

# **ANG-ING BY A THREAD Angela Merkel's government on brink of COLLAPSE over Germany's migrant crisis as coalition minister threatens to quit**

Horst Seehofer revealed he is set to quit his crucial cabinet post and key role as leader of her coalition partners because he believes the Chancellor is soft on immigration.

**ANGELA Merkel is holding crisis talks today to try and save her political future after her interior minister said he was ready to quit over her handling of the migration crisis.**

Horst Seehofer revealed he was poised to resign from his crucial cabinet post and key role as leader of her coalition partners because he believes the German Chancellor is too soft on immigration.

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives for a meeting at the CDU headquarters in Berlin.

The tricky migration issue pits Seehofer and his Bavaria-only Christian Social Union party against Merkel, the head of its sister party, the Christian Democratic Union.

Seehofer wants to turn some asylum-seekers back at Germany's border, but Merkel is adamant Germany shouldn't take a unilateral stance that might upset its European partners.

The complete collapse of Germany's ruling party was only averted after Merkel promised Seehofer she would reach a deal at the EU summit last week which would resolve the problem.

However, Seehofer reportedly argues the new measures still aren't tough enough and now says he wants out.

AP:ASSOCIATED PRESS

Horst Seehofer (right) has threatened to quit over Merkel's handling of the immigration crisis

## What would happen if Seehofer quit?

Seehofer's threats to quit make the future of Merkel's government look pretty bleak, since her party relies on his CSU party to maintain power through a coalition formed three months ago.

Merkel lost votes to the far-right AfD in elections last September, and she has been forced to turn to EU neighbours to help resolve the row over how to deal with migrants trying to enter her country.

Should the CSU decide to nominate a replacement for Seehofer, Merkel's coalition would continue to remain in power although her credibility would be badly dented.

If the CSU pulls out of the coalition, there are several scenarios that could take place, none of which look good for Merkel.

REUTERS

A protester holds a placard reading 'Merkel must go' outside her party's headquarters

## What are the most likely scenarios?

**A minority government** - Merkel could attempt to continue ruling without a majority, but would need to continually seek partners in the opposition in order to pass any legislation.

**A brand new coalition** -The CDU could look for a new coalition partner to fill the gap left by the CSU. The Free Democrats (FDP) or the Greens are seen as favourites.

**Merkel gets the boot** - The third option would see Merkel facing a vote of no confidence in the Bundestag (German parliament). However, the other feuding parties would then need to agree on a new candidate - which seems highly unlikely.

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Migrants heading to Europe are rescued in the Med off the coast of Libya

## **What if the German government collapses?**

Should Merkel's government completely break down, it could pave the way for the temporary dissolution of the German parliament and new elections.

Although the process of calling a new poll is complicated, it is an option Merkel herself has said she prefers to ruling with a minority government.

Should President Frank-Walter Steinmeier decide to dissolve parliament, a new election would be ordered to take place within 60 days.

His office involves an integrative role and the control function of upholding the law and the constitution of the country.

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Migrants rest at the port of Algeciras, southern Spain after being saved in the Strait of Gibraltar

## **Is there a chance Seehofer might change his mind?**

A lot will depend on the meetings being held today and what pledges Merkel will make to him about any future immigration policies.

Seehofer, who has long demanded that Merkel toughen her open-doors refugee policy, still sees no alternative to turning some migrants back at the border, party sources say.

However, the German Chancellor has made it clear she completely rejects that idea.

Seehofer's own party members are now said to be desperately trying to persuade him to change his mind about resigning.

Seehofer told party colleagues that his ongoing discussions with Merkel had so far proved fruitless, according to a party source.

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Merkel pours coffee as she for an early morning meeting of her party's governing board

But others in the CSU have pointed to opinion polls showing Bavarians have more sympathy for Merkel than for him.

By appealing to migration hardliners in the CSU, they argue, their party could eventually end up losing future votes.

## **What has the EU agreed to do to tackle immigration?**

Last week, EU leaders hammered out a deal to share out refugees on a voluntary basis and create "controlled centres" inside the European Union to process asylum requests.

The 28 leaders agreed to consider setting up "disembarkation platforms" outside Europe, most likely in North Africa

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