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# Algeria Confronts Escalating Tree Cover Challenges in Ouargla Province

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## BODY

A recent series of incidents in Ouargla Province, Algeria, has brought the nation's struggle with tree cover loss into sharp focus. On May 9, 2024, the region experienced multiple fire incidents, highlighting a broader trend of environmental challenges.

Algeria, with an area spanning over 230 million hectares, has a relatively small tree cover extent of approximately 1.22 million hectares. Over the years, the country has faced significant tree cover loss due to various factors. A notable driver of this loss is shifting agriculture, which alone accounted for a substantial portion of the tree cover loss, followed by wildfires and forestry activities.

The data reveals a concerning trend of increasing tree cover loss over the years. In 2017, the country saw a dramatic spike with nearly 46,000 hectares lost, a figure that dwarfs the losses in preceding years. While there have been fluctuations, the overall trajectory points to a persistent challenge. The loss due to wildfires has also been significant, with thousands of hectares affected annually.

Despite these losses, Algeria has seen some positive developments. The net change in tree cover indicates a small gain after accounting for tree cover loss and gain, with a net increase of over 25,000 hectares. This suggests that efforts to recover and expand tree cover are having an impact, albeit modestly.

The incidents in Ouargla Province serve as a reminder of the ongoing battle to preserve and enhance Algeria's natural tree cover. While the net gain offers a glimmer of hope, the persistent incidents and loss underscore the need for continued vigilance and proactive measures to protect these vital ecosystems.