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FOUR Ulster Unionist MPs have formally withdrawn support for the party's participation in the Stormont talks, it was learned today.

They have written to party leader David Trimble, via chief whip Martin Smyth, informing him of their total opposition to the negotiations.

The MPs who signed the letter are understood to be William Ross (East Londonderry), William Thompson (West Tyrone), Roy Beggs (East Antrim) and Clifford Forsythe (South Antrim).

News of the move came as Secretary of State Mo Mowlam prepared today to meet the loyalist PUP to try to persuade them to stay in the talks.

The Government is desperately trying to keep the negotiations on track, but four unionist MPs clearly believe the talks should be sidelined.

## Four MPs put pressure on Trimble

All four were known to have doubts about the process but it is significant that they felt so strongly about the issue they decided to take the further step of writing, earlier this month, to Mr Trimble.

Of the other six MPs in the UUP's parliamentary party, four are in the negotiating team at Stormont — Mr Trimble, deputy leader John Taylor, security spokesman Ken Maginnis and Lagan Valley MP Jeffrey Donaldson.

Mr Donaldson last week called for a review of the party's future participation in the process. Although he stopped short of calling for a pull-out, he has deep concerns.

But Mr Taylor insisted today that the talks should be continued — even though he rates their chances of success at "4%".

The MP said: "I personally would not be advising our party to withdraw from the talks.

"I think we must

persevere. I think, if necessary, we may have to go ahead without Sinn Fein and I would be alarmed at the collapse of the talks because that will bring about a resurgence of both loyalist and republican violence which would affect not only Northern Ireland but the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

"It will be more serious than we have known in the past 25 years."

The contents of the letter signed by the four disgruntled MPs have been made known to the Belfast Telegraph.

They said: "It is now apparent that the two governments, by the continual concessions to terrorist demands under the guise of confidence-building measures, are prepared to jeopardise the future of the law-abiding majority."

The loyalist UDP will meet Dr Mowlam tomorrow, but it is not threatening to quit Stormont.