

Satellite operator OneWeb switches launches to SpaceX

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OneWeb has previously used Soyuz rockets operated by the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos to launch its satellites.

Global satellite communications company OneWeb said Monday that it will switch launches to Elon Musk's SpaceX, after suspending activities

with Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

"OneWeb... announced today that the company and SpaceX entered into an agreement that will enable OneWeb to resume [satellite launches](#)," OneWeb said in a brief statement.

The terms of the agreement remain confidential and the first launch is expected later this year.

OneWeb decided on March 3 to scrap all launches from Baikonur because it would have used Russian Soyuz rockets and been overseen by the Russia's space agency Roscosmos.

The group had faced intense political pressure to scrap Baikonur activities in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"We thank SpaceX for their support," said OneWeb CEO Neil Masterson.

"With these launch plans in place, we're on track to finish building out our full fleet of satellites and deliver robust, fast, secure connectivity around the globe."

OneWeb has already launched 428 satellites into orbit via Soyuz rockets under Starsem, which is a [joint venture](#) between Europe's Arianespace and Russia's Roscosmos.

The group has been working to complete the construction of a constellation of low earth orbit satellites to provide enhanced broadband and other services around the globe.

OneWeb is aiming for its global commercial internet service to be operational by next year, supported by a total of almost 650 satellites.

Arianespace has worked with Russia for nearly two decades, and is under contract to make 16 Soyuz launches between December 2020 and the end of this year.

However, Russia suspended space launches from French Guiana and withdrew technical personnel on February 26 in response to EU sanctions over Moscow's assault on Ukraine.

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