

Merkel: Germans Must Prepare for a Changed Nation



[the image](#) struck a national nerve: German Chancellor Angela Merkel peering out from a black veil, her pious face juxtaposed against a national parliament building Photoshopped to include soaring minarets.

German public broadcaster ARD this week flashed the image on national television while airing a segment that quickly went viral and triggered an uproar on social media. The network called it satire, a way to capture the mounting sense of national angst over a refugee surge to Germany that could top 1 million by the year's end. But the image was nevertheless blasted by critics across Germany as blatant Islamophobia.

The image did, however, get one thing right: As Germans wrangle over the region's biggest refugee crisis since World War II, Angela Merkel is in the eye of the storm.

The woman known as the Iron Chancellor – and the same leader who brought the bankrupt Greeks to their knees last summer – has now put her political future on the line by showing a far kinder face to the Syrians, Iraqis and others fleeing war. In a region where other leaders have been far less compassionate, Merkel's voice of sympathy is so notable that her name is now even being bandied about as a contender for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Germany has gotten tougher in recent weeks – vowing to rapidly deport financial migrants and reinstating border checks to control the flows. But **Merkel has also told Germans to prepare themselves for a new nation, one that may not be as white and Christian as it is today.**