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Cameroon Grapples with Escalating Tree Cover Loss and 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

Cameroon has experienced a significant increase in tree cover loss over the past two decades, with the latest incident reported in the Adamawa Region on January 8, 2025. The country's tree cover extent, which spans over 31 million hectares, has been facing persistent threats, primarily from shifting agriculture, which has been responsible for the majority of the tree cover loss. The data indicates a disturbing trend, with a net loss of approximately 626,000 hectares, marking a 1.71% decrease in tree cover. Urbanization and forestry activities also contribute to the loss, albeit to a lesser extent.

The impact of these losses is profound, considering the country's total land area of over 46 million hectares. The loss of tree cover not only affects biodiversity and ecosystems but also has significant implications for carbon emissions. While the data on wildfires show minimal impact on tree cover loss, the presence of even a single recent fire alert underscores the ongoing vulnerability of Cameroon's forests to various disturbances.

The trend over the years has shown fluctuations, with some years witnessing exceptionally high losses, such as in 2014, where over 181,000 hectares were lost. Despite some gains in tree cover, the overall trajectory remains negative. This pattern of tree cover loss in Cameroon calls for a broader discussion on sustainable land management and the protection of vital forest resources.