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Guinea Confronts Escalating Tree Cover Loss Amid Shifting Agriculture and Wildfires

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Guinea has experienced a significant decline in its tree cover over the past two decades, with shifting agriculture and wildfires being the predominant drivers of this loss. Analysis of the data reveals that the country's tree cover extent, which spans over 8 million hectares, has been consistently compromised, primarily due to the expansion of agricultural activities.

The most substantial impact comes from shifting agriculture, accounting for the majority of tree cover loss. This practice, which involves clearing forests for crop cultivation and relocating when soil fertility diminishes, has led to extensive deforestation. Wildfires also contribute notably to the depletion of Guinea's forests, further exacerbating the environmental impact.

From 2001 to 2022, the total tree cover loss in Guinea amounted to over 1.80 million hectares, which represents a concerning 8.34% decrease in tree cover. This loss is not offset by the gains in tree cover, which are relatively minimal in comparison. The disturbances to the tree cover have also been significant, with a net loss of approximately 1.60 million hectares when accounting for both losses and gains.

The latest incident data from November 2024 indicates that the region of Labé, Guinea, continues to face fire alerts, underscoring the ongoing challenge of wildfires in the country. These incidents not only threaten the remaining tree cover but also pose risks to biodiversity, local climates, and the livelihoods of communities dependent on forest resources.

The trend of tree cover loss in Guinea highlights the urgent need for sustainable land management practices that balance agricultural productivity with forest conservation. It also calls for increased efforts to prevent and mitigate wildfires to protect the country's valuable forest ecosystems.