Church defies Musyoka on shut schools

By BEAUTTAH OMANGA

The Catholic Church has defied a government order to reopen five schools in Kisii.

Three priests, A. Masese, L. Mandere, Lawrence Nyaanga and the Kisii diocese education secretary, Mr Chris Osinde, said the affected schools will remain closed until the current principals are transferred.

Addressing a press conference in Kisii town, the church officials accused Education Minister Kalonzo Musyoka of protecting corrupt principals who had run down the institutions.

"The minister should stop imposing and defending corrupt managers on Catholic-sponsored schools within Kisii only for him to turn around and accuse the Church of interference," said the priests.

They said the problems facing the schools were real and those on the ground could testify to them.

They said the minister erred by issuing orders to have the schools re-opened without finding out why the church took the drastic step.

"We as Catholics have a right to exist and a right to run our schools and we feel it is our obligation to protect these rights at all costs," they said.

They called upon the Christian fraternity to remain calm, united in prayer and ready for any action that the diocese may ask of them.

The controversy has affected more than 1,500 students who have heeded the church's call to stay at home until the principals of Cardinal Otunga (Mosocho), Sengera Girls, Amasago, Rangenyo Girls and St Augustine Otamba are transferred.

The affected heads and the district education officer were unavailable for comment.