



Students Organisation of Nairobi University (Sonu) chairman Babu Owino at a past Press conference. Public university students are planning to stage demonstrations along certain roads today. [PHOTO: FILE/STANDARD]

Avoid city, Sonu says on strike plans

Student leaders want vehicle owners to keep off University Way, Thika Road and Kikuyu Road

By ISAAC MESO and ELEANOR NANDWA

University of Nairobi student leaders have warned motorists to keep off major roads leading to the city centre due to today's nationwide students' demonstrations.

Students Organisation of Nairobi University (Sonu) chairman Babu Owino urged motorists to keep off University way, Nairobi CBD, Moi Avenue, Parklands, Kikuyu Road and Thika Superhighway.

"If you are working within Nairobi and you own a vehicle, please leave it at home. We are further warning motorists to stay away from major roads leading to town since they will be flocked by demonstrators" he said.

"Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi has remained silent over this matter and we strongly feel that the only way we can get his attention is through paralysing learning in our institutions," he said.

"We have also received information that one of our stu-

dent leaders received a bribe to snub the demonstration. This will not work as all the students in public universities are behind us," he added.

The Sonu chairman said the nationwide demonstrations by students from the seven public universities will continue until the Government addresses their grievances.

Sonu secretary general Jim Akach said it was unfair for the Government to increase university fee and lower the maximum loan awarded to students by the Higher Education Loans Board.

The student leaders questioned the Government's motive to raise university fee at a time when it was being haunted by the Anglo Leasing scandal.

TASK FORCE

"We won't allow the Government to raise our fee so as to use part of the money to fund Anglo Leasing," said Akach.

Among the grievances they want addressed are reduction of current fee by half, increase of HELB loans and provision of grants to students.

The student leaders had earlier given Prof Kaimenyi 14 days to establish a task force to review university fees, insisting they had not been consulted.

According to the student leaders, the Government is planning to double the fee for regular students, which currently stands at Sh28,000 per year.

I didn't order fees increment, Kaimenyi tells students

By Irvin Jalang'o

Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi has dismissed claims that he ordered fees increment in all public universities.

In a meeting with student leaders from across the country in his Jogoo House office, Prof Kaimenyi said he never issued such a directive.

"Government directives are

communicated officially through memos and circulars. No statement or directive, or any documentation has been written to that effect. We are all surprised by the strike notice," he said.

While referring to a speech he delivered at Bomas on April 23, Prof Kaimenyi said the Government was only considering a differentiated unit cost, where different courses would

cost differently.

"We cannot increase University fees without consulting stakeholders, of which students are the major players. That responsibility is with the universities councils," he said.

Leaders from the National University Students Organisation led by George Bush of Moi University distanced themselves from the strike notice

and told Prof Kaimenyi they had called for calm.

Notably missing was the Babu Owino-led Kenya University Students Organisation which the Principal Secretary Belio Kipsang said he had met. Kaimenyi said the matter may have been politicised. He urged the student leaders to give dialogue a chance.

Babu's group had called for a strike today.

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