

Mahinda Rajapaksa denies giving money to LTTE

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Colombo: Former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa today denied allegations that he gave money to the LTTE, saying the ruling coalition leaders have been trying to "mislead voters" ahead of the parliament elections next month.

JVP or People's Liberation Front leader, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, had said at an election rally that President Maithripala Sirisena told him that if a Presidential Commission of Inquiry finds former President Rajapaksa guilty of having given money to the LTTE, he could be deprived of his civic rights.

Dismissing the allegations, the former President's office in a statement said, "JVP speakers have been trying to mislead voters by saying that there was no point in voting for the UPFA because Rajapaksa could lose his civic rights. The public should be vigilant about such falsehoods being propagated by bankrupt politicians."

"Firstly, former president Rajapaksa did not give money to the LTTE. On the contrary, it was he who defeated the LTTE. Secondly, no Presidential Commission has recommended that Rajapaksa be deprived of his civic rights. Thirdly a Presidential Commission of Inquiry cannot deprive anybody of his civic rights unless parliament passes a resolution to that effect with a two thirds majority," Rajapaksa's office was quoted as saying by the Colombo Gazette.

The JVP leader also alleged that Rajapaksa's wife, Shiranthi Rajapaksa, had spent Rs 35 million from the Siriliya Saviya charity run by her to buy a house.

Refuting the allegations, the statement said, "In an earlier press release, we have pointed out that Shiranthi Rajapaksa had bought a property in Colombo 5 on a loan. This loan appears in former President Rajapaksa's assets and liabilities declaration as a liability. Siriliya Saviya money was not used to buy this property. Like other families, the Rajapaksa family also has assets as well as liabilities." Rajapaksa is contesting the parliamentary elections scheduled to take place on August 17.

The former president lost the presidential elections in January to Maithripala Sirisena.

- PTI