

## **British Imperialist Conquest of Bormi and The Martyredom of Caliph Attahiru I in The Twentieth Century**

By

**Umar Zubairu, PhD**

**Department of History and Diplomatic Studies**

**Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State**

[Umarzubairu1@gmail.com](mailto:Umarzubairu1@gmail.com)

+2347037385617

&

**Adamu Babayo Usman**

**Department of History and Diplomatic Studies**

**Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State**

**GSM: 0703-4949-185/ 0802-572-5755**

[adambabayo@gmail.com](mailto:adambabayo@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The martyrdom of Caliph Attahiru I in the battle of Bormi in Gombe Emirate marked the triumph of the British invading forces over the Sokoto Caliphate. Although there was no any resistance put in place against the invading forces of Britain by Emir Umaru of Gombe emirate, who solemnly submitted to the whim of British imperialist forces, the Emirate was not taken over by the British until after the British and Umaru's combined forces were triumphant in the second battle of Bormi. Battle of Bormi marked the full conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate, as it was the last serious resistance met by the British imperialist forces. Consequently, Bormi together with all the surrounding communities were ruined; embargo was enforced forbidding any resettlement of people on land. The place remained significant for pilgrims and tourists as it houses the tomb of Caliph Attahiru I and his companions on the one hand, and the graves of the slain British soldiers on the other. The consequences of this Bormi battles were tremendous. Thousands of lives perished during the two battles especially among the rank of Islamic Scholars, the entire emirate witnessed mass migration of people of different social strata to Sudan, Arabia and East Africa. This situation led to a huge vacuum of labour and manpower in different human endeavours, to the extent that Emir Umaru was forced to go to Kano, Katsina, Zaria and many places to invite people with different trades and specialisation to operate in Gombe Emirate. However, considering that sources are central for any meaningful historical research, in this paper therefore, both written and oral sources were used after being subjected to scientific assessment to establish their originality with a view to examine the British Imperialist conquest of Bormi and its consequences.

**Keywords: Imperialist, Martyrdom, Conquest, Bormi, Caliph Attahiru I****Introduction**

The conquest of Gombe Emirate was part of conquest of the whole the Sokoto Caliphate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was In conformity with the plan to change the mandate given to United African Company (UAC)<sup>1</sup> which was later named Royal Niger Company (RNC) by British Government Charter. Toyin Falola et'al opined that:

According to this charter the Royal Niger Company was charged with the responsibility to govern those territories with which it had signed treaties of protection, acquire new territories, abolish slavery and slave trade, and to collect taxes and duties in order to defray the cost of its administration.<sup>2</sup>

However, the company was unable to fulfill its obligation until in 1899. The period also coincided with serious encroachment of French and Germany into the eastern parts of the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno area. In addition to that, also there was the upsurge of Mahdiya movement that continued to attract masses from different parts of Sudan.<sup>3</sup> These reasons necessitated the British Government to withdraw the Royal Charter granted to the company. In this regard, the area was put under the direct control of the British colonial office.<sup>4</sup> A year later, on the 1<sup>st</sup> January of 1900, British flag was raised at Lokojo. Sokoto Caliphate was officially declared a British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, this marked the official imposition of British colonial rule on the area which lasted until 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960. Though the British colonial conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate had began

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<sup>1</sup> The idea to establish the United African Company (UAC) came up in 1877. This was a time of cut-throat competition for trade by many European merchants. Therefore, Sir, Goldie came out with a plan to solve the problems of trade for the British merchants. In 1897, Goldie organised all the important trading interest into a single company known as United African Company (UAC). This British Company was to compete the other European companies. However, the quest for French to establish a colonial empire in West Africa, and the advance of Germany from the Cameroons to northern Nigeria forced Goldie to change the name of the company to National African Company (NAC) aiming to deal with the two French rival companies. Having faced with the threat of the colonial expansion of the French and Germany into the Niger. Toyin Falola et'al, *History of Nigeria 2: Nigeria in the nineteenth century*, 1991, pp.175-6.

<sup>2</sup> Toyin Falola et'al, pp.175-6

<sup>3</sup> Victor N. L., *Three Nigerian Emirates: A Study in oral History*, 1976. pp. 170-1.

<sup>4</sup> M. B. Ahmad, *The Galadima of Gombe Emirate; An Outline History of the Institution C.1825-1984*. M.A. Thesis, BUK, 1985, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> M. B. Ahmad, p. 122.

soon, but on the matter of fact, the conquest and occupation of Gombe Emirate took place in 1902. Even then, the occupation of the Emirate was informed by some reasons. These reasons were partly the French activities in the Chad Basin which Rabeh regarded a great threat on his territory. This has inspired serious struggle between the two. In April 1900 the French defeated the forces of Rabeh Fadl.<sup>6</sup> This opened up the Sokoto Caliphate to French colonial forces. Furthermore, in October 1901, Fatrallah, son of Rabeh, asked the British to recognise him as the ruler of Borno, but he was killed by the French forces at Gujuba during a fierce battle that ensued between the two forces. The British perceived the success of the French over the forces of Fatrallah as great threat on their territory. Therefore, this triggered the British to send an expeditionary forces known as "Lower Borno Expedition" in January 1902, to assert control on Borno.<sup>7</sup>

### **Alliance Between the British Imperialist Power and Gombe Emirate Against the Mahdiyya Movement**

With regards to the contact between Gombe Emirate and the British imperial power, however, there are some traditions which maintained that Gombe Emirate officially had contact with the British since August 1898. The contact came about as a result of the recruitment exercise embarked upon by the West African Frontier force (W.A.F.F) from its base at Ibi to Bauchi, and areas around between July and September 1896.<sup>8</sup> This recruitment expedition led to the establishment of the West African Frontier Forces (W.A.F.F). When the expedition was in a place called Jogodo, Galadima Bubawa of Akko, who was worried about the security threat posed by Malam Jibrila Gaini on Gombe Emirate which Akko formed part. The inability of Emirate to dislodge the Forces of Malam Jibrila Gaini,

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<sup>6</sup> Rabeh bin Fadh was born in 1830 A.D at al-Jalil near Khartoum, in Sudan. In his life Rabeh joined the service of Zubair Pasha but later on established himself as one of the commanders of the Mahdi. His conquest from the Nilotic Sudan brought him to Chad Basin, the then territory of Borno under Mai Shehu Hashim. Rabeh has established himself in the area in around 1893. People perceived Rabeh differently. To the Borno aristocracy he was a man of terror and genocide, to the European colonialists he was nothing other than a slave raider, and for the Ulama he was regarded as God punishment to the morally decadent Islamic society of Borno. Whatever, might be the case the consequences of his occupation of the central Sudan were remarkable. His devastation of the Borno Empire had an adverse effect on the socio-political and economic life of the people. His frequent attacks on some towns especially Kukawa, the city of learning, led to mass movement of scholars from the areas of disputed to the north and went as far south as Nupeland and the Republic of Benin. During his raids close to a half million lives perished. Umar Dahiru, *Qur'anic Studies in Borno: Developments in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, PhD. Thesis, BUK, 1995, pp. 55-7.

<sup>7</sup> M. B. Ahmad, *op.cit.* p.122, R.A Adeleye, *op. cit.* p. 237.

<sup>8</sup> M. B. Ahmad, p. 122-3.

therefore, Galadima foresaw the end of his power on the area without a strong support of the British forces. On the July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1898, Galadima sent a soliciting message to WAFF requesting them to come to his aid. Similar request was sent again on the 30<sup>th</sup> July of the same year. Based on these messages, Lieutenant Bryan arrived in Akko on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1898. At this occasion Galadima Bubawa spoke on behalf of himself and the deceased Emir of Gombe Muhammad Tukur (1895-1898).<sup>9</sup> Bubawa requested the British expedition to break up Malam Jibrila Gaini, he therefore made promise to offer 50 horses if his request is granted.<sup>10</sup>

Another recruitment expedition led by Captain Lynch left Ibi for Bauchi in September of the same year. Galadima Bubawa of Gombe remained determined in pursuance of British to help the Emirate against its prime enemy- Malam Jibrila Gaini. In response to the invitation made by Galadima Bubawa, Captain Lynch and his team arrived Gombe Abba not Akko on the 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1898. They were given enthusiastic reception by Emir Umaru. It was the first contact between the Emir of Gombe Umaru and the British. The Emir did not hesitate to present to the British his request to break up Malam Jibrila Gaini's camp.<sup>11</sup> Captain Lynch unequivocally agreed with Emir Umaru's request, however, he demanded Emir Umaru to provide him with 300 able-bodied male, persons of his choice to be recruited and receive training at Ibi- their base. The Emir was not in the position to meet the need of the British, because that the *Bait al-mal* or treasury he inherited was not enough to buy him 300 slaves of Captain Lynch's choice, neither could he conscript freemen.<sup>12</sup> Failure to reach a suitable agreement between the two parties led to the departure of Captain Lynch and his team.

The two meetings held between the Emirate and the British had exposed its weakness to the latter. Furthermore, this has also explained the extent of the damages inflicted on the Emirate by the Mahdiya forces under Malam Jibrila Gaini whose camp was Bormi.<sup>13</sup>

With the declaration of Sokoto Caliphate as part of the British colony a military expedition known as Lower Borno Expedition was dispatched. The expedition under the command of Col. Morland constituted of 17 Europeans, 500 rank and file, 900 carriers, 3 Maxim and

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<sup>9</sup> In order to understand the looming nature of the political strife between Muhammad Tukur and Emir Umaru see Victor N. Low, pp. 175-6.

<sup>10</sup> M. B. Ahmad, p.123.

<sup>11</sup> R.A Adeleye, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> M. B. Ahmad, p.123.

<sup>13</sup> Victor N. Low, p.163.

17 mm guns. The expedition was ordered to move via Bauchi and establish garrisons in all important places around the area. The expedition was also charged with the responsibility of bringing down Malam Jibrila Gaini<sup>14</sup>, but if they found him 'pliable' it was conferred the

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<sup>14</sup>Malam Jibrilla (also known as Jibrilla, Malam Zai, Mallam Gaini and Modibbo Bormi) was born ca. 1820 in Jabdo a Hardawa village in southern Katagum a town at the northern edge of Bauchi Emirate. Of his youth little has yet come to light, but it is generally agreed that when he reached adulthood Jibrilla was ordered by Sarkin Hardawa to abandon his farm and emigrate out of the area. With several companions and a few cattle he journeyed some 40 miles eastward, crossing into Karekare land and finally settled in Zai, a village then jointly governed by Fika Emirate and Katagum. In the mid-1880s Jibrilla was again asked to move his establishment; he soon returned, however, and, supported by Emirs of Gombe and Katagum, killed the chief of Zai and enslaved his Karekare subjects. He now proclaimed a jihad against other Karekare towns, received additional aid from Jama'are, Hadeja and Misau, and, together with Haji of Katagum, occupied briefly the Karekare centre of Jellum. A subsequent defeat of the Katagum forces by Karekare of Daya caused Haji to accuse Jibrilla of seeking to weaken him through a depletion of his cavalry, and the Malam, with an enlarged band of followers, had to take refuge at Nafada. In ca. 1885-8 Haji sent an armed deputation to Gombe Abba with a message for the emir: "We have shot a guinea fowl, which has flown down here; give us our food and shall return home." Zailani, the Emir of Gombe refused, but Jibrilla and his people were hurried by a few of the more powerful Emirs of Gongola Bend, reportedly in fear that his continued presence among them would encouraged other to join the growing band of religious enthusiasts already gathered around him. By 1887 he had persuaded Emir Zailani to provide with farmland at Bormi, a slave hamlet of Sarkin Magaba. The Emir sent 150 baskets of guinea corn as a token of his good will. Jibrilla received as well permission to revive his attacks on Karekare towns north of the Gongola. He quickly raided across the river, accompanied by Damburam of Gombe Tukur, and returned a share of booty with him to the capital. Several Karekare chief aided by Moi Fika soon retaliated. Jibrilla seized on this counter raid to induce all the neighbouring settlements to join him to Bormi for their security. Jibrilla without asking Sarkin Magaba or his superior, Sarkin Bage, erected a wall around Bormi and soon drove away the Magaba slave overseers. At the end of the second annual harvest Jibrilla refused payment of Zakka to Sarkin Magaba, and Sarkin Bage appealed to the Emir of Gombe, Zailani for help in bringing Jibrilla to account. At the same time Jibrilla announced publicly his intention of freeing the poors and oppressed from their bonds of excessive taxation by local chiefs and resident agents of the Gombe fief holders. He pledged to everyone who chose to enlist in his cause an end to extortion, illegal judgements, and all other forms of alleged misrule. Emir Zailani planned military assault on Bormi, but betrayed by his high rankle officials who refused to obey the royal order. Emir Zailani was left with few people with him charged the gate of Bormi where he was shot by a poisonous arrow. He died at Magaba few hours later, and was buried at Birin Bolewa. Yerima Hassan was made an Emir, immediately he sent for assistance to Sarkin Misau Muhammadu Manga II. However, the combined

right to recognised him as the sub-chief or even the chief of the lower Borno region.<sup>15</sup> The expedition marched through Bauchi and drove out its Emir, Umaru and enthroned his heir apparent, Chiroma Muhammadu as a new Emir of Bauchi. The expedition departed Bauchi for Gombe, though its aim was to deal with Malam Jibrila Gaini, but it has to pass through Gombe Abba to inform the Emir of their mission since Jibrila's territory fell within Gombe Emirate. When the expedition reached Gombe Abba, the Emir of Gombe whose fear of Jibrila made him to see the British expedition more as a friend than enemy, thus they were warmly received with lavish reception.<sup>16</sup>

It is doubtful to believe that the peaceful submission of Gombe Emirate to the British colonial power without any resistance was without any reason. Certainly, the Emir's action was informed by some reasons that include the following: i) the story being told of the defeat of Bida and Ilorin and the fatal blow received by those Emirates, followed by the example of Bauchi, the immediate Emirate west of Gombe Emirate, ii) looming crises of succession that divided the ruling family in Gombe emirate and the fief-holders alike, ii) the internal revolt led by Galadima Bubawa which had a support of some members of the ruling family, and iii) the menace of Malam Jibrila Gaini had no doubt made him not to hesitate to submit to British forces.

Therefore, the Emir provided the expedition with all required assistance to quell what he considered as rebellion against him. The expedition left Gombe on 25<sup>th</sup> February in search of Malam Jibrila, in their company was an appointed guide in a person of Shamaki Abba.<sup>17</sup> The encounter between the British Lower Borno Expedition and Malam Jibrila ensued on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1902 lasted for about two weeks. Malam Jibrila Gaini was capture and sent on exile to Lokoja, a place he remained until he died in 1907.<sup>18</sup> Some traditions had strongly maintained that Emir Umaru himself was in the company of the British forces when they marched to Bormi.<sup>19</sup> Malam Garba, the son of Sa'id bin Hayatu, the leader of Mahdiya movement in Western Sudan argued that Malam Jibrila Gaini was not captured in Bormi town,<sup>20</sup> he posits that:

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forces of Gombe and Misau Emirates were unable to capture Bormi. Finally, Manga returned to Misau and Emir Hassan returned to Gombe Abba as new Emir of Gombe enthroned at the battle field. Victor N. Low, op. cit. Pp. 162-4.

<sup>15</sup> R.A Adeleye, p.238

<sup>16</sup> R.A Adeleye, p.142.

<sup>17</sup> M. B. Ahmad, p.127.

<sup>18</sup> R.A Adeleye, p. 243.

<sup>19</sup>NAK/SNP 445/14 History Gombe Emirate, by I. F. Carlyle, 1914.

<sup>20</sup>NAK/SNP 445/14 History Gombe Emirate, in an Annual Report 1902, by I. F. Carlyle, 1914.

“Jibrillah was proceeding to Toungo when he was attacked by Colonel Morland and his men dispersed. He was deceived and led out by a nomad Pullo, Sambo Bodade, who promised to lead him through bush to Kanem to meet Al-mahdi son of Muhammad As-senousu, who is regarded by Ansar as one of the supporters of Mahdi. While Alkali Dedare wanted him to conclude peace with the British to save his territory from being transferred to Gombe, Katagum or Fika, Musa Dedare betrayed him and led an army officer to the place where he was hiding. He was arrested and taken to Lokojo. Musa Dedare became the head of the community.”<sup>21</sup>

The victory of the British forces over the Bormi forces that led to the deportation of Malam Jibrila Gaini to Lokojo<sup>22</sup> earned Umaru recognition to remain in power on behalf of the colonial government. Thus, in 1903, the British attacked Bormi again with combined forces from Bauchi, Misau, and Kano. After Malam Dedare was killed,<sup>23</sup> however, this time the effort of the British met with stiff resistance.

#### **caliph attahiru's journey to martyrdom in bormi**

The peaceful submission of Gombe Emirate to British power was not the end of the whole Sokoto caliphate. The spiritual head in the Caliphate-Caliph Attahiru I refused to submit himself to whom he regarded as his enemies, even after the downfall of Sokoto- the then seat of caliphate in March 1903. Instead, he fled eastwards with the intention to migrate to Sudan.<sup>24</sup> Sani Abba states that:

When he left Sokoto, officials who followed him included the Alkali, Ubandoma, Dan Magaji, Sarkin Karma, the Madaki and one son of the Waziri, the Caliph stayed in Gusau for some time and left Gusau around the 17<sup>th</sup> of April when he was reported to be in “Kasar Kano” from “Kasar Katsina” he was joined by Abubakar Mai jakkai from Pauwa and his people. From Bakori were the Maigari Aliyu, the Bagudu with some of his

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<sup>21</sup>Asma`u G. Sa`eed, *Literary Works of Alhaji Garba Abubakar Sa`id*, published by A.J. Publishers, 2007, p. 180.

<sup>22</sup>Paul J. Delaney, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Alkali Musa Dedare was said to be among the Mahdis that fought against combined forces of the emirates of Gombe, Bauchi, Misau. However, sources have it that he lured Malam Jibrillaa Gaini, the leader of the revolt, and handed over to the British, this was why he assumed the leadership of Bormi community. He was however, arrested and taken to Mafori in Maiduguri when he refused to submit to the Emir of Gombe. (Asma`u G. sa`eed p.180)

<sup>24</sup>NAK/SNP 445/14, pp. 9-11.

people. Gwangwam Ibrahim a warrior of emir of Kano living in exile in Bakori. Ibrahim is said to have joined the tafiyyar Attahir with about a hundred people. Also from Malumfashi Maigari Aliyu with some of his family also joined.<sup>25</sup>

As the news of his arrival to Kano spreads numerous notable and nobles joined his rank, however, the most popular of them as outlined by Sani Abba are:

Alkalin kano, Ex-Madaki and Magajin keffi who had earlier taken refuge there, others included Sarkin Dutsi, Dan Yamusa, Sarkin Derki, Sarkin Karaye, Sarkin Kafin Musa, Liman Zangaya and Liman Wudil. Before reaching Misau he was joined by the brother and four officials of the Emir of Zaria,. . .and from Makarfi many officials including the Alkali also joined the movement. From Bida came the deposed Eisu of Nupe, Abubakar and his followers.<sup>26</sup>

The news of his migration soon spread across the Caliphate, the popularity of the Caliph soon increased and was considered a hero who refused to surrender to invading Christian forces. Therefore, thousands of people abandoned their towns heading eastward to join Attahiru I to his next abode. From Kano, Attahiru I went through southern borders of Kano from there he turned northeastward to Shira, Zadawa and arrived Misau on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1903. Caliph Attahiru was warmly welcomed by the deposed Emir, Ahmad ibn Muhammad and Sheikh Bashir Ibn Umat el-futy and his Tijjaniya supporters. It was from Misau, the large crowd of the Caliph moved into Gombe Abba via Malala. It was not the Caliph intention to stay in Gombe, however, his intention was to reach Arabian peninsula, particularly to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.<sup>27</sup>

When Caliph Attahiru I reached Malala,<sup>28</sup> a territory of Gombe Emirate, Emir Umaru issued an order that nobody from his Emirate should join or render assistance to the Caliph in his migration. In fact, Gombe tradition had maintained that his order was adhered to by his officials except the dissident Galadima Bubawa of Akka, *Sarkin Hashidu*, *Sarkin Bajoga* among others who swore allegiance to the Caliph. Galadima Bubawa was said to have ordered all the people of Akko as well as the whole Muslim communities of Gombe

<sup>25</sup> Sani A. A. et'al: Gombe State: A History of the Land and the People, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1999, p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> Sani A. A. et'al: Gombe State, p.76

<sup>27</sup> Sani A. A. et'al, p.77

<sup>28</sup>NAK/SNP 445/14, pp. 9-11. p. 30.



Emirate to be in the company of the Caliph. Galadima's call was answered with enthusiasm and made popular as it was later called as *Perol Akko*.<sup>29</sup> Sani argued that:

It is pertinent to understand that the ruling aristocracy all over the Caliphate appeared to have apted for submission rather than military resistance. The princes, office-holders and officials of all categories had, of course, vested interest in the preservation of the Caliphate, albeit, under the sovereignty of unbelievers.<sup>30</sup>

Caliph Attahiru I, after having being repudiated my Emir Umaru of the Gombe emirate, preceded to Bima hill. This was perceived as great threat by the British, so they didn't take it lightly. Instead, they organised all what was required to make sure Caliph Attahiru I was captured, he was driven away by the British.

Caliph Attahiru I was said to arrived Bima hill in large entourage, though it was pertinent to know that up to the time he arrived Gusau the people accompanied him were not more than two hundred horsemen. However, by the time he reached Gombe emirate, his followers run to thousands as cited in Uba by Sani Abba that:

From Kano, Zaria and other emirates large number of followers flocked to his banner as he made his way through Kano and into Bauchi territory, arousing anti-British sentiment. The Resident of Kano, Dr. Cargill and the newly appointed emir, Mohammad Abbas, had to take certain measures to stop the exodus, warning office holders that anybody who departed would have his post immediately filled. But the threat did not deter some district chiefs, especially those through whose territories Attahiru passed, from joining the movement. There was fear that unless drastic actions were taken, the whole of the population of Kano would follow the ex-caliph.<sup>31</sup>

Caliph Attahiru I and his men camped beneath the Bima thinking of what line of action should be taken. After consultation with his followers they decided to honour the invitation of the Mahdis in Bormi.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> M. B. Ahmad, op. cit. p.127.

<sup>30</sup> Sani A. A. et'al, p.76

<sup>31</sup> Sani Abba Aliyu et'al, p.78

<sup>32</sup> Asma'u G. Sa'eed, p.181.

### Encounters Between the Caliph Attahiru and The Allied Forces of Britain and Gombe Emirate in Bormi

In Bormi, Lamido Bajoga Musa swore allegiance to protect him at the Juma'a prayer ground. Attahiru I declared his support to Mahdiya and the Ansar. For he said:

Ina tare daku, in bana Bormin duniya ina Bormin lahira, kune ku  
kayi kama da almajiran shehu masu taggo.

Meaning, "I am with you, if I am not in the Bormi of this world I am in that of the next world, you look like the disciples of *Shehu* who wear *taggo*."

His fourth son Muhammadu Bello Mai Wurno and *alkali* Abdullahi who by then were against the Caliph Attahiru's decision to stay at Bormi and cooperation with the *Ansar*, moved eastwards and settled on the Nile awaiting another superior Mahdi in *Hijaz*.<sup>33</sup> *Alkali* Abdullahi, during their stay with the Sultan Attahiru used to say to later, "*Sarkin Musulmi rabu da wadanga masu kananan taggo*". Meaning "Oh commander of the faithful, keep away from those wearers of small *taggo*".<sup>34</sup>

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 1903, Bormi was attacked by large British forces. However, there were serious casualties on the side of the British. The ensuing action lasted 5 hours, the troops were charged twice by the Attahiru's troops. They were unable to force an entry into the town and eventually withdrew with 4 killed and 60 wounded. Two British officers namely Sergeant Hay was severely wounded while Major Plummer received slight wounds. Attahiru I received reinforcement from the neighbouring towns. Paul Delaney opines that:

On the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1903, the British attacked Bormi which was a very large town with high, strong walls and underground passages. To their great surprise the Caliph was not there, and they were defeated by the ferocious warriors of Bormi. It was after this defeat- the first defeat in the history of their conquest of the Caliphate- that the British built their strength in men, weapons, and ammunition to defeat Bormi.<sup>35</sup>

It was that defeat the British imperial treated to Bauchi and an attempt for the final assault on Bormi. As mentioned earlier, the combined British forces had sustained serious

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<sup>33</sup> Asma'u G. Sa'eed, p.181.

<sup>34</sup> Asma'u G. Sa'eed, p.181.

<sup>35</sup> Paul J. Delaney, p. 12, Sani A. A. et'al: Gombe State: A History of the Land and the People, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1999, p. 78.

casualties of two killed fifty-six wounded. On the other side, the Bormi forces many lives perished estimated to have reached 150 martyrs.<sup>36</sup> The British contingent was led by major Plummer and Sward.

After that Attahiru I proceeded and camped at Gwani. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1903, he was attacked by Captain Hamilton Brown who left Gajuba with huge reinforcement. In that encounter, Caliph Attahiru I, after a fierce battle, was forced to take his way back to Bormi. The British and their allied forces of the nearby emirate cut off food and cattle supply to Bormi. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1903, Major Marsh joined Major Barlow who had arrived Nafada, Captain Sward arrived from Gajuba they were joined by Mr. Temple and all together they converged on Bormi at a time when Caliph Attahiru I and his people were running short of food and water.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1903, Bormi was attacked from all directions. The British-led forces consisted of 18 officers, 3 NCO, 2 residents, 2 medical Doctors, 445 rank and file infantry with 4 maxims, 60 rank and file mounted infantry and 15 rank and file Royal Artillery with one 75mm gun.<sup>38</sup> On the other side, there similar arrangement put in place by caliph Attahiru and his host community. The walls were fortified, ditches were dug and connected within and outside the town-wall, and sources of supplies were put in place for basic essentials goods and ammunitions.<sup>39</sup>

The British-led forces learned that the important factor that determined the success of the resistance was the supply lines the Mahdist were able to maintain during the war, so this time around, they had to make sure that all the supply lines were cut off before the commencement of the impending war. It is in that view that the British forces under Barlow, on the 31<sup>st</sup> May attacked Ashaka and killed several people. Barlow was later joined by Hamilton and launched attack on Bormi, killed many and put the town under effective siege. On the 30<sup>th</sup> June, Barlow in a company of the resident launched assault on Biri, Tougo and the nearby town and villages.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Sani A. A. et'al, p.78.

<sup>37</sup> NAK/SNP 445/14 History Gombe Emirate, in an Annual Report 1902, by I. F. Carlyle, 1914, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> Sani A. A. et'al, p.79.

<sup>39</sup> Sani A. A. et'al, p.79.

<sup>40</sup> Tarihin Gombe, p. 214

On 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1903, Bormi was finally attacked from all directions.<sup>41</sup> After a fierce battle Bormi fell into the hands of British troops. Determined stiff resistance was experienced, after its gates had been stormed street fighting continued until night fall. When the Caliph heard that the enemies had already purged their way into the town, he came out of the mosque where he had been praying and bravely confronted the enemies. Caliph Attahiru and his body guard were martyred on the spot and about 700 among his followers were killed including *Alkalin* Sokoto, *Alkalin* Kano, Ubandoman Sokoto, Sarkin Bajoga, Wazirin Bauchi, Magajin Keffi and Amadu of Misau among other.<sup>42</sup> After the death of the Caliph, some personalities among his adherents were able to leave the scene. Galadima Bubawa of Akko, Muhammadu *Sarkin* Tijjane and Malam Sanusi *Sarkin* Bormi were among the survivors of Bormi attack of 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1903.

However, Galadima Bubawa returned to Akko and Malam Sanusi was captured by Captain Buxton at Muri Emirate where he took refuge.<sup>43</sup> Bormi was set ablaze as everything was destroyed. The British further declared that no one was allowed to set settlement at the site. Many Islamic scholars lost their lives during the encounters between the two allied forces of Gombe Emirate and British invading forces under the British command on one hand and that of Caliph Attahiru I and Mallam Jibrilla Gaini on the other.

### Conclusion

The aftermath of battles of Bormi was very serious as it affected all the spheres of life in the emirate. There witnessed mass migration of people to Sudan and beyond. The economic activities of Gombe also suffered the consequences of the battles. However, the most affected of all was educational sector, this is because of the mass participation of the scholars alongside Attahiru, those who survived the battles felt it difficult to stay in Gombe. The latter Emirs of Gombe Emirate had to go Kano, Zazzau, Katsina and beyond to appeal for Islamic scholars<sup>44</sup> and experts on different trades to come to Gombe to fill the existing gap.

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<sup>41</sup> Sani A. A. et'al, p.79.

<sup>42</sup> NAK/SNP 445/14 History Gombe Emirate, in an Annual Report 1902, by I. F. Carlyle, 1914, p. 31.

<sup>43</sup> NAK/SNP 445/14 History, pp. 31-2.

<sup>44</sup> Example of scholars who came to Gombe Doma in the 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were Malam Dan yashi, Malam Habu Damagaram, Yanlafiya in Jekadafari. Tsangayar Kuka in Gumbiya-Gumbiya. Sani Abba et'al, op. Cit. P. 98.

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