

# Sarkin Kano

## Khalifah Sir Muhammadu Sanusi (1953-1963)

**K**halifah Sir Muhammadu Sanusi was the most distinct *Sarkin Kano* of the Ibrahim Dabo Dynasty being the first to abdicate. He was an example of resilience and perseverance, having led the most prosperous Native Authority he was not demoralized by this forced resignation. His strong faith in Allah made him to quickly adapt to his new role as the leader of the Tijjaniyya Brotherhood, the largest Sufi Order in Nigeria. He was also one of the most positively active Emirs of Kano, with public service experience spanning over quarter of a century before assuming the mantle of leadership of the Emirate. His impact on Kano was positive in various endeavors. He continued with the social development policies of his father.

His biography is a lesson in history and sociology of Kano, because it deals with the transition from traditional forms of administration to modern system and crisis of legitimacy as a result of handing over power from the colonial officials to Nigerians some of whom were elected and believe they are more legitimate than those who inherited leadership. These attributes make his biography special. Some biographical studies have already been published, for example, Zawiya and Sadauki (1991) and the more recent one, Makama (2010).

Prior to his assumption of Emirship, he succeeded his father to the title of *Ciroman Kano* and District Head of Bichi in 1926. Abdullahi Bayero was the first *Ciroma* to ascend the position of Sarki. Similarly Sanusi was also the closest son ever to any Emir in the Sullubawan Dabo Dynasty. He had unique qualities such as seriousness and commitment to learning, since his childhood, which endeared him to his revered father, who was widely acknowledged as a saintly personality. He did not disappoint his father in his position as the District Head. Therefore, even rival emirate administrators recommended him for the position of a Senior Councilor of the Emirate Council sequel to the resignation of *Madaki* Mahmud from that position because of ill health. The position was more or less that of a de facto deputy emir. He controlled the administration of the Emirate, as the sole Native Authority for over a decade therefore he was very experienced before assuming the Emirship of Kano in 1953.

He had special relationship with the emerging Western educated elite; he brought many of them into the services of the Native Authority, while serving as the Senior Councilor (Head of District Administration). All those in this category that excelled in public service were closely associated with him. Some of these prominent individuals include Alhaji Bello Kano (Regional Minister, *Makaman Kano* and later *Madakin Kano*), Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji (*Wazirin Kano*), Alhaji Shehu Ahmed (*Madakin Kano*), Alhaji Bello Dandago (*Sarkin Dawaki Maitutar Kano*), Alhaji Inuwa Wada (Former Minister of Defense and one time acting Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

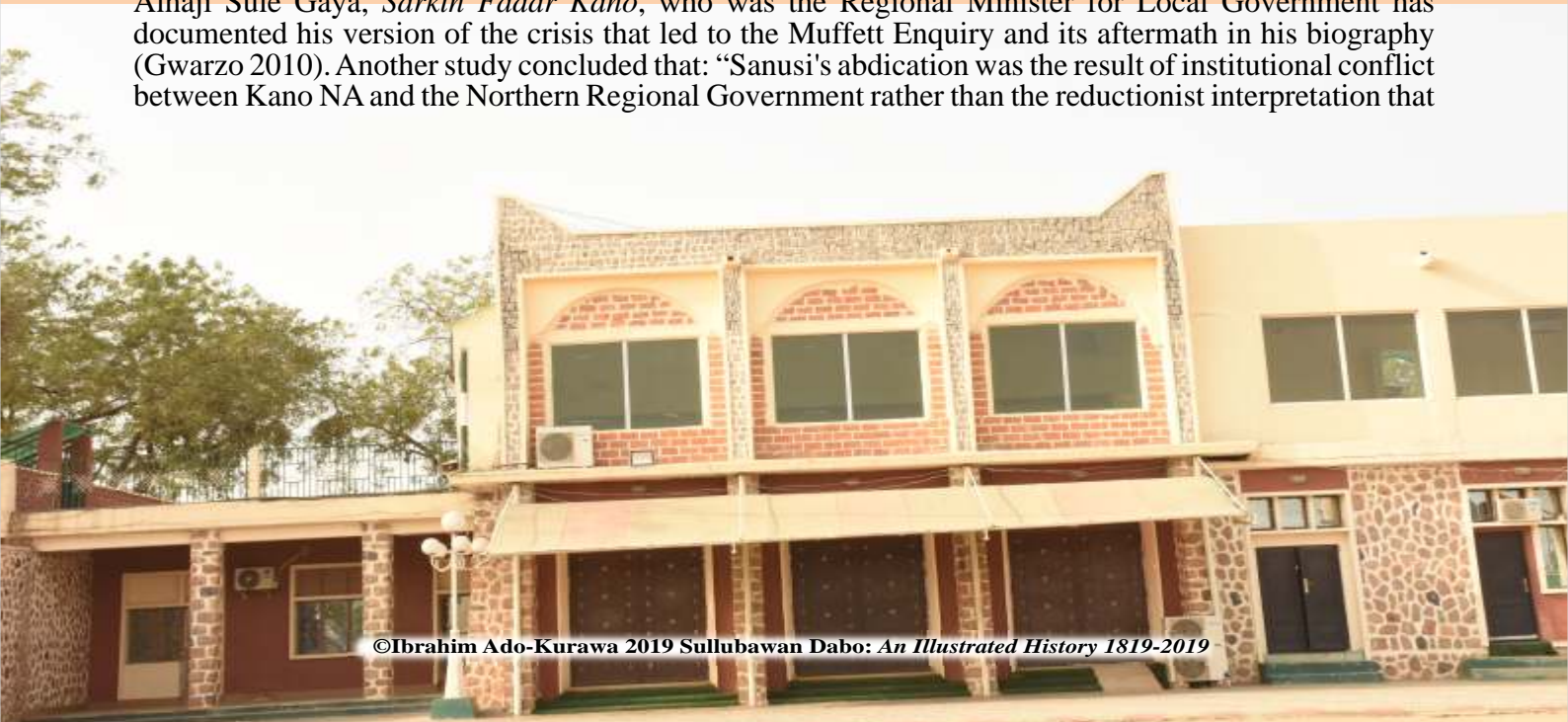




Magajin Garin Kano), Alhaji Umaru Babura (Regional Minister and *Sarkin Fulanin Jaidanawar Kano*), Alhaji Abdullahi Maikano Dutse (Regional Minister and *Sarkin Dutse*). All of them were students of the famous Katsina College. Sir Muhammadu Sanusi was a key facilitator of major shift in elite configuration in Kano, even though all those mentioned above were from aristocratic families their western education gave them advantage over their competitors and he promoted them.

Politically, Sanusi was instrumental in the formation of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). He brought many groups into the NPC, especially traders and young western educated elites. He had earlier helped Sardauna when the later had problems with the Sultan of Sokoto, Sir Abubakar III. He also ensured Sardauna's election as the President General of the NPC. He was in fact the strongest supporter of the NPC and they relied heavily on him (Paden 1986: 145-154 and 457). He was a Regional Minister without portfolio in 1952, while he was the *Ciroman Kano* but he was re-appointed in 1956, while he was the Emir. He also acted as the Governor of Northern Region from May to July 1961.

Most of the senior members of the NPC in Kaduna resented his influence. This resentment culminated in the instituting of a commission of inquiry into the finances of the Kano Native Authority with D. J. M. Muffet as the sole commissioner. The Sarki and other members of the Native Authority testified before the commissioner. Muffet advised the Regional Government that the Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammad Sanusi should resign. He tendered his resignation to the Governor of the Northern Region Sir Kashim Ibrahim on the 28th of March 1963 (Paden 1973: 266). There were reactions in Kano against the NPC government because of this resignation. Since the people were aware of the political machinations that led to the crisis. The Kano Peoples Party, which was loyal to Sir Muhammad Sanusi, was formed (Paden 1973: 270-271). Alhaji Sule Gaya, *Sarkin Fadar Kano*, who was the Regional Minister for Local Government has documented his version of the crisis that led to the Muffett Enquiry and its aftermath in his biography (Gwarzo 2010). Another study concluded that: "Sanusi's abdication was the result of institutional conflict between Kano NA and the Northern Regional Government rather than the reductionist interpretation that





it was a personality conflict between Sanusi and Premier Bello”(Yakubu 2006: 217). Another one also noted that the deposition of Sir Muhammadu Sanusi “highlights another important feature of the sarakuna in the immediate era following independence: their role in electoral and parliamentary politics” Miles (1987: 242).

But as recent as March 8, 2009, an elder-statesman Alhaji Abbas Dabo Sambo suggested in a *Sunday Trust* interview a conspiracy theory that it was the “Borno Mafia” that worked against Sir Muhammadu Sanusi. He stated that the Sardauna had wanted to make him the Governor of the Northern Region as Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe had done to their friends Chief Adesuji Adeyemi and Dr. Akanu Ibiam respectively. The so-called “Borno Mafia” did not want to be subordinated to someone other than from Kanuri ethnic group. This may not be unconnected to the historical rivalry between the Kanuri and their neighbors. The ambition of Borno elite contributed to the deterioration of cordial relationship between the two friends. They had wanted one of them to become the Governor. Therefore they started scheming against Sanusi long before the Muffett Inquiry.

In addition, Ambassador *Dan Iya* Ado Sanusi who was the closest member of the family to the Emir

during the reign of his father noted that there were several indications before the inquiry that the authorities in Kaduna were up to something. First, the Kano Native Authority was accused of not holding Town Council Elections as scheduled despite the efforts of the *Dan Iya* to rally members of the NPC for the election. There were also reports that the British advised the Sardauna to get rid of the Emir because in the first place they never supported his ascension but he was able to get against their wish. The Minister of Lands and Survey had already drew a line against the Emir by refusing to honor an invitation of the Emir to arbitrate between him and the brother of Usman El-Tayyeb over a marital dispute. He had also sought a certificate of occupancy for his property in Fagge (present Ibrahim Taiwo), which was denied by the Native Authority because it was against town planning regulation. He used the regional authority and unilaterally signed his own certificate of occupancy. The regional government also refused to permit the expansion of Sabon Gari Township as requested by the Kano Native Authority. All these occurred before the Inquiry and when the Sole Commissioner came he changed his mandate from financial inquiry to every aspect of the Native Authority Administration because there was a hidden agenda.



As the Emir of Kano, Sir Muhammadu Sanusi who was knighted in 1958 was a reformer, but this dimension is rarely explored in public commentary except in specialized studies. Some scholars view his reforms positively, especially as it relates to the rights of women while others viewed them negatively. On assumption of office in 1953 he promised three reforms, which he implemented swiftly in his characteristic energetic disposition. They were public sessions of his court and change in its members, review and reorganization of office appointments and land registration and reforms. He was known to have restored the inheritance rights of women.

There was also the Local Government reform of 1954, which was the first since the establishment of the Native Authority. This was the beginning of the crisis of legitimacy for the traditional institution and the struggle of the emerging western educated elite class for recognition and inclusion. Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Headmaster of Bauchi Middle School and Member Northern Region Legislature in 1954 (who became the first Prime Minister of the Federation) brought up these issues in the Assembly and urged reforms. According to Balewa the new Constitution that will come into

force did not recognize the traditional institution and there was the need to provide them with specific roles and responsibilities, it was also necessary to gain the confidence of the people in a modern democracy since at that time only coercion and fear were used as the traditional leaders were the nearest to the people but with little confidence. He further added that the Native Authority system was autocratic and there was hardly any chance for consultation and genuine advisory role for the councilors as most of them fear the rulers. He emphasized that there was need for the Native Authority system to accord recognition to the emerging western educated elite class to which he belonged. He called for training of staff and better professional preparation of financial estimates as part of the reforms (Adamu 2007: 152-154).

The 1954 Native Authority Reform provided for establishment of a council with members who will advise the chief executive and made it possible for the inclusion of the new western educated elite. There were ten councilors in the Kano Native Authority, which was the maximum provided by the law and there were also thirteen departments headed by professionals or *wakilai*. Almost all the councilors were graduates of at least the Kano Middle School. Most of them later became



ministers at the regional level, or members of the Federal Parliament. This arrangement continued up to the Local Government Reform of 1977 (Adamu 2007: 159-163).

Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi also, as stated earlier, had another distinction, which no other Emir of the Ibrahim Dabo Dynasty ever had. After his abdication, Shaykh Ibrahim Niass appointed him his Khalifah or Successor in Nigeria. The Shaykh was the most famous leader of the Tijjaniyya Sufi Brotherhood during his time. He first came to Kano during the reign of *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Bayero, who embraced the brotherhood and *Ciroman Kano* Muhammadu Sanusi was also initiated. *Walin Kano* Sulaiman coordinated the trip. Shaykh Ibrahim Niass was the

first Tijjaniyya leader who was not of the Umar Futi spiritual lineage to visit Nigeria. Some of the prominent Kano Ulama belonged to the branch of Shaykh Umar Futi. Acceptance of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass by *Sarkin Kano* Abdullahi Bayero and Sir Muhammadu Sanusi helped in making the branch of Shaykh Ibrahim Niass the dominant branch of the Tijjaniyya in Nigeria. Kano became the nucleus of Tijjaniyya with prominent scholars such as Shaykh Abdullahi Salgha, Shaykh Tijjani Usman, Shaykh Shehu Maihula and Shaykh Sani Kafinga. Sir Muhammadu Sanusi was appointed the Khalifah because of his spiritual knowledge and charismatic appeal.





He died in 1991 twenty-eight years after his abdication, *Sarkin Kano* Aliyu Babba died twenty-three years after deposition. But unlike Aliyu who was buried in Lokoja, Sanusi was buried at the Nassarawa Palace near three previous Emirs: Abbas his grandfather, Abdullahi Bayero, his father and Muhammadu Inuwa, his uncle and successor, but who died before him.



# Alhaji Ahmed Tijani

He was born in Bichi in 1926 he was brought to Gidan Rumfa when he was two years old and put under the care of Hajiya Fulani Hafsatu the senior wife of Sarkin Kano Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero. Amongst those under her care were Sani Bayero (later *Galadima*), Ado Sanusi (later *Dan Iya* and Ambassador), Hamza Bayero (later *Sarkin Shanu*) and the young girls included Bilkisu Bayero and Inna Safiyanu (granddaughter of Sarkin Kano Bayero and later wife of *Wali* Abubakar Maiwuridi). He had Qur'anic and Islamic Education at the Kofar Kwaru Qur'anic School and the House of *Wali* Sulaiman before starting Western Education at the Elementary School from where he moved to Shahuchi Judicial School and then to Law School (which later became School for Arabic Studies). Among his colleagues at Law School were Shehu Ahmad Said Galadanci

(later Professor and Ambassador), Bello Yola, Mahmud Adamu Malle and Wada Jafaru Ciranci. He completed Law School in 1947. He and some of brothers and uncles were married in 1950 under the honor of Sarkin Kano Alhaji Abdullahi, as it was the Sullubawan Dabo tradition for reigning Emir to arrange the marriage of his sons, brothers, nephews and other relatives. Those who were married that year included his uncles Cigari Bayero (later Barde), Tijani Bayero (later *Wambai*), Ado Bayero (later Sarkin Kano) and Umaru Mai Zaire (later *Dan Amar*) and his younger brothers Abubakar (later *Wambai*), Aminu (later *Ciroma* and Ambassador) and Ado (later *Dan Iya* and Ambassador).

He started his working career as a clerk in Wakilin Kudu Office and in 1954 he was conferred the title of *Dan Darman* and posted to Tudun Wada as District Head. He was transferred to Kiru in 1958 from where he was relieved of his position of District Head. He was later appointed Wakilin Kafintoci in charge of Native Authority Wood Workshop. He was also a Wakilin Sarki before his appointment as Wakilin Yamma by his uncle Sarkin Kano Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero in 1995. He died in 2016 and his son succeeded him.

# Alhaji Abubakar (*Wambai*)

He was born in Bichi in 1927 and he was brought to *Gidan Rumfa* in accordance with the tradition. He started his Islamic Education in the house of *Wali* Sulaiman under Umman Makaranta Mallama Saudatu. He was the first son of Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi to perform the Hajj with his grandfather Sarkin Kano Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero. He attended Kofar Kudu Elementary School, Shahuchi Judicial School. He started his working career at the Native Authority Central Office as a clerk and then later he became the Wakilin Biya (paying clerk) in 1953. His father Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi appointed him *Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida* after the death of his maternal grandfather *Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida* Ahmadu Abbasi who was the District Head of Gwaram in 1954 but he was appointed District Head of Gabasawa. He was promoted to *Dan Iya* and District Head of Bichi in 1957 after the deposition of his uncle *Dan Iya* Aminu.

In 1959 Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi made the most historic conferment of titles in his reign on the same day he conferred the title of *Makama* on *Dan Amar* Bello Kano, the title of *Wambai* on *Dan Iya* Abubakar Sanusi, the title of *Dan Iya* on *Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida* Ado Sanusi, the title of *Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida* on Abbas Sanusi and the title of *Dan Amar* on Abubakar Bayero. *Wambai* Abubakar remained in Bichi as the District Head until his death in 1980. He was a very reserved and honest person and above all a favorite of his father. He was also an in law of Sardauna Sir Ahmadu Bello as he was married to Inno, Sardauna's daughter.

## Ambassador Aminu Sanusi *Ciroma* CON

He was born in 1929. He attended Kofar Kudu Elementary School, Kano Middle School, School for Arabic Studies and the University of Exeter where he studied Public Administration. His father appointed him *Ciroma*, the position he vacated to become the Emir in 1954.

He was appointed Assistant District Officer (ADO) to the Provincial Officer of Ilorin. He transferred to Foreign Service where he rose through the ranks of career diplomacy to become an Ambassador. He was one of the first twelve Nigerians recruited by the British to establish the Nigeria Foreign Service in 1957. He was the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Kingdom of Belgium and later to the Peoples Republic of China. He played a very significant diplomatic role during the civil war crisis. Ambassador Aminu Sanusi was the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of External Affairs during the Murtala/Obasanjo Administration before he voluntarily retired from the Civil Service. He was the Board Chairman Nigeria Airways Limited and later Pro-Chancellor and Chairman Governing Council University of Jos. He was also the Co-Managing Director of United Nigerian Textiles Plc at the time of his death.



## Ambassador Ado Sanusi OFR

He was born in 1930. He attended Kofar Kudu Elementary School, he and his colleagues, his brother Aminu and his uncle Ado Bayero were in the same class at the elementary school and were also attending the Qur'anic school under the tutelage of Hajiya Mallama Umma the wife of *Wali* Sulaiman. The three of them proceeded to the Kano Middle School while he was a student at Kano Middle School his father showed special attention in his progress and whenever he came for holidays Mallam Abubakar Dokaji taught him to improve his learning. He passed the entrance examination to Kaduna College (Barewa College where he was number 553), which was very competitive at that time. He was the first member of the Sullubawan Dabo Clan to attend that college which was the most prestigious in Northern Nigeria at that time. After completing Kaduna College he proceeded to England where he attended the

Tutorial Institute at Pinner Green near London. Ado Sanusi was a clerk at medical headquarters Kaduna from 1953 to 1954, Kano Native Authority Development Inspector 1954 to 1956 and later clerk Kano Native Authority Council. He was the chairman Northern Region Marketing Board in 1961. He was a member of the Northern Region House of Assembly from 1956 to 1961. He was instrumental in drafting many people into the NPC and fielding them as candidates in elections. Ado Sanusi was turbaned *Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida* in 1957 and *Dan Iya* in 1959, and he was appointed Native Authority Councilor for Health and Land in 1962. He was also a target of the Muffett Inquiry because the rival elite faction that instigated the inquiry were aware that he was the pillar of his father's administration just as his father was the principal figure of the Sarkin Kano Abdullahi Bayero Administration.

After the Muffett Inquiry and the subsequent abdication of his father, the Emirate Council summoned him and other senior members of that Administration. He was offered the title of Galadiman Kano, the highest title of the Royalty vacated by Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa who was appointed successor of Sir Muhammadu Sanusi, but he declined. This was a unique behavior hardly any *dan sarki* (prince) would



have ever done that. Thereafter he was summoned a few weeks later and *Sarkin Shanu* Sani one of the Native Authority Councilors delivered to him his letter of termination of appointment on behalf of the Emirate Council.

He joined his exiled father in Azare in 1963 where he remained until he was appointed Consul in the Nigerian Embassy in Sudan in 1969. He was onetime Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Kingdom of Morocco, before his appointment as Executive Secretary Nigeria Pilgrims Board. He was later appointed Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from where he was transferred to Indonesia. The Federal Government of Nigeria conferred him with the honor of the Officer Order of the Federal Republic (OFR).



Galadiman Kano  
ALH. ABBAS SANUSI

## Galadima Alhaji Abbas Sanusi OON OFR

He was born in 1933. He attended Kofar Kudu Elementary School, Kano Middle 1948 to 1953 School, School for Arabic Studies 1953 to 1956 and the Technical School Torque England where he earned a Diploma in Public Administration.

*Galadima* Abbas was the Supervisor Kano Native Authority Commercial undertakings 1956 to 1958, Councilor in charge of Health Department and Chairman Finance and Tenders Board Kano Local Government at various times between 1958 and 1976. He was appointed *Sarkin Dawakin Tsakar Gida* in 1959 and later promoted to Dan Iya in 1963 and posted to Ungogo and later to Nassarawa as the first District Head from where he was transferred to Kiru and in 1981 he was transferred to Kunci and later back to Kiru in 1982 and then

Nassarawa again in 1983. He was appointed acting senior councilor Kano Emirate Council in 1987 and he was confirmed substantive Senior Councilor in 1987. He was promoted to *Wambai* in 1989 and to *Galadima* in 2015.

During the First Republic he was elected into the Federal House of Representatives 1959-1966. He served as board member of Kano Abattoir and Trans Air Services Limited and member of the Police Community Relations Committee. He was honored by the Federal Government with Officer Order of the Nigeria (OON) and then later Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR).

## Dan Galadima Alhaji Haruna Sanusi

He was born in 1943 in Ciroma's mini palace at Ciranci quarters. Studied the Qur'an under the guidance of Hajiya Mallama Iya and he attended Dandago Primary School from 1949 to 1953, from where he proceeded to Birnin Kudu Senior Primary School in 1954. He completed Provincial Secondary School (now Rumfa College) in 1963. He went to Prisons Services Course but did not complete it and then he joined the services of Royal Exchange Assurance and after insurance training he served under Alhaji Nuhu Insurance as an Assistant Manager. He went back to the Prisons Service and was absorbed as an Assistant Superintendent and rose to become Assistant Controller General of Prisons and Zonal Coordinator of six states' commands.

Sarkin Kano Muhammad Sanusi II appointed him *Dan Amar* and District Head of Bebeji in 2016 and he was, promoted to *Dan Galadima* in May 2017 this was the first time the title was introduced in Kano. It is a Sokoto title.



Dan Galadiman Kano  
ALH. HARUNA SANUSI

## Turaki Ahaji Lamido Abdullahi Sanusi

He was born on September 27, 1950. He attended Kaduna Capital School 1958 – 1965, Birnin Kudu Government College 1966 – 1970, Kaduna Polytechnic 1974 – 75 and 1976 – 77, Trans-world Tutorial College Jersey Britain, College of Marketing, Berkshire England 1981 and Century University Los Angeles California USA 1987 – 91.

He was an insurance officer, with Royal Exchange Insurance Company, 1970 to 1974 before he joined Local Government Service as Assistant Co-operative Officer and Head of Department, Kano Local Government Council. He was later promoted to the position of Co-operative Officer and Head of Social Development Bichi Local Government Council. He went back to the private sector in 1978 as Assistant Sales Manager, Richard and Hashim Motors Kano, he later in 1979 joined Giwarite Asbestos as Sales Representative. In 1981, he was appointed Advertisement Manager, Triumph Publishing Company Limited. He was appointed Director of Administration and Company Secretary of Kano State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KNARDA) in 1984, where he remained until his appointment as *San Turaki* and the first District Head of Warawa in 1991, he was promoted to *Dan Ruwata* in 1999, then to *Dokaji* and he was promoted to *Dan Isan Kano*, later to *Dan Buram* and in 2015 he was transferred to Dala as District Head of Dala and was later elevated to *Turaki*.



Turakin Kano

ALH. ABDULLAHI LAMIDO SANUSI



Bunun Kano

ALH. UMARU SUNUSI

## Bunu Ahaji Umar Sanusi

He was the first son of Sarkin Kano Sir Muhammadu Sanusi who was born in Gidan Rumfa in 1956. He started his Qur'anic studies in Gidan Rumfa before enrolling in Primary School in 1961. After the resignation of his father he was taken to Sumaila and put under the care of his uncle *Dan Buram* Sani Bayero where he continued with his primary from there he was moved to Wudil and put under the care of *Dan Darman* Alu from 1964 to 1968 when he was taken to Rano Secondary School and after completing this school he worked briefly in the Kano State Local Government Service. He went to the United States and studied business administration he returned in 1984 after which he did his National Youth Service before joining the Kano State Board of Internal Revenue. He moved to the Savannah Bank in 1988 and then Oceanic Bank in 1992 and in 1994 he joined the Zenith Bank Plc where he became Deputy General Manager.

## Alhaji Munir Sanusi Dan Buram

He was born in Kano in 1962.



Dan Buran Kano

ALH. MUNIR SANUSI