



National Reconnaissance Office Release

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NRO Successfully Launches NROL-123 from NASA Wallops

First NRO & Rocket Lab launch from the United States

CHANTILLY, Va. — The National Reconnaissance Office successfully launched the NROL-123 mission aboard a Rocket Lab Electron rocket from Rocket Lab Launch Complex 2 at NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility and Virginia Spaceport Authority’s Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport located on Wallops Island, Va., on March 21, 2024, at 3:25 a.m. EDT.

NROL-123 is the first Rocket Lab launch for the NRO from the United States. Rocket Lab previously launched four NRO missions from Launch Complex 1 in Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand – two in 2020 and two in 2022.

“This launch, which is putting research missions into space, exemplifies the NRO’s commitment to building partnerships with private industry and academia,” said Dr. Chris Scolese, director of the NRO. “The knowledge gained from this research will advance innovation and enable the development of critical new technology.”

NROL-123 is the fifth and final launch service acquired using the NRO’s Rapid Acquisition of a Small Rocket (RASR) contract. RASR enables the NRO to explore new opportunities for launching small satellites through a streamlined, commercial approach. The previous four NRO Rocket Lab launches from New Zealand were also acquired under the RASR contract.

“The NRO is always looking for innovative ways to advance our capabilities in space and build agility and resilience into everything we do,” said Laura Robinson, deputy director of the NRO’s Office of Space Launch and mission director for NROL-123. “Our first Rocket Lab launch from U.S. soil offers another opportunity to put payloads into orbit safely and efficiently.”

Since its inception in 1961, the NRO has been at the forefront of innovation. It uses satellites and other space-based capabilities to secure and expand America’s intelligence advantage. Millions of people count on the NRO to collect and deliver critical information that can only be obtained from the vantage point of space. The Department of Defense and Intelligence Community depend on NRO capabilities for national security, and the NRO helps civilian customers with priorities like assessing damage from natural disasters, predicting climate change, and helping relief agencies determine how and where to deliver humanitarian aid.

Additional information on upcoming launches will be available at [NRO.gov/launch](https://nro.gov/launch).

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NRO is the leader in developing, acquiring, launching, and operating the nation's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites to secure and expand America's advantage in space. We are building a diversified and resilient architecture of spacecraft and ground systems designed to meet the challenges of a changing space environment by accelerating innovation and leveraging strategic partnerships, backed by a diverse and highly skilled workforce. At NRO, we See It, Hear It, Sense It so our nation's warfighters and policymakers have decision advantage amid increasing global competition. Learn more at [NRO.gov](https://nro.gov).