

UNCLASSIFIED



**Office of Inspector General**  
**United States Department of State**

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ISP-I-25-16

Office of Inspections

April 2025

# **Inspection of Embassy Tunis, Tunisia**

BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



# HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General  
United States Department of State

ISP-I-25-16

## What OIG Inspected

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

## What OIG Recommends

OIG made 27 recommendations to Embassy Tunis. In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with all 27 recommendations. OIG considers all 27 recommendations resolved. The embassy's formal response is reprinted in its entirety in Appendix B.

April 2025

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

## Inspection of Embassy Tunis, Tunisia

### What OIG Found

- Embassy Tunis' Front Office generally complied with Department of State standards for tone at the top and standards of conduct, execution of foreign policy goals and objectives, security and emergency planning, and equal employment opportunity. The Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission fostered an open and collaborative work environment that inspired staff.
- The embassy had deficiencies in the fire protection program and the safety, health, and environmental management program. Additionally, the motor vehicle, property, contracting officer's representative, human resources, and financial management programs did not fully comply with Department standards.
- Embassy Tunis also had deficiencies related to the security of information systems and information technology assets, mobile device management, and telephone operations.
- Spotlights on Success: The embassy's Human Resources Office developed a tracking system to provide timely human resources updates. Additionally, the Public Diplomacy Section found creative ways to sustain social media engagement during a period of high anti-American sentiment.

## CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND.....	1
INSPECTION RESULTS .....	2
Spotlights on Success.....	4
Findings .....	6
PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS .....	29
APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY.....	30
APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE.....	32

## INTRODUCTION

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The Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated the executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Tunis, Tunisia, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.<sup>1</sup> A related classified inspection report includes discussion of the security program, issues affecting the safety of embassy personnel and facilities, and certain aspects of the embassy's information management operations.

## BACKGROUND

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The U.S.-Tunisia relationship dates to the 1797 Treaty of Peace and Friendship. The United States was the first major power to recognize Tunisian sovereignty and established diplomatic relations with Tunisia in 1956, following its independence from France. In January 2011, a popular revolution began a process of democratic transition. A Constituent Assembly was elected in October 2011 and charged with drafting a new constitution. Since then, however, Tunisia has faced significant questions surrounding its democratic path amid political upheaval and economic uncertainty. President Kais Saied, elected in 2019, dismissed Parliament and consolidated power since July 2021. He was reelected in 2024.

The United States has provided more than \$2 billion since the 2011 revolution to support the country's democratic transition and build its role as a regional security partner, although levels of direct assistance to the government have declined in recent years amid the concerns noted above. The two countries have signed several economic agreements and launched a high-level Joint Economic Commission in 2016.

Embassy Tunis outlined the following strategic objectives in its Integrated Country Strategy, approved in July 2022 and updated in November 2023:

- Tunisia strengthens democratic institutions and increases citizen confidence in government responsiveness.
- Tunisia stabilizes government finances and allows the private sector to generate inclusive growth.
- Tunisian security forces prioritize public safety and security, public trust, and human rights, to continue to counter terrorism and irregular migration.

In FY 2023, the United States provided Tunisia with more than \$175 million in funding for humanitarian and security assistance, economic development, nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, law enforcement, and other programs managed by the Department of State (Department), the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Department of Energy.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

At the time of the inspection, the embassy had 91 authorized U.S. direct-hire positions for the Department. The embassy also had 296 locally employed staff and 28 eligible family member positions. Additionally, the embassy had 33 U.S. direct-hire employees working for other U.S. government agencies. Other government agencies represented at the embassy were the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and Justice; the American Battle Monuments Commission; and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

## INSPECTION RESULTS

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OIG found Embassy Tunis' Front Office generally complied with Department standards for tone at the top and standards of conduct,<sup>2</sup> execution of foreign policy goals and objectives, adherence to internal controls, security and emergency planning, professional development for first- and second-tour professionals, and equal employment opportunity. OIG found the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) set a collaborative tone that fostered interagency coordination and created what one section head called "one of the best working environments" they have seen over numerous assignments. Staff told OIG they valued the Ambassador's concern for their safety and welfare, his ability to listen, his clear guidance, and the vision he conveyed for the embassy. Staff said they appreciated that the DCM, who arrived in August 2024, displayed genuine curiosity, asked "all the right questions" as she visited each section, and quickly took steps to improve paper flow to and from the Front Office.

OIG assessed the Political and Economic Sections' leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting, commercial promotion, Leahy vetting,<sup>3</sup> and end-use monitoring,<sup>4</sup> and found the sections generally complied with Department standards. OIG reviewed Embassy Tunis' management, oversight, and coordination of foreign assistance programs. Although the Assistance Coordinator role was vacant at the time of the inspection and was not scheduled to be filled until summer 2025, OIG determined the embassy's foreign assistance coordination, as well as its foreign assistance management and oversight, generally complied with Department standards.

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<sup>2</sup> The Department's leadership and management principles outlined in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). Leahy vetting is the process of determining if the Department has credible information that units or individuals proposed to benefit from certain assistance have committed a gross violation of human rights. The Department helps implement a similar law applicable to "amounts made available to the Department of Defense" for assistance to foreign security forces. See 10 U.S.C. § 362.

<sup>4</sup> The Department requires certain property purchased with foreign assistance funds or through commercial defense exports be monitored to ensure the property is used for its intended purposes, known as end-use monitoring. Such end-use monitoring fulfills the requirements of Section 484(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended; Chapter 3A, Sections 38 and 40A of the Arms Export Control Act; and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations. See 22 U.S.C. § 2291c(b) and 22 U.S.C. § 2785.

Additionally, OIG reviewed the embassy's consular operations and observed the Tunisian government hindered the embassy's ability to provide consular services to U.S. citizen prisoners. Specifically, the Tunisian government's failure to provide reliable, timely access to U.S. citizen prisoners prevented the embassy's Consular Section from visiting prisoners and providing them with consular services. Embassy staff told OIG that the Tunisian government did not notify the embassy of U.S. citizen arrests on a timely basis and that diplomatic notes requesting access to prisoners were not acknowledged. Staff also told OIG that the Tunisian government did not allow U.S. citizen prisoners to sign Privacy Act Waivers,<sup>5</sup> which prevented the embassy from communicating information about the detained U.S. citizens to their family, friends, or congressional representatives. The responsibility of consular officers to provide services to U.S. citizen prisoners is described in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. Without access to consular visits, or signed Privacy Act Waivers, U.S. citizen prisoners may be unable to secure appropriate legal representation, communicate with friends and family, protest mistreatment, or receive emergency dietary or medical assistance. The embassy had engaged in multiple lines of effort to seek improved access to prisoners, with little improvement.

During the inspection, the embassy addressed the following issues:

- The embassy updated its Leahy vetting standard operating procedures and issued a management notice informing embassy personnel of Leahy vetting roles, responsibilities, and points of contact.
- The Consular Section finalized a fraud prevention strategy and completed namechecks for the American Liaison Networks<sup>6</sup> in Tunisia and Libya.
- The Management Section closed 45 overdue travel advances and referred 3 to the Bureau of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services for debt collection.
- The Diplomatic Technology Office developed or updated documentation related to IT security, assets, training, and mailroom operations. These included:
  - A communications security emergency destruction plan.
  - Documentation that the office will review and approve the procurement of all official IT assets for the Political and Public Diplomacy Sections and maintain the inventory.
  - The embassy's local configuration management protocol.
  - An annual training plan and budget.

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<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, consular officers must obtain written permission from U.S. citizens before releasing any information about them. A Privacy Act waiver specifies who the consular officer may contact on behalf of the citizen and what information may be released.

<sup>6</sup> According to 7 FAM 071b, an American Liaison Network is a country-based network of volunteers composed of representatives from key U.S. citizen constituencies, including faith groups, business communities, retirees, and students. The program facilitates regular two-way communication between embassies and consulates and U.S. citizen constituencies abroad on topics such as security, health, voting, and travel. The volunteers, known as Citizen Liaison Volunteers, are private U.S. citizens who assist consular sections in several ways, including emergency assistance to U.S. citizens, disseminating information, identifying local resources to assist U.S. citizens, and maintaining local contacts who might be of use to consular operations (see 7 FAM 073a and b).

- Policies on the use of pouch and diplomatic mail.
- Procedures on mail screening.

OIG identified two notable aspects of the embassy’s operations, which are described in the Spotlights on Success section below. OIG also found deficiencies in certain aspects of the embassy’s public diplomacy, consular, resource management, and information management operations, as detailed in the Findings section of this report.

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department stakeholders for their review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued 27 recommendations to Embassy Tunis. The embassy’s complete response can be found in Appendix B. The embassy also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

### Spotlights on Success

Spotlight on Success: Human Resources Office Developed a Hiring Process Tracking System That Provided Timely, Proactive Updates	
<b>Issue</b>	From 2022 to 2024, Embassy Tunis undertook hiring actions for 256 positions, with recruitment staff handling up to 20 actions simultaneously. The embassy’s Human Resources Office wanted a better way to manage hiring actions and provide timely updates to embassy stakeholders.
<b>Success or Innovation</b>	The Human Resources Office developed an innovative SharePoint-based tracking system that was viewable by hiring managers and embassy leadership. The system contained information fields such as overall position status, key actions and dates through onboarding, and text fields for additional details. The tracking system could be sorted or filtered by any of the information fields and generated an automatic notification to hiring managers when Human Resources staff changed the status of a position. To protect personally identifiable information, Human Resources staff limited which positions a user saw. For example, hiring managers were only able to view positions for which they were recruiting. With the system created in SharePoint, Human Resources staff could quickly adapt or modify the information being tracked as needed.
<b>Significance</b>	The system provided proactive and transparent updates for hiring managers, a holistic view of hiring for embassy leadership, and aided the Human Resources Office’s recruitment staff in managing and organizing their workload.

<b>Spotlight on Success: Public Diplomacy Section Found Creative Ways to Sustain Social Media Engagement During a Period of High Anti-American Sentiment</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	Following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel and subsequent Israeli military actions in Gaza and Lebanon, Embassy Tunis had to navigate a highly charged and negative local opinion climate based on U.S. government support for Israel. Embassy Facebook postings, even on U.S. humanitarian aid to Palestinians, were generally met with overwhelmingly negative comments and reactions.
<b>Success or Innovation</b>	Embassy Tunis' Public Diplomacy Section found that social media posts keyed to non-political topics showing U.S. connections with and support for Tunisia, especially those that tap into local influencers as well as popular American influencers sharing Tunisia-related content, could break through the negative climate and garner a positive response. For example, on World Internet Day, the embassy highlighted the connection between a prominent local internet pioneer and his American mentor. This post reached over 51,000 first-time viewers of embassy content and garnered almost entirely positive reactions. In another example, the section engaged an American influencer with thousands of local followers to highlight embassy support for Tunisian cultural heritage. This second post, amplified by the influencer's own followers, reached more than 287,000 people on Facebook (200 percent more than average embassy posts) and more than 100,000 people on Instagram, with more than 11,000 initial "likes" across the two platforms.
<b>Significance</b>	Positive social media engagement during a period of constrained bilateral relations helped Embassy Tunis sustain a foundation of public goodwill for advancing its goals.

## Findings

Policy and Program Implementation: Public Diplomacy	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Section Published the Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan Late and Did Not Include All Staff in Planning Process</i></b></p> <p>The section’s annual Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan<sup>7</sup> for FY 2024, due November 30, 2023, was not approved and published until March 22, 2024. OIG also determined the section did not involve all staff in the plan’s development. As a result, some staff told OIG they were unclear on section priorities, and that program decisions seemed often ad hoc rather than the product of strategic focus.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	18 FAM 301.2-1, 18 FAM 301.2-4(A), cable 24 STATE 87808, cable 23 STATE 107314 <sup>8,9</sup>
<b>Significance</b>	The lack of an inclusively developed and timely annual strategic plan undermined the section’s ability to prioritize program and funding decisions and ensure that its resources and activities are aligned with embassy goals.
Recommendation 1	
Embassy Tunis should implement an inclusive public diplomacy strategic planning process and publish the FY 2025 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan by the deadline set by the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>7</sup> Through the Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan process, a public diplomacy section conveys how it will advance policy goals, objectives, and sub-objectives. It helps the section design public diplomacy campaigns, activities, and interventions that measurably advance policy priorities; report on and track activity outputs and outcomes; communicate country-specific public diplomacy priorities to U.S. government partners for consideration in their planning; and manage section budgets and track spending.

<sup>8</sup> According to 18 FAM 301.2-1, “Robust, coordinated strategic planning processes are essential to make informed decisions; develop innovative ways to cope with tight budgets; prioritize resources; ensure alignment with key policies; and improve the way we do business. It also creates a framework for monitoring progress and measuring results; shaping resource decisions; and ensuring accountability.” Additionally, according to 18 FAM 301.2-4(A), “In general, the content of strategic plans should be grounded in evidence and analysis, developed collaboratively with relevant stakeholders, sufficiently focused and realistic to facilitate decision-making, and aligned with higher level strategies.”

<sup>9</sup> Cables 24 STATE 87808, “FY 2025 PDIP Process,” August 13, 2024; and 23 STATE 107314, “ACTION REQUEST: FY 2024 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan (PDIP) Process Instructions,” October 2, 2023.

Policy and Program Implementation: Public Diplomacy	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Public Diplomacy Section Did Not Allow Sufficient Time for Grant Application Submissions and Selection Panel Reviews</i></b></p> <p>OIG found the Public Diplomacy Section did not allow at least 60 days<sup>10</sup> for grant application submissions and did not provide selection panelists sufficient time to review these applications before obligating funds.<sup>11</sup> The embassy posted the FY 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity for public diplomacy grants on August 16, 2024, with a deadline for submission of August 31, 2024. Additionally, the embassy required that all FY 2024 grants be obligated by September 6, 2024, forcing the Public Diplomacy Section to complete the selection panel review of 50 grant applications for the funding of awards totaling more than \$1 million in just 4 business days.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	Federal Assistance Directive (May 2024), Chapter 2, Sections F.5. and H.8
<b>Significance</b>	By not conducting open competition for grants with sufficient time for application submissions, the embassy may limit transparency, fairness, and the opportunity to engage potentially new program partners. Additionally, a rushed period of review could result in the embassy deciding to fund projects of lower quality or that less effectively support embassy goals.
Recommendation 2	
Embassy Tunis should bring its timelines for public diplomacy grant application submissions and selection panel reviews into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>10</sup> According to the Federal Assistance Directive, “Whenever possible, openly competed NOFOs [or notices of funding opportunity] and limited competitions should be open for applications for at least 60 days.” Although a shorter application period may be permitted, “no funding opportunity should be available for less than 30 calendar days unless exigent circumstances are justified and approved in writing by the [grants officer].” See Federal Assistance Directive (May 2024), Chapter 2, Section F.5.

<sup>11</sup> The Federal Assistance Directive states that review panelists should receive copies of the applications “one to two weeks prior to the panel date, if possible.” See Federal Assistance Directive, Chapter 2, Section H.8.

Policy and Program Implementation: Public Diplomacy	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Changes to Public Diplomacy Section’s Organizational Structure Without Department Approval, Left Some Staff Confused About Roles, Responsibilities, and Lines of Supervision</i></b></p> <p>Although the Public Diplomacy Section’s original implementation of the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative<sup>12</sup> in 2021 followed Department guidelines, OIG found the section subsequently changed the organizational structure without obtaining approval from the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy’s Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources, as required. In interviews with OIG, some staff noted they were unclear about roles, responsibilities, and lines of supervision because of the changes to the section’s organizational structure.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	Department guidelines for the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative, including cable 23 STATE 76022, <sup>13</sup> and 3 FAM 7313.1(2) <sup>14</sup>
<b>Significance</b>	A lack of clarity and consensus about staff roles and responsibilities can undermine team cohesion and organizational effectiveness.
Recommendation 3	
Embassy Tunis, in coordination with the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources, should review the section’s organizational structure, and position elements to ensure compliance with Department guidelines and to optimize section effectiveness. (Action: Embassy Tunis, in coordination with R/PPR)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>12</sup> The Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative is a comprehensive reorganization of the Department’s overseas public diplomacy sections that shifts public diplomacy practitioners to a policy-centered, audience-focused approach to advancing Integrated Country Strategy objectives by replacing previous press and program silos with collaborative staff units organized around five functional clusters. The initiative is overseen by the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, and all associated changes to section organization and positions require its approval.

<sup>13</sup> The Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy intranet site on the Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative describes how the initiative replaces program silos with collaborative staff units. Additional guidance on the initiative can be found in cable 23 STATE 76022, “Creating or Reclassifying Public Diplomacy Locally Employed Staff Position Classification – Post Public Diplomacy Staffing Initiative (PDSI) Guidance,” July 6, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> According to 3 FAM 7313.1(2), managers and supervisors of locally employed staff are responsible for “structuring organizations and positions to accomplish mission objectives efficiently and effectively.”

Policy and Program Implementation: Consular Operations	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Consular Section Did Not Maintain and Destroy Immigrant Visa Files as Required</i></b> The Consular Section did not appropriately maintain and destroy immigrant visa files. OIG observed the section improperly retained original documents and did not terminate inactive files on the required schedule.
<b>Criteria</b>	9 FAM 601.6-3(A), (C), and (D); 9 FAM 504.1-4(B); 9 FAM 504.2-8(A)(1)
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to maintain and destroy immigrant visa records in accordance with Department standards resulted in the Consular Section storing unnecessary amounts of personally identifiable information.
<b>Recommendation 4</b>	
Embassy Tunis should maintain and destroy immigrant visa files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Policy and Program Implementation: Consular Operations	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Consular Section Did Not Archive Electronic Communications on Department Systems</i></b> The Consular Section used the electronic messaging system WhatsApp <sup>15</sup> but did not archive these communications on Department systems as required. Consular staff told OIG they used WhatsApp to engage with and provide services to U.S. citizens but did not subsequently archive these communications on the Department's network.
<b>Criteria</b>	5 FAM 435c and d
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to properly archive records of Department business conducted on non-Department systems means that information related to official decisions and activities may not be available for future use.
<b>Recommendation 5</b>	
Embassy Tunis should archive Consular Section communications according to Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>15</sup> WhatsApp (officially WhatsApp Messenger) is an instant messaging and voice-over-IP service owned by Meta.

Resource Management: Facility Management	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy's Non-High-Rise Residential Apartment Properties Did Not Meet Minimal Fire Safety Standards</i></b></p> <p>OIG found all 19 of the embassy's non-high-rise<sup>16</sup> residential apartment properties did not meet minimal fire safety standards that require two exits or exit stairways on each floor and a functional fire alarm system. A June 2024 Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) fire safety inspection also found that the embassy was leasing apartments in non-high-rise buildings that did not have automatic fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, and access to two enclosed stairs. According to 15 FAM 813.7-3c, exceptions<sup>17</sup> may be requested where an overseas embassy deems that the application of a fire standard, or fire equivalency,<sup>18</sup> is not obtainable or feasible. At the time of inspection, the embassy had not requested any exceptions.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	15 FAM 813.7-6b, 15 FAM 813.7-3, 15 FAM 813.7-4
<b>Significance</b>	Taking appropriate residential fire mitigation measures is critical for the life safety of occupants and failure to do so puts embassy staff and their families at risk.
Recommendation 6	
Embassy Tunis, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its non-high-rise residential apartment properties into compliance with Department standards for fire protection or obtain exceptions to the standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis, in coordination with OBO)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>16</sup> According to 15 FAM 813.7-6a, non-high-rise buildings are buildings with an occupied floor located less than 75 feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access.

<sup>17</sup> To receive an exception, the appropriate embassy officer must recommend the exception to the fire standards or equivalencies, the Emergency Action Committee must concur and obtain chief of mission concurrence and acceptance of risk for the exception request, and the embassy must submit a cable to OBO requesting approval.

<sup>18</sup> According to 15 FAM 813.7-3b, "fire equivalencies" refers to the acceptable level of variance from the established standard approved through OBO's Office of Fire Protection. Fire equivalencies represent an accepted degree of risk tolerance.

Resource Management: Facility Management	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Embassy Did Not Visually Inspect Residential Fire Extinguishers and Smoke Alarms Monthly</i></b> The embassy's fire protection program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy did not ensure residents undertook monthly visual inspections of residential fire extinguishers and smoke alarms.
<b>Criteria</b>	15 FAM 843d, 15 FAM 842b
<b>Significance</b>	A non-compliant fire protection program increases the risk of fire hazards that could lead to injury or loss of life.
Recommendation 7	
Embassy Tunis should visually inspect its fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Resource Management: Facility Management	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Eleven Embassy Structures Lacked Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Permits</i></b> OIG found the embassy installed 11 unpermitted, prefabricated buildings on the chancery and recreation center compounds, from 2003 through 2014. These buildings were used for locally employed staff changing, break, and training rooms, and a prayer room.
<b>Criteria</b>	15 FAM 643d, 15 FAM 644.2a
<b>Significance</b>	Using unapproved buildings that may not meet the required building and fire codes for functional space puts employees' safety at risk.
Recommendation 8	
Embassy Tunis should request permits from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations for the 11 prefabricated buildings on the chancery and recreation center compounds. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Resource Management: Facility Management	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>The embassy’s safety, health, and environmental management program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy did not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect all office work areas annually and “high-risk”<sup>19</sup> workplaces twice a year. Although Embassy Tunis began inspecting these areas, at the time of OIG’s review, the embassy had not yet completed its inspections of all office work areas and high-risk workplaces (15 FAM 962a).</li> <li>• Have fencing and self-closing and self-latching gates around some swimming pools<sup>20</sup> (15 FAM 412.1d(3)).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to comply with the Department’s safety, health, and environmental management standards increases the risk of injury and loss of life.
<b>Recommendation 9</b>	
Embassy Tunis should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>19</sup> 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.”

<sup>20</sup> OIG reviewed 9 of the embassy’s 42 swimming pools and found 4 with gates that did not close automatically, 1 with both gates propped open, and 1 with no fencing or gates.

<b>Resource Management: Facility Management</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Elevator Program Did Not Meet Department Standards</i></b> OIG found the two chancery elevators and one Chief of Mission Residence elevator were last inspected in January 2023 and the embassy had not corrected all deficiencies from those inspections. As a result, the embassy did not have certificates of use for the elevators. <sup>21</sup> In October 2024, a team from OBO re-inspected the embassy’s elevators and found 29 deficiencies, such as leaking seals, missing box covers, and missing handrails and kickplates. At the time of OIG’s inspection, OBO had not issued current certificates of use, pending the embassy correcting these deficiencies.
<b>Criteria</b>	15 FAM 672.3(1), 15 FAM 672.6d(2)
<b>Significance</b>	Operating non-compliant elevators increases the risk of workplace injuries.
<b>Recommendation 10</b>	
Embassy Tunis, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should complete all elevator repairs needed to obtain a current certificate of use for each elevator, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis, in coordination with OBO)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

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<sup>21</sup> To receive a certificate of use, an elevator must be inspected annually by an accredited elevator inspector, with a comprehensive inspection every 5 years. The embassy must complete any necessary repairs, after which the elevator is again inspected. If the re-inspection indicates full compliance, OBO issues a 1-year certificate of use.

<b>Resource Management: Financial Management</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Embassy Did Not Conduct Unannounced Sub-Cashier Verifications Quarterly</i></b> OIG found U.S. direct-hire supervisors of sub-cashiers did not conduct quarterly unannounced verifications of sub-cashier funds. At the time of inspection, the embassy had 10 sub-cashiers, all with advances of less than \$1,000. OIG reviewed documentation on cash verifications for these sub-cashiers from January 2022 through October 2024, and found more than 30 verifications were missing.
<b>Criteria</b>	4 FAM 397.2-3a
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to conduct quarterly unannounced verifications may result in the embassy not detecting errors and a misuse of funds.
<b>Recommendation 11</b>	
Embassy Tunis should conduct quarterly unannounced cash verification of sub-cashier funds in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Resource Management: General Services	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy Did Not Manage Bulk Fuel Operation in Accordance With Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>The embassy did not manage its bulk fuel operation in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began using the required Daily Fuel Issuance Record in August 2024. However, all August forms reviewed by OIG were either incomplete or completed incorrectly. For example, the embassy used the odometer reading rather than the pump meter reading and listed only the number of liters dispensed (Motor Pool Procedures Overseas,<sup>22</sup> Section 3.2a).</li> <li>• Did not calibrate its fuel tank periodically. Although the embassy brought in a company twice during the inspection, the company was unable to calibrate the tank due to not having the exact dimensions of the tank. (Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, Section 3.3c(1)).</li> <li>• Did not gauge fuel tanks before and after delivery, due to the fuel tank being out of calibration (Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, Section 3.1c(2)).</li> <li>• Did not reconcile periodic fuel inventories against fuel property records (Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, Section 3a).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to implement adequate management controls over bulk fuel operations increases the risk of mismanagement and theft.
<b>Recommendation 12</b>	
Embassy Tunis should manage its bulk fuel operation in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>22</sup> Bureau of Administration, Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, October 2022.

<b>Resource Management: General Services</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Motor Vehicle Operators Did Not Perform Required Daily Maintenance Checks or Record Vehicle Usage Data</i></b></p> <p>OIG found embassy operators of official vehicles did not perform and record daily maintenance checks or record daily vehicle usage data for all U.S. government vehicles. OIG requested documentation of maintenance checks for 11 vehicles for February 2022, January 2023, November 2023, and April 2024. However, the embassy was unable to provide any documentation—of either the maintenance checks or usage data—for nine of the vehicles and could provide only 2 months’ worth of documentation for two vehicles.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	14 FAM 435.2b, 14 FAM 437.2
<b>Significance</b>	<p>Failure to perform daily maintenance checks risks placing an unsafe vehicle into operation and endangers the operator and any passengers in the vehicle. Furthermore, incomplete vehicle usage information prevents the embassy from having accurate cost and usage data essential for an effective fleet management system.</p>
<b>Recommendation 13</b>	
<p>Embassy Tunis should perform and document required daily maintenance checks and record vehicle usage data for all U.S. government vehicles, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)</p>	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Resource Management: General Services	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Embassy Did Not Review and Reconcile Fuel Credit Card Receipts</i></b> OIG found the embassy did not perform a daily review of fuel credit card receipts and compare them to the daily vehicle usage data, which, as described above, were also incomplete. Moreover, the embassy did not retrieve purchase receipts from drivers and reconcile these receipts against the monthly invoice from the fuel company. At the time of the inspection, the embassy had a fleet of 96 U.S. government vehicles and issued one fuel credit card per vehicle, with the cards primarily used for travel outside the capital.
<b>Criteria</b>	Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, Sections 2.2 and 2.4d
<b>Significance</b>	Insufficient oversight of fuel management controls increases the risk of theft or unauthorized use of the fuel credit card.
Recommendation 14	
Embassy Tunis should review and reconcile its fuel credit card receipts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Resource Management: General Services	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Embassy Did Not Fully Comply With Department's Motor Vehicle Safety Standards</i></b> OIG found Embassy Tunis did not comply with some elements of the Department's overseas motor vehicle safety standards. Specifically, out of 165 drivers, 13 had expired or no record of medical certifications and 17 had expired or no record of driver safety refresher training.
<b>Criteria</b>	14 FAM 433.4a, 14 FAM 433.5a
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to enforce motor vehicle safety standards increases the risk of injury to drivers, passengers, and the public, as well as damage to U.S. government property.
Recommendation 15	
Embassy Tunis should bring its motor vehicle safety program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Resource Management: General Services	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Contracting Officer's Representative Program Did Not Comply with Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>The contracting officer's representative (COR) program at the embassy did not comply with some Department standards. At the time of the inspection, the embassy had eight CORs who oversaw eight contracts valued at more than \$6.6 million. Specifically, OIG found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven CORs had never received certification as a COR (14 FAH-2 H-113e).</li> <li>• Seven CORs did not certify to the contracting officer that they properly maintained their COR files (14 FAH-2 H-517c).</li> <li>• None of the CORs had filed their annual financial disclosure forms (14 FAH-2 H-151c).</li> <li>• None of the CORs maintained complete COR files in the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS)<sup>23</sup> (Department of State Acquisitions Manual 604.802).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	The lack of certification, financial disclosures, and documentation in the Department-approved system may result in CORs who do not have sufficient technical expertise to monitor and administer contracts, cannot be held liable for unauthorized acts, or may have conflicts of interest.
<b>Recommendation 16</b>	
Embassy Tunis should bring its contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<b>Resource Management: General Services</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Embassy Did Not Properly Account for Personal and Program Property</i></b> OIG found Embassy Tunis did not account for personal and program property, including uniforms, personal protective equipment, and excess construction materials, in ILMS, as required.
<b>Criteria</b>	14 FAM 446.1c, 14 FAM 414.2-1, 15 FAH-1 H-121.2(6)
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to account for property in the Department’s approved property record system increases the risk of mismanagement and theft of embassy property.
<b>Recommendation 17</b>	
Embassy Tunis should use the Integrated Logistics Management System to track all personal and program property in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<b>Resource Management: General Services</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b><i>Property Transfers Lacked Required Documentation</i></b> Embassy Tunis did not properly document all nonexpendable property transfers. OIG found 21 percent of all property transfers to residential locations in 2022 and 2023 did not have the appropriate documentation. As of November 2024, the embassy also had more than 1,800 assets pending appropriate documentation.
<b>Criteria</b>	14 FAM 414.3a, 14 FAH-1 H-413.2a(1)
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to adhere to Department guidance and exercise oversight of property management increases the risk of waste, fraud, and abuse of resources.
<b>Recommendation 18</b>	
Embassy Tunis should document all nonexpendable property transfers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<b>Resource Management: Human Resources</b>	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Time and Attendance Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards.</i></b></p> <p>OIG determined the embassy’s time and attendance program did not fully comply with Department standards. OIG reviewed time and attendance records for U.S. direct-hire and locally employed staff across four pay periods<sup>24</sup> and found the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incomplete, unsigned, or missing time and attendance documentation (4 FAH-3 H-523.3, 4 FAH-3 H-526.1-4).</li> <li>• Lack of documentation of prior approval for leave or premium pay (4 FAH-3 H-525.4-1b, 4 FAH-3 H-523.2).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to comply with Department standards for time and attendance increases the risk for waste, fraud, and mismanagement of U.S. government resources.
<b>Recommendation 19</b>	
Embassy Tunis should bring its time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>24</sup> OIG reviewed pay periods 3 and 11 in 2022, pay period 25 in 2023, and pay period 6 in 2024. In those pay periods, approximately 10 percent of forms were not complete or not signed, and approximately 30 percent of leave requests and 69 percent of premium pay requests were not approved in advance.

Resource Management: General Services	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Furniture and Appliance Pool Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards.</i></b></p> <p>OIG found the embassy's furniture and appliance pool program did not comply with Department standards. Specifically, Embassy Tunis incorrectly issued 152 items valued at \$58,000 to 28 unauthorized locations including offices, designated residences,<sup>25</sup> and the recreation center.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	6 FAH-5 H-514.1d(2)
<b>Significance</b>	Issuing furniture and appliance pool assets to unapproved locations risks inflating International Cooperative Administrative Support Services <sup>26</sup> costs charged to agencies.
Recommendation 20	
Embassy Tunis should bring its furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>25</sup> Designated residences include the residences for the Ambassador, DCM, and Marine Security Guards. Furniture and furnishings for designated housing and offices are funded through other allotments.

<sup>26</sup> The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services, or ICASS, is the principal means by which U.S. government agencies share the cost of common administrative support services at most diplomatic and consular posts overseas. Through the ICASS working capital fund, service providers recover the cost of delivering administrative support services to other agencies at overseas missions.

Information Management: Information Systems Security	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Information Systems Security Officers Did Not Perform All Required Duties</i></b></p> <p>The designated primary and alternate Information Systems Security Officers (ISSOs) did not perform ISSO duties consistently for the embassy’s classified, OpenNet, and non-enterprise networks (NENs).<sup>27</sup> Specifically, OIG found the ISSOs did not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review classified, OpenNet, and NEN user access annually, to verify whether access was still needed or had been updated (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3b and c).</li> <li>• Brief embassy employees on cybersecurity responsibilities prior to granting access to classified, OpenNet, and NEN resources (12 FAH-10 H-212.1-3(1)).</li> <li>• Review audit logs for security violations on the classified network, OpenNet, and NENs (5 FAM 724c(1), 12 FAH-10 H-122c(5)).</li> <li>• Ensure that only the Department’s Technology Review Board<sup>28</sup> or local configuration management protocol<sup>29</sup>-approved software and hardware was used on the embassy’s information systems (12 FAH-10 H-164.3, 12 FAH-10 H-222.1-3).</li> <li>• Use the ISSO checklist<sup>30</sup> to perform information security duties (5 FAH-11 H-116a).</li> </ul> <p>A March 2023 Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Cybersecurity Assessment<sup>31</sup> identified similar issues with the embassy’s ISSO program. Additionally, OIG issued reports in May 2017 and December 2020 that highlighted widespread Department failures to perform ISSO duties.<sup>32</sup></p>
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to perform required ISSO responsibilities leaves Department networks vulnerable to potential unauthorized access and malicious activity.
<b>Recommendation 21</b>	
Embassy Tunis should require all Information Systems Security Officers to perform their duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>27</sup> OpenNet is the Department’s Sensitive But Unclassified network. A non-enterprise network is a Department-procured and locally managed computing environment. NENs are used by a specific entity to meet their mission requirements that cannot be achieved using an enterprise managed solution.

<sup>28</sup> According to 5 FAM 114.6-1, the Department’s Technology Review Board manages the process for insertion of information technology products into the Department’s global IT environment that consists of classified, unclassified, and non-enterprise networks.

<sup>29</sup> In November 2024, the Department updated FAM references to the “local IT configuration control board” to “local configuration management protocol.” For example, see 5 FAM 114.6-2, “Local Configuration Management.” At the time of the inspection, the references in 12 FAH-10 H-222.1-3, last updated in July 2024, continued to refer to the “local IT configuration control board.”

<sup>30</sup> The ISSO checklist includes a description of 53 tasks, an explanation of minimum tasks to be performed, and how often they need to be performed.

<sup>31</sup> Bureau of Diplomatic Security, “Cybersecurity Assessment US Embassy Tunis – Tunis ESC Frankfurt 2023-004,” March 2023.

<sup>32</sup> 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).

<b>Information Management: Information Security</b>	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy Did Not Manage Its Non-Enterprise Networks in Accordance With Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>The embassy did not manage its NENs in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not secure, monitor, or correctly register its MeterNet<sup>33</sup> internet connection as a NEN with the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology (5 FAM 872.1, 5 FAM 872.2).</li> <li>• Operated NENs with unapproved and outdated devices, operating systems, and network management software (5 FAM 872.3).</li> <li>• Did not implement identity and access control procedures (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-1a(2)).</li> </ul> <p>A March 2023 Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Cybersecurity Assessment identified similar issues with the embassy's NENs.</p>
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to secure and monitor NENs increases the embassy's vulnerability to cyberattacks.
<b>Recommendation 22</b>	
Embassy Tunis should manage its non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>33</sup> MeterNet is the Department's centralized and approved automated smart metering system that helps embassies monitor and reduce their energy consumption.

Information Management: Information Security	
<b>Issue</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy Did Not Implement Local Configuration Management Protocol to Review and Approve IT Equipment</i></b></p> <p>Although the embassy had a charter that required a local configuration control management team to review and approve local IT needs,<sup>34,35</sup> OIG found the embassy did not use the charter to review and approve IT equipment unique to the embassy. During the inspection, OIG observed locally procured, unapproved network devices, printers, and computer peripherals being used on the embassy’s NEN and OpenNet networks.</p>
<b>Criteria</b>	Embassy charter on local configuration control, <sup>36</sup> 5 FAM 114.6-2a, 5 FAM 862.1, 5 FAM 114.6-1
<b>Significance</b>	Without implementing a local IT configuration management protocol, the embassy cannot manage risks to the Department’s information stemming from unapproved hardware and software on its networks.
<b>Recommendation 23</b>	
Embassy Tunis should implement its local configuration management protocol, as set forth in its charter, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>34</sup> As noted earlier in this report, in November 2024, the Department updated FAM references to the “local IT configuration control board” to “local configuration management protocol.” At the time of the inspection, Embassy Tunis’ charter referred to the “local IT configuration control board.”

<sup>35</sup> According to 5 FAM 114.6-2, embassies must establish and maintain a local configuration management protocol. As part of this process, the system level change management team reviews changes affecting systems or applications for which the embassy is responsible. The system level change management team then determines whether a change request can be approved locally or if a new product is needed, which may then require submitting a request to the Department’s Technology Review Board.

<sup>36</sup> Embassy Tunis, “Mission Tunisia Local Information Technology Change Control Board Charter.”

Information Management: Information Security	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy Developed Applications Without a Lifecycle Management Plan</i></b>                      Embassy Tunis developed applications without implementing an application lifecycle management plan. Specifically, OIG found that the embassy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used Microsoft’s O365 Power Platform<sup>37</sup> and SharePoint to develop software but did not document access control requirements, application architecture, data types and sources, routine application management tasks, and support requirements to ensure compliance with applicable security requirements and sustainability (12 FAH-10 H-342.2-1, 12 FAH-10 H-342.4-1, Department’s O365 Power Platform Developer Guide).</li> <li>• Developed applications that stored personally identifiable information without conducting a privacy impact assessment<sup>38</sup> (5 FAM 466.2).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	Not having an application lifecycle plan increases risk to the security, compliance, and sustainability of Department information.
<b>Recommendation 24</b>	
Embassy Tunis should implement a lifecycle management plan for the applications it develops, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>37</sup> The Microsoft Power Platform provides a set of services that can be used to quickly create business solutions. Bureau of Information Resource Management’s Systems and Integration Office, DOS-O365 Power Platform Developer Guide, Version 1.0, March 23, 2023.

<sup>38</sup> According to 5 FAM 463, a privacy impact assessment is an analysis of how personally identifiable information is handled to ensure it conforms to applicable legal, regulatory, and policy requirements regarding privacy; to determine the risks and effects of creating, collecting, using, processing, storing, maintaining, disseminating, disclosing, and disposing of information in identifiable form in an electronic information system; and to examine and evaluate protections and alternative processes for handling information to mitigate potential privacy concerns.

Information Management: Mobile Devices Internal Control	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy Did Not Manage Mobile Devices in Accordance With Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>The embassy did not manage its mobile devices in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the following issues with the embassy’s mobile device management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The embassy did not have a written procedure that addressed receiving, inspecting, and accepting mobile devices into the inventory (14 FAH-1 H-312g). OIG observed that the same staff member who received mobile devices and entered the information into ILMS, also supported the inventory reconciliation and disposal processes.</li> <li>• The accountable property officer did not conduct quarterly unannounced spot checks to verify the accuracy of mobile device property records in ILMS (14 FAM 411.2-2b(8)).</li> <li>• A random sample of three smartphone devices found in the OpenNet server room showed that all three devices were marked as “disposed” in ILMS in previous years, contrary to Department standards that require embassies to account for all enterprise mobile devices in its inventory (12 FAH-10 H-163.1e).</li> <li>• The ISSO did not provide a mobile device cybersecurity awareness briefing when users were issued a mobile device and annually thereafter (14 FAM 414.3b(1)(a)).</li> <li>• Enterprise mobile devices were loaned for more than 90 days at a time without the approval of the accountable property officer (14 FAM 412.4-2c).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	Failure to implement the Department’s mobile device management standards increases the risks of compromise of Department information and loss of U.S. government property.
<b>Recommendation 25</b>	
Embassy Tunis should manage its mobile devices in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

Information Management: Physical Protection of IT Assets	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy's Sensitive But Unclassified Server Room Did Not Meet Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>The embassy's Sensitive But Unclassified server room did not meet Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not have an emergency power-off control inside the server room adjacent to each egress door (12 FAH-10 H-272.8-1(1-3)).</li> <li>• Placed a non-Department-owned modem and router, which supplied internet access to the enterprise wireless network, inside of the Sensitive But Unclassified server room instead of in the demarcation room (12 FAH-6 H-651.5-2a).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	By not adhering to the Department's physical security standards, the risk of equipment damage due to fire and electrical incidents is increased. In addition, locating a non-Department-owned telecommunications equipment in the Sensitive But Unclassified server room creates security vulnerabilities when non-cleared technicians access the room.
<b>Recommendation 26</b>	
Embassy Tunis should bring its Sensitive But Unclassified server room into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<b>Information Management: Telephone Operations</b>	
<b>Issue and Criteria</b>	<p><b><i>Embassy Telephone System Did Not Meet Department Standards</i></b></p> <p>Embassy Tunis' telephone system did not meet the Department's telecommunications management standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not develop and implement standard operating procedures for telephone operation and maintenance, including description of the telegraphic circuit, alternate-route procedures, and points-of-contact for the embassy (5 FAH-2 Exhibit H-113(11), 5 FAH-2 H-621).</li> <li>• Did not configure the call accounting system<sup>39</sup> to identify and seek repayment for unapproved telephone charges (5 FAM 526.1c, 5 FAM 511c(4)).</li> <li>• Stored telephone system passwords electronically, and the passwords did not meet password standards (12 FAH-6 H-542.5-9, 12 FAH-10 H-132.4-1(c)).</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	By not adhering to the Department's telecommunications management standards, the embassy risks undermining the effectiveness of its telephone system's operation and security.
<b>Recommendation 27</b>	
Embassy Tunis should bring its telephone system into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)	
<b>Management Response</b>	Concur.

<sup>39</sup> According to 5 FAH-2 H-114, call accounting is the process by which call detail records for specific, or groups of, telephone extensions are collected and recorded for billing and traffic monitoring purposes.

## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
<b>Chiefs of Mission:</b>		
Ambassador	Joey Hood	2/2023
Deputy Chief of Mission	Emily Katkar	8/2024
<b>Chiefs of Sections:</b>		
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs	Clayton Alderman	7/2024
Consular	Bobbie Neal	6/2024
Economic	Doreen Bailey	9/2024
Management	Hormazd Kanga	7/2022
Political	Tara Maher	7/2023
Public Diplomacy	Arlissa Reynolds	6/2023
Regional Security	Robert "Kevin" Helm	7/2024
<b>Other Agency Representatives:</b>		
American Battle Monuments Commission	Adrien Adams	6/2024
Legal Attaché	Michael Matten	4/2024
Office of Security Cooperation	Basim Younis	8/2023
Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché	Jorn Pung	6/2024
U.S. Agency for International Development	Scott Dobberstein	9/2021

**Source:** Generated by OIG from data provided by Embassy Tunis.

## APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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This inspection was conducted from September 3 to December 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.

OIG assessed executive direction based on interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of embassy meetings and activities during the on-site portion of the inspection. OIG assessed policy and program implementation, which includes Political and Economic, Public Diplomacy, Foreign Assistance, and Consular Operations, through a review of the embassy's advocacy and analysis work, section leadership, strategic planning and reporting, knowledge management, grants administration, program management and exchanges, media engagement, and oversight of American spaces. OIG also reviewed Embassy Tunis' provision of U.S. citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing,

and fraud prevention programs. To address resource management, OIG reviewed internal control systems in facility management, general services, financial management, and human resources. Finally, OIG assessed Embassy Tunis' computer network operations, information systems and administration of mobile computing devices, mail and pouch services, cyber security practices, records management, and telephone and emergency communications systems.

In FY 2025, OIG conducted a pilot test of a streamlined report format. OIG reported the results of this inspection using the streamlined format.

## APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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Embassy of the United States of America  
Tunis, Tunisia

March 11, 2025

UNCLASSIFIED

THRU: NEA – Tim Lenderking, Senior Bureau Official

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

FROM: Embassy Tunis – Ambassador Joey R. Hood

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Embassy Tunis

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

### **OIG Recommendation 1:**

*Embassy Tunis should implement an inclusive public diplomacy strategic planning process and publish the FY 2025 Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan by the deadline set by the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. In consultation with R/PPR, Public Diplomacy Section leadership designed and led the team’s annual strategic planning offsite and an inclusive input process for developing its FY2025 PDIP. On the recommendation of the PD OIG inspector, PDS Tunis received an extension of the deadline to submit the FY25 PDIP in January. The PDIP was cleared in January, however, the FY25 PDIP was not published due to new Administration priorities. The FY26 PDIP will be submitted on time with full section input.

**OIG Recommendation 2:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its timelines for public diplomacy grant application submissions and selection panel reviews into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. Embassy Tunis has developed a timeline for its FY2025 Annual Program Statement and grant panel review process that complies with Department standards.

**OIG Recommendation 3:**

*Embassy Tunis, in coordination with the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources, should review the section's organizational structure, and position elements to ensure compliance with Department guidelines and to optimize section effectiveness. (Action: Embassy Tunis, in coordination with R/PPR)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. Public Diplomacy Section leadership has reviewed the section's organizational structure and position elements with R/PPR and is working closely with R/PPR to ensure compliance with Department guidelines while also optimizing section effectiveness.

**OIG Recommendation 4:**

*Embassy Tunis should maintain and destroy immigrant visa files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. The consular section is currently implementing the recommendation by reviewing all Immigrant Visa files. Embassy Tunis has purged 23 cases and disposed of the original documentation according to FAM regulations. The embassy is currently reviewing the remaining cases containing original documentation to likewise determine their status and the appropriate disposition of the documentation. The expected completion date is July 1.

**OIG Recommendation 5:**

*Embassy Tunis should archive Consular Section communications according to Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by complying with the Records Guidance for Electronic messages and scheduling a calendar reminder every 20 days.

**OIG Recommendation 6:**

*Embassy Tunis, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should bring its non-high-rise residential properties into compliance with Department standards for fire protection or obtain exceptions to the standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis, in coordination with OBO)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. The Emergency Action Committee (EAC) met on February 5 and recommended to the Ambassador that Embassy Tunis submit an exception request. The exception request cable (25 TUNIS 158) was transmitted to OBO on March 10, 2025.

**OIG Recommendation 7:**

*Embassy Tunis should visually inspect its fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. The Facility Management section and the Diplomatic Technology section have worked together to develop an application for residents to use to conduct and record these inspections. The application and instructions will be shared with the community by March 14.

**OIG Recommendation 8:**

*Embassy Tunis should request permits from the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations for the 11 prefabricated buildings on the chancery and recreation center compounds. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. The Facility Management section has been coordinating with the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations regarding the permitting process. The estimated completion date for the submission of permit requests is April 30.

**OIG Recommendation 9:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. All office work areas were inspected in 2024, including high-risk areas. The twice-yearly inspections for 2025 are scheduled to begin on March 17. Regarding

swimming pool gates and latches, three of the gates are fixed and the two remaining await parts for installation. The expected completion date is March 31.

**OIG Recommendation 10:**

*Embassy Tunis, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should complete all elevator repairs needed to obtain a current certificate of use for each elevator, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis, in coordination with OBO)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. As of March 11, five deficiencies remain, including one programming issue that will require a return visit from OBO's elevator technician. Embassy Tunis has coordinated with OBO and other contractors to resolve these issues. The estimated completion date is July 31.

**OIG Recommendation 11:**

*Embassy Tunis should conduct quarterly unannounced cash verification of sub-cashier funds in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. Since the inspection, each unannounced cash verification has been properly documented.

**OIG Recommendation 12:**

*Embassy Tunis should manage its bulk fuel operation in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis hired a local company to calibrate the tank and fuel pump on January 19. The embassy reviewed the fuel tank after calibration and confirmed it was accurate within a three percent margin of error. This calibration process will be repeated annually. The embassy will continue to reconcile the fuel delivery every three weeks and the fuel issuances every weekday. The General Services Officer conducted training on and provided guidance on how to complete form DS-1914 to all drivers. Staff now complete DS-1914 every weekday, take odometer readings with fuel and maintenance transactions, and reconcile fuel inventory daily.

**OIG Recommendation 13:**

*Embassy Tunis should perform and document required daily maintenance checks and record vehicle usage data for all U.S. government vehicles, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. The embassy is now ensuring trip tickets for all drivers are documented in FMIS for each trip in accordance with 25 STATE 6408.

**OIG Recommendation 14:**

*Embassy Tunis should review and reconcile its fuel credit card receipts in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. The embassy switched fuel service providers and updated all fuel cards in accordance with regulations. Starting March 31, the embassy will implement an updated Standard Operating Procedure that includes spot-checks on receipts and reconciliations.

**OIG Recommendation 15:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its motor vehicle safety program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. The embassy developed a three-month tracking system to track SMITH systems training, drivers' licenses, and medical clearances and stores all information in FMIS. Using the new tracker, procurement requests for medical exams are submitted well in advance of medical clearance expiry.

**OIG Recommendation 16:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its contracting officer's representative program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. The embassy has made progress documenting COR e-files in the Integrated Logistics Management System. The embassy will continue to collect all Contracting Officer Representative (COR) certifications, COR files, and OGE-450 financial disclosure reports in ILMS. The estimated completion date is April 30.

**OIG Recommendation 17:**

*Embassy Tunis should use the Integrated Logistics Management System to track all personal and program property in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. The embassy was deficient in uniforms and construction material and is now tracking uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment in the expendables or loanable module of the Integrated Logistics Management System. Facility Management is tracking construction material as required. The embassy will draft and release a new Uniform Policy to be in full compliance with Department standards. The estimated completion date is April 30.

**OIG Recommendation 18:**

*Embassy Tunis should document all nonexpendable property transfers in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis is now correctly finalizing the documentation in the Integrated Logistics Management System and has reduced the number of items that are in pending status from 1,800 to two.

**OIG Recommendation 19:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its time and attendance procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis has brought its procedures into compliance with Department standards and has implemented a system of American supervisor spot checks to ensure continued compliance.

**OIG Recommendation 20:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its furniture and appliance pool program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. The embassy has greatly reduced the number of Furniture and Appliance Pool (FAP) items in unauthorized locations by transferring items to the correct funding code or removing them. Some items, such as voltage transformers and the refrigerator in the health unit, still need to be transferred from FAP to ICASS inventory. For items at the Tunis Deputy Chief of Mission Residence, the embassy is in touch with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Residential Furnishings and Design to receive replacements. The estimated completion date is December 31.

**OIG Recommendation 21:**

*Embassy Tunis should require all Information Systems Security Officers to perform their duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with the recommendation. As of December 2, 2024: (1) User access reviews are conducted quarterly to bi-annually; (2) Before accessing their OpenNet accounts, embassy employees receive a briefing and must sign a sheet with all the ISSO points; (3) Audit log notifications are reviewed daily to weekly, depending on the occurrence, ensuring that only DT Review Board or ITCCB/LCCB approved software and hardware is used on the networks is a daily task; and (5) The ISSO checklist is utilized for performing security duties.

**OIG Recommendation 22:**

*Embassy Tunis should manage its non-enterprise networks in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis has registered MeterNet as a circuit with the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology. In addition, the embassy plans to retire the non-enterprise networks no later than April 30. Devices connected to the network will be transitioned to Enterprise Wi-Fi, which is managed, monitored, and updated centrally in Washington in accordance with Department standards.

**OIG Recommendation 23:**

*Embassy Tunis should implement its local configuration management protocol, as set forth in its charter, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis chartered a Local IT Change Control Board (LCCB) in October 2024, chaired by the Diplomatic Technology Chief. The LCCB submitted its charter to Washington's IT CCB Management group in November 2024. Upon establishment, the embassy has ensured that the LCCB reviews and approves all local IT needs in accordance with the charter. The embassy will continue to utilize LCCB reviews to approve all IT equipment unique to the embassy.

**OIG Recommendation 24:**

*Embassy Tunis should implement a lifecycle management plan for the applications it develops, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. In October 2024, Embassy Tunis implemented an application lifecycle management template for Microsoft's O365 Power Platform and SharePoint applications developed by DT. This template documents the application sponsor, data owner, data sensitivity (including personally identifiable information), data governance policies, and data retention schedule. The embassy used the template to retroactively document previously developed applications and identified and

retired applications that were no longer in use. To align with the new lifecycle management framework, the embassy created a Tunis DT team O365 environment for testing and production. The embassy will continue to iterate and enhance its lifecycle management to better align with shifts in technology.

**OIG Recommendation 25:**

*Embassy Tunis should manage its mobile devices in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis documented and disposed of all non-operable or non-allowable devices in its stock by December 2024. Embassy Tunis is conducting a baseline inventory of mobile device holdings in accordance with the Department's annual inventory. Embassy Tunis is also implementing a policy for managing mobile device lifecycles by establishing guidelines for procuring, receiving, tracking, accounting, and disposing of mobile devices to ensure proper management, accountability, and security. The Department-furnished asset management database, Integrated Logistics Management System Loanable Property module, is used to manage the inventory of mobile phones. Tracking and accountability include periodic inventories and quarterly spot checks. The embassy expects to fully implement these measures no later than June 1.

**OIG Recommendation 26:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its Sensitive But Unclassified server room into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis has decommissioned and removed equipment and relocated servers for better access; consulted with Oversea Building Office and electricians at the embassy to better safeguard its equipment; performed stress tests on its

battery backups; and wired an alternate circuit for vendor equipment to be relocated to the demarcation room. The embassy has two remaining plans: (1) Repair and modify the emergency power-off control inside the server room so that it cuts electricity to all hardware and (2) Work with the vendor to complete the relocation of the non-Department-owned modem and router from the Sensitive But Unclassified server room to the demarcation room. The estimated completion date is June 1.

**OIG Recommendation 27:**

*Embassy Tunis should bring its telephone system into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Tunis)*

**Management Response:** Embassy Tunis concurs with this recommendation. Embassy Tunis has successfully brought its telephone system into compliance with Department standards. The embassy has developed and implemented standard operating procedures for telephone operation and maintenance by utilizing PEAGASYS, ATLAS, and the ITCP. These tools have enabled the embassy to describe the telegraphic circuit, establish alternate-route procedures, and identify points-of-contact for the embassy, as required by 5 FAM 121.4c(7). The DT Chief has configured the call accounting system to identify and seek repayment for unapproved telephone charges on a monthly basis, in accordance with 5 FAM 526.1c and 5 FAM 511c(4). Finally, as of February 1, the embassy has ensured that telephone system passwords are stored securely and meet the Department's password standards, as specified in 12 FAH-6 H-542.5-9 and 12 FAH-10 H-132.4-1(c).

The point of contact for this memorandum is Hormazd J. Kanga.

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