



**The Saudi Space Commission reveals the AX-2 mission will officially launch on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

*A momentous occasion as the first Arab Female Astronaut; Rayyanah Barnawi will fly into space*



**On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023**, two Saudi astronauts, Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali AlQarni will be part of the AX-2 mission travelling towards the International Space Station (ISS) to conduct ground-breaking scientific research experiments that serve humanity. Joining the crew will be Peggy Whitson, a former NASA astronaut who now flies for Axiom and John Shoffner, the pilot.

The AX-2 mission will launch atop a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The crewmates will travel to and from the ISS in a SpaceX Dragon 2 capsule named Freedom.

The astronauts will be conducting 14 innovative and pioneering scientific experiments in microgravity, including the repercussions of space on human health and rain-seeding technology, which is aiming to contribute to increasing rainfall in many countries. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, there will also be educational experiments conducted aboard the ISS in real time with 12,000 students viewing from Saudi. The aim is to inspire the future generation of scientists and aspiring astronauts and encourage more young women and girls to follow STEM careers.

Rayyanah Barnawi says "Space research hovers over all of humanity, literally and figuratively. As such, it should include the voices and perspectives of a truly global community that involves not only a diversity of nations, but a diversity of people. I am honoured to represent Saudi Arabia's growing contributions to this field and proud to be the first Saudi Arabian woman to go to space. I hope this mission will inspire girls from various backgrounds, who have not always had these opportunities, to embrace their talents and intellect, and to know they have a crucial role to play in advancing the human experience."

The success of this mission will enhance Saudi Arabia's global position within the field of space exploration and underline its service to humanity. It will place a cornerstone in the astronauts' program which is designed to prepare future astronauts and engineers, through quality educational and training programs, participation in scientific experiments, international research, and future space-related missions - ultimately helping to achieve the goals of Vision 2030.

Notes to editors:

For further information and images please contact [saudispace@mercurycomms.com](mailto:saudispace@mercurycomms.com)

**About The Saudi Space Commission (SSC):**



The Saudi Space Commission (SSC) was established by the royal order in December of 2018 (Rabi II 1440). This bold step serves a future that is innovative and looks forward to the latest technologies and opportunities in the Saudi Space Industry.


With the Kingdom moving towards a progressive quality of life, SSC demonstrates the aligned vision of creating better, secure environments for its citizens while actively enabling prospects of lucrative economic and monetary inventions.

The SSC has strategized to create primary objectives that serve national security interests against space related risks and encourage cumulative growth and advancement.

<https://saudispace.gov.sa/en/about-us/>

**EXECUTION**

In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1746, and subject to the penalties of 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and 22 U.S.C. § 618, the undersigned swears or affirms under penalty of perjury that he/she has read the information set forth in this statement filed pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, 22 U.S.C. § 611 *et seq.*, that he/she is familiar with the contents thereof, and that such contents are in their entirety true and accurate to the best of his/her knowledge and belief.

Date	Printed Name	Signature
7/13/23	Marissa Mastellone	
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____