

SpaceX Falcon 9 launches 4 private astronauts toward ISS

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The Sunday live broadcast from SpaceX showed that the Ax-2 mission, which includes a commercial crew of four people, was launched at 5:37 p. m. Eastern Time (21:37 GMT on Sunday) from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Falcon 9's first stage booster has landed on Landing Zone 1, a first for a human spaceflight mission," SpaceX said on Twitter shortly after the launch of the Ax-2 mission.

Previously, after manned missions, the first stage landed only on floating platforms in the Atlantic Ocean.

The Crew Dragon spacecraft separated from Falcon 9's second stage around 12 minutes after liftoff and is expected to reach the International Space Station (ISS) at 13:24 GMT on Monday.

This is the second time that Houston-based Axiom Space is sending a commercial crew to the International Space Station (ISS). The Ax-2 crew includes retired NASA astronaut commander Peggy Whitson, US pilot John Shoffner, Saudi fighter pilot Ali Alqarni, and research technician Rayyanah Barnawi, who will become the first Saudi woman in space. They will participate in the scientific work at the ISS along with the station's regular crew.