

Date:  
8 Dec 2024

# Madagascar Grapples with Escalating Tree Cover Loss and Fire 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.

# Madagascar Grapples with Escalating Tree Cover Loss and Fire Incidents

## BODY

Madagascar has been facing a significant challenge with tree cover loss over the past two decades, a trend that has continued with the latest incident in Ihorombe. The island nation, known for its unique biodiversity, has seen a net change in tree cover characterized by a 5.89% decrease, equating to a loss of over 1.19 million hectares. This loss has been primarily driven by shifting agriculture, which accounts for the vast majority of tree cover loss, followed by forestry and wildfires.

The data indicates that the incidents of tree cover loss have not only been persistent but have also escalated in certain years, with the highest recorded loss in 2017 at over 510,000 hectares. The impact of these losses is substantial, considering that Madagascar's tree cover extent is over 17 million hectares. The latest fire alert in the region of Ihorombe adds to the concern, signaling ongoing environmental stress.

These incidents have a profound effect on the country's ecology and the livelihoods of its inhabitants. The loss of tree cover is a critical issue that not only affects local ecosystems but also has broader implications for climate change, given the role of forests in carbon sequestration. The continued trend highlights the need for concerted efforts to address the underlying causes and to promote sustainable land management practices.