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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-26-01

Office of Inspections

December 2025

Inspection of Embassy Cairo, Egypt

BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

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HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-26-01

What OIG Inspected

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

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 11 recommendations to Embassy Cairo. In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with 8 recommendations and disagreed with 3 recommendations. OIG considers all 11 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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OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

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What OIG Found

- The Ambassador generally modeled the Department of State's leadership principles, particularly integrity, valuing and developing people, and fostering resilience.
- Embassy Cairo's Political, Economic, and Public Diplomacy Sections generally complied with Department standards and priorities.
- The embassy's Consular Section had deficiencies related to wait times for U.S. citizen services and immediate relative immigrant visa interviews, as well as with its workspace configuration.
- The employee association did not reimburse Embassy Cairo for \$389,000 in local guard services.
- Embassy Cairo had internal control issues in general services and facility management programs.
- The embassy had information management deficiencies related to information systems security officer duties, unauthorized software, user access rights, and telephone inventory.

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CONTEXT



Figure 1: Map of Egypt (Source: CIA World Factbook, as of June 2025).

The United States and Egypt share a partnership based on mutual interests in Middle East peace and stability, economic opportunity, and regional security. Specific areas of focus include the conflicts in Libya, Gaza, and Sudan, and countering terrorist threats. Uninhibited access through the Suez Canal, a waterway through which 12 percent of international commerce flows, is another core area of shared interest.

Egypt is the United States' largest export market in Africa. In 2024, U.S. bilateral trade in goods with Egypt totaled an estimated \$8.6 billion, with a U.S. trade surplus of \$3.5 billion.

Since the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty brokered by the United States, the United States has provided Egypt with approximately \$54 billion in Foreign Military Financing to improve and modernize Egypt's capabilities to contribute to regional security objectives and increase interoperability of its forces with U.S. and regional militaries.¹ Additionally, the United States has allocated \$30 billion in economic assistance to Egypt.²

According to the Department's biennial ranking, Embassy Cairo is a category 5 embassy (on a scale from 1 to 5+). The rankings are based on the level and type of work required to achieve the Department's bilateral and multilateral core diplomatic mission. Specifically, the Department describes a category 5 embassy as a very large, comprehensive, and full-service overseas post that is in a country of major importance to the United States and that has a global influence on many countries around the world. Other U.S. government agencies represented at the embassy during the inspection include the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Justice, as well as the Library of Congress and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).³

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated Embassy Cairo's executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management consistent

¹ From FY 2021 to FY 2024, Congress appropriated more than \$1 billion annually in Foreign Military Financing to Egypt.

² Congress appropriated funding from the Economic Support Fund for Egypt totaling \$140.8 million in FY 2021, \$160 million in FY 2022, and \$125 million in FY 2023 and FY 2024.

³ In July 2025, USAID ceased operations, and the Department assumed responsibility for select foreign assistance programs and activities formerly administered by USAID.

with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.⁴ A related classified inspection report discusses the embassy's security program, issues affecting the safety of embassy personnel and facilities, and resource management operations.

On January 21, 2025, the Secretary of State (Secretary) issued guidance to the Department of State (Department) on the administration's priorities.⁵ The Department subsequently disseminated initial guidance on foreign assistance, public diplomacy, consular operations, personnel evaluation, planning and policy documents, and other Department activities. At the time of this inspection, the Department was developing detailed implementation guidance on these and other policy initiatives. Therefore, OIG limited its assessment of areas where guidance was still evolving and did not assess the embassy's implementation of foreign assistance programs as part of this inspection.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Since 2023, Egypt has experienced active conflicts along each of its three land borders: Gaza, Sudan, and Libya. The Houthis' attacks of commercial vessels in the Red Sea, which disrupts shipping in the Suez Canal, and conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Somalia have added to the region's volatility. Two of these conflicts, the Sudan conflict⁶ and the Israel-Hamas conflict,⁷ had a significant impact on Embassy Cairo's operations. In 2024, the embassy supported 78 official visits, which were generally linked to the conflicts. These visits included 25 congressional delegations, 6 visits from the Secretary, as well as visits from the Special Envoys to Sudan and Libya. Additionally, the embassy provided the following support and services:

Israel-Hamas Conflict

- Dispatched rotating interagency teams for 7 months to the Rafah border crossing to assist nearly 2,000 U.S. citizens and their families departing Gaza and entering Egypt.
- Created and staffed an off-site reception center in Cairo for U.S. citizens and others departing Gaza and entering Egypt, to include provision of transportation and temporary lodging.
- Established a humanitarian response working group and a multi-country disaster assistance response team to support Gaza-related humanitarian needs.
- Managed Department funds totaling \$862,606 to support the evacuation of U.S. citizens and locally employed (LE) staff from Gaza.
- Managed embassy funds totaling \$189,952 for staff travel to support the evacuation of U.S. citizens and LE staff from Gaza.

⁴ See Appendix A for additional details.

⁵ Cable 25 STATE 5156, "New Administration Priorities," January 21, 2025.

⁶ The conflict began on April 15, 2023, between two rival factions of the military government of Sudan, the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. As a result of the conflict, Embassy Khartoum, Sudan, suspended its operations in April 2023.

⁷ Since October 7, 2023, Israel has been at war with the Palestinian Sunni Islamist group Hamas. Hamas, which is a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, led an attack that day from the Gaza Strip into Israel.

- Coordinated the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza with U.S. government and international partners including the United Nations and Egyptian Red Crescent.

Sudan Conflict

- Delivered logistical support and consular services to U.S. citizens evacuating from Sudan and arriving in Egypt.
- Provided employee services to Embassy Khartoum, Sudan, LE staff and their family members who obtained temporary refuge in Egypt. The embassy assisted LE staff with obtaining extensions of residence permits and multiple-entry visas, provided telework support, and made LE staff salary payments.
- Hosted Embassy Khartoum's Consular Section staff. These staff processed immigrant visas for Sudanese nationals, provided U.S. citizen services to Sudanese Americans, and supported visa services for Sudanese officials.
- Hosted the Embassy Khartoum LE staff Senior Media Specialist to expand outreach and crisis communication to the Sudanese community in Egypt.
- Coordinated with the Department's Office of Sudan Affairs based at Embassy Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on a variety of consular issues including processing special immigrant visas for Embassy Khartoum's LE staff, as well as Sudanese visa and U.S. citizen services cases.
- Coordinated the delivery of humanitarian assistance with other donors and humanitarian actors.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Cairo in November 2023. She previously served as Ambassador to Bulgaria and Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at Embassy Lisbon, Portugal. The DCM, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in June 2023. She previously served as Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim, at Embassy Doha, Qatar.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

OIG found the Ambassador generally modeled the Department's leadership and management principles as outlined in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b,⁸ particularly in demonstrating integrity, valuing and developing people, and fostering resilience. The Ambassador and DCM were well respected and generally appreciated by personnel throughout the embassy.

In interviews and personal questionnaires, the LE staff expressed appreciation for the care and attention the Ambassador and DCM showed toward them. They also appreciated the Ambassador and management team's efforts on LE staff salary adjustments during a period of devaluation of the local currency in Egypt, as well as social events the Ambassador hosted for LE staff.

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.

Staff from multiple sections and agencies, however, found the direction and tone from some members of the Front Office to be at times confusing and abrupt. Several staff members told OIG they felt they were not getting enough direct access to and timely feedback from the Ambassador on her preferences and “what success would look like.” Additionally, staff attributed the lack of direct feedback to the DCM’s tendency to exercise control over Front Office access and decision-making, which left some staff feeling disempowered. Staff told OIG that more direct engagement with the Ambassador would be more efficient and better address Front Office needs by eliminating the need to infer the Ambassador’s preferences. The Ambassador and DCM committed to improving communication and coordination by including a wider circle of embassy personnel in Front Office planning and decision-making processes.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

OIG found the Ambassador generally led Embassy Cairo in accordance with 1 FAM 013.2a requirements to exercise full responsibility for the direction and coordination of all U.S. executive branch employees in the country, and 2 FAM 113.1b(7) instructions to obtain support for U.S. policies and positions with the receiving government. Staff in Washington and at Embassy Cairo praised the Ambassador and DCM for their understanding and expertise on key issues affecting U.S.-Egyptian relations as well as on broader regional issues.

In the absence of an approved Integrated Country Strategy, and in accordance with 3 FAM 1214b(2) and 1 FAM 013.2a guidance to plan strategically and coordinate all U.S. executive branch employees at the embassy, the Ambassador established foreign policy goals based on directives from Washington. She had the new administration’s four priority goals printed on a laminated card and distributed throughout the embassy,⁹ and she pivoted the embassy’s work towards greater engagement on trade, economics, and commercial affairs.

However, OIG found the embassy could benefit from the Front Office formulating an engagement strategy to carry out its objectives. Despite the pivot towards greater engagement on trade, economics, and commercial affairs, the embassy had not yet developed an engagement strategy to address this priority. The Ambassador and DCM expressed their intent to hold a strategic planning meeting to discuss trade, economic, and commercial affairs later in 2025. Staff cited the embassy’s regular outreach to the Alexandria region as another example where more forward planning and clarity on objectives would be helpful. The Front Office developed a plan, approved by the Department in November 2024, to establish a Virtual

⁹ The embassy drew from the Bureau of Global Public Affairs’ February 2025 summary of the four priority policy areas: “(1) Make America Safer – Curb Illegal Immigration and Secure Our Borders; (2) Make America More Prosperous – Ensure Fair Economic and Trade Relationships; Restore and Maintain American Dominance In Energy, Science, Technology, Cybersecurity, and AI; (3) Make America Stronger – Combatting Adversarial Actors; and (4) Celebrate American Excellence – Spotlight On America’s Achievements, Innovation, and Leadership.”

Presence Post¹⁰ in Alexandria.¹¹ At the time of this inspection, the DCM was making monthly visits to the city to expand the embassy's outreach to local leaders. However, the Front Office had not developed an engagement strategy, outlining target themes and audiences, to guide the outreach. The visits were coordinated by a single U.S. direct-hire officer without a Front Office-led process to guide planning and engage all relevant embassy sections. The Ambassador and DCM agreed to hold a meeting to better define the scope and parameters of the Alexandria Virtual Presence Post.

Adherence to Internal Controls

OIG determined the Front Office generally complied with Department management control guidelines in 2 FAM 022.7, 2 FAM 024d, and cable 24 STATE 334.¹² The Ambassador and the DCM actively engaged in preparing the FY 2024 Statement of Assurance, asked questions, discussed issues with section and agency heads, and reviewed documents. The embassy included no reportable deficiencies or issues in the Statement of Assurance. During this inspection, OIG found internal control issues, which are detailed in the Resource Management and Information Management sections of this report.

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

Security and Emergency Planning

The Front Office's leadership of the security and emergency preparedness programs was consistent with the Department's guidelines in 2 FAM 113.1b(5) and 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-762a. The Front Office was supportive and attentive to security issues, the embassy held regular Emergency Action Committee meetings chaired by the DCM, and the Ambassador and DCM regularly participated in drills and radio checks. In 2024, the embassy updated its emergency action plan and posted links to the plan and security directives on the embassy intranet site.

Equal Employment Opportunity

OIG found Embassy Cairo's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program complied with Department standards in 2 FAM 1511. The embassy had two EEO counselors and four LE staff EEO liaisons. The embassy posted EEO notices near the elevators and on its website. In September 2024, the Department's Office of Civil Rights conducted mandatory EEO training, in English and Arabic, for all staff.

¹⁰ Virtual Presence Posts allow embassies to provide remote diplomatic engagement with important cities or regions. Because Virtual Presence Posts have no resident Department employees, these posts generally involve regular visits from embassy personnel, ongoing public affairs activities, and virtual engagement through websites dedicated to the city or region.

¹¹ In 2019, the Department closed U.S. Consulate Alexandria.

¹² Cable 24 STATE 334, "Your Role and Responsibilities for Management Controls and Oversight over Post Operations," January 2, 2024.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

OIG determined the DCM oversaw a First- and Second-Tour (FAST) program as required by 3 FAM 2713b. The embassy's program had 61 FAST personnel, including entry-level members from other agencies and the Marine Security Guard Detachment. FAST employees generally rated the Ambassador's and DCM's leadership of the FAST program favorably. FAST members served on a rotational basis as notetakers at Country Team meetings and at other events with the Ambassador and DCM and as control officers for high-level visits.

The DCM and Ambassador also hosted periodic social and career mentoring activities for FAST personnel at the embassy and in their residences. In addition, the DCM and Ambassador supported the embassy's Becoming Outstanding, Successful Supervisors professional development program for mid-level personnel.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Cairo's policy and program implementation through a review of the Political, Economic, and Public Diplomacy Sections and the U.S. citizen and visa services provided by the Consular Section. As noted in the Context section of this report, OIG did not review the embassy's administration of federal assistance awards and programs funded with foreign assistance appropriations because new policies were still in development at the time of this inspection. OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. However, OIG made recommendations to address deficiencies in the Consular Section, as discussed below.

Political Section

OIG reviewed Embassy Cairo's Political Section, including its leadership and management, policy engagement and coordination, cable reporting, Leahy vetting,¹³ and end-use monitoring functions. The Political Section focused on the regional conflicts, described in the Operating Environment section of this report, as well as bilateral engagement. Starting in October 2023, the section supported Washington outreach regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict, including multiple official visits to Egypt, and meetings by the Secretary, National Security Council staff, Congress, and other Department and interagency officials with Egyptian authorities. In addition, the section tracked U.S. interests in the Sinai, including humanitarian supplies and border security equipment for use at the Rafah border crossing point. In 2024, the section also managed multiple visits by the Special Envoy for Sudan, who focused on the Sudan conflict, which contributed to the influx of an estimated 1.5 million Sudanese refugees into Egypt.

¹³ 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.

Finally, the section also worked, in coordination with the Department of Defense's Office of Military Cooperation, on prioritizing items to be funded by \$1.3 billion in annual Foreign Military Financing to Egypt.

In interviews with OIG, Department and interagency offices generally praised the Political Section's cable reporting. OIG reviewed 125 reporting cables and 40 demarche response cables¹⁴ prepared by the section from March 2024 to March 2025 and found the cables to be relevant to U.S. interests on topics such as Egypt's legal reforms, military cooperation, religious issues, refugees, and outreach. The section monitored human rights issues and participated in the Egypt Leahy Vetting Forum to discuss Leahy-related cases. OIG found that some embassy offices involved in Leahy vetting were unfamiliar with the latest standard operating procedures. However, during this inspection, the Political Section corrected this deficiency by providing the latest guidance to all relevant offices. Overall, OIG determined the section generally complied with Department standards.

Economic Section

OIG reviewed the Economic Section's leadership and management, policy implementation, reporting, and commercial advocacy work. The section steered the content of the Economic Working Group, which focused on Egypt's economic challenges and U.S. engagement, and the China Working Group, which covered China's expanding activities in Egypt. These working groups met regularly and promoted broad interagency collaboration under the leadership of the DCM and the Ambassador. The Economic Section also engaged in commercial advocacy, and during this inspection, the section sought to enhance coordination with the embassy's U.S. Commercial Service and Foreign Agricultural Service representatives by including them in a monthly "sync" call with Washington counterparts.

Washington offices generally expressed satisfaction with the cable reporting the Economic Section generated, with notable praise for the coverage of macroeconomic and trade issues. However, the section's staff of nine U.S. direct-hire employees with reporting responsibilities, including the Regional China Officer, produced only 44 reporting cables and 12 demarche delivery notifications from March 2024 to March 2025. During this inspection, section leadership acknowledged to OIG a need to prioritize producing more cable reporting for Washington audiences. Despite the need for more cable reporting, OIG determined that the Economic Section generally complied with Department standards.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning and reporting, resource and knowledge management, federal assistance awards, education and cultural

¹⁴ A demarche is a formal diplomatic representation of one government's official position, views, or wishes on a given subject to an appropriate official in another government or international organization. Demarches generally seek to persuade, inform, or gather information from a foreign government. Governments may also use a demarche to protest or object to actions by a foreign government.

programs, media engagement, and American Spaces.¹⁵ In the absence of a current Integrated Country Strategy and Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan,¹⁶ the section organized its work around the administration's four priority policy areas noted in the Executive Direction section of this report. Under these broad themes, they developed section-wide working groups to focus on sports diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and celebrating the United States' 250th anniversary in 2026.

The section produced several media summary products including a biweekly report on China's efforts to influence Egyptians with false information through media and cultural programming. The section also regularly contributed to embassy reporting, including several cables on areas of Washington interest such as Egyptian media reaction to developments in Gaza. The section also served as the coordinating lead for the embassy's outreach to Alexandria, supporting the DCM's monthly visits to the city. Overall, OIG determined that the Public Diplomacy section generally complied with Department standards. OIG's review of the section's grants is discussed below.

Public Diplomacy Section Focused on Managing the Department-Mandated Termination of Federal Assistance Awards

OIG reviewed all Public Diplomacy grants awarded from FY 2023 through FY 2025 with an award value of \$50,000 and greater (16 grants totaling \$3,015,999) and found that they generally complied with Department guidelines. During this inspection, the section corrected instances of missing documentation in the official award files, such as evidence of the merit selection process. Following the administration's global grant pause and review process initiated on January 27, 2025, the Department mandated the termination of all but 2 of the section's 22 then-active grants.¹⁷ As a consequence, the section's grants administration during

¹⁵ 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. American Corners are partnerships with local host institutions offering a range of American Space programming, governed by a memorandum of understanding between the institution and the embassy. The section managed an American Center in Cairo, an American Corner in the Cairo suburb of Maadi, and another American Corner in Alexandria. Due to the implementation of the administration's priorities and available resources, the section limited its planned expansion of four new American Spaces to one location in Luxor, set to open in late FY 2025.

¹⁶ According to cable 25 STATE 6078, "Implementing E.O. 14145, 14167, 14171 - Promoting Equality and Merit Instead of Discriminatory and Revisionist Activities," January 22, 2025, the Department suspended all existing strategic planning documents pending further guidance, which, along with the Integrated Country Strategy, also included the Public Diplomacy Implementation Plan.

¹⁷ From FY 2023 through FY 2025—up to the start of the inspection in March 2025, the Public Diplomacy Section awarded 54 grants totaling \$3,759,595. OIG reviewed the section's compliance with the Federal Assistance Directive (October 2022) and subsequent revisions, as applicable, as well as the Federal Assistance Management Advisory Number 2025-07 on Implementation of the President's Executive Order 14173: Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (February 4, 2025) and as amended (February 7, 2025). OIG found the section generally complied with those guidelines. The Department completed its grant review process on March 4, 2025. The two Public Diplomacy Section grants approved to continue, valued at a combined \$1,096,462, were in the areas of English language programs and promotion of university partnerships, respectively.

this inspection focused primarily on ensuring an orderly close-out process for the terminated grants.

Sustaining Binational Engagement Through English Language Programs Despite Anti-American Sentiment Linked to Gaza

Since 2006, Embassy Cairo's Regional English Language Office has built a positive relationship with Egypt's Al-Azhar, a leading Sunni Muslim religious and educational authority. Despite Al-Azhar's opposition to U.S. support for Israel's actions in Gaza since October 2023, the partnership has achieved significant milestones. From May to December 2024, four English Language Specialists from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs helped Al-Azhar revise its English textbooks, incorporating updated teaching methods and shared U.S. and Egyptian values. These textbooks, featuring a note of gratitude to Embassy Cairo, will be used by 1.5 million students in over 11,000 schools. Additionally, on May 5, 2025, the embassy opened an English Language Resource Center at Al-Azhar University's Assiut campus, marking its first permanent presence in southern Egypt. This center aims to engage Egyptians in remote areas through high-quality English programs, fostering future business, diplomatic, and educational collaboration with the United States.

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Cairo's consular operations, including U.S. citizen services, fraud prevention programs, nonimmigrant and immigrant visa services and processing, training, management controls, communication and outreach, consular cashiering and fees, consular space, and crisis preparedness.

In addition to its regular workload, the Consular Section provided services for other countries in the region. Embassy Cairo became the designated processing facility for Sudan's immigrant visas, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, and Consular Reports of Death Abroad after Embassy Khartoum suspended operations in April 2023 due to the conflict in Sudan. At the time of this inspection, four of Embassy Khartoum's LE staff were on temporary duty in Cairo to assist with this workload. Beginning in 2023, the section also assumed responsibility for adjudicating passports, immigrant visas, and some nonimmigrant visas for individuals who fled from Gaza to Egypt during the Israel-Hamas conflict. In addition, Embassy Cairo was one of several embassies in the region that provided consular services, including visas and U.S. citizen services, for Yemen.

During the inspection, OIG identified two deficiencies that Embassy Cairo corrected. First, senior consular managers, rather than mid-level managers, resumed management of the nonimmigrant visa referral program as required by 9 FAM 601.8-1(A)c. Additionally, the embassy updated required waiting room signage to include the U.S. Government Fact Sheet on Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting and began handing out copies to immigrant visa

On May 8, 2025, the Department restored four terminated grants totaling \$986,140, which supported cultural heritage and preservation.

applicants, bringing them into compliance with 9 FAM 504.10-4(A)(1) and 9 FAM 504.10-4(A)(2).

Except as noted below, OIG found the embassy's consular programs generally complied with guidance in 7 FAM, 8 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies.

Wait Time for U.S. Citizen Services Exceeded Wait Time for Visa Appointments

OIG found the appointment wait time for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad¹⁸ exceeded the wait time for nonimmigrant visa appointments by up to several months. According to 7 FAH-1 H-263.7d, U.S. citizen services appointment wait times should not be longer than nonimmigrant visa wait times. Embassy staff told OIG that most of the Consular Reports of Birth Abroad cases involved children born in other countries, such as Sudan and Yemen, and such cases require a more time-consuming review process. Staff also told OIG that the Consular Section had insufficient service window space for interviewing U.S. citizens. Failure to appropriately manage appointment wait times could result in U.S. citizens continuing to wait longer for embassy services than non-citizens.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Cairo should manage U.S. citizen services appointment wait times in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Median Wait Times for Immediate Relative Immigrant Visa Interviews Exceeded Department Standards

OIG found the median wait time for an immediate relative immigrant visa interview exceeded Department standards. The wait time was approximately 17 months, while at the same time the median wait time for a nonimmigrant visa interview in Cairo was only 49 days. Department standards in 9 FAM 504.7-2 and Section 237 of Public Law 106-113¹⁹ require that all immediate relative visa applicants be processed within 30 days of receipt of the necessary information from the applicant and the Department of Homeland Security. Consular managers told OIG they were processing immigrant visas for multiple embassies in the region, including Sudan and Yemen, and they needed more immigrant visa staff and consular service windows to keep up with the work. They noted the immediate relative immigrant visa backlog doubled after Cairo assumed responsibility for Sudanese immigrant visa processing. Failure to appropriately manage immigrant visa interviews could result in immediate family members of U.S. citizens continuing to face long wait times for immigrant visas.

¹⁸ A Consular Report of Birth Abroad (Form FS-240) is defined in 8 FAM 101.1-2a as "a formal document certifying the acquisition of U.S. citizenship at birth by a person born abroad to a U.S. citizen parent(s)." Additionally, "[under] U.S. law (22 U.S.C. 2705), it is proof of U.S. citizenship—in legal terms, it establishes a 'prima facie case' of U.S. citizenship." According to 8 FAM 101.1-2f, "the purpose of issuing a form FS-240 is to provide a record of the acquisition of U.S. citizenship at birth by a child born in a foreign state that can be used by that citizen throughout life."

¹⁹ Embassy Security Act, Public Law 106-113.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should manage immediate relative immigrant visa interviews in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with CA)

Consular Physical Space Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found the Consular Section's physical space did not meet Department standards in 7 FAH-1 H-281a. For example, the section lacked sufficient service windows for the number of daily U.S. citizen services and visa appointments, and there was no wheelchair accessible window in the visa waiting room. Consular managers implemented creative mitigation strategies, such as having LE staff perform some nonimmigrant visa intake duties at their desks to free up service windows, but the need for improvements to the physical space remained. Additionally, OIG observed that the section's unreliable microphone system inhibited clear communication between consular staff and applicants. At the time of this inspection, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO), in coordination with Embassy Cairo and the Bureau of Consular Affairs, was developing a renovation plan for the consular space and had ordered a new microphone system. Therefore, OIG did not make recommendations to address these deficiencies.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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

- Reassessed petty cash use and reduced the number of subcashiers (Cashier User Guide, Chapter 13.2.5).
- Implemented a process to monitor and track periodic unannounced subcashier cash verifications (4 FAM 397.2-3a).
- Initiated the process to obtain Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS) eFiling access to designated contracting officer's representatives (COR) (14 FAH-2 H-142b(16)(b)).
- Developed a standard operating procedure for fire watch procedures when fire protection systems are out of service (15 FAM 813.5b).

Overall, OIG found the embassy's Management Section generally implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department standards, with the exceptions noted below.

General Management

American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association Did Not Reimburse Embassy Cairo for Local Guard Services

The American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association (AECWA) did not reimburse Embassy Cairo for local guard services provided at its off-compound recreation facility. The U.S. government-owned and AECWA-managed facility included a full-service restaurant, bar, swimming pool, and recreational spaces for members and their guests. According to 6 FAM 524b, the association must reimburse guard services that are exclusively provided for an association facility. Since this requirement was introduced in June 2021, the embassy has paid approximately \$389,000 for the local guard services provided to the AECWA facility for fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024, and has budgeted a further \$135,000 for fiscal year 2025.

OIG determined the embassy was unaware of this requirement, which was implemented in June 2021, because the embassy had executed its license agreement with AECWA in 2020. The 2020 license agreement stipulated that the embassy would provide guard services to AECWA on a fully non-reimbursable basis. By not requiring reimbursement of local guard services, the U.S. government is unduly subsidizing the employee association. Because the AECWA license agreement does not comply with Department standards, as described above, OIG questions \$389,000 in local guard services provided to AECWA.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should seek reimbursement of the \$389,000 in questioned costs for local guard services provided to the American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association from FY 2022 to FY 2024 and bring the provision of local guard services for the association into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with A and DS)

General Services

Embassy Provided Home-to-Work Shuttle Service Without a Justification or Approval

The embassy provided a home-to-work shuttle service to U.S. direct-hire employees at a FY 2025 budgeted annual cost of approximately \$433,000, without a justification or chief of mission approval for other authorized use of official motor pool vehicles. Guidance in 14 FAM 432.3a through c states that transportation (other than for business purposes) is normally an employee responsibility. The use of official vehicles is not an entitlement and is subject to availability and prioritization of embassy resources. The chief of mission may approve other authorized uses where such uses are advantageous to the U.S. government or where public transportation is unsafe or unavailable. Although the embassy previously authorized a home-to-work armored vehicle shuttle service based on unsafe public or alternate transportation, in April 2023, the embassy started allowing U.S. direct hires to use their personally owned vehicles and all public means of transportation. Staff told OIG they believed that the embassy's Emergency Action Committee's decision to maintain armored vehicle capability in case of

heightened threat activity was sufficient justification to continue operating the home-to-work shuttle service. Failure to obtain proper approval for the use of vehicles for nonbusiness purposes increases the risk for mismanagement and cost to the U.S. government and the abuse of U.S. government resources. In August 2025, Embassy Cairo ended the home-to-work shuttle service.²⁰ Therefore, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Embassy's Contract Administration Did Not Adhere to Department Standards

The embassy's contract administration program did not adhere to Department standards. OIG reviewed all five of Embassy Cairo's administered contracts above the simplified acquisition threshold of \$250,000, initially valued at approximately \$16.3 million.²¹ OIG found no evidence that the assigned CORs had completed mandatory annual performance reviews for these contracts and entered them into the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS)²² since the start of these contracts. Guidance in 14 FAM 222c(1) states that the COR is the primary individual assigned to monitor a contract and evaluate the contractor's performance. Federal Acquisition Regulation 42.1502(a) and (b) also require past performance evaluations to be prepared annually for all contracts that exceed the simplified acquisition threshold and be entered into CPARS. Despite this issue, OIG determined that the embassy generally monitored its contracts, received goods and services for which it had contracted, and addressed contractor performance as required.

Embassy CORs told OIG that they were not aware of these requirements and that some of them also had access issues with CPARS. Failure to properly evaluate contractors increases the risk of poor contract performance, substandard deliverables, and mismanagement of appropriated funds. In addition, a lack of clear and timely evaluations of contractor performance hinders the embassy in making informed business decisions when awarding government contracts.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Cairo should bring its contract administration program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

²⁰ Cable 25 CAIRO 890, "Embassy Cairo: Motor Pool Reduction in Force," August 3, 2025.

²¹ The embassy awarded four of five contracts. The Department's Regional Procurement Support Office in Frankfurt, Germany awarded the fifth contract relating to LE staff health insurance, which the embassy manages. The initial value of the five contracts is based on the exchange rate on the date the contracts were signed (and not the current exchange rate).

²² CPARS is the government-wide evaluation reporting tool for all past performance reports on contracts and orders. A performance assessment must be done in the system, annually, for each contract over the simplified acquisition threshold of \$250,000. See Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 2.101's definition of simplified acquisition threshold and FAR 42.1502(a) and (b).

Embassy Did Not Track and Review Residential Housing Commissioning and Make Ready Costs by Property for U.S. Government-Owned and -Leased Residential Properties

The embassy did not track and review commissioning and make ready costs for each of its U.S. government-owned and -leased residential units.^{23,24} Department standards in 6 FAH-5 H-522.2d and 6 FAH-5 H-524f require that each embassy maintain and track detailed records related to commissioning and make ready costs for each of its properties.²⁵ These records are essential for both managing an embassy’s housing pool, because they establish the history of conditions and changes to each lease property, and making a business case for retention of a property. OIG also found the embassy did not follow its March 2024 standard operating procedure to track materials used and costs associated with the make-ready process and conduct periodic reviews of the information.²⁶ General Services Office staff told OIG they did not track commissioning and make ready costs by residential properties due to staff turnover. Facility Management unit staff told OIG that they recorded all labor hours related to commissioning and make readies of U.S. government-owned housing in the Global Maintenance Management System,²⁷ but were unaware of the requirement to track and review all commissioning and make ready costs outside of labor costs by property. By not tracking and reviewing its housing commissioning and make ready costs, the embassy risks losing the ability to identify questionable and excessive expenditures involved in the commissioning and make ready processes.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Cairo should track and review its embassy housing commissioning and make ready costs in adherence with embassy standard operating procedures and Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Facility Management

Embassy’s Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Adhere to Department Standards

The embassy’s fire protection program did not fully adhere to Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy did not:

²³ Residential commissioning is the process of preparing a new residential property for occupancy. New properties are brought into the housing pool either due to a need to expand the pool or to replace an existing residence. The preparation of U.S. government-owned and leased properties in the embassy’s housing pool for in-coming personnel is called the “make ready” process.

²⁴ OIG previously made recommendations on tracking make ready costs to Embassy Cairo. See OIG, *Audit of the Process To Prepare Residences for New Tenants at U.S. Embassy Cairo, Egypt* (AUD-MERO-22-23, March 2022). The status of these recommendations can be found on OIG’s website at <https://www.stateoig.gov/report/aud-mero-22-23>.

²⁵ The embassy’s FY 2025 budgeted commissioning and make ready costs were \$17,000 and \$60,674, respectively.

²⁶ American Embassy Cairo, “SOP for Tracking Materials Used and Costs Associated with the Make-Ready Process,” March 5, 2024.

²⁷ The Global Maintenance Management System is the Department’s facilities management application system that supports requirements for planning and managing facility management activities overseas.

- Conduct periodic fire inspection surveys using the latest OBO fire inspection report as a basis for the survey (15 FAM 813.3b).
- Perform and log weekly functional tests of its fire pumps and monthly inspections of fire sprinkler systems (15 FAM 841a).
- Perform and log monthly emergency lighting inspections (15 FAM 844a).
- Conduct annual emergency egress inspections (15 FAM 846.4).

Facility management unit staff told OIG these issues occurred due to their unfamiliarity with Department standards. Failure to adhere to all fire protection standards increases the risk of injury or loss of life to staff and visitors.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Cairo should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Embassy Did Not Complete the Required Fire-Safety Mitigation Actions for Its Residences

The embassy did not complete the required fire safety mitigation for its residential properties. OIG found that although the embassy had obtained an embassy-wide exemption to the Department's fire and safety standards for its residences, at the time of this inspection it had not yet sent all necessary data to OBO required for providing fire and safety mitigation measures and strategies for the residences. According to 15 FAM 813.7-5h and 15 FAM 813.7-6i, as part of the exception request, an embassy must coordinate with OBO's Fire Protection Analysis Division, which will provide property specific risk management mitigation measures, and must ensure occupants are aware of the risks and they are provided with OBO's risk mitigation strategies. Failure to complete all mitigation measures for properties that do not meet Department fire standards increases the likelihood of serious injury. During this inspection, the embassy was in the process of completing the fire safety mitigation actions. As a result, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program Did Not Fully Meet Department Standards

The embassy's safety, health, and environmental management (SHEM) program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found the embassy did not:

- Provide safety and occupational health orientation training for all new embassy staff and annual refresher training (15 FAM 965h).
- Perform and submit annual written assessments of the SHEM program to OBO (15 FAM 968d).²⁸
- Provide two electric forklift charging stations with spill kits and one electric forklift charging station with an eye wash station (14 FAH-1 H-313.1-2g(1) and (3)).

²⁸ Embassy Cairo had not submitted an annual written assessment of the SHEM program since 2020.

Facility management unit staff told OIG they were aware of these issues but prioritized other SHEM areas including pest management, drinking water safety, workplace inspections, and the fire extinguisher testing program. Failure to adhere to all safety, health, and environmental management standards increases the risk of injury to staff.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Cairo should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Cairo's Diplomatic Technology (DT) operations, including classified, unclassified, and non-enterprise network²⁹ computer operations; physical and environmental protection of IT resources; classified communications security; emergency communications preparedness; telephone programs; and mail and pouch services in Cairo.

During this inspection, Embassy Cairo corrected four issues identified by OIG. Specifically, the embassy:

- Updated the IT contingency plan (5 FAM 1065.5).³⁰
- Established a local configuration management protocol (5 FAM 114.6-2a).³¹
- Removed passwords stored on OpenNet (12 FAH-10 H-132.4-2(8)).³²
- Removed NOFORN documents on OpenNet (5 FAM 722.6(4)).³³

Overall, OIG determined the embassy's DT operations generally complied with Department standards with the exceptions noted below.

Information Systems Security Officers Did Not Perform All Required Duties

Embassy Cairo's Information Systems Security Officers (ISSO) did not perform all duties as required. Specifically, OIG found the ISSOs did not perform the following duties:

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ An information system contingency plan is a management policy and procedure designed to maintain or restore business operations, including computer operations, possibly at an alternate location, in the event of emergencies, system failures, or disasters.

³¹ 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 this inspection, the references in 5 FAM 862.1b and 5 FAM 864c, last updated in June 2024 and October 2018, respectively, continued to refer to the "local IT configuration control board." The IT configuration control board manages standardization of the Department's global information technology environment and addresses issues of configuration tracking, change control, and network planning and operations.

³² OpenNet is the Department's Sensitive But Unclassified network.

³³ NOFORN is a category of Sensitive But Unclassified information that must be processed and transmitted on a system authorized by the Department for classified information transmission, storage, and processing.

- Review the list of information systems users at least annually to determine whether all users require access to the information systems and whether all temporary, terminated, or transferred accounts have been deactivated or removed (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3b).
- Review at least annually the access privileges of each user, in coordination with the user's supervisor, to verify that the privileges are still required (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3c).
- Review at least quarterly the access privileges of all users with the system administrator, ISSO, or programmer and developer to ensure the privileges are still required (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3d).
- Monitor accounts for atypical usage and report such usage to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Computer Incident Response Team, if found (12 FAH-10 H-112.1-3e).
- Remove stale accounts, including stale system administrator accounts, after 90 days of inactivity (5 FAH-12 H-115.2).
- Monitor security controls on an ongoing basis (12 FAH-10 H-312.5-3).

Additionally, the designated ISSOs did not have the required ISSO accounts to perform the duties on all networks.³⁴ OIG determined these issues occurred because of a lack of management oversight. OIG issued management assistance reports in May 2017 and December 2020,³⁵ that highlighted widespread Department failures to perform ISSO duties. Failure to perform required ISSO responsibilities leaves Department networks vulnerable to potential unauthorized access and malicious activity.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Cairo should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Embassy Cairo Used Unauthorized Cloud-Based Software

OIG found the embassy's facility management unit used a cloud-based software application, *SafetyCulture* (formerly *iAuditor*), without conducting a risk assessment and obtaining an authorization to operate from the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology, as required in 12 FAH-10 H-332.2-1c and 5 FAM 619. Facility management unit staff used the application to document inspections of embassy facilities and residences. An August 2017 OBO Facility Management Guidebook stated the *iAuditor* application could be used for housing inspections. OIG concluded that the application's inclusion in the guidebook, as well as in an OBO regional in-service training and a 2022 OBO newsletter, may have created the impression that the embassy did not need to seek Department approval. However, at the time of this inspection, the

³⁴ ISSOs are required to use ISSO accounts to maintain separation of ISSO functions from systems management duties. According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, separation of duties includes "ensuring that security personnel who administer access control functions do not also administer audit functions." See National Institute of Standards and Technology Special Publication 800-53, Revision 5, "Security and Privacy Controls for Information Systems and Organizations," page 36 (December 2020).

³⁵ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017); OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Continued Deficiencies in Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Responsibilities at Overseas Posts* (ISP-21-07, December 2020).

application did not have approval for Department-wide use. Use of unauthorized cloud-based applications could result in unauthorized disclosure of sensitive Department information.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Cairo should conduct a risk assessment and obtain an authorization to operate its cloud-based software application from the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Embassy Did Not Limit User Access Rights to State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset Channels

Embassy Cairo did not follow the concept of least privilege when administering system administrator and user access rights to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART) application.³⁶ According to 12 FAH-10 H-112.1-1a(2), supervisors must only approve access privileges to files, programs, and data necessary for the user to perform their official duties and approval of privileges must be based on need-to-know. OIG determined that the system administrators granted themselves access, without supervisor approval, to 26 SMART channel cables to which they did not need access to perform their duties. These included multiple Front Office, Bureau of Medical Services, and personnel communication channels. OIG determined this issue occurred because of lack of management oversight. Failure to limit user access increases the risk of personally identifiable information being compromised.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Cairo should bring system administrator and user access rights to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset application into compliance with Department standards (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Embassy Did Not Comply With Department Standards for Managing Telephone System Inventories

Embassy Cairo did not comply with Department standards for managing telephone system inventories. Specifically, OIG found that DT unit staff did not add telephone components installed in the embassy's private branch exchange³⁷ and other spare parts received by the embassy into ILMS as required. According to 5 FAH-2 H-621(4), all embassies should update ILMS when replacement parts are received. DT unit staff told OIG they were unfamiliar with the requirement to inventory telephone parts and supplies. Failure to inventory telephone parts and equipment in accordance with Department standards increases the risk of theft and mismanagement.

³⁶ SMART is the Department's cable and record email application. SMART enables users to send and receive organizational authority messages and other messages with long term value using Microsoft Outlook on the Department's Sensitive But Unclassified and classified networks. These messages are stored and searchable in the SMART Archive.

³⁷ Private branch exchange is a private telephone exchange that provides on-premises dial service and may provide connections to local and trunked communications networks. It is based on centralized stored program computer technology that provides switched telephone networking features and services.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Cairo should inventory telephone parts and equipment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG provided a draft of this report to Department entities for review and comment on the findings and recommendations. OIG issued 11 recommendations to Embassy Cairo. The embassy's complete response can be found in Appendix B. The embassy also provided technical comments that were incorporated into the report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Cairo should manage U.S. citizen services appointment wait times in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo managed U.S. citizen services appointment wait times in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should manage immediate relative immigrant visa interviews in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with CA)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo managed immediate relative immigrant visa interviews in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should seek reimbursement of the \$389,000 in questioned costs for local guard services provided to the American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association from FY 2022 to FY 2024 and bring the provision of local guard services for the association into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with A and DS)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo disagreed with this recommendation. The embassy noted the American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association (AECWA) facility at Embassy Cairo does not meet the exclusivity requirement of 6 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 524b, which states, "The [employee association] must reimburse guard services and other services, if any, that are exclusively provided for an association facility." The embassy reported that it uses the facility to support multiple official and mission critical functions beyond the AECWA. These included official embassy events, Overseas Security Advisory Council meetings, and an assembly and muster point for embassy residences. Because

the local guard supported these official uses and was not exclusive to AEWCA, the embassy noted it complied with Department standards.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. OIG notes that at the time of the inspection, the embassy did not provide any evidence to indicate that the facility was not exclusively used for AECWA purposes. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo sought reimbursement of the \$389,000 in questioned costs for local guard services provided to the American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association from FY 2022 to FY 2024 and brought the provision of local guard services for the association into compliance with Department standards. Alternatively, it can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the facility was used by the embassy for official U.S. government purposes and was not used exclusively by the AECWA.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Cairo should bring its contract administration program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 5: Embassy Cairo should track and review its embassy housing commissioning and make ready costs in adherence with embassy standard operating procedures and Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo disagreed with this recommendation. The embassy noted it complies with Department standards for tracking costs for make ready, commissioning, labor, and materials. According to the embassy, the Department's procurement system and the Regional Financial Management System records these expenses under dedicated sub-cost centers (the commissioning sub-cost center is 7850-0899, and the make ready sub-cost center is 7850-0799). Additionally, Embassy Cairo's facility management unit staff enter labor and materials costs for make ready work orders into the Global Maintenance Management System.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. As noted in the report, at the time of the inspection, General Services and Facility Management staff told OIG that they were not tracking or reviewing all housing commissioning and make ready costs by property as required by the embassy's standard operating procedure and Department standards. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo tracked and reviewed its embassy housing commissioning and make ready costs by property in adherence with embassy standard operating procedures and Department standards.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Cairo should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 7: Embassy Cairo should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo's safety, health, and environmental management program complied with Department standards.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Cairo should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 9: Embassy Cairo should conduct a risk assessment and obtain an authorization to operate its cloud-based software application from the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo conducted a risk assessment and obtained an authorization to operate its cloud-based software application from the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Cairo should bring system administrator and user access rights to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset application into compliance with Department standards (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo disagreed with this recommendation. After reviewing State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART) configuration and discussing with the SMART team in Washington, Embassy Cairo determined that its system administrators do not have direct access to any restricted or unnecessary captions. The embassy noted the system administrator role is necessary for essential functions such as administering and troubleshooting the system and resolving cable distribution issues. Although this role allows administrators to “touch” cables to address system issues, it does not automatically distribute those cables to an administrator’s inbox, nor does it result in cables being routinely read. Embassy Cairo noted that SMART has been properly configured and that roles are assigned appropriately, the use of the system administrator role is necessary, and the system remains managed in accordance with Department guidance and operational requirements. To reinforce this, Embassy Cairo’s Diplomatic Technology unit will continue to conduct routine audits of administrator roles, in consultation with Washington counterparts, to ensure access rights remain aligned with Department policy and best practices.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. OIG acknowledges that the system administrator role is required to perform essential functions in SMART and that the system administrators at Embassy Cairo may require access to certain channels to perform their duties. However, as noted in the report, OIG determined that the system administrators granted themselves access, without supervisor approval, to 26 SMART channel cables. According to 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-10 H-112.1-1a(2), supervisors must only approve access privileges to files, programs, and data necessary for the user to perform their official duties and approval of privileges must be based on need-to-know. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo brought system administrator and user access rights to the SMART application into compliance with Department standards.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Cairo should inventory telephone parts and equipment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Cairo)

Management Response: In its September 10, 2025, response, Embassy Cairo concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date by March 2026.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Cairo inventoried telephone parts and equipment in accordance with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Herro Mustafa Garg	11/2023
Deputy Chief of Mission	Evyenia Sidereas	6/2023
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	Jonathan Webster	8/2023
Economic	Benjamin Thomson	8/2024
Management	Daniel Bischof	8/2024
Political	Nathaniel Turner	11/2020
Public Diplomacy	Ruben Harutunian	8/2023
Regional Security	Benjamin Sides	8/2023
Other Agency Representatives:		
U.S. Department of Agriculture:		
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	Erin Beasley	8/2023
Foreign Agricultural Service	Christopher Riker	7/2023
Department of Defense	David Kobs	12/2022
Department of Homeland Security:		
U.S. Customs and Border Protection	Marjon Pinguli	1/2023
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement	Aron Mann	12/2024
Department of Justice:		
Drug Enforcement Administration	Christopher Shary	6/2024
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Michelle Miller	9/2023
Library of Congress	Rustin Zarkar	3/2023
U.S. Agency for International Development	Sean Jones	8/2023
U.S. Commercial Service	Scott Pozil	8/2024

Source: OIG generated from personnel data provided by Embassy Cairo.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from March 17 to July 8, 2025,¹ 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 of State (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.

¹ The issuance of this report was delayed due to the lapse in appropriations, which began October 1, 2025, and ended November 12, 2025.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Embassy of the United States of America

UNCLASSIFIED

September 10, 2025

THRU: NEA – Senior Bureau Official Mora Namdar
TO: OIG – Lisa Rodely, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
FROM: Embassy Cairo – Ambassador Herro Mustafa Garg

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Embassy Cairo, Egypt

Embassy Cairo has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report and thanks the inspection team for its efforts throughout this process, which strengthen our operations. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

OIG Recommendation 1: Embassy Cairo should manage U.S. citizen services appointment wait times in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with the recommendation. Over 65 percent of CRBAs processed at Post involve families from outside of Egypt. The Embassy has taken steps to implement the recommendation including adding a fourth adjudicator to the ACS unit by shifting resources from other units, shifting cross-trained NIV LE staff to the ACS unit, adding one additional day of CRBA appointments per month, maximizing use of the passport repatriation program (PRP) to minimize local adjudication workload, and streamlining correspondence through an online navigator application.

OIG Recommendation 2: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should manage immediate relative immigrant visa interviews in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with the recommendation. More than 20% of IV cases at post originate from Sudan alone. The assumption of responsibility for processing Sudan-origin immigrant visa applications in April 2023 without additional resources led to a doubling of Cairo's IV backlog. Post has taken steps to implement the recommendation including adding a third adjudicator to the immigrant visa unit by shifting resources from the nonimmigrant visa unit and implementing a pre-screening program in April 2025 to reduce the 221g refusal rate. In August 2025, CA informed Post that Mission Saudi Arabia will begin processing a portion of Sudan-origin IV applications.

OIG Recommendation 3: Embassy Cairo, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, should seek reimbursement of the \$389,000 in questioned costs for local guard services provided to the American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association from FY 2022 to FY 2024 and bring the American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association's provision of local guard services into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo disagrees with the recommendation. The AECWA facility at Embassy Cairo does not meet the exclusivity requirement of 6 FAM 524b, which states: "The EA must reimburse guard services and other services, if any, that are exclusively provided for an association facility." A/CR concurs with post's assessment. (Please see also email from A/GO/PST/CR explaining this FAM section).

The Embassy uses this facility to support multiple official and mission-critical functions beyond the scope of AECWA membership, including:

- Hosting official embassy events (e.g., Independence Day celebrations, back-to-school functions, holiday gatherings) that involve the entire embassy community and mission personnel. In the past 12 months, the AECWA facility has averaged three such events per month, open to all Mission personnel irrespective of AECWA membership status.
- Serving as the designated venue for the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) steering committee meetings, which are official security engagements with private-sector partners. OSAC held approximately four

of these events at AECWA facilities in the past 12 months

- Acting as an RSO-designated emergency assembly and muster point, a critical component of the mission's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for safeguarding U.S. government personnel during crises. There are 44 housing units occupied by Mission Cairo personnel that would use the AECWA facility as an emergency assembly and muster point.

Because the local guard force supports these official uses, its role is mission-integrated and not exclusive to AECWA under the FAM definition. Per 6 FAH-5 H-341.5-4(A), the shared use of building local guard services is to be funded through ICASS cost center 5826. Post remains in full compliance with this guidance.

OIG Recommendation 4: Embassy Cairo should bring its contract administration program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with the recommendation. The Procurement Section will require a refresher trainer for Contract Officer Representatives (CORs). The CORs will be trained on how to conduct a formal annual performance review and how to enter the assessment into the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). This will be completed by the end of Q1 FY 2026. In addition to the automated system reminder, the Procurement Section will remind the CORs and their USDH supervisor of their responsibilities twice a year. The requirement to perform annual performance reviews, submitted via CPARS, will be added to the COR's work requirements which are tracked in the Merit-Based Compensation system to ensure compliance.

OIG Recommendation 5: Embassy Cairo should track and review its embassy housing commissioning and make ready costs in adherence with embassy standard operating procedures and Department standards

Management Response: Embassy Cairo disagrees with the OIG recommendation. Post complies with Department standards for tracking costs for make ready, commissioning, labor, and materials. Expenses are accurately tracked and remain in compliance with cost-tracking requirements. For example, the Department's procurement system and the Regional Financial Management System record

these expenses under dedicated sub-cost centers, allowing them to be readily reviewed. _ Supplies, tools, and equipment are not used for short-term lease units make readies, as all costs are the responsibility of the landlord – except for cleaning and painting. Painting expenses are charged to ICASS, while cleaning is contracted out and charged to the outgoing agency under a blanket purchase agreement. Make ready for U.S. government-owned properties is considered maintenance and repair. Post Cairo uses OBO maintenance and repair funds to cover supplies, tools, equipment, and painting. Cleaning is contracted out and charged to the outgoing agency under a blanket purchase agreement. The commissioning sub-cost center is 7850-0899, and the make ready sub-cost center is 7850-0799. Expenses for each are tracked through their respective dedicated sub-cost centers. Further, FAC staff input both labor and materials for make ready work orders into GMMS data. (Please see FAC Attachments 1 – Make Ready Labor and Material Costs; FAC Attachment 2 – FAC SOP on Work Order).

OIG Recommendation 6: Embassy Cairo should bring its fire protection program into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with the recommendation. We offer the following notes:

Conduct periodic fire inspection surveys using the latest OBO fire inspection report as a basis for the survey (15 FAM 813.3b): The 10 remaining items from the 2022 OBO/FIRE report with next steps are attached. (REF: Attachment 3 – FAC Fire Inspection Schedule; Attachment 4 – OBO Fire inspection Report)

FAC Cairo has an active and robust safety inspection schedule for the entire Mission (schedule attached) that includes some fire protection items. The original 2022 OBO/FIRE inspection report (attached) that OIG suggests we use as a basis of our inspections had 147 deficiencies, of which 10 remain and FAC continues to work through the list. OBO/FIRE advised Senior Facility Manager Chris Grawburg on July 2, 2025, that, due to budget constraints, OBO/FIRE would not inspect post in 2025 and hopes to schedule a visit in 2026.

Perform and log weekly functional tests of its fire pumps and monthly inspections of fire sprinkler systems (15 FAM 841a): The two fire pumps at the Embassy Compound are only tested quarterly due to a problem with a switch in the sprinkler system that sets off all the alarms on the Embassy when the fire pump is

tested. The OBO/FIRE engineer is assigned to Cairo and is aware of the problem. He will be in Cairo beginning September 9, 2025, for two weeks and this issue is on his agenda for repair. The Senior Facility Manager will update progress after the engineer arrives.

Perform and log monthly emergency lighting inspections (15 FAM 844a): FAC performed no emergency lighting inspections prior to the creation of the lighting testing program by Senior Facility Manager in May 2023. Since May 2023, FAC has missed approximately 21 percent of the monthly emergency light inspections. The Senior Facility Manager will investigate why FAC is missing lighting inspections and, by September 15, 2025, add a quarterly standing work order in GMMS for the spot check of lighting inspection work orders.

Conduct annual emergency egress inspections (15 FAM 846.4): The egress inspection program must be implemented in GMMS. GMMS requires FAC to inventory each individual emergency egress door, and there are more than 100 doors across the Mission. After the completion of the 2025 Make Ready season in October 2025, FAC will begin the inventory and submission of each egress door into GMMS. The survey and data entry will take approximately one month.

Once the doors are entered into GMMS, FAC will create an annual standing work order so OIG can see documentation of the program. The inspection work will be carried out in December 2025, with the completed work order showing that all doors were verified. Before December 31, 2025, FAC can provide the closed work order to OIG as evidence the program is in place and the work was completed in 2025.

OIG Recommendation 7: Embassy Cairo should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards.

Part 1. Embassy Did Not Complete the Required Fire-Safety Mitigation Actions for Its Residences

Management Response: Embassy Cairo disagrees with the recommendation. In May 2025 OIG investigated the 2025 fire mitigation compliance program mid-way through the 2025 process. The OIG noted post had only received the post-wide exception (March 17, 2025), but “it had not conducted and documented fire and

safety mitigation measures and strategies for the residences.” The attached 2025 timeline shows the steps of the fire mitigation process for 2025, and what was done before and after the OIG investigated in May. Post will complete the process in the coming months when all new occupants arrive and mitigation memos sent to residents. Please see the timeline for specific next steps (Attachment 5 – Embassy Cairo Fire Mitigation Timeline for 2025). Post will update OIG when all memos are sent to occupants.

Part 2. Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Program Did Not Fully Meet Department Standards

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with the recommendation. Post provides the following information in response to items 1, 2, and 3 listed in Part 2 of this recommendation.

1. Facility Management (FAC) Cairo provides safety training to all new FAC employees and annual refresher training. As of August 2025, Cairo’s Senior Post Occupational Health and Safety Officer Assistant (A/POSHO) is working with Matt Goode in SHEM to create a simple online program that all new employees (USDH, LE staff, and working EFMs at the Embassy) can take. The training will be in English. Post is working with SHEM and will provide an update on the joint effort at the end of September.
2. Senior Facility Manager (S/FM) thought that the bi-annual standing work order in Global Maintenance Management System (GMMS) pushed out to all Facility Managers requiring them to acknowledge that Post holds SHEM Committee and attach the meeting slide deck met this requirement. S/FM will submit this annual report per the requirement in November 2025 after the fall SHEM Safety Committee Meeting (date TBD.)
3. When post receives FY 2026 in October 2025, post will purchase and install these items and provide an update.

OIG Recommendation 8: Embassy Cairo should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with this recommendation. Diplomatic Technology (DT) leadership has formally assigned all Information

Systems Security Officer (ISSO) responsibilities to a mid-level Diplomatic Technology Officer (DTO), who formally assumed these responsibilities in May 2025, in response to the OIG recommendation, with approximately 75 percent of the position's portfolio dedicated to fulfilling ISSO duties. In carrying out these responsibilities, the DTO uses the Department's ISSO checklist to ensure compliance with the requirements outlined in 12 FAH-10 and 5 FAH-12, as noted in the OIG inspection report. To strengthen compliance and oversight, the designated ISSO will also coordinate activities with the regional DT ISSO support unit based in Frankfurt to complete required tasks and maintain alignment with Department standards and regulations.

Recognizing that most large and "mega" posts maintain a dedicated ISSO position, Embassy Cairo continues to highlight the need for permanent ISSO staffing. This requirement was acknowledged in the 2024 M|Strategy & Solutions Overseas Presence Review, which concurred with the addition of one ISSO position. Establishing a new, dedicated ISSO position in Cairo will ensure long-term sustainability and allow the Embassy to more effectively safeguard its extensive information technology footprint. In the meantime, DT Cairo has leveraged an existing officer to fulfill ISSO responsibilities while also updating the position capsule for the Summer 2026 bid cycle to reflect this portfolio. DT Cairo will continue to execute ISSO responsibilities using internal human capital resources while working closely with the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology and our regional bureau toward a permanent staffing solution.

OIG Recommendation 9: Embassy Cairo should conduct a risk assessment and obtain an authorization to operate its cloud-based software application from the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with this recommendation. DT Cairo is coordinating with OBO, the NEA Bureau, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology to discuss and scope a formal risk assessment of the cloud-based software application *SafetyCulture* (formerly known as *iAuditor*) and the process for obtaining an Authorization to Operate (ATO). *SafetyCulture/iAuditor* is a commercial inspection and auditing platform used worldwide to improve operational safety and compliance by digitizing checklists, workflows, and reporting. At the post, the Facilities section has employed this tool to standardize residential inspection processes, improve record-keeping, and enhance accountability across facilities and safety programs.

DT has engaged with the Facilities team and other OBO equities to begin discussions toward advancing a risk assessment in coordination with the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology in Washington, ensuring alignment with Department cybersecurity standards. Should OBO obtain the ATO, this tool would not only strengthen Embassy Cairo's operational effectiveness but could also provide significant benefits to other posts worldwide by enabling a standardized, modernized approach to inspections and safety oversight.

This effort further underscores the importance of dedicated ISSO staffing at Cairo. While a mid-level DT officer currently carries ISSO responsibilities as part of a broader portfolio, the growing scope of cloud risk assessments, ATO processes, and cybersecurity oversight highlights the need for a permanent ISSO position. Establishing such a position would ensure the Department's expanding cybersecurity and compliance requirements are consistently met and would position Cairo to serve as a model for securely adopting and scaling cloud solutions across the region and beyond.

OIG Recommendation 10: Embassy Cairo should bring system administrator and user access rights to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset application into compliance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo disagrees with this recommendation. After reviewing SMART configuration at post and in discussions with the SMART team in Washington, Embassy Cairo determined post administrators do not have direct access to any restricted or unnecessary captions. The SYSADMIN role is configured at post and worldwide in accordance with guidance provided by the SMART support team in Washington. This role is necessary to allow administrators to perform essential functions such as administering and troubleshooting the system, managing "no hits," and resolving cable distribution issues.

The SYSADMIN role also allows administrators to manage cables with all captions except for DSX, the Department's most restricted caption. While the SYSADMIN role allows administrators to technically "touch" cables to address system issues, it does not automatically distribute those cables to an administrator's inbox, nor does it result in cables being routinely read. The SMART team in Washington has confirmed that use of the SYSADMIN role is required to properly administer

SMART at post and, if absent, posts are instructed to create it. Moreover, Department policy allows for non-cleared LE staff to be assigned the SYSADMIN role, though their rights are limited compared to those of cleared USDH administrators. In Cairo, only cleared USDH DT staff have ever been assigned this role. These officers routinely complete the required SMART training and review role and caption assignments to ensure compliance with Department standards.

Post confirms SMART is and has been properly configured at Mission Cairo. Roles are assigned appropriately, the use of the SYSADMIN role is both compliant and necessary, and the system remains managed in accordance with Department guidance and operational requirements. To reinforce this, DT Cairo will continue to conduct routine audits of administrator roles, in consultation with Washington counterparts, to ensure access rights remain aligned with Department policy and best practices.

OIG Recommendation 11: Embassy Cairo should inventory telephone parts and equipment in accordance with Department standards.

Management Response: Embassy Cairo concurs with this recommendation. As part of the enterprise-wide Information Technology Infrastructure Replacement (ITIR) project, Mission Cairo's telephone system will be replaced. DT Cairo will ensure all legacy telephone equipment is inventoried and properly disposed of in accordance with Department standards and property management regulations. Likewise, all newly deployed telephone equipment will be recorded, tracked, and reconciled in ILMS to maintain accountability and lifecycle management. Inventory will be completed in conjunction with the ITIR rollout, scheduled for FY 2026 Q2, and post will continue to follow Department guidance to ensure telephone equipment inventory remains current and in compliance going forward.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Daniel Bischof, Management Counselor for Management Affairs.

Attachments:

- 1 – FAC Make Ready – Labor and Material Costs
- 2 – Embassy Cairo Facility Management SOP on Work Order
- 3 – FAC Fire Inspection Report
- 4 – OBO Fire Inspection Deficiency Report
- 5 – Embassy Cairo Fire Mitigation Timeline for 2025
- 6 – Email of A/GO/PST/CR

ABBREVIATIONS

AECWA	American Employees Cooperative and Welfare Association
COR	Contracting Officer's Representatives
CPARS	Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DT	Diplomatic Technology
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and Second-Tour
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
ISSO	Information Systems Security Officer
LE	Locally Employed
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
SHEM	Safety, Health, and Environmental Management
SMART	State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development



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