

INTERVIEW

Meet the Ukrainian MP on a mission in search of peace

By Sarah Glynn



KYIV, UKRAINE - APRIL 29, 2021 - MP Anna Skorokhod delivers a speech during a regular sitting of the Ukrainian parliament, Kyiv, capital of Ukraine. (Photo credit should read Hennadii Minchenko/ Ukrinform/Future Publishing via Getty Images).

UKRAINIAN MP Anna Skorokhod is a woman with a mission. I met her at last week's Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where she had come to persuade delegates of the urgent necessity of a peace deal with Russia, and she agreed to talk to me for the Sunday National.

Skorokhod's call is not the product of political ideology – she was in Strasbourg at the invitation of the Left Group, but her own party, For the Future, is in the same group as the British Conservatives. Rather, she is driven by bitter reality.

She explains that, despite all the fighting, the front lines barely move, and now so many volunteers have been killed, wounded, taken prisoner, or missing in action that

the authorities are catching conscripts off the streets. No-one knows the true extent of the casualties, but they are “running out of people”.

While **Ukraine** has had “successful” deep strikes into Russia, Russia also strikes deep into Ukraine. In Ukraine, Russian strikes have hit civilian areas and vital services. Skorokhod’s flat in Kyiv lost doors and windows to one blast. Last winter, they were left without heating, while electricity was limited to a few hours a day.

Her six-year-old’s school has a safe room to retreat to, and he has learned to distinguish between Shahed drones and even more lethal missiles. People live under constant stress and are exhausted by war.

Skorokhod notes that the Ukrainian strikes also hit Russian infrastructure and make life hard in Russia, and that people in Crimea have been left isolated without essential supplies. The fought-over territories have themselves been so badly scarred and riddled with mines that it will be a long time before they can again be made habitable.

“We destroy each other by rockets and drones; nothing changes on the front line. And for what? Every normal person understands that this craziness must stop.”

Skorokhod insists that her conclusions are shared by the majority of Ukrainians who remain in the war-shattered country, but that most people are scared to speak out.

“If you support peace, if you are talking about peace, and if you criticise power, you are a ‘Russian agent’.” Criticism of the authorities, or talk of peace can land the speaker in prison – and many bloggers and journalists have been “persecuted”. Group actions are limited to humanitarian work.

Skorokhod believes that those in power don’t want peace because this would be followed by elections where they would lose their posts. She argues that Volodymyr Zelenskyy is “trying to stay in power as long as possible”.

She also observes that the desire for war is driven by the arms industries of many European countries, and that the Ukraine war has allowed these countries to sell their old weapons and invest in creating new, profitable models.

“A lot of countries trash their old weapons on our territories with a payment for the weapons. And they restart, and they rebuild, and they renew all their industries, and they are fully booked with all their products for many years – so you just have to count how much money they make each year.

“And you have [to] know that when the **European Union** helps Ukraine, we can’t use money as we want. We have to use money on what they are giving; like, for example, if Germany gives us money, we have [to] mostly spend them on German arms.”

In her role as a parliamentarian, Skorokhod headed a commission that reported on the rights of servicemen, which was extremely critical of leading figures and corruption in the Ukrainian army.

They found vital positions awarded through nepotism rather than merit, and claims for funding for non-existent soldiers. Men can avoid conscription if they are doing a reserved occupation, but also, if they have money to bribe the authorities.

Skorokhod describes Ukraine as a “police state” where everything is controlled by Zelenskyy. She notes that this is completely contrary to the constitution, which stipulates that in time of war, control should pass from the president to parliament.



EVIAN-LES-BAINS, FRANCE - JUNE 16: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky prepares to pose for a family photo before a cultural performance and concert during the G7 Summit on June 16, 2026 in Evian-les-Bains, France. Leaders from the Group of 7 (G7)

While there is a lot of corruption, the organisations tasked with stopping corruption are themselves corrupt, so all is not quite how it seems. Corruption cases can be used to silence opponents, and Skorokhod claims that this is what the authorities are trying to do to her. She is accused of inciting bribery, and the case has been left hanging over her. When she asked to confront her unknown accuser, the authorities put an image on their screen. Skorokhod scrolls through her phone to show it to me, and I see a screen with a picture of a fox.

Skorokhod believes that the 2022 peace plans were scuppered by the intervention of Boris Johnson, and she is concerned that now “nobody is talking about peace.

Everybody is talking about how they are worried about Ukraine, how they support Ukraine, and how they will help Ukraine with money and weapons.”

Although she doesn't want that support to stop, her specific request is for air defence systems, and she wants active European support for negotiations. She has no time for armchair patriots and accepts that peace requires compromise.

For Skorokhod, continuation of this war is simply “insane”. “Nobody is thinking about how much people dead, how many civilians are dead, and how many people will [be] buried every day and every month in Ukraine. Not only militaries, but also civilians, also children.”