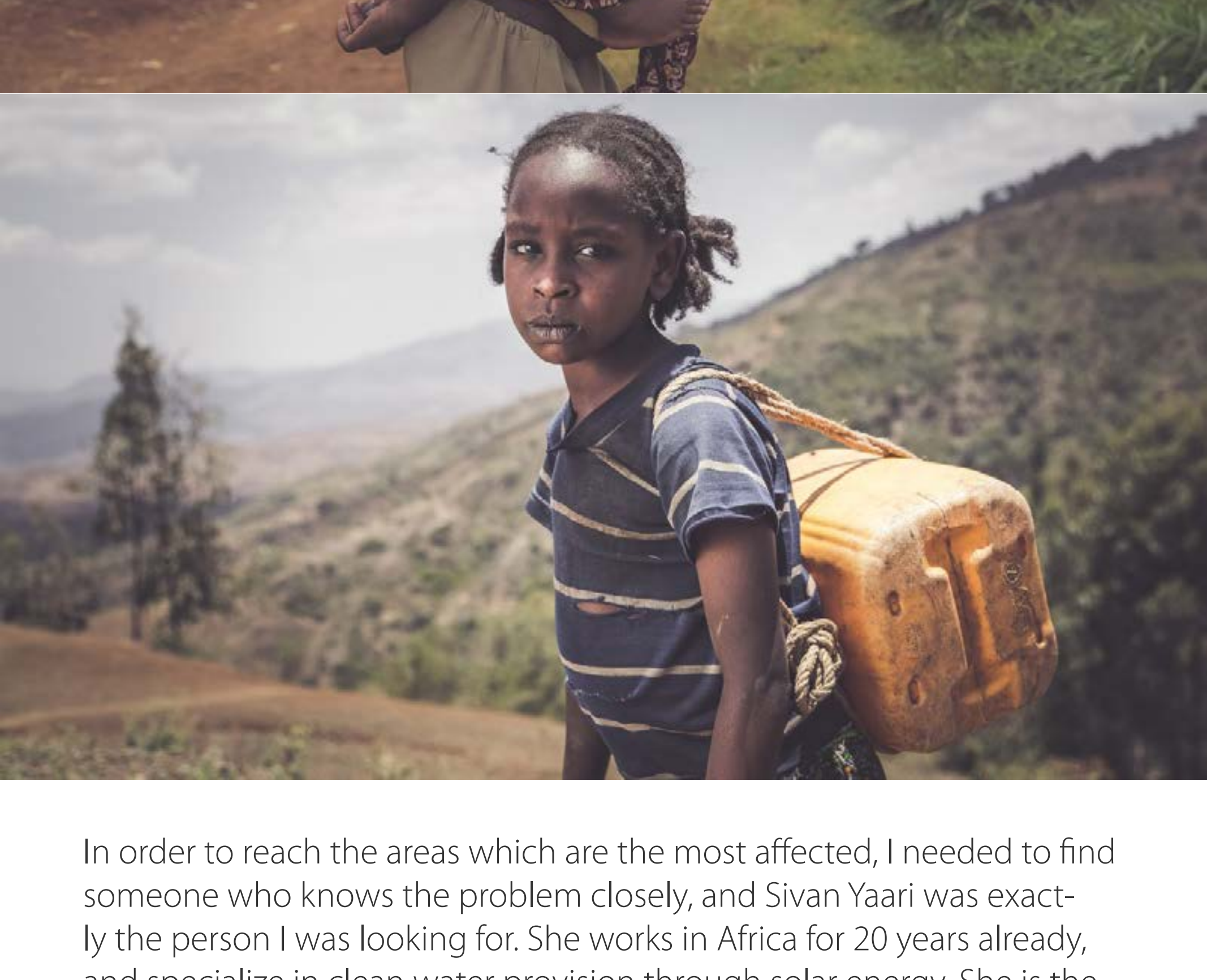


On the quest for clean water

Uganda, located in east Africa, is a beautiful land, but also a hard and challenging one. The Israeli photographer, Lior Sperandio, accompanied an Israeli organization that provides clean water to thirsty communities in Uganda, and came back with an enlightening photo series.

Winston Churchill called Uganda “the pearl of Africa”, and not for nothing- Uganda is one of the most beautiful African lands. The nature is stunning, the people are warm and welcoming, and Kampala, the capital, is young, modern and vibrant. But the stunning nature is also vicious. I have crossed the pearl of Africa from south to north to capture and document the water shortage risk which strike the country today more than ever.

One of the reasons I arrived in Uganda was the statistics which stocked in my mind for months: Every year, the global water shortage kills more people than any other war or violent outbreak. How come I didn't know this fact before? After all, I myself come from a land full of wars and empty of water. This brought me to learn more on the topic, and the findings have pushed me to discover the truths on the ground personally. But nothing prepared me to what I was about to see.

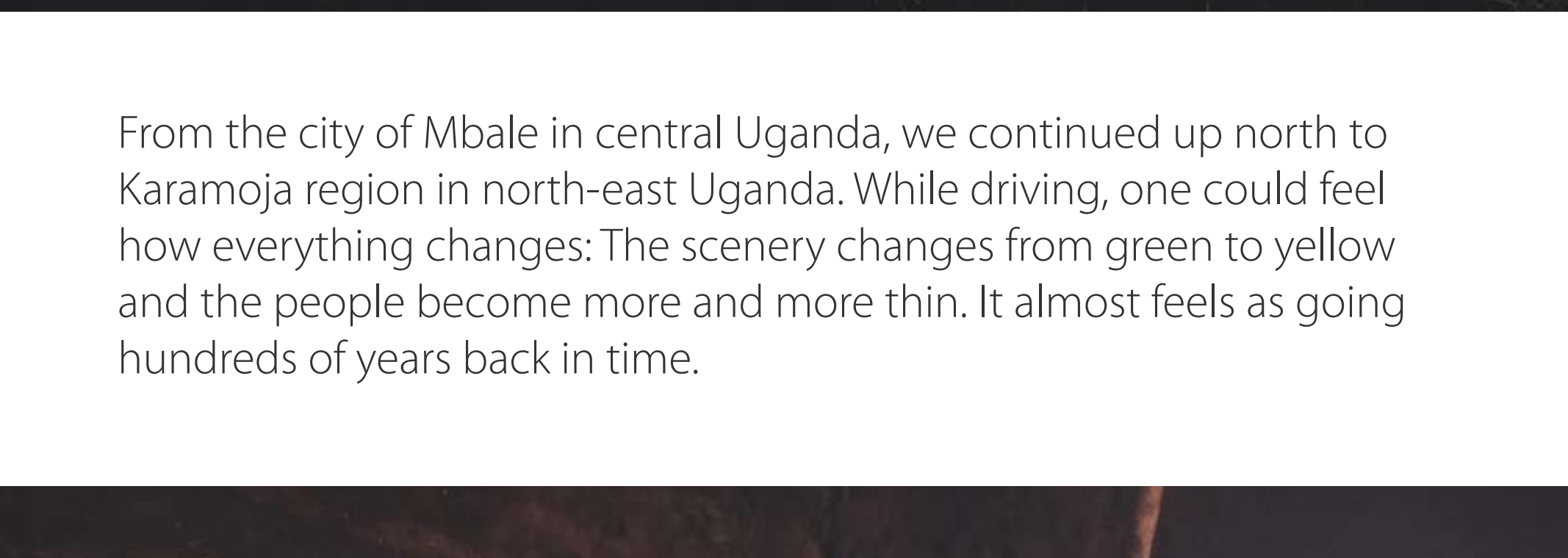


In order to reach the areas which are the most affected, I needed to find someone who knows the problem closely, and Sivan Yaari was exactly the person I was looking for. She works in Africa for 20 years already, and specialize in clean water provision through solar energy. She is the founder and CEO of innovation: Africa.

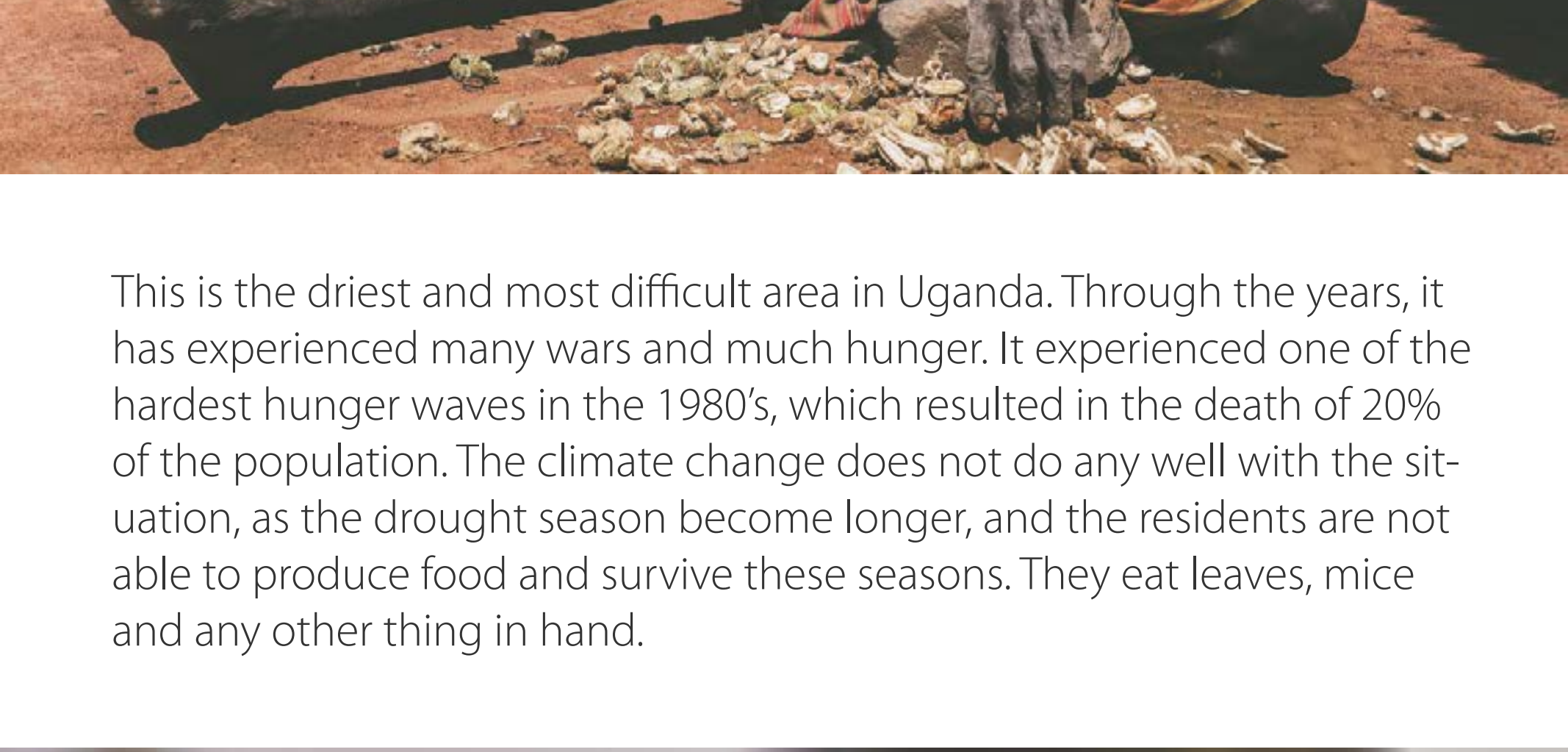


I accompanied Sivan and her team across Uganda. The beginning of the journey was confusing- how can I capture a water shortage crisis when everything around me is green? Yet the reality was about to hit me like a punch in my stomach as we were going up north, to the central region of Mbale.

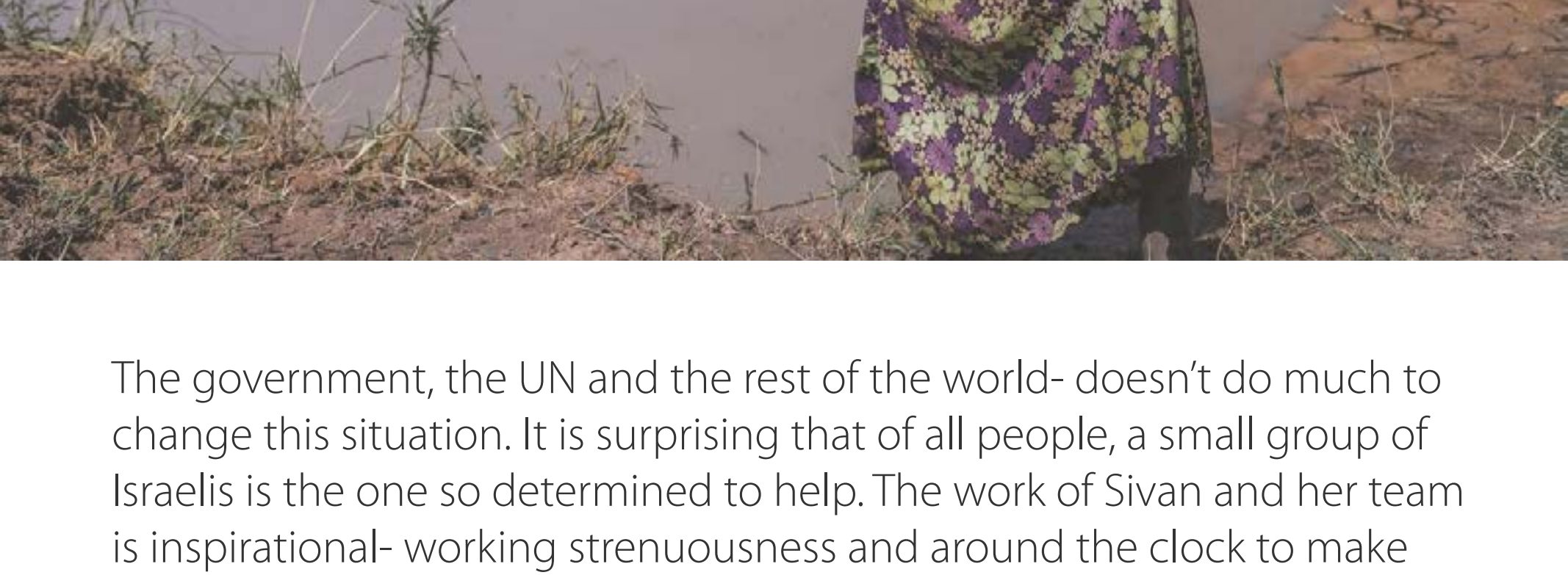
Slowly, you began to recognize them: the yellow jerrycans. If where I come from the man's best friend is the smartphone, in Uganda it's the 20 liter jerrycan with which women and children, the main victims of this situation, collect water day after another, many times from a filthy puddle. Although in most cases the water are contaminated, it is not possible to run normal life routine without them: water is used for everything. Drinking, bathing, laundry, washing dishes, agriculture, pasture and much more. But when collecting water becomes your main worry and provide, there is little time and energy left for the adults to work and provide, and little for the young ones to study and gain education- which sums up a whole cycle of poverty.



From the city of Mbale in central Uganda, we continued up north to Karamoja region in north-east Uganda. While driving, one could feel how everything changes: The scenery changes from green to yellow and the people become more and more thin. It almost feels as going hundreds of years back in time.



This is the driest and most difficult area in Uganda. Through the years, it has experienced many wars and much hunger. It experienced one of the hardest hunger waves in the 1980's, which resulted in the death of 20% of the population. The climate change does not do any well with the situation, as the drought season become longer, and the residents are not able to produce food and survive these seasons. They eat leaves, mice and any other thing in hand.



The government, the UN and the rest of the world- doesn't do much to change this situation. It is surprising that of all people, a small group of Israelis is the one so determined to help. The work of Sivan and her team is inspirational- working strenuousness and around the clock to make clean water accessible to these communities. In the past months, they have launched projects in 6 different locations at the same time, all to pump clean water and allow another 15,000 residents of Karamoja to enjoy them.



The work is not completed after drilling: the staff works with the villagers, and assure that they know and understand the system. The staff also train them with the Israeli agriculture methods, which are able to yield crops in similar conditions, and Israeli agriculture is hardly dependent on outside resources anymore.

Innovation: Africa works today in 7 different African countries and assisted more than a million people. Seeing young children tasting clean water for the first time is an unforgettable shivering experience, which justifies all the time and resources invested in this project.

Lior Sperandio is an Israeli photographer that was a nominee to the Emmy Award. His last project, “People Of”, highlights human and social struggles, and gave voices to silenced populations.