

LTTE driven out of TamilNadu, claims Jayalalitha. (1993, June 26).  
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## LTTE driven out of TamilNadu, claims Jayalalitha

From S. Venkat Narayan

**NEW DELHI:** Ms. Jayaram Jayalalitha, the Chief Minister of the Southern Indian State of Tamil Nadu, has claimed that her government has driven out the Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups, including the dreaded Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from the state.

She made this declaration inaugurating a two-day conference of District collectors and police officials in Madras, the State capital, on Thursday.

Now that the Sri Lankan Tamil militants strength has been literally demolished, Ms. Jayalalitha asked her officers to ensure that there is no direct or indirect revival of any form of militant or terrorist activity in the state irrespective of what some "blinkered politicians" might say.

"Your service will be highly appreciated by the people, who know the truth and they are the best judges," the temperamental Chief Minister told the collectors and police officers.

Her claim comes in the wake of criticism by her political opponents that the state government is now controlling the activities of the

LTTE, which India maintains is responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at an election rally near Madras over two years ago.

Ms. Jayalalitha went on to say that her government has succeeded in restoring law and order and bringing back peace in the state within a few months of assuming office on this day two years ago.

Continued surveillance over coastal areas, a strict watch over Sri Lankan refugee camps in the state and a tight control over special camps where suspected Sri Lankan Tamil militants are kept are the essential ingredients of a programme of action her government has evolved for containing the militants.

Tamil Nadu has been a safe haven for Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups since 1983, when the ethnic strife in the island assumed serious proportions. LTTE Supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran and a host of leaders of other militant outfits had lived in Madras for four years thereafter.

Mr. Prabhakaran returned to his favourite hideout in the jungles of Sri Lanka's Jaffna

peninsula in late 1987 shortly after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord by Rajiv Gandhi and JR Jayawardena to disarm the Tamil militants and to restore peace in the island's northern and eastern provinces.

Even as the LTTE defied the Indian peace-keeping force (IPKF) and fought a bloody war with it, its activists had relatively free access to Tamil Nadu, which is separated from the island's Tamil-inhabited northern tip by the 17 km-wide Palk Straits, under the patronage of Muthuvel Karunanidhi, the then Chief Minister of the State. He was subsequently sacked for helping the LTTE in early 1991 by the Chandra Shekhar government.

Ms. Jayalalitha's All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) had fought the 1991 general elections in the state as an ally of the Congress party. Following Mr. Gandhi's assassination during electioneering in the state, Ms. Jayalalitha became Tamil Nadu chief Minister and mounted a massive campaign with help from the central government to rid the state of the LTTE and other groups.