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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-24-22

Office of Inspections

June 2024

Inspection of Embassy Bangui, Central African Republic

BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

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HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-24-22

What OIG Inspected

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

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 18 recommendations to Embassy Bangui. In its comments on the draft report, the embassy concurred with 14 recommendations, disagreed with 2 recommendations, and neither agreed nor disagreed with 2 recommendations. OIG considers 16 recommendations resolved and 2 recommendations unresolved. 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.

June 2024

OFFICE OF INSPECTIONS

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Inspection of Embassy Bangui, Central African Republic

What OIG Found

- The Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission led Embassy Bangui in a professional and collaborative manner consistent with the Department of State's leadership and management principles, particularly related to communication and fostering resilience.
- The 1-year tours of U.S. direct-hire staff, many of whom had limited or no prior experience in their current positions, affected continuity of operations and the embassy's ability to implement and sustain Department best practices.
- The embassy did not fully complete bilateral joint evaluations of programs funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the embassy's end-use monitoring program did not fully meet Department standards.
- The Public Diplomacy Section's grant files did not consistently meet the Department's Federal Assistance Directive standards for documentation.
- The Consular Section lacked standard operating procedures, and it was unable to accept U.S. citizen registrations for alerts and messaging. The embassy's public entrance lacked consular signage and information.
- The lack of standard operating procedures in General Services significantly hampered key areas such as property management and motor pool operations, resulting in multiple deficiencies.
- The lack of consistent oversight led to a persistent pattern of inventory loss, to include instances of theft and fraud by local staff resulting in multiple dismissals over the past 2 years.
- Records management and storage did not comply with Department standards.
- Spotlight on Success: The embassy leveraged the re-opening of the American Center after a 6-year closure to engage key audiences in an otherwise highly constrained public diplomacy environment.

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CONTEXT

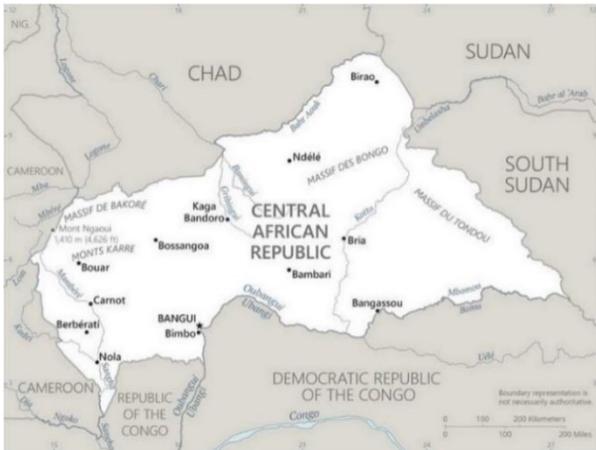


Figure 1: Map of Central African Republic. (Source: CIA World Factbook)

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country in the heart of Africa, stretching from the Congo Basin rainforest in the southwest to the Sahel in the north. It borders Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo. It has an estimated population of 5.6 million.

The United States established diplomatic relations with CAR in 1960 following the country's independence from France. CAR's political history has been marked by a series of coups and conflict among ethnically based

groups. The United States suspended embassy operations three times in the past 20 years due to insecurity and violence, most recently from December 2012 to September 2014; there were also ordered departures of embassy personnel in 2018 and again in January 2021.¹ The Department of State (Department) rates CAR as critical threat level for crime and political violence, with a Level 4 (do not travel) advisory for U.S. citizens. Most consular services are handled by the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The United States supported the establishment in 2014 by the United Nations (UN) of a peacekeeping force for CAR, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); its force as of November 2023 numbered over 18,000 and its mandate runs until November 2024. Following approval of a new constitution, President Faustin Archange Touadéra was elected in 2016, and the CAR government signed a peace agreement with the main rebel factions in 2019. However, armed groups remain in control of large parts of the country's territory. Touadéra's reelection in December 2020 led to another period of political violence that prompted him to request security assistance from the Wagner Group,² a paramilitary group linked to the Russian government. Since then, Wagner Group

¹ Per the definitions in 3 Foreign Affairs Manual 3771, suspended operations denote a U.S. mission or post that has ceased operating. During this period, U.S. direct-hire personnel are usually removed from post (often evacuated). It is possible that some locally employed staff may remain on premises to maintain the facilities. Diplomatic relations with the host government are usually maintained under suspended operations; it is not a revocation of diplomatic relations with the host country. Suspended operations may be initiated by the chief of mission or Secretary of State. Ordered departure denotes an evacuation procedure by which the number of U.S. government employees, eligible family members, or both, at a post is reduced. Ordered departure is mandatory and may be initiated by the chief of mission or the Secretary of State.

² On January 23, 2023, the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control designated the Wagner Group as a significant transnational criminal organization pursuant to Executive Order 13581, as amended by Executive Order 13863. The designation cited the Wagner Group's pattern of serious criminal behavior, including violent harassment of journalists, aid workers, and members of minority groups and harassment, obstruction, and intimidation of UN peacekeepers in CAR. Concurrently, the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets

personnel are increasingly active in CAR's financial, customs, trade, national security, and mineral resource sectors. The Wagner Group also has intensified wide-ranging disinformation campaigns to discredit MINUSCA and traditional Western partners.

CAR is one of the world's poorest countries.³ Approximately 30 percent of CAR inhabitants depend on humanitarian aid. The United States is the leading bilateral humanitarian donor in CAR, providing \$159.7 million in FY 2023 for emergency food aid, shelter, water and sanitation, health and nutrition, protection, and logistical support; this is primarily managed through third party implementers and regional offices outside of Bangui. Approximately \$12.5 million in multiyear funding for security sector and judicial reform projects is provided through the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Affairs (DRL) and detailed in the foreign assistance section of this report. A Department of Defense officer implements an International Military Training and Education program funded at \$200,000 per year.

In 2022, U.S. trade in goods to CAR totaled \$23 million, while CAR traded goods to the U.S. were valued at \$881,000. As of January 1, 2024, CAR became ineligible for trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act⁴ after the United States determined that the CAR government had committed gross violations of human rights and had not worked sufficiently to establish the protection of worker rights, rule of law, and political pluralism.

Embassy Bangui's FY 2024 Integrated Country Strategy contains three policy goals:

- Increase stability and promote peace through engagement with the international and regional communities, MINUSCA, and the CAR government.
- Maximize effectiveness of humanitarian and development assistance to reach Central Africans in need and foster self-reliance.
- Support people-to-people programs that reinforce democratic values.

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Bangui had 13 U.S. direct-hire positions, 1 Department of Defense position, 4 U.S. personal services contractors, 2 third-party contractors, a 13-person Marine Security Guard detachment, 17 Worldwide Protective Services contract security personnel, and 114 locally employed (LE) staff. Embassy Bangui is a Special Incentive Post;⁵ U.S.

Control designated the Wagner Group pursuant to Executive Order 13667 for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence, or abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law in relation to CAR.

³ According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the CAR's 2019 annual GDP per capita of \$427 ranked it 183rd out of 185 countries.

⁴ The African Growth and Opportunity Act is a U.S. trade preference program that allows certain products from eligible sub-Saharan countries to be imported duty free into the United States to encourage export-led growth and economic development.

⁵ Special Incentive Posts are posts that have 1-year tours of duty. At the time of the inspection, they were: Burkina Faso, Burma, Central African Republic, Iraq, Mali, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ukraine. For FY 2024, select

direct-hire employees serve 1-year unaccompanied tours with two rest and recuperation breaks,⁶ 35 percent danger pay,⁷ a 35 percent hardship differential,⁸ and a 1,000-pound consumables allowance.⁹

OIG evaluated the embassy's operating environment, executive direction, policy and program implementation, resource management, and information management consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.¹⁰ A related classified inspection report includes discussion of the embassy's security program, issues affecting the safety of mission personnel and facilities, and certain aspects of the information management program.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Embassy Bangui's limited staffing, uneven relationship with the host government, poor country infrastructure, and constant security risks from both internal and external actors all combined to form serious challenges for the embassy's management platform. Additionally, chronic fuel and power shortages, frequent and lengthy supply chain disruptions, and unreliable international air services undermined embassy efficiency. The country's internet service is weak and unreliable. Many of the Department's cloud-based software applications are slow or unable to load and run. For example, sending documents can sometimes take hours.

The embassy's physical plant dates from the 1950s and does not meet current Department physical security standards. Inadequate office and warehouse space means some offices are in trailers, and some equipment and supplies are stored in containers. The Department is planning to award a contract in FY 2024 for the construction of a new embassy compound in Bangui.

Bureau of African Affairs posts with 2-year tours of duty, including Burkina Faso and Mali, are also included in the Special Incentive Post program. The program provides several service incentives, including that commissioned Foreign Service officers receive additional compensation ranging from 20 to 35 percent for serving at these posts.

⁶ Employees are provided with rest and recuperation travel when conditions of life at the post present distinct and significant difficulties of sufficient severity to justify temporary relief. Among the conditions considered are climate, isolation, inadequate transportation within the country, lack of adequate recreation facilities, housing conditions, unsanitary conditions, lack of essential services such as medical or dental care, prevalence of communicable diseases, unusual personal hazards, and excessive cost of transportation from the post to a suitable relief area.

⁷ Danger pay is additional compensation above basic compensation for service at designated danger pay posts where civil insurrection, terrorism, or war conditions threaten physical harm or imminent danger to all U.S. government civilian employees.

⁸ Post hardship differential compensates employees for service in foreign areas where environmental conditions differ substantially from those in the continental United States and warrant additional compensation as a recruitment and retention incentive. The differential is paid as a percentage of basic compensation and can range from 5 to 35 percent.

⁹ The Department's Office of Allowances designates a post with a consumables allowance when it is difficult to obtain locally foodstuffs for human consumption or items used for personal or household maintenance such as toiletries and nonhazardous cleaning supplies.

¹⁰ See Appendix A.

A persistent pattern of inventory loss (more than \$2 million in expendable property shortage in FY 2023, as detailed in the Resource Management section of this report), to include instances of theft and fraud by LE staff resulting in multiple dismissals over the past 2 years, additionally complicates the working environment and relations between LE staff and management. The 1-year tour (with two rest and recuperation trips) for U.S. direct hires makes it harder to implement and sustain Department best practices and hinders consistent oversight of LE staff performance. Additionally, the pool of candidates with appropriate skills to fill LE staff vacancies is very limited. Finally, in-country travel is logistically complicated, generally requiring the use of UN aircraft and extensive, costly security arrangements.

These various operational challenges are discussed in more detail throughout the report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed Embassy Bangui's leadership based on interviews, review of staff questionnaires and other documents, and observation of embassy meetings and activities during the on-site portion of the inspection.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The Ambassador, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Bangui on April 2, 2022. She previously served as Ambassador to Benin. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) arrived in Bangui in August 2023. Previously she was the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' Director in Nassau, The Bahamas.

OIG found that the Ambassador and DCM consistently modeled the Department's 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214 leadership and management principles.¹¹ In interviews and responses to OIG questionnaires, embassy staff described both as approachable, inclusive, and open to differing viewpoints. Staff felt the two worked well together, with complementary work styles and backgrounds. OIG inspectors repeatedly heard phrases like "I feel lucky" and "they are a great team" from U.S. direct hires and LE staff as they described the Front Office. OIG found that the Country Team was cohesive and collaborative.

The Ambassador used regularly scheduled weekly meetings and periodic town halls to communicate with embassy personnel. LE staff appreciated that the Ambassador sometimes consulted them directly, including stopping by their offices. The Ambassador and DCM met weekly with all section chiefs and monthly with the LE staff association. The Ambassador also held weekly lunches beginning in late 2023 with small groups of LE staff to get to know them better and provide an informal forum for sharing views. In the wake of several fraud/theft-related dismissals of LE staff (noted above in the Operating Environment section of the report),

¹¹ The Department's leadership and management principles outlined in 3 FAM 1214b include (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.

the Ambassador held a town hall for all employees to review and stress the importance of U.S. government ethical standards.

OIG found that the Ambassador calibrated program activity and demands on staff with a realistic appreciation for what the embassy had the capacity to handle effectively. For example, she told OIG that she reluctantly passed on the opportunity to have the embassy develop a program around the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, 2023, despite its relevance for CAR, because she knew the staff was already overloaded with program demands that week, compounded by Thanksgiving leave travel. Staff told OIG that they appreciated that the Ambassador was flexible and not overly demanding on her requirements for briefing materials and support. Similarly mindful of the embassy's limited staff, OIG noted that the DCM readily stepped in as notetaker for the Ambassador on some external meetings, and both regularly wrote reporting cables themselves, rather than always tasking the Political-Economic Section. The Ambassador told OIG that she tried to model and promote work/life balance. For example, she opened the Chief of Mission Residence pool and tennis court for use by U.S. direct hires and promoted the creation of a dirt walking path inside the walled perimeter of the U.S.-owned embassy building site so staff could get some walking exercise in a city where most locations are off limits to staff because of security concerns.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

The Ambassador fulfilled her responsibilities under 2 FAM 113.1b to provide strategic direction for the mission and regularly communicated core mission priorities both inside and outside the embassy through an easy-to-remember "3 P's" framework of peace, prosperity, and people. OIG noted the DCM's push, soon after her arrival and supported by the Ambassador's hosting of a Country Team offsite in October 2023, to update an Integrated Country Strategy that did not adequately reflect the full range of mission activities (resulting in addition of a goal focused on that third "P" of people-to-people diplomacy, which had been missing).

OIG found that the Ambassador used broad and ready access to senior CAR government officials, UN and other international organization officials, and the diplomatic community to represent U.S. interests. This included four meetings with the president during the 6 months preceding the inspection. Department stakeholders and Country Team members praised the Ambassador for effective advocacy with Washington and U.S. allies in Bangui in support of sustained funding levels for humanitarian assistance, the UN peacekeeping mission, and the European Union's small but symbolically important assistance program with the CAR military.

The Ambassador worked to advance and show U.S. support for democratic values through both private diplomacy and public actions. For example, in late October 2022, the CAR President removed the head of the Constitutional Court in what was widely seen as retaliation for her resistance to a constitutional amendment that would remove term limits on the presidency. The Ambassador met with the Prime Minister and President to express U.S. government concerns about the move's implications for judicial independence and the rule of law. The embassy publicly underscored U.S. support for those values by successfully nominating the deposed judge for the Department's International Woman of Courage award, conferred to her

by Secretary Blinken and the First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, in a March 8, 2023, ceremony at the White House.

Adherence to Internal Controls

The Ambassador and DCM met jointly each week with the Management Officer; the DCM supplemented that with an additional weekly one-on-one meeting. Both meetings focused significantly on internal controls, pursuant to their 2 FAM 022.7 responsibilities. The Front Office also participated fully as required in the Statement of Assurance process,¹² which identified the lack of adequate staffing to ensure full and consistent operational and resource oversight as a significant deficiency. OIG noted the Front Office's assessment that 1-year tours for U.S. direct-hire personnel made consistent oversight of LE staff performance more challenging, and the near-constant turnover of U.S. staff – frequently with limited or no prior experience in their current positions – affected continuity of operations and the embassy's ability to implement and sustain Department best practices. The DCM was seeking to mitigate this systemic challenge by developing handover note templates for each embassy section with checklists and a calendar capturing month-to-month requirements to help improve operational continuity. Internal controls challenges are discussed in more detail in the Resource Management section of this report.

Security and Emergency Planning

OIG found that the Front Office engaged on embassy security and emergency preparedness programs consistent with chief of mission responsibilities as outlined in the Department's 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 Emergency Planning Handbook. For example, the Ambassador met with the President during the inspection to express concerns about government-imposed obstacles to the travel of U.S. personnel to and from CAR and other instances of what appeared to be government-sanctioned harassment; she sought assurances that the CAR government would meet its responsibilities with respect to the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel. The Ambassador and DCM met weekly with the Regional Security Officer to review security issues, and both participated in security drills and exercises as required.

¹² The Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 requires that the Secretary of State provide an annual Statement of Assurance to the President and Congress on the effectiveness of the Department of State's management controls and operations of Department systems. The Secretary must indicate if management controls are operating effectively to facilitate accurate reporting, effective and efficient operations, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Per 2 FAM 022.7(5), individual Statements of Assurance are required annually from each chief of mission, assistant secretary, and bureau director, and serve as the foundation for the Secretary's Statement of Assurance. For further information, see 24 STATE 334, "Your Role and Responsibilities for Management Controls and Oversight over Post Operations," January 2, 2024.

Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

OIG found that the Ambassador and the DCM supported Equal Employment Opportunity practices consistent with their responsibilities as outlined in 3 FAM 1212 and 2 FAM 1510. The embassy did not have an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor following the departure of the previous incumbent in mid-2023 but ensured program continuity by training and certifying six LE staff to serve as EEO liaisons, with whom the Ambassador and DCM met periodically.

Staff told OIG that the Ambassador and DCM actively supported Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles. In November 2023, they convened an all-hands Country Team meeting to encourage participation in a newly created DEIA Council. The embassy appointed a Federal Women's Program Coordinator in November 2023.

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

With no untenured entry-level officers or specialists posted to Bangui, the embassy did not have a formal First- and Second- Tour program. However, staff described the Ambassador and DCM as active mentors. U.S. direct hires and LE staff alike expressed appreciation for the guidance and teaching that each of them – both reporting officers by trade – provided on tasks like cable writing. The DCM also hosted an informational session for Department personnel on career development and the bidding process for Department jobs. Finally, the DCM worked with the Management Section to initiate a well-received series of informational sessions on workplace issues for the LE staff and had the LE handbook translated into French to make it more accessible to all personnel.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Bangui's policy and program implementation through a review of the Political-Economic Section's advocacy and analysis work, the INL office's administration of foreign assistance funds, the Public Diplomacy Section's activities, and the embassy's limited consular operations. OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation, with the exceptions and observations discussed below.

Political-Economic Section

OIG reviewed the Political-Economic Section's leadership and management, policy implementation, and reporting and advocacy and found the section generally complied with Department standards. Based on interviews with Washington stakeholders and other sections at Embassy Bangui, as well as observation of meetings, OIG found that the section cooperated well with other embassy elements. OIG also determined that the embassy's reporting and diplomatic engagement supported Integrated Country Strategy and Department goals.

Specifically, OIG reviewed 101 embassy cables¹³ from July 2023 through January 2024 and found reporting to be timely, relevant, and appropriately sourced. Washington end-users told OIG that embassy reporting was of good quality and responsive to policy, particularly on CAR's electoral politics and associated concerns about restrictions on democracy and pluralism, the Russian Wagner Group, and MINUSCA activity.

Foreign Assistance

Most non-humanitarian U.S. assistance to CAR is provided by INL and DRL and is formally managed by the two bureaus in Washington. INL's current multiyear programming includes a \$3 million grant to support security sector reform and strengthen law enforcement and a \$4.5 million grant to professionalize the judicial sector. DRL's \$4.9 million multiyear programming supports CAR's Special Criminal Court. The embassy's INL office helps oversee both INL and DRL programming in CAR through regular contact with both implementing organizations¹⁴ and with CAR government officials. Washington stakeholders told OIG they value INL Bangui's reporting on INL and DRL programming, as well as the law enforcement and justice sectors more generally, which provides helpful insight on the effectiveness of U.S. security assistance and suggests future lines of effort. They said INL Bangui actively participates in the entire programming cycle, from development of future programming needs to evaluation of completed assistance programs. The embassy's INL coordinator, the first incumbent in this position, arrived in August 2022, and INL's Senior Justice Advisor started in September 2023.

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Programs Lacked Joint Evaluations

OIG found that the embassy did not hold joint evaluations with the CAR government of INL-funded programming as required in the bilateral 2015 letter of agreement (LOA) through which INL funds its foreign assistance projects in CAR.¹⁵ The agreement requires U.S. and CAR government officials to meet at least every 3 months to review and report on "progress towards achievement of the program goals and objectives" and to evaluate INL programming based on "qualitative and quantitative indicators." Embassy staff acknowledged that they had not performed such joint evaluation reviews but noted that security assistance had been discussed bilaterally on several occasions in 2022 and 2023 in meetings organized under a

¹³ The Ambassador and DCM contributed significantly to reporting, as did the Public Diplomacy Section and INL office. However, Political-Economic Section staff wrote most reporting cables.

¹⁴ The UN Development Programme in CAR implements both the DRL grant as well as INL's security sector reform grant, while INL's justice sector grant is implemented by the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

¹⁵ In February 2024 the Department issued guidance to relevant embassies to meet the joint evaluation requirements in the LOAs that pertain to INL foreign assistance; see Cable 24 STATE 12028, "Fulfilling Evaluation Requirements in Letters of Agreement with Foreign Countries". This guidance was in response to an OIG finding in its inspection of INL in 2023; OIG made similar findings in inspections of individual embassies since 2017. See OIG, *Inspection of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs* (ISP-I-23-08, January 2023); *Inspection of Embassy Cotonou, Benin* (ISP-I-23-20, July 2023); *Inspection of Embassy Chisinau, Moldova* (ISP-I-23-19, July 2023); *Inspection of Embassy Abuja and Constituent Post, Nigeria* (ISP-I-23-09, June 2023); *Inspection of Embassy Nassau, The Bahamas* (ISP-I-19-19, August 2019); *Inspection of Embassy Paramaribo, Suriname* (ISP-I-19-20, July 2019); *Inspection of Embassy Port-au-Prince, Haiti* (ISP-I-19-18, June 2019); and *Inspection of Embassy Freetown, Sierra Leone* (ISP-I-17-16, May 2017).

separate memorandum of understanding between the U.S. and CAR governments in October 2020.¹⁶ However, the 2020 memorandum of understanding does not reference the 2015 LOA, and the two countries did not draft reports following meetings held under the memorandum of understanding (though INL programming in CAR was discussed at these meetings). The lack of joint reviews to evaluate progress could hinder the efficient use of funding and hamper the measurement of results against both the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy objectives and INL's program objectives.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bangui should comply with the requirements of the 2015 Letter of Agreement between the United States government and the Central African Republic government on foreign assistance projects funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

End-Use Monitoring Program Did Not Fully Meet Requirements

OIG found that INL Bangui's end-use monitoring (EUM) program did not fully meet Department standards.¹⁷ For example, a May 2023 INL review of INL Bangui's EUM practices identified almost 2,000 INL-provided items in CAR that may be subject to EUM that are not being tracked in the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS).¹⁸ In addition, INL Bangui did not have a completed standard operating procedure to implement EUM, as required by INL guidelines.¹⁹ INL Bangui staff told OIG that, prior to the arrival of the INL coordinator, LE staff did not access Department systems to keep track of INL assets that are subject to EUM. They also told OIG that they had undertaken some EUM, including outside of Bangui, but that the security situation in CAR inhibited their ability to undertake EUM in much of the country. INL Bangui staff told OIG that the embassy was working towards completing a post-specific standard operating procedure which would accord with INL's recent amendments to its policies and procedures regarding the conduct of EUM in non-permissive environments. Lack of a fully implemented, post-specific EUM standard operating policy and procedures creates an increased risk that sensitive U.S. assistance could be diverted for unintended purposes that contradict the assistance goals.

¹⁶ "Institutions Durables: Forces Efficaces" Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Central African Republic, October 2020.

¹⁷ The Department requires certain property purchased with foreign assistance funds be monitored to ensure it is used for intended purposes, known as end-use monitoring. For instance, INL equipment valued at more than \$10,000 or items designated as defense articles, munitions, or dual-use items are subject to this requirement, a requirement posts are obligated to review and follow. See *INL Standard Operating Policy/Procedure for End Use Monitoring*, Sections 6.3.2 through 6.3.4, December 12, 2023. End-use monitoring fulfills the requirements of Section 484(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and Chapter 3A, Section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act. See 22 U.S.C. § 2291c(b) and 22 U.S.C. § 2785.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ INL, *INL Standard Operating Policy/Procedure for End Use Monitoring*, Section 6.1, December 12, 2023.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Bangui should comply with the end-use monitoring requirements for Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs assets. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Leahy Vetting Lacked Standard Operating Procedure

OIG reviewed INL Bangui's management of the embassy's Leahy vetting program.²⁰ The INL office took over this function from the Political-Economic Section upon the arrival of the INL coordinator. DRL, which coordinates the program for the Department, told OIG that the embassy submitted most Leahy vetting batches to the Department in a timely manner. However, the embassy had not completed an embassy-specific standard operating procedure on Leahy vetting in accordance with DRL guidelines. The INL office proceeded to complete a standard operating procedure during the inspection, and OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's leadership, strategic planning and reporting, resource and knowledge management, grants management, exchanges and cultural programs, and media engagement, as well as the operations of the embassy's American Center. The section consisted of one Public Affairs Officer and four full-time and two part-time LE staff members. A lack of back up coverage for the Public Affairs Officer during absences and constant security risks hindered the section's ability to manage resources and conduct public outreach. Despite these challenges, the section advanced Integrated Country Strategy goals through a range of public diplomacy tools and programs, including English language learning, exchange programs, alumni engagement, and the American Center. OIG found the embassy's public diplomacy activities generally complied with Department standards and guidance, with the exception noted below.

Public Diplomacy Grant Files Did Not Meet Department Standards for Documentation

The Public Diplomacy Section's grant files did not consistently meet the Department's Federal Assistance Directive²¹ standards for documentation. OIG's review of 12 public diplomacy grants

²⁰ 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. 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. See 22 U.S.C. § 2378d and 9 FAM 303.8-5(B). The Department also 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.

²¹ The Department's Federal Assistance Directive establishes internal guidance, policies, and procedures for all domestic and overseas grant-making bureaus, offices, and posts within the Department when administering Federal financial assistance. Standards relevant to this finding were Federal Assistance Directive, October 2022, Chapter 2 F1-4 (Pre-Federal Award Requirements: Conduct an Open Competition to Select a Recipient); Chapter 2 H1-2 (Pre-Federal Award Requirements: Conduct a Merit Review of Proposals and Recipient Selection); Chapter 4.D, paras 1-2 (Post Federal Award Requirements: Monitoring and Reporting); and Chapter 5C (Closeout: Grants Officer Responsibilities).

totaling \$170,528, in a universe of 27 grants totaling \$173,692 from February 1, 2021, through February 6, 2024, found that many grants had not been closed out and were generally lacking documentation. Among the missing documents were panel review decisions to approve grants, evidence of monitoring and assessment of progress, documentation of changes in grants officers, and award closeout documentation. Embassy staff told OIG that annual rotation of public diplomacy officers, staffing gaps in LE staff positions, and a lack of training and standard operating procedures caused these deficiencies. Under current leadership, however, the Public Diplomacy Section established a grants standard operating procedure, trained staff, established two new grants officer representatives, and closed out most of the expired grants prior to or during the inspection. The Public Diplomacy Section also established a plan to close all remaining expired grants and used the standard operating procedure on all current grants, observing effective grants management. Given the corrective actions taken by the embassy, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Spotlight on Success: Embassy Bangui Leveraged Reopening of the Bangui American Center to Extend Public Diplomacy Reach to Strategic Audiences

The Bangui American Center, reopened in January 2023 after closing in 2017, afforded the embassy a vital means of engaging key audiences in an otherwise highly constrained public diplomacy environment. The Public Diplomacy Section leveraged the Center's spaces to offer internet access, research resources, and programs that reach strategic audiences, including students, journalists, and emerging leaders. The Public Diplomacy Section established English conversation sessions; invited English clubs and teachers; implemented live English courses for students, journalists, and teachers; held in-person and virtual speaker programs; and conducted film screenings to explain and promote U.S. culture, such as for Black History Month in February. In FY 2023, the Bangui American Center received 4,818 visits and held 75 total programs. The Public Diplomacy Section expanded upon this outreach by procuring robotics equipment to promote science, technology, and innovation; it approved funding and identified a local partner to begin an English micro-scholarship program; and scheduled training for one LE staff member to conduct education advising with the goal of sending CAR students to study in the United States.

Consular Operations

OIG reviewed Embassy Bangui's limited consular operation as well as coordination with Embassy Yaoundé. Most consular operations for CAR are handled by Embassy Yaoundé, including passport and visa services and consular fraud prevention reporting on behalf of Embassy Bangui. Embassy Bangui performed very limited consular services, specifically special U.S. citizen services, messaging/website updates for U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in CAR, and verification of documents originating in CAR. Embassy Bangui's Consular Section is staffed by a Political-Economic-Consular Officer, who performs consular work on an as-needed basis, and one Political-Economic-Consular LE staff member who is expected to spend 15 percent of his time on consular issues. Embassy Bangui proactively obtained approval from the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) for an online payment process to renew passports through pay.gov, allowing U.S. citizens residing in CAR to drop their signed applications at Embassy Bangui for sending to Yaoundé, eliminating the need for U.S. citizens to physically travel to Yaoundé. OIG

noted that the Front Office was aware of issues, such as arrest or detainment of U.S. citizens or problems with immigration officials when entering the country, involving the small U.S. citizen community. The embassy maintained close contact with the community through regular town halls.

OIG reviewed Embassy Bangui's crisis communication plan for messaging to U.S. citizens residing in CAR (predominantly missionaries and temporary staff with nongovernment organizations and MINUSCA). During the inspection, the Public Diplomacy Section and Consular Section completed a crisis communication plan that outlined roles and responsibilities, emergency contact information, and a communication action plan that included templates, platforms, and technologies needed for messaging to U.S. citizens in the event of a crisis.

OIG concluded that Embassy Bangui's limited consular program generally complied with guidance contained in 7 FAM, 9 FAM, 7 FAH, applicable statutes, and other Department policies, with the exceptions described below.

Consular Section Did Not Maintain Standard Operating Procedures

The Consular Section lacked standard operating procedures for specific consular services it offers – responding to requests for verification of vital records and education diplomas, responding to inquiries, and assisting U.S. citizens with special citizen service requests. It also did not maintain contact information for CAR government officials. The requirements in 7 FAH-1 H-264a and d specify that consular services worldwide must be provided according to procedures that are uniform, consistent, and reflective of the CA Management Framework and that local procedures cannot be arbitrary or informal but must be consistent, transparent, and fully documented. Consular staff had not taken the time to create standard operating procedures outlining specific steps and procedures for consular services offered at Embassy Bangui. Without standard operating procedures, the short tours and high turnover of staff and officers result in consular staff who will likely not have access to institutional knowledge and will waste time and effort recreating procedures for local consular operations.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bangui should draft standard operating procedures with instructions for local consular operations. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Consular Records and Files Lacked Organization and Accessibility

Embassy Bangui's consular operations' records and files, including templates and contact information, were kept on personal drives or in the Political-Economic Section's files rather than on the consular SharePoint site. Consular staff must be able to locate crucial information quickly and accurately, as specified in 7 FAH-1 H-451 and H-453b. Consular staff said they did not realize the importance of keeping their records and files on the consular SharePoint site. Without systematic, organized, and accessible files, consular staff cannot quickly find and access information necessary to perform their duties efficiently and effectively.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Bangui should maintain consular records and files in a systematic and organized manner in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Consular Section Unable to Accept U.S. Citizen Registrations for Alerts and Messaging

Because Embassy Bangui does not have access to consular systems, consular staff could not accept or search U.S. citizens who registered in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).²² This resulted in Embassy Bangui consular staff being unable to add names to STEP to send out emergency messaging. CA encourages U.S. citizens to enroll in STEP to enable the Department and embassies to contact U.S. citizens in an evacuation or other emergency, as described in 7 FAM 041b. OIG learned that consular systems information technology staff in Washington pulled the CAR registrations list from STEP in late 2022 or early 2023 and sent it to Embassy Yaoundé²³ for manual entry into a database to create a new emergency and alert distribution list for the Message Alert System for Citizens Overseas Tool MASCOT for U.S. citizens in CAR.²⁴ However, because the list of U.S. citizens registered in STEP is constantly changing and the list from STEP is not being uploaded into MASCOT on a regular basis, U.S. citizens registered in STEP for temporary travel do not receive alerts or emergency messages. Without a current list of U.S. citizens who have registered their presence in CAR, Embassy Bangui and CA cannot send messages to all who registered and may be unable to locate and alert U.S. citizens physically present in the country during a crisis or evacuation.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Embassy Yaoundé, should resolve coordination and systems problems that impede the enrollment of U.S. citizens in the Central African Republic in the Smart Traveler Enrollment System. (Action: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with CA and Embassy Yaoundé)

Consular Section Did Not have Outside Signage with Consular Information

Embassy Bangui's public entrance lacked a signboard with information about consular services, such as emergency after hours phone numbers, the embassy's internet address, information about passport and visa services offered at Embassy Yaoundé and contact information for Embassy Yaoundé's Consular Section. Guidance in 7 FAH-1 263.8b states that consular sections should use outside signs to provide visitors with current and helpful information about consular services. Embassy staff told OIG that the local guard force at the embassy's main entrance had

²² STEP is an internet site linked to the Department "where U.S. citizens residing or traveling abroad can enroll themselves on-line using an Office of Management and Budget approved form DS-4024 that includes an optional opportunity to provide prior written consent to disclosure under the Privacy Act." 7 FAM 044a and b. Registrants can receive, via email, updates to Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts, and Travel Advisories specific to the countries they choose. Their registration records will be available to relevant embassies and consulates. The STEP program "allows consular staff to respond more effectively and rapidly to requests for assistance." 7 FAM 044d.

²³ As noted previously, Embassy Yaoundé covers CAR for most consular services.

²⁴ The Message Alert System for Citizens Overseas Tool (MASCOT) is an application that allows consular staff to send alerts, routine messages, and travel advisories to U.S. citizen travelers who enrolled a trip in STEP or within a particular consular district.

handouts for this information to provide when visitors requested. Requiring that visitors request this information from the local guard force could inconvenience visitors, including U.S. citizens, who seek information about consular services and could result in local guards providing erroneous information or making decisions without consular knowledge.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Bangui should install signage with consular information in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Bangui's internal controls in general services, facility management, financial management, human resources, and health unit operations. During the inspection, the embassy corrected three deficiencies identified by OIG. Specifically, the embassy:

- Reviewed approximately \$6.3 million worth of unliquidated obligations, including \$1.3 million with no activity in the previous year, and de-obligated invalid obligations totaling \$251,614 (4 FAM 225d).
- Took steps to clear overdue travel advances totaling more than \$17,000 (4 FAM 464.5(1), 4 FAM 464.6-2a(1), and 4 FAM 464.6-2c-d).
- Issued a work de-energized policy²⁵ (15 FAM 957.7b(1)).

Although the Management Section's facility management, financial management, and human resources functions generally implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with Department standards, OIG found numerous deficiencies in the section's general services operations and a deficiency in the facility management operation. As noted in the Internal Controls portion of the Executive Direction section of this report, section staff attributed many of these issues to inadequate staffing and staffing gaps that resulted in workload issues and competing priorities. The Management Section was comprised of four U.S. direct-hire employees: a Management Officer, who also served as the Human Resources Officer and Financial Management Officer; a first-time General Services Officer; an Information Management Officer; and a Medical Practitioner. A third-party contractor oversaw the facility management operations. The Management Officer told OIG he spent approximately 50 percent of his time on human resources matters, which left little time to perform duties in other areas under his purview. Section staff also cited a lack of familiarity with Department standards, insufficient training, and inadequate facilities as additional issues that impacted the section's internal controls.

²⁵ A work de-energized policy provides guidance on how to ensure that electrical power is turned off and remains off when working on electrical equipment.

General Services

Lack of Standard Operating Procedures Hampered Property Management and Motor Pool Operations

OIG found the lack of standard operating procedures in General Services hampered operations in key areas such as property management and motor pool operations. General Services staff told OIG that the frequent rotation of U.S. direct hires resulted in situations where they were unsure how to properly handle certain tasks. For example, some General Services staff who could be called upon to receive fuel deliveries in the absence of the acting receiving clerk were not familiar with the procedures and internal controls in place for fuel deliveries. In another example, staff were unsure how to account for vehicle maintenance costs (asking OIG if the labor costs of the direct-hire LE staff mechanics should be included in such costs) and unsure how to properly account for and validate the need for vehicle spare parts issued by the warehouse. The Government Accountability Office's Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, Principle 3.10,²⁶ states that effective documentation assists in promoting internal controls by establishing and communicating responsibilities to personnel and providing a means to retain organizational knowledge. Furthermore, 18 FAM 301.1-4a states that program management involves thoughtful planning and implementation of programs and processes in a manner that achieves intended goals and objectives. Staff told OIG that the lack of standard operating procedures was caused by staffing issues and competing priorities. The absence of standard operating procedures reduces operational efficiency and creates risks that critical responsibilities will not be carried out effectively.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bangui should implement standard operating procedures for its property management and motor pool operations. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

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

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

- Three chauffeurs held expired medical clearances (14 FAM 433.4a).
- Nine incidental drivers did not complete driver's safety refresher training (14 FAM 433.5a-b).
- The embassy did not track all incidental drivers' compliance with driver safety training and medical clearance requirements using the Department's Fleet Management Information System²⁷ (14 FAM 433.4e and 14 FAM 433.5e). For example, none of the

²⁶ Government Accountability Office, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, Principle 3.10, page 29 (GAO-14-704G, September 2014).

²⁷ The Fleet Management Information System is the Department's enterprise system for the management of all fleet operations.

U.S. direct hires and contractors who operated embassy vehicles were recorded in the system.²⁸

Embassy staff told OIG the issues related to medical clearances and driver safety training occurred because of workload issues and competing priorities. The lack of complete records in the Fleet Management Information System resulted from staff's unfamiliarity with Department standards. Failure to enforce Department motor vehicle safety standards increases the risk of injury to drivers and the public, as well as damage to U.S. government property.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bangui should comply with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

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

The embassy did not manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. Specifically, OIG found that:

- Armored vehicles were not parked under a covered structure to prevent damage to the transparent armor,²⁹ contrary to 14 FAM 435.3b.³⁰
- Tires were not balanced, and the embassy did not ensure that tires were systematically replaced within 6 years of the manufacturing date, as required by 23 STATE 111682.³¹
- Embassy mechanics lacked functioning diagnostic equipment to properly maintain the vehicles, contrary to guidance in 23 STATE 111644.³²
- The embassy did not set maintenance schedules for all vehicles in the Fleet Management Information System, as required in 14 FAM 437.1a.

Embassy staff told OIG the embassy did not have sufficient covered parking spaces to ensure adequate protection from the sun. Staff also told OIG they were unable to balance tires because the wheel balancer broke more than 2 years ago. Lastly, staff told OIG that their diagnostic equipment was unusable because the embassy had not renewed the software license. Therefore, the diagnostic software was outdated. Failure to follow Department standards for managing armored vehicles increases the cost of vehicle operations and the risk of injury to vehicle occupants and the public.

²⁸ Because these incidental operators were not tracked in the Fleet Management Information System, OIG could not determine whether they were in compliance with all motor vehicle safety requirements.

²⁹ Transparent armor is a ballistic resistant transparent composite that may replace the original equipment manufacturer glass or be positioned directly on original equipment manufacturer glass.

³⁰ According to 14 FAM 435.3b, armored vehicles must be parked under a covered structure to prevent delamination and other damage to the transparent armor. If covered parking is not available, post must coordinate with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations for the construction of covered parking. Until covered parking can be constructed, exterior front and rear sun shields or car covers can be used to temporarily protect transparent armor.

³¹ Cable 23 STATE 111682, "2024 Annual Armored Vehicle Tire Guidance," October 17, 2023.

³² Cable 23 STATE 111644, "FY 24 Annual Armored Vehicle Maintenance Guidance," October 17, 2023.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Bangui should manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Embassy Lacked Motor Vehicle Key Control System

OIG found the embassy had not implemented a control system for its motor vehicle keys. OIG observed that keys were left in unattended vehicles parked on the embassy's compound, including over a weekend. According to 14 FAM 431.6-2b(4), the Mission Vehicle Accountable Officer³³ is responsible for implementing a key control system and a vehicle key log for motor pool vehicles showing the operator's name, tag number, and date/time when keys are picked up and returned. Management staff told OIG this occurred because of a lack of management oversight. The lack of a key control system increases the risk of motor vehicles being used for unauthorized purposes.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Bangui should implement a motor vehicle key control system, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Embassy Did Not Manage Property in Accordance With Department Standards

The embassy did not manage its personal property in accordance with Department standards. OIG identified the following internal control deficiencies related to the embassy's management of personal property:

- The embassy did not properly track and account for all expendable property,³⁴ such as facility maintenance small hardware and spare parts, in ILMS. According to 14 FAM 414.2-1a(2), the ILMS Expendable Management System is the approved system for operating materials and supplies in storage at a warehouse or storeroom to be consumed in normal operations. Accordingly, the embassy could not explain a pattern of expendable property inventory shortages that exceeded \$2 million in FY 2023 alone (see Table 2 below).
- The embassy did not account for all nonexpendable property³⁵ in ILMS. For example, OIG was unable to find any property records in ILMS for five of the embassy's six motorcycles valued at approximately \$12,600. According to 14 FAM 414.2-1a(1), ILMS Asset Management is the approved property accountability system for Department accountable personal property.

³³ The Mission Vehicle Accountable Officer is responsible for managing the mission-wide fleet program. See 14 FAM 431.6-2a.

³⁴ Expendable property is property which, when put in use, is consumed, loses its identity, or becomes an integral part of another item of property. Examples are office supplies, automobile tires, and machine parts.

³⁵ Nonexpendable property is property such as furniture, information technology equipment, motor vehicles, and generators.

- The embassy did not follow Department property receipt standards. Management staff told OIG that the receiving clerk³⁶ did not inspect all property delivered to the embassy and was occasionally asked to issue receiving reports without performing an inspection. According to 14 FAM 413.1b, the receiving clerk must inspect all property delivered to post as to quantity, quality, and condition, and ensure that the property is in accordance with the terms and conditions of the acquisition document.
- The embassy did not maintain proper separation of duties. For example, property management staff who maintained property records participated in the annual inventory, contrary to 14 FAM 416.2c. In cases where separation of duties is not possible, a management review is required twice a year in accordance with 14 FAM 411.2c; however, the embassy did not conduct such reviews.
- The embassy's accountable property officer did not conduct periodic, unannounced spot counts of expendable and nonexpendable property to verify the accuracy of property records in ILMS and reconcile discrepancies, as required by 14 FAM 411.2-2b(8). Instead, the spot counts were performed by property management LE staff.
- As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the embassy maintained an excessive inventory of nonexpendable property, including old computer and communications equipment, that needed to be disposed. Management staff told OIG the embassy had not held an auction of excess property in more than 2 years. According to 14 FAM 411.2-2b(4), the accountable property officer is responsible for direct oversight of property management procedures and key functions, including disposing of personal property to prevent accumulation in offices, warehouses, and other locations.
- The embassy stored new furniture intended for the Chief of Mission Residence in shipping containers staged in a vacant lot, contrary to guidance in 15 FAM 735c which requires storage in a climate-controlled warehouse.
- The embassy did not store replacement tires for its motor vehicle fleet in a closed, cool, dry room, contrary to 14 FAH-1 H-313.2-11a. Instead, tires were stored outdoors, in a covered open space.

Table 1: Nonexpendable Property Shortage – Fiscal Years 2019 through 2023

Fiscal Year	Inventory Value	Shortage (Percentage)	Shortage (Dollars)
2019	\$2,410,233	8.55	\$206,177
2020	\$2,025,906	2.09	\$42,361
2021	\$1,990,176	0.58	\$11,578
2022	\$7,233,666	1.91	\$38,085
2023	\$7,388,224	0.42	\$8,890

Source: OIG generated from annual inventory certification documents obtained from the Bureau of Administration.

³⁶ The receiving clerk is responsible for the receipt and inspection of all property and the preparation and distribution of receiving reports. The receiving clerk is the link between the procurement, property, accountability, and certifying functions. When a receiving report is signed stating that the supplies or service have been received, the procurement process is completed, the accountability function begins, and the process for payment is initiated.

Table 2: Expendable Property Shortage – Fiscal Years 2019 through 2023

Fiscal Year	Inventory Value	Shortage (Percentage)	Shortage (Dollars)
2019	\$623,586	17.08	\$106,552
2020	\$564,259	0.10	\$618
2021	\$625,191	10.39	\$64,971
2022	\$1,191,904	9.92	\$118,249
2023	\$2,490,037	92.26	\$2,297,371

Source: OIG generated from annual inventory certification documents obtained from the Bureau of Administration.



Figures 2 and 3: Excess computer and communications equipment in storeroom, Embassy Bangui. (Source: OIG)

Management staff told OIG that the embassy did not comply with Department standards for property management because of U.S. direct-hire staffing gaps, lack of qualified locally employed supervisors and staff, insufficient training, inadequate facilities, and competing priorities. Lack of consistent sound management controls increases the risk of fraud, waste, and mismanagement of resources.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should bring its property management procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with A)

Embassy's Fuel Pump Meter Could Not be Calibrated

The embassy's fuel pump meter could not be calibrated to reflect accurate readings. During the inspection, a local contractor attempted to calibrate the fuel pump meter but was unsuccessful. After calibration, the difference between the quantity of fuel dispensed according to the pump's meter and the actual quantity of fuel dispensed as measured by the contractor was approximately 10 percent.³⁷ According to the Department's Motor Pool Procedures Overseas, Section 3.3b, pumps become less accurate with frequent use, age, and exposure to

³⁷ The contractor dispensed 100 liters of fuel in a calibrated vessel; however, the fuel pump's meter showed a quantity of only 90 liters. Prior to calibration, the discrepancy was approximately 15 percent – or 85 liters measured by the fuel pump meter for 100 liters of fuel dispensed, as measured by the contractor.

environmental factors and should be calibrated at least yearly by a qualified service person. Embassy staff told OIG the contractor could not find a solution to this calibration issue. In March 2022, OIG issued an information report³⁸ that highlighted widespread fuel management deficiencies at overseas posts, Department efforts to address those deficiencies, and the importance of ongoing Department-wide efforts to systemically address those deficiencies. Incorrect fuel meter readings impede accurate usage records and increase the risk of fraud and mismanagement.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Bangui should repair or replace its fuel pump. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Procurement Files Were Not Closed Out Within Required Timeframes

The embassy did not close out procurement files in ILMS within required timeframes. Specifically, the mission did not close out 102 procurement files from FY 2015 to FY 2023. In addition, 2,435 files from FY 2015 to FY 2022 could not be closed out until procurement staff completed all required steps. Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b³⁹ states that contracts under simplified acquisitions procedures should be closed out immediately after the contracting officer receives evidence of receipt of property and final payment. Embassy staff told OIG this issue occurred because workload issues limited the amount of time available to perform contract closeout processes. Failure to close out procurement files within the required timeframe increases the risk of inaccuracies in procurement records and of internal control issues in procurement operations.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Bangui should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Facility Management

Embassy's Real Property Inventory Was Inaccurate

OIG found the embassy's real property inventory was inaccurate. Specifically, the embassy had not accounted for all structures in the Department's Real Property Application (RPA). OIG's review of RPA data showed that, for example, four hardened alternative trailer systems used as office space on the chancery compound were not included in the embassy's inventory. According to 15 FAM 661.10a, RPA is the Department's single comprehensive database for all real property abroad and serves as a sub-ledger to the Department's financial system. Posts must use RPA to manage their real property inventory and are required to update RPA as real property transactions occur, in accordance with 15 FAM 141.1a.⁴⁰ Management staff told OIG this occurred because of unfamiliarity with Department standards. OIG issued an audit in

³⁸ OIG, *Information Report: Systemic Deficiencies Related to the Department of State's Fuel Management From FY 2016 to FY 2020* (AUD-MERO-22-20, March 2022).

³⁹ Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b also cites 48 C.F.R. § 4.804-1.

⁴⁰ The standards in 15 FAM 141.1a apply to all land, buildings, and structures owned or leased by the U.S. government abroad.

September 2023⁴¹ that found the Department could not provide an accurate or complete inventory of temporary structures at overseas posts due to widespread deficiencies and inconsistencies in the use of RPA. Inaccurate reporting in RPA increases the risk of mismanagement of the embassy's real property assets.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Bangui should complete a review of all structures on the chancery compound and ensure that they are reported in the Real Property Application. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Bangui's information management operations, including Sensitive But Unclassified and classified computer operations; physical protection of information technology resources; classified communications security; emergency communication preparedness; telephone programs; records management; and mail services. The Information Management Office was supervised by an Information Management Officer, the only cleared Diplomatic Technology Manager at the embassy. OIG determined that the embassy's information management operations generally complied with Department polices and applicable laws, with the exceptions noted below and in the companion classified report.

Information Systems Security Officer Did Not Perform All Required Duties

The embassy's sole Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) did not perform all required information systems security duties. According to 12 FAM 613.4 and 5 FAH-11 H-116a, ISSOs are responsible for meeting the minimum requirements for implementing cybersecurity policies and procedures for information systems as detailed in the Bureau of Information Resource Management's ISSO checklist.⁴² Although OIG found that the ISSO correctly performed new user briefings, access request reviews, and local registry authority duties, the ISSO did not use the ISSO checklist to review mobile devices and systems audit logs for inappropriate or malicious activities and did not consistently monitor security controls. The ISSO told OIG that he did not perform these duties due to the lack of an alternate ISSO to help and competing priorities. OIG issued two management assistance reports, one in May 2017⁴³ and the other in December 2020,⁴⁴ 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.

⁴¹ OIG, *Audit of Physical Security Standards for Department of State Temporary Structures at Selected Overseas Posts* (AUD-SI-23-30, September 2023).

⁴² The ISSO checklist includes a description of tasks, an explanation of minimum tasks to be performed, and how often they need to be performed.

⁴³ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017).

⁴⁴ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Continued Deficiencies in Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Responsibilities at Overseas Posts* (ISP-21-07, December 2020).

Recommendation 15: Embassy Bangui should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Non-Enterprise Networks Were Vulnerable to Compromise

Embassy Bangui had not implemented all recommended physical cybersecurity corrective measures for vulnerabilities in non-enterprise networks⁴⁵ that had been identified in the February 2023 Bureau of Diplomatic Security Cybersecurity Assessment.⁴⁶ OIG confirmed that the ISSO could not check audit logs on non-enterprise networks as required in 12 FAM 642.4-5 due to the lack of a central network server. The embassy was developing a design for a central network server but had not secured funding or ordered equipment and licenses to consolidate the three separate embassy compound non-enterprise networks into a central protected system to meet Department standards. OIG issued a management assistance report in July 2017⁴⁷ highlighting the failure of embassies to correct cybersecurity problems raised in Department assessments. The continued inattention to resolving Department cybersecurity recommendations results in undue risk and potential compromise to Department information systems.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Bangui should comply with Department standards for non-enterprise network physical cybersecurity. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Embassy Did Not Properly Dispose of Obsolete Classified Information Processing Equipment

OIG discovered obsolete and excess classified information processing equipment consisting of desktop computers, printers, laptops, and controlled radios occupying secure storage and classified pouch space, three safes, and a staff office within the post communications center. This storage did not comply with guidance for decertification, decommissioning, and disposal of this equipment contained in 12 FAH-6 H-633.5-9. The embassy told OIG that competing workload demands had prevented them from disposing of old assets, including hard drives that contained classified information that should be destroyed per 14 FAM 417.1-1(c). Excessive inventory adds security risks and occupies limited secure storage space and staff offices.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Bangui should dispose of obsolete classified information processing equipment, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

⁴⁵ The Department defines a non-enterprise network as an internet connection from a commercial or government internet service provider on a Department-owned and operated discrete non-sensitive unclassified local area network that is not connected to any other Department system.

⁴⁶ Engineering Services Center Pretoria, Cybersecurity Assessment, U.S. Embassy Bangui (2023-001).

⁴⁷ OIG, Management Assistance Report: *Deficiencies Reported in Cyber Security Assessment Reports Remain Uncorrected* (ISP-17-39, July 2017).

Records Management Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

OIG found Embassy Bangui's records management program did not comply with Department standards for records lifecycle processes.⁴⁸ OIG reviewed a sample of electronic files on the embassy's SharePoint sites and found that only the Front Office had well organized files and regularly used State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART)⁴⁹ for official business. Other sections did not organize program and administrative records to allow for quick retrieval or deletion as required by 5 FAM 418.9b(4)(c)ii. In addition, according to the Department's Records Service Center, the embassy last retired paper program records in 1995 and ambassador and DCM records in 1993; the Department has not received any e-Records⁵⁰ retirements from Embassy Bangui. Furthermore, embassy records were disorganized and stored in a warehouse facility vulnerable to insects, dust, vermin, and unauthorized access. Figures 4 and 5, below, show records stored at the warehouse. OIG found the embassy's failure to delegate records management responsibility and provide guidance to an assigned employee in each section, as required in 5 FAH-4 H-215.3-2b, led to the deficiencies in the embassy's records management program. OIG issued management assistance reports in September 2020 and June 2022⁵¹ that highlighted deficiencies in records management, including records retirement, across the Department. Without a records management program that follows Department requirements for organization, records retirement disposition, and oversight, the embassy is vulnerable to inefficient information retrieval and loss of critical documentation.

⁴⁸ As defined in 44 U.S.C. Section 3301, official records include "all recorded information, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received by a federal agency under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the United States government or because of the informational value of data in them." Official records do not include "library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes; or duplicate copies."

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ The eRecords self-submission portal, part of the eRecords System, allows bureaus, office, and overseas posts to transfer permanent electronic records to the Bureau of Administration.

⁵¹ OIG, Management Assistance Report: *Deficiencies in Overseas Records Management* (ISP-20-25, September 2020); and OIG, Management Assistance Report: *The Department of State's Records Retirement Process* (ISP-22-20, June 2022).



Figure 4: Disorganized and outdated records stored at the warehouse, Embassy Bangui. (Source: OIG)



Figure 5: Official documents not stored in records boxes at the warehouse, Embassy Bangui. (Source: OIG)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Bangui should implement a records management program that complies with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Mail Screening Procedures Did Not Follow Guidelines

Although Embassy Bangui had an adequate mail screening facility and Class 1 biological safety cabinet, the initial mail handling procedures did not follow 14 FAH-4 H-331.2c guidelines as local mail, messenger deliveries, and packages were opened and temporarily stored in the compound access control⁵² before biological screening. This resulted in potential contamination to the building, local guards, embassy staff, and visitors. OIG discussed the risk with Regional Security Office and IM staff, and they changed the movement procedures to adhere with Department standards. Based on the embassy's corrective actions, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

⁵² A compound access control facility is a system of gates, barriers, and guard booths, used to pre-screen personnel and vehicles entering a secure perimeter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Recommendation 1: Embassy Bangui should comply with the requirements of the 2015 Letter of Agreement between the United States government and the Central African Republic government on foreign assistance projects funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui disagreed with this recommendation. The embassy noted it meets quarterly with officials from the Central African Republic government to build on the conclusions of the October 2020 Durable Solutions, Effective Forces agreement, which was created to help the embassy implement the Letter of Agreement. The embassy also noted it held steering committee meetings in 2021 and 2022, as well as a working level review of Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)-funded programing in June 2023. Lastly, the embassy meets at least quarterly with the Central African Republic government to review the requirements of the Letter of Agreement, and the conclusions of those joint discussions are included in INL quarterly reporting.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. As noted in the report, OIG acknowledges that security assistance had been discussed bilaterally in meetings with officials from the Central African Republic government organized under the October 2020 Durable Solutions, Effective Forces agreement.¹ However, during the inspection, OIG did not find evidence of joint reporting on the quarterly meetings, as required by the 2015 Letter of Agreement. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui complied with the requirements of the 2015 Letter of Agreement between the United States government and the Central African Republic government on foreign assistance projects funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Bangui should comply with the end-use monitoring requirements for Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs assets. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation.

¹ This agreement is referenced in the report as the ““Institutions Durables: Forces Efficaces” Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Central African Republic, October 2020.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui complied with the end-use monitoring requirements for Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs assets.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Bangui should draft standard operating procedures with instructions for local consular operations. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui neither agreed nor disagreed with this recommendation. The embassy noted it believes this recommendation should be combined with Recommendation 4 to address the embassy's consular activities, in the absence of a consular section and consular operations. The embassy refers requests for consular services to Embassy Yaoundé, and therefore relies on standard operating procedures maintained at Embassy Yaoundé.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation unresolved. OIG acknowledges that Embassy Bangui provides limited consular services. As noted in the report, OIG found the Consular Section lacked standard operating procedures for the specific consular services it offers—responding to requests for verification of vital records and education diplomas, responding to inquiries, and assisting U.S. citizens with special citizen service requests. Department standards in 7 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-264a and d state that consular services worldwide must be provided according to procedures that are uniform, consistent, and reflective of the Bureau of Consular Affairs Management Framework and that local procedures cannot be arbitrary or informal but must be consistent, transparent, and fully documented. Additionally, this recommendation stands on its own based on the FAH requirement for providing consular services. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui drafted standard operating procedures with instructions for local consular operations or provides an acceptable alternative that fulfills the intent of the recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Bangui should maintain consular records and files in a systematic and organized manner in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui neither agreed nor disagreed with this recommendation. The embassy noted it believes this recommendation should be combined with Recommendation 3 to address the embassy's consular activities, in the absence of a consular section and consular operations. Furthermore, the embassy noted the only consular activities it regularly conducts include: (1) maintaining contact information for U.S. citizens, (2) facilitating Priority Appointment Requests for Central African Republic government visa applicants, and (3) shipping passport applications to Yaoundé for adjudication. The embassy noted the related database is stored on the embassy's SharePoint site and is accessible only by the consular officer and one designated consular locally employed staff. The embassy further noted that it does not store passport applications, which are packaged for shipment to Yaoundé.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. As noted in the report, OIG found consular operations' records and files, including templates and contact information, were kept on personal drives or in the Political-Economic Section's files rather than on the consular SharePoint site. According to 7 FAH-1 H-451 and H-453b, consular staff must be able to locate crucial information quickly and accurately. Additionally, the recommendation stands on its own based on FAH requirements for access to consular resources. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui maintains consular records and files in a systematic and organized manner in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Embassy Yaoundé, should resolve coordination and systems problems that impede the enrollment of U.S. citizens in the Central African Republic in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. (Action: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with CA and Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui disagreed with this recommendation. The embassy noted it does not have consular systems because it does not have a consular section.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation unresolved. As noted in the report, OIG recognizes that the embassy does not have access to consular systems. However, the current system in place for adding U.S. citizens into the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to create emergency and alert distributions lists for U.S. citizens in the Central African Republic is not conducted on a regular basis and therefore U.S. citizens registered in STEP for temporary travel are at risk of not receiving alerts or emergency messages. OIG recognizes that Embassy Bangui will have to work with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Embassy Yaoundé to accept and update the U.S. citizen registration in STEP to ensure they can receive emergency messages. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, resolved coordination and systems problems that impede the enrollment of U.S. citizens in the Central African Republic in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program or provides an acceptable alternative that fulfills the intent of the recommendation.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Bangui should install signage with consular information in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of July 2024.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui installed signage with consular information in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Bangui should implement standard operating procedures for its property management and motor pool operations. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of August 2024.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui implemented standard operating procedures for its property management and motor pool operations.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Bangui should comply with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui complied with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Bangui should manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of October 2024.

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

Recommendation 10: Embassy Bangui should implement a motor vehicle key control system, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui implemented a motor vehicle key control system, in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should bring its property management procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with A)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of September 2024.

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

Recommendation 12: Embassy Bangui should repair or replace its fuel pump. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted it is working with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to procure a new fuel pump. The embassy also noted an estimated completion date of November 2024.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui replaced its fuel pump.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Bangui should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of August 2024.

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

Recommendation 14: Embassy Bangui should complete a review of all structures on the chancery compound and ensure that they are reported in the Real Property Application. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of July 2024.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui completed a review of all structures on the chancery compound and ensure that they are reported in the Real Property Application.

Recommendation 15: Embassy Bangui should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of June 14, 2024.

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

Recommendation 16: Embassy Bangui should comply with Department standards for non-enterprise network physical cybersecurity. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date by June 2024.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui complied with Department standards for non-enterprise network physical cybersecurity.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Bangui should dispose of obsolete classified information processing equipment, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui disposed of obsolete classified information processing equipment, in accordance with Department guidance.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Bangui should implement a records management program that complies with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: In its June 7, 2024, response, Embassy Bangui concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an estimated completion date of July 2024.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Bangui implemented a records management program that complies with Department standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Agency/Section/Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Patricia Mahoney	4/2022
Deputy Chief of Mission	Bridget Premont	8/2023
Chiefs of Sections:		
Consular	Alan Young	8/2023
Political/Economic	Pedro Campo-Boue	7/2023
Management	Thomas Nally	7/2023
Public Affairs	Nicholas Sesnak	7/2023
Regional Security	Jared Lucero	7/2023
Other Agency Representatives:		
U.S. Agency for International Development	Oumar M'Bareck	7/2021
Office of Security Cooperation	Major Luis Arauz	9/2023

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

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from January 2 to March 20, 2024, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspections Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department and the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

Objectives and Scope

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chief Executive Officer of USAGM, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and USAGM. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved and U.S. interests are accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy; and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; and whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

Methodology

OIG used a risk-based approach to prepare for this inspection. OIG conducted portions of the inspection remotely and relied on audio- and video-conferencing tools in addition to in-person interviews with Department and other personnel. OIG also reviewed pertinent records; circulated surveys and compiled the results; and discussed the substance of this report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the inspection. OIG used professional judgment and analyzed physical, documentary, and testimonial evidence to develop its findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



*Embassy of the United States of America
Bangui, Central African Republic*

June 7, 2024

UNCLASSIFIED

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

FROM: Embassy Bangui, Ambassador Patricia Mahoney

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Embassy Bangui, Central African Republic - Draft

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

OIG Recommendation 1: Embassy Bangui should comply with the requirements of the 2015 Letter of Agreement between the United States government and the Central African Republic government on foreign assistance projects funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

INL Response: Post disagrees that INL Bangui is out of compliance with the requirements of the LOA. We meet quarterly with CAR officials to build on the conclusions of the October 2020 Durable Solutions, Effective Forces (French acronym IDFE) agreement, which was created to help us implement the LOA (the IDFE is a tool; it is not the LOA itself). Ambassador Tamlyn held two steering committees in 2021 in June and December, respectively. Ambassador Mahoney met with the Steering Committee for Justice Programming of the IDFE in December 2022. DCM Hogan led a working level review of INL Programming with police and gendarmes in June 2023. INL Bangui also meets at least quarterly with

the CAR government on to review LOA requirements, and the conclusions of those joint discussions are included in INL quarterly reporting.

OIG Recommendation 2: Embassy Bangui should comply with the end-use monitoring requirements for Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs assets.

INL Response: INL concurs with the recommendation. By the end of quarter 3 (September 2024) INL will apply for non-permissive EUM status. In the meantime, INL will continue to attempt to track down purchase requests and supporting information for previously donated equipment to continue registering them in ILMS.

OIG Recommendation 3: Embassy Bangui should draft Standard Operating Procedures with instructions for local consular operations.

Consular Response: Embassy Bangui believes this recommendation should be combined with Recommendation 4 to address what we do in the absence of a consular section and consular operations. We refer requests for services to Embassy Yaoundé, and therefore we rely on SOPs maintained at Embassy Yaoundé.

OIG Recommendation 4: Embassy Bangui should maintain consular records and files in a systematic and organized manner in accordance with Department standards.

Consular Response: Embassy Bangui believes this recommendation should be combined with Recommendation 3 to address what we do in the absence of a consular section and consular operations.

The only consular activities we regularly conduct include 1) maintaining contact information (names, phone numbers, email only) for U.S. citizens; 2) facilitating Priority Appointment Requests (PARs) for CAR government visa applicants; and 3) shipping passport applications to Yaoundé for adjudication. The related database is stored on the Embassy Sharepoint and is only accessible only by the consular officer and one designated consular LE staff. Passport applications are not stored; they are packaged for shipment to Yaoundé (only).

OIG Recommendation 5: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Embassy Yaoundé, should resolve coordination and systems problems that impede the enrollment of U.S. citizens in the Central African Republic in the Smart Traveler Enrollment System.

Consular Response: Embassy Bangui disagrees. We do not have consular systems because we do not have a consular section.

OIG Recommendation 6: Embassy Bangui should install signage with consular information in accordance with Department standards.

Consular Response: Embassy Bangui concurs and will install signage by July 2024 informing citizens that the embassy does not provide consular services and posting emergency phone numbers and the website.

OIG Recommendation 7: Embassy Bangui should implement standard operating procedures for its property management and motor pool operations. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with the recommendation and is implementing it. An LE Executive Corps trainer provided guidance and training to the motorpool supervisor in using ILMS and FMIS to track vehicle maintenance, costs, and vehicle spare parts. This is now being tracked. Warehouse and motorpool are currently updating SOPs and translating them into French. This is expected to be completed by August 2024.

OIG Recommendation 8: Embassy Bangui should comply with all Department Motor Vehicle Safety Management Program standards for chauffeurs and incidental drivers. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with this recommendation, and it has been implemented. Medical clearances have been updated and are now being tracked in FMIS. All drivers have completed their driver's refresher training, and all incidental drivers' safety training and clearance requirements are tracked using FMIS- this includes USDH and contractors.

OIG Recommendation 9: Embassy Bangui should manage its armored vehicles in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with this recommendation and is implementing it. GSO has worked with DEAV to identify and purchase both temporary and permanent solutions for armored vehicle covering. Maintenance schedules are being set and tracked in FMIS. The expected completion of the remaining recommendations is October 2024 due to length of time required to receive orders.

OIG Recommendation 10: Embassy Bangui should implement a motor vehicle key control system, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with this recommendation and has implemented it. Keys are kept at Post 1 overnight, checked out by the dispatcher in the morning, and kept in a secured key box during the day. The dispatcher keeps a spreadsheet to record operator's name, tag, date and time when keys are issued and returned.

OIG Recommendation 11: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with the Bureau of Administration, should bring its property management procedures into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui, in coordination with A)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with this recommendation and is implementing it. The embassy held an auction on May 11th to dispose of excess property. Post is in the process of hiring a new Warehouse Supervisor and Receiving Clerk, properly training everyone, and correcting inventory and storage issues. Expected completion date is September 2024.

OIG Recommendation 12: Embassy Bangui should repair or replace its fuel pump. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with this recommendation and is implementing it. Post is working with the OBO to procure a new fuel pump. Expected completion of this recommendation is November 2024 due to length of time required to receive orders.

OIG Recommendation 13: Embassy Bangui should close out procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with this recommendation and is implementing it. Procurement is working to close out files. Expected completion date of this recommendation is August 2024.

OIG Recommendation 14: Embassy Bangui should complete a review of all structures on the chancery compound and ensure that they are reported in the Real Property Application. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with the recommendation and is implementing it. We have sent OBO all the details needed to enter the (4) HATS put into RPA for Post Bangui. Expected completion date for this recommendation is July 2024.

OIG Recommendation 15: Embassy Bangui should complete all information systems security officer responsibilities in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with the recommendation and is implementing it. The Embassy has designated and trained an alternate ISSO. ISSO and Alternate ISSO are working toward full compliance by June 14th, 2024.

OIG Recommendation 16: Embassy Bangui should comply with Department standards for non-enterprise network physical cybersecurity. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with the recommendation and is implementing it. We have the equipment on order to correct this issue. We expect full compliance by the end of June 2024.

OIG Recommendation 17: Embassy Bangui should dispose of obsolete classified information processing equipment, in accordance with Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with the recommendation and is implementing it. We decertified and decommissioned all computer related

equipment. Hard drives will be sent to the Frankfurt degaussing facility for final destruction in the next classified pouch run expected by the end of June 2024. Obsolete radio equipment will be returned to the RBP for final destruction, also via classified pouch.

OIG Recommendation 18: Embassy Bangui should implement a records management program that complies with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Bangui)

Management Response: Embassy Bangui concurs with the recommendation and is implementing it. We have been working with the records management division to correct this issue. Trainers from the division are scheduled to be at post from June 20th to 26th. With their training and assistance, we hope to have the embassy in full compliance by the end of July 2024.

The point of contact for this memorandum is DCM Bridget Premont.

ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CAR	Central African Republic
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Affairs
EUM	End-Use Monitoring
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
ISSO	Information Systems Security Officer
LE	Locally Employed
LOA	Letter of Agreement
MASCOT	Message Alert System for Citizens Overseas Tool
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
RPA	Real Property Application
SMART	State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset
STEP	Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

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