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Tanzania's Tree Cover Faces Continuing Decline, Latest Fire Incident Reported

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Tanzania has experienced a significant decrease in tree cover over the years, with the latest incident being a fire alert in the Morogoro Region on October 20, 2024. The country, which spans over 94 million hectares, has a tree cover extent of approximately 26.40 million hectares. However, the net change in tree cover has been negative, with a loss of over 4.30 million hectares and a modest gain of about 557,000 hectares, resulting in a net loss of approximately 3.80 million hectares, marking an 11.30% decrease.

Shifting agriculture has been the predominant driver of tree cover loss, contributing to the vast majority of the deforestation. Other factors such as forestry, wildfires, and urbanization also play roles, but to a much lesser extent. The impact of these losses is profound, not only on the environment and biodiversity but also on the carbon emissions, with millions of metric tons of CO2 equivalent released into the atmosphere as a result of this deforestation.

The trend of tree cover loss in Tanzania calls for a broader discussion on sustainable land use and conservation strategies to mitigate the ongoing deforestation and its associated impacts on the climate and ecosystem health.