

5 OVERSIGHT BY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES



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Deminers clear landmines and unexploded ordnance in Kabul. (Photo by UNAMA/Abel Kavanagh)

OVERSIGHT BY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

SIGAR’s enabling legislation requires it to keep the Secretaries of State and Defense fully informed about problems relating to the administration of Afghanistan reconstruction programs, and to submit a report to the Congress on SIGAR’s oversight work and on the status of the U.S. reconstruction effort no later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter. The statute also instructs SIGAR to include, to the extent possible, relevant matters from the end of the quarter up to the submission date of its report.

Each quarter, SIGAR requests updates from other agencies on completed and ongoing oversight activities. This section compiles these updates. Copies of completed reports are posted on the agencies’ respective public websites.

The descriptions appear as submitted, with minor changes to maintain consistency with other sections of this report: acronyms and abbreviations in place of full organizational names; standardized capitalization, punctuation, and preferred spellings; and third-person instead of first-person voice.

These agencies perform oversight activities related to Afghanistan and provide results to SIGAR:

- Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DOD OIG)
- Department of State Office of Inspector General (State OIG)
- Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- United States Agency for International Development Office of Inspector General (USAID OIG)

COMPLETED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This quarter, participating agencies issued four oversight reports related to Afghanistan, which are listed in Table O.1 and described in the following section by agency.

TABLE O.1

COMPLETED OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES OF OTHER U.S. AGENCIES, AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2024			
Agency	Report Number	Date Issued	Report Title
State OIG	AUD-GEER-24-21	7/22/2024	Evaluation of Adjustments to the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program from 2018 to 2022
State OIG	AUD-GEER-24-28	9/9/2024	FY 2023 NDAA Section 5275 Mandated Review of the Department of State Efforts to Support and Process Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Applicants and Other Afghan Evacuees
State OIG	AUD-GEER-24-31	9/19/2024	Supplemental Classified Report on the Audit of the Disposition of Sensitive Security Assets at U.S. Embassies Kabul, Afghanistan, and Kyiv, Ukraine
DOD	AUD-GEER-24-32	9/30/2024	Management Assistance Report: The Department Would Benefit From a Formal, Systematic Methodology to Capture and Utilize Lessons Learned Following Post Evacuations

Source: State OIG, response to SIGAR data call, 9/13/2024 and 10/3/2024.

State Office of Inspector General - Middle East Regional Operations

State OIG issued four reports this quarter related to Afghanistan reconstruction.

Evaluation of Department of State Accounting, Screening, and Vetting of Afghan Evacuees

Following State's evacuation and suspension of operations at U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan, in August 2021, multiple Congressional committees requested that State OIG review the processing of Afghan special immigrant visas. State OIG is issuing a series of reports in response to the requests. In addition, Section 5275 of the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act directed State OIG to assess State's "efforts to support and process evacuees from Afghanistan and the Afghanistan [SIV] program." State OIG incorporated the Section 5275 requirements into its ongoing work related to Afghan SIVs. State OIG conducted this evaluation to (1) determine the extent to which State accounted for the total number of individuals evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021 with U.S. Government support and (2) assess the systems, staffing, policies, and programs used to screen and vet SIV applicants.

State OIG could not confirm the number of individuals evacuated from Afghanistan, regardless of destination, with U.S. Government support in 2021. State OIG determined that State relied entirely on DOD to track evacuation statistics because the military commander was responsible for conducting the noncombatant evacuation operation. Although State OIG requested DOD documentation to validate the number of evacuees, DOD did not fully respond to State OIG's request prior the issuance of this report. According to DOD officials, the source data may be available, but that data was never provided to State OIG despite repeated attempts to obtain it. Following the noncombatant evacuation operation, State continued relocating Afghan SIV applicants, U.S. citizens, and other eligible Afghans from Afghanistan. State OIG found that State maintained records of individuals relocated since the noncombatant evacuation operation ended. According to State's records, from September 2021 through December 2023, State relocated 35,171 individuals, including 1,971 U.S. citizens and 21,925 Afghan SIV holders and applicants from Afghanistan.

State also reviewed a statistical sample of Afghan SIVs issued in 2021 and found that State followed its established policies, process, and procedures to screen and vet the Afghan SIV applicants with respect to confirming the applicants' identity and spouses who were minors. In addition, State did not find any instances of human trafficking or domestic abuse concerns in the Afghan SIV files reviewed.

State OIG made two recommendations to improve data sharing between State and DOD during military assisted evacuations, including

noncombatant evacuations. State concurred with both recommendations. At the time the report was issued, State OIG considered one recommendation resolved, pending further action, and one recommendation closed. The open recommendation will remain open until State OIG receives documentation that all agreed-upon actions have been completed.

FY 2023 NDAA Section 5275 Mandated Review of the Department of State Efforts to Support and Process Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Applicants and Other Afghan Evacuees

Section 5275 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Public Law 117-263, directed the Offices of Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State to conduct a joint review “of efforts to support and process evacuees from Afghanistan and the Afghanistan special immigrant visa program” in coordination with the Inspector General of the Department of Defense and other appropriate Inspectors General. Among other things, section 5275 directed these offices to provide information regarding the vetting, processing, and resettlement of evacuees, and required that the review include an assessment of the systems, staffing, policies, and programs used to: (1) screen and vet evacuees; (2) admit and process the evacuees at U.S. ports of entry; (3) temporarily house the evacuees prior to resettlement; and (4) account for the total number of individuals evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021 with the support of the U.S. Government, including the number of individuals who were holders of Afghan special immigrant visas.

Following an interim joint report published by the OIGs in June 2023, this report summarizes all of State OIG’s work related to the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program since 2020. From June 2020 through July 2024, State OIG issued seven reports, five of which included recommendations intended to improve the Afghan SIV program. In those reports, State OIG issued 21 recommendations, of which seven recommendations were resolved pending further action, as of August 1, 2024. This report contained no new recommendations.

Supplemental Classified Report on the Audit of the Disposition of Sensitive Security Assets at U.S. Embassies Kabul, Afghanistan, and Kyiv, Ukraine

State OIG conducted this audit to determine whether U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan, and U.S. Embassy Kyiv, Ukraine managed, safeguarded, and disposed of sensitive security assets in advance of the evacuation of each post in accordance with State guidance. This report is classified. An unclassified report is forthcoming.

Management Assistance Report: The Department Would Benefit From a Formal, Systematic Methodology to Capture and Utilize Lessons Learned Following Post Evacuations

To ensure the safety of mission personnel during political instability or other security threats, State may evacuate personnel and suspend operations at an embassy or consulate. Since 2014, State has evacuated and suspended operations at seven overseas posts because of deteriorating security environments in the host countries, including Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan, in August 2021 and Embassy Kyiv, Ukraine, in February 2022. During an audit of the disposition of sensitive security assets in the lead-up to the evacuations of Embassy Kabul and Embassy Kyiv, State OIG identified challenges related to State's approach to documenting and applying lessons learned from previous post evacuations. This report addresses those challenges.

State OIG found that State had not established a consistent, comprehensive method to capture lessons learned following post drawdowns, evacuations, and suspensions of operations. State OIG identified two types of reports intended to document lessons learned. Both types of reports are intended to document significant lessons learned following post evacuations and may include recommendations to aid other posts facing emergency evacuation scenarios. However, State OIG found that State had not established clear requirements as to when these reports must be produced. State OIG also found that, even when lessons learned reports were produced following a post's evacuation, State had not established a process to systematically review documented lessons learned or determine when lessons learned should necessitate changes to State policies, procedures, or guidance. As a result, State OIG found that many of the same difficulties experienced by posts that underwent evacuations prior to 2021 were repeated during the evacuation of Embassy Kabul.

State OIG made three recommendations to address the deficiencies identified in this report. The relevant State entities concurred with two recommendations and neither agreed nor disagreed with one recommendation. At the time the report was issued, State OIG considered all three recommendations resolved, pending further action. The recommendations will remain open until State OIG receives documentation that all agreed upon actions have been completed.

ONGOING OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

This quarter, participating agencies reported three ongoing oversight activities related to Afghanistan, which are listed in Table O.2 and described in the following section by agency.

OVERSIGHT BY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

TABLE O.2

ONGOING OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES OF OTHER U.S. AGENCIES, AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2024			
Agency	Project Number	Date Initiated	Report Title
State OIG	22AUD012	12/2/2021	Review of the Department of State Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program
State OIG	23AUD001	12/13/2022	Audit of the Disposition of Defensive Equipment and Armored Vehicles in Advance of Evacuations of U.S. Embassies Kabul and Kyiv
USAID OIG	551F0123	4/21/2023	Audit of USAID's Efforts to Safeguard Implementers and Activities in Afghanistan

Source: State OIG, response to SIGAR data call, 9/13/2024; USAID OIG, response to SIGAR data call, 9/12/2024.

State Office of Inspector General–Middle East Regional Operations

State OIG had two ongoing projects this quarter related to Afghanistan.

Review of the Department of State Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program

This review will be issued as a series of reports in response to requests from multiple congressional committees to review a range of topics regarding the Afghan SIV program.

Audit of the Disposition of Defensive Equipment and Armored Vehicles in Advance Operations of Evacuations at U.S. Embassies Kabul and Kyiv

This audit will determine whether U.S. Embassies Kabul and Kyiv managed, safeguarded, and disposed of sensitive security assets in advance of the evacuation and suspension of operations at each post in accordance with Department of State guidance.

United States Agency for International Development Office of Inspector General

USAID OIG had one ongoing performance audit this quarter related to Afghanistan.

Audit of USAID’s Efforts to Safeguard Implementers and Activities in Afghanistan

The audit will determine USAID’s oversight of implementer efforts to mitigate both security and safety risks and Taliban interference in activities.