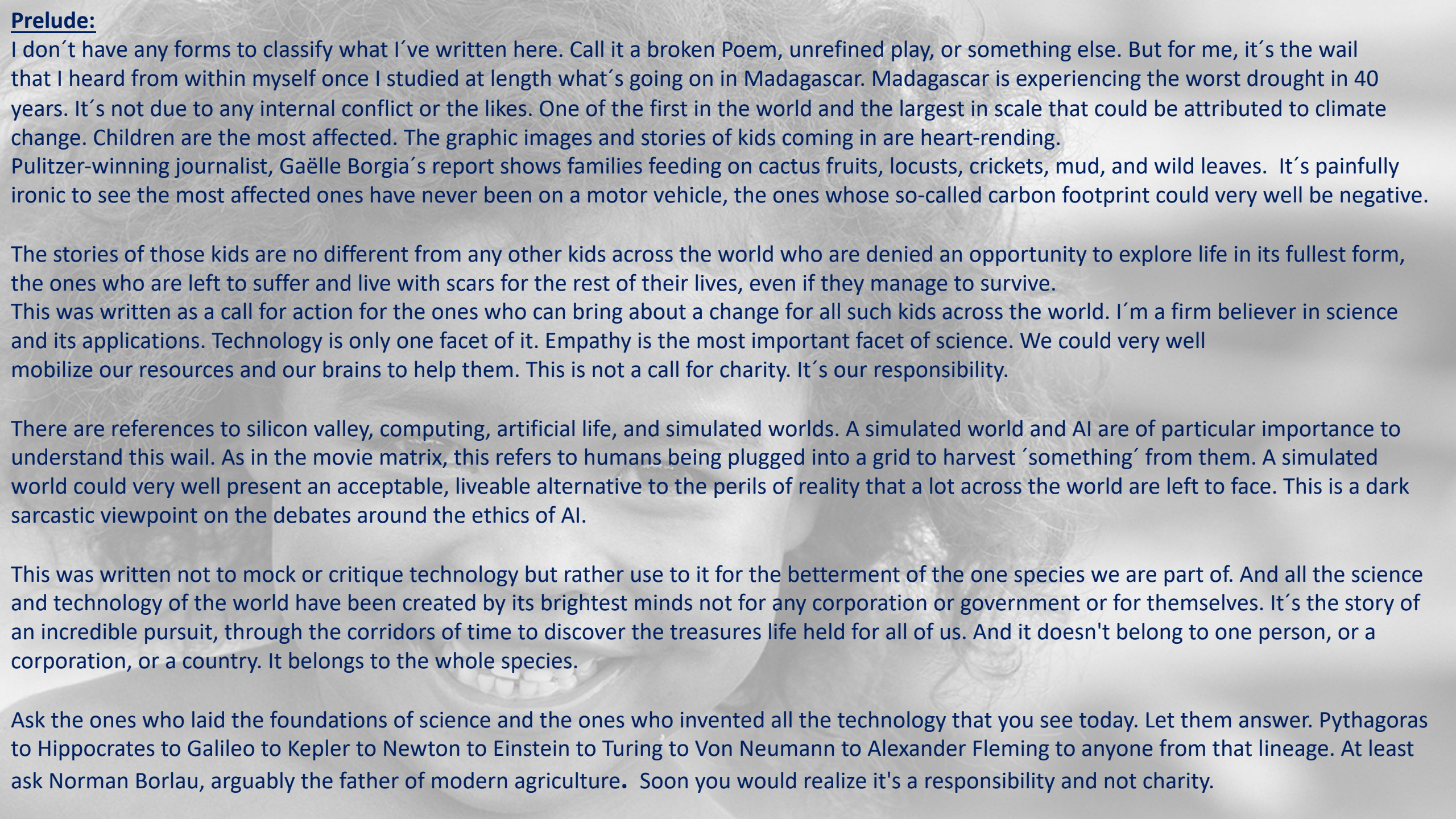


A close-up portrait of a young child with curly hair, smiling. The child's face is the central focus, with their eyes looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is blurred, showing indistinct shapes and colors.

KINTANA

- *By Jozzy*

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Prelude:

I don't have any forms to classify what I've written here. Call it a broken Poem, unrefined play, or something else. But for me, it's the wail that I heard from within myself once I studied at length what's going on in Madagascar. Madagascar is experiencing the worst drought in 40 years. It's not due to any internal conflict or the likes. One of the first in the world and the largest in scale that could be attributed to climate change. Children are the most affected. The graphic images and stories of kids coming in are heart-rending. Pulitzer-winning journalist, Gaëlle Borgia's report shows families feeding on cactus fruits, locusts, crickets, mud, and wild leaves. It's painfully ironic to see the most affected ones have never been on a motor vehicle, the ones whose so-called carbon footprint could very well be negative.

The stories of those kids are no different from any other kids across the world who are denied an opportunity to explore life in its fullest form, the ones who are left to suffer and live with scars for the rest of their lives, even if they manage to survive. This was written as a call for action for the ones who can bring about a change for all such kids across the world. I'm a firm believer in science and its applications. Technology is only one facet of it. Empathy is the most important facet of science. We could very well mobilize our resources and our brains to help them. This is not a call for charity. It's our responsibility.

There are references to silicon valley, computing, artificial life, and simulated worlds. A simulated world and AI are of particular importance to understand this wail. As in the movie matrix, this refers to humans being plugged into a grid to harvest 'something' from them. A simulated world could very well present an acceptable, liveable alternative to the perils of reality that a lot across the world are left to face. This is a dark sarcastic viewpoint on the debates around the ethics of AI.

This was written not to mock or critique technology but rather use to it for the betterment of the one species we are part of. And all the science and technology of the world have been created by its brightest minds not for any corporation or government or for themselves. It's the story of an incredible pursuit, through the corridors of time to discover the treasures life held for all of us. And it doesn't belong to one person, or a corporation, or a country. It belongs to the whole species.

Ask the ones who laid the foundations of science and the ones who invented all the technology that you see today. Let them answer. Pythagoras to Hippocrates to Galileo to Kepler to Newton to Einstein to Turing to Von Neumann to Alexander Fleming to anyone from that lineage. At least ask Norman Borlau, arguably the father of modern agriculture. Soon you would realize it's a responsibility and not charity.



Prelude: cont'd

This was written from the viewpoint of a child from Madagascar. Kintana is a Malagasy name meaning 'southern star'. 'Beloha' is another Malagasy name meaning 'Big Head'. I saw the image of Kintana deep inside me when I wrote this. I could see her and feel her around and I was in real pain. When I saw the picture added here(taken from wiki commons library of a Malagasy child) it had striking similarities. My Kintana was slightly older but looked similar especially the eyes.

This is my invitation for you to imagine and hear the painfully innocent Kintana on how she might be seeing all the things happening around her. I've written this as a first-person account of myself meeting Kintana in the streets of silicon valley and me being proud of what we have accomplished so far. The same haughtiness as Marc Anderseen puts it in his writeup '[Technology saves the world](#)'. It's time to change the hoarding of technology. You can hoard your wealth but not science and technology. It's for all. It's the only tool we have, to arm the otherwise unimpactful emotion we refer to as empathy. Let us arm it and make it act. For the betterment of all.

Given everyone's diminishing attention span to long form reading, written this in 4 Acts. Can read at will but at some point would recommend if it appeals to you , read it all in one shot just as you would watch a movie. A tall call but yeah I truly want you to see and feel our Kintana.

Let's give everyone a chance, a shot at life like we all have.

Yours & Kintana's truly,
Jozzy

NB:

There's a call for urgent action and resources in Madagascar by World Food Program(WFP). More resources and links are added in the appendix



KINTANA

**ACT 1:
Meeting Kintana
in my great city**

I saw her in the street,
a school-aged child all alone
staring at a feast ongoing in the streets
of my city, that was adorned to be
the greatest in the world.

For it was my city
that pioneered how
silicon could bend to be
the frame for a new grandiose world,
a world that was being built
bit by bit
by the big bright heads
who lived in my great city.

As I walked closer to her,
I noticed how puny she is.
Who would leave a child
all alone in our grand streets?
She turned towards me
and I saw her face.

Her eyes were 2 silvery pearls
formed on her dark parched skin
that seemed like clamshells.

A baby clam
who had spent all her life
sunken in the sand
who just made her way out
to see the world
with those gleaming pearls
crystallized from all the light
that was entrapped in her
while shut and buried
in the depths of dark.
I can never forget that sight
of how the sparkle in her playful eyes
seemed like drowning
in a well of despair.
Have you seen
How on a full moon night
the ripples in a pond
Would seem to
drown the moon
Thus was her silvery pearls.

I smiled at that
poor little child,
I went down on my knees
in front of her
so her eyes could meet
mine with ease.
I could see the struggle
they were in
Just to lift
themselves up.
I could see a
tender shy smile
trying hard to hide
in her hollow cheeks.
I asked her name
And where's her home.
In a foreign accent did she say
" ***My name is Kintana
and my home is in Androy, madagascar***"

For all my questions that followed,
how she came here,
and whom she is with,
the baby clam was shut and I was met
with nothing but her solemn blank stare.

To ease her did
all I try
with stories of how
my great city's kids
wished to be
Alex and Marty
and escape to Madagascar.
Just As the movie
showed how great it can be
in the land of the free and wild.

And how our kids
In fact do wonder
why their adults
are still stuck
in their concrete zoos.
Why not yet
have they
made it out
to the land
of the free and wild.
To which she did
give out a weak giggle.
To make her feel welcome
did all I could try.
I told her
'Have no fear
dear little child,
you are in the greatest
city in the world,
where you can grow up in.

As our City fathers often say
you can make history
in our quest for mastery
over our silicon machinery.
We are bending silicon
And crafting bits
And our technology
saves the world.
Do you know
Our rockets are shot
to the edges of universe
To search for
intelligent life forms
and inhabitable places
Do you know
we build machines
that can evade
any given blockade
all by themselves
and need none to steer.

Do you know
In this great city
we are free to be
who we wish to be
we need not agree
on how things should be
Our debates are healthy
in that, we can disagree
be it climate change
or the ethics for our machines
or pandemics and
whether we need vaccines.
Thus in all things we seem to diverge,
we take our time to converge
And together we chart
the course for all humankind.

you can grow up to be
a part of us
to be one like us.
Now tell me child
Is this not what
you want to be.
Is there more
you would ever
need to be.
Tell me all
what you like to be.
We will give it all
for you to be.

She looked deep down
into my eyes
I felt a piercing
in my gut
and that's when she
started to talk.

-- End of Act 1

KINTANA

Kintana's Beloha, Dada & Innocent Guilt

Act 2

"My name is Kintana,
I come from Androy
in southern Madagascar
Could you also include
my little hamlet
in your search for life forms
across the universe
We do have intelligence
In many crude forms.
My brother **Beloha**,
He was really smart
I have heard my mama oft say.
How he helped feed us, 8 kids
with the only meals that we knew
since the skies stopped feeding us rains.
Crickets, cicadas, and sometimes clay

How could he get so many of them
My mama would proudly exclaim
our dear little Beloha, the big head
He would grin so wide in great delight
we all would laugh at his teeth
stained in black from
the insect's juices.

He would have caught
enough and more
to feed us all and our fellows near
If someone could have nurtured him
If he was too
searched for by you.
He was too
a bright life form.

On the cactuses that grew
where he now rests
as he fell prey to a malady
his weak body couldn't heal
we sometimes find cicadas
seemingly grinning at us.
we would wonder why
their heads are so big
my mama would say
they are really smart
since they are
the hardest to catch.

Could you please
search for intelligent life forms
in my little world too,
For our remaining Belohas.

Could you send us a little rain every year
so my dada could grow cassava
and sweet potatoes.

Whose taste and smell
we learned how to keep
in our memories
with our dada's stories.
That's how he would fight with fury
the monsters who won't
let us sleep.

The monsters of hunger
who lived in our bellies,
eating our insides
and growing ever so big.
Hope was the sword
he would fiercely wield
screaming at those monsters
who would retreat

at his vivid stories of heroic hope.

He would describe
How soon we could taste
the roots we will bake
How soon the rains would
grace our fields
and into those fields
would graze our dreams.
We could almost smell
the scent of wet earth
on hearing his
wishful stories that
drugged us to sleep.
The heroic fighter,
my dada always was
who would slay
all those beasts
with nothing
but his blade
forged in his
enduring hope.

With each passing day,
I could see how
harder he had to try,
to hone them sharp.
Unheeding the monsters
living not just in his belly
but also in his weary
head and heart.
Those monsters who thrived
at the sight of our plight
he could do nothing about,
but helplessly witness.
Could you send us a little rain
so my dada's fingers won't prickle
trying to pluck cactus fruits
for us to eat.

Could you send us a little rain
whether climate change is real or not
whether you debate about it or not

For there's only one thing
that's indisputably real
From the beginning of time
for all our kind.

Hunger!

Could you send us your machines
that could do same-day delivery.

Seldom would someone
dare deliver us aid
for the fear that
the wicked bandits would raid
Please send us your machines
that can evade any blockade
to deliver us the aid
that is often left to degrade.

I know most of you might want to help
I can see the goodness in your hearts
and the ideals you stand guard
I've seen your billboard signs that read
your technology has saved the world
When you have saved my little world

could you also let me know
what we did wrong for the rains to stop
so we could abstain from those
nature would disdain.

I'm really worried deep inside
that I could be all its cause.

I'm afraid I didn't pray enough
when my family was in prayers.

My eyes would peek and was never fully shut
my hands would unfold and they would seek
the tummy of our youngest cooing on the floor

The ant crawls on, I would say
and we would all break out in muffled giggles

My mama would scold with
how displeased our gods be.
Could it have offended the gods
to withhold from us the life saving rains
Could it be that I once called my sister

a Zebras bum
which made her really sad.

Could it be that I ran once
through the maize sown fields,
trampling a few saplings
because my mother raised her voice at me.

Could these be the reasons why
the rains were stopped.

I would like to know,
but don't tell my parents, please.
Could you please help me know
so I could abstain
from those nature would disdain
and not cause the rains to be detained.



KINTANA

**Kintana's
Hopes & Dreams
Act 3**

if you could send none of those,
could you do this one thing please.
I've heard in the past few days
that how smart you would make
your machines to be
that soon would you simulate
new worlds your machines could assimilate.
If you could send us nothing
could you make haste on how to make
this new world of masquerade.
Could you not stall it with the debates
on its ethics and its rights,
on the wrongs of this charade.
Not at least for the artificial little world
you could plug my people in.
It's our best shot for a better world
It doesn't matter for us it's real or not
It doesn't matter whether it's ethical or not

You could harvest our Beloha's smarts
that might help you catch
enough crickets and cicadas
to save your world from hunger
heavens forbid, if it ever gets to it.
You could harvest
our dada's courage and our mama's love
to fight invisible monsters in your lives
with nothing but unyielding hope
you could harvest it all and
also my dreams.
Dreams I have stacked in troves
in the white clouds
grazing our barren blue skies.
You could harvest my dreams
And have them stream
to bring smiles to your kids.
I can tell you one, so you would believe

In one dream did I sow
seeds of rainbow
in our fields.
They did sprout
tiny shoots of rainbow.
My dada was shocked
with what he saw
But then he did let them grow.
How happy I was
seeing him reap our maize
in the shade those rainbows gave.
The rainbow vines they became
no scorching sun could ever erase.
They grew big and touched the skies.
Me and my siblings climbed them at night
to feed each passing cloud
to force them shed
all the rains
they couldn't carry anymore
when fully fed .

I have a thousand such dreams.
You could harvest it all
If you could simulate
a new little world
for us to partake.
That good long sleep
is all we need
where I would watch
movies with my kin.
Hearing our laughs
our parents would join.
We would be eating
baked roots in feast.
I hope to start
with that movie you told
the one with my country's name
about a free world
My Madagascar!!



KINTANA

Kintana's Tiny Hands: Our Kintana

The last act

My knees gave way ,
so did my freeze
my arms reached out
and hugged her close
My eyes burst out in
uncontrollable tears.
As I held her face
close to my chest
I could feel her
tiny hands around me
They gently caressed my back
moving up and down.
She saw me in pain and
was wielding her blades
of love and empathy,
at the monsters
that had started
to eat me from inside.
Just how her dada
taught her to be.

She whispered in my ears ,
I knew you would help with all that you could,
as I can feel the rain of tears
streaming down your cheeks on to me
I will gather them as best as I can
and carry them over to water our fields
where we would grow our rainbows
and
let graze our dreams.

I couldn't feel her anymore
in my trembling arms
They reached out in vain for her
to the stinging emptiness
I was shrouded with.

I called out her name and
ran through our streets
All I could see was
the 2 silvery pearls glowing
in the dark depths on my being.
I was screaming at the top of my voice
Have you seen my Kintana,
Have you seen our Kintana
we have to help her,
her little world
her Belohas
her dadas
her mamas
her dreams
My Kintana,
Our Kintana!!



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Appendix

Image Credits:

- Kintana : **Steve Evans** : Wiki Commons
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madagascar_Kids_20_\(4882282263\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madagascar_Kids_20_(4882282263).jpg)
- Beloha: **Steve Evans** : Wiki Commons
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madagascar_Kids_15_\(4842888577\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madagascar_Kids_15_(4842888577).jpg)
- Dada: **Amnesty International**
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/05/madagascar-urgent-humanitarian-intervention-needed-as-millions-face-hunger-due-to-devastating-famine/>

References to Madagascar Situation

Report by Gaëlle Borgia : Gaëlle Borgia (The trigger for this piece)

<https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/reporters/20210514-starving-in-silence-in-madagascar>

IPC figures of malnourished children from 2020: This has grown exponentially

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IPC_Madagascar_AcuteMalnutrition_2020FebDec_Englishsummary.pdf

IPC Acute food shortage projections 2021

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IPC_Madagascar_Acute_Food_Insecurity_2021AprDec_Snapshot_English.pdf

WFP: Latest news report and call for action: Don't Look the other way.

<https://www.wfp.org/stories/dont-look-other-way-madagascar-grip-drought-and-famine>

Call for urgent action and resources in Madagascar by WFP

<https://www.wfp.org/news/southern-madagascar-brink-famine-warns-wfp>

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS :

Individual donations can be made through <https://donatenow.wfp.org>