



Baba Gonto Leadership Model (BGLM) and its Implication on Zaar Struggle

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Introduction

“The only thing I know is that I know nothing” – Socrates

Baba Peter Gonto, of blessed and glorious memory, was born in Mwari village of Bogoro LGA of Bauchi State, Nigeria to the family of Gung Gida Vodhm Fyali (The Village Head of Mwari) in the year 1882. See Figure 1. The name “Peter” was given to him when he got converted to Christianity in 1926. From a credible source, Gung Gida, the father of Gonto, was arguably the first Zaar Christian convert. On the contrary, others believe that Baba Gonto was the first Christian convert and missionary in Zaar Land (See Appendix 1). Gonto doubled as an evangelist and a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The legendary Baba Gonto Mwari (1882-2000) was a classically renowned freedom fighter in the Zaar nationalistic struggle for freedom, justice, and equity in the dominant polity of the Emirate System common in Northern Nigeria which suppresses ethnic nationalities who are not followers of Islam (Wadam, 2014). Over time, Baba Gonto later became the core reference or rather symbol of the Zaar nationalistic struggle for freedom and self-determination from the cruel oppression of the Bauchi Emirate and the Islamic expansionism agenda of the Fulani jihadists.



Figure 1. Baba Gonto Mwari Born in Mwari (1882-2000)

Source: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/sayawa?src=hash>

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” – Nelson Mandela

Baba Gonto was a modern freedom fighter (1928/9). Arguably, the first politician, along with Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, in the 1940s. A socio-political activist. Gonto encouraged Zaar people to educate their children and retake back lands that were mischievously taken away from them by the Bauchi Native Authority and given to foreign Muslims who were either Hausa or Fulani. Gonto was the first champion of the coalition of the Zaar people, the Afizare people, the Jhaar people, and the Pyem people that led to the boundary adjustment of 1929 which carved out Gindiri and Dangi-Kanam from the Bauchi Area to the Plateau areas of the present-day Plateau State.

Understandably, Gonto along with four (4) leaders from (Zaar) neighbouring tribes (namely, Afizare, Jhaar, and Pyem) initiated the movement for the emancipation of their people. These were ethnic indigenous tribes who felt marginalised and discriminated against by the Emirate Authority. They were not comfortable being treated as slaves with no rights of their own. Because of the commonality of their misery, they agreed to unite and confront the monstrous feudal Emirate System. The four (4) people who teamed with Gonto to resist the Emirate were Baba Azi Nyako from Jarawa Dutse, Baba Zagi Dass from Dass, Baba Garba Thomas from Tadnum, and Baba Ibrahim Dimis from Duguri. They were concerned about Muslim domination, which they considered a threat to their collective existence. They decided to confront headlong the Islamic expansionism agenda. Hence, they started the struggle to emancipate their people. All of them accepted Jesus Christ and agreed to resist the infiltration of Islamic preachers into their lands.

During the journey, Garba died leaving Zagi, Azi, Ibrahim, and Gonto. These emancipators were revered by their people because of their courage, sacrifice, and patriotism. Understandably, Zagi, Ibrahim, and Azi discontinued with the coalition at different times and for different reasons. This research did not seek to know why they discontinued. However, one could see that a movement that started with five (5) people gradually declined to one man and that one man was Gonto.

Data and Methods

Figure 2 shows the methodology adopted in this investigation. The study adopted mixed method using both qualitative and quantitative data collection. A questionnaire was designed and administered to target respondents who were recommended during the period of the research. These were people who had worked or lived with Baba Gonto. Some of the respondents are related to Gonto. Data was gathered from written literature on Gonto. We used primarily primary data. But where primary data was not available, secondary data was used. All these sources of data were subjected to thorough verification and comparison to ascertain the originality, validity, authenticity, reliability, consistency, and accuracy of the information.



Figure 2. Methods adopted in the research [Courtesy of 123RF]

Besides, the research primarily centred on qualitative data. However, few quantitative data were used where applicable to support the investigation. Other sources of information include calls, chats, messages (both email and text), audio recordings, videos, pictures, etc. Information collected from one or two persons were validated from other sources to check for consistency and ensure balancing of reports. At the end of data collection and analysis, the completed report was subjected to a process of reviewing, editing, and proofreading to enhance the quality and standard of the report. We are aware that there are only a few contributions on Baba Gonto and the Zaar Struggle, but the intent is to add to the few existing literature. We urge you to journey with us as we take you through this investigation. We hope you will enjoy this journey with us.

Why the BGLM?

The essence of this contribution is to explore the qualities or features of what we call the Baba Gonto Leadership Model (BGLM) and to learn from the lessons therein going forward in the Zaar Struggle. This could provide an insight into the BGLM and possibly serve as an inspiration to those genuinely involved in the Zaar Struggle and those who willingly wish to join. The Zaar Struggle for self-realisation, self-actualisation, and self-emancipation has a long-time history. It became evident in 1804 during the time Uthman Dan Fodio declared Islamic jihad on the indigenous tribes in Northern Nigeria (Nmah and Amanambu, 2017; Takaya and Sunday, 1987).

In particular, the doggedness and resilience of our forefathers prevented the conquest of our land and people. We understood that our patriarchs were fearless warriors. They started the struggle for the emancipation and liberation of our people. Gonto and his contemporaries simply continued with the struggle. Our struggle, like any other struggle, is likened to runners involved in a relay race. One runner passes the baton to the next runner. This calculated and purposeful passing of the baton from one runner to another continues until the last runner reaches the finish line. All the runners run to win the race. The runners herein are the participants of the Zaar Struggle, the baton is the collection of the features of the BGLM, and the finish line is our total emancipation from those who see us as not equals and wish to impose their will and culture. The finish line also connotes freedom from any form of oppression, injustice, marginalisation, colonisation, and discrimination whatsoever (Suleiman, 2019).

The BGLM

The BGLM examines those leadership qualities or features of Baba Gonto that define the Zaar Struggle then. Figure 3 shows the features of the BGLM. Some spectacular qualities or features that made the late Icon, Gonto, stand out were his unparalleled humility and wisdom. He was a man who understood the times and knows what the Zaar people should

do. Someone once shared this story about Gonto. One day, a certain man attended a meeting late where Gonto was presiding. Unfortunately for the latecomer, all the seats were occupied. Chances were for him to go find a chair or hang somewhere. But there was an interesting thing that happened; to his astonishment, Gonto offered his seat to the latecomer. Seeing such an act of humility, the latecomer felt it was too much offer and instead of accepting the offer, he straight away told Gonto that for him to accept the offer, is better he went home and never attended the meeting at all. In response, Gonto told the latecomer not to do what he intended to do. That was humility garnished with wisdom in leadership scenarios. Humility was one of the characteristics of Jesus Christ and is a tested secret for successful leaders.

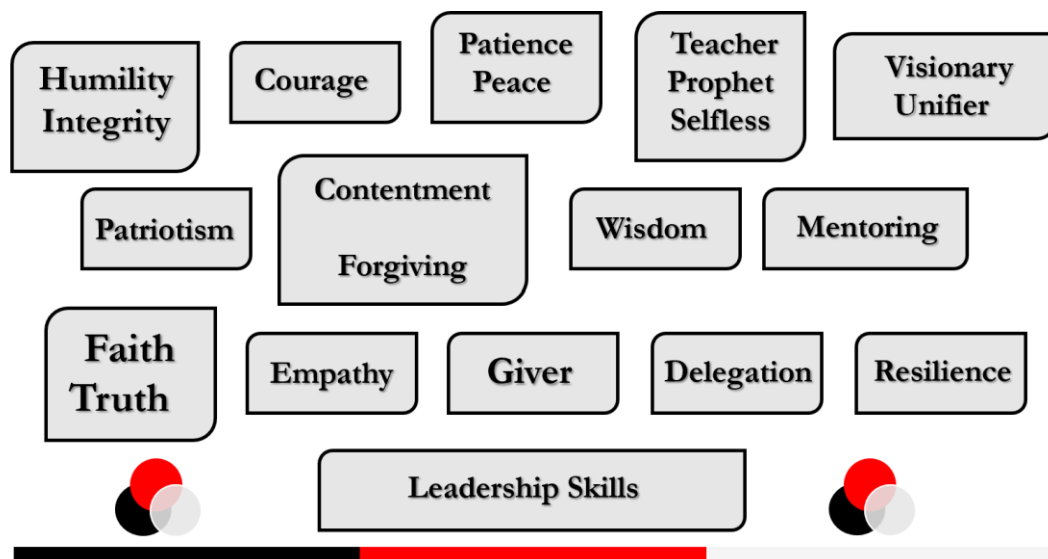


Figure 3. Features of the Baba Gonto Leadership Model (BGLM)

Gonto’s Philosophy

Political Strategy

Gonto’s refusal to compromise combined with his exceptional leadership qualities gave him wide acceptance not only from the Zaar people but among neighbouring tribes. Thus, the indigenous tribes within the Tafawa Balewa LGA and its environs saw Gonto as a trustable rallying point. From a credible source, Gonto was selected as a regional leader to represent his people and other tribes in Kaduna. When Gonto noticed

that accepting the position was going to be a distraction to his quest for Zaar liberation, he instead proposed to Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to represent our Federal Constituency. His reasons were that Mallam Abubakar was his brother from Bazanshi; they were in the struggle together and had not betrayed him in past times. Though they were of different religions, Mallam Abubakar stood together with him to defend and promote the interests of their people. It was through this window that Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa later became the first and only Prime Minister of Nigeria. From a reliable source, because of Gonto's political popularity, Chief Obafemi Jeremiah Oyeniya Awolowo came to Tafawa Balewa to see Gonto. Chief Awolowo was a Nigerian nationalist and political leader who played a key role in Nigeria's independence movement.

Gonto and Sardauna of Sokoto

“One of the truest tests of integrity is its blunt refusal to be compromised.” – Chinua Achebe

In the process of time, Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto invited Gonto for a political negotiation in Kaduna. Sardauna said to him getting his people (Zaar) liberated and becoming their leader was not possible. However, Sardauna proposed to offer Gonto a gift of a car and a house. Instead of accepting the gifts, Gonto refused. Gonto, said to Sardauna, what do you call me? You call me Gonto. The Gonto with you is not the Gonto at home. For the gifts, leave them here until you have cars and houses enough for the Gontos at home. He argued that those he left at home were the Gontos. He was just one of the many Gontos. Sardauna could not say anything, rather than asked Gonto to leave his presence. Thus, Gonto did not compromise nor betray his people for monetary or material wealth. He was a man of integrity who refused to compromise or betray the trust of his people even when there was the opportunity to do so. Gonto was a testament to godliness with contentment as a great gain.

“Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore, get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.” – Proverbs 4:7

Gonto and the Bauchi Emirate

In addition, Gonto did not fear anybody. Many people in the Bauchi Emirate did not believe that Gonto was an ordinary person. They did not believe that Gonto was an ordinary human being. At some points, they invited some of Zaar people to ask them in front of the Emir of Bauchi if they agreed with Gonto to rule them. They all said no. It was stage-managed to set Gonto against his people. Surprisingly, Gonto told the Emir “Even you not all your people are loyal to you.” Release my brothers. If we go home, we will reconcile and there will not be any problems. The Emir went away and left them. The following morning, people were waiting for the Emir to come and pronounce judgement on Gonto. The Emir could not come out. He was deeply touched by what Gonto said. The Emir could not prosecute Gonto but asked Gonto to go home. They also released all his people to go with him. Indeed, Gonto was a man of wisdom. Besides, Gonto had a very good knowledge and understanding of the Holy Bible. This was the secret of his wisdom.

Betrayal, Arrest, and Imprisonment

It should not be forgotten that our revered legend, Gonto, of blessed and glorious memory, and many other Zaar patriots had suffered betrayal, arrest, and imprisonment in defence of the rights and dignity of our people. In 1950, understandably, Gonto was sent to study Administration by the Bauchi Native Authority at the Institute of Administration, Zaria, Kaduna State (Dr. Bukata R. Adamu, 1991). It was a commendable move to recognise, promote, and ensure the rights of ethnic nationalities are well protected because of their cultural, traditional, and religious differences with the Bauchi Emirate. This was in preparation for the coronation of Gonto as the Gung Zaar of the Zaar Kingdom. Then what happened? At the end of the study, Gonto along with Baba Ali Sumi Mwari and Baba Bulus Kushi Lusa were betrayed, arrested, and detained in Bauchi prison based on fabricated lies. Instead of the Bauchi Native Authority honouring their part of the agreement, the hopes of the Zaar people were once again dashed to the wall. Our journey to freedom was temporarily interrupted by the forces of evil. Our rights were delayed.

We can see that for long this evil mechanism masquerading as respecters of “rule of law” and “due process” has never meant well and will never mean well for the Zaar people. To them, we are nothing but third-class citizens. In their mind, we are slaves, not equals. They would always blame the victim for not doing the right thing. To them, the right thing is for us to accept their assigned position of us as slaves. To them, we are commodities, not humans. This is reflected in the inhuman treatment of our people by those who see themselves as lords. To them, we dare not challenge their authority whatsoever. In their mind, they see us as “conquered” territory. We all know that the Zaar people have never been conquered by the Islamic jihadists and will not be conquered by the grace of God. They always make every effort to delay our freedom. We must remember:

“A right delayed is a right denied.” - Martin Luther King Jr.

Gonto's Sacrificial Leadership Style

Gonto was a renowned Zaar hero and a freedom fighter who fought tirelessly for our common good. He sacrificed almost everything, including wealth, to keep the struggle alive. He was indeed a true leader by example. He would not only inspire people to support the movement by whatsoever means necessary but would back up his words with actions. According to a reliable source, Gonto sold over Three Hundred (300) cattle for the cause of the Zaar Struggle. Selling 300 cattle proves that he was a man of great wealth before leading the Zaar Struggle. With the current market value in Nigeria, it is around 60 million Naira (₦60,000,000.00) if a cow costs the sum of Two Hundred Thousand Naira (₦200,000.00) only. He was, indeed, a sacrificial and selfless leader who fought for the welfare of the Zaar people and the prosperity of the Land.

Before we proceed, we need to ask ourselves some pertinent questions.

- i. What is the state of the Zaar Struggle as of today?
- ii. Is everything alright with the struggle?
- iii. Is the lamp of the struggle burning or about to die?

- iv. Are we making any form of sacrifice?
- v. Any passion?
- vi. Any patriotism?
- vii. Any knowledge?
- viii. Any wisdom?
- ix. Any courage?
- x. Any integrity?
- xi. Any sincerity of purpose?
- xii. Any patience?
- xiii. Any faith?
- xiv. Any teamwork?
- xv. Any purity?
- xvi. Any mentoring?
- xvii. Any sustainability plans?
- xviii. Any continuity plans?
- xix. Are we feeding the sheep or feeding from the sheep?
- xx. Are we in the struggle for self-recognition?
- xxi. Do we expect a form of compensation because of our contribution to the struggle?
- xxii. Are we as selfless as Gonto and his contemporaries?
- xxiii. Why do you want to aspire to a leadership position in the Land?
- xxiv. Do you understand that the Zaar Struggle is a call to duty, selfless service, responsibility, accountability, and servanthood, and does not offer benefit or compensation?

Gonto and our Pioneer Graduates

Gonto mentored our pioneer graduates in the Zaar Struggle. These graduates were our early elites. One thing we learned from them was that they humbly and willingly submitted to Gonto's leadership philosophy for the good of the Land. They did not allow their education to stand between them and the interests of the Land. From reliable sources, what later metamorphosed into the Zaar Development Association (ZDA) was a brainchild of these elites. They created ZDA as a pressure group that stood side by side with the Gonto movement for the emancipation of the

Zaar people and the neighbouring tribes who so willingly identified with the movement. Having acquired Western Education, they used their education as a vehicle to advance the cause of the Land. Gonto mentored this group of elites and allowed them to support the struggle using the power of pen and paper. These patriotic elites include but are not limited to:

- i. Mr. Yohanna Iliya (now late),
- ii. Mr. Alhamdu Samari Haruna (now late),
- iii. Mr. Samu Tubi Bitkon (now late),
- iv. Mr. Sara Tubi Bitkon (now late),
- v. Barr. Godiya Samu Pokti from Mallar (now late),
- vi. Mr. Yakubu Dodo Hassan (now late),
- vii. Hon. Irmiya Dodo Hassan (now late),
- viii. Dr. Siman K. Manzo (then),
- ix. Dr. Suleiman Bogoro (then),
- x. Dr. James Landi (then, now late),
- xi. Hon. Barr. Jonathan K. Manzo (now late),
- xii. Hon. Dr. Bukata R. Adamu (now late),
- xiii. Hon. Justice James Auta (now late),
- xiv. Engr. Bulus Musa (now late),
- xv. Hon. Jonah Tumbai Bukar from Bar (now late),
- xvi. Hon. Barr. Bukata Zhyadi,
- xvii. Barr. Kefas Magaji.

It is pertinent to point out that Gonto was a man full of wisdom, philosophic, and diplomatic in his approaches. Most times, Gonto will not allow people to decide on his behalf. He perceived that most times people did not really understand him. The likes of Mr. Yohanna Iliya, of blessed memory, used to write for him. Sometimes Gonto will ask them to tear the paper. He perceived that it was difficult to change or reverse what was written. Given this, Gonto preferred to talk rather than to write to avoid being implicated. Thus, it became so hard to put words in his mouth for him to accept. There were occasions when judges would want to put words to him to implicate him. They have tried severally but failed. Sometimes, out of frustration, they would detain him. It was gathered that Gonto had been detained severally in Kaduna and Bauchi. Despite the

detention and harassment, Gonto was not cowed. This was the narration of the man we are talking about – Gonto of blessed memory.

Gonto's Perspective of the 1991 Crisis

The very first time Gonto relaxed was after the 1991 crisis (see Appendix 1). He was relaxed because his people became aware of the purpose of the struggle. During the crisis, there was a woman that was attacked at Pamchipam. He asked a young man if he had ever seen him dance? The young man replied, “No, except during Christmas”. But the day was a metaphoric Christmas to Gonto because the invaders of Zaar Land were defeated through the mighty hands of God. Gonto made a strong affirmation that fateful day saying, “*Henceforth, nobody will see the back of Zaarman again* – paraphrased”. It was a prophetic declaration over the Land. He said “If I die today (1991), I will die in peace because Zaar people are now inspired and informed about the Zaar Struggle.

After the crisis of 1991, not only did Zaar people began to rise above limits, but their consciousness and patriotic spirit were reawakened. The level of involvement of our people in governance, government, the education sector, politics, leadership, etc. made the Bauchi Emirate afraid. For example, the rise of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa to become the first and only Prime Minister of Nigeria, Rt. Hon. Barr. Yakubu Dogara (Speaker of the 8th Nigeria National Assembly), Prof. Suleiman Bogoro (Executive Secretary, TETFund), Justice Haruna Simon Tsammani (the Presiding Judge, Court of Appeal Abuja, and the Chairman of the Panel of Justices, 2023 Presidential Election Petition Tribunal), Amb David Bala Gambar (Career Diplomat), Barr. Hon. Kefas Magaji (Chairman, Nigerian Law Reform Commission; Caretaker Chairman, Tafawa Balewa LGA, Special Adviser to Bauchi State Governor on Legal Matters), Hon. William Wadni (Director, Nigerian Building and Road Research Institute (NBRRI), Federal Ministry of Science and Technology), among others, have made the Bauchi Emirate and their associates afraid of Zaar. In addition, the Land is blessed with professors, senior officers in military and paramilitary, permanent secretaries, directors, clergies, PhDs, medical consultants, justices, etc. This can only be God.

We cannot exhaust the leadership qualities of Gonto. But we could attempt to mention but a few. Reliably, Gonto was known as a man of extreme patience. Furthermore, he had a forgiving spirit. He hated oppression and injustice of any kind. For instance, when Gonto was young, whenever he sees someone oppressing or molesting another (Zaar), he would without fail pick up the fight. Gonto identifies with the oppressed. He was also known as a man of great contentment. “*Godliness with contentment is a great gain*” – 1 Timothy 6:6. You will never see Gonto going from person to person begging. In other words, he had mastered the secret of contentment. Gonto was a perfect example of dignity and honour. It was gathered that Gonto hardly quarrel, let alone fight. He was trustable, honest, and sincere. No wonder he enjoyed the support of the majority of the Zaar people.

Unmasking the Sokoto Caliphate, the Bauchi Emirate, and the Bauchi State Government

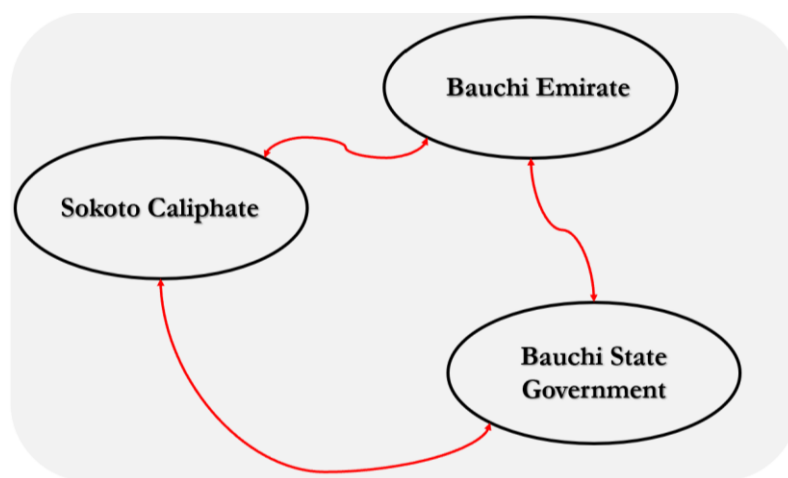


Figure 4. The inherent connection among the Sokoto Caliphate, the Bauchi Emirate, and the Bauchi State Government for Islamic expansionism

The Good Book says, “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”. We need to know the truth. We need to be aware of the truth. Because if we do, it has the power to set us free. That is our sure path to freedom. The paths in Figure 4 are curved and marked red. The curved path suggests a rough and hard experience while the red is referred to here as paths stained with the blood of Zaar martyrs. These were people who sadly lost their lives in the cause of the Zaar Struggle.

We cannot forget in a hurry how the Sokoto Caliphate in partnership and strong association with the Bauchi Emirate and the Bauchi State Government over the years inflicted pain and hardship on the Zaar people as indicated in Figure 4. We must understand that these three (3) entities work together. The trio are inherently connected. They are one and the same. Gonto and his colleagues were victims of the trio's cruelty and deception. We must learn from the experience or else history will repeat itself. The trio share the same agenda: Islamic expansionism, dominance, and recolonisation. The better we understand and become aware of their *modus operandi*, the closer we are to freedom. This explains the tactical delay and refusal by the Bauchi State Government to announce Air Cdre Ishaku Komo (rtd) the Gung Zaar of Zaar Chieftdom with its headquarters in *Puji* (Tafawa Balewa). No wonder, Dr. Bukata R. Adamu (late), among others, advocated for the removal of Zaar Land from Bauchi State and merged with Plateau State. Our merger with our kith and kin in Plateau State would have for long addressed the lingering issue of ceremonial recognition and presentation of staff of office to Air Cdre Ishaku Komo (retd), the Gung Zaar.

The Middle Belt and the Emirates

Particularly, this is the sad reality of repeated gross injustice, discrimination, and lack of equity suffered by the Middle Belt peoples (Ochonu, 2008). The Emirates see the ethnic nationalities within the Middle Belt as subjects not equals. In their view, they are masters while we, should be treated as slaves. Our ancestors did not accept this so also, we (Zaar) do not and will not. We demand equal treatment. We demand equality before the law. We demand justice. We demand freedom. We demand dignity and respect. We demand fairness. We demand to be treated as equals not subjects. We demand the rights to self-realisation and self-actualisation. We demand freedom of religion and faith. This we (Zaar) will continue to demand till God's people say, "*freedom at last*". When injustice from the oppressors becomes a law, resistance from the oppressed is a duty (*Thomas Jefferson's Monticello*). We call on Zaar sons and daughters, lovers of freedom and justice, to rise and be counted. We must

unite as one people, move as one people, speak as one people, and act as one people. We must say no to the oppressor. Let us side with our brothers and sisters to defend the rights and dignity of our land and people.

“We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant.” - Elie Wiesel

Gonto’s Delegation Strategy

“But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. They should always be available to solve the people’s common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace” – Exodus 18:21-23

NLT

In addition, Gonto was a team player. He understood the principles of shared responsibilities and the power of effective delegation. Delegation was one of the strategies adopted by our famous freedom fighter. This leadership strategy involves teaching, coaching, and mentoring. It is a means of not only raising leaders but easing the burden of leadership. *“You are not a successful leader until you have successors”*. It is about sustainability and the continuation of the struggle. It is also a way of shifting attention from one man to others. Our present leaders in the struggle should emulate this leadership style. They should learn to delegate responsibilities. Our leaders must learn to turn their attention away from themselves and allow others to serve and grow in the service.

During his era, we understand that he had delegates or rather representatives from different communities. Delegates from the Zaar Communities and tribes within the Zaar Kingdom. For instance, a village such as Sum, Tapshin, Borshi, Mwari, Kimsi, or Marsin will have a

delegate by the name of “Baba” followed by the name of the person and then the village the person comes from. We can see from the list of delegates below that Gonto did not only unite the Zaar people but non-Zaar-speaking tribes within the Zaar Kingdom. Thus, it would be right to suggest here that Gonto was a unifier.

Delegates, Followers, or Supporters of Gonto Freedom Movement

“Our children may learn about the heroes of the past. Our task is to make ourselves architects of the future” – Jomo Kenyatta

Some of the delegates, followers, or supporters of Gonto freedom movement worthy of mention include but are not limited to the following:

- i. Baba Wakili John Kyauta from Dunga (late – second in command to Baba Gonto),
- ii. Baba Wakili Ali Sumi Mwari from Mwari (late),
- iii. Baba Wakili Iliya Madaki from Mwari (late),
- iv. Baba Wakili Rev. Samaila Banike from Dunga Tafawa Balewa (late),
- v. Baba Wakili Dauda Jondi from Bongah (late),
- vi. Baba Wakili Boyi Bar from Bar (late),
- vii. Baba Wakili Nakwada from Gobbiya Kazar (late),
- viii. Baba Wakili Samu Mallar from Nahuta Mallar (late),
- ix. Baba Wakili Bulus Kushi from Marseng (Lusa) (late),
- x. Baba Wakili Kadiri Manzo from Sum (late),
- xi. Baba Wakili Mailere Kesar from Kesar (late),
- xii. Baba Wakili Mato Borshi from Borshi (late),
- xiii. Baba Wakili Mutashi Danladi from Borshi (late),
- xiv. Baba Wakili Gagara from Gill (late),
- xv. Baba Wakili Yakubu Gida from Gill (late),
- xvi. Baba Wakili Mbaki Dinki from Dinki (late),
- xvii. Baba Wakili Lade Bar from Bar (late),
- xviii. Baba Wakili Marafa Gungu from Gungu (late),
- xix. Baba Wakili Joshua Sarauta Gungu from Gungu (late),
- xx. Baba Wakili Gizo Bogoro from Gill (late),

- xxi. Baba Wakili Magani Marti from Marti (late),
- xxii. Baba Wakili Bugazafi from Sum (late),
- xxiii. Baba Wakili Shagari Bongah from Bongah (late),
- xxiv. Baba Wakili Musa Tarai from Marti (late),
- xxv. Baba Wakili Sarkin Boto Habe from Boto (late),
- xxvi. Baba Wakili Yohanna Gubbiyum Tadnum from Tadnum (late),
- xxvii. Baba Wakili Sambo Bongah from Bongah (late),
- xxviii. Baba Wakili Folmi from Dashem Yelwa Boi (late),
- xxix. Baba Wakili Daniel Ranshigah from Tapshin (late),
- xxx. Baba Wakili Kadmi from Saran Kasa (late),
- xxxi. Baba Wakili Gani Mbutbar from Gill (late),
- xxxii. Baba Wakili Mugana Baraya from Kurum (late),
- xxxiii. Baba Wakili Zhyadi Waddi from Waddi (late),
- xxxiv. Baba Wakili Gurama Tafawa Balewa (late),
- xxxv. Baba Wakili Magaji Tafare from Tafare (late),
- xxxvi. Baba Wakili Gobara Maryam from Maryam Tafawa Balewa (late),
- xxxvii. Baba Wakili Garba Shehu Num from Num (late),
- xxxviii. Baba Wakili Mbabi Nagale Vung from Vung (late),
- xxxix. Baba Wakili Gida Kutaru from Kutaru (late),
- xl. Baba Wakili Pokti Dunga from Dunga (late),
- xli. Baba Wakili Arziki Gizaki from Gizaki (late),
- xlii. Baba Wakili Doba Gari from Gambar Sabonlayi (late),
- xliii. Baba Wakili Godiya Goska Dunga from Dunga (late),
- xliv. Baba Wakili Ishaya Mawurni from Mawurni (late),
- xlv. Baba Wakili Ayuba Sudungma Tadnum from Tadnum (late),
- xlvi. Baba Wakili Midah Boyi Bogoro from Gill (late),
- xlvii. Baba Wakili Maikasuwa Tafare from Tafare (late),
- xlviii. Baba Wakili Dauda Garaje from Dinki (late),
- xliv. Baba Wakili Galadima Bulus from Kundum (late),
- l. Baba Wakili Boyi Zari from Kobbii (late),
- li. Baba Filibus Gaduniya Sum (late),
- lii. Baba Folmi Baraya (late),
- liii. Baba Haruna Mutashi Boi (late),
- liv. Baba Shagari Bongah (late),
- lv. Baba Ryaghan Adamu Bongah (late),
- lvi. Baba Simon Komo Mhrhm (late),

- lvii. Baba Ayuba Gobara Mhrhm (late),
- lviii. Baba Munza Gobbiya (late),
- lix. Baba Rev. Shettima Jatau Tadnum (late),
- lx. Baba Marafa Gungu (late),
- lxi. Baba Daniel Danladi Dunga Puji (late),
- lxii. Baba Dauda Yelwan Sayawa (late),
- lxiii. Baba Musa Maiburedi Tafawa Balewa (late),
- lxiv. Baba Yakubu Gagara Molmol (late),
- lxv. Baba Sarki Bitrus Angwan Waje (late),
- lxvi. Baba Pastor Tambaya Gambar Lere (late),
- lxvii. Baba Dogo Koyi (late),
- lxviii. Baba Bulus Shekara (late),
- lxix. Baba Ishaya Baushe (late),
- lxx. Baba Sati N. Yohanna (first settler Puji Dandi aka Tudun Wada) (late),
- lxxi. Baba Pastor Bulus K. Mwari (alive)

The delegates served as decision-makers on behalf of the community they so represent. One will imagine a congregation of honourable delegates who were sent to the House of Representatives in say Mwari or *Puji* (Tafawa Balewa). It was gathered that there was no permanent meeting place. The delegates will meet from village to village. That is, the meeting of the Congress was from one village or hamlet to another. Another level of the meeting was the Executive Committee (EXCO). The EXCO meetings would involve a few members meeting and deliberating on executive matters. There used to be three (3) different places of meeting. They were namely Gonto's residence in Mwari, Rafin Gimba *Puji*, and Nahuta (around COCIN Bible School) *Puji*. Rafin Gimba and Nahuta are in Mhrhm (Maryam) – a village having the largest land mass in *Puji*. On special occasions, COCIN Centre *Puji* was used as a meeting place to discuss classified issues. All meetings at *Puji* were done with a high sense of caution to avoid arbitrary arrest and possible detention of persons by then government officials. For instance, Baba Gonto and his colleagues were multiple times arrested and detained by Alhaji Adamu “Tafawa

Balewa” for resisting the imposition of Fulani appointed District Head of Lere District by the feudal Bauchi Emirate.

Overall, the pertain of the meeting was that whatsoever the House (the Congress) decided becomes morally binding on all the people. The representatives will convey the message to the people in their respective communities. In this way, the delegates served as a go-between linking the people to the central leadership. Hence, vital information and resolutions arrived at meetings and were conveyed to the people. The delegates are leaders of the people who will pursue the interests and wishes of their people during meetings. For the people to have maximum benefits from such a level of representation, the delegates must be of noble and trustable character. They must be honest, selfless, and not greedy about money or material possessions. These virtues were the minimum requirements for the office of a delegate. In this way, Gonto was able to lead people from different communities who were bonded by a sense of brotherhood, culture, common destiny, and love for justice and freedom.

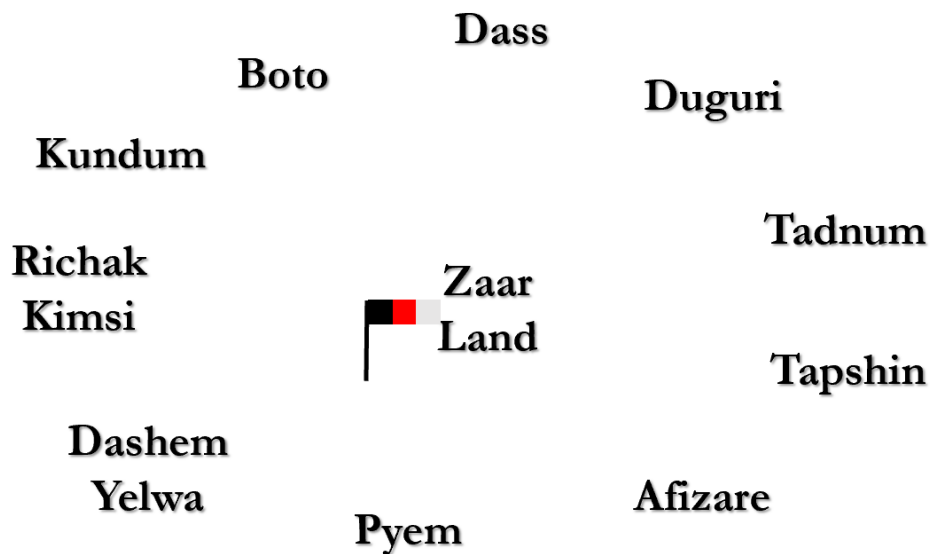


Figure 5. Gonto networking with neighbouring communities

Going by the distribution of delegates not only in Zaar Land but across communities neighbouring our borders, one can see the leadership prowess of Gonto. Gonto understood the power of networking with neighbouring communities with shared cultures and traditions to advocate for justice, freedom, and equity. Recall that Gonto worked with four (4) others from different ethnic nationalities to campaign for self-realisation,

self-actualisation, and self-determination. Because of this, Figure 5 shows the distribution of communities neighbouring Zaar Land that partnered with Gonto for the cause of their people. Thus, this leadership quality confirms Gonto was a unifier.

Balgham (Zauren) Baba Gonto

“Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children” – Amilcar Cabral

By 1940, some Zaar literates became patriotic and politically conscious in local and regional affairs. They started agitation for indigenous District Head. They resisted the recolonisation agenda by the Bauchi Emirate through the imposition of rulers. Furthermore, in 1948, the Zaar Traditional Rulers Council demanded from the Bauchi Emirate that an indigene be appointed as the District Head of Lere District. This was because the Bauchi Emirate, against the wishes of the indigenes, imposed a non-Zaar Muslim as the District Head. Their objection to the imposition of rulers with no connection to their cultures and traditions angered the Bauchi Emirate. As a result, the Bauchi Emirate arrested, detained, and imprisoned those chiefs. The chiefs simply refused to bow to Islamic expansionism and domination agenda. From a credible source, the names of the chiefs include the following:

- i. Gung Salman of Gill (late),
- ii. Gung Yake Vodhm Fyali of Mwari (late),
- iii. Gung Shehu Salman of Num (late),
- iv. Gung Bako Dalhatu of Walngghi (late)
- v. Gung Saramayo of Lhwong (late)

Because any chief who challenges the “authority” of the Bauchi Emirate was dethroned, Gonto urged the traditional chiefs to concentrate on the Chieftaincy Affairs Administration. It was at that point that Gonto picked up the mantle of leadership of the movement for the freedom of the Zaar people. Thus, Gonto pioneered a coordinated Zaar Struggle for self-

realisation, self-determination, and self-emancipation. Later, people who believed in Gonto's vision became attracted to the Zaar Struggle and voluntarily supported the movement. No wonder, people, regardless of age or lineage always make positive reference to Gonto on the Zaar Struggle. It was arguably understood that the movement later metamorphosed to what is now known as "*Balgham Gonto*".

After the passing to glory of Gonto, of blessed memory, it was gathered that members of Balgham Gonto decided to fill in the leadership vacuum created by his demise. To do this, they conducted an election to elect one of them to lead the leadership body. Thus, the leader was referred to as the Chairman. Arguably, the election result revealed that Baba Dauda Jondi (late) was the Chairman-elect. A good number of Zaar stakeholders sent congratulatory messages to Baba Dauda Jondi (late) including the then ZDA National President Pharm. B. B. Bukar. However, a few stakeholders who did not agree with the election result insisted that Baba Boyi Bar (late) who had been the acting Wakili of the Balgham Gonto, should continue as the leader. This later metamorphosed to Baba Boyi Bar as the Chairman of the Balgham Gonto.

Members of Balgham Gonto include but are not limited to:

- i. Baba Peter Gonto Mwari (late),
- ii. Baba Wakili John Kyauta Banike from Dunga (late – second in command to Baba Gonto),
- iii. Baba Iliya Madaki Kutaru (late),
- iv. Baba Rev. Samaila Banike (late),
- v. Baba Dauda Jondi (late),
- vi. Baba Arziki Gizaki (late),
- vii. Baba Wakili Boyi Bar (late),
- viii. Baba Wakili Nakwada (late),
- ix. Baba Wakili Samu Mallar (late),
- x. Baba Bulus Kushi Marseng (late),
- xi. Baba Kadiri Manzo (late),
- xii. Baba Garba Vurmi (late),
- xiii. Baba Rev. Iliya Mailafiya (late),
- xiv. Baba Rev. Yashiwa Dare Datsan Borshi (late),

- xv. Baba Rev. Shattima Sukumun (from Tadnum – late),
- xvi. Baba Baraya Mugana (late),
- xvii. Baba Ayuba Daji Badagari (late),
- xviii. Baba Yakubu Molmol (late),
- xix. Baba Rev. Iliya Zaman,
- xx. Baba Samaila Alhassan Walngi,
- xxi. Baba Sgt. Ayuba Ibrahim Borshi,
- xxii. Baba Bitrus Gwamna,
- xxiii. Baba Baraya Kaura Borshi (late)
- xxiv. Baba John Zabe Minigwom Borshi (late),
- xxv. Baba Istifanus Rabo,
- xxvi. Baba Bitrus Kadmi (late),
- xxvii. Baba Bako Dogha Kimsi (late),
- xxviii. Baba Daniel Ramshaka Tapshin (late),
- xxix. Baba Marafa Gungu (late),
- xxx. Baba Joshua Maikasuwa Gungu (late),
- xxxi. Baba Daniel Danladi Bar (late),
- xxxii. Baba Rev. Ishaku Pico (late),
- xxxiii. Baba Rev. Nehemiah Kundali Dirbi (late),
- xxxiv. Baba Rev. Nehemiah Jondi Mallar (late),
- xxxv. Baba Wakili Mato Borshi (late),
- xxxvi. Baba Mutashi Sarki Danladi Datsan Borshi (late),
- xxxvii. Baba Sarkin Kijim from Kimsi (late),
- xxxviii. Baba Madaki Folmi (late),
- xxxix. Baba Jondi Kadiri from Kwablang Marseng,
 - xl. Baba Rev. Mugana Dazai from Mallar,
 - xli. Mr. Yabra Y. Isa (Secretary).

“Gotoism” Philosophy Summarised

- i. A Zaar by blood and by character
- ii. A Christian when he began to champion the Zaar Struggle
- iii. A man of faith and strong conviction
- iv. Had good knowledge and understanding of the Holy Bible
- v. Lover of his people

- vi. Man of peace
- vii. Man of few but powerful words
- viii. Fearless
- ix. Had mastered contentment
- x. Wisdom
- xi. Consistent
- xii. Resilient
- xiii. Trustable and dependable
- xiv. Visionary
- xv. Prophetic
- xvi. Not afraid to walk alone if necessary
- xvii. Doggedness
- xviii. Giver
- xix. Not greedy for money or material wealth whatsoever
- xx. Often speaks in parable
- xxi. Man of great patience
- xxii. Tolerance
- xxiii. Hospitable

Zaar Values

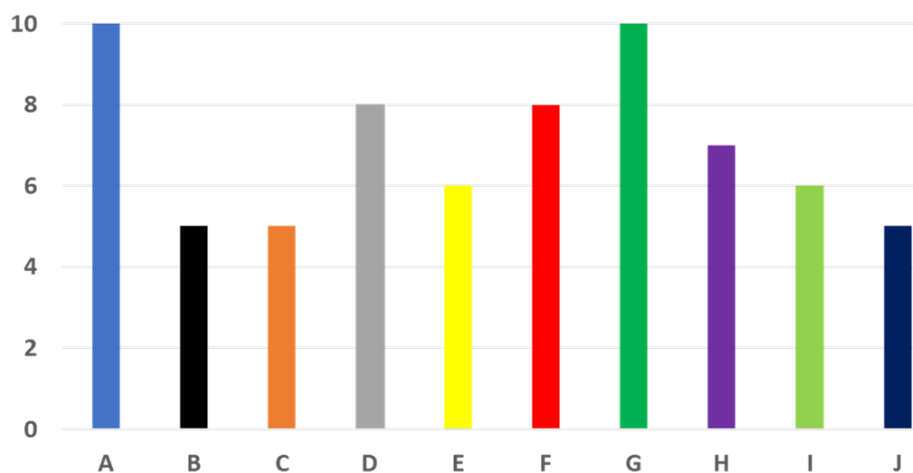
Beside BGLM, it is important to explore the Zaar Values. Zaar Values are those moral principles that define who we are. We, the Zaar people, are known with specific inherent tendencies as we relate among ourselves and others. This we have seen and learned from our forebears. We cannot succeed in the struggle if we are not guided by the Zaar Values. Figure 3 is in strong agreement with the values that would be analysed in this section. Those who are in or aspire to join the Zaar Struggle for justice, equity, fairness, and self-determination should employ and deploy the values as well.

“If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom, and the irony of it is that if it is comfort or money that it values more, it will lose that too.” – W.

Somerset Maugham

To achieve this feat, a survey was conducted in 2021 to choose from a list of sixteen (16) values suggested by a few Zaar patriots. The sixteen (16) Zaar Values administered to the twenty-one (21) Zaar respondents were as follows:

- i. Truth,
- ii. Integrity,
- iii. Justice,
- iv. Courage,
- v. Mutual respect,
- vi. Discipline,
- vii. Love,
- viii. Unity,
- ix. Peaceful coexistence,
- x. Self-reliance,
- xi. Liberation through educational pursuit,
- xii. Hard work,
- xiii. Resilience,
- xiv. Patriotism,
- xv. National consciousness, and
- xvi. Fear of God.



Legend

A – Love, B – Truth, C – Integrity, D – Justice, E – Unity, F – Discipline,
 G – Fear of God, H – Hard Work, I – Mutual Respect, J – Courage

Figure 6. Analysis of data from a questionnaire of a list of 21 Zaar Values administered to 11 Zaar respondents to show the most preferred Zaar Values. The letters A to J on the horizontal axis are the most preferred Zaar Values with their meaning indicated by the legend.

The survey was administered in the form of a questionnaire to twenty-one (21) respondents of Zaar origin. We understand that there are many moral values that are so dear to the Zaar people. However, it becomes hard to narrow down to a few lists of values that the next generation could easily relate to. We do not claim that this is a complete or perfect list of Zaar Values. Nonetheless, we attempted to reduce the numbers to ten (10) in line with the Ten (10) Commandments as indicated in Figure 6.

Someone might ask, why the Ten (10) Commandments? We all know that Zaar people are predominantly of the Christian faith. If our people are united based on common cultural heritage, tradition, history, language, geographical space, and religion, it is proper to use the Ten (10) Commandments which are core to the Christian faith as a basis for the choice of ten (10) Zaar Values. We can remember, advocate, and champion the Zaar Values using acronym generated from the letters. For example, the acronym “**JDUMFLITCH**” or “**JFTUMCHILD**”.

Findings

“Leadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another.” -John C. Maxwell

- i. Gonto was a Zaar personified.
- ii. Gonto was a man of faith in words and deeds.
- iii. He was strong and courageous.
- iv. Selfless and sacrificial.
- v. Man of wisdom and uncommon understanding.
- vi. Visionary leader.
- vii. Unifier and lover of Zaar.
- viii. Hated injustice and marginalisation against his kith and kin.
- ix. Spoke truth to power regardless of the consequences.
- x. Understood the power of delegation.
- xi. A teacher and mentor to upcoming leaders or freedom fighters.
- xii. Did not compromise even when others that started with him did so.
- xiii. A socio-political leader who served as a rallying point for the Zaar Struggle.

- xiv. Fought against Islamic expansionism agenda.
- xv. Prophetic in his role as a beacon of hope and inspiration.
- xvi. Was an inspiration to many, including other tribes.
- xvii. Man of few words but a strong character.
- xviii. Effective communicator.
- xix. A freedom fighter whose legacy is worthy of emulation.
- xx. Symbol of Zaar nationalistic struggle.
- xxi. Lived a fulfilled life.
- xxii. Did not betray his people.
- xxiii. An embodiment of purity, honour, and dignity.
- xxiv. BGLM is recommended to serve as a minimum requirement for any Zaar leadership position.
- xxv. Liberation of the Zaar people implies the liberation of neighbouring tribes.
- xxvi. Leadership demands humility and patience.
- xxvii. Zaar Values have a direct link to BGLM.
- xxviii. We should promote BGLM along with the Zaar Values.
- xxix. The Zaar Struggle is a continuous process until we all enter the Promised Land.
- xxx. Those who joined and/are thinking of joining the Zaar Struggle must do so without looking for any form of recognition or compensation.
- xxxi. Leadership is a call to sacrificial service, duty, and accountability.
- xxxii. Leadership is all about the people and the interests of the Land.
- xxxiii. A leader must not be a lover of money or wealth.
- xxxiv. Balgham Gonto was created to champion the cause of the Zaar Struggle by Gonto and his allies.
- xxxv. The 1991 crisis was a defining moment in Zaar's history for development and self-determination.
- xxxvi. Our enemies betrayed, abused, disrespected, oppressed, victimised, maltreated, and dehumanised Zaar people for over a period of two (2) centuries.
- xxxvii. The Sokoto Caliphate, the Bauchi Emirate, and the Bauchi State Government are one and the same. They share the same agenda, the same mission, and the same vision.

- xxxviii. Their agenda is to establish Islam, God forbid, through divide and rule and weaponisation of poverty.
- xxxix. Right or wrong, the demands of Zaar people were turned down because we rejected Islam. We can see that our major challenge in the Land is the rejection of Islam. We can overcome this challenge through unity of the Church. Hence, our (Zaar) Church leaders must show leadership by standing on the truth and rejecting greed and love of money.
- xl. Therefore, we must unite as one people, move as one people, speak as one people, and act as one people.
- xli. We do not seem to have a purposeful symbiotic union between the generation in power and the generation to be in power. This creates a leadership gap in the Land. To me, one of our (Zaar) problems as a people is leadership related. Gonto mentored future leaders but, in our time, mentoring of future leaders is not on our list of priorities.

“We cannot transfer (Zaar) values to leaders of tomorrow without purposefully engaging with and mentoring them today”. – Dr. Habila Mormi John.

Conclusion

Overall, the **Baba Gonto Leadership Model (BGLM)** was partly examined as indicated in Figure 3. The contribution explored the features of the **BGLM** and the **Zaar Values** (Figure 6) with the sole purpose of learning from Gonto's exemplary leadership legacy and replicating in our contemporary society. The acronyms "**JDUMFLITCH**" and "**JFTUMCHILD**" were proposed to support us remember, advocate, and champion the **Zaar Values**. Although one might argue that the Model might be outdated or would fall short of such a wide paradigm shift in culture, tradition, politics, economy, and society, the fact remains that we are still Zaar who are unique in terms of our cultural heritage, tradition, identity, and values. Our culture is our identity; our identity is our heritage, which encompasses our values, worldviews, and beliefs. If it is true that a leopard cannot change its spots, it then implies that it is also true Zaar cannot change their identity. These cultures, traditions, beliefs, and values define who we are and what we stand for as a people. They should guide our (Zaar) struggle.

Our present leaders could explore the **BGLM** potentials and deploy the same as a compass to navigate the Zaar Struggle. We must learn from the wisdom of those who were in the struggle yesterday to champion today's struggle so that we can successfully handover the baton of the struggle to the leaders of tomorrow. We must learn to serve our people with humility, courage, and honour. We must learn to recognise that together we are stronger. We must learn to unify all the tribes within the Zaar Kingdom. *We must realise that our freedom is in their freedom. We must acknowledge that we are not free until every one of us is free.* We must learn to delegate responsibilities to those who have been with us in the struggle. We cannot truncate the struggle midway. We cannot hand over the wrong baton. We cannot hand over the baton to the wrong people. *"We cannot compromise the (Zaar) struggle in our time because those who were involved in the struggle yesterday did not.* – Dr. Habila Mormi John. We must sustain the tempo of the struggle as it were yesterday. *"We must continue with the (Zaar) struggle until there comes a day and time when our people are emancipated and emancipated indeed".* – Dr. Habila Mormi John

Recommendations

- i. We should intentionally promote and protect the unity of Zaar people. Our gatherings can serve as platforms to advance one united indivisible Zaar Nation.
- ii. Using our traditional, cultural, political, educational, social, and religious institutions as purveyors of unity, peace, and progress.
- iii. We should form strategic alliance with our brothers and sisters who share the same ideology with us in Plateau State and the Middle Belt for peaceful coexistence, unity, security, prosperity, and other areas of mutual benefits.
- iv. Integrating and incorporating the BGLM and the Zaar Values into Zaar leadership documents.
- v. Develop a guiding document called “**The Zaar Agenda**”. The BGLM and the Zaar Values might be useful. The Holy Scriptures should inspire the development of The Zaar Agenda. For example, the Holy Scriptures was used to draft the American Constitution and the British Constitution.
- vi. The Zaar Agenda can serve as a guiding document from generation to generation.
- vii. Gonto mentored future leaders to continue with the struggle. Hence, leaders (elders) should purposefully mentor future leaders and build networks. By this, we can sustain and continue with the struggle and pass (Zaar) values from one generation to another.
- viii. Return all the names of our hamlets, villages, or districts, etc. to their original (Zaar) names. For example, use a quality signboard at the entrance and exit of the community for the names. This was proposed by Dr. Bukata R. Adamu of blessed memory.
- ix. Removing Zaar Land from Bauchi State and merging with Plateau State as advocated by Dr. Bukata R. Adamu (late) and others.
- x. Return all Zaar traditional titles to Zaar language only. The use of Hausa language and the likes is an adulteration and pollution of our traditional/cultural titles.
- xi. Encourage the use of Zaar in naming our children even if there are other names used in the naming. For example, biblical names, etc.

- xii. Produce an accurate map of Zaar Land using modern geodetic mapping equipment. We can use GPS/smart phones and other relevant devices to achieve this feat. Our professionals in this field can lead the project.
- xiii. Build Zaar Hall of Fame or Zaar Resource Centre to house the full names of Zaar heroes or heroines to remember and honour their contributions to Zaar Land. For example, as it is used in the Book of Numbers, The Holocaust Remembrance Centre Israel, etc.

Written and compiled on this day of Sunday 13 of August 2023 at 23:30 BST by Dr. Habila Mormi John (jonnymormiv@yahoo.com).

The contribution was **reviewed** by Mrs. Chongdah Mormi Habila, Prince Johnson Balewa, Mr. Silas Magani, Dr. Sanda Nehemiah Yakubu, Dr. Dauda Ishaya, Mr. John Emmanuel Rica, Mr. Uriah Daniel David, Mr. Christopher John Molmol, Mr. Amos Magaji Yakubu, Mr. Elijah Simon

Inspired by Zaar Patriots.

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Appendix 1

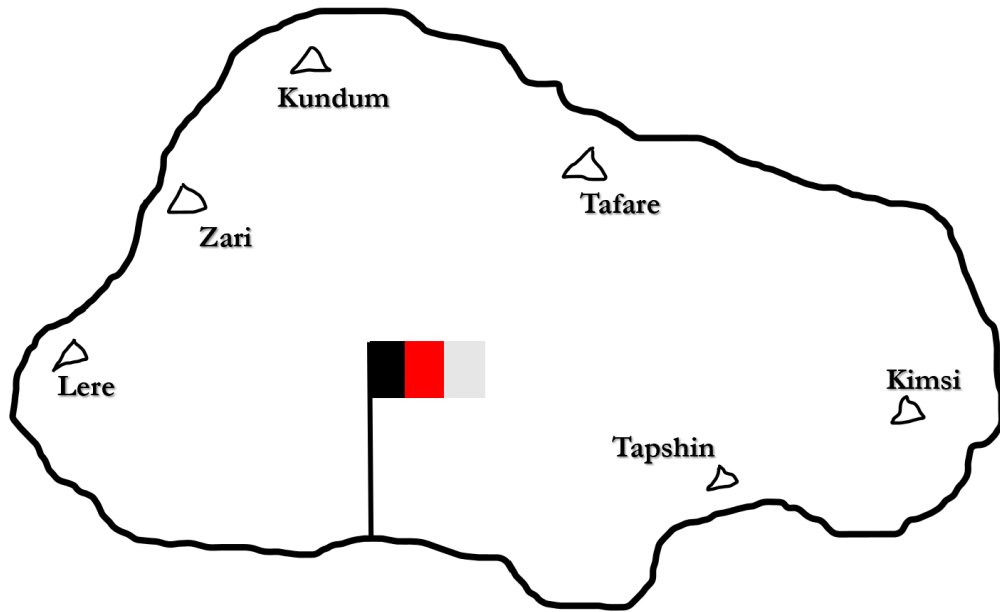


Figure 7. Approximate Map of Zaar Land

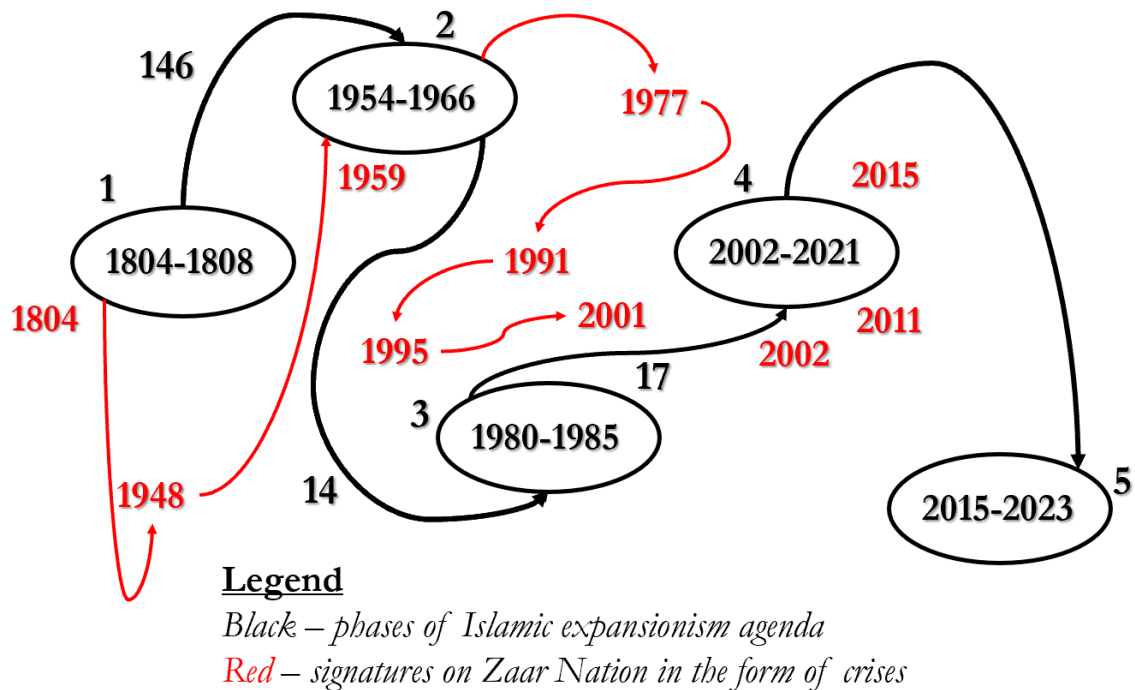


Figure 8. Phases of Islamic expansionism in Nigeria carried out in the form of jihad and the corresponding signatures on Zaar Nation

Figure 8 shows the crises of 1804, 1948, 1959, 1977, 1991, 1995, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2015 (Nmah and Amanambu, 2017; Logams, 1985, 1987; Wadam, 2014).