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Côte d'Ivoire Faces Critical Tree Cover Loss; Shifting Agriculture Major Culprit

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

Côte d'Ivoire has experienced significant tree cover loss over the past two decades, with shifting agriculture being the primary driver. The country, which boasts an area of over 32 million hectares, has seen a net decrease in tree cover of approximately 1.65 million hectares, marking a 6.94% change. This loss is a substantial portion of the country's total tree cover extent of nearly 14.90 million hectares.

The data reveals a consistent pattern of tree cover loss, with shifting agriculture accounting for the vast majority of this decline. For instance, in 2022 alone, shifting agriculture was responsible for over 97% of the tree cover loss. Urbanization, while a much smaller factor, has also contributed to the diminishing tree canopy.

The impact of these losses is not only ecological but also significant in terms of carbon emissions. Over the years, the total CO2 equivalent gross emissions from tree cover loss have reached alarming levels, with shifting agriculture again being the leading cause.

The latest incident data from 2024 indicates a fire alert in the Zanzan District, highlighting the ongoing challenges the nation faces in managing its natural resources. While the number of incidents is relatively low, the cumulative effect of these events over time poses a serious threat to the country's environmental stability and sustainability.