

The Knesset

**Member of Knesset Ksenia Svetlova**

**Ksenia Svetlova** (in Russian: **Ксения Светлова**) was born on 28 July 1977. She is a MK for Hatnua in the Zionist Camp parliamentary group, an Israeli journalist and Arab affairs analyst for Channel 9, and a doctoral candidate at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

**Biography**

Ksenia Svetlova was born in Moscow to Svetlana and Igor. She immigrated to Israel in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. She has a BA and MA in Communications and in Islamic and Middle East Studies from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is writing a doctorate at The Hebrew University on The Attitude of Egyptian Media towards Israel between 1979 and 2011.

Svetlova speaks four languages: Hebrew, Arabic, Russian and English, and she interviews in the media in each language. Her posts on Facebook are generally written in at least two languages.

**As a Journalist**

In 2002 Svetlova began working worked as a reporter for Israel Plus (Channel 9), where she directly covered all facets of the Arab and Middle East arena.

Svetlova also wrote for numerous journals in Israel and around the world. In 2004, she won first prize at the Eurasian "Telforum" festival in Moscow for her investigative reporting in the South Mt. Hebron area.

As a journalist, Svetlova interviewed many Arab leaders, including Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hezbollah leaders, etc.

Events she covered in the field include:

* The Iraq war
* Funeral of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Al Hariri
* Implementation of the Disengagement Plan (coverage from the heart of Palestinian territory)
* The civil war in Syria
* The coup in Egypt (2011)
* The coup in Egypt (2013)

In 2011, at the start of the Egyptian revolution, Svetlova predicted the imminent fall of Mubarak’s rule.

**As a Middle East Commentator**

Svetlova frequently writes about issues related to the Middle East and Islam.

She often covered the Arab Spring, writing numerous analyses and opinions on the subject.

During her visit to Iraqi Kurdistan, Svetlova wrote about the Kurdish nation and its relationship with the State of Israel, about the erasing of the Jewish identity of the prophet Ezekiel and on various topics related to ISIS.

**Political Career**

In January 2015, Svetlova announced her joining the Zionist Camp Party, and she was placed fourth on the Hatnua list headed by Tzipi Livni, which is 21st on the Zionist Camp list. In the Knesset elections, the list received 24 seats, and Svetlova was elected to the 20th Knesset.

Svetlova is a member of the Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Committee and is an alternate member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. She also established three lobbies:

* The Lobby for Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Expression
* The Lobby for the Preservation of the Culture of Jews from Islamic Countries
* The Lobby for Strengthening Relations between the State of Israel and the Kurdish People

She also is member of the Lobby for Regional Cooperation.

In the 20th Knesset Knesset, Svetlova was made head of the Israel-Estonia, Israel-Lithuania, Israel-Finland and Israel-Latvia Parliamentary Friendship Groups.\*

**Legislation**

As a MK, Svetlova submitted draft laws on issues related to the lives of immigrants from the former USSR, laws on religion and state and laws on freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

**Her Positions**

Svetlova is a member of the peace camp, and frequently makes statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the media and in her speeches in the Knesset. She uses examples from her experience as a journalist in the Arab world.

Upon her immigration to Israel, Svetlova received public religious education in Jerusalem, where she adopted a right-wing philosophy, but as a journalis, she was exposed to the Palestinian and Arab neighbors, which resulted in her belief that peace “is not only necessary, it is possible”.

Among the Russian-speaking MKs from the former Soviet Union, Svetlova is prominent in her activity for equality and against racism. This is discernible in the draft laws she tables in the Knesset.

Svetlova chose to focus on equality within the framework of the Lobby for the Preservation of Cultures of Jews from Islamic Countries. According to Svetlova, her experiences as a new immigrant to Israel, alongside her familiarity with the Arab world, created her perspective in this area.

Svetlova holds a social-democratic perspective.

**Personal Life**

Svetlova immigrated to Israel with her mother and grandmother. Following her immigration, she lived with them in Jerusalem, where she attended public religious schools and became familiar with Israeli society.

She is the mother of two daughters and lives with her partner Anatoly, a hi-tech specialist who also immigrated to Israel from the former USSR. She lives with her family and mother in Modiin-Maccabim-Reut.