy Chief of Mission | Stephanie Miley | 7/2022 |
| Chiefs of Sections: | | |
| Consular | Stephanie Porter | 8/2022 |
| Economic | Chris McCabe | 7/2023 |
| Management | Vernetta Wheeler (acting) ^a | 8/2022 |
| Management | Marcus McChristian | 5/2024 |
| Eastern Congo Unit | Michael Coker | 11/2022 |
| President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief | Shirley Dady | 10/2018 |
| Political | Stacey Jones | 5/2024 |
| Public Diplomacy | Monica Shie | 7/2022 |
| Regional Security | Ben Langford | 8/2022 |
| Information Resource Management | Sabireen Khattak | 9/2021 |
| International Narcotics and Law Enforcement | Daniella Gayapersad-Chad | 8/2023 |
| Other Agency Representatives: | | |
| Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Peter Fonjungo | 10/2020 |
| Office of Security Cooperation | MAJ Joseph Wilhelm ^b | 7/2023 |
| Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché | LTC Chad Brinton ^c | 2/2024 |
| U.S. Agency for International Development | John Dunlop | 8/2022 |

^a Vernetta Wheeler became acting Management Counselor on March 14, 2024, and served until May 6, 2024. On May 6, 2024, Marcus McChristian arrived at Embassy Kinshasa as the Management Counselor.

^b MAJ Wilhelm is assigned to Embassy Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo and supports Embassy Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

^c LTC Chad Brinton, assigned to Embassy Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, is dually accredited to the Republic of the Congo.

Source: Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Kinshasa.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from March 18 to August 27, 2024, 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



Ambassade des États-Unis d'Amérique

Kinshasa, République Démocratique du Congo

January 10, 2025

UNCLASSIFIED

THRU: Molly Phee, Assistant Secretary African Affairs

TO: OIG – Arne Baker, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

FROM: Ambassador Lucy Tamlyn

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Mission Kinshasa

Mission Kinshasa has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

OIG Recommendation 1

Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the Bureau of African Affairs, should bring its Leahy vetting practices into compliance with the embassy's standard operating procedure and Department guidance.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs with the recommendation. The Embassy will coordinate with DRL and AF to update its Leahy vetting practices in compliance Department guidance.

OIG Recommendation 2

Embassy Kinshasa should bring the Economic Section's records management program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs with the recommendation. The Economic Section is actively trying to fill the EFM Office Assistant position, which has been vacant for a year. When/if this position is filled, the incumbent will assume records management

responsibilities. The section has already standardized use of its SharePoint site to store documents and has trained staff on the requirement to archive WhatsApp messages.

OIG Recommendation 3

Embassy Kinshasa should provide consular applicants with a waiting area that meets Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs with the recommendation. The Consular Section is working with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Embassy Facility Section on options to make the waiting room more accommodating to those with mobility issues, including using alternate entrances or creating a ramp that would allow wheelchairs into the waiting space.

OIG Recommendation 4

Embassy Kinshasa should issue guidance to sections and bureaus implementing foreign assistance advising them on the travel policy and requiring that monitoring plans for proposed programs take into account limitations on travel and staff capacity.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs with the recommendation. The Embassy has issued guidance to section and agency heads advising them on the travel policy and the travel and staffing limitations that could affect monitoring plans. The Travel Security Working Group met in November 2024 to review and update the travel policy and discuss its implications on programming and monitoring. RSO and the interagency are collaborating on avenues to address issues that currently limit travel, including staffing, as well as a new multi-million dollar contract to provide enhanced security information in regions where monitoring is required.

OIG Recommendation 5

Embassy Kinshasa should close out expired federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs with the recommendation. INL and Political sections are closing out expired federal assistance awards and instituting procedures to ensure timely closure of awards in the future.

OIG Recommendation 6

Embassy Kinshasa should implement standard operating procedures in the PEPFAR Coordination Office for the management of federal assistance awards in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs with the recommendation. The PEPFAR Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator positions have been vacant since July 2024. Currently there is only one employee in the PEPFAR Office. With the arrival of the new Coordinator in the new future, and subsequent hiring for other vacant positions, the PEPFAR office will implement standard operating procedures to ensure proper management of federal assistance awards.

OIG Recommendation 7

Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement a plan to supervise the locally employed staff in Goma on a regular basis.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Management, starting in FY2025 has instituted quarterly visits to/from Goma by the SGSO in addition to bi-weekly calls with the admin staff in Goma. The increased communication and visits will ensure more effective communication and oversight.

OIG Recommendation 8

Embassy Kinshasa should require all acquisition agreements and procurements be authorized by a warranted contracting officer in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The embassy is fully staffed with three USDH GSO's for the first time in more than two years, which will allow for stronger oversight of all acquisition agreements. As of **June 26, 2023**, the warrant that was incorrectly authorized for the LE Staff employee was revoked. All procurement actions and acquisitions have been reviewed/approved by a warranted CO. Additionally, Management issued a Management Notice to the community on July 18, 2024, regarding Prevention of Unauthorized Commitments to help mitigate further occurrences.

OIG Recommendation 9

Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement standard operating procedures for the purchase of official vehicles to adhere to Department acquisition rules for official vehicles.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The S/GSO drafted and submitted a Corrective Action Plan for A/GO (formerly A/LM) review/approval on July 7, 2023. The action plan was approved, and since that time, all vehicle purchases have been done in accordance with A/GO regulations.

OIG Recommendation 10

Embassy Kinshasa should bring its contracting administration program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The S/GSO is creating contracting officer's representative (COR) Program to be established in FY25 for Embassy Kinshasa. Post will also engage OPE to request a Staff Assistance Visit to Post to assist with program implementation. The implementation of a robust COR program will mitigate future occurrences of unauthorized commitments and ensure reviews of contracts/contractors are recorded in CPARs as required. Additionally, all procurement staff have completed the requisite Contract Administration Workshop course.

OIG Recommendation 11

Embassy Kinshasa should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. GSO, procurement, and finance staff are currently working through a significant backlog of e-files in ILMS. The backlog is scheduled to be cleared by the end of FY25Q3.

OIG Recommendation 12

Embassy Kinshasa should record all operational and maintenance data and costs for the embassy's watercraft in accordance with the Department's forthcoming Foreign Affairs Manual guidance.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. As of March 29, 2024, all boats have been added to FMIS as 'equipment' for the purposes of tracking operational use. Once the updated FAM guidance is released, Post will make all necessary adjustments to ensure we are following the new requirements.

OIG Recommendation 13

Embassy Kinshasa should adhere to all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers under chief of mission authority.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. As of March 29, 2024, all Chauffeurs and Incidental Drivers have received Safe Driver training, which has been documented in FMIS. FMIS has also been updated to include medical clearances information for all Drivers.

OIG Recommendation 14

Embassy Kinshasa should bring its property management program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Effective FY25, GSO has begun quarterly unannounced spot checks, to ensure items are properly recorded in ILMS.

OIG Recommendation 15

Embassy Kinshasa should bring its furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The SGSO is working with the Property staff to correct deficiencies by the end of FY25Q3, to include correction of misclassified FAP, and drafting of updated FAP Policy. The excess FAP in the warehouse was being held to furnish new leases and will be deployed by the end of FY25. Remaining excess FAP which is beyond its lifecycle will be auctioned.

OIG Recommendation 16

Embassy Kinshasa should bring its warehouse operations into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The post is arranging forklift training through Toyota Gibraltar and has contained all flammable materials, ordering additional cabinets for excess. Large/heavy items have been relocated to bottom shelves, and access will be controlled with combination locks. The GSO and Facility Manager are working on ventilating the Expendables Warehouse, with resolution expected by the end of FY25.

OIG Recommendation 17

Embassy Kinshasa should manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. GSO is purchasing car covers for the AVs to protect them from sun damage and delamination. Unfortunately, post's request to build a shaded shelter was not authorized by OBO. Post Facility Management will submit another project request into BMIS for the construction of a shade structure for post AV fleet before the end of January 2025.

Financial Management

OIG Recommendation 18

Embassy Kinshasa should document its actions taken to recover the \$245,000 improper payment for two official vehicles. If the embassy determines the improper payment to be unrecoverable, Embassy Kinshasa should report it as a fiscal irregularity in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Post has documented and prepared the required documentation per the FAM for improper payment and is awaiting response from the bureau on the proper payment procedures to resolve this outstanding issue.

OIG Recommendation 19

Embassy Kinshasa should review and de-obligate all unliquidated obligations without activity for more than one year in accordance with Department standards, so that funds of up to \$2.8 million can be put to better use.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Post has put in procedures to reduce unliquidated obligations (ULO) on a continual basis. The process involves weekly reviews by the FMC staff and routine collaboration between FMC, GSO procurement, and requesting offices. Post is currently tracking an amount of \$2.4M when excluding INL ULOs which are de-obligated in Washington.

OIG Recommendation 20

Embassy Kinshasa should bring the travel advance process into compliance with Department standards, including clearing overdue travel advances, and put funds of up to \$107,000 to better use.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Only the financial management officer (FMO) has access to close travel advances. Although many of the advances had been paid, they remained open due to a staffing gap in the FMO position. Now there is a FMO at post, travel advances are being routinely closed.

OIG Recommendation 21

Embassy Kinshasa should develop and implement a standard operating procedure to accurately monitor and collect employee receivables for excess cell phone charges in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. A cell phone policy is in clearance and will be released soon. The policy gives guidance on how charges will be monitored and billed to employees.

OIG Recommendation 22

Embassy Kinshasa should use the suspense deposits abroad account for authorized purposes only and reconcile the account's balance in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: The current FMO has suspended the use of the SDA account and is working with agencies at post to clear the account. Several hundreds of dollars have already been cleared.

Human Resources

OIG Recommendation 23

Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the local compensation plan in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. HR has submitted the entire LCP for local counsel review in Q2/2025. HR is working with local legal counsel to update separation, severance, and retirement and other end-of-service benefits. Post hopes to have these specific parts reviewed by Q2/2025 and implemented by the end of Q4/2025.

OIG Recommendation 24

Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, should update the locally employed staff handbook in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. HR is working with GTM, L/EMP, and local legal counsel to address several issues contained in the LE Staff Handbook. Post hopes the changes will be implemented in Q3/2025.

OIG Recommendation 25

Embassy Kinshasa should require authorizing officials to approve staff requests for overtime in advance in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Post has implemented management controls that require authorizing officials to approve staff request for overtime in advance. If overtime was not approved in advance, the work will not be authorized, *unless it is deemed an emergency*. Post will also conduct trainings and share information with authorizing officials to address these issues.

OIG Recommendation 26

Embassy Kinshasa should review and revise locally employed staff position descriptions and classify them in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. HR has implemented management controls to 1) conduct internal reviews of each position to ensure they were classified, 2) follow up with supervisors to update PDs and have them reclassified, and 3) only use PDs that are recruitable. As of January 2025, there are 26 PDs that need to be reviewed and classified in accordance with Department standards. HR expects the rest of the PDs to be in compliance with Department standards by Q3/2025.

OIG Recommendation 27

Embassy Kinshasa should require supervisors to complete locally employed staff performance evaluations on time and hold supervisors accountable for non-compliance.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. HR has created an employee performance review (EPR) tracker that will send automated reminder emails to supervisors 90, 60, and 30 days before their due date. HR, in consultation with the Management Counselor, is working to ensure EPRs are completed on time by sending reminder emails, addressing supervisors in person, and consistently following up. ***The Management Counselor has implemented the following consequences for failure to submit EPRs on time:*** verbal consultations and written reprimands.

OIG Recommendation 28

Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Medical Services, should recruit all health unit staff members in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The embassy contract, through a nongovernmental organization for an LE staff healthcare provider, will end on ***08/01/2025 and will not be renewed***. HR will assist the HU in hiring all its staff members in accordance with Department standards.

Facilities Management

OIG Recommendation 29

Embassy Kinshasa should perform workplace hazard inspections of both high-risk and low-risk workplaces in compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs, Facilities Management has brought its inspections of both high hazard and low-risk areas within the guidelines as required by 15 FAM 962a. A/POSHO conducted maintenance shop inspections during the month of Oct 2024 and has scheduled the Chancery inspection for Jan 2025. All follow up inspections has been scheduled by adding the inspection on a six-month interval to his outlook calendar. Copies of all inspections has been placed in A/POSHO SHEM electronic and hard copy files.

OIG Recommendation 30

Embassy Kinshasa should bring its swimming pool safety program into compliance with Department standards and guidance.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs, in accordance with 15 FAM 957.4, Post APOSHO completed swimming pool safety checks at all government owned residence but did not complete for leased residences/apartments. POSHO will work with GSO housing to get the landlord to approve additional required safety issues at the non-government owned residences.

OIG Recommendation 31

Embassy Kinshasa should publish boat safety guidelines for its boat program in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. In accordance with Department Standards, the mission Boat Policy was last updated in March 2023, a revised update to the policy was written in May of 2024 but was never finalized. The POSHO will work with GSO to update the policy in January 2025. In addition, the POSHO completed the safety checks of all four boats on the 16th of May 2024. All check sheets are in POSHO and APOSHO files.

OIG Recommendation 32

Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Embassy Kinshasa concurs, Post POSHO/FM will complete all requirements needed to obtain a fire mitigation letter for the USAID office building. Also, facilities will conduct and document the required annual emergency egress inspections before the end of January 2025.

OIG Recommendation 33

Embassy Kinshasa should implement an integrated pest management program in compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Embassy Kinshasa concurs, in accordance with 15 FAM 957.1 and 15 FAM 957.2, post updated and issued its pest management program in May 2024 to the community via Management Notice

OIG Recommendation 34

Embassy Kinshasa, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should bring its Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response Unit into compliance with Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The SGSO will coordinate with RSO, DS, and SHEM to determine a workable solution, which may include disposal of the two vehicles in question to be replaced by vehicles that are in line with SHEM safety standards.

OIG Recommendation 35

Embassy Kinshasa should control and account for all leftover construction materials in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Kinshasa concurs, Facilities management will work with GSO expendable property storekeeper to place all leftover construction materials into the ILMS management system as outlined in 14FAM 414.4(5)(a).

Health Unit

Recommendation 36

Embassy Kinshasa should dispose of medications and controlled substances in accordance with Department guidelines.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. The health unit has instituted a schedule for the disposal of medications and controlled substances in accordance with Department guidelines.

Recommendation 37

Embassy Kinshasa should conduct inspections of the cafeteria in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Mission Kinshasa concurs with the OIG recommendation. Mission Kinshasa's health unit has begun routine inspections of the cafeteria in accordance with Department standards.

Diplomatic Technology

Recommendation 38

Embassy Kinshasa should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. Due to staffing shortage and the rotation of TDY support, the DT-Unit Chief has been assigned as the ISSO for both enclaves. He maintains an ISSO account for both enclaves and actively reviews user access and audit logs. A cybersecurity brief is performed for all newcomers as part of the in-processing brief. In addition, all users with newly created or transferred accounts must sign the computer management document.

Recommendation 39

Embassy Kinshasa should schedule regular local Information Technology Configuration Control Board meetings to evaluate non-approved technology for use on Department networks. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation but is unable to effectively implement an IT CCB program due to lack of staffing. In the interim, post has eliminated the use of any hardware or software that must be approved by an ITCCB. Post will re-visit the implementation of IT-CCB after the addition of trained staff within Diplomatic Technology to Mission Kinshasa.

Recommendation 40

Embassy Kinshasa should manage its inventory of mobile devices in accordance with Department standards, including holding employees accountable for lost or missing U.S. government-issued property. (Action: Embassy Kinshasa)

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. The DTO-UC has drafted a new mobile device policy in accordance with Department standards. It is now going through the approval process and will be implemented shortly. The policy addresses accountability for GFE mobile devices and implements a process to forward lost/damaged DS132 paperwork to a property survey board for disposition. The new policy will be implemented within the next 90 days pending completion of the new cellular contract, but no later than June 2025

OIG Recommendation 41

Embassy Kinshasa should relocate the telecommunications demarcation point outside the limited access area server room in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. Due to the age of the building, limited availability of space, and the construction of the NEC, there is no funding to relocate the telecommunications demarcation outside of the limited access area server room. Post does have plans to relocate all demarcation equipment to a separate rack to prevent access to any State equipment. The expected completion date is late November 2025.

OIG Recommendation 42

Embassy Kinshasa should repair its high-frequency radio and conduct radio checks in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. The High Frequency radio received a RAN last week and is schedule to be shipped the week of January 13, 2025. The replacement equipment entered the shipping process destined for Kinshasa on January 3, 2025.

OIG Recommendation 43

Embassy Kinshasa should require locally employed staff to complete information assurance training in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. All ISC LE Staff have been through initial training with the last one completing his training in November. As funding permits, remedial training will be conducted for all staff that have not had the training in the past three years.

OIG Recommendation 44

Embassy Kinshasa should install access control software and monitor its non-enterprise networks.

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. All non-Enterprise networks have been disconnected, except the Motor Pool network non-Enterprise network, accessed via a VPN, which is used to access vehicle schematics. Kinshasa is scheduled to receive Enterprise WiFi in FY25, which will eliminate the motor pool circuit and any future non-enterprise networks.

OIG Recommendation 45

Embassy Kinshasa should develop, implement, and update standard operating procedures for capturing, sharing, transferring, and retaining information related to its Diplomatic Technology programs in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Post concurs with the recommendation. DTO has created several SOPs over the last six months. The DT office now has folders on SharePoint for every employee and all documentation related to DTO activities is stored. Documents are uploaded and saved for a period of two years past the departure of employee from post. The DT Office has increased use of MyServices to document fixes, server repairs, and system repairs and technical support to the end user. All information on this is maintained in MyServices with keyword search criteria that allows fixes to be easily found.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Deputy Chief of Mission Susan Tuller.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| CO | Contracting Officer |
| COR | Contracting Officer's Representative |
| DCM | Deputy Chief of Mission |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| DT | Diplomatic Technology |
| EEO | Equal Employment Opportunity |
| EFM | Eligible Family Member |
| FAH | Foreign Affairs Handbook |
| FAM | Foreign Affairs Manual |
| FAST | First and Second Tour |
| ICS | Integrated Country Strategy |
| ILMS | Integrated Logistics Management System |
| INL | International Narcotics and Law Enforcement |
| ISSO | Information Systems Security Officer |
| ITCCB | Information Technology Configuration Control Board |
| LE | Locally Employed |
| MONUSCO | United Nations Organization for Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| OSC | Office of Security Cooperation |
| PEPFAR | President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief |
| SPEAR | Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response |
| USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |



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