# Turufe site-specific topic: religious dispute between Muslims and Protestants

Turufe Kecheme is inhabited by different ethnic groups the majority being the Oromos. There are also Amharas and Tigrayans as well as Wolayitas and Kembatas. The majority of the community members are followers of the Muslim religion. Apart from the Muslim there are Orthodox and Protestant religion followers. As most of the kebele residence indicated the community used to live in mutual respect for each other’s religion and there was no dispute until recently.

As one prominent Muslim religion leader pointed the relation and tolerance between the Muslim religion followers and the Protestant religion followers is getting rough. As the Muslim leader informed me the tolerance between the two religion followers is getting tense from time to time.

It is said that the instigators of the religious dispute are the youth Protestants who are new converts from Muslim into Protestant. As the religious leader stated those new converts to Protestant began this tendency of aggressiveness towards the Muslim religion as soon as they were converted by humiliating their former religion and praising the new one. These youngsters used to agitate their family members and their peers to accept and follow the Protestant religion. This defaming of the Muslim religion began to expand and began to engulf many members from both religions.

Fearing of the tendency and the repercussion, as my informant indicated, the leaders of the Muslim religion have proposed to discuss over the issue. But the response from the other end was not a positive one.

According to my informant the leaders of the Muslim religion have tried many times to sit for negotiation. But there was no sign of willingness from the Protestants side. Because of this and evaluating the consequence if this dispute is aggravated, the Muslim leaders have reported the case to the Wereda administration.

The wereda officials did not come to the kebele to settle the dispute or they didn’t call both sides to the wereda to give administrative guidance. Because of this the tension between these two groups of religions is sore and bitter. To counter check this information I was not able to have discussion with the leader of the Protestant religion. My attempt to fix a meeting through telephone has failed, because the leader said that he was busy during the research time.

On the other hand the religious tolerance between the Muslims and the Orthodox Christians is very appreciated by my informant from the Muslim religion.

When I asked the religious leader “what has to be done in the future?” to create a conducive atmosphere where different religion followers could live in harmony; the leader said “ we , on our part will bring the issue to the floor and try to settle our difference once and for all for mutual coexistence sake.” And he went further by saying,” if this doesn’t work we will try again the legal means.”

Asked how far the temperature of this issue is hot on the agenda of the community, the religious leader said,” it seems cool at this particular period. May be it is election period and they don’t want to be responsible of disturbing the community if any civil disturbance is revealed. Because of this the temperature seems cool and peaceful. Hope it will continue as it is and we live mutually and respect one another’s religious freedom and be a peaceful community as it used to be earlier.