

# Russian Rocket Fails Shortly After Launch

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A Russian Dnepr rocket failed 86 seconds after liftoff Wednesday, the RIA-Novosti news agency reported. The rocket, a former Soviet RS-20 intercontinental ballistic missile, carried 17 micro-satellites - as well as the first Belorussian spacecraft, called Belka. It apparently failed after the second stage was ignited.

The Interfax news agency reported that the rocket 25 kilometers (15 miles) south of the launch pad, Yuri Nosenko, deputy chief of Roskosmos told Interfax. "There was no harm to any of the towns and villages on the nearby territories," he said.

The satellite constellation had been designed for a five-year remote-sensing mission. Called baumanets, the microsattellites were due to follow orbits ranging from 300 kilometers to 900 kilometers (185 miles to 560 miles) above Earth.

The rocket had a mass at liftoff of approximately 250 tons. Its length was 34.3 meters (111 feet) and a diameter of 3 meters (10 feet) and was capable of putting into orbit a payload of up to 3.7 tons.

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