# Yetmen site-specific topic: conflict between rural and urban Yetmen

MALE VIEWS: The conflict between the rural and town communities began when the town people unilaterally agreed with the wereda in selecting the high school construction site to be on the communal grazing land in rural Yetmen. The rural community discussed and passed a resolution through all the 4 Deshs (funeral associations) to resist and change the construction site. It was agreed that any resident /household who failed to implement the community decision would be considered as traitors, if they rather cooperated with the town community and could be evicted from the Desh they belong and all the other Desh were to ostracise them

When the community practically prevented the school construction, the wereda sent a police force to arrest about 13 individuals suspected as leaders of the resistance. As police ordered the militiamen to arrest these leaders many of them refused saying the community’s demand was theirs too and some of these rather handed over their guns and went home, while others were disarmed by the police. As in one early morning the police arrested the leaders and tried to take them away, the people called each other and violently prevented the police from taking the leaders. When the police felt being engulfed and threatened of attacks, one of them shot directly at the leader’s wife wounding her and killing the baby on her back. In response peoples became more aggressive against the policemen forcing them all to run away. Since this violent incident, the rural community decided through the Desh to cut off all relationship/ interaction with the town’s people, even with relatives when facing crisis; the priests were also to stop providing services to town people at home, except the common religious services at the churchyard.

The contradiction seemed to continue as the town community were reported to have been consulting to reject/prevent the rural community’s decision to give replacement land to farmers from the grazing land used by both communities.

FEMALE VIEWS: The fact that the rural residents of Yetmen refused the construction of a secondary school in a place planned created a gap between the community members of the urban and the rural Yetmen. The communal water pipes in the rural Yetmen used to be opened by employees from urban Yetmen and they stopped soon after the conflict. The conflict was created in April and the water service was stopped in May. The water wells were made with the financial support from the urban and labour and some money from the rural Yetmen. The rural community did not ask for it because they have alternatives they have water walls and they also use water from pipes in urban Yetmen.

MALE VIEWS: About 13 community resistance leaders were finally imprisoned for a month and released paying 500 birr fines each for their alleged involvement in mobilizing the community against the government school development plan.