

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-554](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The U.S. government seeks to advance human rights when it provides security assistance to foreign countries. Such assistance includes DOD- and State-supported human rights and international humanitarian law training for foreign security forces. The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 consolidated multiple capacity building authorities, now codified at 10 U.S.C. § 333. DOD implements most U.S. human rights training for foreign security forces.

Congress included a provision in the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2018 for GAO to review human rights training for foreign security forces. This report, among other objectives, (1) describes the entities through which DOD and State provide such training, (2) assesses the extent to which DOD and State track the provision of and funding for such training, and (3) examines the extent to which DOD and State have evaluated the effectiveness of the training. GAO reviewed laws, regulations, guidance, agency training and funding data, and course catalogs, and interviewed agency officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making three recommendations, including that the Secretary of Defense establish a process to systematically track mandated human rights training and develop a timeline for implementing monitoring and evaluation. DOD agreed. GAO also recommends that the Secretary of State develop a plan with a timeline to monitor and evaluate such training. State disagreed. GAO continues to believe the recommendation is valid as discussed in the report.

View [GAO-19-554](#). For more information, contact Jennifer Grover at (202) 512-7141 or groverj@gao.gov.

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SECURITY ASSISTANCE

U.S. Agencies Should Improve Oversight of Human Rights Training for Foreign Security Forces

What GAO Found

Several entities within the Departments of Defense (DOD) and State (State) are involved in human rights training. DOD's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) conducts program management for DOD's efforts to build the capacity of foreign security forces. The human rights training required by 10 U.S.C § 333 is provided exclusively by the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS), a DOD entity. DOD operates a number of other educational entities that provide training to foreign security forces, and many include human rights-related material in their curriculum or through operational exercises. (See figure.)

Figure: Foreign Military Students Practice a Simulated Raid at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in Fort Benning, Georgia



Source: Provided by the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. | GAO-19-554

DOD does not systematically track human rights training and, as a result, only limited information is available on the provision of and funding for these activities. Without a process to ensure systematic and accurate tracking of human rights training data, DSCA is limited in its ability to monitor its compliance with the training-related provision of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017. State relies on DOD to track human rights training for military forces and tracks some training and funding data for police.

DOD and State have not assessed the effectiveness of human rights training for foreign security forces, according to agency officials. The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 required DOD to conduct monitoring and evaluation of its security assistance programs. DOD has taken initial steps to develop monitoring and evaluation policies but officials stated that they have not yet determined when DOD will evaluate human rights training. State officials said they do not know when the agency will begin monitoring and evaluating human rights training provided under the International Military Education and Training program, a large source of funding for such training. Monitoring and evaluation would enable DOD and State to determine the effectiveness of U.S.-provided human rights training for foreign security forces.