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Cambodia's Forests Under Threat: A Single Day's Fire Alert Reflects Ongoing Struggle

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In a concerning environmental update, Cambodia has reported a fire incident in Kampong Thom Province on January 20, 2025. This incident is a stark reminder of the broader challenges facing the country's forests. Over the years, Cambodia has experienced significant tree cover loss, with a net decrease of approximately 25.59% in tree cover. Notably, shifting agriculture and forestry have been the primary drivers of this decline, contributing to substantial carbon emissions and habitat loss.

The data reveals a troubling trend, with the highest annual tree cover loss recorded in 2010, amounting to over 237,000 hectares. Although there has been some fluctuation in the extent of loss in subsequent years, the overall trajectory has been one of continued deforestation. Urbanization, while a less significant factor, has also contributed to the reduction in tree cover.

The impact of these losses is profound, not only on the environment but also on the biodiversity and climate regulation functions that forests provide. The fire incident in Kampong Thom Province is a microcosm of the environmental pressures that Cambodia's forests face, highlighting the need for concerted efforts to protect and restore these critical ecosystems.