

Gidan Rumfa





Gidan Rumfa the Emir's Palace Kano is the oldest continuous seat of authority in Sub Saharan Africa. Sarkin Kano Muhammadu Rumfa who flourished between 1466 and 1499 established it. It is a great landmark covering 60 acres. It was constructed as a new palace ushering a new era of Islamic influence. Shaykh al-Maghili from North Africa guided Rumfa in this endeavor. The palace is aligned to the Ka'aba in the Holy City of Makkah (Saudi Arabia), which is the Qibla (direction) for Muslim prayer. The exactitude of this orientation was confirmed and found to be peculiar as even in North Africa it was not common until the eighteenth century when perhaps the compass was introduced. Those who constructed in fifteenth century were able to achieve this feat without compass using the stars at night.

Since then it has remained the seat of Kano Authority that experienced several transformations. *Gidan Rumfa* is the oldest seat of continuous authority in sub Saharan Africa. Many palaces have been constructed but none has survived as a seat of authority since the fifteenth century. From a Sultanate when the Palace was established to an Emirate under Sarkin Kano Sulaiman (1807 to 1819). The British conquered Kano in 1903 and the Emirate was transformed to a Native Authority under the supervision of the colonial Resident. The Emirs since then served as Chief Executives of the Native Authority. However by 1999 the Native Authority had been stripped of all executive, legislative and judicial powers. Sarkin Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero (1963 to 2014) who

Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II & Gidan Rumfa directly experienced most of these transformations remained influential the society because the people respected him for his integrity.

All the successors of Sarkin Kano Muhammadu Rumfa have in one way or the other contributed to the transformation of Gidan Rumfa. However some have made outstanding landmarks. Ibrahim Dabo (1819-1846) constructed Soron Mallam and Dakin Shekara, which are still relevant in the ascension procedures. Sarkin Kano Abdullahi Majekarofi constructed the Kofar Kudu Gate. Sarkin Kano Bello (1883-1893) constructed Soron Bello. He also constructed the Mosque at Kofar Kudu, which was later renovated by Sarkin Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero (1963-2014). Sarkin Kano Shehu (1919-1926) constructed Soron Shehu.



Soron Fadancin Dare

Sarkin Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero (1926-1953)

He was a great builder and the person who introduced modern construction in the palace as he did in other sectors of Kano including the new Mosque and public utility buildings, several schools and hospitals within the emirate. Apart from introducing new painting style using the white color instead of the red color (or makuba) he constructed houses in the palace as well as courts, which remain his landmarks in Gidan Rumfa. He constructed the famous *Soron Ingila*, which remained for eighty years as the Court where the Emir receives guest. It became the most famous Court during this period. Another landmark building of Sarkin Kano Abdullahi Bayero is the *Dogon Gida* (Tall House) named because of its tall size in the residential area of the Sarki. During his reign the *Farin Gida* (White House) was also constructed in Shekar Jimina (Garden of the Ostrich).



Dogon Gida



Soron Ingila



Soron Makaranta

Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi

Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi (1953-1963) was also a builder. He constructed the Council Chamber and the Court House at Kofar Kudu. This was even a subject of Jinkadi's Song. In addition he was also made another gate at the northern part of Gidan Rumfa known as Kofar Mota. Jankidi has summarized Sarki Sanusi's constructions at the palace and even the landscaping a major innovation:

<i>An yi ofis Kano hawa biyu,</i>	Two-storey office block was built in Kano
<i>Nijeriya, Arewa kwata,</i>	
<i>Ba wanda ad da ofis haka,</i>	No one has an office like this
<i>Fanka ukku, hitila hudu,</i>	Three ceiling fans and four lamps
<i>Nan wurin zaman Sarkin Kano,</i>	The throne of Sarkin Kano is there
<i>Babban Malami dag gabas,</i>	The Head of the Ulama is on the eastern side
<i>Dagga nan yamma yaran Sarki,</i>	On the left the Emir's servants
<i>Ga wuka ga takobi rataye,</i>	The knife and the sword are hung up there
<i>Ga harabar zaman 'yan kara,</i>	There is the foyer for the complainants
<i>Dagga fuskar arewa mata,</i>	The northern side is reserved for the women
<i>Ga famfo kuma ga magewayi,</i>	There is pipe borne water and restroom
<i>Ga katanga ta dutsi ya yi,</i>	There is stonewall barear
<i>Duk ya gyara gidan Alhaji,</i>	He has renovated Alhaji's residence
<i>Lalle mulki ya kammala,</i>	The authority is complete
<i>Muhammadu Allah shi yi maka tsari.</i>	May Allah protect you, Muhammadu

He also commented on the landscaping of the palace environment during Sanusi's reign:

<i>Dole karfi ka sa ai komai</i>	
<i>Rani an mai sai damuna</i>	Dry season has been turned into rainy season;
<i>Ga ruwa na gudu bisa ga kasa</i>	Water is flowing on the ground
<i>ga shifke shifke nan cikin gida</i>	There are plants in the house (garden)
<i>sarauniya gwamna shi yacce mata ga Kano Ingilar 'yan Hausa nan ake saka kayan yauki.</i>	He told the Queen that Kano is the England of Hausaland
<i>amma fa yardarki na yassamo</i>	But this is because of the Queen



Kofar Kudu (Soron Tuta)



Fadar Waje

Sarkin Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero (1963-2014)

He had the longest reign in the history of the Sullubawa Dynasty. He has brought many changes to the palace including the fencing for the first time with concrete blocks covering the old mud walls. In the private quarters so many reconstructions and new quarters were made including a new guest wing and library. He constructed a new residence southwards of *Soron Sarki* and it is called *Sabon Gida* (literarily new house). Courts were renovated and others reconstructed with concrete blocks. Courts constructed with concrete blocks include Rumfar Kasa Court and Soron Hakimai at Kofar Kudu. A new hall, office complex and Court were also constructed. In addition Soron Giwa and Soron Gaujeje were reconstructed. The Mosque at Kofar Kudu was also reconstructed.



Gidan Rumfa (Soron Gaujeje)



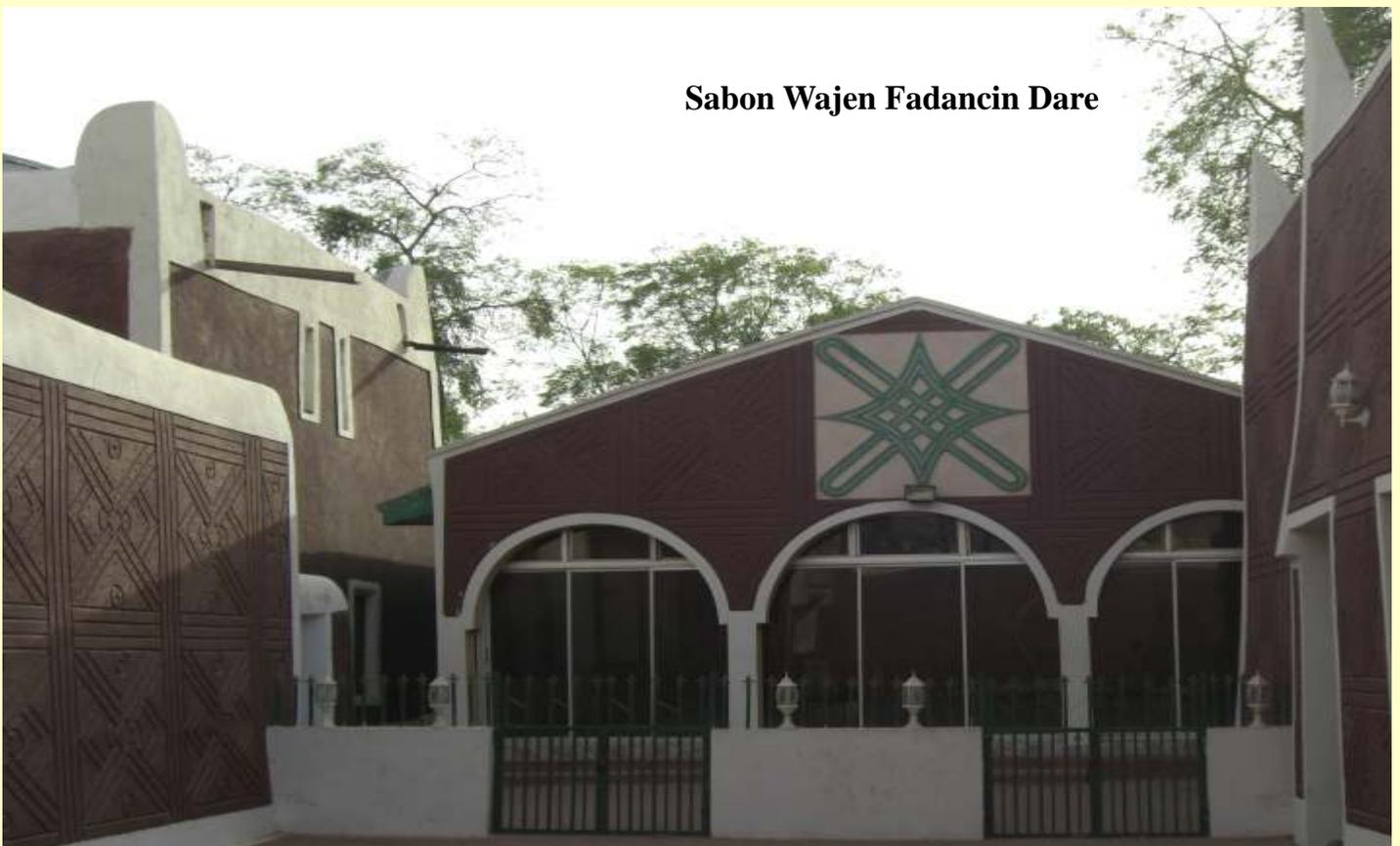
Masallacin Kofar Kudu



Sabuwar Runfar Kasa



Soron Giwa da Runfar Kasa



Sabon Wajen Fadancin Dare

Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II

He ascended the throne on June 8, 2014. He immediately realized that Gidan Rumfa needed to be modernized. As a modern Emir who had visited many palaces across the world he was however more influenced by Andalusian styles of Islamic architecture. Most of the new structures are now decorated with Islamic calligraphic and quotations similar to those at the Alhambra Palace of Andalucía. He has changed the entire palace with several new buildings and many old mud structures have been brought down and reconstructed.

He began with administrative changes. The welfare of all staff was enhanced with improve salaries. In addition all senior women descendants of Ibrahim Dabo were placed on monthly for the first time. The position of Uwar Soro the leading concubine and head of the palace inner administration was no longer possible as he had no concubine. Therefore Hajiya Fulani Halima his senior wife took over the responsibilities. She is unique as the daughter of Sarkin Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero the predecessor of Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II. She is highly experienced in dealing with people as he had turbaned her, the Giwar Dan Maje before he became the Emir. Many people attest to her kindness, friendliness and humility. Her residence was one of the first places that, was reconstructed by Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi as an extraordinary palace in Gidan Rumfa with Maghribean style befitting her status has been erected to replace the old mud structures.



Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II & Gidan Rumfa

The entire Garko Quarters has been reconstructed for the princesses. Many descendants of Sarkin Kano Ibrahim Dabo live in the palace especially in this area. The entire inner residence of the Emir or *Soron Sarki* where the famous *Rumfar Kasa* is located has reconstructed and the mud structures demolished. It is now an impressive edifice in Gidan Rumfa. The Emir's Library one of the largest private collections in Nigeria is now located in this area. *Dogon Gida* one of the landmarks of Sarkin Kano Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero has been reconstructed with new style of architecture expressive of the nature



Wajen Giwa





WAJEN GIWA

The establishment of this area is a new innovation of Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II because it is a combination of two previous sections of *Gidan Rumfa*. This new section is the palace residence of Hajiya Fulani Halimatu Sadiyya, the senior wife of Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II. As noted earlier she was *Giwar Dan Maje* when he held that title and she has now been elevated to the status of *Giwar Sarki*. He ordered the demolishing of *Bayan Dan Soro*, which is adjacent to *Soron Sarki* the private residence of the Emir. This has been the official residence of the senior wife of the Emir since the reign of Sarkin Kano Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero (1926-1953), the grandfather of *Giwar Sarki* and the great grand father of Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II. *Unguwar Bari-Bari* was also demolished and added to *Bayan Dan Soro* to make up the new palace of Hajiya Fulani Halimatu Sadiyya *Giwar Sarkin Kano*. *Unguwar Bari-Bari* contained mud buildings in traditional style until recently it was occupied by mostly princesses.

Dogon Gida















Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II & Gidan Rumfa



