

Taylor pledges support for Liberia peace process

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MONROVIA, April 23 (Reuter) - Liberia's main rebel faction pledged its commitment to peace on Saturday, two days after the United Nations brandished the threat of a Rwanda-style withdrawal.

Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) said it would formally start participating in the transitional government on Monday, ending its boycott.

"We reaffirm our full commitment to re-establish Liberia as a haven of peace and stability," the NPFL said in a statement faxed from its headquarters in Gbarnga, central Liberia.

The NPFL also nominated Dorothy Musuleng Cooper to be foreign minister in the coalition government due to lead the West African country to presidential elections on September 7.

Taylor's previous choice, Momolu Sirleaf, was unacceptable to the two other factions who signed last July's peace accord, the ULIMO militia and Amos Sawyer's former interim government.

The U.N. Security Council agreed on Thursday to extend the mandate of its Military Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until October 22.

But underlining impatience with the factions, it warned the 368-member mission could be withdrawn sooner if progress in implementing the peace accord was not speeded up.

On Friday the Security Council voted to pull most of the U.N. peacekeepers out of Rwanda, where tribal fighters have refused to stop their killing spree.

Disarmament of rival armies has come to a virtual stop in Liberia. ULIMO is split on tribal lines and there were several bloody incidents between Krahn and Mandingo fighters last week.

One report reaching Monrovia on Friday said Armah Youlo, a top ULIMO commander, had joined the rebellion against the movement's Mandingo leader, Alhaji Kromah.

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