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No apologies from 'The Economist'

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - No apologies will be forthcoming from The Economist, the magazine which has drawn Malaysian ire for insulting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Its Asia Editor Christopher Lockwood wrote in an e-mail to Berita Harian that no apology would be necessary.

"We have not received any written complaint. However, we have been told verbally that an apology is being sought.

"(Our position is) that no apology is necessary since we stand by our special report," said Lockwood, who wrote the articles "The Changing of the Guard: A Survey of Malaysia" and "A Qualified Success" in the magazine's April 5 issue.

Berita Harian had written to Lockwood asking if the magazine would issue an apology, which has been called for by several government leaders.

Several Umno leaders have demanded action against the magazine, while Puteri Umno said it should be banned.

"If the Malaysian Government decides to ban us, there is nothing we can do about it. However, our subscribers will be able to continue to read (us) online," added Lockwood.

In his articles, Lockwood had written about the coming changes in Malaysian leadership, issues such as the Internal Security Act, and the trial and jailing of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He had described Dr Mahathir as a "jailer of the Malaysian people" and also questioned Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership abilities.