

Israel says new spy satellite sends first images

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Israel's latest spy satellite began transmitting pictures on Thursday, the defence ministry said, overcoming initial hiccups on its launch nine days ago.

"A team of engineers and operators... operated this evening for the first time, the payload of the observation satellite Ofek 11, and successfully downloaded the first pictures from the satellite," a ministry statement said in English.

"Since its launch on September 13, 2016, dozens of engineers have engaged in activities to stabilise the satellite and its systems," it said.

The statement did not describe the images received or the satellite's mission.

Ofek 11, like its 2014 predecessor Ofek 10, was launched into space on an Israeli-made Shavit rocket from a site in the centre of the country.

It joins a number of [spy satellites](#) Israel has been deploying since 1988.

When Ofek 10 first entered orbit, then-defence minister Moshe Yaalon said it would "enable the security establishment to better deal with threats near and far, at all hours of the day and in any weather."

A civilian Israeli communications satellite, Amos 6, was destroyed ahead of [launch](#) in the United States on September 1 when the US-made rocket

meant to take it into space exploded during a test.

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