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Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

ISP-I-20-20

Office of Inspections

May 2020

Inspection of Embassy Yaoundé, Cameroon

BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

UNCLASSIFIED



HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

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What OIG Inspected

OIG inspected the executive direction, program and policy implementation, resource management, and information management operations of Embassy Yaoundé. The inspection included Embassy Branch Office Douala.

What OIG Recommends

OIG made 13 recommendations: 12 to Embassy Yaoundé and 1 to the Bureau of Global Talent Management.

In its comments on the draft report, the Department concurred with all 13 recommendations. OIG considers all 13 recommendations resolved. The Department's response to each recommendation, and OIG's reply, can be found in the Recommendations section of this report. The Department's formal written responses are reprinted in their entirety in Appendix B.

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What OIG Found

- The Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission led Embassy Yaoundé in a professional and collaborative manner. However, the Deputy Chief of Mission did not efficiently manage and prioritize items coming to her for review and approval, which created delays in the approval process.
- The embassy did not develop a plan to integrate Embassy Branch Office Douala with embassy operations, as called for in the Integrated Country Strategy.
- Prior to the end of the FY 2019 Diversity Visa program, the Consular Section issued 13 visas to applicants who were ineligible because their medical results were incomplete.
- The embassy's residential housing program did not fully comply with Department of State safety and fire standards.
- Embassy Yaoundé did not have a functioning high frequency emergency radio network, leaving it unable to communicate with posts assigned to its regional network control station.

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CONTEXT

The Republic of Cameroon, a country slightly larger than California, is located at the intersection of West and Central Africa, bordering the Atlantic Ocean between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. President Paul Biya has served as the chief of state since 1982 and last was elected in 2018 to a 7-year term. Despite economic growth in some regions of the country and a 2017 gross domestic product of \$35 billion, approximately 30 percent of the country's population lives below the poverty line. Cameroon's economy suffers from factors that often affect underdeveloped countries, such as stagnant per capita income, a relatively inequitable distribution of income, a top-heavy civil service, endemic corruption, continuing inefficiencies of a large state-controlled system in key sectors, and a generally unfavorable climate for business enterprise.

Cameroon also faces security challenges from regional violent extremism and internal discord, which have led to more than 380,000 refugees and 792,000 internally displaced persons. The country's security forces, which received U.S. security assistance and specialized training, play an important role bilaterally and through a Multi-National Joint Task Force in the fight against the terrorist groups Boko Haram in the Far North Region and the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)-West Africa in the Lake Chad Region. The country also contributed U.S.-trained troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic.

Internally, despite decades of relative stability, the country faces a crisis in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions¹ stemming from the Anglophone Cameroonians' longstanding feelings of marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government. Protests started in 2016, and there have recently been armed Anglophone separatist attacks against schools and individuals supporting the government. The security forces' response to the crisis included attacks on civilians, which caused international human rights organizations to accuse them of human rights abuses. Due to the human rights issues in the Anglophone regions, the U.S. Government ended several security assistance programs totaling \$17.5 million in February 2019.

The embassy's four strategic objectives to assist the country, as outlined in its September 2018 Integrated Country Strategy (ICS), are:

- Strengthen democracy and good governance.
- Assist Cameroon in securing itself and its region.
- Improve health outcomes.
- Empower Cameroon to transition from receiving humanitarian assistance to focusing on development.

The U.S. diplomatic mission in Cameroon consists of the embassy in Yaoundé and the Embassy Branch Office in Douala. At the time of the inspection, the mission had 67 authorized U.S.

¹ Cameroon is divided into 10 regions.

direct-hire employees, 523 locally employed (LE) staff members, and 8 eligible family members. Of the U.S. staff, 46 worked for the Department of State (Department) and 21 worked for other Government agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), and Justice. Also located at the embassy are the U.S. Agency for International Development² and the Peace Corps, which had approximately 108 volunteers serving in the country. U.S. bilateral foreign assistance to Cameroon in FY 2018 totaled approximately \$65.8 million, which included \$41.3 million in President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding.

OIG evaluated Embassy Yaoundé's policy implementation, resource management, and management controls consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.³ A companion classified inspection report discusses the embassy's security program and issues affecting the safety of mission personnel and facilities.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

OIG assessed Embassy Yaoundé's leadership on the basis of interviews, staff questionnaires, and OIG's review of documents and observations of embassy meetings and activities during the course of the on-site inspection.

Tone at the Top and Standards of Conduct

The Ambassador, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, arrived in Yaoundé in December 2017 after serving as the Senior Bureau Official for the Bureau of African Affairs. Prior to this assignment, the Ambassador held a number of senior bureau positions and had substantial additional experience in Africa. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) arrived in May 2018 after an assignment as Deputy Director in the bureau's Office of West African Affairs. She also had several other postings in the Department and overseas.

OIG determined the Ambassador and the DCM established a professional tone for the embassy and were committed to providing a discrimination-free workplace. Embassy staff said both the Ambassador and the DCM were fair in their dealings with employees, did not exhibit favoritism, and had a caring attitude to employees. For example, the Ambassador hosted a town hall at his residence to give American staff members the opportunity to voice their concerns on any issues. Additionally, after she fell on a slippery chancery floor, the DCM met with LE staff to reassure them no employees were to blame and to focus on corrective action.

DCM Did Not Always Give Clear, Timely Guidance to Embassy Staff

Although the DCM worked well with the Ambassador to set a professional tone for the embassy, OIG found she did not always give clear and timely guidance to employees. According to 3 Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) 1214b(2-3), which describes leadership and management

² The U.S. Agency for International Development had five contract personnel working at Embassy Yaoundé.

³ See Appendix A.

principles for all Department employees, the Front Office—the Ambassador and the DCM—should provide a clear focus, give direction, and establish expectations for the embassy. However, many of the embassy’s U.S. direct-hire staff told OIG the DCM had difficulty managing and prioritizing her workflow. Staff described several instances when the DCM failed to provide timely feedback and affirmatively clear materials submitted for her review and approval. For example, the DCM received a Trafficking in Persons strategy for clearance and approval on May 7, 2019, but when she had yet to clear it after 3½ months, the Political-Economic Section abandoned its efforts to have it approved. In another example, the DCM received a request in February 2019 from the Management Section to approve the embassy’s swimming pool safety policy but never cleared the policy. The embassy finally issued it in July 2019 after another officer, serving as acting DCM, cleared it. Additionally, OIG’s interviews and document reviews found the DCM frequently heavily edited multiple versions of documents to the point of delaying the approval process. Finally, the Front Office did not have a process to track and prioritize documents submitted for clearance.

OIG discussed these issues with the DCM and the Ambassador. They both acknowledged the need to address these issues and committed to quickly implementing a Front Office tracking mechanism. During the inspection, the embassy drafted a procedure to manage and prioritize paper flow through the Front Office and planned to implement it after internal coordination. Additionally, the DCM accepted OIG’s advice to focus on giving clear and timely guidance to employees, particularly on written work products, to improve the embassy’s internal operations.

Equal Employment Opportunity Program

OIG found Embassy Yaoundé’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program generally met the requirements of 3 FAM 1514.2.⁴ In September 2019, the embassy appointed two EEO counselors and three LE EEO liaisons and publicized their names and positions. This team revitalized the program by sharing EEO information with the embassy community, conducting internal refresher training, and participating in new employee orientation with the goal of educating staff on the process and how to identify EEO-related actions. In addition, the Ambassador and the DCM emphasized the importance of EEO principles through mission-wide emails, at town halls, and at Country Team meetings, and expected section and agency heads to reinforce this message in their own meetings. Although the Federal Women’s Program Coordinator position had been vacant since July 2019, the embassy named a program coordinator during the inspection. Finally, after potential EEO issues were raised at an August 2019 town hall meeting, the Front Office requested that the Department’s Office of Civil Rights send a staff member to Cameroon to conduct diversity training for embassy employees, which the office agreed to do.

⁴ Department standards in 3 FAM 1514.2, which were current at the time of the inspection, stated that chiefs of mission shall nominate one or more EEO counselors, with a goal of ensuring one certified counselor for overseas posts with less than 50 employees, and it was “strongly encouraged” that chiefs of mission nominate more than one counselor at overseas posts with more than 50 employees. The Department updated the standards in 3 FAM 1514 in March 2020.

Execution of Foreign Policy Goals and Objectives

OIG concluded the Ambassador met his responsibilities under 2 FAM 113.1 to establish and oversee an effective strategic plan that included his vision for the embassy. The Ambassador maintained a robust schedule of diplomatic engagements and enjoyed good access to senior Government of Cameroon officials, leaders in civil society, and key actors in the diplomatic community. Additionally, the embassy developed its ICS through an inclusive process involving all embassy sections. Through interviews, OIG determined the staff was familiar with ICS goals and used them to guide activities and engagement. However, OIG found the Ambassador and the DCM did not develop a road map to ensure optimal use of the embassy branch office in Douala, as called for in the ICS and discussed in more detail below.

Plan To Integrate Branch Office Douala into Embassy Operations Yet To Be Developed

Embassy Yaoundé failed to produce a business plan for Embassy Branch Office Douala⁵ that integrated its functions and activities fully with the embassy, as called for in the ICS and as recommended by Department guidance. Beginning in October 2018, the Front Office and embassy section heads spent several months reviewing and discussing the branch office's future, including discussions with the Bureau of African Affairs. However, they never reached any conclusions about how the office should be integrated with the embassy. In OIG interviews, embassy officers voiced uncertainty about the role of the branch office, which at the time of the inspection was staffed with one American officer who arrived in September 2019 and three LE staff members. The Front Office only gave the officer general guidance to report on economic and political developments, extend outreach to the American and Cameroonian communities in Douala, and perform a public diplomacy role. As a result, OIG concluded the Front Office did not provide strategic planning and clear focus for the branch office, as recommended by Department guidance in 3 FAM 1214b(2). Furthermore, the lack of a plan prevented Embassy Branch Office Douala from being fully integrated into embassy operations and limited its ability to support U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Yaoundé should complete a plan to integrate Embassy Branch Office Douala into embassy operations in accordance with the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy and as recommended by Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Adherence to Internal Controls

The Management Officer, together with the Ambassador and the DCM, effectively oversaw the preparation of the FY 2019 Annual Chief of Mission Management Control Statement of Assurance, in accordance with 2 FAM 024. The embassy also adhered to Department standards in 2 FAM 022.7, which requires chiefs of mission to develop and maintain appropriate systems of management control of their organizations. OIG found the DCM spoke to every embassy section head about potential issues. In addition, the Management Officer reviewed each section's input and briefed the DCM and the Ambassador on a regular basis. In addition to

⁵ Embassy branch offices are part of an embassy's facility located and staffed in a city other than the capital.

being involved in preparing the Statement of Assurance, OIG found the Ambassador expressed strong support for internal controls, ethical behavior, and the avoidance of fraud and misconduct in town halls and in messages to staff.

The DCM carried out regular reviews of the Consular Section chief's nonimmigrant visa adjudications, as required by 9 FAM 403.12(A).

Security and Emergency Planning

OIG found that the Ambassador and the DCM successfully oversaw the embassy's security and emergency planning program in accordance with the responsibilities listed in 12 Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH)-1 H-721a. They participated in emergency drills and checks of the emergency and evacuation radio network, and the Ambassador made staff aware that he expected a participation rate of 100 percent.⁶ The Ambassador regularly monitored the overall participation rate in the weekly radio checks, contacted employees who failed to participate, and issued reminders to staff via emails and in Country Team meetings.

The Ambassador also stressed a focus on emergency preparedness and encouraged embassy staff to participate in Foreign Service Institute-sponsored crisis management training held in Yaoundé in October 2019. Participants in the 5-day training included American and LE staff and eligible family member employees. At the Ambassador's invitation, members of other diplomatic missions also took part. The training gave the participants the opportunity to learn more about crisis management and included sessions for First- and Second-Tour (FAST) personnel as well as teachers and administrators at the local international school. In addition, 40 mission staff members participated in a DCM-chaired crisis management exercise included in the training. To help prepare for the training, the Regional Security Office led a series of mini-tabletop exercises with the Country Team. Embassy personnel told OIG they believed the embassy, overall, was well-prepared for emergencies. OIG's companion classified report more fully discusses Embassy Yaoundé's security program.

In February 2019, the Ambassador and geographic combatant commander appropriately signed and submitted to the Department a current memorandum of agreement on security of Department of Defense elements and personnel in Cameroon as required by 2 FAH-2 H-116.4.⁷

⁶ Records OIG reviewed showed staff generally met the Ambassador's expectation—one weekly radio check had 100 percent participation, and another had 93 percent participation.

⁷ In December 1997, the Secretaries of Defense and State signed an agreement to address the security of Department of Defense personnel located overseas, in which the Secretary of State agreed, per 22 U.S.C. 4805(a), to delegate operational control of security functions for certain Department of Defense personnel to the Secretary of Defense. This agreement is implemented through country-level memoranda of agreement between the chief of mission and relevant geographic combatant commander. See 2 FAH-2 H-116.4a, "COM Security Responsibility and the Department of Defense."

Developing and Mentoring Foreign Service Professionals

Embassy Yaoundé's DCM developed and managed the FAST employee program in accordance with 3 FAM 2242.4, which requires DCMs to be responsible for the professional development and mentoring of FAST employees. The DCM created the FAST program in August 2018 to increase participants' skills needed for successful careers. The embassy opened the program to all First- and Second-Tour personnel from other agencies and to family members in the Expanded Professional Associates Program.⁸ FAST employees met as a group approximately once every 4 to 6 weeks to exchange ideas and to learn from guest speakers about their agencies or to discuss subjects of interest to Department employees, such as bidding and the evaluation process. The FAST group members also developed their skills by participating on a rotating basis as control officers for U.S. Government visitors, attending conferences, and meeting with senior officials visiting the embassy. Department FAST employees also met regularly with the DCM in one-on-one sessions. Participants told OIG the schedule and variety of program events worked well and gave them a broader perspective of the Department and other agencies.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

OIG assessed Embassy Yaoundé's policy and program implementation through a review of the work of the Political-Economic, Public Diplomacy, and Consular Sections and the PEPFAR Coordinator. As described in more detail below, OIG found the embassy generally met Department requirements for policy and program implementation. Additionally, OIG noted some areas for improvement, also described below.

Political-Economic Section

OIG found that the Political-Economic Section advanced the embassy's ICS goals through its advocacy and reporting. OIG reviewed 155 reporting cables sent between May and November 2019 and found them to be adequately sourced, timely, and relevant to ICS goals. In OIG interviews, Department officials widely praised the embassy's reporting for its quality, relevance, and usefulness, highlighting reporting on human rights violations and on the growing separatist movement in the country's Anglophone regions. The embassy won praise from the Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor for its reporting on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) rights and the judicial trials of political separatists. In response to human rights violations by Cameroonian Government forces, the embassy actively pursued restrictions on U.S. military assistance as well as elimination of trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act.⁹ The Department's Bureau for Economic and Business

⁸ The Expanded Professional Associates Program gives eligible family members employment opportunities in key positions abroad. The program differs from other eligible family member employment opportunities in that it offers responsibilities similar to Foreign Service entry-level positions.

⁹ The African Growth and Opportunity Act, enacted in May 2000, is designed to expand U.S. trade and investment with sub-Saharan Africa, to stimulate economic growth, to encourage economic integration, and to facilitate sub-Saharan Africa's integration into the global economy.

Affairs praised the embassy's advocacy of U.S. business interests, which included at least one embassy-organized trade mission to the United States every year, often with the participation of senior Cameroonian Government officials.

In addition to its advocacy and reporting work, the Political-Economic Section managed a grants portfolio that supported ICS strategies. In FY 2018 and FY 2019, the section managed 81 grants totaling \$1.7 million. OIG reviewed 15 of these grants, totaling \$532,601, and found the section fulfilled all requirements in the Department's Federal Assistance Directive.¹⁰

Embassy's Leahy Vetting Did Not Meet Department Timelines Guidelines

OIG found Embassy Yaoundé's Political-Economic Section did not meet Department guidelines for timely submissions of Leahy vetting requests to identify potential human rights abuses.¹¹ OIG reviewed the embassy's processing of 838 Leahy vetting cases from November 2018 to September 2019 and found 79 percent were submitted to Washington too late to allow for sufficient processing time. As a result, Washington had an average of 4 days to process the requests, instead of the 10 working days stipulated in the Department's 2017 Leahy Vetting Guide. The embassy updated its Leahy vetting standard operating procedures in May 2019. In addition, staff from all embassy offices involved in Leahy processing met in October 2019 to discuss the new standard operating procedures and the need for timely submissions. As a result of these actions, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

During the inspection, OIG found two of the offices responsible for implementing the PEPFAR program in Cameroon—U.S. Agency for International Development and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—were unable to agree on how to allocate PEPFAR's FY 2019 budget. After the PEPFAR Coordinator could not resolve the conflict, the Ambassador and the DCM provided oversight and guidance to help solve the disputes. OIG noted that, beginning in FY 2020, PEPFAR planned to expand its clinical program from 4 to all 10 Cameroon regions. To fund this expansion, PEPFAR increased the program's budget from all sources to \$97.2 million in FY 2020, up from \$41.3 million in FY 2018. Embassy staff and PEPFAR officials in Washington told OIG the funding increase could cause more budget allocation disputes among the embassy's interagency PEPFAR team. For this reason, OIG advised the Ambassador and the DCM to continue to maintain close supervision and direction over the PEPFAR program, which they agreed to do.

¹⁰ Based on the date of award, different Federal assistance award guidance apply to assistance awards. The 15 reviewed awards fall under the Federal Assistance Directive, Version 1.1, valid from May 20, 2017, through September 30, 2017; the Federal Assistance Directive, Version 2.3, valid from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018; and the Federal Assistance Directive, Version 3.0, valid from October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019.

¹¹ The Leahy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 prohibits the Department from furnishing assistance to foreign security forces if the Department receives credible information that such forces have committed gross violations of human rights. See 22 U.S.C. 2378d.

Public Diplomacy

OIG reviewed the Public Diplomacy Section's strategic planning, reporting, leadership, resource and knowledge management, Federal assistance awards, American Spaces,¹² educational and cultural exchanges, and media engagement. OIG found the section contributed to ICS goals and operated in compliance with Department guidelines and policies. The section won praise from the Front Office and the Bureau of African Affairs' Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs for emphasizing the positive aspects of the U.S.-Cameroonian relationship.

During its review of the Department's State Assistance Management System Overseas database,¹³ OIG found some Federal assistance award files lacked required documentation. Missing documents included selection criteria, Grants Officer Representative designations, and monitoring reports. During the inspection, the section located and uploaded the documents to the SAMS Overseas database. As a result, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Consular Affairs

OIG reviewed Embassy Yaoundé's consular operations, including section leadership, American citizen services, crisis preparedness, management controls, visa services and processing, outreach, and fraud prevention programs. The Consular Section, with four consular officers and 12 LE staff members, delivered American citizen services to a community that included an estimated 11,092 American citizen residents and 2,710 American citizen visitors annually. In FY 2019, the embassy processed 546 citizenship cases (such as passport applications and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad), 9 percent fewer than in FY 2018, and 3,456 immigrant visas, 5 percent fewer than the previous year.¹⁴ The section also processed 14,489 nonimmigrant visas in FY 2019, a 28 percent decrease from FY 2018. Section staff attributed the decrease in citizenship services, in part, to fewer Americans residing in Cameroon and the decrease in nonimmigrant visa applications, in part, to a higher refusal rate that discouraged applicants. With the exception of the issues described below, OIG found the Consular Section's operations complied with Department guidelines.

¹² American Spaces are Department-operated or -supported public diplomacy facilities that host programs and use digital tools to engage foreign audiences in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives. In Cameroon, spaces are located in the embassy, at the University of Beau in the South West Region, and at the Municipal Library of the Garoua Urban Community, North Region.

¹³ The State Assistance Management System Overseas, or SAMS Overseas, is the Department's program to capture the data essential for overseeing, administering, monitoring, and reporting Department-wide Federal assistance. It includes all four phases of the Federal assistance lifecycle as outlined by Office of Management and Budget guidelines: pre-award, award, post-award, and closeout.

¹⁴ In addition to Cameroon citizens, Embassy Yaoundé processes immigrant visas for residents of neighboring countries Central African Republic, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea.

Consular Section Issued Diversity Visas to Applicants Who Did Not Meet Qualifications

OIG found that prior to the end of the FY 2019 Diversity Visa program,¹⁵ the Consular Section authorized and printed visas for 13 applicants who were ineligible because of incomplete medical examinations. Guidance in 9 FAM 504.4-7a requires all immigrant visa applicants, including for diversity visas, to undergo a physical and mental examination, the results of which are used to determine visa eligibility. Furthermore, guidance in 9 FAM 502.6-4b(3)(a) states that a Diversity Visa application is valid only until midnight of the last day of the fiscal year and that there is no carry-over into another year for persons who fail to complete all requirements on time.

Consular officers told OIG they authorized and printed the Diversity Visas for the 13 applicants in an attempt to be helpful, in anticipation that some of the applicants would qualify after completing their medical exams. They said they did not realize the visas could not be issued under these circumstances. OIG found that the Consular Section ultimately delivered 10 of the 13 visas to applicants who successfully completed their medical exams after September 30, 2019.

After OIG identified this issue, the Bureau of Consular Affairs advised Embassy Yaoundé to attempt to physically cancel the visas for those applicants who had yet to travel to the United States. The bureau also advised the embassy to provide the names of those applicants who had traveled to the United States to the Department of Homeland Security for review and possible revocation of the individuals' legal permanent resident status.

As a result of the embassy's error, an immigration benefit was conferred on applicants who did not qualify for that benefit. The Consular Section initiated attempts to recover the 10 improperly issued visas during the inspection. As a result of the action taken by the embassy, OIG did not make a recommendation to address this issue.

Walkway for Consular Applicants Did Not Comply With Department Standards

The walkway between the consular compound access control facility and the consular waiting room used by applicants did not provide adequate protection from the elements. Guidance in 7 FAH-1 H-281a states that every effort should be made in consular lines and waiting areas to accommodate the public as efficiently, safely, and pleasantly as possible. OIG found consular applicants were exposed to rain when walking from the compound access control facility to the chancery. Although a structure provided shelter midway along the walkway, it was small and narrow, meaning many of the seats along the walkway became wet during a driving rain. Failure to provide cover for visa and passport applicants leaves them exposed to inclement weather.

¹⁵ Diversity Visas are available to a class of immigrants known as "diversity immigrants," subject to an annual numerical limitation of 55,000 each fiscal year. Citizens of countries with low rates of admission to the United States may enter the annual Diversity Visa lottery to apply for an immigrant visa in the following fiscal year. All Diversity Visa applicants must meet the same requirements as other immigrant visa applicants. (See 9 FAM 502.6-2a, 9 FAM 502.6-4b(1)(ii), and 9 FAM 502.6-4f(1).)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should provide protection from the elements for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with OBO)

Consular Officers Lacked Line of Sight of Cashier's Booth

Consular officers could not visually monitor the work of the consular cashier, a key internal control, as recommended by Department guidelines. According to 7 FAH-1 H-282(2)(i) and 7 FAH-1 H-281(e), consular sections should consider a cashier booth that allows supervisors to physically observe work areas. The small size and location of the cashier window made it difficult to monitor the cashier's activities without standing almost directly in front of the window. Lack of line-of-sight inside the cashier's booth increases the risk of cashier malfeasance.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Yaoundé should install a closed-circuit television monitoring system or other means to enable consular managers to visually observe the activities within the Consular Section cashier booth. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed internal control systems in facilities management, human resources, general services, and financial management at Embassy Yaoundé. OIG determined the Management Section generally implemented required processes and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and Department guidance, except as described below.

Facilities Management

Embassy Housing Program Did Not Meet Department Safety Standards

Embassy Yaoundé's housing program did not fully meet Department safety, health, and environmental management standards. Guidance in 15 FAM 252.5c states that all Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer (POSHO) safety certifications must be completed and documented in the online POSHO Certification Application system. However, OIG found the POSHO did not enter into the system certifications for 41 residential properties listed in the real property database. In addition, OIG reviewed 10 property lease files and found 5 files lacked POSHO certifications, while another 3 had expired POSHO certifications. According to 15 FAM 971, the POSHO must complete a certification document in the online application for each property and retain a copy in the property file at post. Embassy staff told OIG they were in the process of completing the missing certifications for active properties at the time of the inspection and attributed the delays to competing priorities. Failure to conduct and document safety certifications and maintain housing lease files could lead to employees under chief of mission authority living in unsafe residences.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Yaoundé should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Residential Fire Protection Program Did Not Fully Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Yaoundé did not fully comply with the Department's fire protection program. OIG inspected seven residences and found none of the occupants conducted the required monthly fire extinguisher inspections. According to 15 FAM 843d, residential occupants must conduct a visual inspection of their fire extinguishers monthly for operable condition, record inspection dates on the extinguisher inspection tag, and report any deficiencies to the facilities manager or general services officer.¹⁶ In addition, OIG found no evidence residents conducted monthly smoke detector inspections as required by 15 FAM 842b. Management staff told OIG many of the residents were unaware of these requirements. During the inspection, the embassy issued a management notice reminding employees of the requirement to check their fire extinguishers and smoke detectors monthly. The lack of monthly fire extinguisher and smoke detector inspections increases the likelihood that equipment will not work when needed, thereby increasing the risk of injury and loss of life.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Yaoundé should bring its residential fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Human Resources

Outstanding Requests To Review Local Compensation Plan Benefits

The embassy's LE staff local compensation plan did not conform as closely as feasible with Cameroon labor law and prevailing practice, in accordance with 3 FAM 7224.2-1a. OIG found the Department did not act on three embassy requests to update the local compensation plan to bring it into compliance with local labor laws. The most important requested change—a salary advance plan—had been pending with the Bureau of Global Talent Management (formerly the Bureau of Human Resources) Office of Overseas Employment since August 2016. A requested change to night differential premium pay had been pending since November 2014, while a relocation benefit had been pending since August 2017. Management Section staff told OIG staffing turnover within the Office of Overseas Employment was likely the cause for these long delays. Without an accurate local compensation plan, the LE staff may not be receiving benefits to which they are entitled.

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Global Talent Management, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé, should determine whether the embassy's pending local compensation

¹⁶ The purpose of the visual inspection is to not only check the general condition of the apparatus (e.g., corrosion on the discharge mechanism, obvious signs of leaks around seals, etc.), but also to check the pressure gauge to ensure the unit is sufficiently pressurized to expel the fire suppressant.

plan requests should be incorporated into the local compensation plan. (Action: GTM, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé)

General Services

Property Management Section Did Not Document Nonexpendable Property Transfers

Embassy Yaoundé did not fully comply with requirements to document nonexpendable property transfers. Specifically, embassy staff did not document 22 percent of residential nonexpendable property transfers in FY 2019. According to 14 FAM 416.3a, property transfers need to be documented and signed for by the occupant of the residence, and the signed forms should be maintained in the appropriate inventory files. In addition, 14 FAM 414.5 requires the Accountable Property Officer to ensure that effective internal requisitioning and issuing procedures to document transactions are established and enforced. Embassy staff attributed this issue to changes in embassy property management procedures, work volume, and competing priorities. Failure to document property transfers increases the risk of mismanagement, loss, or theft.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Yaoundé should comply with Department standards for documenting nonexpendable property transfers. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Embassy Did Not Close Out Procurement Files in Accordance With Department Guidance

Embassy Yaoundé did not close out its procurement files in the Department's Electronic Filing System. Specifically, OIG found embassy contracting officers did not complete the final step to close out 3,097 procurements conducted under simplified acquisition procedures from FY 2015 through FY 2019. Guidance in 14 FAH-2 H-573.2b states that contracts conducted under simplified acquisition procedures should be closed out immediately after the contracting officer receives evidence of receipt of property and final payment. The embassy's contracting officer cited delays in creating her Integrated Logistics Management System account and internet connectivity problems for this issue. Failure to close procurement files after receiving evidence of receipt of property and final payment increases the risk of inaccuracies in procurement records and internal control deficiencies in procurement operations.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Yaoundé should close procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Contracting Officer's Representative Program Did Not Comply With Department Standards

Embassy Yaoundé's contracting officer's representative (COR) program did not fully comply with Department standards. Specifically, the Contracting Officer did not ensure that LE staff who might potentially serve as CORs applied for certification in the Department's Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives system, as required in 14 FAH-2 H-113e. After applying for certification in the system, the Office of the Procurement Executive decides whether to grant the COR's certification or if additional training is required. The embassy's contracting officer attributed this issue to a misunderstanding of Department

guidelines. Uncertified CORs increase the risk of contract mismanagement and harm the integrity of the overall contract management system.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Yaoundé should require potential contracting officers' representatives to apply for certification in the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives system in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

OIG reviewed Embassy Yaoundé's Information Management (IM) operations, including classified, unclassified, and dedicated internet network computer operations; classified communications security; emergency communications preparedness; radio and telephone programs; mail and pouch services; and records management. OIG found IM operations generally functioned well and met the needs of embassy users. During the inspection, section staff corrected issues related to information technology (IT) training requirements, contingency planning, physical access control for IT areas, and internal knowledge management procedures. OIG identified additional issues, which are detailed below.

Information Technology Helpdesk Support Lacked Standard Operating Procedures

The embassy's Information Systems Center staff did not have an established operating procedure in place to record, track, and resolve IT helpdesk service requests submitted by users through the MyServices application. According to 5 FAM 867, managers must maintain documentation for all aspects of computer support and operations to ensure continuity and consistency. OIG found the section did not require customers to open service requests for assistance, nor did employees consistently document their actions. Although users reported positive International Cooperative Administrative Support Services¹⁷ scores for IT support services, section leadership acknowledged the need to establish an internal procedure for managing helpdesk service requests through MyServices and had advertised a position for a new computer systems assistant to coordinate helpdesk support. Without the documented account of helpdesk requests, IM managers could not accurately capture the Information Service Center staff's workload or monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of helpdesk operations.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Yaoundé should implement documented operational procedures for recording and tracking helpdesk requests for the unclassified and classified networks, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

¹⁷ The International Cooperative Administrative Support Services, or ICASS, established in 1997, is the principal means by which U.S. Government agencies share the cost of common administrative support services at more than 250 diplomatic and consular posts overseas. Through the ICASS working capital fund, service providers recover the cost of delivering administrative support services to other agencies at overseas missions, in accordance with 6 FAM 911 and 6 FAH-5 H-013.2.

Information Systems Security Officer Duties Not Performed

Embassy Yaoundé's Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) did not perform information system audits or complete mandated ISSO duties, including recurring vulnerability scanning and random email and user data reviews. Among other facility logs and records, guidance in 12 FAM 632.5a requires ISSOs to maintain audit trail logs, system maintenance logs, and system operation logs. In addition, 12 FAH-10 H-122.5-2 and 12 FAM 632.1-8c require ISSOs to conduct monthly reviews of randomly selected accounts to ensure users are not processing information above the authorized classification level for the computer system or otherwise engaging in security-related anomalies or suspicious activities.

The Information Management Officer acknowledged the need to prioritize the ISSO-required duties and proactively sent the unclassified systems manager to the required ISSO training course during the inspection. The Information Management Officer told OIG he also planned to send the first-tour IM specialist to the ISSO training course so that all direct-hire IM staff met the training requirement and, if needed, could help perform ISSO duties. OIG also notes that it issued a management assistance report in May 2017¹⁸ that identified the need to enforce the performance of ISSO duties by overseas IM personnel in accordance with Department standards. In a subsequent Department cable,¹⁹ the Bureau of Information Resource Management requested that embassy management work with ISSOs to ensure performance of their duties by prioritizing resources to ensure that cybersecurity needs were met and documented. Notwithstanding OIG's report and the Department's subsequent cable, OIG found a lack of planning and prioritization of the required training led to non-performance of these duties, which placed the security of the Department's computer systems at risk.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Yaoundé should require the Information Systems Security Officer to perform information systems security duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Embassy's High Frequency Radio Network Was Inoperable

Embassy Yaoundé's lack of a functioning high frequency emergency radio network prevented it from communicating with posts assigned to its regional network control station. Embassy staff told OIG that equipment failure caused these reception issues. In October 2019, a regional radio technician replaced the high frequency radio tuner with backup equipment as an interim solution until the embassy could receive a new tuner. However, OIG found the backup equipment did not allow the embassy to communicate with all posts in its regional network. According to 5 FAM 542.5, the Regional Information Management Center is responsible for the guidance, installation, and maintenance support for emergency action plan (Emergency Action Committee and emergency and evacuation radio networks) and administrative radio networks under chief of mission authority. During the inspection, IM staff requested the regional center

¹⁸ OIG, *Management Assistance Report: Non-Performance of Information Systems Security Officer Duties by Overseas Personnel* (ISP-17-24, May 2017).

¹⁹ Cable 17 STATE 104970, "Documenting Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) Duties," October 18, 2017.

in Johannesburg replace the damaged radio equipment. Without a functional high frequency radio network, the embassy does not have the ability to communicate with all regional posts in an emergency.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with Regional Information Management Center Johannesburg and the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should repair or replace the embassy's emergency high frequency radio equipment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with RIMC and IRM)

Embassy Records Management Program Did Not Comply Fully With Department Standards

Embassy Yaoundé's records retirement practices did not comply with Department standards. According to the Department's records management database, the embassy did not retire the previous DCM's official files upon the official's departure from post. Furthermore, the embassy had not archived the annual Public Diplomacy program records since 2018. Department standards in 5 FAM 414.8(1)(2) require all Department employees to preserve documentary materials meeting the definition of a record under the Federal Records Act and create, use, maintain, preserve, and dispose of the Department's information and records according to Department requirements. In addition, 5 FAM 414.5a states the principal officer is responsible for implementing and administering records policies, standards, systems, and procedures issued by the Department's Records Officer, while 5 FAM 433a-b requires posts to maintain an active, continuing retirement program and retire records in accordance with records disposition schedules. During the inspection, the records management officer issued a management notice and mission policy regarding this requirement. However, until all embassy sections bring the records management into compliance, the embassy risks the loss of important data and historical records that could affect the Department's and the mission's ability to conduct policy analysis, decision-making, and archival research.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Yaoundé should conduct records retirement in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

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 Yaoundé and the Bureau of Global Talent Management. The Department's complete responses can be found in Appendix B.¹ The Department also provided technical comments that were incorporated into this report, as appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Yaoundé should complete a plan to integrate Embassy Branch Office Douala into embassy operations in accordance with the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy and as recommended by Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation of Embassy Yaoundé's plan to integrate Embassy Branch Office Douala into embassy operations.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should provide protection from the elements for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé provided protection from the elements for consular applicants.

Recommendation 3: Embassy Yaoundé should install a closed-circuit television monitoring system or other means to enable consular managers to visually observe the activities within the Consular Section cashier booth. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé installed a closed-circuit

¹ OIG faced delays in completing this work because of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting operational challenges. These challenges included the inability to conduct most in-person meetings, limitations on our presence at the workplace, difficulty accessing certain information, prohibitions on travel, and related difficulties within the agencies we oversee, which also affected their ability to respond to our requests.

television monitoring system or other means to enable consular managers to visually observe the activities within the Consular Section cashier booth.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Yaoundé should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted an expected completion date of June 2020.

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

Recommendation 5: Embassy Yaoundé should bring its residential fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

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

Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Global Talent Management, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé, should determine whether the embassy's pending local compensation plan requests should be incorporated into the local compensation plan. (Action: GTM, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, the Bureau of Global Talent Management concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation of the Bureau of Global Talent Management's decision on Embassy Yaoundé's pending local compensation plan requests.

Recommendation 7: Embassy Yaoundé should comply with Department standards for documenting nonexpendable property transfers. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé complied with Department standards for documenting nonexpendable property transfers.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Yaoundé should close procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation. The embassy noted that the General Services Officer was closing current procurement files and had implemented a plan to close historic files in reverse chronological order. However, the embassy also noted that much of the backlog predates any of the current contracting officers and it is inappropriate for a contracting officer to certify procurements that occurred before he or she assumed the position.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that the embassy closed the procurement files, as appropriate, in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Yaoundé should require potential contracting officers' representatives to apply for certification in the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives system in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé's contracting officers' representatives applied for certification in the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives system.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Yaoundé should implement documented operational procedures for recording and tracking helpdesk requests for the unclassified and classified networks, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation of operational procedures for recording and tracking helpdesk requests for the unclassified and classified networks.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Yaoundé should require the Information Systems Security Officer to perform information systems security duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé's Information Systems Security Officer performed information systems security duties in accordance with Department standards.

Recommendation 12: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with Regional Information Management Center Johannesburg and the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should repair or replace the embassy's emergency high frequency radio equipment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with RIMC and IRM)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé repaired or replaced its emergency high frequency radio equipment.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Yaoundé should conduct records retirement in accordance with Department records management standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: In its May 8, 2020, response, Embassy Yaoundé concurred with this recommendation.

OIG Reply: OIG considers the recommendation resolved. The recommendation can be closed when OIG receives and accepts documentation that Embassy Yaoundé retired records in accordance with Department records management standards.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Title	Name	Arrival Date
Chiefs of Mission:		
Ambassador	Peter Barlerin	12/2017
Deputy Chief of Mission	Vernelle FitzPatrick	5/2018
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Matthew Miller	8/2018
Consular	Michael Fitzpatrick	7/2017
Political -Economic	Jennifer Bah	8/2018
Embassy Branch Office Douala	Rashidah (Patricia) Ellis	9/2019
Public Affairs	Leanne Cannon	8/2019
Regional Security	Josh Murray	7/2018
Other Agencies:		
Peace Corps	Danielle Monty-Mara	3/2018
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Dr. Kainne Dokubo	2/2018
Senior Defense Official-Defense Attaché	Commander Michele Lowe	6/2018

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

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection was conducted from October 31, 2019, to January 26, 2020, in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, as issued in 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's 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

In conducting inspections, OIG uses a risk-based approach to prepare for each inspection; reviews pertinent records; circulates surveys and compiles the results, as appropriate; conducts interviews with Department and on-site personnel; observes daily operations; and reviews the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, and organizations affected by the review. OIG uses professional judgment, along with physical, documentary, testimonial, and analytical evidence collected or generated, to develop findings, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

APPENDIX B: MANAGEMENT RESPONSES



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Yaoundé, Cameroon

OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR

UNCLASSIFIED

May 8, 2020

TO: OIG – Sandra Lewis, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections

CC: Tibor P. Nagy, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs

FROM: Peter Henry Barlerin, Ambassador, U.S. Mission to Cameroon

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OIG Report – Inspection of Embassy Yaoundé, Cameroon

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

OIG Recommendation 1: Embassy Yaoundé should complete a plan to integrate Embassy Branch Office Douala into embassy operations in accordance with the embassy's Integrated Country Strategy and as recommended by Department guidance. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with this recommendation. The Front Office drafted a Strategic Plan to guide Embassy Branch Office operations in Douala and to ensure integration for the EBO in the Mission. The plan is based on input from the EBO Director and various sections and includes actions that had been ongoing but which had not been captured in a document, in addition to several new elements. Post expects that all action items that are not ongoing activities will be completed by year's end or at the earliest opportunity, assuming a resumption to full operations post-COVID-19. The plan is posted prominently on the Mission SharePoint.

OIG Recommendation 2: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should provide protection from the elements for consular applicants, in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with OBO)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with this recommendation. Consular and Facilities Management created a Statement of Work for a construction project to protect consular applicants from the elements. The Facilities Manager entered the project and funding request into the Buildings Management Integrated System (BMIS) in December 2019 as an OIG-recommended project. Under normal circumstances Post would expect a September decision from OBO on funding for projects in 2021, but OBO indicates that the normal decision timelines may not be maintained this year. In the interim, Consular has ordered 20 large umbrellas to protect applicants when necessary from the elements.

OIG Recommendation 3: Embassy Yaoundé should install a closed-circuit television monitoring system or other means to enable consular managers to visually observe the activities within the Consular Section cashier booth. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with this recommendation. A survey by Post's Engineering Services Office (ESO) recommended that a non-wireless closed-circuit monitoring system could be purchased, installed and serviced by a local vendor for a reasonable price. Regulations prevent further ESO involvement. Consular currently has adequate funds in its FY2020 budget to follow through on this recommendation once the post-COVID-19 normal operations resume.

OIG Recommendation 4: Embassy Yaoundé should bring its safety, health, and environmental management program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with this recommendation. Since the OIG inspection, post has made significant progress on this important endeavor. Currently 60 of our 62 residences are fully compliant with POSHO inspections. The remaining two residences are 90% compliant. The remaining tasks for full compliance involve correcting a handrail at location G7 and adding plexiglass to the stairwell railing at location G5. We expect these items to be complete by June 2020.

OIG Recommendation 5: Embassy Yaoundé should bring its residential fire protection program into compliance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with this recommendation. Post has a sufficient quantity of smoke detectors and fire extinguishers at each residence that are tested by our preventative maintenance teams. Raising awareness and occupants training on testing smoke detectors and inspecting fire extinguisher in their homes has started with management notices released during the OIG inspection. In addition, the front office will mandate attendance of yearly live fire safety training by all personnel. Post has also changed the housing orientation walk through for new arrivals to include a briefing on the resident responsibility under the fire protection program.

OIG Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Global Talent Management, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé, should determine whether the embassy's pending local compensation plan requests should be incorporated into the local compensation plan. (Action: GTM, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with this recommendation. GTM/OE has recently assigned a new compensation and benefits manager who has been very responsive to Post's request for a clearing of the backlog. Post has received the preliminary authorization for the Salary Advance Plan request and is in the process of implementing. HRO is reviewing the local compensation plan for additional modifications to ensure compliance with local labor law and prevailing practice.

OIG Recommendation 7: Embassy Yaoundé should comply with Department standards for documenting nonexpendable property transfers. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation. GSO and Property staff have already implemented controls to correctly document nonexpendable property transfers. Property transfer forms (DS-584) are created and logged for each transfer and no longer grouped together. With the upgrade to the Annual Inventory Modernization (AIM) system, transfers are scanned and logged at the point of transfer in real-time using handheld scanners. As a secondary control measure, the warehouse staff has implemented a property transfer tracking spreadsheet. The tracker ensures all transfers have an associated DS-584 and allows management to easily view historical transfer information as a management control.

OIG Recommendation 8: Embassy Yaoundé should close procurement files in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation with reservations. The backlog of e-filing at Embassy Yaoundé is a representative example of the systemic problem with e-filing across the entire Department of State. GSO is closing current procurement files and has implemented a plan to close historic files in reverse chronological order. However, much of the backlog predates any of the current contracting officers. As discussed with the OIG team during the visit, it is inappropriate for a contracting officer to certify procurements that occurred before he/she assumed the position. Recognizing that this is a Department-wide issue, there needs to be a method for mass-closeouts of e-filing backlogs or blanket guidance that absolves post of risk if they certify potentially problematic historic records.

OIG Recommendation 9: Embassy Yaoundé should require potential contracting officers' representatives to apply for certification in the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives system in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation. GSO has begun implementing a training plan to meet the requirements for certification by Contracting Officer's Representative system. Technical problems with the registration website has delayed completion of this requirement and is ongoing. Additionally, the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic have further delayed certification due to reduced LES access to OpenNet systems while implementing protective measures. Post anticipates registration will be completed within 30 days of restrictions being lifted.

OIG Recommendation 10: Embassy Yaoundé should implement documented operational procedures for recording and tracking helpdesk requests for the unclassified and classified networks, in accordance with Department guidelines. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation. The embassy has implemented the recommendation by creating a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to process and track helpdesk requests by utilizing the MyServices database. The SOP includes procedures for walk-in, phone call, and email requests. The reporting functions within MyServices will be used to produce status reports for technicians and management personnel.

OIG Recommendation 11: Embassy Yaoundé should require the Information Systems Security Officer to perform information systems security duties in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation. At the time of the inspection none of the IRM staff had completed the ISSO training within the last three years as required by the Department. The Primary ISSO has since completed ISSO training and has implemented all the required ISSO checks. The Primary ISSO performs all the required information system security duties. The Alternate ISSO will attend the required training course once FSI has resumed classes post COVID-19.

OIG Recommendation 12: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with Regional Information Management Center Johannesburg and the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should repair or replace the embassy's emergency high frequency radio equipment in accordance with Department standards. (Action: Embassy Yaoundé, in coordination with RIMC and IRM)

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation. Embassy IRM staff replaced the primary HF radio in the IPC with the backup radio. HF options have been restored. The broken HF radio will be sent back to Washington for repair and/or replacement as soon as diplomatic pouch service is restored world-wide. Currently all HF systems in Yaoundé are fully functional and Post is fulfilling its duties as Net Control for West-Central Africa. All radio checks are documented on the RIMC SharePoint site as required by the Department.

OIG Recommendation 13: Embassy Yaoundé should conduct records retirement in accordance with Department records management standards.

Management Response: Embassy Yaoundé concurs with the recommendation. Post has initiated the retirement process and is working with the Records Retirement Office in the Department to complete the task. This has been disrupted due to personnel reductions as a result of the COVID-19 Authorized Departure. Post Management has ensured the latest regulations regarding Records Retirement have been posted as Management Notices on the embassy SharePoint site. The IMO sends out periodic reminders and provides training and assistance with the records retirement process. Several sections have successfully retired records since the OIG visit.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Management Counselor, Matthew J. Miller.

May 8, 2020

Bureau of Global Talent Management
Response to Office of Inspector General
Draft Inspection Report for Embassy, Yaounde, Cameroon

The Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) has reviewed the draft OIG inspection report. We provide the following comments in response to the recommendations provided by OIG:

OIG Recommendation 6: The Bureau of Global Talent Management, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé, should determine whether the embassy's pending local compensation plan requests should be incorporated into the local compensation plan. (Action: GTM, in coordination with Embassy Yaoundé).

Management Response 5/8/2020: GTM concurs with the recommendation. GTM/OE continues to work with post management to update various sections of the LCP. The status of each revision is reported below:

Change to salary advance plan: Completed 1/08/2020; Authorized 20 STATE 1972

Change to night differential in premium pay plan: Under review. GTM/OE does not have a cable request on file from post. GTM/OE/CM will work with post to locate the cable request from 2014. If the cable request cannot be found, post will submit a new cable request and GTM/OE/CM will review for compliance with local law.

Implement relocation plan: Under review. GTM/OE/CM cannot implement a relocation plan unless it is required by local law or it is prevailing practice to pay moving expenses. Post should submit an updated cable request, which outlines the plan for closing the Douala branch and the transition of LE Staff to Embassy Yaoundé. A local legal opinion may be required. GTM/OE/CM will work with post to obtain proper documentation and establish either local law or prevailing practice.

The point of contact for this memorandum is Lisa Jacobson.

ABBREVIATIONS

COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FAST	First- and Second-Tour
ICS	Integrated Country Strategy
IM	Information Management
ISSO	Information Systems Security Officer
LE	Locally Employed
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Intersex
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
POSHO	Post Occupational Safety and Health Officer

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