

1.3.2. Militant groups in the Niger Delta

[Main COI reference: [Targeting](#), 2.2]

The Niger Delta comprises of the states of Ondo, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom and Cross River. A number of militant groups operated in the area. Their members demand an improvement of the conditions in the region and protest against its environmental degradation due to oil exploitation.

Between 2006 and 2009, after the decline of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the most active militant group was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (**MEND**). MEND is an umbrella organisation whose political objectives have focused on demanding local control over oil resources and development of the region. The group has made use of kidnapping and car bombing with the aim of kidnapping foreign oil workers, attacks against oil pipelines and oil bunkering.

In the last years, MEND had a limited presence due to the imprisonment of some of its leaders and due to a large-scale amnesty and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programme introduced in 2009. The DDR has also provided financial benefit for approximately 30 000 former militants.

The cut to the programme funding in 2015, along with the government's failure to improve the socio-economic conditions in the Delta region, and actions by security guards of oil installations, led to a new insurgency in 2016 and to the emergence of several militant groups, in particular of the Niger Delta Avengers (**NDA**). In 2016, the group launched a large number of attacks on oil infrastructures and it continued to be active in 2017 and early 2018. Since then, no major incidents involving the NDA have been found in the consulted sources [[Security situation 2021](#), 1.3.2.4].

Maritime kidnappings have become common in the Niger Delta, as militants have turned to piracy [[Security situation 2021](#), 1.3.2.4].