

## Rwanda's new premier says forced "resignation" meaningless

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KIGALI, July 25 (AFP) - Rwanda's Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana has dismissed as meaningless a resignation letter members of her own political party had forced here to sign.

Uwilingiyimana was cornered by members of her own Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) on Friday night and forced to sign the letter, she said on national radio late Saturday.

The 44-year-old, who became premier exactly one week ago, said the letter had been prepared well in advance. She insisted she would continue to lead the government until the imminent signing of the peace accord with the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Several members of the ruling MDR opposed the nomination of Uwilingiyimana - the former education minister - when she replaced the MDR's ousted premier Dismas Nsen-

giyaremye.

Four of the five parties in Rwanda's transitional government also rejected her candidacy.

The Prime Minister said the resignation letter was forced on her by Nsengiyaremye's supporters assembled in the capital Kigali for a congress aimed at ousting MDR President Faustin Twagiramungu and other members of the government.

The MDR is in crisis as Nsengiyaremye's supporters - mostly from the Gitarama region - oppose the party's progressive wing, led by Twagiramungu, which is trying to tackle the ethnic problems.

Defence Minister James Gasana, who has offered his resignation, also said he had received threats and has fled to Switzerland with his family, according to reliable sources.

The peace agreement due to be signed with the RPF seeks to end two years of civil war in the cen-

tral African nation between Hutu-dominated government forces and Tutsis rebels. venal Habyarimana refused to attend the ceremony in the Tanzanian town Arusha.

The accord was meant to be ratified on June 24 but was postponed when Rwanda's President Ju- mgu/cj/job AFP AFP SEQN-0099