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U.S. To Resume International Space Station Flights With Russia

By AFP

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Astronaut Frank Rubio. **Robert Markowitz / NASA**

The United States said Friday it would resume flights to the International Space Station with Russia, despite its attempts to isolate Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine.

"To ensure continued safe operations of the International Space Station, protect the lives of astronauts and ensure continuous U.S. presence in space, NASA will resume integrated crews on U.S. crew spacecraft and the Russian Soyuz," U.S. space agency NASA said in a statement.

NASA said that astronaut Frank Rubio would fly with two Russian cosmonauts on a Soyuz rocket scheduled to launch on Sept. 21 from Kazakhstan.

The announcement came hours after President Vladimir Putin fired the head of Russia's space agency, Dmitry Rogozin, a firebrand nationalist and ardent backer of the Ukraine invasion who once quipped that U.S. astronauts should get to the space station on trampolines rather

than Russian rockets.

NASA said that the International Space Station was always designed to be operated jointly with participation from the space agencies of the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada.

"The station was designed to be interdependent and relies on contributions from each space agency to function. No one agency has the capability to function independent of the others," it said.

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