



JAYE GASKIA @ 60
**COMMEMORATIVE
PROGRAMME &
LEGACY BOOK**

A LIFE OF IDEAS, STRUGGLE,
SERVICE & TRANSFORMATION

IN HONOUR OF

**Mr Jaye
Gaskia**

LECTURE • VISIT TO ORPHANAGE • BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

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SECTION ONE ***THE COMMEMORATION***

The Occasion, Purpose and Programme

WELCOME MESSAGE

Celebrating a Life. Preserving a Legacy. Inspiring the Future.

It is with great joy and a deep sense of appreciation that we welcome you to Jaye @ 60, a celebration of the life, journey, ideas, relationships, service and continuing legacy of Comrade Jaye Gaskia as he marks his 60th birthday.

Sixty years is an important milestone. Yet, this commemoration is about much more than counting the years of a life. It is an opportunity to look back at a journey shaped by ideas and conviction; struggle and organising; friendship and comradeship; service and sacrifice; learning and reflection; and an enduring commitment to building a more just, democratic, peaceful and humane society.

Across different periods of his life, Jaye's journey has intersected with student activism, the labour and popular movements, struggles for democracy and active citizenship, civil society, environmental and Niger Delta struggles, development practice, governance and public policy, electoral politics, peacebuilding, human security, community resilience and the prevention of violent extremism. Although the platforms and instruments have changed over time, a common thread has remained: a belief in the agency of people, the importance of organisation and the possibility of social transformation.

But no life is made by public work alone.

Jaye @ 60 is equally a celebration of the son, brother, husband, father, friend, comrade, colleague, mentor and fellow traveller behind the public engagements. It celebrates the relationships, conversations, disagreements, friendships, music, books, experiences, places and people that have accompanied and shaped the journey.

This is why the commemoration has been conceived not simply as a birthday celebration, but as a Legacy Initiative.

Across the activities of 20th, 22nd and 23rd August 2026, we are creating spaces not only to celebrate Jaye, but also to engage the ideas and struggles to which much of his life has been devoted. The Legacy Lecture and Symposium provides a platform for conversations around Active Citizenship, Social Movements and

the Future of Democracy in Nigeria; the community outreach reflects the values of solidarity, service and our shared humanity; while the Grand Birthday Celebration brings together family, friends, comrades, colleagues and associates to celebrate the person and the relationships behind the journey.

The legacy, however, must extend beyond these three days.

Through the Jaye Gaskia Library, his writings, speeches, reflections and public interventions are being preserved for future generations. Through the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy and Mentorship Programme, experience and knowledge will be connected deliberately with younger generations of active citizens, organisers, leaders and change-makers.

This Commemorative Programme & Legacy Book is itself part of that effort.

Within these pages are not only the programmes of the Jaye @ 60 events, but fragments of a much larger story: photographs chronicling different stages of the journey; milestones and memories; tributes from those who have shared parts of the road with him; reflections engaging his ideas, work and contribution; and the story of places and communities that formed part of that journey, including 13 Agudama.

We have also sought to reveal something of the intellectual, cultural and human influences behind the activist through Jaye's Top 60 Legacy Selections — books and recommended readings, songs and music, historical and inspirational figures, and iconic sports personalities. Together, they provide another window into the ideas, personalities, sounds, experiences and sources of inspiration that have accompanied six decades of life.

The voices gathered in the Tributes and Reflections remind us of another important truth: legacy is not created by one person alone. It is created through relationships. It lives in the people we encounter, the organisations we help build, the ideas we share, the struggles we participate in, the people we mentor, and the institutions and possibilities we leave behind.

Jaye @ 60 therefore provides an opportunity not simply to ask, “What has Jaye done?”, but to engage a more important set of questions:

What can we learn from the journey? What remains unfinished? What must be preserved? What must change? And what must the next generation take forward?

As you participate in the events and journey through the pages of this commemorative book, we invite you to celebrate, remember, reflect, reconnect and imagine.

We thank the family, friends, comrades, colleagues, organisations, contributors, partners, supporters, volunteers and members of the various planning teams whose generosity, memories, photographs, reflections, tributes, time and resources have made this commemoration possible.

Above all, we thank everyone who has walked some part of this sixty-year journey with Jaye — in the family home, in classrooms and campuses, on the streets, in movements and communities, in workplaces and organisations, in moments of struggle and disagreement, and in the enduring bonds of friendship and comradeship.

Welcome to Jaye @ 60.

Welcome to a celebration of ideas, struggle, service and transformation.

Welcome to a conversation between generations.

And welcome to the beginning of what we hope will become an enduring legacy.

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

Jaye @ 60 Planning Committee

August 2026

ABOUT JAYE @ 60

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

Jaye @ 60 is more than a celebration of the 60th birthday of Comrade Jaye Gaskia on 23 August 2026. It is a deliberate effort to celebrate a life, document a journey, preserve a body of ideas and experiences, recognise the people and movements that have shaped that journey, and create platforms through which its lessons can be passed on to future generations.



For more than four decades, Jaye's journey has moved through student activism, pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military struggles, labour and popular movements, environmental and climate justice, civil society and development practice, governance and public policy, electoral politics, peacebuilding, human security, community resilience and the prevention of violent extremism. Across these different spaces, the forms of engagement have evolved, but the underlying commitment has remained: social justice, active citizenship, democratic participation, human dignity and the transformative power of organised people.

Jaye @ 60 therefore provides an opportunity not simply to look back at what one individual has done, but to reflect on the ideas, movements, relationships, institutions, struggles and historical moments through which his journey has unfolded. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the family, friends, comrades, colleagues, organisations and communities who have walked different parts of that journey with him.

The commemoration is built around three interconnected days of activities. On Thursday, 20 August 2026, the Jaye @ 60 Legacy Lecture & Symposium, under the theme “Active Citizenship, Social Movements, and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria,” provides a platform for reflection and intergenerational dialogue, alongside the presentation of key legacy initiatives. On Saturday, 22 August, attention turns to community outreach and service, reflecting the values of solidarity, compassion and shared humanity. The activities culminate on Sunday, 23 August, with the Grand 60th Birthday Celebration, bringing together family, friends, comrades, colleagues and associates to celebrate Jaye the person as much as Jaye the public figure.

But the ambition of Jaye @ 60 deliberately extends beyond these three days.

At its heart is the Jaye @ 60 Legacy Initiative—an effort to convert the occasion of a birthday into enduring platforms for documentation, learning, mentorship, leadership development and social transformation. This includes the Jaye Gaskia Library and publication programme, through which his writings, speeches, reflections and public interventions are being preserved; and the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy and Mentorship Programme, designed to connect accumulated knowledge and experience with emerging generations of active citizens, organisers, leaders and change-makers.

The Jaye @ 60 Commemorative Programme & Legacy Book is itself part of this legacy-building process. Beyond serving as a guide to the events, it brings together Jaye's biographical journey, a pictorial timeline, major milestones, tributes, reflections and memories from those who have known and worked with him. It also documents important people, places and relationships associated with his journey.

The commemorative project further looks beyond the formal record of activism and professional work through Jaye's Top 60 Selections—60 books and recommended readings, 60 songs and music tracks, 60 historical and inspirational figures, and 60 iconic sports personalities. Together, these collections provide a more personal window into the books, people, ideas, sounds, interests and sources of inspiration that have accompanied the journey.

Ultimately, Jaye @ 60 is as much about the future as it is about the past. It asks what four decades of activism, organising, professional practice, writing, institution building and engagement with Nigeria's changing political and social realities can teach another generation. It asks what should be preserved, what should be questioned, what remains unfinished, and what new forms of organisation, leadership and citizenship will be required for the struggles ahead.

It is therefore a celebration of life and relationships, but also of ideas and movements; a moment for memory, but also for reflection; an occasion for gratitude, but equally an invitation to continue building.

Sixty years provides the occasion to look back. The greater purpose is to ensure that the ideas, experiences, relationships and lessons accumulated along the journey continue to inspire action long after the celebration is over.

JAYE @ 60

A Life of Ideas, Struggle, Service and Transformation

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

THE JAYE @ 60 LEGACY INITIATIVE

From Commemoration to Continuity

The Jaye @ 60 Legacy Initiative is the enduring dimension of the commemoration of Comrade Jaye Gaskia's 60th birthday. It is founded on a simple conviction: while a birthday is an important moment to celebrate a life, the greater opportunity lies in preserving the ideas, experiences, relationships and lessons of that life and creating platforms through which they can continue to contribute to society and future generations.



Jaye's journey across more than four decades has traversed student activism, pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military struggles, labour and popular movements, environmental and climate justice, civil society and development practice, governance and public policy, electoral politics, peacebuilding, human security, community resilience and the prevention of violent extremism. The Legacy Initiative seeks to document this journey, but it is not intended merely as an archive of the past. Its purpose is to turn accumulated experience into a living resource for learning, leadership, active citizenship, movement building and social transformation.

At its core, therefore, the Initiative connects three dimensions of legacy: preserving the past, engaging the present and investing in the future.

Preserving the Ideas and Intellectual Legacy

A major pillar of the Initiative is the Jaye Gaskia Library and Publication Programme, conceived to identify, organise, preserve and make accessible Jaye's writings, speeches, lectures, policy interventions, interviews, reflections and other intellectual contributions accumulated over several decades.

The publication of The Essential Jaye Gaskia Reader represents an important first step in this process. Rather than attempting to compress an extensive body of work into a single publication, the Library provides an architecture through which additional thematic collections, archival materials and future writings can subsequently be published.

Over time, the ambition is to develop both a physical and digital archive, preserving not only published writings but also photographs, correspondence, movement documents, speeches, campaign materials, interviews, audiovisual recordings and other materials that illuminate the movements, organisations, struggles and historical periods through which the journey unfolded.

Documenting a Life Through People, Places and Memories

Legacy is not contained in writings alone. It also resides in relationships, shared experiences and collective memory.

The Jaye @ 60 documentation project therefore brings together tributes and reflections from family members, friends, comrades, colleagues, activists, development practitioners, associates, mentees and others who have encountered Jaye at different stages of his life.

The Jaye @ 60 Commemorative Programme & Legacy Book serves as one repository for these voices. Through photographs, memories, reflections, biographical material and a chronology of major milestones, it seeks to preserve perspectives that may otherwise disappear with time.

This documentation also recognises the importance of places and spaces in shaping movements and people. Locations such as 13 Agudama, and other significant sites associated with organising, debate, friendship and collective action, form part of the social history that the Initiative seeks to preserve.

Building the Next Generation

Perhaps the most forward-looking expression of the Legacy Initiative is the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy.

The Academy is conceived not as a monument to an individual, but as a platform for developing the capacities of emerging generations of active citizens, organisers, movement builders, development practitioners and transformative leaders.

Its areas of engagement will include Active Citizenship, Leadership Development, Organising and Mobilisation, Governance and Policy Engagement, and Social Transformation.

Learning can be delivered through leadership programmes, seminars, boot camps, digital learning, communities of practice, fellowships, exchanges, conversations with experienced practitioners and other forms of experiential and intergenerational learning.

Mentorship and Intergenerational Exchange

The Mentorship Programme will operate as a flagship component of the Leadership & Social Transformation Academy.

It reflects a central principle of the Legacy Initiative: experience becomes more valuable when it can be shared, interrogated and transmitted.

The intention is therefore not simply for younger people to learn about Jaye's generation, but to create structured opportunities for emerging leaders to interact with people who have accumulated experience across movements, civil society, labour, governance, development, environmental justice, peacebuilding and other fields.

In this way, mentorship becomes a two-way, intergenerational conversation—connecting experience with new ideas, historical memory with contemporary realities, and lessons from previous struggles with the challenges facing a new generation.

The Legacy Lecture & Symposium

The Jaye @ 60 Legacy Lecture & Symposium provides the Initiative with an intellectual and public-conversation platform.

The inaugural edition, under the theme “Active Citizenship, Social Movements, and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria,” uses the occasion of Jaye's 60th birthday to engage questions that extend far beyond the individual being celebrated.

The longer-term opportunity is for the Legacy Lecture to become a platform for continuing conversations around democracy, citizenship, movements, governance, social justice, human security, leadership and social transformation—bringing together activists, academics, practitioners, policymakers and younger generations.

The Legacy Collections

The Initiative also recognises that intellectual and personal formation occurs beyond formal politics and professional work.

The Jaye @ 60 Legacy Collections therefore provide a more personal and cultural window into the journey through:

- ◆ 60 Books and Recommended Readings
- ◆ 60 Songs and Music Tracks
- ◆ 60 Historical and Inspirational Figures
- ◆ 60 Iconic Sports Personalities

These collections are not intended merely as lists. They can become resources for learning and discovery, accompanied by short explanations of why particular books, people, songs or personalities matter and what lessons future generations might draw from them.

A Living Legacy

The long-term value of the Jaye @ 60 Legacy Initiative will ultimately be determined not by what is launched during the birthday celebrations, but by what continues afterwards.

Its success should therefore be measured by whether writings and archives continue to be preserved; whether new publications emerge; whether young people are mentored; whether the Academy develops into a sustainable platform; whether conversations begun through the Legacy Lecture continue; and whether accumulated experience is transformed into knowledge that others can use.

The Initiative is therefore deliberately conceived as open-ended and evolving. Jaye's 60th birthday provides the point of departure, not the conclusion.

It transforms a personal milestone into an opportunity for documentation, preservation, intergenerational learning, leadership development and institution building.

It asks us to move beyond celebrating what has been achieved towards considering what can still be built.

And it rests on a proposition that captures the spirit of the entire commemoration:

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.



PROGRAMME OF **LEGACY EVENTS**

20th - 23rd August 2026

20th August: Legacy Lecture & Symposium,
Book Launch and Academy Launch

22nd August: Community Outreach & Orphanage Visit

23rd August: Grand 60th Birthday Celebration



The Jaye Gaskia Legacy Lecture 2026

THEME:

**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS, AND THE FUTURE
OF DEMOCRACY**

Sub-Theme: From Struggle to Systems:
Building the Next Generation of
Transformative Leaders.

**THURS 20TH
AUGUST 2026**

9AM

AT TOP RANK GALAXY HOTEL, JABI, ABUJA

LEGACY LECTURE • SYMPOSIUM • BOOK LAUNCH • ACADEMY UNVEILING

JAYE @ 60 EVENT PROGRAMME

Legacy Lecture, Symposium,
Book Launch & Academy Unveiling

Thursday, 20 August 2026

@Top Rank Galaxy Hotel, Jabi, Abuja

TIME

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

9:00 – 9:05 a.m.

9:05 – 9:10 a.m.

9:10 – 9:20 a.m.

9:20 – 9:30 a.m.

9:30 – 9:45 a.m.

9:45 – 10:00 a.m.

10:00 – 10:35 a.m.

10:35 – 10:50 a.m.

10:50 – 11:20 a.m.

11:20 – 12:05 a.m.

12:05 – 12:15 a.m.

12:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

1:00 – 1:20 p.m.

1:20 – 1:50 p.m.

1:50 – 2:15 p.m.

2:15 – 2:25 p.m.

2:25 – 2:30 p.m.

PROGRAMME

Registration, Accreditation & Arrival

Formal Opening

Creative Presentation

Welcome Address

Goodwill Messages

Legacy Presentation - Jaye Gaskia:
A Life of Ideas, Struggle, Service and
Transformation

Chairperson's Opening Remarks

KEYNOTE LECTURE - Active Citizenship, Social
Movements, and the Future of Democracy in
Nigeria

Keynote Responses

Tea Break

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL - Citizenship, State and
Society: Rebuilding Trust and Democratic
Accountability

Creative Interlude & Transition - Voices of
Struggle, Voices of Hope

MOVEMENT-BUILDING PANEL - Organising for
Change: Lessons from Labour, Student and Civil
Society Movements

Audience Dialogue - The Future We Must Build

BOOK LAUNCH - Jaye Gaskia @ 60
Commemorative Publication

ACADEMY LAUNCH - Jaye Gaskia Leadership
& Social Transformation Academy

Closing Session - The Jaye @ 60 Declaration
on Active Citizenship and Democratic Renewal

Vote of Thanks & Closing 2:00 p.m. Lunch,

PROGRAMME DURATION: 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.



60TH Grand

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION &
THANKS GIVING SERVICE *of*

MR JAIYE GASKIA

SUN. 23RD AUGUST 2026

1PM

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Celebrating Jaye Gaskia [Ayodeji Ajayeoba]@60

"60 Years of Grace & Glory"

- 1 **Arrival of Guests / Red carpet - photographs and informal reunion**
Welcome and seating of guests.
- 2 **Opening Prayers**
- 3 **Welcome Address**
Mc/ Jaye @60 planning committee
- 4 **Grand entrance of the celebrant**
- 5 **Testimonies and Tributes**
Family, Friends & Well-wishers_
Video slides and recorded messages
"A life that has touched many"
- 6 **Cutting of the Cake**
Prayers for
- 7 **Birthday Toast**
To 60 years and many more
- 8 **Fun Games/Trivia about the celebrant**
- 9 **Refreshments**
Food and drinks will be served_
- 10 **Dance of the Celebrant**
Honoring our Diamond celebrant
- 11 **Dance! Dance!! Dance!!!**
- 12 **Vote of thanks**
- 13 **Closing prayers**

*Let the music play Celebration time!
Till Mama's call*

SECTION TWO

THE MAN AND THE JOURNEY

A Life of Ideas, Struggle, Service and Transformation

WHO IS COMRADE JAYE GASKIA?

As we journey towards Jaye @ 60, many friends, comrades, colleagues and associates joining the commemoration have asked a simple question:

“Who is Comrade Jaye Gaskia?”

The answer is not easily captured in a few words.

Jaye Gaskia, whose formal name is Ayodeji Ajayeoba, is a Nigerian socialist and pro-democracy activist, activist-intellectual, movement builder, civic organiser, public-affairs analyst, governance and development strategist, peace and security expert, policy adviser, peacebuilding practitioner, researcher, writer, mentor and public commentator.

For more than four decades, his life and work have intersected with some of Nigeria's most important conversations and struggles around democracy, human rights, social justice, labour, popular participation, accountable governance, environmental and climate justice, citizenship, political economy, peacebuilding, human security, community resilience and social transformation.

At the heart of this journey has remained a consistent conviction: that sustainable social transformation requires organised citizens, ethical and accountable leadership, strong democratic institutions, social justice, collective action and the active participation of people in shaping the decisions that affect their lives.

In His Own Words

Jaye Gaskia describes himself as “an Organic Intellectual, a People's Scholar, an Original Thinker, a Revolutionary Activist, a Consummate Professional, a Marxist, and above all, a Humanist.” He is a Governance and Development Strategist and a Peace and Security Expert, and has often been acclaimed by contemporaries and peers as a “Professor of Practice.”

As a Marxist, he strives to be “a Marxist for his time” — engaging with the changing realities of society and the evolving conditions within which struggles for justice and social transformation take place.

From Student Activism to a Life of Struggle

Jaye's public journey began in the 1980s at the University of Ilorin, where he studied Biological Sciences (Zoology) and became actively involved in the vibrant student movement of the period, eventually emerging as Chairman of the Students' Union Congress.

It was within this environment of student activism, political debate, ideological contestation and popular mobilisation that many of the convictions that would shape his life's work were consolidated — justice, equality, democratic participation, solidarity, collective action and the transformative potential of organised people.

His political formation was strongly influenced by socialist and Marxist traditions, but over time his writings and practice have consistently sought to connect political ideas with the concrete realities of ordinary people and the practical challenges of organising for change.

Importantly, Jaye's engagement with Nigeria's pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military struggles did not begin after his university years. These engagements were already part of his political and movement experience during his days in the student movement from the mid-to-late 1980s, when student activism was itself deeply connected to wider struggles against authoritarianism, repression, economic injustice and attacks on democratic rights.

He subsequently built upon and consolidated these engagements through the period of military rule, Nigeria's transition to democracy and the early years of civil rule. Across these different phases, he worked alongside students, workers, activists, professionals, community organisers, human-rights advocates and other democratic forces through organising, civic education, coalition building and popular mobilisation.

What began within the student movement thus developed into a sustained engagement with the broader struggle for democracy, human rights, accountable government and social transformation.

Democracy, Labour and Popular Movements

As Nigeria moved through the struggle against military rule and eventually towards civilian government, Jaye continued to play leadership and organising roles within progressive movements and coalitions.

He became particularly associated with the United Action for Democracy (UAD), where he served in senior leadership, including as National Convener, and worked

through wider alliances involving organisations and platforms such as the Democratic Alternative (DA), Joint Action Forum (JAF) and the Labour and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO).

Through these platforms, he worked alongside trade unions, civil society organisations, community groups, activists and progressive political actors on democratic reform, economic justice, labour solidarity, civic mobilisation and the defence of citizens' rights.

His public life has consequently been closely associated with a fundamental question that runs through much of his writing and organising:

How can popular anger and protest be transformed into organised citizen power capable not merely of resisting injustice, but of changing the institutions, policies and systems that reproduce it?

January 2012 and the Power of Active Citizenship

One of the defining moments of Jaye's public activism came during the January 2012 uprising, widely associated with the Occupy Nigeria movement and the nationwide resistance that followed the removal of the petrol subsidy.

Jaye was part of the labour–civil society organising and leadership around the mobilisation, which became one of the largest expressions of popular civic action in Nigeria's contemporary democratic history.

For him, however, the significance of January 2012 extended beyond the immediate fuel subsidy controversy. It raised deeper questions about active citizenship, popular power, political organisation, accountability and the relationship between social movements and state power.

His subsequent writings and reflections have repeatedly returned to the lessons of such struggles: protest can create political possibilities, but enduring transformation requires organisation, leadership, strategy, institutions and the capacity to translate grievance into governance.

The Niger Delta, Environment and Climate Justice

Another important dimension of Jaye's journey has been his engagement with the Niger Delta struggle and environmental justice.

His activism and professional work intersected with organisations and movements concerned with environmental rights, resource justice, community livelihoods and

the consequences of extractive development, including his association with Environmental Rights Action (ERA) and the Chikoko Movement.

These experiences brought questions of environmental degradation, community rights, natural-resource governance and social justice into closer relationship with his wider thinking about democracy and development.

Over time, this strand of his work expanded into broader concerns around climate justice, environmental sustainability, community resilience and the connections between environmental stress, inequality, conflict and human security.

This is an important part of understanding Jaye's intellectual and professional evolution: environmental justice, development, peace and security have increasingly become interconnected dimensions of the same struggle for human dignity and social transformation.

From Activism to Development Practice

Alongside movement activism, Jaye built an extensive professional career in international development, governance, humanitarian response, conflict transformation, peacebuilding and institutional development.

His experience has included work and leadership responsibilities associated with organisations such as ActionAid International, Oxfam GB and VSO Nigeria, as well as collaboration with numerous Nigerian, regional and international development, governance, democracy and peacebuilding initiatives.

Through these engagements, he has worked across areas including conflict transformation, humanitarian response, participatory governance, strategic planning, advocacy, coalition building, organisational development, community resilience and institutional strengthening.

This professional journey did not represent an abandonment of activism. Rather, it increasingly reflected an effort to understand how the values and aspirations associated with popular struggle could also influence programmes, policies, institutions and systems.

In this sense, one of the defining features of Jaye's journey has been his ability to move between the street and the policy table, movements and institutions, protest and programme design, activism and development practice.

Constitutional Reform and National Policy Engagement

Jaye's commitment to democratic reform also took him into formal national policy and constitutional processes.

In 2014, he represented civil society, specifically the United Action for Democracy, at Nigeria's National Conference. He also played a role in coordinating the Civil Society Delegation Secretariat and participated in the broader labour–civil society effort to advance social justice, democratic accountability, constitutional reform and socioeconomic rights.

His participation in constitutional and national reform processes reflected a longstanding concern in his writings and activism with questions of citizenship, federalism, restructuring, self-determination, democratic governance, community self-government and nation building.

For Jaye, democracy has therefore never been understood simply as periodic elections. It must also involve meaningful citizenship, participation, accountable institutions and people's capacity to influence the political, economic and social conditions under which they live.

From Protest to Electoral Politics

This concern with the relationship between movements and political power eventually led Jaye to explore electoral politics more directly.

Ahead of Nigeria's 2019 general election, he declared his intention to seek the presidency and articulated a progressive political programme centred on accountable governance, social welfare, accessible public services, economic transformation, citizen participation and social justice.

The experience represented another stage in a question that had occupied him for decades: how movements that organise against power might also develop the political capacity to contest, exercise and transform power.

His engagement with electoral politics therefore forms part of a broader evolution — from protest and popular mobilisation towards questions of governance, political organisation, institutional reform and the practical exercise of state power.

Peacebuilding, Human Security and PCVE

In more recent years, Jaye's work has increasingly engaged Nigeria's peacebuilding, conflict prevention, human security and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) architecture.

He played a foundational leadership role in the development of the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE Network), helping to build a national civil society platform for engagement on preventing violent extremism.

He also chairs the Development and Management Team of the PCVE Knowledge, Innovation and Resource Hub (PCVE-KIRH), where his work contributes to research, policy engagement, capacity strengthening, knowledge management, community resilience and the development of more locally grounded approaches to preventing violent extremism.

This phase of his work reflects an important evolution in his thinking about security.

Rather than understanding security primarily through military and law-enforcement responses, his work increasingly emphasises the importance of human security, social justice, inclusive governance, prevention, community agency, social cohesion, resilience and addressing the underlying conditions that create vulnerability to conflict and violent extremism.

The thread connecting this work to his earlier activism remains visible: sustainable peace, like sustainable democracy, cannot simply be delivered to citizens from above. Communities and citizens must be active participants in building it.

The Writer and Public Intellectual

Running alongside these different dimensions of his work is an extensive body of writing.

Jaye is a prolific writer, researcher and public intellectual whose articles, essays, speeches, policy papers, lectures and public interventions span socialism and political economy; labour and social movements; democracy and popular power; governance and citizenship; constitutional reform and nation building; the Niger Delta and environmental justice; climate justice; elections and political organisation; peacebuilding; human security; community resilience; PCVE; and social transformation.

The writings reveal both continuity and evolution.

They document an activist thinking through the struggles in which he participates; an organiser examining the strengths and weaknesses of movements; and, increasingly, a practitioner concerned with how ideas and struggles can be translated into institutions, policies and sustainable systems.

As part of the Jaye @ 60 Legacy Initiative, selected writings are now being curated through The Jaye Gaskia Library, beginning with The Essential Jaye Gaskia Reader, to preserve this intellectual record and make it accessible to activists, students, researchers, practitioners, policymakers and future generations.

The Family Man

Beyond the activist, intellectual, strategist and professional is Jaye the family man.

He is the first of four siblings and has been married to Omoisiuwa Ajayeoba since 1997, their journey together having begun in 1995.

He is father to Ayomide Ajayeoba, whom he affectionately calls “Chuchu” — a treasured daughter he shares with her mother, his wife, Omoisiuwa.

Jaye is also a brother to three siblings, a brother-in-law to the three Ajayeoba wives, and an uncle to his Ajayeoba nieces and nephew. He is also a brother in law to five surviving Osaghaes (4 brothers and a sister) and their spouses, siblings of Omoisiuwa, his wife. He is also Uncle in law to their children.

This family dimension is an important part of understanding the person behind the public life. Behind more than four decades of activism, organising, professional engagements, travel, writing, public advocacy and institution building is a network of intimate relationships, responsibilities, sacrifices and shared experiences that have accompanied and sustained the journey.

Teacher, Mentor, Comrade and Friend

Yet perhaps one of the most enduring dimensions of Jaye's legacy cannot be measured through organisations, campaigns, publications or positions.

It lies in people.

Across generations, Jaye has mentored and worked with students, activists, researchers, trade unionists, civil society leaders, development practitioners, community organisers and emerging public leaders.

To many who have encountered him, he has been a teacher, strategist, organiser, sounding board, intellectual sparring partner, mentor, colleague, comrade and friend — someone willing to share knowledge, interrogate assumptions, debate ideas and invest time in the development of others.

It is this commitment to intergenerational learning that now finds institutional expression in the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy and its flagship Mentorship Programme, intended to create a platform through which accumulated knowledge and experience can be connected deliberately with emerging generations of active citizens, organisers, leaders and change-makers.

At 60: From a Birthday to a Legacy

As Comrade Jaye Gaskia marks his 60th birthday on 23 August 2026, the occasion is deliberately being transformed into a Legacy Initiative.

The objective is not simply to celebrate a milestone, but to document a journey, preserve a body of ideas, recognise the relationships and movements that shaped it, and create platforms through which experience can be transmitted to future generations.

This is being expressed through interconnected initiatives, including:

- ◆ The Jaye @ 60 Legacy Lecture & Symposium;
- ◆ The Jaye Gaskia Library and publication programme;
- ◆ The Jaye @ 60 Commemorative Programme & Legacy Book and Archive;
- ◆ The Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy and Mentorship Programme; and
- ◆ continuing efforts to document the people, places, movements, ideas and experiences that have formed part of the journey.

So, Who Is Comrade Jaye Gaskia?

For some, he is an activist.

For others, a socialist and public intellectual.

To others, he is a movement builder, organiser and strategist.

He is also a development practitioner, environmental justice advocate, governance and policy strategist, peace and security expert, peacebuilder, researcher and writer.

To another generation, he is simply teacher, mentor, comrade and friend.

And beyond the public roles, he is a husband, father, brother, uncle and family man.

Perhaps the most useful way to understand him, however, is not by choosing between these identities.

Jaye Gaskia is an organic intellectual and people's scholar; a revolutionary activist who became a development, governance, peace and security practitioner without abandoning his commitment to social transformation. He is a Marxist who strives to be a Marxist for his time and, above all, describes himself as a humanist.

His journey connects student activism with labour and popular struggles; human-rights and anti-military resistance with the struggle for democracy; environmental justice with human security; protest with governance; peacebuilding with prevention; movements with institutions; and accumulated experience with the responsibility to prepare another generation.

Across more than four decades, the platforms have changed. The methods have evolved. The questions have become more complex.

But the underlying commitment has remained remarkably consistent:

the belief that lasting social transformation is built through organised citizens, social justice, ethical leadership, democratic participation, strong institutions, informed public engagement and an unwavering commitment to human dignity.

As we celebrate Jaye @ 60, therefore, we celebrate more than sixty years of life.

We celebrate a journey of ideas and struggle, movements and institutions, service and friendship, reflection and learning, leadership and hope.

And, perhaps most importantly, we ask what that journey can contribute to those who must carry the work forward.

JAYE @ 60

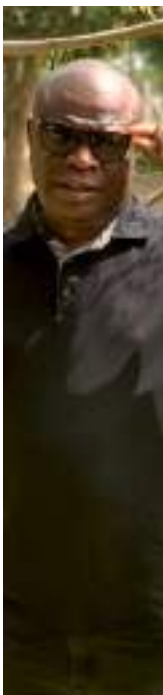
A Life of Ideas, Struggle, Service and Transformation

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

JAYE THROUGH THE YEARS: A LIFE IN PICTURES



JAYE GASKIA'S FAMILY







TIMELINE OF A LIFE OF IDEAS, STRUGGLE, SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION

Jaye Gaskia Through the Decades

The story of Comrade Jaye Gaskia is not a straight line from activism to professional life. It is a journey in which ideas, movements, struggles, professional practice, institution building and mentorship have continually interacted. From the student movement of the 1980s to contemporary work on peacebuilding, human security and PCVE, each phase has built upon experiences accumulated in the preceding ones.

This timeline should therefore be read not simply as a chronology of positions held, but as a map of an evolving journey: from political consciousness to activism; from activism to organising; from resistance to movement building; from movements to policy and development practice; and increasingly, from struggle to systems, institutions and intergenerational legacy.

1966 — THE JOURNEY BEGINS

23 August 1966

Ayodeji Ajayeoba — Jaye Gaskia — is born.

The first of four siblings, he would grow into a life shaped by family, books, ideas, political consciousness, activism, professional practice and a sustained concern with questions of justice and social transformation.

Legacy Lens: Family • Formation • Beginnings

THE 1980s

Political Awakening, Student Activism and Ideological Formation

Mid-to-Late 1980s — University of Ilorin

Jaye studies Biological Sciences (Zoology) at the University of Ilorin.

His university years coincide with a politically vibrant period in Nigeria's student movement and become a defining stage in his intellectual and political formation.

He becomes actively involved in student organising and emerges as Chairman of the Students' Union Congress.

This period deepens his engagement with socialist and Marxist ideas and with questions of inequality, democracy, political power, citizenship, collective action and social transformation.

Importantly, his engagement with the pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military struggles begins during this period. Student activism is closely connected with broader resistance to authoritarianism, repression, economic injustice and attacks on democratic rights.

Jaye's identity as an activist, organiser and Marxist therefore begins to take shape within the student movement rather than after it.

Legacy Lens: Ideas • Student Movement • Marxism • Human Rights • Democracy • Organising

LATE 1980s–1990s

Resistance, Democracy and Movement Building

As military rule deepens, Jaye builds upon the political and organisational foundations developed during his student years.

He participates in the wider pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military movements, working alongside students, workers, activists, human-rights advocates, professionals and other democratic forces.

His engagements span organising, mobilisation, political education, coalition building and resistance to military dictatorship.

This period strengthens a conviction that would remain central to his work: spontaneous resistance may open political possibilities, but sustained transformation requires organisation, political consciousness, collective leadership and institutions.

The Progressive Movement

Across this period and into the transition to civilian rule, Jaye becomes associated with progressive organisations, movements and coalitions, including the:

- ◆ United Action for Democracy (UAD)
- ◆ Democratic Alternative (DA)
- ◆ and subsequently wider labour–civil society platforms.

He would serve in senior leadership within UAD, including as National Convener.

Legacy Lens: Resistance • Pro-Democracy • Anti-Military Struggle • Coalition Building • Popular Organisation

THE 1990s

Environment, Communities and the Niger Delta

Alongside democratic and movement struggles, another major strand of Jaye's journey develops around environmental justice, community rights and the Niger Delta.

His work intersects with Environmental Rights Action (ERA) and movements and initiatives concerned with environmental degradation, resource justice, community livelihoods and the consequences of extractive development.

His engagement with the Niger Delta and Chikoko Movement expands his understanding of the relationship between environment, livelihoods, inequality, community agency, political power and development.

What begins as environmental and resource-justice engagement would later connect with broader concerns around climate justice, conflict, community resilience and human security.

Legacy Lens: Niger Delta • Environmental Justice • Resource Justice • Community Agency

1995–1997

Family and Partnership

In 1995, Jaye begins his journey with Omoisiuwa Ajayeoba.

They marry in 1997.

Family would remain an important dimension of the life behind the activism, organising, professional work, travel and public engagements.

Jaye later becomes father to Ayomide Ajayeoba — “Chuchu”, as he affectionately calls her.

Legacy Lens: Family • Partnership • Love • Responsibility

1999 AND THE EARLY YEARS OF CIVIL RULE

From Anti-Military Resistance to Democratic Accountability

Nigeria's return to civilian government changes the political terrain but does not end the struggle for democracy.

**For Jaye, the transition poses a new challenge:
how should movements formed in resistance to
military dictatorship engage with an elected civilian
state?**

His work increasingly focuses on ensuring that civilian rule becomes meaningful democracy through active citizenship, accountability, popular participation, economic justice and strong democratic institutions.

He continues to consolidate his engagement with labour, civil society and popular movements through platforms including UAD, DA, JAF and LASCO.

The arena changes.

The fundamental questions remain.

Legacy Lens: Democratic Transition • Active Citizenship • Accountability • Popular Power

THE 2000s

From Activism to Development and Professional Practice

Alongside movement organising, Jaye develops an extensive professional career across development, governance, humanitarian response, conflict transformation and institutional development.

His experience includes work and leadership responsibilities associated with organisations including:

- ◆ ActionAid International
- ◆ Oxfam GB
- ◆ VSO Nigeria

- ◆ and engagement with other Nigerian and international development initiatives.

His professional practice spans areas such as participatory governance, conflict transformation, humanitarian response, advocacy, strategic planning, coalition building and organisational development.

Rather than representing a departure from activism, this period expands the arena within which he engages questions of social transformation.

The activist increasingly becomes a practitioner concerned with how ideas can influence programmes, policies, organisations and institutions.

Legacy Lens: Development • Governance • Humanitarian Action • Professional Practice • Institution Building

JANUARY 2012

Occupy Nigeria and the Power of Organised Citizens

The removal of the petrol subsidy triggers one of the largest popular civic mobilisations of Nigeria's contemporary democratic era.

Jaye becomes part of the labour–civil society organising and leadership around the January 2012 uprising, widely associated with Occupy Nigeria.

For Jaye, January 2012 becomes more than a protest over fuel prices.

It becomes an important demonstration of the possibilities—and limitations—of popular mobilisation.

It reinforces a question that runs through much of his subsequent writing:

How can protest and popular anger be transformed into organised political power capable of changing institutions and systems?

Legacy Lens: Occupy Nigeria • Labour • Civil Society • Active Citizenship • Popular Power

2014

The National Conference and Constitutional Reform

Jaye represents civil society, specifically the United Action for Democracy, at Nigeria's 2014 National Conference.

He also plays a role in coordinating the Civil Society Delegation Secretariat and participates in wider labour–civil society engagement around the Conference.

This places him within formal national conversations on:

constitutional reform • federalism • citizenship • restructuring • democratic accountability • socioeconomic rights • governance • nation building.

It also illustrates an important evolution in the journey—from mobilising outside state institutions to engaging directly with processes intended to reform them.

Legacy Lens: Constitutional Reform • Citizenship • Federalism • National Dialogue

2015–2019

From Protest to Political Power

Jaye's longstanding concern with the relationship between movements, political organisation and state power increasingly leads him towards electoral politics.

Ahead of Nigeria's 2019 general election, he declares his intention to seek the presidency and advances a progressive programme centred on social welfare, public services, accountable governance, citizen participation, social justice and economic transformation.

The experience represents another stage in a decades-long political inquiry:

Can movements move beyond protesting against power to developing the capacity to contest, exercise and transform power?

Legacy Lens: Electoral Politics • Political Power • Governance • Progressive Alternatives

THE LATE 2010s–2020s

Peacebuilding, Human Security and Prevention

Jaye's work increasingly engages questions of peace, conflict prevention, security and community resilience.

His earlier experiences in activism, development, environmental justice, governance and conflict transformation begin to converge around a broader understanding of human security.

Security, in this approach, cannot be reduced to policing, military force or state protection.

It must also address:

justice • governance • livelihoods • inclusion • community agency • social cohesion • resilience • dignity.

This provides an important bridge into his increasing engagement with the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) field.

Legacy Lens: Peacebuilding • Conflict Prevention • Human Security • Community Resilience

PAVE NETWORK

Building a Civil Society Architecture for Prevention

Jaye plays a foundational leadership role in the development of the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE Network).

Through PAVE, he contributes to efforts to strengthen civil society engagement with preventing violent extremism and to promote approaches grounded in communities, prevention, resilience, inclusion and social justice.

The work represents another evolution of a principle present throughout his journey:

people and communities must be participants in creating their own security, democracy and development.

Legacy Lens: PCVE • Civil Society • Prevention • Community Agency

PCVE-KIRH

From Practice to Knowledge and Institution Building

Jaye becomes Chair of the Development and Management Team of the PCVE Knowledge, Innovation and Resource Hub (PCVE-KIRH).

The work brings together several dimensions of his accumulated experience:

research • knowledge management • policy • capacity development • peacebuilding • community resilience • human security • institutional development.

It also reflects an increasing emphasis on building systems and institutions capable of preserving knowledge and sustaining practice beyond individual projects or personalities.

The journey is moving increasingly from struggle to systems.

Legacy Lens: Knowledge • Policy • Institutions • PCVE • Systems Building

THE WRITER THROUGH THE DECADES

Ideas as Part of the Struggle

Running alongside activism, organising and professional practice is an extensive body of writing.

Across several decades, Jaye writes on:

Marxism and political economy • democracy • labour • social movements • popular power • citizenship • governance • constitutional reform • nation building • Niger Delta • environmental and climate justice • elections • peacebuilding • human security • community resilience • PCVE • social transformation.

His writings become an intellectual record of an activist thinking through the struggles in which he participates.

They reveal both continuity and change—ideas being tested against experience and experience reshaping ideas.

Legacy Lens: Writing • Ideas • Analysis • People's Scholarship

MENTORSHIP ACROSS GENERATIONS

From Experience to Transmission

Across his journey, Jaye increasingly becomes a mentor, teacher, strategist, sounding board and intellectual sparring partner to younger activists, organisers, researchers, development practitioners and emerging leaders.

Knowledge accumulated through struggle and practice becomes something to be shared rather than possessed.

This intergenerational dimension increasingly raises another question:

How can the lessons of one generation be transmitted without expecting the next generation simply to reproduce its methods?

Legacy Lens: Mentorship • Learning • Intergenerational Exchange • Leadership

2026

Jaye @ 60 — From Commemoration to Legacy

On 23 August 2026, Jaye Gaskia turns 60.

But the milestone is deliberately conceived as more than a birthday.

Jaye @ 60 becomes an opportunity to document the journey, preserve the ideas, recognise the people and movements that shaped it and create enduring platforms for future generations.

The commemoration gives expression to interconnected legacy initiatives including:

The Jaye @ 60 Legacy Lecture & Symposium

The Jaye Gaskia Library and Publication Programme

The Essential Jaye Gaskia Reader

The Jaye @ 60 Commemorative Programme & Legacy Book and Archive

The Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy

The Mentorship Programme

and the continuing documentation of the people, places, movements, ideas, writings and experiences that have formed part of the journey.

20 AUGUST 2026

Ideas and Intergenerational Dialogue

The Jaye @ 60 Legacy Lecture & Symposium convenes around the theme:

Active Citizenship, Social Movements, and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria

The occasion provides a platform not simply to discuss Jaye, but to use questions central to his life's work to stimulate a wider conversation about Nigeria's future.

22 AUGUST 2026

Service and Solidarity

The commemoration turns towards community outreach and service.

The activity reflects another dimension of the legacy: solidarity and social transformation must ultimately be expressed through relationships with people and communities.

23 AUGUST 2026

Jaye Gaskia at 60

Family, friends, comrades, colleagues, associates and fellow travellers gather for the Grand 60th Birthday Celebration.

It is a moment to celebrate not simply the activist, intellectual or professional, but also the husband, father, brother, uncle, mentor, comrade and friend.

Sixty years becomes a point from which to look both backward and forward.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Jaye describes himself as:

- ◆ An Organic Intellectual.
- ◆ A People's Scholar.
- ◆ An Original Thinker.
- ◆ A Revolutionary Activist.
- ◆ A Consummate Professional.
- ◆ A Marxist.
- ◆ And Above All, A Humanist.

As a Marxist, he strives to be “a Marxist for his time.”

His six decades cannot therefore be reduced to a list of positions, organisations or campaigns.

They tell a larger story:

Ideas became consciousness.

Consciousness became struggle.

Struggle required organisation.

Organisation built movements.

Movements confronted power.

Experience entered development and governance.

Practice increasingly turned towards peace, prevention and human security.

And accumulated experience created a responsibility to build institutions and prepare another generation.

The journey has never been without contradictions, setbacks, reassessments or unfinished struggles.

Nor is it complete.

At sixty, perhaps the most appropriate punctuation is therefore not a full stop.

It is a continuation mark.

1966–2026 — Sixty Years of Life

Four Decades of Ideas, Struggle, Service and Transformation

And a Legacy Still Being Built.

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

SECTION THREE

IDEAS, INFLUENCES AND INSPIRATION

The People, Books, Music and Ideas That Shaped the Journey

JAYE @ 60 LEGACY COLLECTIONS

*Reading, Music, Inspirational Figures & Sports Icons
for the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation
Academy and Mentorship Programme*

A. 60 Recommended Books

Approach retained from the source document: title, author, year, category and recommender/source.

1. The Civil War in France

Author	Karl Marx
Year	1871
Category	Political, Philosophy / History
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

2. The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State

Author	Friedrich Engels
Year	1884
Category	Political Philosophy / Sociology / History
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

3. The State and Revolution

Author	Vladimir Ilyich Lenin
Year	1917
Category	Political Philosophy / Political Theory
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

4. The History of the Russian Revolution

Author	Leon Trotsky
Year	1930 (originally published in Russian)
Category	History / Political History / Revolutionary Studies
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

5. A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962

Author	Alistair Horne
Year	1977
Category	History / Military History / Political Science / International Relations
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

6. Long Walk to Freedom

Author	Nelson Mandela
Year	1994
Category	Biography / Leadership / Politics / African History
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

7. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa Author:

Author	Walter Rodney
Year	1972
Category	African History / Political Economy / Development Studies
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

8. The Wretched of the Earth

Author	Frantz Fanon
Year	1961
Category	Political Philosophy / African Studies / History / Postcolonial Studies
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

9. Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life

Author	Jon Lee Anderson
Year	1997
Category	Biography / Political History / Leadership / Revolutionary Studies
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

10. The Vultures

Author	David Mandessi Diop
Year	1959
Category	Poetry / African Literature / Social Justice
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

11. The Audacity of Hope Barack Obama

Author	Barack Obama
Year	2006
Category	Political Leadership / Biography / Public Policy
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

12. The Black Jacobins

Author	C. L. R. James
Year	1938
Category	Political Leadership / African Diaspora Studies / Revolutionary History
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

13. Petals of Blood

Author	Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
Year	1977
Category	African Literature / Governance / Political Fiction
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

14. The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide

Author	Gérard Prunier
Year	1995
Category	African History / Conflict Studies / Peace and Security / Governance
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

15. A Long Time Coming: The Inspiring, Combative 2008 Campaign and the Historic Election of Barack Obama

Author	Evan Thomas
Year	2008
Category	Political Leadership / Biography / Electoral Politics / Democracy
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

16. Unionizing the Ivory Tower: Cornell Workers' Fifteen-Year Fight for Justice and a Living Wage.

Author	Author: Al Davidoff
Year	2023
Category	Leadership / Organizational Development / Labor Relations / Social Change
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

17. Neo-Liberal Siege Against Nigeria: In Memory of Festus Ikhuoria Iyayi

Author	Omotoye Olorode
Year	2016
Category	Political Economy / Public Policy / Governance / Development Studies
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

18. God's Bits of Wood

Author	Ousmane Sembène
Year	1960
Category	African Literature / Leadership / Labour Relations / Social Justice
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

19. Anthills of the Savannah

Author	Chinua Achebe
Year	1987
Category	African Literature / Leadership / Governance / Political Fiction
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

20. Sunset at Dawn

Author	Chukwuemeka Ike
Year	1976
Category	Nigerian Literature / History / Peace and Conflict Studies / Leadership
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

21. The Famished Road

Author	Ben Okri
Year	1991
Category	African Literature / Leadership / Governance / Cultural Studies
Recommended By / Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

22. I Do Not Come to You by Chance

Author	Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani
Year	2009
Category	Nigerian Literature / Ethics / Leadership / Social Issues
Recommended By / Source	Chuchu

23. The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue

Author	Author: V. E. Schwab
Year	2020
Category	Fiction / Personal Development / Leadership / Philosophy
Recommended By / Source	Chuchu

24. Tomorrow, I Become a Woman

Author	Aiwanose Odafen
Year	2025
Category	Contemporary Nigerian Literature / Personal Development / Gender Studies
Recommended By / Source	Chuchu

25. Dream Count

Author	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Year	2025
Category	Contemporary Nigerian Literature / Leadership / Personal Development / Women's Studies
Recommended By / Source	Chuchu

26. In Every Mirror She's Black

Author	Lola Akinmade Åkerström
Year	2021
Category	Contemporary Fiction / Diversity and Inclusion / Leadership / Social Studies
Recommended By / Source	Chuchu

27. The Purpose Driven Life

Author	Rick Warren
Year	2002
Category	Christian Leadership / Personal Development / Spiritual Growth
Recommended By / Source	Wife

28. Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

Author	Sheryl Sandberg
Year	2013
Category	Leadership / Women's Leadership / Professional Development / Organizational Management
Recommended By / Source	Wife

29. Seamless: Understanding the Bible as One Complete Story

Author	Author: Angie Smith
Year	2015
Category	Christian Leadership / Biblical Studies / Spiritual Formation
Recommended By / Source	Wife

30. The Resolution for Women

Author	Priscilla Shirer, Patsy Clairmont, Dee Brestin, Denise Glenn, Barbara Rainey and Mary Kassian
Year	2011
Category	Christian Leadership / Women's Leadership / Spiritual Formation / Personal Development
Recommended By / Source	Wife

31. Come Out from Amongst the Trees

Author	Cindy Esezobor
Year	Publication year varies by edition.
Category	Christian Leadership / Personal Development / Spiritual Growth
Recommended By / Source	Wife

32. Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Author	Paulo Freire
Year	1968
Category	Education / Critical Pedagogy / Social Transformation
Recommended By / Source	Ade

33. The Souls of Black Folk

Author	W. E. B. Du Bois
Year	1903
Category	Race / Sociology / Citizenship / History
Recommended By / Source	Ade

34. I Write What I Like

Author	Steve Biko
Year	1978
Category	African Politics / Black Consciousness / Social Justice
Recommended By / Source	Che

35. Decolonising the Mind

Author	Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
Year	1986
Category	Culture / Language / Postcolonial Studies
Recommended By / Source	Che

36. Things Fall Apart

Author	Chinua Achebe
Year	1958
Category	African Literature / Culture / Social Change
Recommended By / Source	Emeka

37. A Man of the People

Author	Chinua Achebe
Year	1966
Category	Political Fiction / Governance / Leadership
Recommended By / Source	Emeka

38. There Was a Country

Author	Chinua Achebe
Year	2012
Category	Memoir / Nigerian History / Conflict
Recommended By / Source	Bright

39. The Trouble with Nigeria

Author	Chinua Achebe
Year	1983
Category	Governance / Leadership / Nigeria
Recommended By / Source	Emeka

40. The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born

Author	Ayi Kwei Armah
Year	1968
Category	African Literature / Corruption / Ethics
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

41. The Man Died

Author	Wole Soyinka
Year	1972
Category	Memoir / Human Rights / Political History
Recommended By / Source	Ralph

42. Africa Must Unite

Author	Kwame Nkrumah
Year	1963
Category	Pan-Africanism / Politics / Development
Recommended By / Source	Ralph

43. Consciencism

Author	Kwame Nkrumah
Year	1964
Category	Political Philosophy / African Studies
Recommended By / Source	Che

44. The Struggle Continues

Author	Kwame Nkrumah
Year	1973
Category	Politics / Pan-Africanism / Social Change
Recommended By / Source	Che

45. No Easy Walk to Freedom

Author	Nelson Mandela
Year	1965
Category	Leadership / Liberation / African History
Recommended By / Source	Che

46. I Am Malala

Author	Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb
Year	2013
Category	Memoir / Education / Youth Leadership
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

47. Becoming

Author	Michelle Obama
Year	2018
Category	Memoir / Leadership / Personal Development
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

48. A Promised Land

Author	Barack Obama
Year	2020
Category	Memoir / Governance / Political Leadership
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

49. Dreams from My Father

Author	Barack Obama
Year	1995
Category	Memoir / Identity / Public Leadership
Recommended By / Source	Emeka

50. Fighting Corruption Is Dangerous

Author	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Year	2018
Category	Governance / Public Finance / Integrity
Recommended By / Source	Bright

51. Reforming the Unreformable

Author	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Year	2012
Category	Public Policy / Reform / Development
Recommended By / Source	Bright

52. The Autobiography of Malcolm X

Author	Malcolm X with Alex Haley
Year	1965
Category	Memoir / Civil Rights / Transformation
Recommended By / Source	Botti

53. Letter from Birmingham Jail

Author	Martin Luther King Jr.
Year	1963
Category	Civil Rights / Ethics / Nonviolent Action
Recommended By / Source	Botti

54. Why We Can't Wait

Author	Martin Luther King Jr.
Year	1964
Category	Civil Rights / Organising / Social Change
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

55. My Story: 9.58

Author	Usain Bolt
Year	2010
Category	Sport / Discipline / Excellence
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

56. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Author	Maya Angelou
Year	1969
Category	Memoir / Resilience / Identity
Recommended By / Source	Andrew

57. We Should All Be Feminists

Author	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Year	2014
Category	Gender / Equality / Citizenship
Recommended By / Source	Emeka

58. Half of a Yellow Sun

Author	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Year	2006
Category	Nigerian Literature / War / Memory
Recommended By / Source	Bright

59. Americanah

Author	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Year	2013
Category	Identity / Migration / Race
Recommended By / Source	Ralph

60. The Art of Possibility

Author	Rosamund Stone Zander & Benjamin Zander
Year	2000
Category	Leadership / Creativity / Personal Development
Recommended By / Source	Ade

B. 60 Inspirational & Motivational Songs

The first 30 selections are retained from the supplied compilation; the remaining 30 are editorial additions aligned to its themes of resilience, justice, solidarity, purpose, relationships and leadership.

1. No Woman, No Cry

Artist(s)	Bob Marley
Year	1974
Leadership & Life Lesson	Teaches resilience, hope, perseverance, and standing together through difficult times. Great leaders inspire optimism even during adversity.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

2. Stir It Up

Artist(s)	Bob Marley
Year	1973
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages nurturing relationships, emotional intelligence, empathy, and positive communication. Leadership begins with healthy human relationships.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

3. Nyabinghi

Artist(s)	Bob Marley
Year	1983
Leadership & Life Lesson	Highlights spiritual reflection, cultural identity, resilience, and the pursuit of justice and freedom.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

4. Best of No Nation (BONN) (Compilation)

Artist(s)	Fela Anikulapo Kuti
Year	
Leadership & Life Lesson	A collection of Fela's music that encourages critical thinking about governance, social justice, accountability, and civic responsibility.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

5. Zombie

Artist(s)	Fela Anikulapo Kuti
Year	1976
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages independent thinking and questions blind obedience to authority. It illustrates the importance of ethical leadership and accountability.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

6. Forever Young

Artist(s)	Jay-Z
Year	2009
Leadership & Life Lesson	Inspires ambition, leaving a positive legacy, continuous growth, and making wise life choices.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

7. Halo

Artist(s)	Beyoncé
Year	2009
Leadership & Life Lesson	Highlights trust, compassion, gratitude, and the transformative influence that positive relationships can have on personal growth.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

8. See You Again

Artist(s)	Wiz Khalifa & Charlie Puth
Year	2015
Leadership & Life Lesson	Promotes loyalty, friendship, remembrance, resilience, and valuing meaningful relationships throughout life.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

9. We've Got Tonight

Artist(s)	Kenny Rogers & Sheena Easton
Year	1983
Leadership & Life Lesson	Demonstrates empathy, companionship, emotional support, and appreciating the present moment.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

10. Endless Love

Artist(s)	Lionel Richie & Diana Ross
Year	1981
Leadership & Life Lesson	Teaches commitment, trust, loyalty, and building enduring relationships founded on mutual respect.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

11. Who Is Your Guy?

Artist(s)	Spyro
Year	2023
Leadership & Life Lesson	Highlights appreciation, generosity, friendship, and recognizing those who genuinely support your journey.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

12. Gwagwalada

Artist(s)	Kizz Daniel
Year	2023
Leadership & Life Lesson	Celebrates confidence, perseverance, cultural identity, and enjoying success while remaining authentic.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

13. Buga

Artist(s)	Kizz Daniel & Tekno
Year	2022
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages celebrating achievement after hard work, confidence, optimism, and inspiring others through success.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

14. Hero

Artist(s)	Enrique Iglesias
Year	2001
Leadership & Life Lesson	Highlights courage, selfless service, loyalty, and the willingness to support and protect others. True leaders become a source of strength during difficult times.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

15. You're Still the One

Artist(s)	Shania Twain
Year	1998
Leadership & Life Lesson	Emphasizes commitment, trust, perseverance, and loyalty. Strong leadership is built on enduring relationships and keeping one's promises.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

16. I Will Always Love You

Artist(s)	Whitney Houston
Year	1992
Leadership & Life Lesson	Teaches emotional maturity, respect, gratitude, and the ability to let go with dignity while wishing others well.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

17. Queen of My Heart

Artist(s)	Westlife
Year	2001
Leadership & Life Lesson	Highlights appreciation, faithfulness, empathy, and valuing those who make meaningful contributions to our lives.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

18. When I Need You

Artist(s)	Leo Sayer
Year	1977
Leadership & Life Lesson	Demonstrates the importance of emotional support, dependable relationships, and maintaining strong connections despite distance or challenges.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

19. The Lady in Red

Artist(s)	Chris de Burgh
Year	1986
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages appreciation, gratitude, respect, and recognizing the value and dignity of others. Great leaders acknowledge and celebrate people around them.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

20. I Want to Know What Love Is

Artist(s)	Foreigner
Year	1984
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages self-awareness, empathy, vulnerability, and the pursuit of deeper understanding in relationships. Effective leaders build trust through compassion and emotional intelligence.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

21. Angel

Artist(s)	Halle
Year	2001
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages self-worth, resilience, hope, and recognizing one's inner strength despite adversity. A reminder that leaders should inspire hope and compassion in others.
Source	Chuchu

22. Enemy

Artist(s)	Imagine Dragons featuring JID
Year	2021
Leadership & Life Lesson	Explores overcoming criticism, self-doubt, and external opposition. Teaches perseverance, emotional resilience, and the importance of staying focused on one's purpose.
Source	Chuchu

23. Brown Skin Girl

Artist(s)	Beyoncé, Wizkid, Blue Ivy Carter & SAINT JHN
Year	2019
Leadership & Life Lesson	Celebrates identity, confidence, diversity, and self-acceptance. It teaches leaders to value inclusion, empower others, and appreciate cultural heritage.
Source	Chuchu

24. Too Sweet

Artist(s)	Hozier
Year	2014
Leadership & Life Lesson	Highlights authenticity and staying true to one's values rather than changing simply to please others. Effective leaders maintain integrity while respecting differences.
Source	Chuchu

25. Grace

Artist(s)	Rag'n'Bone Man
Year	2016
Leadership & Life Lesson	Emphasizes forgiveness, humility, gratitude, and personal growth. It reminds leaders that extending grace and learning from mistakes strengthens relationships and builds trust.
Source	Chuchu

26. When My Spirit Is Weak

Artist(s)	World Hive
Year	2025
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages perseverance, hope, and dependence on inner strength and faith during difficult moments. It reminds leaders that resilience is built by seeking wisdom, support, and renewed purpose when facing challenges.
Source	Wife

27. Greatest Love of All

Artist(s)	Whitney Houston
Year	1986
Leadership & Life Lesson	Promotes self-worth, confidence, personal responsibility, and lifelong learning. Great leaders believe in themselves while inspiring others to reach their full potential.
Source	Wife

28. 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

Artist(s)	Matt Redman
Year	2011
Leadership & Life Lesson	Inspires gratitude, faithfulness, humility, and unwavering trust in God regardless of life's circumstances. Gratitude is a hallmark of emotionally intelligent leadership.
Source	Wife

29. I Love You, Lord

Artist(s)	CeCe Winans
Year	2021
Leadership & Life Lesson	Encourages devotion, worship, humility, and love for God. It reminds leaders that a strong spiritual foundation can shape character, integrity, and servant leadership.
Source	Wife

30. I'm Alive

Artist(s)	Celine Dion
Year	2002
Leadership & Life Lesson	Celebrates hope, joy, gratitude, optimism, and renewed purpose. It teaches leaders to embrace life's opportunities with confidence and inspire positivity in those around them.
Source	Wife

31. Redemption Song

Artist(s)	Bob Marley & The Wailers
Year	1980
Leadership & Life Lesson	Freedom, self-emancipation, courage and intellectual independence.
Source	Che

32. Get Up, Stand Up

Artist(s)	The Wailers
Year	1973
Leadership & Life Lesson	Active citizenship, courage and standing up for rights and dignity.
Source	Botti

33. One Love / People Get Ready

Artist(s)	Bob Marley & The Wailers
Year	1977
Leadership & Life Lesson	Unity, reconciliation and collective responsibility.
Source	Ralph

34. Three Little Birds

Artist(s)	Bob Marley & The Wailers
Year	1977
Leadership & Life Lesson	Hope, calm and resilience in difficult circumstances.
Source	Che

35. War

Artist(s)	Bob Marley & The Wailers
Year	1976
Leadership & Life Lesson	Equality, justice and opposition to discrimination.
Source	Che

36. Africa Unite

Artist(s)	Bob Marley & The Wailers
Year	1979
Leadership & Life Lesson	Pan-African solidarity and collective purpose.
Source	Ralph

37. Water No Get Enemy

Artist(s)	Fela Kuti
Year	1975
Leadership & Life Lesson	Adaptability, persistence and the enduring power of people and culture.
Source	Ade

38. Sorrow Tears and Blood

Artist(s)	Fela Kuti
Year	1977
Leadership & Life Lesson	Civic courage and reflection on repression, fear and public responsibility.
Source	Ade

39. Shuffering and Shmiling

Artist(s)	Fela Kuti
Year	1978
Leadership & Life Lesson	Critical thinking about social conditions, institutions and public accountability.
Source	Botti

40. Beasts of No Nation

Artist(s)	Fela Kuti
Year	1989
Leadership & Life Lesson	Questioning abuse of power and defending human dignity.
Source	Emeka

41. Imagine

Artist(s)	John Lennon
Year	1971
Leadership & Life Lesson	Peace, human solidarity and imagining alternatives.
Source	Andrew

42. Man in the Mirror

Artist(s)	Michael Jackson
Year	1988
Leadership & Life Lesson	Personal responsibility and beginning social change with oneself.
Source	Andrew

43. Heal the World

Artist(s)	Michael Jackson
Year	1991
Leadership & Life Lesson	Compassion, service and responsibility for future generations.
Source	Femi

44. We Are the World

Artist(s)	USA for Africa
Year	1985
Leadership & Life Lesson	Solidarity, collective action and humanitarian responsibility.
Source	Andrew

45. One Moment in Time

Artist(s)	Whitney Houston
Year	1988
Leadership & Life Lesson	Preparation, excellence and rising to defining moments.
Source	Ade

46. Hero

Artist(s)	Mariah Carey
Year	1993
Leadership & Life Lesson	Inner courage, resilience and self-belief.
Source	Ade

47. The Climb

Artist(s)	Miley Cyrus
Year	2009
Leadership & Life Lesson	Perseverance, learning through difficulty and valuing the journey.
Source	Andrew

48. Rise Up

Artist(s)	Andra Day
Year	2015
Leadership & Life Lesson	Resilience, solidarity and persistence in adversity.
Source	Andrew

49. Hall of Fame

Artist(s)	The Script featuring will.i.am
Year	2012
Leadership & Life Lesson	Ambition, disciplined effort and purposeful achievement.
Source	Ralph

50. Brave

Artist(s)	Sara Bareilles
Year	2013
Leadership & Life Lesson	Courageous communication and finding one's voice.
Source	Andrew

51. Roar

Artist(s)	Katy Perry
Year	2013
Leadership & Life Lesson	Confidence, self-advocacy and resilience.
Source	Andrew

52. Unwritten

Artist(s)	Natasha Bedingfield
Year	2004
Leadership & Life Lesson	Agency, possibility and taking responsibility for one's future.
Source	Bright

53. Lean on Me

Artist(s)	Bill Withers
Year	1972
Leadership & Life Lesson	Mutual support, trust and community.
Source	Ralph

54. Stand by Me

Artist(s)	Ben E. King
Year	1961
Leadership & Life Lesson	Loyalty, solidarity and dependable relationships.
Source	Andrew

55. What a Wonderful World

Artist(s)	Louis Armstrong
Year	1967
Leadership & Life Lesson	Gratitude, hope and appreciation of shared humanity.
Source	Che

56. Higher Ground

Artist(s)	Stevie Wonder
Year	1973
Leadership & Life Lesson	Renewal, moral growth and striving to do better.
Source	Botti

57. Glory

Artist(s)	Common & John Legend
Year	2014
Leadership & Life Lesson	Justice, collective struggle and the long arc of social change.
Source	Anthony

58. Fight Song

Artist(s)	Rachel Platten
Year	2015
Leadership & Life Lesson	Agency, perseverance and rebuilding confidence.
Source	Anthony

59. Try Everything

Artist(s)	Shakira
Year	2016
Leadership & Life Lesson	Learning from failure, experimentation and persistence.
Source	Andrew

60. Beautiful Nubia – Seven Lives

Artist(s)	Beautiful Nubia
Year	2006
Leadership & Life Lesson	Purpose, cultural rootedness, reflection and social responsibility.
Source	Ralph

C. 60 Inspirational Figures

The source document combines figures selected by Jaye, Chuchu and his wife. Those 30 entries are preserved. Thirty editorial additions broaden the collection across African liberation, democracy, civil rights, scholarship, culture, public service and social transformation.

1. Karl Marx

Why Inspirational	Influential philosopher whose ideas transformed political economy and social theory.
Key Leadership Lessons	Critical thinking, intellectual rigor, social analysis, challenging established systems.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

2. Friedrich Engels

Why Inspirational	Co-developer of Marxist theory and prolific writer on society, economics, and politics.
Key Leadership Lessons	Collaboration, scholarship, strategic partnership, social inquiry.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Frock-Coated Communist
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

3. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Why Inspirational	Central leader of the Russian Revolution and founder of the Soviet state.
Key Leadership Lessons	Strategic planning, organization, political mobilization, decisive leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Lenin: A Biography
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

4. Leon Trotsky

Why Inspirational	Revolutionary leader, military organizer, and historian of the Russian Revolution.
Key Leadership Lessons	Vision, resilience, communication, organizational leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ My Life
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

5. Rosa Luxemburg

Why Inspirational	Political thinker remembered for her advocacy of democracy, workers' rights, and internationalism.
Key Leadership Lessons	Independent thinking, courage, principled advocacy.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Rosa Luxemburg: A Life
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

6. Tony Cliff

Why Inspirational	Political theorist and founder of the International Socialist tradition.
Key Leadership Lessons	Organizational development, ideological clarity, movement building.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Tony Cliff: A Marxist for His Time
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

7. Malcolm X

Why Inspirational	Powerful advocate for Black empowerment and human rights whose views evolved throughout his life.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, self-education, transformation, conviction.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Autobiography of Malcolm X
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

8. Martin Luther King Jr.

Why Inspirational	Leader of the American Civil Rights Movement who championed nonviolent social change.
Key Leadership Lessons	Nonviolent leadership, moral courage, public service, reconciliation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

9. Barack Obama

Why Inspirational	Lawyer, statesman, and the first African American U.S. president.
Key Leadership Lessons	Inclusive leadership, communication, consensus-building, public service.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ A Promised Land
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

10. Frederick Douglass

Why Inspirational	Formerly enslaved writer and statesman who became a leading abolitionist.
Key Leadership Lessons	Resilience, education, advocacy, persuasive communication.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

11. Sojourner Truth

Why Inspirational	Advocate for abolition, women's rights, and equality.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, public speaking, perseverance, social justice.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Narrative of Sojourner Truth
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

12. Alexandra Kollontai

Why Inspirational	One of the world's first female diplomats and an advocate for women's rights.
Key Leadership Lessons	Inclusion, innovation, public policy, gender equality.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

13. Nelson Mandela

Why Inspirational	Anti-apartheid leader who guided South Africa's democratic transition.
Key Leadership Lessons	Forgiveness, resilience, reconciliation, servant leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Long Walk to Freedom
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

14. Frantz Fanon

Why Inspirational	Influential thinker on colonialism, liberation, and identity.
Key Leadership Lessons	Critical analysis, courage, social transformation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Frantz Fanon: A Biography
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

15. Thomas Sankara

Why Inspirational	Remembered for reforms promoting self-reliance, anti-corruption, and public welfare.
Key Leadership Lessons	Integrity, accountability, visionary leadership, patriotism.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Thomas Sankara Speaks
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

16. Fela Anikulapo Kuti

Why Inspirational	Musician and activist who used art to challenge corruption and authoritarianism.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, freedom of expression, advocacy, creativity.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Fela: This Bitch of a Life
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

17. Usain Bolt

Why Inspirational	The most decorated sprinter in Olympic history and a symbol of excellence.
Key Leadership Lessons	Discipline, preparation, humility, consistency, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ My Story: 9.58
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

18. Mkwugo Okoye

Why Inspirational	Nigerian nationalist, political thinker, and writer on African development and governance.
Key Leadership Lessons	Nation-building, intellectual leadership, civic engagement.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Storms on the Niger (autobiographical work)
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

19. Melissa Jefferson

Why Inspirational	Award-winning musician and advocate for confidence, self-acceptance, and body positivity.
Key Leadership Lessons	Authenticity, confidence, resilience, empowering others.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Lizzo: Biography of a Legend (unofficial biography)
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

20. Ernesto 'Che' Guevara

Why Inspirational	Revolutionary figure whose life has had a lasting influence on political movements worldwide.
Key Leadership Lessons	Commitment, courage, endurance, conviction. His methods and legacy remain the subject of significant historical debate.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Motorcycle Diaries
Source	Comrade Jaye Gaskia

21. Malala Yousafzai

Why Inspirational	Nobel Peace Prize laureate and global advocate for girls' education who continued her advocacy after surviving an assassination attempt.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, resilience, advocacy, servant leadership, and defending the right to education.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb (2013)
Source	Chuchu

22. Greta Thunberg

Why Inspirational	International climate activist who mobilized millions of young people to advocate for urgent action on climate change.
Key Leadership Lessons	Conviction, persistence, civic responsibility, evidence-based advocacy, and youth leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference (2019)
Source	Chuchu

23. Hedy Lamarr

Why Inspirational	Actress and inventor whose pioneering work in frequency-hopping technology laid the foundation for Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and other wireless communications.
Key Leadership Lessons	Innovation, creativity, curiosity, lifelong learning, and multidisciplinary excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Hedy's Folly by Richard Rhodes (2011)
Source	Chuchu

24. Idris Elba

Why Inspirational	Acclaimed actor, producer, musician, and philanthropist recognized for excellence across multiple creative industries.
Key Leadership Lessons	Excellence, discipline, perseverance, versatility, and giving back to society.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ There is currently no full-length official autobiography by Idris Elba. Recommended reading: Idris Elba by Emily Herbert (2015).
Source	Chuchu

25. Kudirat Abiola

Why Inspirational	Nigerian pro-democracy activist remembered for her courageous campaign to restore democracy after the annulment of the 1993 presidential election.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, patriotism, sacrifice, democratic values, and public service.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Recommended reading: The Stolen Presidency by Olusegun Adeniyi (2018), which provides context on the Abiola family and the June 12 struggle. There is no widely recognized standalone biography of Kudirat Abiola.
Source	Chuchu

26. Michelle Obama

Why Inspirational	She is a Lawyer, author, and global advocate for education, healthy living, military families, and girls' empowerment. She has inspired millions through her authenticity, resilience, and commitment to public service.
Key Leadership Lessons	Authentic leadership, resilience, service, education, emotional intelligence, and empowering others.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Becoming (2018)
Source	Wife

27. Mother Teresa

Why Inspirational	Founder of the Missionaries of Charity and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. She dedicated her life to serving the poor, the sick, and the marginalized.
Key Leadership Lessons	Compassion, servant leadership, humility, selflessness, empathy, and commitment to humanity.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, edited by Brian Kolodiejchuk (2007)
Source	Wife

28. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Why Inspirational	Nigerian economist, former Minister of Finance, and the first woman and first African to lead the World Trade Organization. She is recognized globally for economic reforms, public service, and international leadership.
Key Leadership Lessons	Integrity, strategic thinking, economic leadership, resilience, negotiation, and public accountability.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Fighting Corruption Is Dangerous (2018)
Source	Wife

29. Oprah Winfrey

Why Inspirational	Media entrepreneur, philanthropist, producer, and one of the world's most influential women. She transformed personal adversity into a platform for education, inspiration, and social impact.
Key Leadership Lessons	Vision, resilience, communication, empathy, lifelong learning, and philanthropy.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Life You Want (2014) (Also recommended: Oprah: A Biography)
Source	Wife

30. Helen Keller

Why Inspirational	Despite being deafblind from early childhood, Helen Keller became a renowned author, lecturer, and advocate for people with disabilities, demonstrating extraordinary perseverance and determination.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, perseverance, optimism, resilience, lifelong learning, and overcoming adversity.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Story of My Life (1903)
Source	Wife

31. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti

Why Inspirational	Pioneering Nigerian nationalist, educator and women's rights organiser.
Key Leadership Lessons	Grassroots organising, courage, gender equality, civic mobilisation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria by Cheryl Johnson-Odim & Nina Emma Mba
Source	Botti

32. Kwame Nkrumah

Why Inspirational	Pan-African leader and Ghana's first prime minister and president.
Key Leadership Lessons	Vision, Pan-Africanism, institution building, self-determination.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years by June Milne
Source	Ralph

33. Julius Nyerere

Why Inspirational	Tanzanian independence leader, educator and advocate of African unity.
Key Leadership Lessons	Public service, simplicity, education, nation-building.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Nyerere: The Early Years by Thomas Molony
Source	Botti

34. Amílcar Cabral

Why Inspirational	Anti-colonial thinker and organiser in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.
Key Leadership Lessons	Political education, organisation, culture, strategic leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Amílcar Cabral: A Nationalist and Pan-Africanist Revolutionary by Peter Karibe Mendy
Source	Ralph

35. Steve Biko

Why Inspirational	Founder of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa.
Key Leadership Lessons	Dignity, self-belief, youth organising, intellectual courage.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biko by Donald Woods
Source	Andrew

36. Desmond Tutu

Why Inspirational	Cleric and anti-apartheid leader associated with reconciliation and human rights.
Key Leadership Lessons	Moral leadership, reconciliation, courage, compassion.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ No Future Without Forgiveness
Source	Andrew

37. Wangari Maathai

Why Inspirational	Kenyan environmentalist, democracy advocate and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.
Key Leadership Lessons	Environmental stewardship, grassroots mobilisation, persistence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Unbowed: A Memoir
Source	Ade

38. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Why Inspirational	Liberian stateswoman and Africa's first elected female head of state.
Key Leadership Lessons	Resilience, public leadership, post-conflict governance, women's leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ This Child Will Be Great
Source	Anthony

39. Kofi Annan

Why Inspirational	Ghanaian diplomat and former UN Secretary-General.
Key Leadership Lessons	Diplomacy, multilateralism, listening, principled leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Interventions: A Life in War and Peace
Source	Anthony

40. Wole Soyinka

Why Inspirational	Nigerian writer, Nobel laureate and advocate for freedom and democratic rights.
Key Leadership Lessons	Intellectual courage, freedom of expression, cultural leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ You Must Set Forth at Dawn
Source	Femi

41. Chinua Achebe

Why Inspirational	Nigerian novelist and public intellectual who shaped modern African literature.
Key Leadership Lessons	Storytelling, cultural confidence, ethical reflection, public responsibility.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ There Was a Country
Source	Emeka

42. Ken Saro-Wiwa

Why Inspirational	Writer and environmental justice campaigner for the Ogoni people.
Key Leadership Lessons	Nonviolent advocacy, environmental justice, courage, community rights.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ A Month and a Day
Source	Andrew

43. Edwin Madunagu

Why Inspirational	Nigerian Marxist scholar, journalist, organiser and public intellectual.
Key Leadership Lessons	Political education, movement memory, consistency, mentoring.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Nigerian Left: Introduction to History
Source	Emeka

44. Bene Madunagu

Why Inspirational	Nigerian botanist, feminist, socialist and organiser.
Key Leadership Lessons	Women's organising, scholarship, movement building, equality.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Women in Nigeria: The Challenge of Our Time (related movement reading)
Source	Domale

45. Abubakar Momoh

Why Inspirational	Nigerian political scientist, pro-democracy activist and public intellectual.
Key Leadership Lessons	Scholarship, democratic reform, mentorship, institution building.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The State, Civil Society and Democratization in Nigeria (selected writings)
Source	Che

46. Claude Ake

Why Inspirational	Nigerian political economist and scholar of democracy and development.
Key Leadership Lessons	Rigorous analysis, development thinking, democratic accountability.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Democracy and Development in Africa
Source	Emeka

47. Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem

Why Inspirational	Pan-African activist, scholar and organiser.
Key Leadership Lessons	Pan-Africanism, solidarity, humour, movement building.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Speaking Truth to Power: Selected Pan-African Postcards
Source	Femi

48. Gani Fawehinmi

Why Inspirational	Nigerian lawyer and human-rights advocate.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, rule of law, persistence, public-interest advocacy.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Gani: The Story of a Courageous Lawyer by Richard Akinnola
Source	Emeka

49. Kudirat Abiola

Why Inspirational	Nigerian pro-democracy activist associated with the June 12 struggle.
Key Leadership Lessons	Sacrifice, courage, democratic commitment, resilience.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Stolen Presidency by Olusegun Adeniyi (contextual reading)
Source	Ade

50. Fela Anikulapo Kuti

Why Inspirational	Afrobeat pioneer who used music as political and social commentary.
Key Leadership Lessons	Creative resistance, courage, freedom of expression, cultural power.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Fela: This Bitch of a Life by Carlos Moore
Source	Che

51. Bob Marley

Why Inspirational	Global reggae icon whose music carried messages of peace, justice and liberation.
Key Leadership Lessons	Cultural influence, unity, conviction, communication.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Catch a Fire: The Life of Bob Marley by Timothy White
Source	Che

52. Mahatma Gandhi

Why Inspirational	Indian independence leader associated with mass nonviolent resistance.
Key Leadership Lessons	Nonviolence, discipline, mass mobilisation, moral courage.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Story of My Experiments with Truth
Source	Ralph

53. Rosa Parks

Why Inspirational	Civil-rights activist whose refusal to surrender her bus seat became a movement catalyst.
Key Leadership Lessons	Quiet courage, dignity, disciplined resistance, civic action.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Rosa Parks: My Story
Source	Ralph

54. Ella Baker

Why Inspirational	Civil-rights organiser who championed participatory and grassroots leadership.
Key Leadership Lessons	Facilitation, grassroots leadership, youth empowerment, organisation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement by Barbara Ransby
Source	Dantani

55. Harriet Tubman

Why Inspirational	Abolitionist who escaped slavery and helped others reach freedom.
Key Leadership Lessons	Courage, service, strategy, sacrifice.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom by Catherine Clinton
Source	Domale

56. Maya Angelou

Why Inspirational	Writer and civil-rights activist whose work explored dignity, identity and resilience.
Key Leadership Lessons	Communication, resilience, empathy, authenticity.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Source	Dantani

57. Muhammad Ali

Why Inspirational	Boxing champion and public figure known for confidence, principle and social engagement.
Key Leadership Lessons	Self-belief, discipline, courage of conviction, resilience.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Greatest: My Own Story
Source	Femi

58. Serena Williams

Why Inspirational	Tennis champion whose career exemplifies sustained excellence and resilience.
Key Leadership Lessons	Preparation, mental strength, excellence, persistence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ On the Line
Source	Domale

59. Pelé

Why Inspirational	Brazilian football icon and global ambassador for sport.
Key Leadership Lessons	Excellence, teamwork, humility, global citizenship.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Pelé: The Autobiography
Source	Andrew

60. Miriam Makeba

Why Inspirational	South African singer and anti-apartheid advocate.
Key Leadership Lessons	Cultural diplomacy, courage, identity, using art for justice.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Makeba: My Story
Source	Dantani

D. 60 Iconic Sports Personalities

This section completes the wider Jaye @ 60 'Top 60' legacy architecture with a dedicated sports collection. It is an editorially generated companion list and should be reviewed/confirmed before being presented as Jaye's personal selections.

1. Muhammad Ali

Sport	Boxing
Why Inspirational	Combined elite sporting achievement with outspoken conviction and social engagement.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Courage, self-belief, discipline, communication, principle.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Greatest: My Own Story
Source	Femi

2. Pelé

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	A global football icon whose excellence helped internationalise the sport.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Teamwork, excellence, humility, consistency.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Pelé: The Autobiography
Source	Femi

3. Diego Maradona

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	One of football's most gifted and influential players, whose life also illustrates the pressures of fame.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Creativity, confidence, resilience; also the importance of discipline and support systems.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ El Diego
Source	Andrew

4. Lionel Messi

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	A model of sustained excellence, technical mastery and team contribution.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Consistency, humility, preparation, mastery.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Messi by Guillem Balagué
Source	Andrew

5. Cristiano Ronaldo

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Known for exceptional longevity, work ethic and goal-oriented professionalism.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Discipline, ambition, fitness, continuous improvement.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Cristiano Ronaldo: The Biography by Guillem Balagué
Source	Emeka

6. Marta

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Brazilian football great and a major global figure in women's sport.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Excellence, persistence, representation, leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Marta: The Story of the World's Greatest Female Footballer (biographical reading)
Source	Ade

7. Didier Drogba

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Ivorian football icon noted for leadership on and off the pitch and humanitarian engagement.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Team leadership, service, influence, responsibility.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Commitment: My Autobiography
Source	Ralph

8. Samuel Eto'o

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Cameroonian football great who excelled across top clubs and international competition.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Ambition, adaptability, confidence, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Samuel Eto'o: The Making of a Legend (biographical reading)
Source	Anthony

9. George Weah

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	African football icon who later entered public service.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Excellence, transition, aspiration, public responsibility.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ George Weah: The Making of a President (biographical reading)
Source	Ralph

10. Nwankwo Kanu

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Nigerian football icon whose career and health journey inspired millions.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Resilience, optimism, teamwork, giving back.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Kanu: The Biography (biographical reading)
Source	Bright

11. Jay-Jay Okocha

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Celebrated Nigerian footballer known for creativity, flair and confidence.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Creativity, confidence, joy, mastery.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ So Good They Named Him Twice (biographical reading)
Source	Femi

12. Rashidi Yekini

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Nigeria's record-setting striker and a symbol of national football history.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Focus, finishing, perseverance, national pride.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Rashidi Yekini: The Goals King (biographical reading)
Source	Femi

13. Asisat Oshoala

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Nigerian football star and a leading African figure in women's football.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Ambition, resilience, representation, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews on Asisat Oshoala
Source	Femi

14. Perpetua Nkwocha

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Pioneer of Nigerian women's football and multiple African award winner.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Consistency, pioneering leadership, resilience.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles on Perpetua Nkwocha
Source	Domale

15. Mikel John Obi

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Nigerian midfielder known for composure and team-oriented leadership.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Composure, teamwork, discipline, responsibility.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and long-form interviews
Source	Andrew

16. Sunday Oliseh

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Nigerian international remembered for intelligence, leadership and a defining Olympic-era career.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Strategic thinking, confidence, leadership, preparation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Audacity to Refuse
Source	Andrew

17. Usain Bolt

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	World-record sprinter whose dominance transformed global athletics.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Preparation, confidence, consistency, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Faster Than Lightning: My Autobiography
Source	Emeka

18. Carl Lewis

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Multiple Olympic champion across sprinting and long jump.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Longevity, versatility, discipline, competitive excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Inside Track: My Professional Life in Amateur Track and Field
Source	Domale

19. Jesse Owens

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Olympic champion whose achievements challenged racist ideology on a global stage.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Courage, excellence under pressure, dignity.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Jesse: The Man Who Outran Hitler by Jesse Owens
Source	Dantani

20. Florence Griffith Joyner

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Iconic sprinter remembered for extraordinary speed and distinctive presence.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Confidence, excellence, individuality, preparation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Flo-Jo: My Life on the Track
Source	Dantani

21. Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Jamaican sprint icon noted for longevity and repeated championship success.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Consistency, resilience, preparation, motherhood and excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews
Source	Ralph

22. Allyson Felix

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Decorated sprinter and advocate for women athletes and maternal protections.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Excellence, advocacy, resilience, values-based leadership.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and first-person essays
Source	Femi

23. Tobi Amusan

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Nigerian hurdler who reached the highest level of global competition.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Focus, technical mastery, resilience, national pride.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews
Source	Emeka

24. Chioma Ajunwa

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Nigeria's first individual Olympic gold medallist.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Perseverance, breakthrough achievement, national service.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles on Chioma Ajunwa
Source	Dantani

25. Haile Gebrselassie

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Ethiopian distance-running legend and entrepreneur.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Endurance, discipline, long-term thinking, reinvention.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Greatest: The Haile Gebrselassie Story
Source	Dantani

26. Eliud Kipchoge

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Marathon champion renowned for discipline, simplicity and mental strength.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Consistency, humility, focus, process.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Eliud Kipchoge: History's Fastest Marathoner by various biographers
Source	Ijeoma

27. Serena Williams

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	One of tennis's most accomplished champions and an icon of resilience.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Mental strength, excellence, self-belief, persistence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ On the Line
Source	Ijeoma

28. Venus Williams

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	Champion and advocate who helped reshape women's tennis and pay equity.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Pioneering leadership, resilience, advocacy, longevity.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Come to Win
Source	Ijeoma

29. Roger Federer

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	Tennis great admired for sustained excellence, adaptability and sportsmanship.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Composure, mastery, reinvention, respect.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Master by Christopher Clarey
Source	Femi

30. Rafael Nadal

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	Champion associated with extraordinary competitive resilience and humility.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Persistence, discipline, recovery, humility.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Rafa: My Story
Source	Emeka

31. Novak Djokovic

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	Champion known for mental toughness, adaptability and sustained performance.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Resilience, focus, preparation, adaptability.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Serve to Win
Source	Dantani

32. Billie Jean King

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	Champion and advocate for gender equality in sport.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Advocacy, courage, institution building, equality.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ All In
Source	Domale

33. Naomi Osaka

Sport	Tennis
Why Inspirational	Grand Slam champion who has also influenced conversations on athlete wellbeing and identity.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Self-awareness, courage, boundaries, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews
Source	Ralph

34. Michael Jordan

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Basketball icon whose competitive drive and performance shaped global sports culture.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Preparation, competitiveness, teamwork, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Driven from Within
Source	Ralph

35. LeBron James

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Elite basketball player noted for longevity, leadership and community investment.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Consistency, leadership, philanthropy, adaptability.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ LeBron, Inc. by Brian Windhorst
Source	Ralph

36. Kobe Bryant

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Champion remembered for relentless preparation and the 'Mamba Mentality'.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Discipline, deliberate practice, resilience, focus.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Mamba Mentality
Source	Domale

37. Magic Johnson

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Champion playmaker who successfully transitioned into business and advocacy.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Teamwork, vision, reinvention, entrepreneurship.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ My Life
Source	Domale

38. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Basketball great, author and public intellectual.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Longevity, learning, social awareness, discipline.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Becoming Kareem
Source	Andrew

39. Hakeem Olajuwon

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Nigerian-born NBA champion known for skill, discipline and faith.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Mastery, humility, discipline, cultural confidence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Living the Dream
Source	Anthony

40. Giannis Antetokounmpo

Sport	Basketball
Why Inspirational	Global basketball star whose journey reflects migration, family and perseverance.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Resilience, family, humility, continuous growth.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Giannis: The Improbable Rise of an NBA MVP by Mirin Fader
Source	Anthony

41. Michael Phelps

Sport	Swimming
Why Inspirational	Most decorated Olympian, whose story includes achievement and mental-health challenges.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Preparation, recovery, goal setting, wellbeing.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ No Limits
Source	Anthony

42. Simone Biles

Sport	Gymnastics
Why Inspirational	Gymnastics icon who combined unprecedented performance with advocacy for athlete wellbeing.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Excellence, courage, boundaries, resilience.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Courage to Soar
Source	Domale

43. Nadia Comăneci

Sport	Gymnastics
Why Inspirational	First gymnast to receive a perfect 10 at the Olympics.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Precision, discipline, composure, pioneering excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Letters to a Young Gymnast
Source	Dantani

44. Tiger Woods

Sport	Golf
Why Inspirational	Transformative golfer whose career illustrates extraordinary excellence and comeback.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Focus, mastery, resilience, handling pressure.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Tiger Woods by Jeff Benedict & Armen Keteyian
Source	Emeka

45. Jackie Robinson

Sport	Baseball
Why Inspirational	Broke Major League Baseball's colour barrier in the modern era.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Courage, restraint, dignity, social change.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ I Never Had It Made
Source	Ade

46. Babe Ruth

Sport	Baseball
Why Inspirational	One of baseball's defining historical figures.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Performance, confidence, cultural impact.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Big Bam by Leigh Montville
Source	Dantani

47. Shohei Ohtani

Sport	Baseball
Why Inspirational	Elite two-way baseball player who has expanded expectations of versatility.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Versatility, discipline, innovation, mastery.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and long-form sports journalism
Source	Dantani

48. Tom Brady

Sport	American Football
Why Inspirational	Quarterback known for longevity, preparation and championship performance.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Preparation, consistency, leadership, continuous improvement.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The TB12 Method
Source	Bright

49. Lewis Hamilton

Sport	Formula One
Why Inspirational	Multiple world champion and advocate for diversity and inclusion in motorsport.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Excellence, resilience, advocacy, representation.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Lewis Hamilton: My Story
Source	Ade

50. Ayrton Senna

Sport	Formula One
Why Inspirational	Formula One icon remembered for speed, intensity and commitment to excellence.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Focus, courage, precision, purpose.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Ayrton Senna: The Whole Story by Christopher Hilton
Source	Femi

51. Michael Schumacher

Sport	Formula One
Why Inspirational	Formula One champion associated with relentless preparation and team development.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Discipline, technical focus, teamwork, consistency.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Michael Schumacher: The Edge of Greatness by James Allen
Source	Ade

52. Valentino Rossi

Sport	Motorcycle Racing
Why Inspirational	MotoGP icon known for longevity, charisma and competitive intelligence.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Adaptability, joy, resilience, mastery.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ What If I Had Never Tried It
Source	Bright

53. Manny Pacquiao

Sport	Boxing
Why Inspirational	Champion across multiple weight divisions who later entered public service.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Discipline, courage, reinvention, service.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ PacMan: My Story of Hope, Resilience, and Never-Say-Never Determination
Source	Ralph

54. Anthony Joshua

Sport	Boxing
Why Inspirational	British-Nigerian heavyweight champion whose career includes setbacks and rebuilding.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Resilience, discipline, humility, recovery.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews
Source	Femi

55. Claressa Shields

Sport	Boxing
Why Inspirational	Multi-division champion and pioneer in women's boxing.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Confidence, resilience, representation, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ T-Rex (documentary/biographical resources)
Source	Bright

56. Caster Semenya

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Middle-distance champion whose career has become central to debates on sport, identity and regulation.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Resilience, dignity, self-advocacy, navigating institutions.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ The Race to Be Myself
Source	Femi

57. Yaya Toure

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Ivorian midfielder and African football icon.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Versatility, leadership, technical excellence, perseverance.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews
Source	Anthony

58. Sadio Mané

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Senegalese football star noted for excellence and community investment.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Humility, service, discipline, social responsibility.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Biographical profiles and interviews
Source	Botti

59. Mia Hamm

Sport	Football
Why Inspirational	Pioneer of women's football and a major figure in the growth of the sport.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Teamwork, pioneering leadership, discipline, excellence.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Go for the Goal
Source	Domale

60. Cathy Freeman

Sport	Athletics
Why Inspirational	Australian Olympic champion and Indigenous sporting icon.
Leadership & Life Lessons	Identity, resilience, national symbolism, focus.
Recommended Biography Reading	/ Cathy: Her Own Story
Source	Domale

SECTION FOUR **VOICES ON JAYE**

Reflections, Tributes and Family Voices



JAYE @ 60

**REFLECTIONS,
TRIBUTES & FAMILY
VOICES**

*A Life of Ideas, Struggle, Service and Transformation
"The Birthday was the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose."*

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PART ONE REFLECTIONS

Ideas • Movements • Memory • Personal Encounters

Thoughtful and analytical pieces on Jaye's ideas, work, struggles, leadership and contributions.

Ideas, Action, and the Making of History: Reflections on Jaye Gaskiya at Sixty

Dung Pam Sha

Professor of Political Economy and Development Studies

Department of Political Science

University of Jos, Nigeria

&

Chairperson, Board of Trustees, PAVE Network

INTRODUCTION

Jaye Gaskiya's 60th birthday is more than a personal milestone. It is an opportunity to celebrate a life devoted to Nigeria's enduring struggle for democracy, social justice, workers' rights, and human emancipation. It also invites reflection on the continuing importance of principled activism, political education, and collective action in building a more just and democratic society.

Milestone birthdays encourage us to look beyond the passage of time and reflect on the values and commitments that define a life. In Jaye's case, six decades have been marked by remarkable consistency of purpose. Whether working with trade unions, civil society organisations, environmental justice movements, development partners, or peacebuilding initiatives, he has remained committed to a vision of democratic transformation grounded in equality, participation, and human dignity.

History, Conviction, and the Making of a Patriot

His life reminds us that history is shaped not only by presidents, generals, or economic elites, but also by those whose quiet labour strengthens institutions, develops leaders, educates citizens, and sustains democratic movements. Jaye belongs to this distinguished tradition. His contribution is measured not by public office but by the organisations he has strengthened, the people he has mentored, and the democratic ideals he has consistently defended.

I first met Jaye in the early 1990s during a meeting of the Democratic Alternative (DA) in Port Harcourt. Nigeria was then experiencing one of the most difficult periods in its political history. Military dictatorship had narrowed democratic space, while the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) deepened poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Universities, labour unions, student movements, and civil society organisations became important centres of debate over the country's future and alternatives to authoritarian rule and neoliberal economic reforms.

The Democratic Alternative emerged as one of the principal platforms through which progressive Nigerians articulated alternative visions of democracy and social justice. It was within this environment that I encountered Jaye. What immediately distinguished him was not fiery rhetoric or ideological grandstanding but his intellectual discipline, analytical clarity, humility, and remarkable ability to explain complex political economy issues in language that ordinary activists could understand. Many activists inspire; fewer educate. Jaye has consistently belonged to that rare tradition of political educators who believe that ideas become transformative only when they are understood and translated into collective action.

Reflecting on Jaye at sixty is also to reflect on a generation forged by military repression, structural adjustment, labour struggles, student activism, and resistance to authoritarianism. Many members of this generation endured detention, surveillance, unemployment, exile, and personal hardship. Yet they persisted because they believed that another Nigeria was possible. Jaye's life embodies the resilience, sacrifice, and optimism that characterised this generation of democratic activists.

His political journey can be understood through Karl Marx's observation in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that people make their own history, but not under circumstances of their own choosing. Jaye's activism developed within conditions shaped by authoritarian rule, economic crisis, widening inequality, and the growing influence of neoliberal reforms. Faced with these realities, some choose accommodation or withdrawal. Jaye chose engagement. His commitment reflected neither personal ambition nor ideological romanticism, but a profound conviction that organised citizens possess the capacity to transform society.

This conviction explains why his activism has consistently been grounded in political economy rather than personality politics. He has long argued that poverty, corruption, inequality, and democratic failure cannot be understood simply as the products of bad leadership. Rather, they arise from political and economic structures that concentrate wealth, power, and opportunity in the hands of a privileged minority while excluding the majority. Consequently, replacing one government with another is insufficient if the institutions and relationships that reproduce inequality remain unchanged.

Throughout his career, Jaye has therefore focused on strengthening democratic institutions, empowering citizens, and expanding participation in public life. Whether working on labour education, governance reform, environmental justice, constitutional dialogue, conflict transformation, or policy advocacy, his objective has remained constant: enabling ordinary people to shape the political and economic decisions affecting their lives.

Celebrating Jaye at sixty is therefore not simply an exercise in personal admiration. It is an invitation to reflect on the larger questions that have guided his life's work. How do democratic movements remain relevant across changing political contexts? How can organisations combine principled commitment with strategic flexibility? How do ideas become organised political action? How are movements sustained across generations? These are questions that have consistently informed his activism.

Central to his approach is a Marxist orientation, understood not as rigid ideology but as a method of inquiry. For Jaye, Marxism provides tools for analysing class relations,

political power, inequality, the state, and historical change. It encourages critical thinking rather than ideological conformity. Through this perspective, he has consistently asked fundamental questions: Who controls economic resources? Whose interests shape public policy? Why does poverty persist despite abundant national wealth? Why do democratic institutions often fail to deliver social justice? These questions have informed both his scholarship and his practical engagement with public policy.

Yet Jaye's politics has never been sectarian. One of his defining strengths is his ability to engage constructively across ideological and institutional boundaries without compromising his principles. Whether working with trade unions, civil society organisations, government institutions, international development partners, or local communities, he has demonstrated that principled engagement does not require ideological surrender. Instead, lasting democratic change depends upon dialogue, coalition building, negotiation, and patient institution-building anchored in clear ethical commitments.

The diversity of his professional engagements, from environmental justice and labour education to governance reform, peacebuilding, and human rights, reflects not fragmented interests but a coherent political philosophy centred on justice, participation, equality, and democratic citizenship. Across changing political contexts and organisational settings, his values have remained remarkably consistent.

It is this consistency of purpose, intellectual integrity, and enduring belief in the transformative capacity of organised citizens that defines Jaye Gaskiya's contribution. His life is worthy not only of celebration but also of careful reflection by all who remain committed to building a democratic, inclusive, and socially just Nigeria.

The Teacher, Organiser, Campaigner, and Public Intellectual

One of Jaye Gaskiya's most enduring contributions lies not simply in the organisations he has served or the positions he has occupied, but in the people he has helped to develop. For more than three decades, he has invested in nurturing workers, activists, civil society leaders, community organisers, researchers, and young intellectuals. His legacy is therefore reflected not only in programmes implemented or policies influenced, but also in the capacities he has built and the new generation of democratic actors he has inspired.

In many respects, Jaye exemplifies Antonio Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual, an intellectual whose ideas emerge from lived social struggles rather than detached academic reflection. Unlike conventional intellectuals whose work is often confined to

universities, the organic intellectual engages directly with society while interpreting and enriching its struggles through critical reflection.

Throughout his career, Jaye has occupied this unique space where scholarship, activism, and public engagement reinforce one another. For him, knowledge has never been an end-in-itself, but a resource for democratic transformation. He teaches while organising, research while advocating, and reflects while acting. Theory and practice are therefore complementary rather than competing pursuits. This explains why his writings, training, and policy engagements have consistently addressed the everyday concerns of workers, citizens, and marginalised communities.

A Teacher of Workers and Citizens

Political education has remained central to Jaye's activism because he believes democracy cannot flourish without informed and organised citizens. In societies marked by inequality and authoritarian traditions, ignorance often becomes an instrument of domination, while political education equips citizens with the confidence and knowledge to participate meaningfully in public life.

Whether facilitating workshops for trade unionists, mentoring young activists, training civil society organisations, or addressing public forums, Jaye has demonstrated a rare ability to explain complex political and economic issues in language that is accessible without sacrificing intellectual rigour. Rather than reducing ideas to slogans, he encourages questioning, critical thinking, and collective reflection. Participants in his programmes frequently leave not merely with new information but with a deeper understanding of the structural forces shaping their lives.

Influenced by emancipatory traditions associated with thinkers such as Paulo Freire, Jaye regards workers, women, youth, and rural communities not as passive beneficiaries of development but as active agents capable of analysing their circumstances and organising for change. Political education, for him, is therefore an instrument of democratic empowerment rather than simple knowledge transfer.

Labour as a Democratic Force

Although his work has spanned governance, environmental justice, peacebuilding, and development, Jaye has maintained a particularly deep commitment to the labour movement. He has consistently viewed trade unions as more than organisations for negotiating wages and working conditions. They are democratic institutions through which citizens learn solidarity, collective organisation, negotiation, and participation in national development.

This perspective reflects his belief that workers' rights cannot be separated from broader questions of governance, constitutionalism, public accountability, social protection, environmental sustainability, and economic justice. Throughout his career, he has supported labour organisations through political education, policy analysis, organisational development, and leadership training. At the same time, he has encouraged unions to respond creatively to new realities such as globalisation, technological change, informal employment, shrinking civic space, and widening inequality. Rather than limiting organised labour to workplace concerns, he has consistently advocated broader engagement in national democratic and developmental debates.

Building Coalitions for Democratic Change

Another defining feature of Jaye's career has been his remarkable capacity for coalition building. Whether working through Environmental Rights Action, ActionAid Nigeria, Oxfam, Voluntary Service Overseas, ThinkAct Consults, or broader civil society networks, he has demonstrated an uncommon ability to bring together organisations with diverse mandates, interests, and ideological orientations.

Recognising that democratic transformation cannot be achieved by isolated organisations, he has consistently promoted collaboration, dialogue, and consensus-building. His leadership style is characterised less by personal prominence than by facilitation, listening, and creating space for collective decision-making. This ability to unite diverse actors around shared democratic objectives has earned him respect across labour unions, civil society organisations, donor agencies, academic institutions, and community groups. It has also made him a trusted mentor to many younger activists.

Environmental Justice and Democratic Governance

Jaye's work on environmental justice illustrates the breadth of his political vision. During his engagement with Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria, he consistently argued that environmental degradation was not merely an ecological problem but also a question of political power, economic inequality, and social justice. Communities often bear the environmental costs of development while receiving few of its benefits.

Accordingly, he linked environmental sustainability with democratic accountability, human rights, and community participation. Long before climate justice became a dominant global concern, he recognised that sustainable development requires placing affected communities at the centre of decision-making. This integrated perspective also informed his work on governance reform, social accountability, food security,

agricultural livelihoods, and economic justice. For Jaye, democracy extends beyond elections to include accountable institutions, inclusive public policies, respect for human rights, and meaningful citizen participation.

The Public Intellectual

Perhaps Jaye's greatest distinction is his refusal to separate intellectual work from public engagement. He has been a researcher, writer, facilitator, strategist, organiser, and policy analyst, yet each of these roles has informed the others. Research has strengthened his advocacy, while practical engagement has enriched his scholarship.

This integration has enabled him to engage governments, international organisations, labour unions, and civil society while maintaining intellectual independence. He has neither romanticised the state nor rejected engagement with public institutions. Instead, he has consistently demonstrated that principled engagement can coexist with critical independence.

In an era increasingly characterised by performative activism and media visibility, Jaye represents a more enduring model of democratic leadership, one grounded in patient institution-building, political education, ethical consistency, and collective organisation. His influence rests not on public acclaim but on the generations of activists, workers, scholars, and community leaders whose political consciousness he has helped shape.

Ultimately, Jaye Gaskiya's significance as a teacher, organiser, campaigner, and public intellectual lies in his unwavering belief that ideas acquire their greatest value only when they enable ordinary people to understand their circumstances, organise collectively, and participate actively in the continuing struggle for democracy, social justice, and human dignity.

The State, the Left, and an Enduring Legacy

Jaye Gaskiya's enduring contribution cannot be understood simply by listing the organisations he has served or the campaigns in which he has participated. The coherence of his life's work lies in the political economy perspective that has consistently shaped his analysis and activism. Throughout his career, he has argued that Nigeria's persistent crises, poverty, inequality, corruption, environmental degradation, democratic deficits, unemployment, and insecurity, are interconnected outcomes of political and economic structures rather than isolated policy failures. His activism has therefore sought not merely to address the symptoms of injustice but to confront the systems that reproduce them.

Understanding the Nigerian State

One of Jaye's most significant intellectual contributions has been his understanding of the Nigerian state. Rather than attributing governance failures solely to corrupt leaders or incompetent governments, he has consistently viewed the state as an arena in which competing political and economic interests struggle for power while often preserving structures of elite domination.

This political economy perspective shifts attention from personalities to institutions and from individual behaviour to systemic incentives. It helps explain why successive governments, despite changes in leadership and political parties, frequently reproduce similar patterns of exclusion, inequality, and weak public accountability.

For Jaye, democratic transformation cannot be reduced to periodic elections or changes in government. Elections are important, but lasting democracy depends on accountable institutions, active citizens, an independent labour movement, vibrant civil society, a free press, and constitutional safeguards capable of limiting abuses of power. This understanding explains why his work has consistently focused on empowering citizens rather than glorifying leaders. He has encouraged workers, women, youth, professional associations, and community organisations to become active participants in governance, arguing that democracy is sustainable only when citizens possess the capacity to hold public institutions accountable.

Reflections on the Nigerian Left

Jaye's political journey is inseparable from the history of the Nigerian Left. He has consistently acknowledged the sacrifices made by labour activists, students, academics, journalists, and civil society organisations in resisting military dictatorship, structural adjustment, authoritarianism, and neoliberal reforms. Many of the democratic freedoms Nigerians enjoy today are products of those struggles.

At the same time, he has argued that progressive movements must continually renew themselves. He has cautioned against ideological rigidity, organisational fragmentation, and unnecessary rivalry among organisations pursuing similar democratic objectives. For him, the effectiveness of progressive politics depends not on uniformity of opinion but on the ability to cooperate around shared values while respecting diversity of perspectives.

This philosophy of "unity in diversity" explains his remarkable ability to work across trade unions, civil society organisations, faith-based institutions, academic communities, development agencies, and grassroots organisations without compromising his principles. Equally important has been his commitment to generational renewal. Recognising that democratic movements survive only when new leaders are cultivated,

he has invested considerable effort in mentoring younger organisers, researchers, facilitators, and activists. In many respects, his most enduring legacy lies in the people whose leadership has been shaped by his guidance.

Peacebuilding and Human Security

Jaye's work on peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism represents a natural extension of the democratic principles that have guided his career. Rather than viewing insecurity solely through military or law-enforcement approaches, he has consistently argued that violent conflict is rooted in political exclusion, economic inequality, weak institutions, and failures of governance.

Communities affected by injustice, unemployment, and marginalisation are often more vulnerable to conflict and violent mobilisation. Sustainable peace therefore requires more than security operations. It depends upon accountable governance, inclusive development, social dialogue, protection of human rights, and meaningful citizen participation.

His work has promoted a people-centred understanding of security in which communities become active partners in preventing violence and strengthening social cohesion. By bringing together civil society organisations, community leaders, government institutions, and development partners, he has demonstrated that lasting peace depends on collaboration rather than coercion. This integrated approach reflects his long-held belief that peace, democracy, development, and social justice are mutually reinforcing.

A Career Guided by Purpose

From Environmental Rights Action and ActionAid Nigeria to Oxfam, Voluntary Service Overseas, ThinkAct Consults, the 2014 National Conference, and numerous policy platforms, Jaye's career has been guided by purpose rather than position. Although his institutional affiliations have evolved over time, his commitment to social justice has remained remarkably consistent.

Whether working on labour education, governance reform, environmental justice, constitutional dialogue, conflict transformation, or community development, his objective has been to strengthen democratic institutions and empower citizens. This consistency explains why he enjoys respect across labour unions, civil society organisations, academic institutions, donor agencies, and development partners. His influence derives not simply from expertise but from integrity, strategic insight, and a willingness to mentor younger generations of activists and practitioners.

Lessons for a New Generation

Jaye Gaskiya's sixtieth birthday provides an opportunity to reflect on lessons for a new generation of activists, scholars, trade unionists, and democratic leaders.

First, ideas matter. Effective activism requires intellectual seriousness, historical understanding, and rigorous political analysis. Lasting social transformation depends upon informed strategies rather than passion alone.

Second, organisation matters. Throughout his career, Jaye has demonstrated that democratic progress is built through strong institutions rather than charismatic individuals. Durable organisations preserve institutional memory, cultivate leadership, and sustain collective struggles across generations.

Third, integrity matters. Jaye has shown that it is possible to engage governments, international organisations, labour unions, and civil society without compromising intellectual independence or ethical principles. His career illustrates that principled engagement is both possible and necessary.

Finally, hope matters. Having witnessed military rule, democratic setbacks, economic crises, and persistent inequality, he continues to believe in the transformative power of organised citizens. His optimism is grounded not in idealism but in the conviction that history remains open to collective action and democratic struggle.

An Enduring Legacy

As Jaye Gaskiya celebrates sixty years of life, his greatest legacy lies not merely in reports written, organisations served, or policies influenced, but in the people he has mentored, the institutions he has strengthened, and the democratic values he has consistently embodied. He has demonstrated that scholarship and activism are mutually reinforcing, that principled conviction can coexist with openness to dialogue, and that authentic leadership is measured less by personal prominence than by the capacity to educate, organise, and empower others.

The most fitting tribute to Jaye is therefore not only to celebrate his achievements but also to continue the work to which he has devoted his life: strengthening democratic institutions, expanding civic space, defending workers' rights, promoting social justice, protecting the environment, nurturing future leaders, and sustaining the belief that another Nigeria is possible.

At sixty, Jaye Gaskiya remains what he has always been, an educator, organiser, public intellectual, and committed democrat whose life reminds us that activism is not an event

but a lifelong vocation. In celebrating Jaye, we celebrate not only an individual but also a tradition of democratic struggle that continues to inspire all who remain committed to justice, equality, solidarity, and human dignity. The struggle continues.

Jaye@60: Tribute to an Exemplar

Prof. Omotoye Olorode

I must have met Comrade Jaye Gaskia (JG) several times up to the mid-1980s without being aware that he was the person that I have heard quite a lot about and would have wished to meet live and in flesh, as they say.

The 1980s and early 1990s to mid-1990s was perhaps the “Golden Age” of synergy in the Nigerian labour movement. That was when the youth inside and outside the tertiary educational institutions, a significant segment of the academia, and organised labour, pre-eminently the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), generated a national democratic coalition which was arguably the most advanced and most coherent in Nigeria since the mid-1940s.

In that “Golden Age”, Comrade JG affected our various theaters of engagement so prominently and so consistently that it was difficult for many comrades in my own generation not to notice his political commitment and capacity for organising. In retrospect it was that general collective awareness of the capacity and development of individuals in the movement, and in concrete action, that invigorated our movement since then. It has been this collective awareness that generally engendered the growth and development of our movement in the flows and ebbs of its evolution.

It had been the privilege of the constant convergences of segments of our movement that enabled my own closer and more robust encounter with Comrade Jaye Gaskia in the last ten years especially. One of such convergences has been our close working together on theory and practice in seeking ways to deliver on our mission as socialists in the Alliance for Surviving Covid-19 and Beyond (ASCAB) since the middle of 2020, and in transforming ASCAB, along with a good number of socialist formations and groups into The Peoples Alternative Political Movement (TPAP-M), and the Movement for Socialist Transformation (MOST).

Regarding the evolution of the foregoing, Comrade JG afforded , and continues to afford, us the facility of his very wide and deep experience in learning, teaching, and organising in the movement. He did all these with consummate energy, diligence,

confidence, humility, and finesse. And, having regard to the need of our movement to generate and develop exemplary cadres for the urgent task of birthing substantive change in favour of the Nigerian working people, we have a model in Comrade JG!

We are saying, “Happy 60th Birthday Anniversary” to our truly valuable Comrade JG!

We wish you all the very best of the occasion of this anniversary: And Far, Far, Beyond!

Omotoye Olorode,

Member, Secretariat Collective, Movement for Socialist Transformation (MOST)

The Work Is Never Finished: Jaye Gaskia at 60!

Rev. Nnimmo Bassey

Sixty years is a good time to pause. Not simply to count the years, but to ask what has been done with them, whose lives have been touched, what struggles have been strengthened, and what seeds have been planted for those who will come after.

For Jaye Gaskia, the answer cannot be reduced to positions held, organisations worked with, campaigns joined or papers written. His life has been a continuing engagement with the *di 翻* cult work of understanding society and organising to change what must be changed.

I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Jaye for many years, including our time together at Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN). Our paths have crossed through many struggles since then, and Jaye has remained a significant ally, comrade and source of strength to the work we continue to do at the Health of Mother Earth Foundation.

One quality has remained constant: Jaye is an activist by conviction, not by occupation.

He has never needed a fashionable cause to tell him where to stand. His work has moved through environmental justice, democracy, community rights, resource control, governance, peace and security, climate justice and movement building. The subjects may have changed, but the question underneath has remained remarkably consistent: who holds power, who is denied it, and how can people organise to reclaim their agency?

That is the mark of a thinker who refuses to take the world as given.

Jaye does not merely look at the visible problem. He wants to understand the structures beneath it. Environmental destruction leads him to questions of power and political economy. Conflict leads to questions of exclusion and governance. Development leads to questions of who benefits and who bears the cost. Climate change leads to questions of history, inequality and the systems that created the crisis.

This ability to see beyond the immediate is one of his gifts.

But Jaye is not only a thinker. He is an organiser. He understands that an idea, however powerful, cannot transform society by remaining in the minds of a few people. Ideas must travel. People must organise. Relationships must be built. Movements must acquire the capacity to act.

Over the years, he has contributed to that *dìng* 定 cult work of building collective power. He has helped people connect their immediate struggles to larger questions of justice, democracy and social transformation. He has also understood something that movements often learn painfully: that resistance must be accompanied by political education, and that political education must remain connected to action.

A movement without memory can lose its direction. A movement without analysis can be manipulated. A movement without organisation can dissipate. Jaye's work has consistently recognizes that these three though distinct are interconnected.

There is also something deeply admirable about his intellectual restlessness. He has continued to learn, question and rethink. The world has changed since the early environmental and democratic struggles in which many of us were formed. Extraction has acquired new languages. Old forms of dispossession now appear in the language of markets, investment, development and even climate solutions.

Yet the underlying question remains: who decides, who gains and who pays? This is why Jaye's contribution to climate and ecological justice is important. Climate change is not only a question of emissions or temperature. It is a question of power, history, inequality, colonialism, and the choices societies make about whose lives and whose futures matter.

At HOMEf, we have repeatedly benefited from Jaye's willingness to bring these questions into our learning spaces. He has been one of the voices that has helped make the EtUwem School of Ecology a space of interrogation rather than instruction alone. He does not simply come to speak. He comes to provoke thought, unsettle comfortable assumptions and push people to look again.

That is a valuable form of leadership.

This is why the Academy being launched in his honour as he turns sixty is so fitting. The Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy offers an opportunity to turn experience into memory, memory into learning, and learning into the capacity of another generation to act. There is wisdom in choosing to mark sixty not only by looking back, but by investing in those who must carry the work forward.

The true measure of a life of activism is not how many people know one's name. It is how many people have become more courageous, more discerning, more organised and more willing to act because their paths crossed yours. By that measure, Jaye has much to celebrate.

There are people who have learnt from his interventions, organisers who have worked alongside him, young activists whose political imagination has been stretched by his questions, movements that have benefited from his ideas, and countless spaces where his presence has helped turn conversation into political reflection. Much of that influence may not appear in a report or on a balance sheet. It lives in people. And that, to me, is one of the deepest meanings of a life well lived: to leave behind not merely monuments to oneself, but people who are better equipped to continue the work.

At sixty, Jaye is not standing at the end of the road. He is standing at another vantage point on a long road whose destination remains unfinished. Nigeria is unfinished. Africa is unfinished. The struggle for justice is unfinished. So, there is still much to question. Much to organise. Much to teach. Much to learn. And much to hand over.

My dear brother and comrade, congratulations on sixty years of life and on the many ways in which you have given that life to the pursuit of justice, dignity, democracy, and transformation.

May the years ahead allow you to see more of the seeds you have planted take root. May you continue to have the courage to ask difficult questions, the patience to build people and movements, and the generosity to make room for those coming behind.

And may those of us who celebrate you today also ask ourselves the question your life quietly places before us: When our own years are counted, what will remain because we were here?

Happy 60th birthday, Jaye.

The work continues.

The struggle continues.

And so does the possibility of transformation.

Nnimmo Bassey

Contested Spaces: Jaye Gaskia on NGOs, Civil Society, the Student Movement, Ethnic Nationality Movements and Democratic Struggle in Nigeria

Dr. Isaac "Asume" Osuoka

Over Three Decades: An Ongoing Conversation

I have known Jaye Gaskia since the early 1990s, at a time when the Nigerian student movement was experiencing one of its most historically significant moments. I was then a student at the University of Calabar, which in 1991 hosted one of the Senate meetings of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), a meeting in which Jaye was prominent. At the time, I was part of a local cell of the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria (PYMN), one of the radical Left formations working within NANS and the student unions on campuses to advance struggles for social transformation beyond the universities. Jaye was a leader of the May 31st Movement, an organisation that had a different perspective on how to engage with NANS. But all our groups, working to contain a strong reactionary current in the general student body, shared an understanding of the importance of keeping the university campuses as principal theatres of the struggle for social transformation, anti-imperialism and Pan-African political expression. In particular, the student movement was at the core of the pro-democracy movement that defeated military dictatorship.

My political relationship with Jaye deepened when we worked together in Port Harcourt during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Those were years of extraordinary political ferment. Alongside the struggle against military dictatorship, new forms of mobilisation, originally expressed in Ogoniland under the leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa, were emerging in the Niger Delta around questions of environmental justice, resource control, and self-determination. In a state of turmoil following the state murder of Ogoni leaders and the unprecedented political repression under Abacha's draconian rule, Jaye was a comrade and an intellectual and organisational force within the Rivers Coalition, the Chikoko Movement and other organisations. What made his role particularly remarkable was that he was not indigenous to the Niger Delta. As a Yoruba activist, he

earned the confidence and respect of activists in the region through an uncompromising commitment to justice and solidarity rather than ethnic identity alone.

As one of the founders of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and its first spokesperson, Jaye was always close by even within the Chikoko Movement's intellectual and political debates about the direction of the "Ijaw Struggle", and the Ogoni Struggle, etc. His Marxist analysis, his insistence on linking environmental justice with democracy and social transformation, and his refusal to surrender to either ethnic chauvinism or liberal reformism were an integral part of the political imagination of the "Port Harcourt School" at the time.

By the end of the 1990s, we were both members of staff at Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria. Jaye would later move to Oxfam, but for several years we found ourselves, like many revolutionaries of our generation, operating within the rapidly expanding NGO sector. The emergent global neoliberal adjustment following the end of the Soviet Bloc included the expansion of Western-funded NGOs that now claimed legitimacy as "civil society" (Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Ferguson, 1994; Petras, 1997; Banks, Hulme & Edwards, 2015). Without preparation, we were thrust into this space and tried to make the best of it – in advancing our struggles. However, we continued to be conscious of the contradictions. Quite often we reflected, together with other comrades, on the opportunities and perils of the NGO space—how organisations created to challenge injustice could become professionalised and donor-driven, yet also create openings for organising, political education, and popular resistance. These conversations were never merely theoretical; they emerged from our shared efforts to reconcile revolutionary commitments with the practical realities of organising in the military, post-military and neoliberal era.

As comrades discussed a volume to mark Jaye's sixtieth birthday, I remembered one conversation we had 2011, shortly before the Occupy Nigeria uprising. Reading it today, one is struck by how the questions we touched on were relevant to Occupy Nigeria and its aftermath. As I prodded, Jaye reflected on the contradictory character of NGOs, the possibilities and limitations of civil society, the structural constraints of organised labour, and the enduring challenge of constructing genuinely counter-hegemonic politics in Nigeria (Gramsci, 1971; Branch & Mampilly, 2015; Obadare, 2014).

This conversation captures Jaye at a critical historical moment. It reveals the consistency of a political thinker whose activism has always been matched by deep theoretical reflection. Across decades of struggle—from the student movement, through the pro-democracy campaigns, the environmental justice movement, and the emergence of

Occupy Nigeria and its aftermath—he has remained committed to a socialism rooted in democracy, popular agency, and Pan-African solidarity.

It is therefore a privilege to retrieve this interview from my archives for publication in this volume. More than a historical document, the conversation remains remarkably relevant to contemporary scholarly and political debates in Nigeria and beyond. The questions Jaye raises about the contradictory character of NGOs, the limits of liberal civil society, the relationship between ethnicity and class, the co-optation of social movements, the reproduction of elite power, and the search for genuinely counter-hegemonic politics continue to animate critical scholarship on democracy, decolonisation, extractivism and social movements across Africa and the Global South (Petras, 1997; Mamdani, 1996; Chatterjee, 1993; Obi, 2010; Obadare, 2018; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). If anything, the intervening years have only reinforced the significance of these debates. This interview therefore stands as a small tribute to a lifetime devoted to revolutionary thought, principled activism, and the difficult work of imagining—and building—a more just society.

Conversation

NGOs, Imperialism and Civil Society

Osuoka: James Petras (1997) and a few other scholars have argued that NGOs function as agents of imperialism. As someone who has worked extensively within the NGO sector, do you think this is an overgeneralisation?

Jaye Gaskia: An overgeneralisation? Maybe. But I think there is a certain amount of truth in it. This is the way I look at it: Most structures that emerge within societies and social formations—particularly within capitalism in Nigeria—even when they emerge as structures of protest, tend, over time, to become co-opted into the structures of society. The more stable that society becomes, the more these structures become integrated into stabilising that society. For me, that has largely been the history and role of NGOs.

By the way, taking our own specific circumstances, Nigeria as a case study, before the advent of what we now know as conventional NGOs, it is not as if there was no civil society organising. We had forms of organisation based on age grades, youth formations, community-level organisations, occupational associations, and so on. What we now recognise as conventional NGOs became prominent during the previous global economic crisis, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which ushered in the Structural Adjustment Programme and the broader paradigm shift associated with the retreat of the state. NGOs then emerged, for two principal reasons, as vehicles for performing functions and providing services that the state had previously been expected to provide

but was no longer providing because of its retreat, the withdrawal of subsidies, and related policies. In order to douse rising social tensions, NGOs increasingly came to occupy that space. That was one dynamic. The second dynamic reinforced the first. Many of the regimes in the global South were autocratic and authoritarian. Before the crisis, these authoritarian regimes had been acceptable. But after the crisis, they increasingly became burdens on global imperialism. That provided an additional—and even more compelling—reason to promote NGOs as alternatives to the state, for both political and economic reasons.

If you look at it from that perspective, it becomes quite easy to argue that NGOs, in their origins and in the dynamics of their growth, became structures of dependence and part and parcel of imperial domination. But that is only one part of the story. The other part concerns agency and context. There is agency in terms of the people involved, and there is context in terms of the material conditions under which those people live and act. These two factors create some degree of manoeuvrability, some political space for NGOs and civil society organisations generally.

So, structures of dependence—structures that help maintain imperial domination—can also play the contradictory role of deepening the crisis of imperial domination. They can challenge it and destabilise it.

Having said that, I think it is actually impossible for NGOs, as NGOs—as professional NGOs—to play the political role of overthrowing imperialism. To that extent, they inevitably have a stabilising effect on imperialism.

But they can also have what I would call a nuisance value.

To that extent, they become contested spaces. I think that is one of the reasons why the Left also entered the NGO sector. NGOs were contested spaces, both ideologically and politically.

There is also an economic dimension. Because NGOs exist outside the state, and largely outside its direct control, they became relatively secure spaces for the counter-elite—for those challenging the status quo—to earn a living without suffering the full weight of economic harassment. Political harassment continued, of course, but economic harassment was somewhat reduced.

NGOs, Local Capital and Political Autonomy

Osuoka: You once said that NGO actors in Nigeria are not tied to local capital. Could you elaborate?

Jaye Gaskia: Let us say that they are not tied to local capital. That is largely because, even today, over 90 per cent of NGOs, as we know them and as they have come to be structured around service delivery and related activities, derive most, if not all, of the resources that enable them to carry out their work from external sources—private foundations as well as publicly funded foundations and international development agencies.

Because of that, they are generally not tied to sections of local capital and are therefore not necessarily influenced by local capitalist interests. Even those parts of the NGO community that have been influenced by the private sector have largely emerged as lobbyists for private-sector investment in Nigeria. But that private-sector investment is predominantly foreign investment, concentrated especially in the Niger Delta and, more specifically, in the oil industry.

Again, because NGOs are not structurally tied to local capital, they enjoy a certain degree of freedom to challenge local political elites. And, in any case, those political elites are often not the real centres of economic power. They front for local capital—or perhaps it is the other way round: local capital fronts for them while remaining in the background. Either way, NGOs have been relatively free to challenge both local political elites and local economic interests.

But there is another side to this. The NGO bureaucracy—and, indeed, much of the broader civil society bureaucracy—is not prevented from playing active, radical and transformative political roles because of structural ties to the state or to local capital. If anything, their relative independence from both arguably places them in a better position to do so.

The constraint lies elsewhere. It lies in their dependence on external resources. What I am saying is that this creates a contradiction. It is entirely possible to find forms of radicalism that, in all their expressions and manifestations, appear strongly anti-capitalist within a particular country, yet are not necessarily anti-imperialist because of the contradictions inherent in their material existence.

Osuoka: Are there examples of particular NGOs, or clusters of NGOs, that challenged the local state while, at the same time, remaining at the service of international capital?

Jaye Gaskia: Let us look at the origins—even the foundational basis—of the present nature and character of NGOs in Nigeria, particularly the human rights NGOs.

During the anti-military struggle, before they became specialised into different aspects of human rights work, they were broadly human rights and democracy organisations.

Within that context, at least for many of the activists—perhaps not for some of their bureaucrats who emerged from the Left, but certainly for many of the activists—the struggle was essentially directed against the state: the local state, the Nigerian state, the military regime. But it was pursued without fully recognising the position of that state within the wider imperialist system or the nature of imperialism itself.

So you had people in organisations such as the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), and others, who vigorously challenged the Nigerian state while, at the same time, idealising, for example, the American state and even, for that matter, British capitalism.

After the return to civilian rule, we have seen the same tendency expressed in more specialised forms. Take police reform, for example. Civil society organisations have challenged the police and the broader security architecture in Nigeria and have called for reforms. But the models they frequently look to are police institutions in Europe and elsewhere.

So, on the one hand, you are challenging the structures and practices through which internal security is maintained in Nigeria. Yet the models you invoke are themselves institutions that perform similar—though not identical—functions within capitalist societies. When those societies are pushed to the wall, they also respond in comparable ways, as the current global experience demonstrates.

The Nigerian Left and the Problem of Eurocentrism

Osuoka: Talking about professional NGOs looking to Europe or North America as models of the ideal society, couldn't one also argue that the conventional Left in Nigeria, which predated the contemporary NGO sector, was equally guilty of looking to Europe for analogies of how socialism should be built? Did the Left not look too much to the Soviet Union?

Jaye Gaskia: I think, in that context, what has become obvious—or what one can point to as obvious—is what, for want of a better term, I would call the Eurocentric nature of our education. And it really does not matter how radical that education was, because it is certainly true that the Left also looked to Europe, and to the models of what was then existing socialism, for guidance on what ought to be done.

What was absent then—and what is still absent now, not completely absent, but largely absent—was the ability to carry inquiry to the point where you begin to challenge orthodoxies. So the furthest we tended to go was to challenge one orthodoxy from within another orthodoxy. If you were a Marxist on the socialist Left, you challenged

capitalist orthodoxy from within socialist orthodoxy, but everything within socialism itself was not to be challenged.

Now, if this had happened in the first half of the last century, one could perhaps explain it in terms of a siege mentality. You had to defend your positions, defend your fronts, and so on. But the fact is that any mode of thinking, any way of interrogating reality, that is based on an understanding of contradictions, dynamics and processes, ought itself to be self-challenging. It ought to be self-critical. That same dynamism ought to be reflected in the way it understands itself and in the way it interrogates its own worldview while seeking to challenge the existing system.

I think—and I say this as someone who comes from that Marxist tradition—that one of the things that tradition has suffered from most is the weakening of its capacity for dialectical thinking.

NGOs, Ethnic Nationality Movements and the Nigerian Left

Osuoka: Let us return to the contemporary struggles of the Nigerian people. During the 1980s and 1990s, while professional NGOs were emerging, new ethnic-based movements were also being formed—the OPC, MOSOP and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). Did you see any divergence between the human rights NGO community and the ethnic nationality movements?

Jaye Gaskia: At least during the 1980s and the 1990s, to a very large extent, they were actually complementary developments. Now, let me explain the complementarity. The complementarity was that the ethnic movements provided political space for Left and radicalised elements who were going into the emerging NGO sector but were finding that space increasingly constraining for the kind of activism they had been used to—the kind of mass mobilisation they had been used to. So, to a very large extent, the ethnic movements became a bridge. But then again, they were not just a bridge. They became an autonomous bridge. They acquired their own dynamics in the process. And, of course, just as the NGO sector consumed many of those Left radicals, the ethnic movements also consumed many of those radicals.

It is interesting—there is an irony in that. Going into the NGO sector was, to a large extent, a conscious decision. One, because the trend was becoming entrenched; two, because it was attractive; but also because many on the Left saw it as a space that could be utilised differently. The same thing applies to many of the ethnic nationality movements that emerged. They were Left projects—not entirely in the sense that Left organisations sat down and consciously decided to create them, although in some cases that did happen—but in the sense that among their initiators you found conscious Left

elements. I think that is probably a better way of putting it than simply saying they were Left projects.

So that is one way of looking at it. But, like I said, the irony was that everybody eventually became consumed by these spaces. What happened was that, while all this was going on, we failed to continue regenerating our own organisations. Because we failed to regenerate our own organisations, the only organisations we eventually belonged to were these ones. Yet they were never entirely our spaces. We were always minorities within those spaces.

So, at the end of the day, it became a question of survival. And survival is not just an economic issue; it is also political survival. If you wanted to remain politically relevant within those organisations, some people had to begin manoeuvring in ways they probably had never envisaged or thought possible.

You can also see that contradiction playing itself out in the broader political arena, particularly with those Left elements who eventually went into electoral politics. They went into politics without an independent political platform. And we all know how difficult it has always been to build a genuine Left political platform in Nigeria. Without such a platform, people became either isolated within mainstream politics—which happened to a few—or submerged and co-opted within it—which happened to many more.

That is not to say that those of us who stayed outside formal politics necessarily fared any better. We too have largely found ourselves in conditions of political isolation. Now, the dynamics of struggle may change that. Indeed, they will very likely change it. But that is where we are today.

I think there is another lesson here. Somebody once said that people do not fight for the ideas in somebody else's head. They fight because of their own material conditions of existence. I think that observation is extremely important.

If you ask why we have been relatively unsuccessful in building a mass Left political movement, while we have been much more successful in building student movements, youth movements and ethnic nationality movements, I think it has to do with our failure to fully understand that point.

No matter how beautiful our ideas are, no matter how correct our interpretation of reality may be, if people cannot connect those ideas directly to the tangible conditions of their own lives, it is difficult to excite them. It is difficult to mobilise them.

The nationality question became one such point of connection. Take the Niger Delta. By then, the crisis in the oil industry—and the crisis of the Nigerian state around the oil industry—had reached a point where communities were already mobilising against the oil companies. They were not initially mobilising simply as ethnic groups. They were mobilising against the oil companies and against the conditions under which they were living. What we were able to provide was a broader theoretical framework that located those experiences within a wider understanding of exploitation. People could relate to that because it was real to them. And I think that explains a great deal of the success that we achieved.

Osuoka: When you speak of "the success that we achieved," can you still refer to those ethnic nationality organisations today as "we"? If not, why?

Jaye Gaskia: Certainly not.

Again, let me put it this way. In every society, in every social formation where you have huge differences—call them class differences, call them differences in education, exposure, opportunities, whatever you like—one of the things that happens is that those who are marginalised and exploited, who are almost always the majority, are less likely to have the wherewithal—and by wherewithal I mean both the material and the intellectual resources—to articulate their own position, build organisations around a coherent theoretical framework, and directly challenge the state. Now, that is not the same thing as saying they do not have the capacity to fight back. They always fight back. But articulating that struggle, giving it organisational expression, that has historically resided more with sections of the middle classes and even the ruling classes because of their greater access to education, exposure and other opportunities. That is one of the issues. And that is one of the things that happened in our mobilisation among the ethnic minority movements—and, indeed, among ethnic majority movements as well.

Now, I think the main reason why today we can no longer refer to those movements as "our" movements, or say that we are part of them in the same way, has to do with the very nature of elitism. The nature of elitism is that it is self-perpetuating. It reproduces itself.

So, if we, as radicalised elites, entered those struggles, for the majority of us there was always, perhaps unconsciously, a reluctance to enable those whom we were leading to know as much as we knew or to be able to do the same things that we did. It became, in a sense, a threat to the security of our own leadership.

That then created a separation between the leadership and the led. And once that separation emerged, it tended to reproduce itself.

Then you add the conditions of repression, co-optation, and all the different tactics the ruling class deployed to contain those struggles. Under those conditions, it became relatively easy for sections of the elite leadership to be detached and co-opted. At the same time, sections of what you might call the middle layer of the leadership—leaders emerging from the masses themselves—also began, for a period, to lose political focus. Of course, in many instances that focus had never been fully developed in the first place. But whatever clarity existed became weakened under those conditions.

The struggle nevertheless continued.

But once struggles continue under those kinds of conditions, a number of things begin to happen. You increasingly resort to desperate methods. Some of those methods then become mechanisms for resource mobilisation—personal resource mobilisation, organisational resource mobilisation—and gradually what the elites and the state would describe as criminality begins to emerge within the movement itself. Eventually, if the struggle persists long enough—whether or not it retains political focus—it becomes part of the ruling class's calculation of the costs of governing. At that point, co-optation becomes more attractive than repression. And those leaders, too, become incorporated.

That, I think, is where we are today. We have witnessed something like three successive waves of co-optation. And, of course, co-optation almost always comes after repression. You first have to soften the ground before co-optation becomes attractive. Today, we are living through another phase of resistance.

Osuoka: Do you think ethnic nationality movements are particularly susceptible to co-optation compared with other forms of mobilisation?

Jaye Gaskia: Yes, and for what I would call very obvious reasons. One is that ethnic mobilisation is not necessarily anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist. It is not. I mean, you do not have to be anti-capitalist, for example, to promote minority rights. So, to that extent, there is no ideological obstacle to becoming co-opted.

The second thing has to do with the nature of nationalism itself. Nationalism is about bringing everybody together. The basis of successful elite mobilisation around nationalism is precisely that its inclusiveness is so broad that it embraces everybody, including the local oppressors—what Ken Saro-Wiwa called the vultures. And because it is not, in itself, either a class project or an ideological project, it becomes very difficult to consistently exclude those vultures. There is really no internal basis for excluding them. That, again, is one of the things that makes co-optation much easier.

The third reason is that if the ruling class decides to offer symbolic inclusion to the leaders or representatives of nationalities whose movements are fighting exclusion, then the more significant that inclusion appears to be, the more likely it is to demobilise the movement.

Take the Niger Delta. Apart from the federal nature of corruption in Nigeria—and Nigeria is supposed to be a federal state, but the only thing that is really federal is corruption—apart from that federalisation of corruption, which has empowered local elites within their respective states and had already begun, by 2002 or 2003, to contribute to the demobilisation of the movements, perhaps the crowning moment was the emergence of a son of the Niger Delta as President. And not just somebody from the Niger Delta, but an Ijaw from the Niger Delta.

At the same time, however, that is also what makes this particular phase of co-optation transient. Why? Because every presidency comes to an end. And from everything we have seen, this presidency is not likely to transform the conditions of the Niger Delta in any fundamental way. That means the contradictions of the Niger Delta will outlive the presidency itself. But even more importantly, once that presidency ends, there will still be people who remain aggrieved by the situation in the Niger Delta, people who do not see themselves as beneficiaries of this process of co-optation. Those people will inevitably begin to rekindle new forms of resistance.

So, that is why I think this particular phase of co-optation is essentially transient. It has remained largely symbolic and superficial rather than structural.

Osuoka: As Convener of the United Action for Democracy (UAD), one of the leading pro-democracy organisations, what potential do you see for including ethnic organisations—in particular, the OPC, the Ijaw Youth Council, and similar organisations—in the civil society processes or programmes that you are planning?

Jaye Gaskia: This is one of those instances where it is not an either-or situation. For me, what would be both feasible and desirable is to build a coalition that is as broad as possible around a central, common focus. That common focus would also define the outer limits of that broad coalition.

Ethnic formations continue to command significant followings—actually, very significant followings. They also continue to resonate historically among ordinary people because, in spite of the elite character of much of their leadership, these organisations are essentially expressions of the struggles of the oppressed classes within those nationalities. They emerged as manifestations of those struggles. So, to that extent, they remain important forces that have to be mobilised.

Conclusion: Towards a New Phase of Democratic Struggle

But the question is this: how do you build a movement that is strong enough to contain the limitations of nationalism while also containing the self-limiting tendencies of established bureaucracies—the labour bureaucracy, for example, and even sections of the NGO movement? I think the answer lies in the way the deepening global crisis, and particularly the crisis in Nigeria, is already throwing up new formations—new organisations of young people that are organising independently and autonomously of these established centres. They are not organising primarily around nationalities or the older organisational traditions.

The question, therefore, is how many of these new formations we can reach and bring into a broader coalition so that they become the necessary counterweight. Because I think we need both. We need the history and the experience of movements that have gone through struggle. But we also need the energy of young people. And at decisive historical moments, I have always thought that the energy of youth, the energy of what is new and emerging, should take precedence over the experience of what is old and established.

Now, why do I say that? Look at what is already developing in Nigeria around the proposal by the regime to remove the so-called oil subsidy. There have been very clear expressions of anger. There have been very strong statements by the established organisations. But the real actions we are beginning to see are coming from newer groups.

Why is that? It is actually very similar to what happened during the Arab Spring. It was the new forces that first moved into the streets. But why? It is because young people are experiencing the contradictions, the hardships, the exploitation and the repression of this system, yet they have experienced very little of the history of resistance to it. They have therefore been insulated from the numbing effects of repeated defeats.

The established organisations have resisted this system many times. They have won some struggles, but they have also suffered many defeats. Their organisational memory therefore includes repression, defeat, and all the sober reflections that come with defeat. And that inevitably produces caution. It produces a certain social inertia when it comes to initiating a new phase of struggle. The younger organisations do not carry those memories. They are therefore much more willing to confront the system directly.

But if we leave things entirely to the established organisations, we may never again generate mobilisation on the scale that is now becoming possible. On the other hand, if we leave things only to the new, the young and the eager, they will most likely be

crushed. That is why it is important to bring the two together. The new can liberate us to take initiatives that the experience of repeated defeats often makes us reluctant to take. But once those initiatives have been taken, the experience of the older organisations becomes indispensable in sustaining the struggle, organising it, broadening its base and enabling it to endure.

I think that is one of the most important lessons of the Arab Spring. And I think we are already beginning to see similar tendencies emerging here in Nigeria.

The challenge before us is to build the kind of coalition that can provide leadership for this new phase of struggle.

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A Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia: Celebrating a Voice of the Nigerian People at 60

Dr. Ayuba Wabba

A TRIBUTE TO COMRADE JAYE GASKIA

Celebrating a Voice of the Nigerian People at 60

As Comrade Jaye Gaskia marks his milestone 60th birthday, I join Nigeria's trade unions, labour movement, civil society, and pro-democracy community in celebrating a man whose entire adult life has been an outpouring of service to the working people and the mass of Nigerian citizens.

Jaye Gaskia has stood with organised labour for so many years in furtherance of our shared vision of socio-economic emancipation for all. During the historic Occupy Nigeria uprising of January 2012, he served as National Convener of the coalition of civil society groups and unions that partnered with Organised Labour to resist the removal of the fuel subsidy. At the 2014 National Conference, Comrade Jaye Gaskia coordinated the Civil Society Delegation Secretariat and worked jointly with the General Secretaries of the NLC and TUC to resource the Labour–Civil Society delegation with his depth of intellect. He would spend the next decade deepening this relationship with Organised Labour.

Under my leadership as the NLC President, our institutional relationship with Comrade Jaye Gaskia blossomed into a stronger partnership. As Co-Convener and head of the secretariat of the Campaign for Transformative Governance, a joint Labour–Civil Society initiative, Gaskia used every opportunity to pursue a closer working relationship with trade unions, informal economy workers, and civil society organisations. This coalesced disparate forces into a single, coherent voice for accountable government.

Throughout my leadership, Jaye Gaskia and the NLC repeatedly stood on common ground: in the campaigns for a living minimum wage, in resistance to fuel subsidy removal and electricity tariff hikes, and in solidarity when state power was turned against union leaders. When the Kaduna State Government under Nasir El-Rufai

declared me and other NLC officials wanted during a labour dispute in 2021, Jaiye Gaskia, alongside Professor Toyé Olorode, publicly condemned the move as an act of impunity against workers' rights to organise. It is those moments of courage, solidarity, and sacrifice that truly describe the worth of a person's character and confer true essence to milestones of a birthday celebration like this.

Today, we celebrate not just a man who has lived sixty years, but a movement builder who has spent every one of them in service of others. His foray into politics, including efforts to contest for the highest position in the land, stands Comrade Gaskia out as a man who elevated his craft beyond sloganeering to political pragmatism. His partnership with Organised Labour stands as a model of what labour and civil society can achieve when they link arms in a partnership rooted in mutual respect, shared sacrifice, and an unshakeable belief that ordinary Nigerians deserve a government that answers to them.

To Comrade Jaye Gaskia: thank you for six decades of courage, clarity, and unwavering solidarity with the Nigerian workers and people. May the coming years bring you continued strength, good health, and the joy of seeing the causes you have championed carried forward by the generation you have inspired. Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade — the struggle continues, and so, we hope, do you.

— In love and solidarity!

Comrade (Dr) Ayuba Wabba, mni, NPOM

Immediate Past President of the NLC and ITUC

Zanna Ma'alama, Borno Emirate

Reflection on Comrade Jaiye Gaskia at 60th Birthday Anniversary

By

Dr. Joseph Ochogwu

Director-General/CEO

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR)

Profile: Dr. Joseph Ochogwu

Dr. Ochogwu is the Director-General and CEO of IPCR. He holds a PhD in International Relations and Strategic Studies (University of Jos, 2015), an MA in Peace Studies with Merit (University of Bradford, UK, 2005), and an MSc in Political Science (University of Lagos, 1997). He spent 15 years as Senior and Chief Research Fellow at IPCR before serving as DFID Conflict Adviser for Northern Nigeria (2017-2018) and was appointed Director-General in April 2023. His specializations encompass conflict analysis, trust building, mediation, national peace architecture, and World Bank/IFC/AfDB project delivery. He has published on topics from climate change and the Responsibility to Protect, to small arms proliferation and rural violence in Nigeria, and is a Chevening Fellow (2004/05) and UPEACE/IDRC Doctoral Research Fellow.

Reflection

On behalf of the Management and Staff of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), I extend heartfelt congratulations to Comrade Jaye Gaskia on the joyous occasion of his 60th birthday.

This milestone is not merely a marker of time, but a testament to a life of unwavering dedication to humanity — particularly in advancing democracy, social justice, active citizenship, governance reform, peacebuilding, movement building, leadership development, and social transformation.

3. Through this journey of six decades, Comrade Jaye has touched countless lives, demonstrated exceptional professionalism, and contributed immensely to strengthening institutions while fostering peace, security, and socio-economic development. Our Institution — IPCR — has been privileged to be part of this splendid journey.

4. I vividly recall my first encounter with Comrade Jaye Gaskia at multiple PCVE events. His clarity of thought, unwavering commitment to peacebuilding, social cohesion, and justice, as well as his ability to inspire collective action, immediately stood out. It was not merely a meeting of minds, but the beginning of a shared path toward building a more peaceful, just, and inclusive society.

5. At the institutional level, Comrade Jaye's partnership with IPCR remains particularly noteworthy. I recall, as Director-General of IPCR, his role in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Knowledge Innovation and Research Hub (PCVE-KIRH), which he chaired. Over time, we have shared ideas, experiences, and insights in the collective effort to rid Nigeria and Africa of violent extremism and terrorism. His contributions to joint projects with IPCR, including training on PCVE, have been invaluable, and the outcomes of our

collaborations continue to resonate. Indeed, the impact of our partnership is already evident in the strides made toward peace and stability.

6. Even as a Director at IPCR, I had the privilege of collaborating with him on a project focused on civic engagement and peacebuilding — one of the most impactful experiences of my career. I recall inviting him to present a paper at IPCR on the implementation of the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) in Nigeria. This invitation was extended because of his extensive work with the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) Network. Jaye's insistence on grassroots participation and his belief that ordinary citizens must be the architects of their own future reshaped the way I approached peacebuilding and conflict resolution. He views peace not merely as the absence of violence, but as the presence of justice, equity, and dignity.

7. The lesson I learned from Jaye is simple yet profound: courage and consistency are the lifeblood of social transformation. He demonstrated that even in the face of adversity, one must remain steadfast in truth and integrity. His example continues to remind me that leadership is not about titles, but about service and sacrifice.

8. In terms of contribution to peacebuilding, Jaye has been a beacon. His tireless advocacy for dialogue, accountability, and participatory governance has influenced countless initiatives across Nigeria and beyond. He has shown that peace is sustained not by silence, but by the active pursuit of fairness and inclusion.

9. His influence on the broader peacebuilding community cannot be overstated. Jaye embodies a rare blend of intellectual rigor, practical experience, and activist passion. He has inspired a generation of practitioners, scholars, and activists to see peace not as an abstract ideal, but as a daily practice rooted in justice.

10. For future generations, Jaye's life offers enduring lessons: that integrity is non-negotiable in leadership; that courage must accompany conviction; that peacebuilding requires patience, persistence, and inclusivity; and that service to humanity is the highest calling.

11. As we celebrate Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60, we do not merely honor his years; we honor his legacy — a legacy that challenges us to continue the struggle for peacebuilding, social cohesion, justice, and human dignity. May his example remain a guiding light for generations yet to come.

Once again, Happy 60th Birthday Anniversary, Comrade Jaye Gaskia!

Standing Left – Right: Comrade Jaiye Gaskia and Dr. Joseph Ochogwu, DG, IPCR

Seating Left – Right: Comrade Jaiye Gaskia and Dr. Joseph Ochogwu, DG, IPCR

The Jaiye Gaskia I Know

Dr. Joe Okei-Odumakin

Comrade Jaye Gaskia has emerged as one of the outstanding human rights and pro-democracy activists in the last four decades. It is not an exaggeration to state that his role as a revolutionary has been intertwined with the history of Nigeria during this period.

Our paths crossed first within the activist circles at Ilorin, Kwara State sometime in 1988.

Among the vibrant groups at the University of Ilorin during this period were Women In Nigeria and Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU). Not long after that, the Committee For the Defence Of Human Rights became another platform which brought activists together on campus.

My interactions with Jaiye on various platforms at Ilorin continued until 1994. It is imperative to mention that some of the university's academic staff who were our Comrades played a role in bringing us together. Among them were Dr Olu Obafemi and Poju Akiyanju.

This was the beginning of the post-Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) period; an era which would expose the Nigerian people and their social groups under intensified attacks by the state and international financial institutions. Naturally, this development galvanized pro-people organizations across the country to prepare for the battles ahead. The social pressures of the period had compelled the Gen Ibrahim Babangida Military junta to set up the Political Bureau in 1986 with a mandate to recommend the way forward for the nation. The regime had been jolted when the Bureau recommended socialism as the most appropriate ideology in line with the demands of the Nigerian people. It was also during this period that the nation-wide National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) general strike and anti-SAP protests occurred.

When the Campaign For Democracy (CD) emerged in 1991 - as a fall-out of the botched attempt by human rights groups to hold a National Conference in 1990- our paths crossed again at the group`s activities in Ilorin and Lagos.

The annulment of the June 12 1993 Presidential election won by the late Bashorun MKO Abiola compelled us to work more closely together.

Against the background of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida's convoluted Transition To Civil Programme, the annulment of the only free and fair election in Nigeria's turbulent history had spontaneously elicited a national outrage.

The widespread condemnation of the election's cancelation was traceable to the military junta's postponement - on two previous occasions - of a hand over date to a civilian administration.

The working relationship between Jaiye and I continued until February 1994 during Teacher's House Convention of the CD at Ibadan where the organization split into two factions.

The split occurred due to conflicting positions on how to proceed after the November 18th 1993 Coup D'etat led by the late Gen. Sani Abacha amidst allegations that some leaders of the CD had secretly dialogued with key figures of the military.

After the split, Gaskia and some other Comrades left to establish the Democratic Alternative (DA), in 1995. Another Coalition of human rights and pro-democracy groups known as the United Action for Democracy (UAD) was inaugurated in 1997. Nonetheless, we remained active through joint activities in the pro-democracy and human rights struggles even though we belonged to different groups and coalitions.

Jaiye was the Convener of the UAD.

UAD was a coalition of 26 pro-democracy groups. I recall that in April 1998, the Coalition alongside the CD called for mass action against pro-Abacha rally scheduled for Ibadan, the Oyo State capital. The rally was planned to drum up support for the military dictator's self-succession plan. A similar rally had earlier been successfully held in Ado-Ekiti.

During the mass action two people were killed and about 20 wounded at the Salami Sports Stadium, Ibadan, when pro-democracy activists disrupted the rally after it had been addressed by then Military Administrator of Oyo State Colonel Ahmed Usman.

Jaiye was part of the leadership of Labour and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO). He was also one of the three civil society representatives in the LASCO Negotiating Team that interfaced with the Government Delegation. We also collaborated during the January 2012 Occupy Nigeria protest. I was active in the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) which worked alongside LASCO in Lagos.

We briefly collaborated again during the 2014 National Conference organized by the Goodluck Jonathan administration. We were both part of the Civil Society Delegation

which Jaiye Gaskia served as Secretary. He also doubled as a Joint Secretary of the Joint Labour And Civil Society Delegations.

During the conference, the Joint Labour and Civil Society Delegation made vigorous presentations.

The Delegation argued that Nigerians from all walks of life recognised the link between an inclusive participatory democratic political system and development. However, the country's democracy continues to be threatened by various forms of authoritarian rule, the systematic narrowing of the political space, extreme personalisation of power, corruption, gross human rights abuses and the

political exclusion of women, ethnic minorities, and the youth. The group pointed out that stultifying effects of these are the root causes and the intensifiers of

the crisis of national identity, conflicts, politically-motivated violence including assassinations, kidnapping and arson. They are also the causes of political apathy, the weakening of our federalism, and the decaying of political institutions.

Jaiye is not only a Marxist revolutionary, he

is also a highly skilled and resourceful personality. He is a public affairs and political commentator as well as a development specialist with skills, competences and expertise in conflict mediation, peace building, participatory governance and development. He is a guru in community mobilization and youth/gender empowerment, design and implementation of strategic and operational plan frameworks, advocacy and campaigns, capacity building and mentoring, relationship building, networking and coalition building.

He was the first Global Conflict Adviser with ActionAid International. He worked in the International Emergencies and Conflict

Team and technically supported 445 Country

Programs. He was also Deputy Country and later

Interim Country Director at Oxfam GB in Nigeria.

He was also Head of Programs at Voluntary

Services Overseas [VSO] in Nigeria.

Dr Joe Okei Odumakin

President, Centre for Change and Women Arise.

Jaye Gaskia: Rebellion and Revolutionary Commitment

Dr. Otiye Igbuzor

"The Birthday is the Occasion; The Legacy is the Purpose." This aptly captures the vision behind the celebration of Comrade Jaye Gaskia's 60th birthday and the establishment of the Jaye Gaskia Leadership and Social Transformation Academy.

I cannot remember exactly when I first met Jaye Gaskia. It must have been sometime in the 1980s during the heyday of the Nigerian student movement and the environmental justice movement. Those were years of intense ideological contestation, political activism and revolutionary optimism. Nigerian campuses were fertile grounds for debates on Marxism, imperialism, democracy and social transformation. Many of us believed that ideas could change society, and we devoted our youthful energy to the struggle for a more just and equitable Nigeria.

The student movement in those days was profoundly influenced by various Marxist tendencies. Virtually every politically conscious student belonged to one ideological current or another. Jaye and I belonged to different Marxist traditions. I was a member of the Socialist Congress of Nigeria (SCON), while Jaye belonged to the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM).

To those outside the Left, these distinctions may appear academic. They were anything but academic to us. SCON identified with the Marxist-Leninist tradition, although our ideological adversaries often dismissed us as "Stalinists." DSM, on the other hand, was rooted in the Trotskyist tradition inspired by the revolutionary ideas of Leon Trotsky.

The ideological differences were substantial. SCON believed in the theory of the two-stage revolution: first, a National Democratic Revolution to dismantle the structures of dependency and underdevelopment, followed by the Proletarian Socialist Revolution. DSM advocated the theory of Permanent Revolution, arguing that democratic and socialist tasks should proceed simultaneously under working-class leadership. SCON regarded the former Soviet Union as a socialist state despite its imperfections, whereas DSM viewed it as a deformed workers' state that had deviated from genuine socialist democracy.

These debates were passionately argued. In many instances, members of the different tendencies related more like ideological adversaries than comrades. Polemics were vigorous, meetings were heated, and each group defended its interpretation of Marxism with unwavering conviction.

Yet, in the midst of these ideological contests, Jaye and I developed and sustained a friendship that has endured for decades. For me, the essence of comradeship has never been uniformity of doctrine but unity of purpose. Anyone genuinely committed to the ideals of socialism, equality, justice and human emancipation is a comrade and a friend irrespective of ideological nuances. Looking back over the years, I remain convinced that ideological disagreements among socialists are often far less consequential than the fundamental differences between those committed to transforming society and those content with preserving unjust social orders.

Indeed, my experience in life has taught me that despite their internal differences, almost every genuine socialist possesses a deeper commitment to justice, equality and public good than the typical bourgeois politician driven primarily by personal advancement.

One striking aspect of those years was the remarkable absence of ethnic consciousness among progressive activists. Identity politics had not yet become the dominant currency of Nigerian politics. We related to one another as comrades rather than as representatives of ethnic nationalities.

It took me a surprisingly long time to discover that Jaye Gaskia was not from the Niger Delta, as many assumed from his revolutionary identity. He is, in fact, a Yoruba man whose given name is Ayodeji Olugbenga Ajayeoba. "Jaye Gaskia" became his revolutionary name—a name that eventually eclipsed his birth name in activist and intellectual circles. That itself reflects something significant about his life: ideas, convictions and commitment mattered more than ethnic identity.

Our paths crossed again professionally in 2004 when I had the privilege of serving as Country Director of ActionAid Nigeria. Jaye joined the organisation as Conflict Adviser. Working together provided another opportunity to appreciate not only his intellectual capacity but also his professionalism.

One interesting dimension of that period was that while I served as Country Director, Jaye emerged as the leader of the Workers' Union within ActionAid. In many organisations, such an arrangement could easily have generated unnecessary tension. Management and union leadership often find themselves on opposite sides of organisational debates. Yet our relationship remained characterised by mutual respect,

ideological maturity and shared commitment to institutional growth. We understood that defending workers' rights and providing organisational leadership were not mutually exclusive responsibilities. We could disagree without becoming disagreeable. We could negotiate firmly without sacrificing friendship. That experience remains one of my enduring lessons in principled leadership and democratic organisational culture.

Reflecting on over four decades of knowing and working with Jaye, several qualities stand out as worthy of emulation. The first is his extraordinary analytical capacity. Jaye is among the most intellectually rigorous analysts I have encountered. His analyses are never superficial. Whether discussing governance, political economy, elections, peacebuilding or international affairs, he approaches issues from first principles, interrogates assumptions and situates immediate events within broader historical and structural contexts. His Marxist orientation gives his analysis a coherence that is increasingly rare in an era dominated by sound bites and social media commentary. Even those who disagree with his conclusions must acknowledge the depth of his reasoning and the discipline of his intellectual method. I just hope that now that he is an elder, his long windy sentences will become shorter.

Secondly, Jaye possesses an unwavering commitment to social justice and revolutionary transformation. For him, socialism has never been merely an academic doctrine or a fashionable label. It is a moral commitment to building a society founded on equality, justice, human dignity and democratic participation. Throughout changing political seasons, he has remained steadfast in advocating for workers, the poor, marginalised communities and democratic accountability. Many who once identified as radicals have moderated their positions in pursuit of political appointments or personal comfort. Jaye has remained remarkably faithful to the ideals that shaped his political consciousness as a young activist.

Thirdly, courage defines his public life. He does not measure the correctness of a position by the number of people who support it. If he is convinced that a position is right, he will defend it even when it is unpopular or when he finds himself standing virtually alone. Such courage is increasingly scarce in contemporary public life where expediency often masquerades as wisdom.

Fourthly, consistency has been one of his greatest virtues. Many people change their principles according to changing political circumstances. Jaye has remained remarkably consistent over the decades. His analyses are predictable not because they are simplistic but because they are anchored in enduring principles. One always knows where he stands on questions of democracy, social justice, human rights and people's struggles.

Reliability and predictability are underrated virtues, but they are essential qualities in both friendship and public life.

Finally, and perhaps most amusingly, Jaye is inherently rebellious. His rebellious spirit extends far beyond politics. It seems woven into his very personality. I vividly recall several occasions during our international travels together. At airport security checkpoints, the screening machines would inexplicably beep as Jaye passed through them, even after removing every conceivable metallic object. Instead of quietly accepting the repeated screening, he would immediately begin questioning the accuracy, fairness and reliability of the machines. Watching these encounters was always entertaining. I often joked that perhaps there were metals embedded somewhere in his bones. Yet, in retrospect, those moments reflected something deeper about his character. Jaye instinctively questions authority, systems and assumptions. He is not rebellious for the sake of rebellion. Rather, he possesses an inbuilt disposition to interrogate structures before accepting their legitimacy. That quality has served him well throughout his career as an activist, public intellectual and development practitioner.

As Jaye joins the elders' club at sixty, I do not see someone who has become old. Rather, I see a revolutionary whose convictions have matured without losing their passion; an intellectual whose curiosity remains undiminished; an activist whose commitment has survived changing political tides; and a friend whose loyalty has endured ideological differences, organisational responsibilities and the passage of time.

The celebration of his sixtieth birthday is therefore more than a personal milestone. It is an opportunity to honour a life devoted to ideas, struggle, service and transformation. It is also fitting that this occasion will culminate in the establishment of the Jaye Gaskia Leadership and Social Transformation Academy, ensuring that his investment in leadership, mentoring and movement building continues to inspire future generations.

As we welcome Comrade Jaye Gaskia into the elders' club, I pray that God grants him good health, strength of mind and body, many more years of productive service, and the continued revolutionary fervour that has defined his remarkable journey.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

Aluta Continua. Victoria Ascerta.

Comrade Otive Igbuzor, PhD

Founding Executive Director, African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD), Abuja

Former Country Director and International Head of Campaigns, Action Aid International

The “Clinical” Polemicist

Comrade Tunde Aremu (Babalawo)

The “Clinical” Polemicist

Occasional interaction and mention of his name in conversations with some comrades were all the connection there was until 2002, when we interacted more closely in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The International Press Centre where I was deputy head had taken the mobilisation of civil society behind the Freedom of Access to Information bill, as it was then, to the oil-rich state.

A memorable thing from the roundtable then was Jaye Gaskia's contributions to the discourse. More importantly for me was his analysis of the personality of Rotimi Amechi, then Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, which still rings in my head. We had brought Amechi into the conversation with the hope that he would support the push for the law, as Olorunnimbe Mamora, then the Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly did. Not only did Amechi balk at the idea, his posture was that of an antagonist. Yes, not known for holding a revolutionary or explicitly progressive view as a student, friends who had known Amechi while in school had assumed that he would at least take a liberal moralist perspective. I expressed my disappointment to a number of friends and comrades present. What struck me from the conversation with Jaye then was that his explanation of Amechi's person was not gossipy, unlike others I spoke with about my shock at the man's open contempt for the demand for an instrument that would guarantee accountability in governance. Jaye's analysis of his person and expressed view was clinical. Focused on the issue at hand and what may have informed his position was both a near-clinical analysis and what could be called an insightful anatomy from a polemist. That conversation was going to help me understand the Amechi personality better in the few occasions my job warranted interaction with same space he was of his public statements.

Although not afraid of getting into a contestation over ideas, principles, practice and space, Jaye also brings into locations where he engaged an alertness to the place of mobilisation of people of similar ideas in spaces meant for change, brand cohesion and the relevance of ideas propagation over personal interest. Apart from being one of the

comrades who encouraged my indication of interest in the role of communication focal person for ActionAid Nigeria, he had at some point instigated other comrades and me to apply for the same lead positions in organisations which he was also applying for, at different times. His reasoning at the time was that it would be advantageous for any of us with a similar orientation to get the job, rather than take the chance of only one person applying and losing it to persons with a different political orientation.

A working class mobiliser with a sense of commitment to investment in change and revolutionary intervention. This came more into the fore in the movement we triggered and built between August 2011 and early 2012, which was later known as the January 2012 Movement. While efforts are on to provide the authentic documentation of the mobilisation and management of that movement, what I am bold to state is that if he had not shared in the leadership of that movement and in situations where the nature of the job of some other of us who led in the cadres of that movement would not allow us take certain responsibility or express mobilisation of the movement required stepping back a bit, he was there to ensure no vacuum existed. His unselfish role helped in determining the character and the strength of the movement, which had commenced as an NGOs alert on socio-economic implications of a hike in fuel price for the mass of the people and food security. At the point when we were into a frantic engagement with the labour centres, who were either not alert to the implications of President Goodluck Jonathan's announcement of an impending hike in fuel price, or unsure of the response appropriate as at August up till early December 2011, Jaye was unrelenting. In this movement was shown another dimension to his personality. While he had, at different times, not shied away from contesting leadership space or engaged in sensitive discourses on differences in political/ideological perspectives; the January 2012 showed him as a revolutionary keen on the preeminence of ideas and objectives of a movement over playing the lead, especially at the time when later-day joiners jostled for spaces at the front.

Happy birthday and a hearty welcome to the elders' club, dear fiend, brother and comrade, Jaye Gaskia (Ayodeji Ajayeoba)

Tunde Aremu (Babalawo)

Against the Current: Reflections on Jaye at Sixty

Dr. Hussaini Abdu

Arguing with the Machine

Let me begin with a story that captures something fundamental about both Jaye and our friendship. Otive Igbuzor, who recruited both Jaye and me into ActionAid, has a favourite joke about the two of us. He often describes us as a duo that would argue with, or protest against, anything, including a machine. He would mischievously imagine us arriving at an airport and, rather than simply walking through the metal detector, stopping to question its existence, interrogate its purpose, and perhaps even organise a protest against it. To Otive, we were perfectly capable of taking on a metal detector in the name of justice!

Of course, it was always said with affection. The joke was never that we were quarrelsome for its own sake. Rather, it recognised something that has defined both Jaye and our generation of activists: an instinct to question, to challenge, and to resist what appears unjust, irrational, or oppressive.

Comrades in Struggle

If resistance has a biography, Jaye Gaskiya has written many of its chapters. His first instinct has never been to ask, "How do I fit in?" but rather, "Is this right? Is it just? Can it be changed?" That spirit of principled resistance has remained with him throughout his life, as an activist, a public intellectual, a development practitioner, and above all, as a comrade.

Although Jaye is older than I am, we belong to the same political generation, one forged in the crucible of the Nigerian student movement and the pro-democracy struggle. We emerged from different ideological tendencies within the progressive movement, with our own traditions of organising and debate. Yet what united us was far greater than what distinguished us: a shared commitment to socialism, social justice, democracy, and the liberation of ordinary people from oppression and exploitation.

Like many in that generation, our political convictions were not abstract intellectual exercises. They were shaped through activism, rigorous debate, solidarity with workers and communities, and an enduring belief that another Nigeria, and indeed another world, was possible. Jaye has remained remarkably consistent in those convictions over the decades. While many have abandoned or softened the ideals that defined our

generation, he has continued to approach public affairs with intellectual honesty, principled engagement, and an unwavering commitment to the interests of the poor and marginalised.

I came to know Jaye even more closely during our time at ActionAid. He established and led the Human Security in Emergencies team, helping to shape the organisation's humanitarian work and deepen its understanding of the complex intersections between conflict, governance, rights, and development. True to his political instincts, he never saw humanitarian action as merely an exercise in relief delivery. For him, emergencies were also windows into deeper structural injustices that demanded political and social transformation. Before moving to ActionAid's international team, he had built one of the organisation's most intellectually vibrant and strategically important programmes.

When Jaye joined ActionAid from Environmental Rights Action (ERA), he brought with him the invaluable experience of years spent working with communities in the Niger Delta at the height of the environmental justice movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Those were defining years, when communities were confronting the ecological devastation of oil extraction, the failures of the Nigerian state, and the growing tensions that would eventually culminate in widespread militancy. Jaye immersed himself in community organising, accompanying local people in their struggles for environmental rights, democratic participation, and corporate accountability. More than campaigning against pollution, he helped nurture citizens' collective agency, enabling communities to organise, articulate their demands, and engage both the state and multinational oil companies in the pursuit of justice. It was an experience that enriched his already formidable political consciousness and would later influence his distinctive approach to humanitarian action, governance, and social transformation.

Intellectualism as Resistance

One of Jaye's most remarkable qualities is the depth of his political economy scholarship. It is all the more impressive because his formal academic training was in the sciences rather than the social sciences. Yet he possesses an extraordinary grasp of history, political economy, democratic theory, and socialist thought that many professionally trained political scientists would envy. His analyses are always historically grounded, theoretically informed, and empirically rich.

His intellectual curiosity has always been boundless. I remember, with admiration and no small measure of amusement, his regular subscription to the *Euro Communist* journal and his fascination with the debates unfolding within the international Left. You will

always have this journal in Jaye's bag or hand, sometimes worn out from excessive handling. Those journals represented his determination to engage seriously with evolving socialist thought and to test its relevance to Nigeria's realities. Conversations with Jaye could effortlessly move from Marx, Gramsci and Eurocommunism to Nigeria's democratic transition, African political economy, or the latest crisis confronting progressive movements across the world. Every discussion was an opportunity to learn.

Like many committed socialists of our generation, Jaye has always wrestled with the difficult question of how radical ideas can find expression within the institutions of a liberal democratic state. At one point, he even toyed with the idea of contesting for the Presidency of Nigeria. I remember wondering, with both curiosity and admiration, how such an experiment would unfold. How would a deeply committed socialist, steeped in critiques of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, navigate a political arena shaped by elite bargaining, patronage, identity politics, and the enormous financial demands of electoral competition? It was a fascinating possibility to contemplate. Whether or not it would have succeeded electorally is beside the point. The very idea reflected Jaye's willingness to think beyond criticism and ask how transformative politics might engage with existing democratic institutions without surrendering its principles. That willingness to interrogate strategy as rigorously as ideology has always been one of his defining characteristics.

The Burden of Independent Thought

Jaye's activism has always been sustained by intellectual clarity, analytical rigour, and a principled understanding of the issues with which he engages. Yet these qualities are not always appreciated, particularly within institutions where critical thought can sometimes be mistaken for stubbornness, dissent, or an unwillingness to conform.

I remember his recurring disagreements with his line manager when he served as Africa Regional Adviser for Human Security at ActionAid. The relationship was often difficult. His manager appeared rarely satisfied with his work and seemed to relate to him differently from the way he related to some of us. Jaye, however, was not someone who could easily suppress a considered opinion merely to make institutional life more comfortable. He asked difficult questions, challenged weak assumptions, and insisted that programmes and policies should be grounded in a serious understanding of power, inequality, conflict, and the lived experiences of the people they were intended to serve.

International development and humanitarian work can be intellectually stimulating. They bring practitioners into contact with some of the most complex questions of our time: poverty, power, inequality, conflict, displacement, climate change, governance,

and social transformation. Ironically, however, parts of the sector can also be deeply resistant to intellectual engagement. Some practitioners prefer fashionable concepts, simplified frameworks, and institutional jargon to critical reflection. When one is unfortunate enough to have such a person as a line manager, the experience can be profoundly frustrating, especially for someone like Jaye, who approaches his work not merely as a set of technical assignments but as part of a larger struggle for justice and social transformation.

Throughout his years at both ActionAid and Oxfam, Jaye had to navigate such personalities and institutional cultures. He encountered people who were uncomfortable with his intellectual independence, his political clarity, or his refusal to accept superficial explanations. Yet he continued to engage, argue, write, organise, and contribute. He learned to operate within large and sometimes bureaucratic institutions without surrendering the critical spirit that had shaped him as an activist. That was not always easy, and it sometimes came at a personal and professional cost.

His experience reminds us that progressive organisations are not automatically progressive in their internal cultures. Institutions that speak publicly about participation, rights, accountability, and social justice can still struggle to accommodate strong independent thinkers within their own structures. Jaye's journey through ActionAid and Oxfam therefore speaks not only to his resilience, but also to the difficult relationship between activism, intellectual independence, and institutional power. He survived those tensions without losing his voice, his sense of purpose, or his commitment to justice.

Beyond the Serious

Beyond his formidable intellect, Jaye is an exceptionally generous comrade. He has mentored younger activists without seeking recognition, challenged lazy thinking without being dismissive, and insisted that political commitment must always be accompanied by intellectual discipline. For him, socialism has never been a closed doctrine or a collection of slogans. Rather, he has approached it as a living tradition that must constantly engage with changing realities while remaining rooted in the pursuit of justice, equality, democracy, and human dignity.

If there is one quality that has consistently defined Jaye, it is his refusal to stop thinking. Even in moments when many comrades settled into comfortable certainties or abandoned the difficult questions altogether, Jaye continued to interrogate assumptions, revisit old debates, and explore new possibilities. He has remained, above all else, an

intellectual in the finest sense of the word, curious, rigorous, principled, and never afraid to question even those ideas closest to his own convictions.

Happy birthday

As Jaye celebrates his 60th birthday, we honour not only a comrade and a friend but also one of the finest public intellectuals to emerge from our generation of activists. His life reminds us that ideas matter, that principles endure, and that intellectual integrity remains one of the rarest and most valuable forms of public service. In an age when conviction is too often exchanged for convenience, Jaye Gaskiya continues to exemplify the courage to think critically, speak honestly, and stand firmly for justice.

Happy 60th birthday, Comrade JayeGaskia. May your restless intellect, generous spirit, and unwavering commitment continue to enrich our collective struggles and inspire future generations of activists, scholars, and democrats.

Comrade Jaye Gaskia @ 60 – A Burden of Revolutionary Intentions

Comrade Orike Didi

Introduction

Trying to define the legacies of Jaye, for practical purposes, could be limited to my knowledge of his contributions to the struggle. He was definitely larger than what was listed about him in the news media – as a public affairs and political analyst, civil society activist, development specialist, conflict transformationist, peace builder and so many other appellations. He was all these, but he was more. Yet, to define him in this simplistic way will easily imply the existence of a struggle to understand the motive forces behind the movement of the different arms of an octopus. Was his socio-political trajectory done on instinct, or was it a conscious manifestation of a man on a mission? Was it his emotions of love for the oppressed that majorly drove his thoughts towards the breaking of slave chains? The primary fact remains that Comrade Jaye was a conscious socialist revolutionary, not only in theory, but also in praxis. He understood theory. He understood history of struggles. He understood the fundamentals of materialism. He marshalled thoughts and cadres on praxis.

Encounters - #10 Agudama Lane

I was introduced to Comrade Jaye Gaskia by Comrade Isaac Osuoka (Sankara) in one of the then ideological meetings of 1996-1997. I was just about leaving graduate school and these meetings took place at the renowned #10 Agudama Lane, D-Line, Port Harcourt. This address sheltered the office of the NGO -Environmental Rights Action. The NGO was headed by Mr. Nnimmo Bassey but the Port Harcourt office was run by late Oronto Douglas, the deputy director. That NGO was seemingly the first of its kind in Nigeria. While reconstructing the office for use, Isaac had carried me along months earlier to see the state of work being done there – Isaac and I were roommates at the University of Port Harcourt. So, the office building was not new to me when it fully came into use. That office became larger than life for it was more than a home for many NGO activities in the Niger Delta. At certain times the meetings were for capacity building for volunteers for ERA's activities. At other times they were for the building and training of cadres for agitations anchored by the United Action for Democracy, the Civil Liberties Organization, Women in Nigeria (WIN), the Ijaw Youth Council, the Chikoko Movement, the Rivers Coalition, Southern Minorities Movement, the Democratic Alternative and the Peoples' Democratic Liberation Party.

Apart from Dr. Isaac Osuoka who knew me earlier, I remember meeting late Comrade Oronto Douglas, late Dr. Mofia Akobo, Comrade Elder Che Ibegwurah, Dr. Chris Akani, late Patrick Naagbanton, late Nelson Azibolanari, Dr. Elias Courson, late Kingsley Kpea and a host of others in these meetings, especially in the meetings of the Rivers Coalition and the Southern Minorities Movement. But then the struggle to free the Niger Delta and the South South minorities from ethnic oppression and economic injustice had its national implication, hence was expected to be a national struggle. That struggle required ideology.

It was only in this office that many ideological formations were fashioned to support peoples' struggles. I had done my little readings of leftist literature while at graduate school but battled with lack of ideological clarity. I needed to connect the dots between theory and reality, and between the histories of different peoples of the world. I suspect that Comrade Isaac Osuoka was deliberate about ensuring that I met this set of leftists, the core of which included Jaye Gaskia, Godwin Frank, Steven Obodoekwe, Karl Chinedu Uchegbu and late Patrick Naagbanton. We easily became the central forces of the Democratic Alternative, a party headed at the national level by Dr. Abayomi Ferreira with Orike Didi occupying the chair of Rivers North.

But then there were so many things wrong with Nigeria in the fading military interregnum, hence so many things to be done, so many things to be discussed. At times

these meetings at 10 Agudama happened one after another and into the night. At times they moved from capacity building workshops for NGOs and peoples' movements into strategy meetings for revolutionary groups. Hence, one could go into that building in the morning and find yourself attending several meetings in one day before going home at night. Many of us belonged to most of the organizations, hence agenda changed at the end of one meeting and with the beginning of another meeting.

In 1997 the Niger Delta region was in a subtle flux. Ijaw youth agitators and pan-Nigerian revolutionaries were beginning to state the obvious fact that the peaceful and non-violent methods employed by Ken Saro-Wiwa in the struggle were no longer effective, hence there was need to match force with force. Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow eight other Ogoni compatriots had been hanged in November 1995 by the Abacha junta and Claude Ake, a leftist intellectual was, I suspect, bombed out of the sky in November 1996 by the same government. Activists and agitators were apprehensive of the presence of anyone in uniform because of the actions of the functionaries of the military government. I was still struggling with the implication of the deaths of these two great thinkers when men of knowledge I met around #10 Agudama Lane swooped in on my ideological life and a new beginning started. Yes, I had read Marx, Lenin and Trotsky and immediately discovered that I was aligned to Trotskyism. I studied the sciences in school, and when I met Jaye Gaskia and Godwin Frank (who were both science graduates) talk about history and progress of society, I felt more comfortable with my thoughts. Jaye handed me *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Trotsky while Patrick gave me *Guerilla Warfare* by Che Guevara. I gave to Patrick, perhaps permanently the books *The Revolution Betrayed* by Trotsky and *The Black Revolution*. I remember also permanently giving to some younger comrades a book by Patrick Wilmot – *The Right to Rebel*. I was later to receive from Godwin Frank electronic versions of Chris Harman's *A Peoples History of the World* and Seumas Milne's *The Revenge of History* when it was published in 2012. Ideological books were moving between comrades and everyone was studying.

It was under the atmosphere of these lectures, debates and mass actions organized by these organizations that the Ijaw Youth Council launched the Kaiama Declaration on 11th December, 1998. Through the Kaiama Declaration, "resource control" acquired a new potent meaning and the phrase- by any means necessary -became a call to action. At least the cacophony of ideas in the Delta finally had a new coherent face in the Kaiama Declaration and that was a great renewal for all the forces behind it. The socialist underground was inherently pleased that the declaration had essentials like the control of material resources belonging the working people who were bound to confront

their destiny through a struggle to enforce the answering of the ethnic question. Naturally, Jaye was one of those who made available his ideas towards the scripting of the declaration.

The ERA office in which Jaye worked even did more than its defined mission as workers' struggles were also given a place of respect. I was very familiar with some of them. I had personally led a group of workers of Magcobar/MI as their secretary to the ERA office. Our sack, communicated earlier through letters by one Mr. Godwin Ojieh, was coincidentally to be effective on 1st May, 2000 which was a global workers' day. The workers were openly denied and betrayed by one Chief Amadi and Mr. Ogbebor of the NUPENG secretariat. These two men had ensured our registration and inauguration as a branch of NUPENG. After our purported sack, we took a bus to ERA office and Jaye addressed the workers, offered biscuits and soft drinks. I remember Oronto Douglas emerging from the inner office and getting into a conversation with Jaye on our matter. They both addressed the workers, offering to help in whatever they could. The workers were shocked that such an organization that showed care existed and many of them got registered as members of the Civil Liberties Organization that same day. One of them was Mr. Dagogo Raymond. The next day being May 1st, we were at the Sharks Stadium parade ground with a banner condemning the actions of our seemingly past employer - Magcobar/MI with the inscription "Magcobar/MI Workers are Drying Up and Dying in Silence!" The banner was paid for by Oronto and Jaye. There was also a newspaper publication in the P.M. News with the caption Magcobar/MI Workers on Head-on Collision with Management". Our socialist bulletin - Arise - (which I edited under the supervision of Jaye and Godwin Frank) carried the analysis of the duel and that of workers and management of Halliburton Energy Services, Julius Berger and Oil Service Base Attendants (OSBAs). Eventually, our flyers, newspapers and bulletin were in the hands of Dr. Peter Odili who took the salute of that day as governor of Rivers State. The company's management was in disarray due to the escalation of the matter. The MD of Magcobar, Mr. Egil Melgren was angry when he saw the publications. Subsequently, all the workers were recalled and with increased pay but under a new contract. However, one of us refused to work in the firm anymore. He was Comrade Silva Asuku. Wrapped in our banner, he walked out of the company premises, rejecting his severance package, refusing to be consoled after the humiliation of working for years with paltry remuneration, and especially for been refused to unionize in the first place. While doing these for workers who never knew him, Jaye was neck-deep in NGO advocacy and research for the ERA, being an employee in the department that deals with programs.

My Presumptions

My major presumption about Jaye the first few times we met was that he was mentally and ideologically ready for the Nigerian revolution. He was widely read and his thoughts revolved around peoples' histories, the similarities of parallel histories and the prospects of a concrete revolution. He easily interrogated processes of history, revolutionary situations, counter-revolution and the retrogressive roles of characters of the military interregnum.

Jaye was an ideological product of the military interregnum in the Nigerian social space – the period of Generals Babangida and Abacha. He came from a generation of student revolutionaries who had battled the military governments from the university campuses and was in the quest of translating it to the wider society when I encountered him. He was in the group of ideologues I refer to as the third generation of Nigerian leftists.

The first generation of Nigerian leftists was made up of the likes of Michael Imoudu (Labour Leader #1), Prof. Eskor Toyo, Mokuwgo Okoye, Prof. Ikenna Nzimiro, Prof. Akin Fadahunsi, Niyi Oniororo, Yusufu Bala Usman, Nduka Eze and Comrade Ola Oni. Before this first generation of leftists faded through age, Jaye had already taken shape as a socialist ideologue. The second generation of leftists was made up of people like Teye Olorode, Dipo Fashina, Festus Iyayi, Bade Onimode, Edwin Madunagu. Jaye interacted with the exiting fortunes of the first generation and naturally more with the second generation. From the aging first generation, Jaye could hear the lamentations over the inability of the Nigerian left to take power as the major cause of the social retrogression and economic backwardness of the most populous black nation in the world, Nigeria. At the 3rd All-Nigeria Socialist Conference held in Benin between 21-23 February, 2003 attended by members of the Port Harcourt as we loved to call ourselves, this issue was again served hot on the table. Betrayals were well experienced by leftists within the ideological walls of the Nigeria Labour Movement leading to a lethargy in fomenting Nigeria's progress through the Labour Party. It seems that forever, characters have always been there to thwart the progress of the left through decomposition factors like ethnicity, religion and geo-politics. Maybe, there was an outright shortage of confidence in the left to pick up the mantle of power, even when it was stranded in street in 1993. It is with nostalgia that we remember this conference was the last and most likely the only one in which three generations of socialists were to meet. The first generation members are all gone, the second are almost all gone too.

The zenith of national social decay came with the General Babangida regime. The government went into a programme of privatization and commercialization of public enterprises as prescribed by the IMF, World Bank and other international predator

agencies. These programmes, implemented under the auspices of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), undermined the social and economic fabric of the society. To the chagrin of the Nigerian unorganized left, the last drop of Nigeria's humanity was cheapened. This was easily seen in the destruction of the economy. The naira was devalued, the educational sector suffered underfunding just as the health sector. The middle class transited into poverty and the poor became hungry.

Naturally, university students were at the receiving end of these neo-liberal economic policies as tuition suddenly rose. Students whose parents had been made poorer by government economic policies reacted in a series of violent street demonstrations called anti-SAP riots. They were murdered by government forces and the protests were brutally repressed. The conscious and active university students of the Babangida era emerged as the third generation of the Nigerian left. Jaye was one of them.

This group of student revolutionaries were joined by labour unions and some intellectuals in the streets after the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election results. A conglomeration of these forces became the movement that confronted the Abacha government which became the second zenith of national decay. Through these, through even more, Comrade Jaye could be said to have gone through the fragmented battles of the struggle to free Nigeria.

Beyond Assumptions - The Burden of Revolutionary Intentions

I make bold to state that Jaye Gaskia was one of those who has remained a blessing in my ideological development. That is not an assumption. As an undergraduate I had listened the lectures of Prof Julius Ihonvbere in the university and become radicalized. I had also listened Prof. Kimse Okoko and more gotten enlightenment. I also read the works of Prof. Claude Ake, especially Social Science as Imperialism and Revolutionary Pressures in Africa with glee. However, Jaye's ideological dispositions freed me from revolutionary confusion and gave me focus. His projections made me easily connect the dots in a revolutionary situation.

I have stated elsewhere that-

That I became more of a revolutionary than a human rights activist was because I had to first establish in my thought processes our common humanity which could not be easily relinquished by the ruling classes. The option left for the oppressed lower classes in society was to take back that humanity through a revolution. I became socialist because I believe capitalist "progress" imposes historical backwardness on society. Additional to this thought is an adjoining logic among socialist revolutionaries that capitalism has self-imposed limitations because it has roots in the slave system. These limitations create the

objective conditions through which a revolution can occur. All that the revolutionary need do is strike the necessary matchstick in the gas station, for the objective conditions have enough fuel for the fire that will burn, and then guide the revolution to its logical conclusion.

Comrade Jaye believed, like Lenin, in the raising of committed set of revolutionaries who must transform into a vanguard of the revolution. The vanguard was expected to guide the working class revolution through thick and thin, but he also believes that the revolutionary who started the revolution will definitely not be the same one that ends it. This is because it is through the junctions of history, contestations of ideological choices, confrontations at the revolutionary fronts, all filtered through the changing fortunes of the revolutionary process, that the revolutionary becomes a new man. Somehow, the socialist is expected to transform into communist, hence the question of ideological commitment was very important. Lack of it and the lack of education could easily veer the assumed revolutionary into bourgeois radicalism at the mid-term or could even kick-start the process of counter revolution when progress was expected. Hence, the assumed revolutionary was ab initio significantly drenched in false consciousness.

I have also stated elsewhere that-

It is only when all the slave systems have been overthrown that the “new” society can work towards establishing a holistic view of human rights. But then, historically, Marxism carries the deeper burden of critical analysis of society. Environmental and animal rights cannot be considered over and above human rights and cannot replace them. Environmental sustainability remains an objective concept in the confrontations of ideological forces in history, and socialist production could be as destructive as its capitalist variant in this light. Marxism, and by extension socialist transformation of society, attempts at humanizing man from the animal in him. This is true because socialist thinkers have been scientific enough to admit that socialism is still very much a dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the historical destination of society is communism, a state of society with a more perfect production and distribution relations.

Jaye has for decades remained a protagonist for the resolution of the contradiction, a teacher of dialectics and materialism. It is his position that correcting the contradictions in production relations is the life purpose of the revolutionary beyond merely expressing his love for society. This naturally leads to a rise in conscious self-activity, mass actions, capacity to resist injustice - whether political or economic, and the need to spread revolutionary justice beyond artificial borders in order to bless history with freedom. To achieve these, there is need to be involved in the contestation for power. In

our common geography, the basis for contestation of power is defined by three dimensions of the struggle.

1. To free the Nigerian masses from the clutches of slavery
2. To Liberate the global middle class from capitalism
3. To answer the nationality question

The first dimension gave Jaye his preliminary baptism of fire. From student unionism down to the streets as a convener of the United Action for Democracy. He sought the revolution to install a socialist system in Nigeria.

The second dimension of the struggle had him immersed in the battles against multi-nationals and their local collaborators, especially in the Niger Delta. In this particular dimension, Jaye stood up against profiteering of the oil-multinationals who left for the working people and farmers wastelands and poisoned waters, polluted air, and the institutions of state which support the exploitation of the Nigerian people. He supported workers' agitations and fought against their exploitation. He was the one who explained better the meaning of the phrase- working people – as those who created the wealth of society, way above the traditional working class. He was committed to international socialism.

In the third dimension of the struggle, Comrade Jaye easily related to the reality of “communism” in the Soviet Union. He knew and explained it away that the ethnic question was one that must be answered for the chains holding the progress of society down to be broken. He knew that what was practiced in the Soviet Union was basically state capitalism over violently “russified” ethnic nationalities. This position of branding Soviet communism state capitalism was very pronounced in much of his analyses. However, Jaye's practical response to the ethnic question in Nigeria was to be personally involved in the Niger Delta struggle, more precisely in the Ogoni and Ijaw struggles, the struggles of two nationalities into which he was not born. That speaks volumes as the anatomy and physiognomy of a man who carried a burden.

Conclusion

So much could be said, so much could be written. But then, brevity is a good virtue.

So, let it be that this is a testament to an unfinished revolution. And a testament that revolves around intentions could also become a burden. Jaye carries that burden of revolutionary intentions.

For now, let us take a break from a million battle fronts and celebrate this great son of the Nigerian soil, the one man who thinks unceasingly of the freedom of the working people of the world.

Comrade Jaye, let sixty beautiful flowers be yours in this season as you celebrate.

Comrade Orike Didi writes from Port Harcourt.

My Friend and Comrade at 60: A Toast to a Lifetime of Leadership and Activism

Associate Professor Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi

Jaiye, my brother, it was a pleasure to write this piece for you. Now we celebrate not only 60 years of impact but 60 years of struggle. You are indeed a leader who came out in the fight when it was hard, an activist who mentors other leaders and not followers. And because of your dedication and selfless struggle, living in just and the truth is easier. People say 60 is a milestone but for Jaiye it's a movement, 6 decades of refusing to give up on the country, of turning dignity into demands, of making sure leadership isn't just a title, it is a duty!

I don't know exactly where we met but I can recall it happening in the military days and how students' organizing as a movement was a big priority for the country. A very deep and assertive senior comrade who ran a group organizing from Ilorin and later Lagos. We were all Marxists, all of us knew and believed that capitalism was a death trap and we must be organized as young people to resist the imminent danger and consequences of capitalism. We got knowledge from leadership; we argued, we innovated and we planned for a revolution that never happened! But little did we know that we are the revolution, we were hoping for!

As I toast to my comrade of three decades or more, I want to thank you for your selfless service to this nation, your contribution to the movement, through your engagement, you have saved lives, you have challenged the authority, you have spoken when others chose to keep quiet, you fight for right, you fought for justice and years after, you still fight for the liberation and emancipation of the masses.

I can't forget an incident some years back, in Babangida regime's time when the student's movement was attacked at BUK during the National Association of Nigerian Students Convention in Kano, the idea to arrest or maim as many as possible and that's

what the then junta did through his boys. During the attack I ran into the bush, and I was particularly followed by these elements because I was the only woman, the shout of 'Keferi' rented the air and I took to my heels. I ran for my life, for more than 20 kilometers and at a point I was losing my strength, goose pimples all over my face and the attackers still trying to beat me, I feared that I wouldn't survive that incident, until I saw my brother Jaye and one of his mentees who took the risk to come and rescue me, they came to wrestle with the guys, and we escaped. I remember how we had to hide in a hut in the bush, how I had to hide inside a drum. That day, I cannot forget, I saw a brave and selfless leader! I want to thank you for who you are! As bad as the situation was, you were still joking and asking me if that incident would define my quest for revolution! It didn't!

Comrade Jaye, you led with dignity. You are indeed a library of struggles won, of battles fought and hope kept alive. Your years are not counted but they are counted for, so thank you for your years of courage. You are indeed an activist, a builder, truth teller, a legend at age 60! I salute 60 years of courage in public! 60 years of standing for what you believe in! You didn't just talk about change, you built it!

Your Comrade Sister

Associate Professor, Public Law

Founder, Women Advocate Research & Documentation Centre, Africa

Tribute to the Incredible Jaye Gaskia on His 60th Birthday

Ken Henshaw

I got to know about Jaye Gaskia long before I ever got to meet him. He was already a living image and personality in my mind—all conjured from stories and narratives I had heard about the man. As many people can relate, in those circumstances, the mind tends to invent images, unlike anything in reality, about people we hear so much about.

It turns out that the Jaye Gaskia I had conjectured was well above six feet, heavily built, dark-complexioned, bearded, with a husky voice, commanding tone, muscular, and never smiling. While I cannot recall the exact moment I met Gaskia, I do remember how it made me feel. I remember feeling somewhat disappointed at how far my conjecture was from reality. He wasn't heavily built, he had no beard, his tone wasn't

commanding, and he was always smiling. He did not look like the archetypal revolutionary from the tales, but rather a simple, friendly, and knowledgeable fellow.

Knowing he is a Marxist, I thought, of what use will my Marxist readings be if I did not spar with him a bit? I threw a question, expecting a debate. I got a laugh and a calm reversal of my question to me. Typical Gaskia.

While I am not certain it was the first, I do recall that one of my earliest meetings with Gaskia was while attending a meeting at 13 Agudama Street in Port Harcourt, that iconic building of which many revolutionary tales should be told. It was 1997, in the heat of Nigeria's pro-democracy movement. The times were tough. The dictator Sani Abacha had set up five political parties that were hell-bent on making him their consensus candidate for President. The political class had been completely co-opted. All that was left between a transition to maximum tyranny under the guise of democracy was a handful of die-hard pro-democracy campaigners, mostly former student activists and labour unionists.

As a student of the University of Port Harcourt, I had joined those ranks early, writing and posting on campus noticeboards and elsewhere, calling for mass student resistance to military dictatorship. In that endeavour, I made the acquaintance of Jimitota Onoyume, who was a year ahead of me in the Department of Philosophy. We struck an immediate partnership in 1996.

I was young, radical, and compelling. He owned a typewriter in his university accommodation and could type. In those days, when computers were not so popular, that was a major asset. Together, we formed the Eagle Magazine, a radical student organ dedicated to mass education and mobilisation. Jimitota was Editor-in-Chief; I was Deputy Editor.

It was Jimitota who first invited me to a pro-democracy meeting at 13 Agudama Street, which is where I believe I met Jaye Gaskia, in the company of other brilliant comrades including Oronto Douglas, Isaac Sankara, Godwin Frank, and Patrick Naagbanton; and later on, Uche Onyeagocha, Uche Okokwu, Nsirimovu Anyakwe, Felix Tuodolo, and others. The details of the planning and the brave acts we carried out collectively are the subject of a thriller movie—perhaps another time.

In those meetings, Gaskia was always the ideological pillar. It was he who always so clearly made the links between strategy and history. Whether it was the ethnic nationality struggles of the Niger Delta, or the Oodua "Republic," or even the fight for democracy in Nigeria, Gaskia could make the needed ideological link, as well as the historical corollary.

In all his analyses, Gaskia always left the room with the feeling that change was possible and within reach, even for a bunch of clandestine renegades like us.

It was not long after, that my tutelage under Gaskia began. I will probably not be the activist I am today if I had not had the exceptional privilege of being taught by Jaye Gaskia. From sharing his library with me, to providing practical guidance, he guided me through those formative years, helping to make me the man I am. It is why I am proud to call him teacher even now.

Our relationship has also been shaped by our shared acts of defiance against military dictatorship. I recall one such “outing” against the Abacha dictatorship on the 25th or 26th of April 1998. We were at the popular Mile 3 Market and Car Park, distributing fliers and mobilizing citizens to resist Abacha’s tyrannical rule. As usual, Gaskia was doing most of the talking, armed with a megaphone and wearing an “Abacha Must Go” emblem. We hadn’t been there for long when the police, dressed in full combat gear, attacked. We ran fast and far. In minutes, everyone was out of the protest ground—except me. I was trapped because I had not seen the danger on time. I disguised myself and remained in the park while the police searched and questioned everyone. The story of my escape on that occasion is the subject of another tale.

When all our comrades returned to the agreed muster point for a head count and I was missing, Gaskia again swung into action. He had drafted the first page of a media statement condemning my “arrest” when I came straggling in. That is how far Gaskia will go for those he calls comrades.

That close call with the police was no deterrent. Less than a week later, on May 1, 1998, Gaskia led us onto the streets again, protesting and distributing fliers. Again, the police attacked, and again we ran!

Such is the doggedness and intensity of Gaskia.

The next narrative requires some background. My introduction to radical student activism drew from the ranks of the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria, a radical youth and student outfit that was deeply active within the ranks of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS). At the time, there were at least two other strands of socialist mobilization and organizing that were quite active within NANS. There was the Democratic Socialist Movement, previously called the Labour Militants. Then there was also the May 31st Movement, otherwise known as the M31M.

In 1990s student activism, these organizations were antagonistic, to say the least. But Gaskia always had a way of seeing the larger picture, seeing beyond “tendencies,” and seeking the value each activist brought to the overall liberation struggle.

On the night I was to be elected President of NANS, Gaskia was at the venue of the convention all night. He was there for me, and nothing else. He understood the value of that moment even when others stuck to their “tendencies.” It did not bother Gaskia in the least that the convention was mostly a PYMN affair!

When the military retreated in 1999 and Olusegun Obasanjo took over, the intensity of our campaigning declined. It turns out that most Nigerians—activists and unionists alike—had imagined that the attainment of democracy was an end in itself. The potential for campaigning within the pro-democracy spectrum and using pro-democracy rhetoric reduced. We could no longer call on citizens to campaign for democracy in order to fix our problems; we already had democracy. A less redundant rhetoric had to emerge.

Enter the ethnic nationality struggle.

Gaskia is a global citizen, but of Yoruba extraction. This was not a barrier to him joining the Niger Delta struggle for resource justice. Without going into details, suffice it to say that Gaskia was instrumental to drafting the Kaiama Declaration that framed the Ijaw struggle for resource justice and self-determination. He was instrumental to defining the strategy. He was every bit a part and parcel of that struggle.

Gaskia was also a combatant for the environment and was one of the first to make a connection between the ecological abuses and destruction by multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta and expropriation by global capitalism. Gaskia always had a way of making sense of it. Again, the many stories buried within these few lines are stuff for another larger narrative.

In later years, I had the honour of working with Gaskia as Secretary of the United Action for Democracy, when he was the Convener. Gaskia designed the character of our response to the Jonathan government’s increase in petrol prices. He mapped the clusters of protests, shaped the arguments, and even identified potential leaders—and all these, months ahead of the January 1st, 2012 subsidy removal announcement by the Jonathan government.

When the protests broke out in cities across the country, he led from the front, coordinating actions from Abuja and participating actively in the Labour and Civil Society negotiating team with the Federal Government.

There is a lot more I can say about Jaye Gaskia, but I will rather limit it to these, in the hope that he plans to write a memoir of his incredible life of service to the Nigerian people. I beg to leave him with some tales and plots to make that memoir a bestseller.

Dear comrade, leader, and mentor, as you turn 60 years, my wish for you is good health and many more years of struggle...Until victory!

Ken Henshaw

Jaye Gaskia and His Contribution to PCVE

Ms. Yetunde Adegoke

I first met Jaye Gaskia in his capacity as Chair of the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) network. He was facilitating a learning reflection session for GCERF grantees. Prior to this, our government technical partner had tasked us with scaling GCERF's pilot successes to State-wide and eventually national levels through the PAVE network. I approached Jaye, armed with questions about the status, gaps, and opportunities for sustainably expanding PCVE interventions. What began as a technical inquiry quickly revealed that I was speaking with someone whose understanding of the ecosystem far exceeded the boundaries of any single project.

From that first conversation, it was clear that Jaye possessed an unusual depth and breadth of knowledge about the wider landscape in which PCVE sits — the political economy, the governance gaps, the structural drivers of violent extremism, and the long-term sustainability challenges that many actors overlook. His thinking was not confined to donor cycles or project frameworks; he saw PCVE as part of a broader struggle for social justice, community empowerment, and equitable development.

One of the earliest ideas he raised was the establishment of a trust fund for PCVE, a concept that immediately shifted our thinking from short-term programming to long-term sustainability. As we explored this idea, the discussions guided us toward confronting one of the major drivers of recruitment into violent extremist groups: large-scale unemployment. He supported a technical team to think beyond traditional donor funding and consider how GCERF resources could be leveraged to attract sustainable investment. He pointed to the Lagos Security Trust Fund as an example of how a public–private partnership could address security issues, and from this emerged a community of practice focused on private sector engagement.

Within this community of practice, the idea of an endowment fund surfaced. A feasibility study among companies and philanthropists revealed both opportunities and constraints, ultimately leading to the strategy of strengthening social entrepreneurship at the community level and amongst the civil society PCVE actors. Jaye's original suggestion of the Trust Fund was instrumental in shaping this direction: by supporting communities to develop bankable, market-driven projects, PCVE actors could attract private sector investment at both small and large scales. This approach aligned with his long-standing belief that communities must be empowered not only to resist violent extremism but to thrive economically and socially.

During the PAVE strategic planning meeting, Jaye introduced another transformative idea: the creation of a PCVE Resource Centre. He envisioned a hub that would harness knowledge from diverse PCVE and PCVE-related actors, facilitate communities of practice, and offer knowledge services such as training, consultancies, and technical support. He emphasized the need for a central repository of knowledge — a place where interventions could be documented, lessons shared, and innovations nurtured. With global funding for PCVE diminishing, he supported the developing idea that Nigeria needed a shift from donor-driven approaches to community-based, market-driven livelihoods supported by a knowledge hub. During consultations with IPCR about the vision, the term PCVE- Knowledge, Innovation, and Research Hub (PCVE- KIRH) was crafted and subsequently a platform designed to anchor Nigeria's PCVE ecosystem in sustainability and local ownership.

Nigeria, one of GCERF's earliest partner countries, faced shrinking global development funds and increasing pressure from GCERF's board to transition out. As GCERF explored options for a responsible exit, Jaye's vision for PCVE-KIRH emerged as a viable bridge between policy and practice. Through extensive consultation, it became clear that PCVE-KIRH — if established not as a project but as a home-grown social enterprise — could take over many of the functions GCERF had piloted and would be well positioned to strengthen and support the scale-up of PAVE and other actors in the PCVE space. Under Jaye's leadership, PCVE-KIRH was fully registered as a Limited by Guarantee organization. He secured additional donor funding, formalized strategic partnerships, and has begun building a formidable action-learning model for sustainable, climate-smart, community-based, market-driven solutions that strengthen livelihoods, enhance community cohesion, and support self-funded PCVE interventions.

Reflecting the whole-of-society approach, Jaye has led PCVE-KIRH into partnerships with NCTC-ONSA, IPCR, universities, PAVE networks, and other diverse actors. Under his guidance, a regional PCVE-KIRH node plus 24 State PAVE networks have been

established, alongside seven pilot multi-sectoral Technical Working Groups in the North-West. Knowledge products, webinars, communities of practice, the PCVE Summit, and the digital platform have laid a strong foundation for future growth.

When GCERF paused grants in Nigeria, many saw it as a setback. Jaye saw an opportunity. He began leveraging potential funding sources — donors, private sector actors, and sub-national governments — to position PCVE-KIRH as a one-stop shop for primary, context-specific PCVE data, proof-of-concepts, and sustainable solutions. He frequently reminds actors that violent extremist groups — responsible for severe harm, loss of life, and human rights violations — thrive in environments where governance is weak or absent. Drawing from his extensive experience with grassroots actors, he emphasizes the importance of both conventional and non-conventional civil society actors in building resilience.

Beyond his technical expertise, Jaye stands out in a development landscape often pressured by capitalist interests. He is a resolute socialist professional whose high intellect, emotional intelligence, and versatility have earned him deep respect. Principled to the point of sometimes being unbending, he nonetheless adapts when he trusts the intent behind new ideas. He accommodates last-minute meetings, listens deeply, and asks incisive questions that bring lofty proposals back to sustainability and community relevance. His reputation is wide-reaching, yet he refuses to exploit relationships, protecting his legitimacy as a grassroots mobiliser. His nuanced understanding of the systems and structural drivers of violent extremism allows him to navigate the sector with integrity, ensuring that his work remains anchored in the empowerment of the communities he serves.

Jaye Gaskia is not simply a development professional; he is a thinker, a mobiliser, a strategist, and a principled advocate for justice. His contributions to Nigeria's PCVE ecosystem — and to the broader struggle for equitable development — will continue to shape the sector for years to come.

A Birthday Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia

Matthew Alugbin

A Birthday Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia

By Matthew Alugbin

I met Comrade Jaye Gaskia in my formative years as a student, at that fragile age when you know something is wrong with the world, but you don't yet have the language to name it. With my other comrades, our encounter with him brought clarity. It brought clarity to what our involvement should be on campus as members of the Students Union. It brought understanding to what it means to be a conscious member of society, and not just a spectator to history but a participant in contributing to it.

That clarity came in the way Jaye spoke. He is deliberate and has the rare ability to break down complex political economy and still make it feel personal. It was easy for him to connect sociopolitical realities of the country to our campus situation. He would connect global capitalist crises to the strike on our campus. He taught us that activism without analysis is noise, and analysis without action is vanity.

We were blessed in that era from the tutelage of lots of people like him, who gave their time freely because they believed the next generation had to be sharper, bolder, and more principled. Baba Aye, Wale Salami, and Wale Balogun were all there for us. There are many more whose names live in our protest chants and our memories. There is Abiodun Aremu, who is in a class of his own.

But even in that constellation of committed mentors, Jaye occupied a unique space. One of the defining moments for me was the Anti-Imperialist Camp held around December 2011. If you were there, you would remember it. If you weren't, it is hard to explain how much it changed us.

That camp was an ideological training ground where we had political education in its simplest forms. It was a critical analysis of global and local capitalist crises that deviated from what we learnt in classes or textbooks. We drew knowledge from the people's struggle, and Jaye Gaskia was central to that. They pushed us to raise questions, to read, to debate, to disagree, and to arrive at our own conclusions, with evidence and history in view.

It was a big gathering of passionate students who wanted change. We learnt that we are all just one movement dispersed on various battlegrounds. That is one of Jaye's greatest gifts to us.

Because of some of his teachings, our comrades returned to campus, seeing that the union ceased to be just a welfare body. It became a political school to test ideas, build coalitions, and hold power to account.

Today, as we mark another year of his life, I'm thinking about the debt we owe. It is a debt to take what we have learnt and multiply it. It is a debt to write, to speak, and to

build. So, on your birthday, we have a duty to recommit ourselves to the political education you prioritized.

Happy birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

Jaye Gaskiya: Ode to a Thinker of Thinkers

Kunle Wizeman Ajayi

"Go get my concortions!" He would softly instruct. And that's how he beams his thinking on us, his Comrades and students.

J.G is a man of soft words, but strong thinking. He would summarize a book of 300 pages with 300 words. He saturates you with how he sinks the ideas without complicating the complexities. And with the usual smiles, he would try to tutor you without sounding as your teacher.

J.G is a great thinker, and a library of thinking words. An Orator who never shouts. Happy birthday, Father!

E-signed, Kunle Wizeman Ajayi, Ibadan, 5th August, 2026.

Jaye Gaskia: An Iconic Legend of the Struggle

Ayansiji RasAQ Abiodun (Castro)

Jaye is a man of many parts, just like the proverbial elephant that was to be described by three honest, wise blind men. The one who touched the legs described the elephant as being like a pillar; the one who touched the tail described it as being like a snake; and the one who touched the belly described it as being like a wall. Every description mirrors the side from which it was observed. However, they all described it in a magnificent manner that stunned every listener.

I doubt if there could ever be a perfect description of Jaye. I came in contact with Jaye's works before I met him in person. Though I was not clear about the source or authorship of those works at the time, I later came to realise that this was largely because of the guerrilla-like strategies of the then pressure groups, which often wrote under collective banners or pseudonyms. The anti-military and socialist messages contained in fliers and

leaflets circulated under the banners of several fronts of the Mayist movement provided clear insights and direction to the struggle against military rule.

Some of the IEC (Information, Education and Communication) materials, when picked from the streets, would be taken to a deep corner of the house to be read and digested because, under military rule, reading such materials openly amounted to gambling with treason charges. Times went by, and some of us began to develop trust and interest in the movement beyond ordinary emotional support and bystanding. Most of those leaflets had a subtle way of persuasively forcing you to join the struggle, particularly with the last lines often reading, “Every onlooker is either a coward or a traitor,” none of which I was comfortable being.

The struggle has many fronts and phases, with Jaye contributing intellectually on all fronts from the ideological to the intellectual, from tactics to strategies, from socialist reconstruction of Nigerian society to the self-determination of ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, and from seemingly opposing and paradoxical views to the pursuit of unity of purpose. All terrains of the struggle were Jaye’s niche. His writings across these fronts, however, never deviated from his reflections, thoughts, and dreams of building a country where all would be equals modest as it may be to say, an egalitarian society.

My first physical encounter with Jaye was sometime in 2002 at Evans Square, Ebute Meta, after a long period of accepting his leadership in the trenches. It was the second anniversary of one of our fronts, the Yoruba Revolutionary Movement (YOREM), an organisation formed after it was discovered that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to instil socialist ideological discipline and direction in the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC).

Jaye delivered a paper titled “Only Unity of All Oppressed Nationalities Can Save Nigeria from Imminent Collapse.” That paper provided a clear sense of clarity, particularly to those who mistook the Yoruba self-determination struggle for a return to the old ways of the ancient Yorubas and nothing more. It brought clarity and a sense of direction, lending credence to “Self-Determination and Social Emancipation,” a popular slogan for which YOREM was known.

His ability to bring order to chaos, particularly intellectually, is a rare talent that many covet. Backed by appropriate theories, pragmatic insights, concrete examples, and utmost clarity on alternatives, Jaye navigates the intellectual space of the struggle with rarely matched prowess and an undiluted sense of purpose.

His leadership of the UAD represented a model of activist citizenship in which civil society was conceived not merely as a watchdog over government, but as an organised

force for popular participation, economic justice, and deepening democracy. One epoch-making and significant episode of the UAD under Jaye Gaskia's leadership was the January 2012 uprising, popularly known as "Occupy Nigeria." Jaye himself described it as a revolution because it defied the conventional style of protests known in recent Nigerian history and set a new phase of the struggle.

Jaye's intervention was particularly important because he combined policy analysis with grassroots mobilisation, going beyond scratching the surface to question not only the immediate increase in fuel prices but also the underlying structure of Nigeria's petroleum economy.

Jaye has traversed many fronts of the struggle intellectually across the globe, bringing clarity to contexts, instilling unity of purpose, and contributing immensely to the cause of humanity. His contribution to humanity transcends his activism, scholarship, and commitment to social justice. It is also reflected in the lives he has touched, the consciousness he has helped awaken, and the generations he continues to inspire.

His unwavering commitment to equity, human dignity, and the emancipation of the oppressed stands as a testament to a life dedicated to the greater good of all. As we celebrate his sixtieth birthday, we are reminded that true legacy is not measured merely by what one achieves materially, but by the courage to make society and the world better for all and sundry to live in.

Jaye Gaskia's enduring legacy is, therefore, one of service, resistance, intellectual courage, and an abiding faith in the possibility of a more just and humane world.

Happy 60th Birthday to an Iconic Legend!

Ayodeji Ajayeoba: the Configurative Avatar

Gbenro Olajuyigbe

It depends on the sides you want to see. I have at least eight sides to this Octagon - the humanitarian-development colossus, the idea generator, the resilience expert, the exotic cocktailed fanta-cocacola biber, the mid-day 'goro' eater, the Marxist, development focused activist, most recently, a loudly quiet aspiring gentleman. Whichever angle you view him from, his humanity and patriotism cannot be diminished.

He is still angry against the nation that cannot preserve the sanity of her children and protect their characteristic innocence. He knows that such a nation has lost her future.

As an expert in peace and conflict, counter terrorism and violent extremism, Jaye understands why there has been an unprecedented rise in the number of radicalized adolescents and young people recruited into terror groups, committing diverse crimes. He knows that the Nigerian state has simply failed to address the issues concerning youth involvement in violence which has more or less become a permanent feature of the country. For so long, the nation has carried on as if it does not care about youth and child development, despite the fact that he has laid out his expertise in this direction for decades. I have been on this journey with him for decades too. We always agree that

there will be no respite for the horrors going on in the country if we fail to act now to address the drivers of violence and strategically address the issues of youth engagement in violent crime and extreme violence. A day will come when it will be too late to halt the impending conflagration which the youth are likely to unleash on a nation that has more or less abandoned it to its fate. This fact is often ignored in governance and policy implementation. Jaye knows that we have built a society of irresponsible rulers and committed failure in positions of authority; who the youths are merely emulating.

For someone like Jaye who understands the importance of a country planning adequately for its youth, women, aged and the vulnerable, it is not strange that Nigeria is this volatile on account of exclusion. A country in which over three million young people graduate every year from secondary and tertiary without effective plans is a country on the precipice. Jaye has been working with others to escape the irreversible Armageddon; unless the governance trajectory shifts.

Jaye is a friend I am proud to have, a credible brother, a distinguished professional but a stubborn Aburo. As he joins the table of the elder may the Lord give him the grace to love Him(God) more dearly, follow Him more nearly and see Him more clearly in Jesus name. A jolly good fellow is 60, take your flowers!

A Life of Ideas, Courage and Commitment: My Reflections on Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

Comrade Yusha'u Sani Yankuzo

It is both an honour and a privilege to reflect on the life and work of Comrade Jaye Gaskia as he marks his 60th birthday. It is impossible to speak about the contemporary pro-democracy movement in Nigeria without acknowledging the immense contributions of Jaye Gaskia. For over four decades, he has remained one of the most

principled, courageous and intellectually grounded activists in Nigeria's democratic and social justice struggles.

My first encounter with Comrade Jaye Gaskia was in 2005 when I was volunteering with the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), North-West Zonal Office in Kaduna. At the time, I was assigned to distribute leaflets for the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Labour and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO) nationwide protests against the increase in the pump price of petroleum products.

Those protests, led by Comrade Adams Oshiomhole and supported by labour unions and civil society organizations across Nigeria, represented one of the defining moments in the struggle for economic justice and accountable governance. As a young activist, participating in that campaign introduced me to the power of organized resistance and collective action. It was also during this period that I first encountered Jaye Gaskia, whose clarity of thought, organizational discipline and unwavering commitment to social justice immediately distinguished him from many others.

That first encounter marked the beginning of what has become a relationship spanning more than two decades. Since then, I have had the privilege of associating closely with Jaye, particularly when I was working with the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) under the leadership of Comrade Y. Z. Ya'u, while Comrade Jaye Gaskia served as the Convener of the United Action for Democracy (UAD). Through his guidance and encouragement, I actively participated in the activities of several organizations committed to deepening democracy and promoting social justice, including ActionAid Nigeria, the Solidarity Center Abuja, the Campaign for Transformative Governance (CFTG), Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) and numerous other pro-democracy platforms across the country.

Jaye possesses a rare ability to connect people, organizations and movements around shared ideals rather than personal interests. He has consistently built bridges between labour unions, civil society organizations, community groups, youth organizations and democratic movements. Many activists of my generation benefited immensely from these networks, which provided invaluable opportunities for learning, organizing and contributing meaningfully to national development.

One memorable experience that remains fresh in my mind was in 2011 when I, together with Comrade Jaye Gaskia, Comrade Baba Aye and the late Comrade Abiodun Aremu, attended the Anti-Imperialism Camp held at the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. We spent nearly a week together engaging in

rigorous discussions on global politics, imperialism, democratic struggles, movement building and strategies for advancing social justice.

Beyond the formal sessions, the camp offered younger activists like myself the rare opportunity to interact closely with experienced organizers whose lives had been dedicated to public service. Jaye never positioned himself as someone above others. Rather, he listened attentively, encouraged debate, challenged assumptions and inspired us to think critically about Nigeria, Africa and the wider world. Those conversations remain among the most valuable political education experiences of my activist journey.

One of Jaye's greatest strengths is his extraordinary commitment to mentoring younger activists. In many organizations, experienced leaders are reluctant to create opportunities for younger generations. Jaye has consistently done the opposite. He has always believed that leadership is meaningful only when knowledge, skills and opportunities are deliberately passed on to others.

Over the years, countless young activists, researchers, organizers and civil society leaders have benefited from his mentorship. Many who now occupy important leadership positions within civil society organizations, development institutions, labour organizations and democratic movements were shaped, directly or indirectly, by his guidance. His mentorship goes beyond giving advice. He patiently develops people, exposes them to ideas, encourages independent thinking and creates opportunities for them to grow.

His intellectual depth is equally remarkable. Jaye combines activism with scholarship in a way that very few people can. His analyses of governance, democracy, elections, constitutional reform, conflict, public policy and social movements have enriched public discourse in Nigeria for decades. Whether speaking at conferences, facilitating workshops or participating in movement strategy sessions, he consistently demonstrates an exceptional ability to simplify complex political and social issues while remaining firmly rooted in democratic principles.

Equally admirable is his courage. Throughout Nigeria's difficult political history, Jaye has never allowed intimidation, harassment or changing political circumstances to silence his voice. He has remained fearless in defending democratic values, human rights, social justice and accountable governance. Even when such positions were unpopular or carried personal risks, he remained steadfast in speaking truth to power.

His courage, however, has never been reckless. It has always been guided by careful analysis, strategic thinking and an unwavering commitment to peaceful democratic

engagement. He has consistently shown that genuine activism requires both conviction and wisdom.

Jaye's contribution to Nigeria's democratic development cannot be overstated. He belongs to the generation of activists whose sacrifices helped challenge military authoritarianism and laid important foundations for Nigeria's democratic transition. Beyond the restoration of civilian rule, he has continued to advocate for deepening democracy through citizen participation, governance reforms, social accountability, electoral integrity and inclusive development.

He understands that democracy is not merely about elections. It is about building institutions, strengthening citizens' participation, protecting rights, promoting social justice and ensuring that governance improves the lives of ordinary people. This broader understanding has informed his work across labour movements, civil society organizations, governance initiatives, peacebuilding programmes and leadership development efforts.

Personally, my association with Jaye has significantly influenced my own journey as an activist and human rights advocate. Working alongside him exposed me to new ideas, broadened my understanding of democratic struggles and strengthened my commitment to justice, accountability and public service. He challenged me to think beyond immediate campaigns and to appreciate the importance of institution building, political education and long-term social transformation.

Perhaps the greatest lesson I have learnt from Jaye is that activism is not an event but a lifelong commitment. Genuine social transformation requires consistency, integrity, humility, intellectual honesty and an unwavering belief in the capacity of ordinary people to shape their own future.

As future generations study the history of Nigeria's democratic struggles, I hope they will remember Comrade Jaye Gaskia not only as a courageous activist but also as an exceptional teacher, movement builder, mentor and institution builder. His greatest legacy may not simply be the campaigns he led or the organizations he helped establish, but the thousands of people he has inspired, mentored and empowered to continue the struggle for a more democratic, just and equitable society.

As he celebrates this important milestone, I join countless comrades, friends and associates in expressing profound appreciation for his remarkable service to Nigeria, Africa and humanity. I wish him continued good health, strength and many more years of impactful service.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia. Your life remains a powerful testimony that ideas, courage, integrity and selfless service can indeed change societies and inspire generations.

About Comrade Yusha'u Sani Yankuzo:

Yusha'u Sani Yankuzo is a Kano based Public Interest Advocate and Human Rights Lawyer, and Pro-democracy Activist. He is the founder and Executive Director of Centre for Human Rights and Social Advancement (CEFSAN) Nigeria. He also serves as the Principal Partner at Y. S. Yankuzo & Co. (Humanitarian Chambers), Kano where he leads public interest litigation and provides legal representation in human rights, governance, and social justice matters.

Yankuzo has been an active member of numerous pro-democracy, human rights, and social justice movements, networks, and coalitions in Nigeria and across the world. He is an Executive Member of End Bad Governance Movement which led the recent #EndBadGovernance Protests in Nigeria.

Reflection on Comrade Jaye Gaskia

Emeka Onuh

My first encounter with Comrade Jaye Gaskia was in the thick of the January 2012 anti-fuel subsidy protest. But it wasn't until 23rd March 2012 that we had a deeply personal meeting about class struggle, movement building and got to kick off a deeply close relationship that has lasted over a decade. I recall walking into his office that evening with youthful vigour and radicalism charged with tension and purpose, and there was Jaye, calm, analytical, and laser-focused on strategy. He wasn't just speaking; he was listening intently to me. That day, I saw a leader who understood that the struggle was not about ego but about collective action. It was the beginning of a relationship that would shape my political consciousness, intellectual sharpness and organising practice for years to come.

Movement, Campaign or Project Shared

Our shared journey has been rooted in the struggle for democratic and transformative governance. From 2012 onward, I was immediately introduced into movement building as the FCT Secretary of the UAD under the late Comr. Adams Unaji with the task for helping to mobilise for April 23rd and 24th, 2012, UAD days of action for the Immediate and Full Implementation of the Fuel Subsidy, Power Sector and Pensions Probe Reports.

The state, as usual, responded through the SSS by inviting Jaye on the 20th to scuttle the protest. I could remember us spending that weekend in different gardens disguised with a face cap to evade the manhunt and the various other strategies deployed to carry out that action.

We continued working closely within various movements, UAD, the Socialist Workers Movement, End Impunity Campaign, Protest to Power, and Take Back Nigeria throughout 2012, trying to get organised labour and civil society back to the streets in continuation of the January uprising. The successes and failures of this engagement led us to the conclusion that we need to take our message to Nigerians and put our ideas on the ballot.

In January 2013, one year after the Occupy Nigeria, we released a statement launching the Democratic Party for Socialist Reconstruction (DPSR) as an alternative political association in the statement we noted that “We have reached the collective understanding that the time has come for us to move from merely venting our anger in various forms of protests, to converting that anger and energy into the liberating task of building an alternative and radical mass based political platform”. In our quest to build a party of the left and an avowed sectarian tendency, we went into negotiations with the DSM, which was trying to register the SPN at the time. When these negotiations broke down, we tried registering the DPSR as a political party, but were denied by INEC. These events, which dampened my resolve, only fuelled Jaye the more as he always urged us to keep organising and not to agonise.

With the 2015 election lost and won by the opposition and when the change illusion promised by the APC failed to materialise, we shifted strategy to trying to get as many of our comrades as possible on the ballot, this led us to launch Jaye Gaskia for president in 2017 with the hope of challenging the 2019 elections, Comr JG will tell the story of the internal and external challenges we faced on this one day. Jaye. We also collaborated more on the broader push for a new political platform, including the Socialist Labour, Campaign for Transformative Governance, ASCAB, and later the TPAP-M. Through these platforms, we built coalitions, organised communities, and confronted the impunity of the political class.

Lessons Learnt Working with Him

Working with Jaye taught me three enduring lessons. First, ideological clarity is non-negotiable; he never compromised on principles, even when it was politically expedient to do so. Second, organisation precedes mobilisation, Jaye taught me that sustainable movements are built on structures, not just passion. Third, solidarity is strategic. He

consistently built bridges across tendencies and always avoided sectarianism. I also learnt patience. Jaye never rushed decisions; he consulted, debated, and built consensus, even in the heat of crisis. These lessons have become the bedrock of my own organising philosophy.

His Contribution to Democracy, Governance, Peacebuilding and Social Transformation

Jaye's contributions are monumental. He was a pillar of the anti-military struggle, from cofounding the Mayist Movement, serving as Deputy National Convener and later National Convener of the UAD. He also played roles in the CD and the Niger Delta struggle. He played a key role in the 2014 National Conference, coordinating the Civil Society delegation. Through the Campaign for Transformative Governance (CFTG), he brought trade unions and civil society together to push for accountable governance. In the peacebuilding space, his work with the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) reframed insecurity as a governance failure. His consistent advocacy for local government autonomy, resource control, and gender equality has shaped national policy conversations for over two decades.

His Influence on My Journey

Jaye's influence on my journey has been profound. He mentored me not through grand speeches but through daily example, showing up, staying committed, and thinking strategically. He entrusted me with various responsibilities. He taught me to see the long game, to build institutions beyond individuals, and to never lose sight of the people we serve. Because of him, I understand that leadership is not about titles but about service. He also taught me resilience, how to weather defeats, learn from them, and return stronger.

What Future Generations Should Learn from His Life and Work

Future generations should learn that ideas matter, but only when they are organised into action. Jaye's life demonstrates that change is possible when you combine intellectual rigour with grassroots engagement. They should learn the value of principled coalitions, building alliances across differences without sacrificing core values. They should also learn that leadership is about succession. His commitment to mentorship and building young cadres has been a task he has been committed to for a long time, and on which we have had several strategies and ideas on how to make it sustainable over the years. This is a testament to his belief in nurturing the next generation. Most importantly, they should learn that the struggle never ends; democracy, justice, and transformation require constant vigilance, renewal, and sacrifice.

Short Profile

Emeka Onuh is an active citizen, organic intellectual, and community organiser. Since 2012, he has worked closely with Comrade Jaye Gaskia across various progressive social movements and civil society coalitions to advance systemic change, working-class solidarity and build an alternative political structure.

Reflection on Jaye Gaskia @60

Kyauta Agmadalo Giwa

I have known Jaye Gaskia for over a decade, when he was working as a staff of ActionAid Nigeria. He has become a household name when it comes to demanding social justice discourse in the country. As a public affairs analyst and development expert, he has contributed to resources on topical issues such as democracy, climate change, social inclusion and good governance.

I recall him vividly at the forefront of the Occupy Nigeria Protest in January 2012. Since then, he has led the Civil Society Labour coalition, charting the need for a united front to fight injustice and bad governance in Nigeria.

We also served in the 2014 National Conference, where he also continued the push for a Civil Society Labour coalition, ensuring delegates from the 2 constituencies had a united front and a common agenda for the Nigerian people.

With a determination and conviction for a prosperous nation, as well as to promote and build an active citizenship, ensure equity, and justice to pursue the realisation in full of their innate potentials in Nigeria, Jaye sought to run for the presidency in the 2019 General Elections.

He has also contributed significantly to the movement building within and outside Nigeria. His wealth of experience has enabled him to contribute to skill-sharing on citizens' mobilising and organising amongst young people and various forums.

I have enjoyed reading several articles written by him on public affairs, where he analysed the state of the nation from the days of the Take Back Nigeria Initiative and set an agenda for a new Nigeria.

I appreciate his courage to speak out and stand up for justice. Documented materials speak volumes about his voice for transformative change and have contributed to scholarly materials.

Future generations can learn about consistency. Jaye has remained resolute in his firm stand for social justice and the transformation of Nigeria.

As a movement builder, there are a lot of lessons to learn from his wealth of experience in mobilising and organising. He has been a mentor to many young activists within and outside Nigeria. His ability to connect with young minds and galvanise support for collective action. He is a reservoir of knowledge for many to learn from and his depth of analysis on topical issues provides a perspective for common engagement. I am proud to be associated with him, believing that Nigeria can be better with the right leadership is in place.

As you commemorate this milestone, do well to stand up and dance o. We won't appreciate the "seat based approach" to enjoy this special privilege God has given you in life.

Comrade Jaiye @ Sixty: A Reflection

Bonney Akaeze

It is with great delight that I embraced this opportunity to pen a few reflections on my enduring connection with for Comrade JaiyeGaskia as he marks his sixtieth birthday.

Our paths crossed in Port Harcourt during my undergraduate years at the University of Port Harcourt. The point of connection point was the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) and subsequently, the Rivers Coalition.

Within the University of Port Harcourt Campus Unit of the CLO, I was not only an active member but also served in various capacities. It was one of the most turbulent period in Nigeria's political history, following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election by the military regime led by General Ibrahim Babangida, and the subsequent emergence of General Sani Abacha's dictatorship.

At the time, Comrade Isaac Osuaka (popularly known as Comrade Sankara) then a post-graduate student at University of Port Harcourt served as the vital link between us—the student activists on campus--and the broader community of civil society activists in Rivers State. Among these were Oronto Douglas, JaiyeGaskia, Godwin Frank, Patrick Naagbanton, Felix Tuodolo, Nelson Azibonari and many other committed advocates for justice. Ken Henshaw, Chilos Godsent and I eventually became the principal campus allies of these Port Harcourt-based activists.

Although the primary focus of these senior comrades, as we fondly called them, was the struggle for environmental justice in the Niger Delta. Jaiye Gaskia distinguished himself by broadening the discourse and situating the Movement the wider context of Nigeria's governance crisis, democratic deficits, and social justice challenges.

He pioneered the Rivers Coalition, a platform that brought together diverse citizens' advocacy and intervention organizations into a formidable civil society network and intellectual powerhouse. Through this coalition, the voices of the Niger Delta people and were coordinated, strengthened, and amplified in demanding environmental justice and the attendant socio-economic rights from both the international oil companies (the IOCs) and the Nigerian State.

Indeed, it was within the Rivers Coalition that the philosophy and political framework of the Niger Delta resource control Movement were subsequently developed. Among this remarkable circle of activists, Comrade Jaiye stood out as the indisputable leading light in terms of philosophy, theory and strategy, providing much of the intellectual foundation upon which the struggle advanced.

I can still vividly recall, his pivotal role in articulating and drafting of the historic 11th December, 1998 Kaiama Declaration. That landmark document was crafted at No 13 Agwudama Street, D-Line, Port Harcourt--the branch office of the Environmental Rights Action (ERA)—Friends of the Earth, (FoE) Nigeria whose national headquarters was in Benin-City. In many respects, Comrade Gaskia remains one of the unsung intellectual architects of the Niger Delta struggle.

Since we got connected in Port Harcourt in the early 90s, we have been involved in several social actions within different platforms among which are the United Action for Democracy (UAD), the Democratic Alternative (DA), the annual political education youth camp of the Social Development Integrated Centre (Social Action), the Nigerian Civil Society/Labour Coalition, the Peoples Alternative Political Movement (TPAP-M), the Campaign for Transformative Governance, and the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) Network as the ones that readily come to mind.

If I were to summarize my impression of this exceptional development activist, I would simply say this: in him I found a living library of Marxist literature, a reference encyclopedia of revolutionary praxis, and a scholar whose knowledge spans multiple disciplines. He is remarkably studious, deeply contemplative, intellectually rigorous, incisive in analysis, and profoundly reflective,

As a writer, he remains a delight to read any day—very methodical, coherent and persuasive. As an Organizer, he is a master strategist with an uncommon capacity for

disciplined execution and resilience. Above all, 'My Senior Comrade as I fondly call him, is a loyal friend whose empathy enriches human relationships and whose fraternal spirit inspires lasting bonds.

What more can say than to pay glowing tribute to this remarkable mind from whom I have learnt so much over the years.

As you celebrate this milestone, may Almighty God continue to grant you divine guidance, sound health, renewed strength, and fresh inspiration to serve God and humanity with greater vigour in years ahead.

May your new decade be filled with abundant grace, enduring fulfilment, and many more years of purposeful service.

Congratulations, Senior Comrade, and happy 60th birthday.

---Boney Akaeze.

Jaye Gaskia: A Man for All Season

Babatunde Oluajo (OSB Sankara)

Describing Jaye Gaskia as a man for all season is by no means an exaggeration. From his students leadership and activism to his political and pro-labour activism and civil society activism as well as his Social Justice activism, Jaye is indeed a man for all season

Today, I join colleagues, activists, policy makers, and citizens across the nation to honor and celebrate an extraordinary leader, patriot, and intellectual—Comrade Jaye Gaskia—on the occasion of his birthday.

Across decades of unwavering service, Jaye Gaskia has exemplified what it means to live a life anchored on principle, courage, and popular empowerment. From his foundational work in student unionism and grassroots organizing to his leadership roles across broad-based civil society coalitions, his contributions to the Nigerian socio-political landscape remain profound, enduring, and transformative.

A Legacy of Strategic Leadership and Policy Advocacy

Jaye's life work reflects a unique synthesis of ideological clarity and practical strategic action:

As a key strategist within movements like the Labour Civil Society Coalition (LASCO), Joint Action Committee (JAF) and various civic alliances, he has consistently championed popular democratic participation, electoral integrity, and citizens' political education.

A relentless advocate for the vulnerable, Jaye has continuously interrogated public policy, highlighting the intersection between systemic corruption, governance failures, and poverty in Nigeria.

His capacity to convene, mentor, and organize diverse voices—from labor unions and student movements to policy think tanks—has kept the culture of accountability alive within the nation's political space.

"True leadership isn't measured merely by influence, but by the consistency of one's commitment to the liberation, dignity, and empowerment of ordinary people."

Beyond his public advocacy, Comrade Jaye is widely revered as a generous mentor and clear-headed analyst. His sharp socio-political commentary and policy critiques have provided invaluable guidance for activists, researchers, and civil society institutions striving to build a more equitable society.

On this special day, I honor not just his achievements, but his integrity, resilience, and unyielding belief in a transformed, just, and prosperous Nigeria.

May the year ahead bring you robust health, renewed strength, peace, and continued wisdom as you lead, mentor, and inspire.

Happy Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia!

-Babatunde Oluajo (OSB Sankara)

A Tribute to Jaye Celebrating His 60th Birthday

Bassey Bassey

A Tribute to Jaye

Celebrating His 60th Birthday

In 2016, I had recently resigned my position as Head of Administration at an organization to pursue a new challenge and stay locked in on a path I was passionate about.

That same year, I was still finding my footing in Abuja, with no family and no strong social network to lean on. Within that period, my path and Jaye's crossed a few times during the NSRP program, and I found myself admiring a man who always had the right contributions to make — and you couldn't miss the sound of his laughter when he did.

I got closer by every meeting, and he seemed to notice me too. He pulled me in, and he became a mentor, a friend, and a colleague. By 2018, when we were registering our organization, HipCity Innovation Centre, we needed an office address and a workspace we couldn't afford at the time. I approached Jaye and shared our vision and situation with him. He looked at me like a father would and said, "You can use my office as long as you want."

That singular act of generosity gave birth to the foundation of HipCity Innovation Centre — an organization that has grown from sharing an office space to becoming a household name in Nigeria in urbanization, housing, and governance. Over the years, Jaye has provided mentoring, support, and technical contributions to most of the work HipCity has done.

But if there is one thing that has shaped how I try to live and work, it is what I witnessed of Jaye's integrity ahead of the 2019 general elections. When he declared his intention to run for the office of President, I watched friends desert him publicly, one by one. I watched him face pressure — even during the party primaries — to pay bribes in exchange for votes. He refused every time. It went against everything he stood for and everything he hoped to correct in the country he wanted to lead. He put forward "Take Back Nigeria," a blueprint manifesto for the change he intended to bring. He didn't make it past the primaries. But those of us who stood close to him during that season saw something more valuable than victory: a man who would not trade his values, even when the cost was steep and the room had emptied around him.

That same integrity, I would come to learn, didn't only show up in public. On a personal level, my relationship with Jaye never stayed confined to the office. We often had time to talk about sundry things, and away from work, two attributes stood out to me as deeply admirable. Jaye is a deeply family-oriented man — he never misses an opportunity to celebrate his wife openly or speak of her with pride. He often shares stories about his relationship with his in-laws, and I confess I look forward to his messages to his wife on her birthday, posted openly on his Facebook page for all to see. I also watched him love his only daughter effortlessly and without reservation — in a world where some men still place undue weight on having male children. That is an attribute that has stayed

with me over the years: a man secure enough in himself to celebrate his family loudly, without performance, without apology.

As he turns 60, I find myself thinking less about how much he has done for HipCity, and more about the kind of man he chose to be — whether the room was full of cameras or empty of everyone but his wife and daughter. That, more than any title he could have won, is his real legacy.

I am more than thankful to God that I get to write this while he is here to read it. Happy 60th birthday, Jaye. May the years ahead be as full of grace, laughter — the same laughter I first fell in admiration of — and unshaken conviction as the ones behind you. Thank you for building not just institutions, but people. Me, among them.

With gratitude and admiration,

Bassey Bassey

Celebrating Jaye Gaskiya at 60: A Legacy of Leadership, Justice and Freedom

Kenneth Okoineme

Dear Jaye,

"Some people pass through our lives and leave memories. Others leave convictions, courage, and a way of seeing the world."

As you mark your 60th birthday, I find myself reflecting with immense gratitude on the profound impact you have had on my life and on the lives of countless others whose paths you have shaped through your leadership, mentorship and unwavering commitment to social justice.

As a young man searching for direction and purpose, you took me under your wing. You invested your time, energy, and wisdom in me, helping to shape my worldview and political consciousness. Through your guidance, I learned not only to think critically but also to engage issues with clarity, courage, and a sense of responsibility. More importantly, you inspired me to move beyond these to action, to believe that a better society is possible and that each of us has a role to play in building it.

From our days at the Nigeria Social Forum and ActionAid and throughout the many years since, you have remained a constant source of inspiration, mentorship and wise counsel. I treasure the countless trips we embarked on together, the long conversations and the many evenings we spend simply sitting with plenty of laughter talking about life, politics, organising, and the future of our country. These moments were not just mentoring sessions; they were lessons in leadership, humanity, and commitment.

For me personally, much of who I am today is a testament to your influence. I owe a great deal of my ability to act purposefully while remaining grounded in the values of justice and solidarity to your mentorship and example

At 60, you can look back with pride on a life dedicated to advancing the struggle for a better Nigeria. As one of the foremost organisers and leaders of the Left movement in the country, you have played a pivotal role in shaping the organising for change. You have consistently led from the front, bringing intellectual depth, strategic insight, and practical action to addressing the challenges we face as a country. Your contributions have helped to keep alive the vision and the journey towards a Nigeria that truly works for Nigerians.

On this milestone birthday, I celebrate not only your achievements but also the remarkable person behind them. You remain my Boss, the Leader, a Trusted Friend and a Big Brother. Thank you for the lessons, the guidance, the opportunities, and the unwavering support over the years.

May your 60th year and the years ahead bring you good health, fulfilment, renewed strength, and the joy of seeing the many seeds you have planted continue to flourish.

Happy 60th Birthday, Jaye.

With deep respect, gratitude and affection,

Kenneth Okoineme

Reflections on Jaye Gaskia at 60

Comrade Green Isaac

There are certain individuals whose lives transcend the ordinary and become a source of inspiration, guidance, and transformation for countless others. For me, Comrade Jaye Gaskia is one of such rare personalities. As he marks his 60th birthday, I consider it both a privilege and a moral obligation to reflect on my encounter, relationship, and years of

learning from a man whose life has been dedicated to justice, knowledge, and the struggle for a better society.

Celebrating Comrade Jaye Gaskia is far more than marking the passage of time; it is celebrating a life of conviction, sacrifice, intellectual courage, and unwavering commitment to social transformation. My years of interaction with him have created a bond that extends beyond friendship or comradeship. His direct and indirect contributions to my personal growth have profoundly shaped my worldview, strengthened my convictions, and influenced my journey within Nigeria's civil society movement. His life remains a reminder that true leadership is measured not by power or position but by the number of lives transformed through knowledge, integrity, and service.

My path first crossed with Comrade Jaye Gaskia around 2009/2010 during one of the defining moments of my search for deeper knowledge about society, governance, and the role of citizens in nation-building. It was at the Port Harcourt Political Education Centre, a place where history, political theories, and social philosophies were not merely taught but critically examined. It was there that I encountered a man widely respected for his vast intellectual depth and his unwavering commitment to Marxist philosophy and progressive social change.

To many, Jaye Gaskia is a renowned Marxist scholar, political educator, activist, prolific writer, and strategist. To me, however, he became much more than those titles. He became a teacher whose classroom extended beyond four walls, a mentor whose lessons were demonstrated through action, and a living example of consistency between ideals and practice. His humility, simplicity, discipline, and commitment to truth made him stand out in an era where many speak about justice but few dedicate their lives to pursuing it.

One of the greatest gifts Comrade Jaye gave me was cultivating in me the discipline of reading. He constantly encouraged me to study Marxist literature and other revolutionary texts that explored nation-building, political economy, social change, liberation struggles, and the historical evolution of societies. Through his guidance, I came to understand that meaningful activism is built upon knowledge, critical thinking, and continuous learning. He taught me that ignorance is one of the greatest enemies of social transformation and that every genuine activist must first become a lifelong student.

Jaye never confined his commitment to intellectual discussions alone. He embodied the very principles he taught. Time and again, he travelled from Abuja—often by road—to

Port Harcourt simply to participate in programmes, identify with young activists, and facilitate discussions during the Social Action Anti-Imperialism Camp at Aluu. Those journeys were not motivated by personal gain or recognition but by a sincere desire to invest in the next generation of progressive minds. Watching him make such sacrifices taught me that leadership is fundamentally about service and commitment, not convenience.

Beyond his activism, I found in Jaye Gaskia an exceptional human being. He possesses an uncommon calmness even in difficult circumstances. His smile, humility, and composure remain unforgettable qualities that have continued to influence my own approach to life's challenges. Whenever situations became discouraging or hostile, he demonstrated that strength does not always announce itself through loud voices or aggression. Sometimes, true strength is reflected in patience, emotional discipline, and the ability to remain focused on the larger purpose despite temporary setbacks.

Perhaps the greatest testimony I can offer is that Comrade Jaye Gaskia helped reveal the hidden person within me. Through his mentorship, he challenged me to think beyond immediate realities and inspired me to develop intellectually, morally, and socially. His influence penetrated the very fabric of my thinking, my values, and my actions. Many of the principles that continue to guide my engagement within Nigeria's civil society space today bear the unmistakable imprint of his teachings and example.

The lessons I have learned from him extend beyond political education. He taught me that ideas have the power to transform societies when pursued with integrity; that justice is not a destination but a continuous struggle; that humility is not weakness but strength under control; and that the pursuit of truth requires courage, discipline, and sacrifice. These are lessons that remain relevant not only to activists but also to every citizen who genuinely desires a more equitable and democratic society.

As Comrade Jaye Gaskia celebrates six remarkable decades of life, I celebrate not merely his age but the enduring legacy he continues to build. His writings, activism, mentorship, and tireless advocacy have inspired countless individuals across Nigeria and beyond. His life demonstrates that one person, armed with knowledge, conviction, and selfless commitment, can influence generations.

On this milestone occasion, I express my deepest gratitude for your investment in my life and in the lives of many others. Thank you for every lesson shared, every correction offered, every sacrifice made, and every example of principled leadership you have demonstrated. Your impact cannot be measured merely by the number of protests attended, books written, or speeches delivered, but by the countless lives you have

awakened to the possibilities of justice, social responsibility, and transformative leadership.

Comrade Jaye Gaskia. May your years ahead be blessed with good health, renewed strength, and greater opportunities to continue inspiring generations. Your legacy reminds us that the struggle for a just society is sustained not only by courageous actions but also by enlightened minds, compassionate hearts, and unwavering hope.

As you celebrate Diamond Jubilee, Comrade your life is proof that ideas can outlive generations, and your legacy will continue to inspire all who believe that another, better society is possible.

Reflection on Jaye Gaskia at 60

Mr. Osaro Odemwingie

Our paths crossed formerly when he joined us at Oxfam GB in Nigeria. Before then, I had known him from a distance when I had to visit ActionAid where he worked to meet up with some of his colleagues with whom I was collaborating on joint campaigns. Some included the World Global Social Forum, food security, gender equality etc. However, I knew him largely from his reputation as an activist.

He joined Oxfam at a time when we were working to adopt a new strategic framework which we called "One Programme Approach", that integrates long-term development work, humanitarian crisis response, and policy advocacy into a unified operational strategy. Instead of treating these areas as separate, siloed divisions, the model ensures they inform and reinforce each other to tackle the root causes of poverty, vulnerability, and injustice.

To our amazement, Jaye very effortlessly understood the programming philosophy and the trajectory that his "learning" curve was like a stroll in the park.

So it was an instant mutual respect and comradery that naturally emerged between us and it was no wonder that we went on to achieve so much together in so short a time. We worked through tough projects together and in the process built a strong and lasting trust. For example, between us, we mobilized stakeholders that included farmers, civil society organizations, organized labour and media partners to set up Voices for Food Security (VFS), a broad based coalition that campaigned vigorously to engage agricultural policy issues, and Association of Small-Scale Agro Producers in Nigeria

(ASSAPIN), a platform that focused on engaging practice and access to resources for poor rural farmers.

It was not surprising that we not only looked forward to come to the 聚会 every day, to share safe spaces for laughter and honesty, our personal friendship grew rapidly such that we would often end up in any one of the numerous rendezvous around Abuja after work or on weekends.

Jaye also proved to be a great family man who deeply adores his wife and love their daughter. He smiles so brightly when he talks about them when we talk family. The only song I have heard him sing - consistently - is "The only one I love" by Jaymay.

As I reflect on the man Jaye at 60, I do so with a profound sense of pride and deep feelings of gratitude, for our shared history, and the unique bond forged through daily work struggles and quiet moments of connection.

Happy birthday to you my dear brother! Wishing you also many more years to come in excellent health and prosperity.

Mr. Osaro Odemwingie

A Tribute to Jaye Gaskia at 60

Kentebe Ebiaridor

There are people whose lives are measured not simply by the passage of time, but by the impact they have on the lives of others, the institutions they help build, and the ideals they steadfastly defend. As Comrade Jaye Gaskia marks his 60th birthday, I am honored to celebrate a man whose life has been defined by courage, conviction, intellect, and an unwavering commitment to justice.

My association with Jaye spans many years of activism, organizing, and collective struggle. Our paths crossed and grew stronger through our work at Environmental Rights Action (ERA), where we stood together in defense of environmental justice, community rights, and democratic accountability. Those years were not merely about campaigns and advocacy; they were years of learning, solidarity, and shared commitment to building a society where the voices of ordinary people mattered.

Learning from Jaye was an education in itself. His clarity of thought, strategic insight, and remarkable ability to connect local struggles with broader national and global realities made him an exceptional leader and mentor. He approached every challenge

with intellectual rigor while remaining deeply grounded in the lived experiences of the communities we served. His commitment was never about personal recognition but about advancing causes greater than himself.

Beyond ERA, our engagement extended into wider spaces of civil society, democratic governance, and social justice movements. In every arena, Jaye consistently demonstrated that principled leadership requires integrity, sacrifice, and the courage to speak truth to power, regardless of the consequences. He has inspired generations of activists, nurtured emerging leaders, and remained a dependable voice for equity, inclusion, and human dignity.

What has always stood out to me is his generosity of spirit. He willingly shares his knowledge, encourages critical thinking, and creates opportunities for others to grow. His leadership has never been about commanding followers but about empowering colleagues and comrades to become leaders in their own right. This is perhaps one of his greatest legacies.

At 60, Jaye Gaskia's journey stands as a testament to a life lived with purpose. His contributions to environmental justice, human rights, democratic development, and social transformation have left an enduring mark on Nigeria and beyond. While much has been accomplished, I have no doubt that the years ahead will continue to benefit from his wisdom, experience, and relentless passion for justice.

On this significant milestone, I celebrate not only a respected comrade but also a trusted colleague, a thoughtful mentor, and a cherished friend. May this new chapter bring renewed strength, good health, peace of mind, and many more opportunities to continue shaping a better and more just society.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

Your life has been a blessing to the movement, an inspiration to colleagues, and a beacon of hope to countless people whose lives have been touched by your unwavering commitment to justice.

Happy Birthday, my senior comrade. May the struggle continue to yield the better society we have all envisioned, and may you continue to lead with the same courage, wisdom, and integrity that have defined your remarkable journey. GOD BLESS YOU
SIR

Aluta Continua!

Personal Reflection on Comrade Jaye Gaskia

Dr. Beji Gowel

When I think of Comrade Jaye Gaskia, I do not just remember a person, I remember a movement. Celebrating Jaye at 60 is more than marking a milestone; it is honoring a journey defined by purpose, peace, resilience, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to humanity.

Reflecting on his life, I recall first meeting him when we invited him to present a paper on the Implementation of the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) in Nigeria. His presence was not only influential but transformative. Jaye carried himself with a quiet strength that inspired confidence in others, turning moments of uncertainty into opportunities for unity and peace.

What stands out most about Comrade Jaye Gaskia is his ability to connect deeply with people. He listens with empathy, speaks with clarity, and acts with conviction. His leadership has never been about position, but about service—lifting others, nurturing dialogue, and building bridges where divisions once stood.

At 60, Comrade Jaye Gaskia embodies the essence of legacy. His life teaches us that true impact is measured not in years lived, but in lives touched. He has shown us that peace is possible when compassion guides our choices, and that resilience is born when we stand together in hope.

As I reflect on Jaye's journey, I see a man who has given himself fully to the pursuit of peace, national cohesion, and justice. His story is not finished—it continues to inspire us to carry forward the values he has lived by: courage, empathy, and the unshakable belief that a better Nigeria is always within reach.

Happy 60th, Comrade Jaye Gaskia. Your life is a gift, and your legacy is a light that will continue to guide us.

Dr. Beji Gowel

A Tribute to Jaye Gaskia, On the Cusp of Sixty

Florence Kayemba

I met Jaye at a point of transition in my own life — leaving the comparative certainties of the private sector for the more textured, unpredictable terrain of the development space. It is not an easy crossing, and I did not know, at the time, how much of it would be shaped by one man's willingness to walk alongside me through it.

Jaye did not simply offer me advice. He offered me a way of thinking. In our many conversations over the years, I found someone whose mind moved with a rare combination of rigour and range — equally at home in political economy and philosophy, in the granular realities of community organising and the sweeping arcs of history that explain why those realities exist. There are people who know a great deal about one thing. Jaye has always struck me as someone who knows a great deal about everything, and carries that knowledge lightly.

What I have admired most is not simply the breadth of what he knows, but the eloquence with which he offers it. Jaye has a gift for articulation that turns ordinary conversation into something closer to instruction — not because he lectures, but because he thinks out loud in a way that invites you to think alongside him. I have lost count of the conversations that left me turning an idea over in my mind for days afterwards, seeing some issue I thought I understood in an entirely new light. That is this quality, I think, that made him such an effective guide during my own transition — he understood what it meant to move between worlds, and never once made me feel like an outsider learning a foreign language.

And now, here we are, at the threshold of sixty — a milestone that, in most cultures, marks not decline but arrival. Sixty is the age of accumulated wisdom finally settling into its full authority. It is the decade in which a lifetime of thought, struggle, and conviction is not merely remembered but is put to its fullest use. If the years behind him have been marked by brilliance and eloquence, I have no doubt the years ahead will be marked by even greater clarity — a wisdom that has been tested and tempered, a strength that has weathered its share of storms, and a vitality that shows no sign of dimming.

So here is to Jaye Gaskia: friend, mentor, and one of the most formidable minds I have had the good fortune to know. Here's to a new decade of wisdom, strength, and vitality. The best, I suspect, is still ahead of you.

From Struggle to Systems

Reflections on Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

By Atambi Ade Ade

There are people one encounters first through reputation, then through ideas, and only later through the shared discipline of work. Comrade Jaye Gaskia was such a person for me. Long before we met physically, I had followed his interventions from a distance. I knew him as an activist, public affairs analyst and organiser whose arguments carried the weight of long engagement with Nigeria's social, environmental, democratic and working-class struggles. I admired the seriousness with which he treated ideas and the refusal to separate analysis from action. When our paths finally crossed in 2018, therefore, I was meeting someone whose work had already influenced how many of us understood the crises of our country.

Our physical meeting came at a decisive political moment. As Director General of the Sustainable Nigeria Party (SNP), I became involved when Comrade Jaye sought to contest for President of Nigeria on the party's platform. For me, his arrival in the party, and his willingness to submit a lifetime of activism to the difficult test of electoral politics, carried genuine promise. It suggested that socialist politics might move beyond commentary and protest into a direct contest over state power, public policy and the organisation of society. The presidential journey was eventually aborted by the manoeuvres and contradictions that played out within the party. Yet that disappointment became one of the most important political lessons of our collaboration.

It showed us that the existence of a political organisation does not automatically mean that it is prepared for power or governance. A party may possess a name, a structure and legal recognition while still lacking the ideological cohesion, democratic culture, mass roots, discipline and institutional capacity required to govern. It also confirmed that the Nigerian left, labour movement and socialist forces cannot wish themselves into relevance at election time. If we are serious about taking political power and using it to transform society, we must patiently build a mass movement rooted among workers, young people, women, communities and the oppressed. That movement must in turn give rise to a genuinely mass workers' party.

The 2018 Encounter and Its Political Lesson

The public record confirms that Jaye was an aspirant for the office of President toward the 2019 general election. His Take Back Nigeria initiative presented electoral participation as one part of a broader effort to build a grassroots mandate and organise citizens around a programme of national transformation. His writings from that period were already demanding concrete programmes rather than slogans, including on restructuring, policing, citizenship and democratic oversight.

Working with him during that period allowed me to see the difference between admiring a public intellectual and labouring beside an organiser. Jaye does not treat political ideas as ornaments. He tests them against concrete conditions. What social forces can carry this proposal? What institutions are required? What contradictions will emerge? What does implementation demand? A discussion with him rarely ends at the level at which it began. He presses a concept until its assumptions, gaps and consequences are visible.

This intellectual pressure can be demanding. He is a taskmaster when it comes to conception, drafting, review and revision. A document that appears complete may return covered in questions. A programme idea may be taken apart and rebuilt. A meeting may generate another layer of research, consultation or design. Over the years I have come to understand this habit as part of his politics. He believes that people who seek to change society must take their own work seriously. Passion without preparation cannot defeat organised power. Moral conviction without institutions cannot sustain a transformation.

Building the Political Alternative

After 2018, our work continued through several platforms, including Take Back Nigeria, the Alliance on Surviving COVID-19 and Beyond, and the process that produced The People's Alternative Political Movement. Each effort responded to a different moment, but a common question ran through them: how can scattered struggles become an organised political force capable of contesting and exercising power?

In March 2021, the Alternative Political Summit brought together left-led initiatives, labour organisations and citizens' groups. Jaye served as Secretary of its Central Organising Committee and publicly argued that working people had played decisive roles in the struggle for independence, the resistance to military rule and the defence of democratic participation, yet still lacked a cohesive left political platform capable of challenging for power. The summit established The People's Alternative Political Movement, known as TPAP M, as an effort to address that strategic absence.

I worked closely with him through TPAPM and through the attempts to register The People's Alternative Party and, more recently, the Party for Socialist Transformation. Both attempts were frustrated by the Independent National Electoral Commission. Those experiences exposed the legal and administrative barriers that confront emerging political alternatives, but they also forced us to confront our own weaknesses. Registration is important, but a certificate cannot substitute for an organised social base. A party must exist in the political consciousness, daily struggles and collective organisation of the people before it can become an effective electoral vehicle.

This is why the Movement for Socialist Transformation has become central to the work we have resolved to continue. MOST sponsored the registration effort for the Party for Socialist Transformation, but its purpose reaches beyond a single application to INEC. Its deeper task is to support mass political education, organise a durable popular base, clarify a socialist programme and help develop the cadres and institutions required for a long struggle. The obstacles placed before party registration have therefore strengthened, rather than weakened, the case for movement building.

During the approach to the 2023 elections, TPAPM established the Campaign for Socialist Transformation. CAST sought to raise the banner of socialism within the election season and compel public debate about the structural roots of poverty, inequality, unemployment and failing governance. Contemporary reports described it as a coalition committed to the emergence of a mass workers' political alternative and recorded its insistence that electoral choices confined to the established ruling parties would reproduce the same⁵⁶ crisis.

The period was difficult. It revealed how far socialist forces still had to travel to convert principled positions into popular organisation, shared discipline and electoral weight. Yet it also created spaces for learning. Through CAST, we convened the Socialist Transformation of Nigeria Conference. STON C allowed activists, workers, intellectuals and movement actors to debate socialist alternatives and the practical requirements of transformation. Even where immediate goals were not achieved, the effort helped preserve an ideological pole in national politics. It affirmed that socialism should neither be hidden during elections nor reduced to a historical memory. It must be explained, debated, organised and placed before the people as a living alternative.

Labour Civil Society and Transformative Governance

Another major arena of our shared work has been the Campaign for Transformative Governance. CFTG emerged from engagement between organised labour and pro-labour civil society. Comrade Jaye has served as a co-convener, while I worked in the secretariat. The campaign was supported in its programme work by the Solidarity Center and brought together trade unions and civil-society organisations around governance, civic space, public services, the economy, security and citizens' participation.

Reports from its launch in 2021 described CFTG as a labour and pro-labour civil-society campaign created to confront bad governance and the shrinking of civic space. Its subsequent work has included political education and organising with trade-union leaders, engagement on inclusive job-creating policies, and initiatives addressing the rights and safety of working women. Jaye's own public interventions have linked transformative governance to concrete improvements in citizens' conditions and to the dignity of working people.

This work reflects an important quality in Jaye's politics: he understands labour as more than an institutional stakeholder. Workers are a potential leading social force. At the same time, he recognises that organised labour must build alliances with informal workers, students, women, communities and progressive civil society if it is to exercise that leadership. CFTG has been one of the spaces in which we have attempted to translate that understanding into programmes, forums, charters, training and collective action.

Serving in the secretariat while Jaye co-convened the platform taught me that coalition work requires a special kind of patience. Organisations arrive with different histories, mandates, internal cultures and expectations. Agreement in principle does not always produce action in practice. Jaye's response is usually to return to political purpose, define the work more clearly and insist on structures that can carry it. This explains his constant movement from an idea to a concept note, from a concept note to a framework, and from a framework to tasks, roles and an implementation process.

Praxis and the Discipline of Political Education

My closest day-to-day experience of his intellectual leadership has come through my work as Programme Lead at Praxis Centre under his direction. Praxis embodies the conviction that movements require spaces for study, reflection, cadre development and strategic experimentation. Political education, in this understanding, is not a ceremonial lecture delivered occasionally to activists. It is a continuing process through which people examine history, political economy, power, organisation and the lessons of their own practice.

Jaye's wider record helps explain this orientation. Biographical accounts describe him as a public affairs and political analyst and a development practitioner with experience in conflict transformation, peacebuilding, participatory development and governance. His earlier work included environmental rights advocacy, a field in which questions of community power, corporate conduct, livelihoods and ecological justice meet directly. Public profiles of Praxis likewise locate its work among young people and communities affected by conflict and insecurity.¹¹¹²¹³

At Praxis, I have experienced his method at close range. He asks colleagues to read more widely, think beyond programme language and identify the political relationships beneath an immediate problem. He can move in one sitting from a national political crisis to the design of a training curriculum, a movement structure, a policy proposal or a community intervention. The range is impressive, but what matters more is the connective tissue. For him, knowledge should help people organise, and organisation should generate new knowledge.

There are, of course, moments when the pace and volume of work stretch everyone. To work with Jaye is to encounter many drafts, overlapping initiatives and ambitious frameworks. Yet even this intensity reveals something valuable: he refuses the comfort of helplessness. Faced with a failing institution or a worsening crisis, his instinct is to ask what platform must be built, what alliance must be convened and what instrument must be designed. This instinct has shaped much of our journey together.

From Protest to Prevention and Community Resilience

Our collaboration has also extended through the secretariat of the Partnership Against Violent Extremism, where Jaye leads as Chair of the Steering Committee, and through the PCVE Knowledge Innovation and Resource Hub. At first glance, work on preventing and countering violent extremism may appear separate from socialist organising. In practice, the connection is clear. Extremism grows within conditions shaped by exclusion, unemployment, injustice, weak public institutions, identity manipulation, ecological stress and the absence of credible pathways for participation. A serious response must therefore address both immediate risks and the structures that reproduce vulnerability.

Public reporting identifies Jaye as a founding member and inaugural chair of PAVE Network and records his continuing leadership of its National Steering Committee. Under this leadership, PAVE and PCVE KIRH have advocated a whole-of-society response to violent extremism, media responsibility, community resilience, early-warning systems, knowledge sharing and collaboration among state institutions, civil society, researchers, young people and affected communities.

The National PCVE Summit held in Abuja in September 2025 illustrates the scale of that work. Organised by PAVE Network in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Centre, it brought together public institutions, civil society, development partners, academics and community representatives. The summit also launched the PCVE KIRH Digital Hub as a platform for research, learning, capacity building and innovation. Earlier in Kaduna, the North West PCVE Summit had similarly focused attention on the regional dimensions of insecurity and community-centred prevention.

Behind such public events lies the less visible work of building relationships, drafting proposals, convening meetings, resolving institutional differences and keeping diverse actors focused on a shared objective. I have worked with Jaye through many of these processes. Together we have travelled across Nigeria, met communities and institutions, debated approaches, responded to emerging crises and returned repeatedly to the question of how national frameworks can serve people at community level.

These journeys have allowed me to see his passion outside conference rooms. He listens to local actors, but he also challenges easy explanations. He is concerned with the immediate suffering caused by violence, while asking what systems allowed the crisis to deepen. He presses for prevention because waiting for violence to occur condemns communities to a cycle of loss and reaction. He presses for knowledge systems because experience scattered across organisations and states cannot easily influence national policy. He presses for institutions because good intentions disappear when they are not embedded in structures that can survive individual projects.

What I Have Learned From Working With Jaye

After eight years of close collaboration, I can say that Comrade Jaye is cerebral, deeply passionate about the struggle and exacting in the work required to advance it. He reads the country structurally. He does not confuse a change of office holders with a change in the relations of power. He is therefore constantly concerned with how citizens, workers and communities can acquire the organisation, consciousness and institutional leverage needed to become authors of governance rather than spectators to it.

I have also learned from his insistence that political work must produce instruments. A movement needs more than anger; it needs a programme. A coalition needs more than goodwill; it needs agreed structures and tasks. Political education needs more than slogans; it needs curricula, facilitators and spaces for learning. Community resilience needs more than projects; it needs locally owned systems linked to policy and resources. These may sound like administrative matters, but they determine whether ideas become material forces.

His most demanding quality is also one of his greatest contributions: he is rarely satisfied with the first answer. He will ask for a deeper conception, a clearer framework or another review. Those who work with him can sometimes feel the weight of that intellectual grind. Yet the demand is rooted in respect for the people in whose name we organise. If we claim that our work concerns the lives of workers, communities and a nation in crisis, then carelessness is not a small fault. We owe them clarity, preparation and seriousness.

Our working relationship has not been a journey of easy victories. We have known aborted aspirations, blocked registrations, coalitions that struggled to realise their promise, demanding campaigns and institutions resistant to change. But struggle should not be judged only by immediate success. It should also be judged by the people it develops, the lessons it clarifies, the organisations it leaves behind and the capacity it creates for the next phase. On those measures, our years of work together have been immensely productive.

The Work Ahead

At sixty, Jaye's story should not be treated as a closed account. The central problems that have occupied his life remain unresolved. Nigeria still faces mass poverty, unemployment, insecurity, ecological crisis, failing public services, deep inequality and a political system dominated by elite competition. The left and labour movement still face fragmentation and limited mass organisation. Many citizens desire change but lack durable vehicles through which to exercise collective power.

The answer we have reached through experience is to continue the patient work of building. MOST must deepen political education and organisation. The effort to establish a mass workers' party must continue, whether through future registration opportunities or through broader realignment among working-class and progressive forces. Praxis must help form a new generation of organisers and leaders. CFTG must connect labour and citizens around concrete struggles for accountable government. PCVE KIRH must strengthen community resilience and ensure that responses to insecurity address causes as well as symptoms.

Jaye's contribution across these spaces is the attempt to connect struggle with systems. Protest remains necessary, but every protest raises the question of what should replace the order being opposed. Electoral participation matters, but it must rest on organised social power. Ideas matter, but they must be carried by people, programmes and institutions. This is the thread I see most clearly when I look back on our work since 2018.

On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, I celebrate a comrade, teacher, colleague and fellow traveller. I celebrate the public intellectual whose analysis has helped many people name the structures behind Nigeria's crises. I celebrate the organiser who continues to convene platforms even after setbacks. I celebrate the taskmaster whose relentless reviews have sharpened our work and sometimes tested our endurance. Above all, I celebrate a life committed to the belief that ordinary people can understand their condition, organise themselves and transform society.

It has been a privilege to work closely with Comrade Jaye Gaskia since our paths converged in 2018. We have traversed the country, entered difficult political terrains, built initiatives, confronted disappointments and continued to imagine institutions equal to our hopes. The road ahead remains long. Yet I am certain that the questions he has insisted we face, about power, organisation, knowledge, community and transformation, will remain central to the future of the Nigerian left and to the struggle for a just society.

Happy sixtieth birthday, Comrade Jaye. The best tribute we can offer is to continue the work: to learn, to organise, to build and to struggle until the people possess the power to govern their own lives.

To an Unbroken Compass

Reflecting on Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

By Babalola Anthony

Standing at the milestone of sixty years, Comrade Jaye Gaskia represents far more than a seasoned activist or an elder statesman of the Nigerian civil space. He embodies an institution of conscience, an intellectual powerhouse whose life's trajectory mirrors the relentless pursuit of justice, peace, and structural transformation for our nation. To reflect on Comrade Jaye's journey is to examine the anatomy of principled conviction—a rare quality sustained across decades without dilution, compromise, or exhaustion.

Comrade Jaye's depth of knowledge is vast, nuanced, and endlessly versatile. In any gathering—be it a policy dialogue, workshop, symposium, or a high-level security retreat, his voice commands immediate authority. It is common to see high-profile dignitaries, seasoned technocrats, and foreign delegates pause, lean in, and take notes whenever he takes the floor. He does not speak to fill airtime; he speaks to dissect reality, stripping complex political and socio-economic crises down to their structural roots.

His intellect bridges the gap between high-level policy formulation and the raw realities of groups on the frontlines of conflict. His contributions to peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and civic capacity development span every geopolitical zone in Nigeria. He never treats peace as an abstract buzzword; rather, he approaches it as an ecosystem that demands systemic accountability, social justice, and citizen participation. Whenever calls arise concerning national cohesion or community security, Jaye makes himself accessible, deploying his time, analytical rigor, and deep institutional memory to de-escalate tensions and build durable coalitions.

Perhaps the most striking paradox of Comrade Jaye's life is the deliberate simplicity with which he carries such immense intellectual weight. In a society that routinely commercializes influence and equates credibility with personal accumulation, his modesty is disarming. Had Comrade Jaye chosen to monetize his strategic foresight, political acumen, and international goodwill for private luxury, he would easily rank among the most materially wealthy individuals across the consulting and governance landscapes.

Instead, he chose radical modesty. He remains grounded, approachable, and fundamentally untethered to the vanity of status. His wealth resides where it matters most: in the minds he has sharpened, the institutions he has incubated, and the unyielding integrity that marks his personal and public conduct. This unpretentious posture disarms adversaries, elevates younger colleagues, and serves as a living rebuke to the transactional ethos that so often infects public advocacy.

Decades of Principled Struggle

What sets Comrade Jaye apart is his unbroken consistency in the struggle for good governance. For decades, through military dictatorships, flawed democratic transitions, state repressions, and changing political regimes, his compass has never wavered. Many who began this journey with him have grown weary, retreated into cynicism, or traded their revolutionary rhetoric for corridors of convenience. Comrade Jaye, however, has stayed on the frontline.

His activism is not seasonal. He does not wait for a crisis to go viral to take a stand, nor does he tailor his critique to suit the regime of the day. He holds progressive, conservative, civilian, and transitional administrations to the exact same uncompromising standard: the fundamental welfare and dignity of the working people and marginalized populations. This consistency has made him a reliable beacon. When younger activists need moral clarity, or when coalitions fracture under political pressure, Jaye remains the anchoring presence who reminds everyone of the core ideological objectives of the civic movement.

Architect of Innovation: The PCVEKIRH Resource and Knowledge Hub

My direct working relationship with Comrade Jaye gave me a front-row seat to his visionary engineering and relentless drive for institutional legacy. Serving as the Chair of the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Knowledge and Innovation Resource Hub (PCVEKIRH), he personally recommended me as the consultant to build what was entirely his brain-child: an unprecedented Resource and Innovation Knowledge Hub.

During our initial scope briefings, he laid out a vision so clear, thorough, and functionally ahead of its time that the entire architecture seemed already alive in his mind. He articulated the structural engineering, the theoretical framework, and the practical usability with surgical precision. Working under his direction, we developed a prototype and final product that stood entirely apart. To this day, I have not encountered any platform that matches the depth, utility, and uniqueness of that hub.

For Comrade Jaye, this was not merely a contractual deliverable; he treated it as a life project. Long after the system went live, his dedication never diminished. He constantly curates and sends critical materials, empirical research, and policy documentation to be archived on the platform, while continuously generating ideas to enhance the application's functionality. His commitment transformed the hub into a living, breathing repository for researchers, practitioners, and peacebuilders nationwide.

Comrade Jaye Gaskia enters his sixth decade having already built a legacy that will outlast trends and transient political cycles. He remains our intellectual compass, an unyielding activist, a humble mentor, and a steadfast comrade.

As you celebrate your 60th birthday, Comrade, may your strength be renewed, your mind remain sharp, and your resolve stay fortified. Nigeria and the global civic space are richer, wiser, and more resilient because you have chosen to walk this arduous, beautiful path with honor.

IN THE TRENCHES WITH JAYE GASKIA

Struggle for the Preservation of the Dignity of Nigeria and Her Citizens

The January 2012 Mass Quake of Occupy Nigeria



History rarely announces itself. It arrives quietly, disguised as a meeting, a whispered conversation, a handwritten note, a telephone that never stopped ringing, a room too small for the dreams it carried. Then suddenly, a nation rises. January came, not with fireworks, but with fire burning in the stomachs of market women, commercial drivers, factory workers, students, teachers, street vendors, informal workers, and citizens of conscience. The price of petrol had risen overnight. But what truly exploded was decades of betrayal. The streets knew that this was never merely about fuel. It was about hunger. About unemployment. About corruption feeding fat on public wealth. About a government asking the poor to pay for the failures of the powerful.

And somewhere before the barricades were built, before the chants filled Ojota, before labour declared a strike, there were rooms where strategy was born.

One of those rooms was the office of Jaye Gaskia the Praxis Center

No palace. No government secretariat. No mansion of privilege. Just a modest space where maps of resistance were drawn, alliances negotiated, arguments sharpened, and hope disciplined into collective action. The walls heard more than conversations. They heard history learning how to walk. There, trade unionists sat beside socialists. Human rights defenders shared tables with organisers from the informal economy. Market women arrived carrying stories heavier than baskets. Youth activists carried restless dreams. Lawyers came with constitutional language. Workers came with the language of empty pockets. Everyone left with one conviction that Nigeria belongs to the people.

“But can we TAKE BACK NIGERIA?”

For the citizens to respond to this question, and truly take back the country, Jaye understood what many overlooked. A revolution cannot belong only to intellectuals. It must speak the language of the mechanic. The pepper seller. The tailor. The bus conductor. The vulcaniser. The artisan. The street trader. The woman whose daily profit disappears when fuel prices rise. He believed that democracy must walk through the marketplace before it enters Parliament. So we organised. Not crowds, but communities. Not followers but citizens. Market associations became centres of political education like Wuse market and Apo Mechanic Village. Informal workers became ambassadors of popular resistance. Every union secretariat became a classroom. Every neighbourhood became an organising committee. Every citizen became a messenger of hope. Soon, Nigeria became the meeting hall. The earth shook, not because mountains collapsed, but because millions stood together. Before Ojota would become a people's parliament, Jaye then representing the Joint Action Front JAF, had with the leadership of the NLC at its national headquarters resolved to shut down the country to Take Back Nigeria for Nigerians.

Abuja answered. Kano marched. Benin refused silence. Kaduna sang resistance. Port Harcourt roared. Ibadan remembered the traditions of popular struggle. Across the federation, citizens became history. Placards replaced resignation. Songs defeated fear. Solidarity conquered isolation. The movement had no single owner. It belonged to everyone who believed that dignity could not be deregulated. In those unforgettable days, Jaye Gaskia stood among many organisers, building bridges between labour, civil society, informal workers, students, professionals, women's organisations, faith communities, and every Nigerian who refused to surrender hope. Not seeking applause. Not chasing office. Only insisting that public policy must answer to public interest. The government counted oil revenues. The people counted empty stomachs. The government spoke economics. The streets spoke justice. And justice found its loudest voice in collective action. The barricades have disappeared. The banners have faded. The microphones have fallen silent. Yet January 2012 still breathes inside the conscience of Nigeria. Its lessons remain. That ordinary people can become extraordinary when united. That market women are defenders of democracy. That informal workers are builders of the republic. That trade unions remain the heartbeat of social justice. That civil society must forever stand between power and oppression. And that every generation must produce its own organisers, women and men whose offices become workshops of democracy, whose words become bridges between despair and possibility,

whose lives remind us that patriotism is not measured by loyalty to governments, but by fidelity to the people. For Nigeria shall endure not because she possesses oil, but because her daughters and sons continue to rise, again,

and again, and again, until the dignity of every citizen becomes the first article of the Nigerian dream.

To Jaye Gaskia, and to the countless unnamed organisers, market women, informal workers, trade unionists, students, artists, journalists, lawyers, religious leaders, and citizens of conscience who stood together during Occupy Nigeria:

History remembers not only those who occupied the streets, but those who quietly prepared the nation to stand. As we celebrate Jaye Gaskia at 60. Let us be reminded of his opening remark at the

"Please let us be those who dared to dream aloud when silence has become the language of fear." – Jaye Gaskia January 2012, Praxis Centre



Above picture taken when citizens “Jaye Jaye” with the coat of arms upside down, because Nigeria “jaga jaga” at Freedom square Wuse 2, Abuja. The idea of creating a freedom square was due to state agents taking over the Eagles square.

By Ralph Gabin

My Reflection on Comrade Jaye Gaskia

While some people influence your life through what they say, others shape it through the consistency of who they are and what they communicate. To me, Comrade Jaye belongs to the latter category. I have come to see him not merely as a leader but as a mentor whose life, convictions, and discipline have challenged me to think more deeply about leadership, purpose, and personal responsibility.

What first drew my attention to him was not his position or achievements but his character. Kindness, honesty, courage, humility, and discipline—these are qualities that define him. In a society where these virtues are often compromised by convenience or personal gain, he has remained remarkably consistent. His actions reflect a belief that leadership begins with character long before it manifests in public space.

One defining characteristic of Comrade Jaye is his unwavering commitment to his convictions. He is not easily swayed by popular opinion, pressure, or changing circumstances. Once convinced that a course is right, he pursues it with remarkable determination. There is strength in such consistency because it demonstrates integrity and resilience. However, this same quality can sometimes make him appear rigid, particularly on ideology. While his firmness commands respect, I believe that the willingness to occasionally reconsider opposing viewpoints can make even the strongest convictions more effective and persuasive.

His understanding of leadership and governance has also influenced my thinking. He believes that leadership has largely failed to improve the lives of the middle class, leaving many hardworking citizens without the opportunities and stability they deserve. Whether discussing politics or national development, his concern has always been rooted in the welfare of ordinary people rather than the interests of the political elite. Listening to him has deepened my appreciation of the relationship between leadership and the quality of life experienced by citizens.

Perhaps the greatest impact Oga Jaye has had on me lies in the lessons his life has taught me. Through him, I have learned that people are imperfect and that meaningful relationships require the grace to accommodate human weaknesses and mistakes. Perfection is an impossible standard, but patience and understanding create room for growth.

He also taught me one of life's most liberating principles: live within your means. In a world driven by comparison and competition, many people measure their worth against others' accomplishments. This often leads to unnecessary pressure, frustration, and unethical choices. Comrade Jaye's example reminds me that true success is not found in competing with another person's journey but in faithfully pursuing my own. Every individual has a unique path, and lasting fulfilment comes from living according to one's values rather than society's expectations.

Reflecting on his influence fills me with both encouragement and renewed commitment. Encouragement because his example demonstrates that principles still matter, and commitment because it reminds me that genuine leadership demands consistency, sacrifice, and moral courage. His life has reinforced my belief that convictions should not be abandoned simply because they are unpopular or difficult to defend.

Among all his admirable qualities, what I respect most is his relentless commitment to pursuing his goals and protecting the principles he believes in. He possesses the courage to stand alone when necessary, refusing to compromise simply for acceptance or convenience. Such conviction is increasingly rare and deserves recognition.

Yet admiration does not prevent honest reflection. Great mentors are also human beings, and growth remains possible for everyone. If there is one quality that I hope Comrade Jaye continues to develop, it is a greater openness to engaging opposing opinions, especially on national and political issues. Listening to alternative perspectives does not weaken conviction; rather, it strengthens understanding and often produces wiser judgments. The strongest leaders are not those who always win arguments but those who can build bridges between differing ideas without abandoning their principles.

As I reflect on Comrade Jaye Gaskia's influence in my life, I am reminded that mentorship is not about finding someone who is flawless. It is about learning from someone whose strengths inspire growth while whose imperfections remind us that every leader remains a work in progress. His example has encouraged me to pursue my own convictions with courage, to maintain integrity in all circumstances, to live within my means, and to measure my progress not by the achievements of others but by my own faithfulness to purpose.

For these lessons, I remain grateful. They are enough to shape me into the leader I aspire to become.

By Bright Nwogwuguw

PART TWO

TRIBUTES AND GOODWILL MESSAGES

Comrades • Colleagues • Friends • Partners • Well-wishers

Contributions from comrades, colleagues, friends, organisations,
institutions, partners and associates.

A FRIEND, A BROTHER, A COMRADE

By Maji Peterx, Ph.D.

Dear Jaiye,

Your life is a gift, and we are all so blessed to have you as a friend, brother and colleague.

Many a time, I wonder how you combine empathy, focus and determination so seamlessly. You have remained very consistent in what you believe in and how you want to achieve your goals. You have not only influenced but also empowered generations.

But most importantly, I must congratulate you on surviving another year of me as your friend. That definitely deserves a well-decorated cake.

Maji Peterx, Ph.D.

2026

My Wishes for Comrade Jaye Gaskia at Sixty

Chat Adamu

Celebrating sixty years is a remarkable milestone, but celebrating a life dedicated to service, justice, and the pursuit of a better society is even more meaningful. As you mark this significant occasion, I am honoured to join family, friends, colleagues, mentees, and countless admirers in celebrating a man whose life has been defined by conviction, courage, and an unwavering commitment to social transformation. Your journey has inspired many and continues to remind us that purposeful leadership is measured not only by personal achievements but by the positive impact made in the lives of others. This milestone provides an opportunity to appreciate a life that has consistently demonstrated integrity, compassion, and a deep commitment to building a more just and peaceful society.

As you celebrate this new chapter, my heartfelt wish is that God continues to bless you with good health, abundant grace, renewed strength, and lasting peace. May He preserve your life and grant you many more years of fruitful service, surrounded by the love of family, trusted friends, and generations of people whose lives you have touched through your work and mentorship.

I pray that the vision you have carried for decades continues to flourish. May every institution you have helped build grow stronger, and may the seeds you have sown through leadership development, peacebuilding, civic engagement, and democratic advocacy continue to bear fruit across Nigeria and beyond. May your wisdom remain a guiding light to emerging leaders who seek to serve with humility, integrity, and courage.

It is also my sincere wish that the Jaye Gaskia Leadership and Social Transformation Academy fulfils its noble purpose of nurturing ethical leaders and committed changemakers. May it become a lasting platform where future generations are equipped with the knowledge, values, and practical skills needed to promote justice, accountable leadership, peaceful coexistence, and sustainable development.

As you look back on six decades of life and more than forty years of dedicated public service, may you find joy and fulfilment in the countless lives you have inspired and the lasting contributions you have made to our nation and humanity. May the years ahead bring even greater opportunities to mentor, influence public policy, strengthen institutions, and continue championing the ideas you have consistently upheld.

Happy 60th Birthday, Sir. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to justice, service, and nation-building. May God continue to guide your steps, enlarge your influence for good, and grant you many more years of purposeful living. May your legacy continue to inspire hope, transform lives, and empower generations to come.

Thank you.

From Mrs. Chat Adamu

TRIBUTE TO COMRADE JAYE GASKIA

Comrade Tijani Abdulkareem

Comrade Jaye Gaskia is an Iroko of Marxist Ideological Movement In Nigeria, Civil society Leader with decades of yielding his voice for the oppressed, and a pillar of Nigeria's ideological leadership movement.

As a civil society ally who has frequently collaborated and supported us in areas of advocacy, social justice, and governance reform initiatives in Nigeria over decades, Jaye's life has exemplified radical dedication, intellectual clarity, and structural organizing for mass liberation.

We fondly call him The Vanguard of the Masses for his Unwavering Activism which remains consistent risking personal comfort to advocate for participatory governance and pro-democracy tracking, organizing mass movements and building strong networks that empower youth and women across Nigeria.

Today, we celebrate the Legacy of a strategic Leader, a street credibility of social action that have immensely contributed in peacebuilding efforts and social justice leading coalitions like the People's Alternative Political Movement (TPA-M) and the Take Back Nigeria Movement, he has proven that true revolution requires both structural strategy, people's action and revolutionary fire power.

"To a mentor, a public intellectual, and a fearless warrior of the Left—your footprints in Nigeria's struggle for social justice remain indelible. The fight for a nation free from exploitation continues, guided by the clarity of your vision."

Happy Birthday Comrade, Wishing you many more years in fulfillment and Glory.

Comrade Tijani Abdulkareem,

Executive Director,

Socio Economic Research and Development Centre, SERDEC

Dear Comrade Jaye,

Adokaji Odela DCA

First, thank you for the honor of inviting me to celebrate this special milestone with you. Happy 60th Birthday! Sixty years is a beautiful milestone, and with everything you have accomplished over the years, this celebration is truly well deserved.

As I sat down to write this tribute, I did not realized how long I have known you until I started looking back. What stood out even more was how much of my leadership journey has been shaped by your impact , even before we worked together.

I first encountered you through the first Democracy Convening in 2023 while i was the national coordinator for the Girls Get Equal, Looking back at its history, I realised you have been there from the early days, consistently encouraging young people to organise, build movements and believe that they have the power to shape the Nigeria they want. That commitment has never changed. Whether through ActionAid, Activista, Setting the Motion steering committee,the Democracy Convening I am presently chairing , YEEP with UNOCT or now the PAVE Network, you have remained intentional about investing in young people and helping them find their voice.

One thing I have always admired about you is how you speak truth to power unapologetically . You are firm, You challenge people to think differently, question themselves and do better. Somehow, you also manage to insert that comic relief while delivering those hard truths. You have a unique way of making serious conversations enjoyable without losing the message. More importantly, you never encourage young people to wait for power. You constantly remind us that we already have power, and that our responsibility is to organise, speak up, shape the conversation and use that power to create change.

Today, I have the privilege of working with a bit closer as the assistant National coordinator for the YAVE network, while you provide leadership as Chair of the PAVE Network in Nigeria. What I appreciate most is that you never impose your ideas. You guide, you ask questions, you share your experience and you allow people to grow into their own leadership. That has been one of the greatest lessons I have learnt from you.

It is only fitting that your 60th birthday is being marked not just with a celebration, but with a book launch, a Legacy Lecture and the launch of the Jaye Gaskia Leadership and

Social Transformation Academy. These are lasting gifts that reflect the kind of life you have lived, one that is committed to raising leaders, sharing knowledge and ensuring that future generations are better equipped to continue the work.

Thank you for believing in young people and for reminding us that leadership is about service, courage and consistency. Your life continues to inspire many of us to dream bigger, think beyond ourselves and remain committed to building a better Nigeria.

As you celebrate this milestone, I pray for many more years of good health, wisdom and fulfilment. May your book reach many hearts, may the Leadership and Social Transformation Academy raise generations of ethical leaders, and may your legacy continue to grow.

Happy 60th Birthday once again, Comrade Jaye. Congratulations on this remarkable milestone and on the incredible legacy you continue to build. I wish you many more years of impact, purpose and joy.

Adokaji Odela

Chair

Democracy Convening Alliance

Tribute to Jaye Gaskia – The Man, The Mentor, The Legend.

Anicetus Atakpu

By Ani Atakpu

I first met Jaye Gaskia in 2010 during a training programme where I participated as a trainee. From the moment he began facilitating, I was captivated by his unique ability to simplify complex issues, engage his audience, and make learning both practical and memorable. His style was authentic, insightful, and refreshingly relatable. As I listened to him, I told myself, “This is how I want to facilitate one day.” That first encounter left a lasting impression on me and marked the beginning of a relationship that has continued to shape my professional journey.

In 2011, our paths crossed again on the advocacy front when ANEEJ led civil society organisations in campaigning for the passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB). It was during this period that I witnessed Jaye the activist and strategist. He was a force to be reckoned with; passionate, fearless, and unwavering in his commitment to justice,

accountable governance, and citizen participation. His ability to connect policy issues with the everyday realities of ordinary people was remarkable.

The real privilege came in 2017 when I had the opportunity to work closely with him. By then, I had become a facilitator myself and had adopted many of the techniques I first admired in him years earlier. Yet, I quickly realised that while facilitation is a skill, Jaye's true gift lies in his extraordinary ability to analyse issues, challenge conventional thinking, and propose constructive alternatives. He does not merely identify problems; he provides pathways to solutions.

What I admire most about Jaye is his intellect, clarity of thought, and unwavering commitment to social transformation. He embodies what many aspire to be, an organic intellectual whose knowledge is not for personal acclaim but for empowering others and strengthening society. Throughout his career, he has consistently championed participatory governance, citizen engagement, peacebuilding, social justice, and democratic accountability.

One of the ideas I have heard Jaye emphasize repeatedly is that "governance must be inclusive, participatory, and responsive to the needs of citizens." This belief has not only defined his work but also serves as a powerful lesson for those of us privileged to learn from him. Another profound reflection from his writings is that "Governance is primarily local," reminding us that meaningful change begins with people, communities, and active citizenship.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Jaye is an exceptional mentor. Every conversation with him becomes a learning opportunity. You cannot sit with Jaye in a meeting, workshop, or even an informal discussion and leave without gaining a fresh perspective on governance, peacebuilding, development, or public policy. His wisdom challenges you to think deeper, question assumptions, and remain committed to the pursuit of a better society.

One of my fondest memories is travelling to the field with him. Those who know Jaye will agree that there is never a dull moment when he is around. Whether discussing serious policy issues, sharing stories from decades of activism, or simply making people laugh, he brings energy, warmth, and camaraderie wherever he goes. He has a unique ability to combine intellectual depth with genuine human connection.

Therefore, to celebrate Jaye Gaskia is to celebrate a life dedicated to service, knowledge, advocacy, mentorship, and transformation. He is not simply a respected colleague or a trusted mentor; he is a legend whose influence extends far beyond the individuals he

has directly encountered. His impact is reflected in the countless lives he has inspired, the movements he has strengthened, and the better society he continues to help build.

Today, I proudly join countless friends, colleagues, comrades, and admirers across Nigeria and beyond in celebrating an extraordinary man.

Happy Birthday, Jaye Gaskia!

Thank you for your wisdom, mentorship, friendship, and enduring commitment to making society better.

You are truly one of a kind; a mentor, an inspiration, and a Legend

Brief profile;

Anicetus Atakpu is a Programme Manager with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), with expertise in governance, anti-corruption, illicit finance prevention, peacebuilding, and the prevention of violent conflict. He works with government institutions, civil society organisations, and international partners to design and manage programmes that promote transparency, accountability, social cohesion, and sustainable development in Nigeria. He is passionate about leadership, policy advocacy, citizen engagement, and advancing positive social change.

A Tribute to an amazingly distinguished leader, human rights advocate, Marxist teacher and Pro democracy campaigner on the occasion of his 60th Birthday.

Obafemi Sodunola Trotsky

It is with profound respect, admiration, and gratitude that I join family, friends, socialist comrades, activists, peace advocates and well-wishers in celebrating a distinguished socialist, human rights activist, peace advocate, scholar, and mentor as he marks his 60th birthday on the 20th of August.

Reaching the milestone of sixty years is not merely a celebration of longevity but a recognition of a life dedicated to the service of humanity, the pursuit of justice, and the struggle for democratic ideals and unwavering commitment to building a more equitable and peaceful society.

Mr (Comrade)Jaye Gaskia's life exemplifies the ideals of integrity, intellectual excellence, and selfless service to humanity and struggle for the emancipation of the downtrodden.

On a personal level, I remain deeply grateful for the privilege of having to pass through his teachings as a Marxist student.

Beyond the theoretical foundations he patiently imparts in some of us who are young activists, he demonstrates that Marxism is not merely an academic discipline but a practical framework for understanding society, confronting injustice, and advancing the cause of the oppressed.

Of course, his mentorship has profoundly shaped my political consciousness and strengthened my commitment to the values of social justice, equality, and collective human progress.

Again, I must also add that among many qualities that distinguish him is his remarkable intellectual depth which stands out prominently. He is an exceptionally well-read, an accomplished researcher, and a critical thinker whose analyses are consistently grounded in rigorous scholarly works and evidence. His courage in defending truth and justice, even in the face of adversity, has earned him the admiration of many who are closer to him. His intelligence as well as humility, discipline, and unwavering commitment to principled leadership continue to inspire those privileged to learn and work alongside with him. This has been proven on many occasions.

Equally admirable is his lifelong devotion to the promotion and protection of human rights and steadfast advocacy for peace. Throughout his career, from student days to these days, he has consistently championed the dignity of many individuals such as students, workers youth, women etc and promoted dialogue over violence, and worked tirelessly to advance policies and initiatives that foster peaceful coexistence and sustainable development.

Many of his contributions to these struggles has incontrovertibly demonstrated that genuine leadership is measured not by personal gain but by the positive transformation one brings to society.

Another amazing remark about him is his exceptional knowledge, analytical depth, and practical expertise in conflict prevention and peace-building.

I remember witnessing firsthand his ability to transform complex policy challenges into thoughtful, evidence-based, and solution-oriented recommendations. Beyond the technical knowledge I gained from him, he taught me the importance of approaching public policy with compassion, intellectual rigor, and an unwavering commitment to the common good.

It is important to note that as we celebrate this landmark birthday with him, my prayer is that Almighty God continues to bless him with sound health, renewed strength, enduring wisdom, and abundant peace. May the good Lord grant him many more years of impactful service to humanity, continued success in his advocacy for human rights and peace, and greater opportunities to mentor future generations of scholars, activists, and leaders. May his voice continue to inspire hope, his work continue to influence positive social change, and of course his legacy remain a beacon for all who believe in justice, equality, and the emancipation of humanity.

Happy 60th Birthday, Sir, dear Comrade.

An admirably leading leader!

Congratulations. Cheers

COMRADE JAYE AT 60

ESIKE ONAJITE GPD TRIBUTE

On behalf of the Board, Management, and Staff of Global Peace Development (GPD), we proudly celebrate Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60. A man whose life has been defined by service, bold ideas, and lasting commitment to transforming lives. Your work has gone beyond advocacy; it has inspired action, strengthened institutions, and given hope to countless communities across Nigeria.

Your leadership, particularly in advancing the Preventing and Countering Violence Extremism agenda, has been both visionary and Inclusive while demonstrating that sustainable peace is built through collaboration, dialogue, and shared responsibility. You have not only shaped policy and practice but have also mentored and inspired a generation of leaders committed to building a more peaceful and just society.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, GPD celebrates a lifetime of purposeful leadership, selfless service, and meaningful contribution that will continue to impact humanity for generations to come. Wishing you continued strength, good health, and many more years.

A Birthday Tribute to Jaye Gaskia at 60

Cornelius Shija

Today, I join thousands of well wishers across the world to celebrate not just a monumental milestone, but sixty years of purpose, wisdom, resilience, and grace. Reaching this milestone is a testament to God's faithfulness and a life that has touched many hearts.

They say not all heroes wear capes, your journey has been marked by strength in difficult times, humility in success, and kindness toward everyone fortunate enough to know you. Knowing you and working close to you for the past 3 years or more, you have inspired not just myself but others through your words, your actions, and your unwavering commitment to family, friends, and community.

Jaye, you are a true comrade in every sense of the word. Through the years, you have shown an unwavering commitment to Peace building, Community Resilience and the struggle for Human Rights across Nigeria, leading the Partnership Against Violent Extremism Network and steering the affairs with Grace and Humility. Your infectious laughter and selflessness have allowed us all to approach you with guidance and direction to carry out impactful solutions in the drive for community resilience.

As you step into this new chapter, may your days be filled with renewed strength, abundant health, lasting peace, and overflowing joy. May the years ahead bring even greater fulfilment, and may your legacy continue to inspire generations to come.

Happy 60th Birthday Comrade Jaye Gaskia! We raise a toast to you and May God richly bless you and crown your life with many more fruitful, healthy, and joyful years. Cheers to sixty years of an extraordinary life and to many more wonderful memories ahead.

Cornelius Shija,

Peacebuilding, PCVE, Humanitarian Programme Management, Conflict
Transformation Consultant

A Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia at Sixty

Sadiq Mustapha

By Sadiq Muhammad Mustapha - Peacebuilding, Governance and Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) Practitioner

It is often said that the true measure of a leader is not the positions they occupy, but the people they inspire. As I reflect on my journey with Comrade Jaye Gaskia, I find this to be profoundly true. Long before I had the privilege of working alongside him, I witnessed the respect he commanded among his peers. Years later, I came to understand that what people admired most was not simply his leadership, but his unwavering belief in the potential of others.

I first came to know Comrade Jaye around 2014–2015 during the formal inauguration of the PAVE Network at the then Sheraton Hotel, Abuja. At the time, I was still a teenager, quietly observing proceedings and trying to understand the dynamics of leadership within Nigeria's civic space. Coincidentally, it was the last programme I attended before departing for India the very next day to pursue my studies. Looking back, I could never have imagined that years later I would return and have the privilege of working alongside the very leader I had quietly observed from the audience. What struck me most was the confidence, trust and respect his colleagues placed in him.

Over the years, as I came to know him more closely, I discovered a leader who combines purpose with humility, conviction with compassion, and leadership with genuine friendship and mentorship. This was evident in his instrumental role in supporting the establishment of the Youth Against Violent Extremism (YAVE), reflecting his unwavering belief that young people are not merely beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts, but active partners in shaping lasting peace. Every engagement with him reflects his constant desire to ask not only what has been achieved, but what more can be done to strengthen our nation and build a more peaceful, democratic and just society.

One lesson from Comrade Jaye has remained with me throughout my professional journey. At different moments when I questioned whether I was ready for certain responsibilities, he reminded me that “no space is too big or too high for me to occupy if I have earned the opportunity to be there, and that such opportunities are often a recognition of the hard work, dedication and commitment that others have already seen in me”. Those words became more than encouragement; they challenged me to trust my abilities, embrace responsibility with confidence, and continue striving for excellence.

That, to me, captures the essence of Comrade Jaye's leadership. He does not simply mentor by offering advice. He mentors by identifying potential, creating opportunities, and instilling confidence in others to achieve more than they thought possible.

Looking back today, I realize that Comrade Jaye's greatest gift to many of us is not simply the opportunities he creates, but the confidence he instills. He has a remarkable ability to recognize potential and encourage people to see it in themselves. By believing in people and encouraging them to step beyond their comfort zones, he quietly shapes leaders who go on to make meaningful contributions in their own fields. I count myself fortunate to be one of those whose journey has been profoundly influenced by that confidence.

To me, that is Comrade Jaye's greatest legacy not simply the institutions he has helped build or the policies he has influenced, but the people he has inspired to believe in themselves and to serve with courage, integrity and purpose. His impact extends far beyond the meetings he chairs or the initiatives he leads. Through his mentorship, he is investing in a generation of leaders who will continue advancing democracy, peace and social transformation long after our own time.

It is therefore fitting that his sixtieth birthday is being marked not merely with celebration, but with the establishment of the Jaye Gaskia Leadership and Social Transformation Academy. There could be no more fitting expression of his life's work than an institution dedicated to nurturing ethical leaders and committed changemakers for generations to come. I have no doubt that this Academy will continue the work he has devoted his life to raising leaders who are guided by principle, inspired by service, and committed to transforming society.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, Comrade Jaye, I pray that God grants you continued good health, renewed strength and abundant wisdom. May He continue to bless the work of your hands, sustain your passion for justice, and preserve your voice as one that continues to inspire courage, hope and positive change. May the countless seeds you have sown in the lives of others continue to bear fruit for generations yet unborn.

As we celebrate your sixtieth birthday, we are in truth celebrating something much greater—a legacy of lives transformed, leaders nurtured, and a lifelong commitment to justice, peace and service. Thank you for believing in people before they believed in themselves. Thank you for reminding us that the greatest measure of leadership is not how many people follow you, but how many they inspire, empower, and prepare to lead.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia. May your legacy continue to inspire generations.

A Heartily Diamond Jubilee Birthday to Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60th

TUNDE SALMAN TRIBUTE

“A 60-year milestone is called a diamond jubilee because diamonds symbolize enduring strength, resilience, and brilliance.” The birthday celebrant, Comrade Jaye Gaskia, symbolizes these three strong virtues. In a country where life expectancy is less than 50 years, sixty is a big number, but as Comrade Jaye hits three scores (60 diamond years), it feels too small for the salient contributions our senior comrade have made in areas of strategic advocacy engagements, public intellectualism, and leftist movements at large.

In nearly two decades that I have known Comrade Jaye Gaskia from a close range, each time I listened to him, whether at numerous civil society convening, or sat with him bilaterally in his office, and or watched him on TV screens demystifying complex polemics, I am convinced of a man of sterling public intellectual, a thought leader with rare ability to turn and digest complex societal issues into coherent policy options or pathways to shape public policy advocacy, orientations, and choices.

As many people who have ever had the chance to sit in a room with him could attest, Comrade Jaye's ability to thoroughly think-through and break down seemingly complex public debates has always been remarkable. This is also evident in his writings, though always long but undoubtedly practical, pragmatic and programmatic; the intensity is always real and genuine. It would do practical goods to revisit many of his reflections on critical issues such as state-society relations, state police, citizenship, civil society, farmers-herder conflicts etc. As a think-tank and act fellow, Comrade Jaye's praxis has now crystalized in the wonderful work under the auspices of PAVE initiative which is a whole of society theory of change to address the violence-extremism using non-kinetic approach. Hence, this praxis translates theory, lesson, or idea into practical action and continuously enacted and refined through reflection.

Comrade Jaye Gaskia is approachable and understandable. He treats everyone with the respect and does not seek online validation or cheap populism as he is more interested in translating civic knowledge into citizens' actions for the betterment of society. In that sense, he demonstrated that you don't need to be loud to be heard, you just need to be

right, be prepared, and be consistent. As we celebrate our senior comrade, a thought leader, deep thinker, it is important that his landscape of struggles, the quiet strategizing, and persistent work of concretizing the country towards a moral center should be supported by his primary constituency of organized civil society, the leftist and labour movements and public at large.

Happy 60th birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia, sir!!!

Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

By Dr. Davji Atellah, Secretary General & CEO Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU)

Davji Bhimji

I write this tribute on behalf of the Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) and also as a friend.

KMPDU is a union led largely by young doctors who continue to grow in their understanding of the politics of work, social justice, and the struggles of the working class. Along this journey, we have been privileged to benefit immensely from the wisdom, experience, and unwavering solidarity of Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

When the history of our victories against exploitation and injustice is written, Comrade Jaye's name will undoubtedly occupy a place of honor. I often reflect on our 2024 industrial action, where the mere threat of a nationwide doctors' strike compelled the government to address our demands before the strike commenced. The strategic thinking that guided us to that outcome was shaped, in no small measure, by Comrade Jaye's counsel.

I vividly remember the many late nights we spent wrestling with difficult decisions. Calling a doctors' strike is never easy. It carries profound consequences for patients, families, and communities, yet there are moments when defending the dignity, rights, and welfare of healthcare workers becomes an equally important moral obligation. Through those difficult conversations, Comrade Jaye consistently brought clarity, principle, and strategic wisdom, helping us navigate one of the most challenging moments in our union's history.

Beyond his contributions to KMPDU, Comrade Jaye has been an inspirational mentor and a trusted friend. Whenever I find myself at a crossroads, I know I can count on his

thoughtful counsel, grounded analysis, and steadfast commitment to justice. His generosity in sharing his knowledge has shaped not only our union but also many of us as leaders.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, we honor your lifelong commitment to the struggles of working people, your courage, your intellect, and your unwavering belief that a more just society is possible.

On behalf of KMPDU and on my own behalf, I wish you a very happy 60th birthday. May you continue to inspire, mentor, and lead for many years to come.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye!

TRIBUTE

Comr Jaiye Gaskya by Vivian Bello

Comrade Jaiye Gaskya; An Unparalleled Leader, Indefatigable Ally.

The legendary Karl Max in one of his epistles, the Communist Manifesto, stated; "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

To fit-in comrade Jaiye into just one or two descriptions is a near-impossible task; comrade Jaiye is, to put it mildly, an enigma of many parts.

With decades of extensive struggles in diverse fronts ranging from anti-military, pro-democracy struggles to environmental rights and fights against corporate

irresponsibilities with oil giants, Students' rights, Labour rights Accountability, Rule of law struggles and so many others. In the line-up of solid Alternative Voices in Nigeria, comrade Jaiye stands indefatigably among the Firsts.

While the toga of "Activist" or "Comrade" has seemingly become bastardized so to speak, with many characters wearing the toga they barely know the entails, comrade Jaiye's on the contrary is laced with several Belts- formed from the fields of several battles, detention yards, street protests, sun and rain, and revolutionary intellectual

activism, all in defense of the Masses, the Oppressed, the Voiceless and the Underprivileged.

While covering beats as a young Journalist then in Port Harcourt, Rivers State even before meeting him, I had encountered his works severally writing on the Ogoni struggles and the wider environmental degradation that had occasioned crude oil extraction in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. These works provided me and I believe many readers some very fundamental insights into the underpinnings of the struggle for environmental justice in the Niger delta, and helped shape my engagement of same in later years then as I joined the Civil Society Sector, from Journalism.

I did not leave his trail, and he also did not disappoint; he continued to act as, and indeed be, a rallying point and voice in several Citizens - centered issues in the Polity. Space and prudence will not allow me to go into numerical details, but one that of course still stands out vividly for me was in the late of 2016, the government of then President Jonathan had announced a sharp increment in the prices of petroleum products, without consultation. The Masses cried wolf, Labour declared a strike and Street protest, some CSOs also backed this.

I was of course in support of the mass action because for me, if anything, the increment hurts the more vulnerable population - Women, the most in several direct and indirect ways. And so although I was against the increment, marching through the Streets under the scorching sun of the Federal Capital, wasn't too palatable for me, lols....it felt too hot for comfort, especially with the long procession route announced by the then leadership of Labour (Berger - to - NASS), with primary concern being on my health, etc.

But as the days approached, I had to readied to march in solidarity regardless. If I believed the increment wasn't right, then it just wasn't ok for me to sit in the comfort of my home or office and look away while the masses and comrades were out there on the lines of the barricade.

Fast forward to the morning of August 2016, the scheduled day of the Protest, I deliberately and cautiously drove early to Berger, calculating I will likely not meet anyone so I just continue to my office. But, guess what; in that early morning, while the day had hardly properly broken and while People had barely risen or made their way to the rallying point - THERE WAS COMRADE JAIYE, standing firmly in central point of the Berger Roundabout, fully donned in his protest regalia with his Placard depicting what he stands for.

It was pretty early, only few people were there. There was of course the usual threats and hostility from government, security operatives, etc , BUT, Comrade Jaiye was there, regardless.

Suffice is just to say that I had to quickly jump down from the wheels, ask someone to go on with the car and promptly joined comrade on the ground, for the March. And for sure, March we did. We marched relentlessly through the scorching sun and streets, with his voice, presence and message, loud and clear.

That is the Jaiye I address as COMRADE. That is the Jaiye I have had the privilege of crossing path with. That is a Man I see as a Leader.

And suffice again is to say that I as a Person, has really very few characters I defer to, (I mean, with a lot of wishy-washy characters all over the place), but, Comrade Jaiye Gaskya is ONE of the few persons I defer to, anytime, anyday. He sure has paid his dues, he is deserving of every Honour.

This is wishing him, many more years, laced this time not with marches under the hot Sun, but with Petals of Silver Lining.

And it is my candid Prayer, that the Nigeria he stood and toiled for, will materialize in his living time - to his Pride and Joy.

E-Soletto!

Comrade Vivian Bello.

(Vivian Bello is a Rights Activist, Policy Expert and Founder, Vivian Bello Foundation, VBF

For Comrade Ajayeoba at 60

Dr. Mercy Nabwire

There are friendships that are marked by time, and there are those that are marked by transformation. Ours belongs to the latter.

Some people pass through your life, while others quietly become part of how you understand the world. They shape your thinking, sharpen your convictions, challenge your assumptions, and leave an imprint that neither distance nor time can erase. Jaye has been that person for me.

When I think of him, I think of a man who is larger than life itself, yet remarkably grounded in his humanity. A gentle giant. Brilliant without pretence. A man who has never stopped believing that ideas matter because people matter.

There are words that have acquired meaning simply because they became part of our shared vocabulary: intentional, deliberate, contradictions, transitions. And yes, stubborn (a title he carries with equal measures of pride and amusement). These words became more than vocabulary; they became ways of seeing, questioning, and engaging with the world.

There is one quote that will remain a constant reference point between us:

“Every generation must out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it.”

— Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

And Jaye's own reflection has always stayed with me:

“First that every period in the development of human history, and therefore every generation is always confronted by challenges, some of which are existential in nature;

Second, that it is the duty of the persons living through that historical period to understand the challenges that they are confronted with, and to seek out a pathway to overcome the challenges and in so doing further advance the evolution of human civilization as we know it. But they do this relatively unknown, in the shadows of the generations ahead of them...”

Those words speak for themselves.

Many people know Jaye as an intellectual, an organizer, a strategist, a teacher, a Marxist. I have had the privilege of knowing the man behind all of those identities; a mentor whose commitment was never transactional and a friend whose presence carried both reassurance and challenge. Someone who has always demanded excellence while extending grace.

If I have grown as a leader, a thinker, and as a person, there is no honest way to tell that story without telling his. His influence is woven into my journey so that it is difficult to separate where my convictions end and his quiet guidance begins. He challenged me, sharpened me, and, in ways both profound and ordinary, became part of the person and leader I continue to become.

Yet, for all the public roles he has so masterfully occupied, the image that perhaps says the most about Jaye, is that of a father. Nothing reveals the depth of his humanity more than the immeasurable love he has for his daughter, Chuchu, the centre of his universe. In a life devoted to movements, ideas, and generations, she has always remained his greatest joy, his deepest tenderness, and his most enduring source of hope. It is impossible to know Jaye fully without appreciating this profoundly beautiful part of who he is.

It is difficult to write about someone who has occupied so much space in your life without falling short. Some relationships simply refuse to be contained by language. They are understood in moments, in shared purpose, in quiet confidence, and in an enduring sense of knowing that someone walks beside you, even from afar.

Sixty is an interesting place to arrive.

For someone whose life has been devoted to shaping ideas, movements, and generations, perhaps sixty is not a destination to be measured by years, but by

perspective. It asks for a different way of looking at time, not just through the work that remains to be done, but through the lives already transformed, the convictions already planted, and the generations already in motion.

I hope these years allow you the rare privilege of pausing, if only for a moment, to see what many of us already see, that the seeds you planted long ago have taken root in people, in movements, and in histories that will continue to unfold long after us. Some of us are among that harvest.

Thank you, Jaye. For your generosity of spirit, for your friendship, an infinite friendship.

Happy 61st.

Dr. Mercy Nabwire

Meeting Jaye in 2024 was a blessing. You've # encouraged me to focus, to grow, and to show up as my best self.

Jamila Musa

Your open heart, your listening ears, and your honest feedback have shaped me.

Thank you for believing in my dream of peaceful cohesion in our community and for constantly checking in and pushing me forward with "how far have you gone?"

Most of all, thank you for teaching me calm in the storm — the way you handle negativity with grace is a lesson I carry with me.

And we can't forget the little things too — you, me, and our habit of always having a bottle of cold coca cola in hand lol, that's our signature.

May this new age/milestone be filled with joy, impact, good health, and everything you've prayed for.

Grateful for you today and always.

Happy Birthday Mr Jaye Gaskia.

From Jamila Musa

A gender, community development and social inclusion specialist, SRHR advocate and facilitator with experience delivering large scale community based programs across Northern Nigeria.

Jaye Gaskia at 60: A Life of Mentorship, Loyalty and Humanity

Jaye Gaskia at 60--Senator Iroegbu

There are people whose influence is measured not by the offices they have occupied, the titles they have accumulated, or the prominence they command, but by the countless lives they have quietly nurtured, encouraged and transformed. Jaye Gaskia belongs to this rare class of human beings.

As he marks his 60th birthday, I celebrate not merely a milestone in years, but six decades of purposeful living, principled leadership and unwavering commitment to humanity.

I have had the privilege of knowing Oga Jaye for close to two decades. Looking back, it is remarkable how swiftly time has passed. My earliest fascination was with his distinctive surname—"Gaskia." It was unusual, memorable and intriguing. But as I came to know the man behind the name, I discovered someone far more extraordinary than his unique identity suggested.

Jaye possesses a quiet magnetism. He is one of those rare personalities to whom people are naturally drawn—not because he demands attention, but because he radiates sincerity, warmth and authenticity. He has an uncommon ability to recognise potential where others see ordinary people. He identifies talent, believes in people long before they believe in themselves, and patiently nurtures them into becoming better versions of themselves.

That, perhaps, is one of his greatest gifts.

Our professional paths first crossed during his years at ActionAid Nigeria, and through his subsequent engagements at Oxfam, the Partnership Against Violent Extremism (PAVE) Network, PCVE-KIRH and numerous other national and international platforms. Through every transition, one thing has remained constant: our relationship.

That enduring relationship speaks volumes about the kind of person Jaye is. In a world where many relationships are transactional and often tied to positions or privileges, he has remained remarkably loyal, consistent and dependable. Neither changing circumstances nor higher responsibilities have altered the simplicity of his character or diminished his accessibility.

His authenticity is perhaps his greatest strength.

Whether interacting with a young intern, a struggling activist, a seasoned journalist, a senior government official, a traditional ruler, an international development partner or a community volunteer, he relates with the same respect, humility and genuine interest. He possesses the rare capacity to make everyone feel seen, heard and valued. Few leaders master that art.

Another quality I have always admired is his extraordinary emotional composure. In all the years I have known him, I have never seen him consumed by anger or frustration, even in the face of provocation or intense pressure. His calm disposition, infectious smile and cheerful outlook have become defining features of his personality. Perhaps this explains why he continues to carry an unmistakable youthful energy. He wears optimism naturally.

Then there is the unmistakable Jaye style.

His elegant African attire—especially his signature Ankara ensembles—has become more than a fashion statement; it reflects his identity, his rootedness and his quiet confidence. Wherever he appears, he does so with simplicity, dignity and unmistakable authenticity.

Beyond style, however, lies substance.

Jaye is a consummate network builder, coalition strategist and bridge-builder. He understands that sustainable social transformation is built on collaboration rather than competition. Throughout his career, he has consistently brought together diverse actors—government institutions, civil society organisations, media practitioners, development partners, youth groups and community leaders—to pursue shared solutions to some of Nigeria's most pressing challenges.

His work in peacebuilding, governance, democratic accountability, conflict prevention, and countering violent extremism reflects an enduring conviction that lasting peace cannot be imposed through force alone. It must be built patiently through dialogue, inclusion, justice, evidence, trust and collective action.

Perhaps what distinguishes him most is his deep investment in people.

He celebrates others' success without insecurity. He gives credit generously. He opens doors. He protects. He encourages. He mentors. He creates opportunities. Many of us have benefitted from his guidance, his confidence in our abilities and his willingness to recommend us for opportunities, often without seeking recognition.

For me personally, he has been much more... He has been a mentor, a trusted adviser and an enduring source of encouragement. His confidence in people inspires them to pursue excellence, while his humility reminds us that true leadership is ultimately about service.

As Jaye turns sixty, his legacy is already firmly established—not only in the organisations he has strengthened or the policies he has helped shape, but in the generations of leaders, activists, journalists, researchers and peacebuilders whose lives bear the imprint of his mentorship.

His story reminds us that genuine greatness is measured less by personal accomplishments than by the number of people whose lives become richer because we walked alongside them.

Happy 60th Birthday, Oga Jaye.

I appreciate your friendship, mentorship, unwavering commitment to justice and humanity, and lifelong investment in people.

May God continue to grant you good health, renewed strength, greater wisdom and many more years of impactful service. May your influence continue to inspire generations yet unborn.

By God's grace, we shall gather again to celebrate your centenary.

Happy Birthday, sir.

Senator Iroegbu

National Coordinator

Media Against Violent Extremism (MAVE) Network

TRIBUTE TO A GREAT LEADER @60 (Diamond Jubilee)

Halima Suleiman

Today, I join the family, friends, colleagues, and well-wishers of Comrade Jaye Gaskia on the occasion of his 60th birthday. I celebrate not just the passing of sixty remarkable years, but a

life dedicated to purpose, service, integrity, and inspirations. I rejoice with you on a diamond milestone that reflects God's faithfulness, wisdom gained through experience, and a legacy built through selfless leadership.

You have been more than a leader, you have been a mentor, a source of strength, and a beacon of hope to many of us.

Your unwavering commitment to excellence, compassion for humanity, and ability to lead with humility have positively impacted countless lives and societies. And through challenges and triumphs alike, you have remained steadfast, demonstrating courage, resilience, and vision.

From you sir, I learned that true leadership is measured not by titles or positions but by the lives touched, the opportunities created, and the values instilled in others. Your kindness, wisdom, and dedication will continue to inspire generations to dream bigger, serve faithfully, and lead with integrity.

As you celebrate your 60th birthday, i pray Almighty Allah grants you renewed strength, sound health, greater wisdom, and abundant peace.

May the years ahead be filled with even greater accomplishments, joy, and fulfillment. May your legacy continue to shine brightly and inspire many more to follow the path of excellence and service.

Happy 60th Birthday to a truly exceptional leader.

Yours in Service!

Halima Suleiman Esq

PAVE Network Chair (Kano State).

A legal Practitioner, Human Rights Advocate, TF-GBV Expert, Female Peace Builder and Development Consultant.

Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

Pwakim Choji

Some lives are measured by the years they have lived; others are measured by the lives they have transformed. Comrade Jaye Gaskia's life is undoubtedly one of the latter.

As you celebrate your 60th birthday, I join your family, friends, colleagues, comrades, and the countless individuals and institutions whose journeys have been enriched by your leadership in celebrating not only this remarkable milestone but, more importantly, the enduring legacy of a life dedicated to justice, service, leadership, and social transformation.

For decades, you have remained a principled voice for democracy, social justice, active citizenship, accountable governance, and people's participation. Through your unwavering commitment to peacebuilding, movement building, governance reform, leadership development, and civic engagement, you have inspired generations to believe that even when it's not fashionable to believe that change is possible in a country where many seem to have lost hope, you kept pushing. Your consistency, courage, intellectual depth, and moral clarity have made you not only a respected public figure but also a trusted mentor and guide to many of us committed to building a more peaceful, just, and inclusive society.

At the Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA), we have had the privilege of drawing from your wisdom, encouragement, and support over the years. Your willingness to invest your time, share your knowledge, challenge our thinking, and open doors for emerging leaders has strengthened our institution and enriched our work. You have consistently demonstrated that true leadership is not about occupying the centre of the stage but about creating opportunities for others to grow, lead, and make meaningful contributions to society.

One of the greatest privileges of my own leadership journey has been meeting and working with you through the Partnership Against Violence Extremism (PAVE). At the national level, I have witnessed firsthand the quality of leadership you provide and the intentional manner in which you have built a movement that brings together civil

society organisations across Nigeria around a shared vision of justice, accountability, inclusion, and democratic governance. I have particularly admired how you deliberately integrated organisations like YIAVHA and amplified the voices of Plateau State within this inspiring national agenda. Such intentional leadership has ensured that organisations working in different parts of the country are not isolated but connected to a larger movement committed to transforming Nigeria.

Getting closer to you beyond meetings and public engagements has revealed even more admirable qualities. I have come to know a man of extraordinary resilience, innovation, discipline, humility, and unwavering focus. You approach every challenge with remarkable clarity of purpose while remaining accessible to those seeking guidance. Your ability to combine strategic thinking with genuine concern for people has made your mentorship both practical and transformational. I count myself among the many beneficiaries of your investment in people.

Your mentorship has extended far beyond advice. You have intentionally nurtured leaders, connected individuals and organisations to opportunities, challenged assumptions, encouraged innovation, and inspired excellence. Many individuals and organisations, including YIAVHA, continue to benefit from your belief that investing in people remains one of the most enduring pathways to sustainable social transformation. Your leadership reminds us that lasting impact is measured not merely by personal achievements but by the capacity to build others who will continue the work long after we are gone.

It is therefore both fitting and inspiring that this milestone is being commemorated with the launch of the “Jaye Gaskia Leadership and Social Transformation Programme. This initiative reflects the values you have embodied throughout your life's journey—continuous learning, critical thinking, ethical leadership, mentorship, solidarity, and selfless service. I have no doubt that this programme will become a platform through which future generations of leaders, activists, peacebuilders, and changemakers will continue to draw inspiration from your vision and commitment while being equipped to advance the values you have consistently championed.

As you reflect on six decades of purpose-driven living, I hope you find fulfilment in knowing that your impact extends far beyond the work you have personally done. It is visible in the institutions you have strengthened, the movements you have helped build, the policies you have influenced, the leaders you have mentored, the organisations you have empowered, and the countless lives you have transformed across Nigeria and beyond.

Speaking personally, I look forward to many more opportunities to partner with your initiatives through YIAVHA and to continue supporting the causes and platforms you champion in every way I can. Your journey continues to inspire many of us, and I remain grateful for the privilege of learning from your example and walking alongside you in advancing peace, justice, accountable governance, and social transformation.

On behalf of the Board, Management, Staff, and Volunteers of the Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA), I congratulate you on this remarkable milestone. We celebrate your courage, your service, your generosity of spirit, your unwavering commitment to justice, and your enduring dedication to building a society founded on peace, equity, accountability, and human dignity.

As you mark this significant milestone, my prayer is that the Lord will continue to strengthen and sustain you for the work He has entrusted into your hands. May He grant you wisdom that never fades, renewed strength for every new assignment, and favour before God and humanity. May your latter years be even more fruitful than the former, as it is written: "The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (Proverbs 4:18).

May God establish the work of your hands, preserve your health, surround you with peace and joy, and cause the seeds you have sown in countless lives to bear lasting fruit for generations to come. May He continue to make you a light to many, and may your life remain a testimony of faithful service, purposeful leadership, and enduring impact.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

Jacob Choji Pwakim

Executive Director, Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA)

Goodwill Message to Jaye Gaskia @ 60

Okechukwu Nwanguma — Executive Director, Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre (RULAAC)

Dear Comrade Jaye,

Sixty years is not merely a milestone to be celebrated; for a person whose life has been so deeply intertwined with the struggles for democracy, social justice, human rights and

social transformation, it is an opportunity to pause, reflect and celebrate a remarkable journey of ideas, commitment, courage, organising and service.

As you attain 60, I join your family, friends, colleagues and comrades across Nigeria and beyond in celebrating not simply the man, but the legacy that you have steadily built over several decades.

Your journey represents an important strand of Nigeria's contemporary history. From student activism and the pro-democracy struggle, through the June 12 struggle, the United Action for Democracy, environmental and community activism, the labour - civil society movement, the 2014 National Conference, and your extensive work in governance, peacebuilding, human security and conflict transformation, you have consistently combined intellectual engagement with practical organising.

You have demonstrated that activism is not merely about protesting what is wrong; it is also about building ideas, institutions, movements and people capable of creating something better. Your transition across grassroots organising, civil society leadership, development practice, policy engagement, peace and security work and public intellectualism has given you a distinctive place in Nigeria's civic space.

What I particularly admire is your refusal to separate knowledge from action. You have remained a thinker who organises, an organiser who thinks, and a practitioner who continues to ask difficult questions about the kind of society Nigeria ought to become. Your commitment to mentoring younger activists and building the capacity of future leaders is perhaps one of the most enduring dimensions of your contribution.

It is therefore fitting that your 60th birthday celebration is not ending with a party. The Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy is a powerful expression of the idea that the most meaningful legacy of a life devoted to social change is to prepare others to continue the journey.

At 60, therefore, I celebrate your life, your convictions, your intellectual contribution, your comradeship and, above all, your continuing belief that Nigeria can become a more just, democratic, humane and equitable society.

On behalf of myself and the Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre (RULAAC), I extend warm congratulations and best wishes to you, Lydia, Ayomide and the entire Gaskia family.

May the years ahead bring you renewed strength, good health, deeper fulfilment and even greater opportunities to share your knowledge and experience with the generations coming behind.

And may the next chapter of your journey be defined not only by the struggles you have participated in, but by the lives you inspire, the institutions you help build, the young leaders you mentor and the social transformation you continue to pursue.

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia.

The birthday is indeed the occasion; the legacy is the purpose.

Congratulations, Comrade.

Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

Comrade Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani) — Executive Director, CISLAC / Transparency International Nigeria

Sixty years (60) is more than the passage of time; it is the accumulation of purpose, sacrifice, courage, and unwavering commitment to humanity. As Comrade Jaye Gaskia marks this remarkable milestone, I am deeply honoured, on behalf of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) and Transparency International Nigeria, to celebrate a man whose life has become synonymous with principled activism, democratic struggle, social justice, and transformative leadership.

For many of us in Nigeria's civil society movement, Jaye is not merely a colleague or Comrade; he is an institution. His journey reflects decades of steadfast dedication to advancing democracy, defending civic space, promoting accountable governance, and amplifying the voices of the marginalized. Throughout the most defining moments of our nation's democratic evolution, he has consistently stood on the side of justice, even when doing so demanded immense personal sacrifice.

Jaye belongs to that rare generation of activists who have never allowed changing political realities to diminish their convictions. While many have adjusted their principles to suit convenience, he has remained resolute in his commitment to equity, human dignity, inclusion, and people's empowerment. His activism has never been about personal recognition; it has always been about building institutions, strengthening movements, nurturing leaders, and creating opportunities for ordinary citizens to participate meaningfully in shaping society.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of witnessing his remarkable ability to combine intellectual depth with practical action. His interventions are always grounded in evidence, informed by history, and inspired by an unwavering belief that another

Nigeria is possible. Whether engaging with governments, Civil Society Organisations, labour unions, youth groups, women's movements, international partners, or grassroots communities, Jaye consistently demonstrates that dialogue, integrity, and principled advocacy remain powerful instruments for social transformation.

What distinguishes him most is not simply his impressive body of work but his generosity of spirit. He has invested immeasurably in mentoring younger activists, encouraging emerging leaders, and sharing knowledge without reservation. Many professionals and advocates across Nigeria and beyond can trace part of their growth to his guidance, constructive criticism, and willingness to create space for others to thrive.

The launch of the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy is therefore both timely and visionary. It reflects what has always defined his life's mission, not merely to lead, but to prepare others to lead with integrity, competence, compassion, and an enduring commitment to justice. In an era where ethical leadership is increasingly scarce, this initiative promises to become a valuable platform for nurturing a new generation of changemakers equipped to confront the complex governance and development challenges of our time.

As Executive Director of CISLAC, I have always valued partnerships rooted in shared principles rather than convenience. Our engagements with Jaye over the years have consistently reaffirmed that sustainable progress depends on courageous voices, collaborative action, and an uncompromising commitment to accountability and democratic values. His contributions to governance reforms, peacebuilding, electoral integrity, social mobilisation, and civic engagement continue to enrich national discourse and inspire collective action.

On behalf of the Board, Management, and Staff of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) and Transparency International Nigeria, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to Comrade Jaye Gaskia on this well-deserved celebration.

May the years ahead be blessed with renewed strength, good health, fulfilment, and continued opportunities to influence positive change. May the seeds you have planted across movements, institutions, and communities continue to flourish, producing generations of ethical leaders committed to service above self.

Thank you for your courage!

Thank you for your consistency!

Thank you for choosing principle over convenience!

Thank you for demonstrating that true leadership is measured not by titles held but by lives transformed!

Happy 60th Birthday, Comrade Jaye Gaskia!

A Tribute to Mr. Jaye Gaskia

Dr. Mfoniso Xael

There are people whose greatest contribution is not simply the work they have done, but the way they shape how others think, question and grow. For me, Mr. Jaye Gaskia is one of those people. Over the years, I have had the privilege of seeking his counsel at important moments in my journey as an environmental and climate justice advocate. What has always stood out is not that he offers easy answers, but that he asks the kind of questions that force deeper reflection, sharpen conviction and stretch one's imagination of what transformative leadership demands.

I particularly remember sharing with Mr. Jaye an early draft of what would later become the MAD framework. His thoughtful questions, critical reflections and generous advice challenged me to interrogate my assumptions and strengthen the conceptual foundations of the framework. Those conversations helped refine my thinking, and today, that framework has become the backbone of the learning approach we have built within Ikike. I remain deeply grateful for his willingness to invest his time and intellect in nurturing the ideas and growth of younger colleagues without ever seeking recognition.

What I admire most about Mr. Jaye is his remarkable ability to combine intellectual rigour with humility, principle with empathy, and radical imagination with practical wisdom. In a space where it is easy to become consumed by urgency, he continues to remind many of us that lasting social transformation is built through political education, movement building, collective learning and an unwavering commitment to justice. His life has been a quiet but powerful testimony that ideas matter, mentorship matters, and people matter.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, sir, I join countless others in giving thanks for a life lived in service of justice, dignity and social transformation. Thank you for your generosity, your example and your steadfast commitment to raising others as you continue to walk your own path with courage and integrity. Happy 60th Birthday, Mr.

Jaye. May the years ahead bring renewed strength, joy and fulfilment, and may the legacy you continue to build inspire generations yet to come.

Best of wishes

Dr. Mfoniso Xael

A Tribute to an Exceptional Mentor and Friend on Your 60th Birthday

Precious Ideh

A Tribute to an Exceptional Mentor and Friend on Your 60th Birthday.

Sixty years is not just a measure of time. It is a beautiful collection of wisdom, achievements, resilience, and lives touched. Today, as you celebrate this milestone 60th birthday, I want to take a moment to honor the incredible person you are and express my deepest gratitude for your presence in my life. To me, you have been far more than a senior friend. You have been a steady anchor, a trusted guide, and a brilliant mentor. In a world where true leadership is rare, you lead by example. Your integrity, grace, and wisdom have shaped not only my career but also my character. You have a unique gift for seeing potential in others before they see it in themselves, and you possess the patience and generosity to help that potential grow. I am profoundly grateful for the countless times you offered a listening ear, shared a word of timely advice, or gently corrected my course when I needed it most. Beyond your invaluable professional guidance, I cherish the warmth of your friendship. You have shown me that it is possible to achieve great success while remaining deeply humble, kind, and grounded. Your laughter, your stories, and your unwavering support have enriched my life in ways words cannot fully capture. Your famous quote *"The greater the struggle, the bigger the reward"* was a motivation to keep on trying and never give up. As you step into this new, golden chapter of your life, my prayer for you is simple: May the next decades bring you the same immense joy, peace, and fulfillment that you have so selflessly given to everyone around you. May you be blessed with robust health, continuous inspiration, and the comfort of knowing that your legacy is vibrant and alive in the many people you have championed. Thank you for being my mentor, my role model, and my very dear friend.

Happy 60th Birthday!

Precious Ideh

On Jaye's Birthday

Comrade Alagoa Morris

I had the rare privilege of being admitted into the wonderful ERA/FoEN family 2007; after years of admiring the organisation from a distance and never imagined I would ever come this close one day.

And, even though Rev. Nnimmo Bassey and OND of blessed memory were the regular faces representing the organisation in print and electronic media; I never knew the likes of Jaye Gaskia were part of the engine room that strengthened and made ERA/FoEN ticking effectively. Those were also the days when ERA/FoEN play leading role in the Kaiama gathering/Kaiama Declaration and the formation of the foremost Ijaw Youth organisation, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC).

At the time I became a member of the ERA family, some of the Comrades who made the organisation tick had moved on: Patrick Nasgbanton, Isaac Osuoka, Doifie and even Orono Douglas was there as I thought he should. And, I missed them as a person; because I heard about them and what they represented.

And, apart from Felix Tuodolo and Doifie, whom I also didn't meet as ERA person; Jaye was among the others (Patrick and Isaac) whose activities and disposition confirmed to me that they were indeed men with capacity required for the kind of struggle we are associated with. Not only that, they display it clearly that there was not dispute, conflict or grudges against ERA; meaning they sailed on clean without depending on ERA. Also, like the other two, Jaye has consistently featured in programmes organised by ERA/FoEN and contributing meaningfully with sound philosophical background on related issues. And most importantly, Jaye is a Jolly good fellow; full of life.

I found inspiration and fulfilment in this disposition of this personality, Jaye. Even though I am his elder by age (as I am already 66 years now); I see him as one of my Senior Comrades; especially in Environmental/Human Rights advocacy and activism...a sort of light.

As he climbs to the sixth floor, on Mother Earth's ladder; I wish him good health, financial comfort and many more years of service to humanity.

Happy Birthday, Senior Comrade, J.G

From Comrade Alagoa Morris

Tribute to Jaye Gaskia at 60

Cde Joseph 'Jobezt' Inyang

That Comrade Jaye Gaskia is intellectually a colossus, is a modest way of describing the personality of the godfather of the then "13 Agudama Tendency" as we revolutionary referred to ourselves in Port Harcourt back in the days. Obviously, his sojourn and travails through the length and breath of Niger Delta actively contributing in restructuring and fortifying tertiary institutions SUG's(Uniport, RSUST, RivPoly etc), in creation of movements like Ijaw Youth Council, PANDEF, resuscitation of Labour Organizations(Risonpalm) and many others that were already comatose reminds one of Che Guevara revolutionary exploit beyond borders.

Suffice to say, it would amount to an exercise in futility to "briefly talk" about Jaye, because he simply defies summary.

Cde Joseph 'Jobezt' Inyang

Goodwill Message to Jaye Gaskia at 60

Dr. Kole Shettima

Jaye is a consummate comrade who cares and fights for every social justice issue. He fights for the rights of the working class, the original inhabitants of Abuja, climate justice, just energy transition, social security and health, among others. Recently, he was occupied by conflict and extremism, peace building, and good governance.

Comrade as you turn 60, marking a Golden Jubilee, I am sure you will rededicate yourself to the cause of the common people. I wish you the best!- Dr. Kole Shettima

Congratulations to Comrade Jaye Gaskia

Funmilayo Jolade Ajayi

Congratulations to comrade Jaye Gasikia a wonderful leader worth celebrating, I met you on the street of struggle a very long time ago, I never knew you were my brother from the root, until when we had a long discussion about Nigeria and Kwara then you told me you were also from the same town with me, ever since then you have become so caring and supportive, I am happy you are a year older today, may heavenly Father continue to strengthen you and bless your new age with long life and sound health, happy birthday once again my brother, leader and comrade, from come Funmilayo Jolade Ajayi, aka omo igbo

A Tribute to My Godfather and Mentor, Jaye, at Sixty

Hajara Dantani Favour

It is a great privilege to celebrate my mentor, whom I fondly call my godfather, as he marks sixty remarkable years of life and service. Having Jaye in my life has been one of God's greatest blessings. He has been more than a mentor, a father figure, a trusted guide, and a constant source of encouragement.

What I admire most about Jaye is his wisdom, humility, integrity, and commitment to developing others. He leads by example, inspires excellence, and always believes in the potential of those around him. His calm nature and genuine concern for people make him truly exceptional.

Every conversation and interaction with him has been memorable. His words of encouragement, wise counsel, and unwavering support have shaped my thinking and strengthened my confidence. Through his mentorship, I have learnt the value of integrity, consistency, lifelong learning, and servant leadership.

Jaye has had a lasting impact on my life and work. He has challenged me to pursue excellence, remain humble, and use every opportunity to make a positive difference. His influence continues to inspire my personal and professional growth.

What makes him special is not only what he has achieved but the countless lives he has touched through his generosity, wisdom, and selfless service, and I am one of those people.

As you celebrate this milestone, I pray that God grants you good health, renewed strength, lasting peace, and many more fruitful years. May your life continue to inspire generations, and may your legacy of service and mentorship endure.

Happy 60th Birthday, Jaye. Thank you for being an exceptional mentor and godfather.

Hajara Dantani favour

HAJO

A Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

Samuel Aruwan

It is a privilege to join family, friends, colleagues and associates in celebrating Comrade Jaye Gaskia as he marks his 60th birthday. For some, sixty is simply another milestone. For Jaye, it represents decades of purposeful engagement, principled advocacy and unwavering commitment to the ideals of justice, democracy and national development.

I have known Jaye for well over twenty years through our shared engagement in civil society and the broader struggle to build a more peaceful, just and accountable Nigeria. Over these years, I have come to know him as someone who never approaches national issues from the standpoint of personal interest or fleeting public opinion. Rather, he is guided by a deep conviction that Nigeria can become a better country if its citizens remain committed to truth, justice and responsible leadership.

One encounter remains particularly vivid in my memory. We were engaged in discussions around countering violent extremism and the broader challenge of sustaining peace in Nigeria. As conversations unfolded, Jaye spoke with remarkable clarity about the historical, political and socio-economic dynamics that continue to shape insecurity in our country. What impressed me was not simply the breadth of his knowledge, but the depth of his analysis. He connected issues that many often treat in isolation and reminded everyone present that lasting solutions must address governance, inclusion and justice alongside security responses.

That conversation reinforced something I had observed about him over the years. Jaye possesses an uncommon ability to simplify complex national questions without oversimplifying them. He is thoughtful in his interventions, generous with his knowledge and always willing to engage those who may hold different perspectives. In

an era where conversations are increasingly polarised, he remains one of those rare voices capable of encouraging dialogue without sacrificing principle.

Beyond his intellectual contributions, I have always admired his consistency. Many people begin their public journey with lofty ideals, but the passage of time often weakens their resolve. Jaye has remained remarkably faithful to the values that first defined his activism. Whether engaging government institutions, civil society organisations or development partners, he has maintained a reputation for integrity, courage and intellectual honesty.

His influence is perhaps most evident in the many younger Nigerians he has mentored over the years. Leadership is ultimately measured not only by personal accomplishments but also by the number of lives positively influenced. In this regard, Jaye's legacy is already secure. His readiness to invest time in nurturing young leaders speaks volumes about the kind of person he is and explains why so many hold him in such high regard.

As he celebrates this important milestone, I congratulate him on a life of purpose and meaningful service. I pray that God grants him continued good health, renewed strength and even greater wisdom for the years ahead. May the Leadership and Social Transformation Academy become a lasting institution that continues to shape ethical leaders and strengthen our nation for generations to come.

Happy 60th birthday, my dear brother and friend. May your best years of service still lie ahead.

Aruwan is a postgraduate student at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

A Tribute to an Exceptional Mentor

Andrew Musa

There are people who pass through our lives, and there are those who leave footprints that shape our journey. You are one of those rare individuals.

Your life has been defined by integrity, humility, wisdom, and an unwavering commitment to developing people. Through your leadership, guidance, and encouragement, you have inspired countless individuals to strive for excellence and serve humanity with purpose.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have learned from you. Your mentorship has challenged me to think beyond limitations, embrace service, and pursue meaningful impact in my community and beyond. Your example continues to remind us that true leadership is measured not by titles but by the lives transformed.

As you celebrate your 60th birthday, I pray that God grants you continued strength, sound health, peace, and many more years of purposeful living. May your legacy continue to inspire generations.

Happy 60th Birthday, Sir. Thank you for being an outstanding mentor and a blessing to many.

Andrew Musa

Founder, Nigerian Earth Warriors

Executive Director, Climate Earth Ecological and Environmental Conservation Foundation (CEEECF)

Jaye @ 60

Dr. Oguntimehin Oluwafemi John

As we celebrate ****Jaye @ 60****, we honor not just the passing of another year but a remarkable legacy of visionary leadership, unwavering service, intellectual excellence, and transformative impact. I recognized Jaye's exceptional leadership qualities from our days in ****Take Back Nigeria (TBN)****, where I had the privilege of serving as the ****South West Coordinator****. Even then, his passion for justice, nation-building, and people-centered leadership distinguished him as a leader of uncommon vision and purpose. Over the years, he has continued to inspire countless lives through his commitment to community development, mentorship, and positive social transformation. This celebration is therefore more than a birthday it is a tribute to a life dedicated to empowering others and building enduring institutions. Happy 60th Birthday, Jaye. May your legacy continue to inspire generations, and may God grant you many more years of impactful service.

****Dr. Oguntimehin Oluwafemi John****

Red Salute

Oluyemi Nathaniel

Today, I raise my fist in solidarity to a true Leader, Father, Fighter and Marxist on his womb eviction celebration day.

In a world that constantly tries to commodify our lives and divide our spirits, you stand firm as a beacon of revolutionary consciousness. Your commitment to the collective struggle is not just a political stance; it is a daily practice of love, solidarity, and unwavering hope for a classless future.

Through every debate, every late-night discussion and every act of mutual aid, you remind me that the liberation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves.

You carry the warmth of a true Leader and the steel of a dedicated General.

May the coming years bring you sharper analysis, deeper connections with your cadres and enduring strength needed to dismantle the old structures and build the new NIGERIA we desire.

HAPPY WOMB EVICTION DAY CELEBRATION SIR.

Oluyemi Nathaniel

OLOGUN GASKY @60

Adeola Olayiwola

Goodwill message

OLOGUN GASKY @60

In the early months of January-February 1992 a name that is often mentioned in whispers among the students union leaders at University of Ilorin is GASKIA.

The period was turbulent as we had series of protests that eventually led to the proscription of the students union government and eventual expulsion of the radical leadership of the union i.e Ilorin Militant Five (IMF).

In the course of this struggle, a gentle looking guy showed up at our base off campus on a fateful evening, visibly agitated at what had happened to his comrades but spoke in

gentle but quite commanding voice, taking charge, the atmosphere changed immediately and it was quite obvious the leader has arrived.

During the above period and from a distance I saw a different kind of “activist” quiet but firm, always Neat in his appearance, Smiling at every opportunity even during such difficult period.

Over the years our relationship grew quite personal with Jaye taking special interest in my growth and development in the students, pro-Democracy and Socialist movement. He gently and genuinely guided me through many episodes of life

Jaye is a consummate humanist, Revolutionary leader, a friend, brother, consummate writer, dialectician, and Internationalist.

There’s no theatre of the struggle that Jaye has not transversed and there’s no way the history of Nigeria’s democratic struggle can be written without his name featuring in many regards.

Gasky is a devoted family man,lover of good life, contented, positive minded, many things to many people but above all a Good great Man.

On this occasion of your Diamond jubilee, I wish you many more years in good health, happiness and service to God and Humanity.

Adeola Olayiwola

Osogbo, Osun State.

A Tribute to Jaye Gaskia at 60

Eleonora Ibrani — Senior Program Officer, Solidarity Center

It is an honor to submit a tribute for Jaye as part of this significant milestone~

I had the privilege of getting to know Jaye through the first cohort of the Global Labor Leadership Initiative (GLLI), a leadership development program I coordinate, jointly offered by the Solidarity Center and Cornell University. Although the program brings together experienced labor leaders from around the world, Jaye immediately stood out - not because he spoke the most, but because of the depth of his analysis, his generosity toward others, and his ability to connect individual struggles to larger democratic aims.

Jaye constantly challenged us to think beyond the boundaries of the labor movement without ever diminishing its importance. He brought a perspective shaped by decades of organizing across labor, civil society, the anti-militarization and pro-democracy movements. He helped participants see that unions do not exist in isolation but are part of the broader struggle to build democratic, just, and inclusive societies. Again and again, he invited the cohort to think more deeply about movements rather than organizations alone, about relationships rather than institutions alone, and about the responsibilities of leadership beyond one's own constituency.

Just as important was the way Jaye engaged with others. He listened carefully, treated every participant with respect, and shared his experience without ever suggesting he had all the answers. He modeled the kind of reflective, values-driven leadership that we hope participants carry back to their organizations and communities.

It was a privilege to have him as part of that inaugural cohort, and I know the program was stronger because of his presence.

As Jaye celebrates this milestone, I hope he takes pride not only in all that he has accomplished, but also in the countless leaders he has helped shape along the way. His influence extends far beyond the organizations he has served, and I certainly feel privileged to have had the opportunity to learn from him.

Congratulations, Jaye, on this well-deserved celebration. May this next chapter bring you the same sense of purpose, curiosity, and community that you have given to so many others.

With respect and appreciation,

Eleonora

P.S. Attached is a photo of Jaye receiving his GLLI certificate from a fellow cohort member, Peter Mutasa from Zimbabwe, upon the program's completion.

Eleonora Ibrani

Senior Program Officer

Program Coordination

Solidarity Center

Tribute to Comrade Jaye Gaskia at 60

Comrade Jaye Gaskia is an outstanding personality with supernatural ability and talent, admirable progressive intellectual, a first-class patriot and a discipline leader of the people, who has truly dedicated his entire life and all his energies to society's progress.

Am gratified that the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre-LSD) Leadership School ably led the Founding Executive Director Dr. Otiye Igbuzor, acknowledged globally as a leader's leader, the indefatigable Executive Director of Centre-LSD, Sir Monday Osasah and the rest members of Faculties of Centre-LSD, have cemented the foundation of the institution on people-centric ideological tendencies and

knowledge that guarantees that no citizen of our beloved country, Nigeria or any where in globe should be treated as 'talakawas' or 'Ogbanjes'.

The most delightful Sir Jaye Gaskia is very famous building capacities with clear headed organizations and networks for inclusive governance, sustainable development and transformative leadership.

There is therefore nothing as bitter in the world as the spectacles of a people that goes to bed free and awakens in slavery. -----Fidel Castro (1952).

As a result of the lectures received through the year, including the last two lectures ably well delivered last Saturday August 2, 2025 by H.C. Ezenwa Nwagwu, MFR and the esteemed Sir Ayodeji Ajayeoba (Jaye Gaskia), there was an overwhelming consensus that any form of mute indifference, cold passivity and siddon lookism in our collective quest at fostering good governance environment that is anchored on constitutionalism, rule of law, proactive leadership would tantamount to treason.

Since democracy is about values and the collective ability to build communities and structures of governance for inclusive development, thus further promoting the values of integrity, tolerance, discipline, tolerance, sacrifice, volunteerism, social confidence and

the living conditions of the people.

Conclusively therefore we will join our hands with our eyes on our flag, to keeping moving Nigeria in the direction of true people-centred inclusive governance and progressive sustainable development.

May God bless our beloved country, Nigeria. Amen.

Yours truly,

Ubaka Emeka Betram

Deputy Governor Centre-LSD Class 23

A Tribute to Comrade JayeGaskia, on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday

Sixty years is a milestone that invites reflection — not just on time passed, but on lives touched along the way. For Comrade Jaye Gaskia, that reflection tells a story far bigger than one man's journey. It tells the story of a Nigeria that has, again and again, needed someone willing to stand at the intersection of thought and action, and found him there.

I count myself among the many who have been shaped by that willingness. In my earlier days, when I was still finding my footing in this space, Gaye was one of the people who took the time to mentor, to challenge, and to believe in what I could become. That mentorship never really ended, it simply evolved. When I led the campaign for local government autonomy and accountability in Nigeria, Gaye was there, ready to show up and make the case, lending his voice, his analysis, and his credibility to a fight for a tier of government too often left in the shadows of national attention. That kind of consistency, showing up not for recognition, but because the cause mattered, it says everything about who he is.

What has always struck me about Gaye is that his radicalism has never been cold. He calls himself a Marxist, a revolutionary, an organic intellectual — but underneath every label is a deeply humanist commitment to the dignity of ordinary people. Whether advising on conflict transformation across a continent, organizing citizens at the grassroots, or writing yet another sharp analysis of Nigeria's political moment, the thread has always been the same: a refusal to accept that things must stay as they are, and a stubborn faith that people, organized and informed, can change them.

Sixty years on, Nigeria's civil society landscape carries his fingerprints in more places than most will ever fully credit — in the movements he built, the younger organizers he mentored, the ideas he refused to let go unspoken. On this birthday, I want to say simply: thank you, Comrade. Thank you for the hours spent mentoring someone who was, in the beginning, just one more young person trying to find their way. Thank you for standing with me when the local government accountability campaign needed a voice like yours. And thank you for continuing, even now, to be the kind of elder this movement needs — present, principled, and generous with your time and wisdom.

Happy 60th birthday, comrade AGaye. May the next decade bring you good health, continued clarity of purpose, and the joy of seeing even more of what you've planted come into bloom. Nigeria's struggle for justice is better because you have given it your life — and so am I.

With deep respect, gratitude, and affection,

Edegbuo, Prince Ekpere

Resource Justice Manager @Social Action

Prince.edegbuo@yahoo.com

CELEBRATING OGA JAYE @60

On behalf of the entire Board and Management of the Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre I join the world to celebrate your legacy of Resilience, Resistance to oppression and Resolve to create positive changes. Your indomitable spirit encouraged many of us at 13 Agudama, Ibaa Street and in Bolo street. You have etched an indelible legacy in the fight for women empowerment, accountable governance, sustainable peace and defense of human rights. Through decades of community activism and service, you have planted seeds that grow into amplified women voices, stronger grassroots social movements and a renewed respect for popular participation as well as gender and social inclusion.

We honour you Sir, an ardent Marxist, a Pan Africanist and an organizer. You have never cared about titles but have prioritized justice and the people. You taught us how environmental degradation is not just about pollution but about class, injustice and the communities whose land are exploited for profit. Your ideological clarity is exemplary, your strategic patience and the fortitude are inspiring.

We wish you many more years of impact, good health, strength, increased innovative ideas.

Ms EMEM J. OKON (PHD)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KEBETKACHE WOMEN DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCE CENTER

PART THREE

FAMILY VOICES

From Those Who Know Him Closest

Goodwill messages, reflections, personal perspectives, appreciation
and stories from members of the family.

To My Darling Husband, Olowo Ori Mi! Ife Mi, Ayanda Mi

Omoisiuwa Ajayeoba

Today, my heart is filled with gratitude as I celebrate the remarkable man God blessed me with. Sixty years of grace. Sixty years of purpose. Sixty years of God's faithfulness.

You have been more than a husband—you have been my friend, my confidant, my encourager, and my anchor. Through life's changing seasons, you have stood strong, carrying our family with love, wisdom, patience, and quiet strength.

People may see your achievements, but I have had the privilege of seeing your heart. I have watched you give without counting the cost, love without conditions, and stand firm when the storms of life came our way. Your greatest wealth has never been measured by what you own, but by the lives you have touched and the love you have generously given.

You truly are my Olowo Ori Mi—the one God chose to bless my destiny. Loving you has been one of the greatest gifts of my life, and I thank God every day that our paths crossed. Thank you for loving and accepting me just as I am! Never judging me – just simple acceptance

As you step into this beautiful new decade, my prayer is that the Lord will reward every sacrifice you have made. May He crown your years with peace, surround you with divine favour, bless you with excellent health, and grant you many more joyful years to enjoy the fruits of your labour.

Thank you for always being there. Thank you for believing in us. Thank you for being an amazing husband, father, and man of integrity.

Happy 60th Birthday, my love. You are deeply cherished, greatly celebrated, and forever loved.

Here's to many more beautiful years together.

Happy Birthday, my King. I love you today, tomorrow, and always.

Happy 60th Birthday, Daddy!

Ayomide Oluwapelumi Ajayeoba

Thank you for being one of my biggest supporters, a safe space, one of the biggest influences in my life. No matter how busy you are you've always made time for me when I needed you, even for things as simple as our family movie nights, and those moments have meant more than you know.

Your unwavering commitment to justice and service has inspired me to care deeply about making a positive difference in the lives of others. I admire both the leader you are and the father you have always been to me.

As you celebrate this incredible milestone, I pray that this new chapter brings you continued strength, good health, joy, and fulfillment.

Happy birthday daddy. I love you, and I'm so proud to be your child.

Don at 60

Apostle Tomson Ajayejesu — Junior Brother, on behalf of the Ajaiyeobas

Distinguished guests, friends, and family. Standing here today, we do not just see the public figure, the strategist, or the voice of the common people.

We see Ayodeji Olugbemiga Ajaiyeoba. We see our brother, husband, father, and uncle —the Olori Ebi of our family- the Ajaiyeobas from the Aworo-Ona royal ruling lineage of Ile-Arin, Oganyin, Oro-Ago, in Ifelodun Local government of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Decades of activism and public service meant that our family learned to share him with the world. We carried the weight of late-night calls, sudden trips, and the constant demands of his work. But Don, whom most of you call Jaye, never stopped being present where it mattered most. As a husband and father, he offers steady guidance, deep listening, and a quiet, constant love. As a brother and uncle: He brings warmth, reliability, and fierce loyalty to every family gathering.

Discipline, compassion, and an unyielding sense of justice guides both his public stands and his private actions.

We know his sharp mind, but we also know his playful spirit. Whether he is sharing a quiet joke at a family gathering to ease a heavy day, or showing fierce compassion to a stranger in need, his humanity shines brightest in small, unscripted moments. His discipline is matched only by his deep care for others, always ensuring none is left behind or forgotten.

Seeing his 60th birthday turn into a wider legacy initiative means the world to us. It proves that the sacrifices we shared as a family were part of a larger story of service and hope.

We thank every friend, comrade, and colleague who has walked this long journey by his side. May Jaye find continued strength, deep joy, and lasting impact in all the years ahead. Happy 60th birthday, Egbon mi atata.

21/8/2026

Anniversary Tribute to Don from the Ajayejesu Family

Apostle Tomson Ajayejesu and Family

Happy 60th Birthday, Olori-Ebi! Your wisdom, kindness, and grace have touched so many lives. May your day be as incredible as you are. Thank you for being such a worthy trailblazer. We pray this birthday year brings you joy, peace, more fulfillment and great health in prosperity in the mighty name of Christ Jesus. Isaiah 46:4.

Tribute to My Dear Brother, Ayodeji Olugbenga Ajaiyeoba

Boluwatife Ajaiyeoba & Family

Hmmm Egbon where do I start from? Sixty years on this earth leaves a beautiful trail of lessons, resilience, and quiet strength, through every storm and every celebration, you have been our steady rock and our voice of reason.

You have shown us that true success is not measured by status, but by the kindness, loyalty, and honesty you give to others from the shared laughter of our childhood to the mature conversations of today, you remain my irreplaceable confidant.

I have watched you navigate life's challenges with a calm grace that inspires me daily. You

are more than just a brother; you are a mentor, a protector, and a truest friend. Your 60 years have made our world infinitely richer, safer, and more joyful.

May this milestone usher in a season of vibrant health, deep peace, and unclouded joy.

May your days remain filled with the warmth of family, the comfort of good friends, and

endless new adventures. And the years ahead bring you time to enjoy the beautiful fruits of

your decades of hard labor

Eku imuleduro, oloriebi ile Ajaiyeoba.

May the Lord continue to strengthen, bless, guide and guard you and yours as you continue

to hold on to Him.

Happy birthday Egbon mi atata, Mr Ayodeji Olugbenga Ajaiyeoba.

With love and admiration, Boluwatife Ajaiyeoba & Family

To a Remarkable Brother-in-Law on Your 60th Birthday

Osayande Precious Ehanika

Sixty years of wisdom, integrity, and warmth—and we are endlessly grateful that you are part of our family.

You brought more than just your wonderful presence into our lives; you brought kindness, steady support, and a generous spirit that makes every family gathering brighter. Whether lending a helping hand, offering sound advice, or bringing laughter to the room, you have been a true brother in every sense that counts.

May this milestone year bring you robust health, great joy, and all the happiness you so freely give to others.

Happy 60th Birthday!

Family Birthday Message

Seyi

Comrade... as I fondly called you, our freedom fighter ...lol, can't believe you are sixty, you look like you are in your 40s.

I am thankful for the grace of God upon your life, how he brought you thus far. And I pray that God will continue to renew your strength all the days of your life in Jesus name.

Happy birthday Comrade and many happy returns!

Congratulations Bro.Ayo

From Seyi

World Uncle Jaiye's Day

Maria Dogwoh

Hollaaaaaaaaaaaa! it's world uncle jaiye's day

Go, Big Brother... it's your birthday, and you should parteyyyyyy like it's your birthday!

My dear brother, so much can be said about you, yet words can never fully capture the incredible person that you are. You are genuine to the very core—true to the final dot. Humility personified. Fearless, courageous, intelligent, dependable, and accountable. You are the kind of man who goes above and beyond for others with your whole heart and without hesitation. Your passion, kindness, and generous spirit make you truly exceptional.

Today, I join your beautiful family, friends, colleagues, and the countless people whose lives you have touched in celebrating you on the occasion of your 60th Birthday. What a remarkable milestone! It is not just a celebration of your age but of a life well lived, a life of purpose, integrity, impact, and unwavering love.

Here's to many more years of laughter, joy, divine health, peace, prosperity, and unforgettable memories. May the years ahead be even greater than those behind.

My amazing friend, my personal person, my Ogami at the top, my secret big brother crush! A gentleman per excellence, you are the very definition of strength, credibility, honour, and loveliness. A go-getter. Determined. Thoughtful. Soulful. Compassionate. Generous to a fault. And, oh, so wonderfully humorous! In short, everyone deserves to have an Uncle Jaiye in their corner because you make life brighter simply by being you.

Thank you for the incredible husband and father you are. The love, honour, care, and unwavering support you shower on your beloved wife—my paddy and dear sister, Lydia—and your beautiful princess, Ayomide, are truly inspiring. Watching your love radiate so effortlessly in their lives is a beautiful reminder that true leadership begins at home. Brother mi, only you na men! You wear your responsibilities with grace, dignity, and joy, and it is a privilege to witness.

As you celebrate this new chapter, my prayer is that Heaven will continually watch over you. May God preserve you in perfect health, grant you long life, overflowing peace, and unending joy. May kings, nobles, and men of influence seek you out and favour you. May every labour of love you have sown return to you in abundant harvest. May doors that no man can shut open before you, and may your latter years be filled with greater glory, honour, and undeniable testimonies in Jesus Christ's Mighty Name. Amen.

Thank you for being an amazing brother, a dependable friend, a trusted confidant, and a tremendous blessing to so many lives. Your impact is immeasurable, and your legacy continues to grow. I love and appreciate you more than words can express. Happy 60th Birthday, Uncle Jaiye May this new decade be your most glorious, fruitful, and fulfilling yet. LOVE YOU BIG TIME! Enjoy every single moment of your special day, Egbomi. You deserve every celebration today and always!

From Maria Dogwoh

Tribute to My In-Law (Ayo Ajayeobo @60)

Osamwonyi, Tetsoma & Kimberly Osaghae

Tribute my In-law (Ayo Ajayeobo @60)

On this glorious day my humble self and family pauses to celebrate you a man of wisdom, integrity and love 60 years of life 60 years of impact, you have been more than an in-law to us. You are a father a pillar and a blessing to our family as you enter into this new decade may your strength be renewed like the eagle, may your health, joy and prosperity abound. God grants you many more years to enjoy the fruit of your labour. Thank you for being a shining example, we love and honour you today and always. With love Osamwonyi, Tetsoma, Kimberly Osaghae.

Happy Birthday to My Senator!

Iredia & Izehiese Idukpaye

May God bless you forever with good health, divine favor, wisdom, strength, and abundant joy. May He continue to guide your steps, grant you many more years of purpose and success, and surround you with His endless love and protection.

Wishing you a beautiful year filled with peace, prosperity, and countless blessings. Have a truly wonderful birthday!

From Iredia & Izehiese Idukpaye

Happy 60th Birthday, Uncle Ayo!

Ukinebo Idukpaye Irabor & Eloghosa Irabor

As I think about the incredible person you are, I can't help but smile at the many memories we've shared over the years. One of the greatest gifts you've given me is the way you've always treated me—with kindness, respect, and unconditional love. You never judged me or made me feel insignificant. Instead, you welcomed me as your own and loved me like a daughter. That is something I will always treasure.

Your laughter is one of those things that could brighten any room. It was genuine, warm, and contagious, and it made every gathering feel a little more joyful.

Watching you with my daughter has been another beautiful blessing. The love you showed her was so natural, and one of my favorite memories will always be of her as a baby, reaching up to grab your ear with those tiny little hands. You never seemed to mind—you simply laughed and enjoyed every precious moment with her.

I also smile when I think about our conversations. Whether you were passionately sharing your political views, excitedly talking about the very first squirrel you ever saw, or reminiscing while listening to Fela Kuti, every conversation was full of personality, humor, and authenticity. Our shared appreciation for Fela Kuti's music made those moments even more special, and I'll always cherish them.

You have left a lasting mark on my life through your generosity, your wisdom, your humor, and your love. Thank you for being exactly who you are and for making everyone around you feel seen and valued.

We love you very much, uncle Ayo. Wishing you abundant health, joy, peace, and countless blessings as you celebrate this milestone.

Happy 60th Birthday! May this new decade bring you every happiness your heart deserves.

From Ukinebo Idukpaye Irabor and Eloghosa Irabor!

SECTION FIVE **FROM STRUGGLE TO SYSTEMS**

*Movement Memory, Leadership and
Intergenerational Continuity*

13 AGUDAMA AND THE NIGER DELTA STRUGGLE

No. 13 Agudama Street-sometimes rendered Agudama Avenue-D-Line, Port Harcourt, should be regarded as one of the most important but insufficiently documented historical sites of the modern Niger Delta struggle.

It was more than an office or residential address. During the 1990s and early 2000s, it functioned at different times as:

an environmental-rights office;

an organising and meeting space;

a political-education centre;

a communications and documentation hub;

a convergence point for activists from different Niger Delta nationalities;

and an incubator for organisations and ideas that subsequently shaped the region.

One retrospective account expressly refers to the network around the address as the “13 Agudama Movement.”

1. An environmental-justice headquarters

No. 13 Agudama was publicly listed as the Port Harcourt office of Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria, one of the principal organisations that documented oil pollution, corporate misconduct, community repression and ecological destruction in the Niger Delta.

ERA, led nationally for many years by Nnimmo Bassey, helped transform the Niger Delta question from one framed merely around compensation and regional development into one involving:

environmental human rights;

corporate accountability;

community consent;

ecological restoration;

resistance to gas flaring;

and criticism of the political economy of petroleum extraction.

The address was also connected with organisations concerned with women’s environmental and human rights. Surviving organisational records list Niger Delta Women for Justice at 13 Agudama, illustrating that the space was not exclusively a male political meeting point.

2. The intellectual birthplace of the Ijaw Youth Council

One of the most important claims associated with the address is that the Ijaw Youth Council was conceived at No. 13 Agudama, although it was formally established at the All-Ijaw Youth Conference in Kaiama on 11 December 1998.

A published account by the Health of Mother Earth Foundation records the recollection that the IYC was “conceived” at 13 Agudama and “birthed” at Kaiama.

This distinction is important:

Agudama was the incubating space where conversations, relationships, strategies and preliminary ideas developed.

Kaiama was the constituent political moment at which representatives from hundreds of Ijaw communities adopted the Kaiama Declaration and created the IYC.

The official history of the IYC confirms that the organisation was founded at Kaiama on 11 December 1998. The declaration established the IYC to coordinate the struggle for Ijaw self-determination and justice.

Thus, 13 Agudama occupies a place in the prehistory of one of the most influential youth movements in the modern Niger Delta.

3. A school of radical political thought

The people associated with 13 Agudama did not only discuss oil spills and community projects. The address appears to have functioned as an informal political school or movement university.

A biographical tribute to the late writer and environmental activist Patrick Naagbanton describes him as a core member of the “13 Agudama Movement,” alongside revolutionary socialists including:

Jaye Gaskia;

Godwin Frank;

Karl Chinedu Uchegbu;

Steve Obodoekwe.

The account connects the group to political formations including:

Democratic Alternative;

the People’s Democratic Liberation Party;

the Socialist Workers Movement;

and the Socialist Workers Party.

Members read, circulated and debated revolutionary and political literature. They discussed Marxism, Black liberation, revolution, resistance, class, capitalism and strategies for social change. The significance was not that everybody who passed through the building held an identical ideology. Rather, the address made rigorous political debate part of Niger Delta organising.

It helped establish that the region’s crisis could not be understood only as:

“The Niger Delta versus the rest of Nigeria.”

It also had to be understood through questions of:

class exploitation;

the Nigerian ruling elite;

multinational capital;

state violence;

minority oppression;

labour rights;

militarisation;

and the relationship between local elites and impoverished communities.

4. A meeting point between different strands of struggle

The historical importance of 13 Agudama lies partly in the diversity of tendencies that crossed there.

It connected, directly or indirectly:

the Ogoni environmental struggle;

emerging Ijaw youth nationalism;

Nigerian human-rights organisations;

the anti-military democratic movement;

socialist and labour organisations;

journalists and writers;

community campaigners;

women's organisations;

international environmental networks;

and, eventually, more militant currents.

A tribute to Oronto Douglas describes meeting him at the “famous” 13 Agudama, where Isaac Asume Osuoka, Godwin Frank and Jaye Gaskia were also involved in supporting workers in a dispute at Risonpalm.

That recollection illustrates the breadth of the address's activities. The struggle was not confined to oil-bearing villages. It linked environmental degradation to the conditions of workers, agricultural estates, democratic repression and the wider political economy.

Patrick Naagbanton's biography similarly connects his work across the Campaign for Democracy, Civil Liberties Organisation, United Action for Democracy, Southern Minorities Movement, Rivers Coalition, Chikoko Movement, MOSOP and ERA. It states that he participated in writing reports, memoranda, flyers, press statements and articles, as well as strategising and distributing political materials.

This makes 13 Agudama best understood as a clearing house of movements, rather than the exclusive headquarters of one organisation.

5. A bridge between Ogoni and Ijaw mobilisation

The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni Nine in November 1995 created a major crisis for Niger Delta activism. Many leading Ogoni organisers had been killed, detained, forced underground or driven into exile.

In the period that followed, activists such as Oronto Douglas, Isaac Osuoka, Patrick Naagbanton, Nnimmo Bassey and others helped carry environmental-rights mobilisation beyond one ethnic nationality.

The networks around 13 Agudama contributed to this transition by bringing together people whose work touched:

Ogoni survival and environmental justice;

Ijaw self-determination;
pan-Niger Delta solidarity;
Nigerian democratisation;
and socialist transformation.

This was politically important because it resisted two limitations.

The first was ethnic isolation-the idea that each Niger Delta nationality should struggle alone.

The second was single-issue environmentalism-the idea that pollution could be corrected without confronting state power, corporate interests, resource ownership and economic inequality.

6. A production centre for movement knowledge

Movements survive not only through public protests but through the less visible work of:

research;
recording testimonies;
writing petitions;
preparing press releases;
photocopying political literature;
communicating with journalists;
producing human-rights reports;
hosting visitors;
providing contact addresses;
and connecting local communities with national and international institutions.

Evidence about Patrick Naagbanton's work describes the production of investigative reports, memoranda, pamphlets, articles and campaign materials, together with strategising against anti-poor policies.

A separate retrospective account states that an educational proposal concerning Ogoni children used 13 Agudama as its contact point and that activists based there helped facilitate engagement with an international delegation.

The address therefore helped convert community grievances into forms that could circulate beyond the creeks:

testimony became documentation; documentation became advocacy; advocacy became national and international pressure.

7. Relationship with the Chikoko Movement

The address is also associated with the intellectual and organisational environment from which the Chikoko Movement emerged.

"Chikoko" refers to the dark, fertile alluvial mud of the Niger Delta. Politically, it conveyed the idea of a movement rooted in the land, waterways, communities and oppressed peoples of the region.

The Chikoko current sought to bring together:

environmental justice;
ethnic-nationality rights;
popular democracy;
regional solidarity;
community organisation;
and radical political transformation.

It was significant because it attempted to move beyond an exclusively ethnic movement while remaining grounded in the particular experience of the Niger Delta.

The historical record later connected the Chikoko Movement, along with the IYC, MOSOP, other nationality organisations and militant formations, to broader pan-Niger Delta meetings and coalitions. Court records from the prosecution of Mujahid Dokubo-Asari list these different groups as participants in a 2005 Pan-Niger Delta Action Conference. These were allegations presented by the state in a criminal case and should not be interpreted as proving that all the organisations shared the same strategy or endorsed armed activity.

8. Relationship with Asari Dokubo and the militant phase

The later history of the address became associated with Mujahid Dokubo-Asari. In the criminal proceedings brought against him, the federal authorities identified him as being of No. 13 Agudama Street and linked the case to the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, Chikoko Movement and other organisations.

This should be interpreted carefully.

It would be historically inaccurate to conclude that 13 Agudama was primarily a militant headquarters or that all those connected to it endorsed armed struggle. Its earlier and broader history was rooted substantially in:

environmental advocacy;
human-rights documentation;
labour solidarity;
political education;
nonviolent mobilisation;
and radical democratic organisation.

However, its later connection to actors in the militant phase demonstrates how closely the different epochs of the Niger Delta struggle overlapped.

The same political environment produced several possible responses:

environmental and human-rights campaigning;
legal action and documentation;
mass community mobilisation;
ethnic-nationality organisation;
socialist political organising;
civil disobedience;

and armed resistance.

13 Agudama stood at the intersection of these competing pathways.

9. The leading lights associated with its history

The historical record associates the address or its networks with a remarkable generation of organisers, including:

Nnimmo Bassey-environmental justice, ERA and Oilwatch;

Oronto Douglas-environmental rights, Ogoni solidarity and Niger Delta advocacy;

Isaac Asume Osuoka-environmental and social-justice organising;

Jaye Gaskia-socialist organising, labour solidarity and popular democracy;

Godwin Frank-radical and socialist organisation;

Patrick Naagbanton-journalism, environmental investigation and movement documentation;

Karl Chinedu Uchegbu-socialist political work;

Steve Obodoekwe-radical movement organisation;

Felix Tuodolo-Ijaw youth and movement organising;

Uche Onyeagucha-human-rights and democratic activism;

Mujahid Dokubo-Asari-Ijaw nationalism and the later armed-agitation phase.

Not all these individuals occupied identical roles, worked there simultaneously or belonged to one unified organisation. The significance of the address is precisely that people with different identities and subsequent political trajectories encountered one another within the same movement ecosystem.

10. Why 13 Agudama matters historically

I would place its historical importance under six headings.

An incubator

Ideas and organisations were discussed there before emerging publicly elsewhere.

A bridge

It connected Ogoni, Ijaw and wider Niger Delta struggles with Nigerian labour, socialist and human-rights movements.

A school

Activists debated political theory, movement strategy and the nature of the Nigerian state.

A communications centre

Reports, petitions, campaign materials and international contacts were developed or supported through its networks.

A refuge and rendezvous

During military repression, activists required relatively safe places to meet, receive visitors, exchange information and plan campaigns.

A crossroads

It stood between the nonviolent environmental movement of the early 1990s and the more confrontational and militant currents that became prominent from the late 1990s into the 2000s.

11. My assessment

13 Agudama should be treated as a site of political memory and movement heritage.

In the history of the Niger Delta, attention is understandably concentrated on:

Oloibiri;

Boro's 1966 revolt;

Bori and the Ogoni uprising;

the Port Harcourt trial and execution of the Ogoni Nine;

Kaiama and the 1998 Declaration;

Odi;

Gbaramatu;

Camp Five;

and the later militant camps.

But struggles are not made only at sites of massacres, declarations and armed confrontations. They are also made inside modest buildings where people:

argue;

read;

write;

organise;

disagree;

shelter one another;

publish;

plan;

and imagine a different future.

That was the deeper importance of 13 Agudama.

Bori gave the struggle an environmental mass movement. Kaiama gave it a historic declaration. The creeks gave it an insurgency. But 13 Agudama helped provide the intellectual, organisational and relational infrastructure connecting these different phases.

12. A necessary historical caution

The surviving record is fragmented. Much of what is known comes from:

activist memoirs;

tributes;

organisational publications;

court records;

interviews;

and retrospective accounts.

Some details-such as the ownership history of the building, the precise dates when particular organisations occupied it and the complete list of people who worked or met there-still require systematic verification.

Therefore, 13 Agudama deserves a dedicated oral-history and archival project involving:

surviving members of the Agudama network;

former ERA personnel;

IYC founders;

Ogoni and Ijaw activists;

labour organisers;

neighbouring residents;

journalists;

women's organisations;

property and organisational records;

photographs, correspondence and publications produced at the address.

Such a project could establish a reliable chronology and prevent an important chapter of the Niger Delta struggle from disappearing with the generation that created it.

In summary, 13 Agudama was not merely an address in Port Harcourt. It was an organising house, a political school, an environmental-rights centre, a meeting ground of nationalities and ideologies, and one of the crucibles in which the contemporary Niger Delta movement was shaped.

THE JAYE GASKIA LEADERSHIP & SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION ACADEMY AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Building Active Citizens. Developing Transformative Leaders. Connecting Generations.

The Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy is one of the principal institutional legacies emerging from Jaye @ 60. It is conceived as a platform through which more than four decades of experience in activism, movement building, development practice, governance, peacebuilding, human security and institution building can be transformed into opportunities for learning, mentorship, leadership development and intergenerational exchange.

The Academy is founded on a simple proposition: social transformation requires people who understand their society, recognise their agency, can organise collectively, engage institutions intelligently and translate ideas and values into purposeful action.

It is therefore not intended merely as a conventional leadership-training programme, nor as an institution established simply to preserve the name of Jaye Gaskia. Its purpose is forward-looking: to help nurture active citizens, organisers, movement builders, practitioners, public leaders and change-makers equipped to engage the complex challenges of their time.

At the heart of the Academy is a commitment to connect ideas with practice, leadership with service, citizenship with responsibility, movements with institutions, and one generation's experience with another generation's possibilities.

Why the Academy?

Jaye Gaskia's own journey illustrates the importance of learning across different arenas of social engagement.

Beginning with student activism and political formation in the 1980s, his journey has traversed pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military struggles; labour and popular movements; environmental and Niger Delta activism; civil society and international development; governance and public policy; electoral politics; peacebuilding; human security; community resilience; PCVE; and institution building.

Each phase required different skills, approaches and forms of organisation.

The Academy seeks to draw lessons from this accumulated experience without attempting to reproduce the politics, organisations or methods of an earlier generation. Instead, it asks a more important question:

What knowledge, values, capacities and forms of leadership will emerging generations require to understand their own time and transform it?

The Academy is therefore conceived as a living learning platform—one that draws from history while remaining responsive to contemporary realities and future challenges.

Five Core Learning Pillars

The Academy's learning and leadership-development architecture is organised around five interconnected pillars:

- ◆ 1. Purposeful Active Citizenship
 - ◆ Citizenship is more than legal status or participation in elections. It involves understanding rights and responsibilities, engaging public institutions, participating in community life, demanding accountability and recognising one's own capacity to contribute to change.
 - ◆ Participants will explore democracy, citizenship, social justice, civic responsibility, public accountability, community agency and different forms of citizen participation.
- ◆ 2. Leadership Development
 - ◆ The Academy will promote leadership as responsibility, service and the capacity to enable collective action, rather than simply position or authority.
 - ◆ Learning will explore values and ethics, self-awareness, strategic thinking, communication, negotiation, decision-making, teamwork, conflict management, accountability and adaptive leadership.
 - ◆ Particular attention will be given to the relationship between leadership, integrity and public purpose.

◆ 3. Organising and Mobilisation

- ◆ One of the central lessons running through Jaye's journey is that concern about injustice does not automatically produce social change.
- ◆ People must be able to organise.
- ◆ This pillar will introduce participants to movement building, community organising, coalition building, advocacy, campaigning, stakeholder engagement, political education, communication, mobilisation, negotiation and the transformation of individual concerns into collective action.
- ◆ Participants will also examine the strengths, weaknesses and lessons of historical and contemporary social movements.

◆ 4. Governance and Policy Engagement

- ◆ Sustainable transformation requires more than challenging institutions from outside. Citizens and movements must also understand how institutions work, how policies are developed, how public resources are governed and how decisions can be influenced.
- ◆ This pillar will expose participants to governance systems, public policy, democratic institutions, political economy, constitutionalism, accountability, policy analysis, advocacy and citizen engagement with government.
- ◆ It reflects an important lesson from Jaye's journey: the movement from protest to policy, and from struggle to systems, requires new forms of knowledge and capacity.

◆ 5. Transformative Change

- ◆ The fifth pillar brings the others together.
- ◆ Participants will examine how social, political, economic and institutional change happens; how power operates; why inequalities persist; how ideas influence societies; and how movements, communities, institutions and leadership interact in processes of transformation.
- ◆ The objective is to encourage participants not merely to respond to individual problems, but to understand the systems and structures that produce them.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

The Academy is envisaged as more than a classroom-based institution.

Its programmes can combine:

- ◆ Leadership Boot Camps and Academies
- ◆ Mentorship Circles

- ◆ Masterclasses and Public Conversations
- ◆ Seminars and Workshops
- ◆ Digital Learning and Online Courses
- ◆ Fellowships
- ◆ Communities of Practice
- ◆ Exchange and Exposure Programmes
- ◆ Case Studies and Learning Journeys
- ◆ Reading and Discussion Circles
- ◆ Podcasts and Digital Conversations
- ◆ Community and Social-Action Projects
- ◆ Policy and Organising Laboratories

This blended approach recognises that leadership and organising are learned not only through instruction, but through practice, reflection, experimentation, relationships and experience.

THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Connecting Experience with Emerging Leadership

The Mentorship Programme is a flagship pathway within the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy.

Its purpose is to create structured opportunities through which emerging leaders and change-makers can learn from people with accumulated experience across activism, labour, social movements, governance, development, academia, environmental justice, media, public policy, peacebuilding, business, community leadership and other spheres of public life.

The programme is built around the understanding that mentorship should not be a one-directional relationship in which an older generation simply tells a younger generation what to do.

Instead, it should create intergenerational conversations.

Experienced practitioners bring history, lessons, networks, successes, failures and institutional memory. Younger generations bring new realities, technologies, perspectives, questions, methods and forms of organising.

Both have something to learn.

From Mentorship to Action

The Mentorship Programme should therefore move beyond occasional conversations between mentors and mentees.

Participants can progress through a structured journey:

Discover → Learn → Connect → Reflect → Practise → Act → Review → Mentor Others

Each participant should ideally leave the programme not only with greater knowledge and stronger relationships, but with something tangible—a community initiative, campaign, policy idea, research project, organisation-building intervention or other form of social action.

In this way, mentorship becomes a bridge between knowledge and practice.

Who Is the Academy For?

The Academy is intended to be intergenerational and multidisciplinary. Its programmes can serve:

young and emerging leaders; students and youth activists; community organisers; trade unionists; civil society practitioners; researchers and academics; development and humanitarian practitioners; public servants; political and governance actors; peacebuilders; journalists and communicators; social entrepreneurs; and others seeking to contribute meaningfully to society.

Participation should be defined less by profession than by a demonstrated commitment to leadership, citizenship, service and positive social change.

A Network of Mentors

Although inspired by Jaye's journey, the Academy should never depend on Jaye alone.

Its strength should lie in building a diverse network of experienced activists, scholars, organisers, professionals, community leaders, policymakers, practitioners and public leaders willing to invest in another generation.

Over time, Academy alumni should themselves become mentors, creating a continually expanding cycle of learning and transmission.

The aspiration is therefore not to build a following around an individual, but to create an ecosystem of transformative leadership.

The Jaye Gaskia Library as a Learning Resource

The Academy will also connect naturally with the Jaye Gaskia Library and Publication Programme.

Jaye's writings, speeches, interviews and reflections—as well as the wider books, movements, people and ideas represented in the Jaye @ 60 Legacy Collections—can provide learning materials for reading circles, seminars, courses and mentorship conversations.

This allows the archive to become more than a repository.

It becomes a living learning resource.

An Institution That Must Outlive the Occasion

The long-term ambition is for the Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy to develop beyond the Jaye @ 60 celebrations into a sustainable institution and community of learning.

Its impact should ultimately be measured not by the number of workshops organised or certificates issued, but by the people it helps to develop, the relationships it creates, the ideas it stimulates, the initiatives its participants undertake and the contribution its alumni make to their communities and society.

At its best, the Academy should become a place where history encounters the future; experience encounters innovation; ideas encounter practice; and generations encounter one another.

It represents a transition from celebrating one person's journey to investing in the journeys of many others.

That is perhaps one of the most meaningful ways to build a legacy.

From Experience to Knowledge.

From Knowledge to Leadership.

From Leadership to Action.

From Action to Social Transformation.

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

CLOSING MESSAGE

The Legacy Continues

As the activities marking Jaye @ 60 draw to a close, we are reminded that while celebrations have beginnings and endings, legacy does not.

Over these days, we have gathered to celebrate sixty years of the life of Comrade Jaye Gaskia—a journey shaped by family and friendship, ideas and convictions, struggle and solidarity, movements and institutions, professional service and public engagement, reflection and continuous learning.

We have looked back at more than four decades of engagement with student activism, pro-democracy, human-rights and anti-military struggles; labour and popular movements; environmental and climate justice; civil society and development practice; governance and public policy; electoral politics; peacebuilding; human security; community resilience; and the prevention of violent extremism.

But Jaye @ 60 was never intended to be only about looking back.

From the beginning, the purpose of this commemoration has been to ask what can be preserved from the journey, what lessons can be drawn from it, what remains unfinished, and how accumulated experience can become a resource for those who must confront the challenges of today and tomorrow.

That is why the most important outcome of Jaye @ 60 is not the celebration itself.

It is what continues after it.

From Memory to a Living Legacy

The photographs, tributes, reflections and memories gathered through this commemoration remind us that no meaningful life is lived alone.

Every journey is shaped by people.

Family. Friends. Teachers. Comrades. Colleagues. Communities. Organisations. Movements. Mentors. Fellow travellers. And sometimes even those with whom we disagreed.

Together, their voices tell a story larger than the story of one individual.

They remind us that movements are built collectively, that ideas develop through debate and experience, that institutions are created through collaboration, and that social transformation is always the work of many hands across generations.

This Jaye @ 60 Commemorative Programme & Legacy Book is therefore not intended simply as a souvenir of three days in August 2026. It is part of an effort to preserve those relationships, memories, experiences and lessons as an enduring historical and intergenerational resource.

The Ideas Continue

One of the clearest threads running through Jaye's journey has been the importance of ideas.

- ◆ Ideas about justice.
- ◆ Ideas about democracy and citizenship.
- ◆ Ideas about political power and organisation.
- ◆ Ideas about development and the environment.
- ◆ Ideas about peace, security and human dignity.
- ◆ Ideas about how people can organise themselves to change the conditions under which they live.

Through the Jaye Gaskia Library and Publication Programme, his writings, speeches, lectures, reflections, interviews and public interventions are being assembled and preserved so that these ideas remain available for interrogation, debate and learning.

The intention is not to create a monument to ideas that cannot be questioned.

Quite the opposite.

A living intellectual legacy must invite future generations to read, question, challenge, reinterpret and build upon what came before them.

The Conversation Continues

The inaugural Jaye @ 60 Legacy Lecture & Symposium, under the theme “Active Citizenship, Social Movements, and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria,” was conceived in this same spirit.

The questions confronting Nigeria—about democracy, citizenship, inequality, governance, security, social justice, leadership and the relationship between citizens and power—will not disappear when the birthday activities end.

Neither should the conversation.

The aspiration is therefore for the Legacy Lecture and related platforms to continue creating spaces where activists, citizens, scholars, practitioners, policymakers and younger generations can meet across experiences and perspectives to interrogate the challenges facing society and explore possibilities for transformation.

The Next Generation Takes the Journey Forward

Perhaps the most important test of legacy is whether experience can help create possibilities for those who come afterwards.

The Jaye Gaskia Leadership & Social Transformation Academy and Mentorship Programme represents this forward-looking dimension of the initiative.

Its purpose is not to create another generation in Jaye's image.

Every generation must understand its own historical moment, develop its own methods, make its own choices and, inevitably, learn from its own mistakes.

The responsibility of an older generation is therefore not simply to provide answers.

It is also to share experience, preserve memory, ask difficult questions, create opportunities, open doors and provide spaces in which another generation can discover its own capacity to lead and transform society.

That is the legacy the Academy and Mentorship Programme seek to build.

The Struggle Continues; the Forms Will Change

The Nigeria in which Jaye entered the student movement in the 1980s is not the Nigeria confronting young citizens today.

The political environment has changed.

Technology has changed.

The economy has changed.

The nature of work has changed.

The information environment has changed.

The forms of insecurity have changed.

And the ways in which people organise, communicate, mobilise and exercise influence continue to change.

Yet many fundamental questions remain.

How do we build a society founded on justice and human dignity?

How do citizens exercise meaningful power between elections?

How do we build accountable institutions?

How do movements move beyond protest towards sustainable organisation and transformation?

How do we address inequality, exclusion, environmental degradation, conflict and insecurity without losing sight of the human being?

How do we build leadership that serves rather than dominates?

These questions belong neither to Jaye nor to his generation alone.

They belong to all of us.

Gratitude

As we conclude this commemoration, we express our profound gratitude to everyone who made Jaye @ 60 possible.

To Jaye's family, for sharing not only the public figure but the husband, father, brother and uncle with generations of comrades, colleagues and fellow travellers.

To the friends and comrades who have walked different stretches of this journey.

To those who contributed tributes and reflections, photographs, documents, memories, books, music and archival materials.

To the speakers, moderators, mentors, writers, editors, researchers, volunteers and members of the various planning teams.

To our partners, sponsors and supporters whose resources, goodwill and encouragement helped transform an idea into reality.

And to everyone who attended, participated, contributed, supported, remembered and celebrated with us:

Thank you.

Beyond Sixty

On 23 August 2026, Jaye Gaskia turns sixty.

The number marks an important milestone, but it cannot define the journey.

- ◆ There are still books to write.
- ◆ Ideas to interrogate.
- ◆ Memories to preserve.
- ◆ Young people to mentor.
- ◆ Institutions to build.
- ◆ Communities to strengthen.
- ◆ Movements to renew.
- ◆ Questions to ask.
- ◆ Mistakes to learn from.
- ◆ And struggles yet to be won.

Perhaps that is why the most appropriate way to conclude this publication is not with an ending, but with an invitation.

- ◆ An invitation to read.
- ◆ To remember.
- ◆ To question.
- ◆ To organise.
- ◆ To mentor.
- ◆ To serve.
- ◆ To build.
- ◆ And, above all, to continue believing in the capacity of ordinary people, acting collectively and purposefully, to transform their society.

The celebration may end.

The work continues.

The events may become memories.

The ideas continue.

One generation may eventually leave the stage.

Another must step forward.

And so, as Jaye enters his seventh decade, we celebrate the journey already travelled while looking towards the possibilities still ahead.

Not as the conclusion of a story.

But as the beginning of another chapter.

JAYE @ 60

A Life of Ideas, Struggle, Service and Transformation

The Birthday is the Occasion; the Legacy is the Purpose.

The Legacy Continues.