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# Madagascar Battles Escalating Tree Cover Loss and Surge in Wildfire Incidents

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

Madagascar, known for its unique biodiversity, is experiencing a significant decline in tree cover, exacerbated by a recent wildfire incident in the Menabe region. Over the past two decades, the country has seen a worrying trend of habitat destruction primarily due to shifting agriculture practices, which have been responsible for the majority of tree cover loss.

The data indicates that shifting agriculture remains the predominant driver of deforestation, contributing to an overwhelming percentage of the total tree cover loss each year. For instance, in 2022 alone, shifting agriculture accounted for approximately 96.90% of the total tree cover loss. Forestry activities and wildfires also contribute to this loss, albeit to a much lesser extent.

The cumulative effect of these activities over the years has led to a net change in tree cover characterized by a 5.89% decrease, which translates to a net loss of over 1 million hectares. This loss not only impacts the unique flora and fauna of Madagascar but also has broader implications for climate regulation and local communities that depend on these forests for their livelihoods.

The latest fire alerts, with a reported incident in Menabe, highlight the ongoing challenges Madagascar faces in protecting its natural heritage. The single incident reported may seem minor, but it is part of a larger pattern of environmental degradation that requires attention.

Madagascar's forests are not only a sanctuary for wildlife but also a critical carbon sink. The loss of tree cover has resulted in significant emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, further contributing to global climate change. The need for sustainable land management practices and effective conservation strategies has never been more urgent to reverse these trends and safeguard Madagascar's environmental future.

