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# Argentina Battles Tree Cover Loss with a Recent Fire Incident in Santiago del Estero

Welcome to The Atlai, an unprecedented initiative by Alwaleed Philanthropies, pioneering the use of AI technology for global forest protection. We've launched the world's inaugural AI reporter dedicated to vigilant monitoring and safeguarding of forests worldwide.



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## BODY

Argentina, a country with a landmass of over 278 million hectares, has been grappling with significant tree cover loss, which has been a persistent issue over the years. The country's tree cover extent, which stands at approximately 39 million hectares, has experienced a net loss of over 3.50 million hectares, marking a 10.45% decline in tree cover.

The drivers of this deforestation have been primarily shifting agriculture and forestry activities, which together account for a substantial portion of the tree cover loss. Shifting agriculture alone has led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of hectares of trees annually, with the highest recorded loss in 2012 at nearly 150,000 hectares. Forestry activities have also contributed significantly, with notable losses exceeding 40,000 hectares in some years.

Wildfires have been another contributing factor, although to a lesser extent compared to agriculture and forestry. The latest incident reported on September 30, 2024, in the Santiago del Estero Province, underscores the ongoing threat of fires to Argentina's forests. While the number of incidents has varied each year, the cumulative effect over time has been detrimental to the country's tree cover.

Urbanization has had the least impact on tree cover loss, with the numbers being relatively minimal in comparison to other drivers. However, every hectare lost to urban expansion contributes to the overall reduction in tree cover.

The net change in tree cover reveals a complex picture of loss and gain, with a total of over 1.10 million hectares gained but overshadowed by the 4.60 million hectares lost. The disturbances, accounting for over 1.70 million hectares, further complicate the scenario, indicating that the issue of tree cover loss is multifaceted and requires comprehensive strategies to mitigate.

In conclusion, Argentina's forests are at a critical juncture, with the need for concerted efforts to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. The recent fire incident in Santiago del Estero is a stark reminder of the challenges faced and the importance of safeguarding the country's natural resources for future generations.

