Rule of law assistance is an important component of U.S. efforts to build the capacity of foreign partners to support international peace and security. DIILS is DOD’s lead global resource for providing professional legal education and assistance to foreign military personnel and civilian defense officials on core rule of law issues. Such issues include military justice, anticorruption, and professionalization of the military. In addition, DIILS provides defense institution-building assistance and statutorily required human rights training to foreign partners. In fiscal years 2013 through 2016, DIILS disbursed over $24 million.

House Report 114-102 includes a provision for GAO to review DOD’s efforts to build partner capacity in the rule of law. This report examines, among other things, the extent to which (1) DIILS has provided rule of law assistance to foreign partners and assessed its quality and (2) DOD has considered whether the size of DIILS’s workforce aligns with the scope of its mission. GAO reviewed and analyzed agency funding, planning, and organizational structure documents for fiscal years 2013 through 2016. GAO interviewed U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., and conducted fieldwork in Newport, Rhode Island; Botswana; Germany; and Uganda. Locations were selected on the basis of the nature and timing of assistance.

What GAO Recommends

The Secretary of Defense should assess the extent to which the size of DIILS’s workforce aligns with the scope of its mission. DOD concurred with the recommendation.

View GAO-17-118. For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., at (202) 512-7331 or JohnsonCM@gao.gov.