

# Church row over schools rages

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The Catholic Church yesterday led a group of churches in calling for an end to a sustained campaign by the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa to be handed over sponsorship of 328 schools in Central and Eastern provinces.

Respective education secretariats of the Catholic, the Seventh Day Adventist and the Anglican churches urged that the schools and parents be left at peace.

"If they (the AIPCA) have a genuine problem with the current sponsorship, as they seem to be, a proper procedure

should be followed as stipulated in the Education Act of 1968," they said in a statement which was signed by Catholic Secretariat national education secretary Augusta Muthigani, SDA education director John Otewa and Mr Peter Nyagrowa, the secretary general of the Christian Churches Educational Association.

They praised Education Minister Henry Kosgey for last week's clarification that he was not aware of the of plans by AIPCA to take over the schools under the management of other churches in the region.

But in quick rejoinder, the AIPCA vowed to hold countrywide

demonstrations to press for its demands. Its top leadership gave Mr Kosgey seven days to retract his Friday statement.

The AIPCA said recent remarks by mainstream church groups which have warned never to let go the schools were borne out of selfishness and fear to lose out on management.

Led by its head, Archbishop Samson Gaitho, 264 AIPCA leaders meeting in Nairobi vowed not to relent in their quest to have the 328 primary and secondary schools in Central and Eastern provinces handed over to their church.

"He duped me into believing he would meet us on Monday (yesterday), yet he had already made a decision on

the matter. It is not fair," said Archbishop Gaitho.

Mr Kosgey was quoted as accusing the Press of "creating a hullabaloo about nothing. As a government, we have not discussed the issue."

But Archbishop Gaitho said his church launched its campaign with the Government last year in a letter to the Education PS and later met the then Education Minister Kalonzo Musyoka.

He wondered why Mr Kosgey never raised the issue with him immediately. Internal Security Minister Marsden Madoka commented on the envisaged takeover and accused him (Kosgey) of being partisan.