

Kenya to launch first operational satellite next week

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Kenya will launch its first operational satellite next week in a landmark achievement for the country's space program, the government said on Monday.

Taifa-1, or Nation-1 in Swahili, is scheduled to be launched on April 10 aboard the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

"The mission is an important milestone," the [defense ministry](#) and Kenya Space Agency said in a joint statement, adding that it would contribute significantly to the country's "budding space economy".

The [observation satellite](#) is "fully designed and developed" by Kenyan engineers and will be used to provide data on agriculture and food security, among other areas, the statement said.

Testing and manufacturing of the parts were done in collaboration with a Bulgarian aerospace manufacturer, it added.

An East African economic powerhouse, Kenya is suffering its worst drought in decades after five failed rain seasons.

The [satellite launch](#) will add to a push by African nations for scientific innovation and the development of space programs.

Egypt was the first African country to send a satellite into space in 1998.

In 2018, Kenya launched its first experimental nano-satellite from the International Space Station.

As of 2022, at least 13 African countries had manufactured 48 satellites, according to Space in Africa, a Nigeria-based firm that tracks African space programs.

More than 50 African satellites have been launched as of November 2022, according to Space in Africa, although none from African soil.

In January, the Djibouti government announced a memorandum of understanding with a Hong Kong-based company to build a \$1 billion commercial spaceport that is expected to take five years to complete.

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