

THE Sun ON SUNDAY SAYS 12|08|18

REGARDLESS of the rights and wrongs of Boris Johnson's burka comments, one thing is for sure.

The Tories are well and truly mired in yet another bloodbath.

And a lot of it is of their own making. Instead of just sitting back and watching Labour self-destruct they now face weeks of in-fighting in front of frustrated voters – many of whom can't see what all the fuss is about.

In a withering attack today, one of Theresa May's own ministers describes her tactics as "cack-handed".

We can only agree. She has left the Cabinet split right down the middle.

Senior party figures are also warning that if Boris is disciplined, a full-scale revolt will see the PM toppled within days.

In any case there could be anarchy by the time the Tory conference starts next month.

What a way to run a party, let alone a Government. The

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She needs to staunch this festering party wound immediately.

Or else the infection will prove fatal.

Crisis Jez gets worse

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Today we reveal he has appeared alongside anti-Jewish racists a multitude of times since 2002.

Many Labour MPs – among them lifelong anti-racism campaigners – will feel sickened by this.

But when will they speak out?

Hawaii oh why?

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It is especially galling as the MoD faces a £20-billion deficit over the next decade.

They may have to enforce bitter cuts – including losing 14,000 troops as well as the Navy's two amphibious landing ships. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister refuses to confirm whether she will protect Britain's status as a Tier One military power.

Of course, MoD staff need somewhere to stay during foreign trips.

But taxpayers should not foot the bill for a £300-a-night beach resort with complimentary yoga lessons.

Next time use the Holiday Inn.



Boris... burka row

Get grip before it's too late, PM

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GOVERNMENT WILL GUARANTEE

REFUGEE FUNDING THANKS TO THE Sun CAMPAIGN



‘Fantastic news! Refuges should worry about people, not money’
— MICHELLE DEWBERRY



‘We are very pleased but we still need central core funding. Refuges save lives’
— JOHN & PENNY CLOUGH



‘We have paid close attention to The Sun on Sunday's excellent campaign’
— ESTHER McVEY



‘This is truly fantastic news... the decision will save lives’
— JULIE WALTERS



By SHARON HENDRY

A MUM who endured horrific domestic abuse has praised The Sun on Sunday after our campaign forced the Government to guarantee the funding of refuges.

Mandy Thomas, who was nearly killed when her partner tortured her with a blowtorch, said: "This will save many lives. Thank you for being the voice of vulnerable women and children."

"Alone, we cannot shout to the masses – but you did it for us." Save Our Shelters highlighted the danger of Government proposals to remove refugees from the welfare system.

The changes would have meant women and children fleeing violence could no longer pay for refuge accommodation with housing benefit – which makes up 53 per cent of refugees' funding.

This would have meant the last guaranteed income for refugees, run by charities in the Women's Aid membership, was lost.

'I was losing faith'

Women's Aid said the reforms would have led to 39 per cent of the 270 refuges in England closing.

Mandy, 52, fled to refuges several times during 18 years of hell at the hands of partner Eustace Douglas. He was eventually jailed for nine years in 2003 for grievous bodily harm with intent and false imprisonment. He also received a concurrent six-year term for rape.

She said: "The Sun on Sunday believed in us. You are the voice of many and you spoke for us in the right way."

After pressure from The Sun on Sunday, Women's Aid and other campaigners, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government said on Thursday all supported housing funding would be retained in the welfare system.

The statement added: "Ministers recognise supported housing is a vital service for some of the most vulnerable people in society."

Mandy said of the worrying original plan: "Just thinking about it gives me goosebumps."

If the Government's original proposals had gone through there would have been a serious rupture in the safety net.

"Without the right support, people fall and when you fall in a violent relationship you risk death. Two women a week die in the UK at the hands of violent partners."

Mandy was losing faith in the system before this happened. One week I've felt a wave of happiness. It's really something to celebrate. It will save lives and send a message to women that it is OK to leave a violent relationship because there is still a net to catch you.

Mandy has endured unthinkable physical and emotional hardships as a domestic violence survivor.

In the first of many escape bids, she escaped up her children and ran to a refuge in 1994.

But Douglas tracked them to a safe house and later held Mandy's head over an open coal fire.

"Things peaked in 2002, after Mandy got a job at the Post



‘I was losing my faith in the system before this victory’
— MANDY THOMAS

PRESSURE... Mandy and son Jahmene. Left, our campaign

Office. She said: "He told me I'd never get a job but I did – and I was promoted to manager. That pushed him over the edge." He imprisoned Mandy in her bedroom in Bath, Somerset, for four days, branded her with a blowtorch, slashed her with knives, dragged her around naked by her hair and threatened to kill her in front of their children.

Just five years after sentencing, her ex was released on a ten-year licence – and shortly afterwards, Mandy's eldest son Daniel, 22, took his own life. Now she is a Women's Aid ambassador, with son Jahmene, 27, the soul singer who wowed The X Factor in 2012 and is currently on tour with Gabrielle.

Mandy has written an autobiography, You Can't Run, and advised writers of Radio 4's The Archers on a controversial domestic violence

storyline in 2016. She added: "We have to keep sending the message to women that they can leave violent relationships with somewhere to go. I went with 4p in my jacket and didn't think about the consequences. But a lot of women worry about 'What if?'

"When things such as refuge provision are in place, it allows them to just run. Ultimately, it's often about staying alive."

'Tireless campaigning'

Women's Aid patron Dame Julie Walters called The Sun on Sunday victory "fantastic news", adding: "More refuge doors will be able to stay open to help women and children living with domestic abuse. I am proud to have supported the Save Our Shelter campaign with The Sun on Sunday, as this decision will save lives." Other

campaign backers also welcomed the victory. Luke and Ryan Hart are the sons of Lance Hart, who shot dead their mum Claire and their sister Charlotte, 19, in Spalding, Lincs, in 2016 before killing himself.

Their book about the horror, Operation Lighthouse: Reflections On Our Family's Devastating Story Of Coercive Control & Domestic Homicide, was published last month. The brothers said: "It is crucial our society chooses the side of innocent victims, rather than perpetrators. This is an important step in that direction."

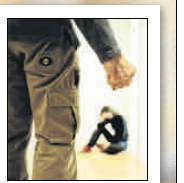
Apprentice winner and telly host Michelle Dewberry, 38, witnessed 18 years of domestic abuse by her father, who once threatened to kill the whole family by burning down their house. She said: "Refuges should only have to worry about helping people, not worry whether they can afford to operate."

Work & Pensions Secretary Esther McVey said yesterday: "We

paid close attention to The Sun on Sunday's excellent campaign, to voices across the sector and to victims of domestic abuse. By working alongside organisations like Women's Aid, Crisis and Refuge, we're helping to safeguard access to a secure accommodation for those who need it.

Communities Secretary James Brokenshire added: "I am grateful to everyone who has worked with us over the last few months and for The Sun on Sunday's tireless campaigning. I can assure your readers this Government will make sure good and safe homes are provided for those who need them most."

IF you are a victim of domestic violence, call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence helpline run by Women's Aid and Refuge on 0800 200 247. Donate to vital services at womensaid.org.uk/donate.



VITAL... demand is high

FUNDS STILL AT RISK

By KATIE GHOSE Chief executive of Women's Aid

DOMESTIC abuse refuges save lives. When we found out last year that the Government planned to remove Refuge's last secure form of funding from 2020, we teamed up with The Sun on Sunday to make sure no refuges would be forced to close their doors for ever. A refuge is so much more than a bed for the night. It is a lifeline for thousands of women and children fleeing domestic abuse.

Two women a week are killed by their partner or ex-partner in England and Wales. Survivors and their kids need to be able to escape unsafe homes to the safety of a refuge, where they can rebuild their lives.

The threatened changes would have forced four in ten refuges to close, leaving 4,000 extra women and children with nowhere to go. And refugees will continue to worry about how they are going to make ends meet and cope with the demand. One in five of all referrals to refuges are turned down due to lack of space. We know demand for places far outstrips supply.

While the concessions we have secured this week represent a massive achievement, the campaign carries on until there is sustainable refuge funding so every survivor and child can flee an unsafe home.

Thank you to the thousands of Sun on Sunday's readers for your support to save refuges.

The important decision will help save the lives of women and children escaping domestic abuse.