

BBC investigating Astro for alleged Bersih 3.0 censorship
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Whistleblower website Sarawak Report reported yesterday that the BBC was looking into claims that Astro had doctored one of its news reports on the Bersih 3.0 rally last Saturday.

It highlighted a video uploaded to YouTube comparing the original BBC broadcast and the allegedly censored version shown on Astro.

NONEIn its posting, the site details that up to 30 seconds of footage from the report had been removed when aired on Astro.

"Thirty seconds appears to have been cut out of the doctored version on Astro, after the removal of three separate sequences, one which showed a policeman on a motorbike apparently firing at demonstrators.

"The two other sequences that were removed included interviews with demonstrators, explaining why they felt they had to take to the streets to defend the right to fair elections," it said in the article.

NONEThe website reports that the BBC issued a statement after being alerted by the website, clarifying that "urgent enquiries" were being made into the matter in order to "establish the facts".

"During the week of World Press Freedom Day, it would be deplorable if access to independent and impartial news was being prevented in any way," said the statement.

Astro has apparently yet to respond to the BBC on the matter.

The report was included in BBC World, one of the channels available in Astro. BBC reporter Emily Buchanan produced the two-minute report covering the Bersih rally, according to the website.

Sarawak Report also claims that the quality of the editing present in the report broadcasted on Astro indicated it was professional work, suggesting that the cuts were a deliberate effort to cast the Malaysian authorities in better light.

In addition, the report claims that an Al Jazeera report broadcasted on Astro was also tampered with, but did not elaborate on what edits were made.

Astro is the only satellite channel licensed by the federal government and is owned by tycoon Ananda Krishnan, who is said to have close links with Umno.

Sarawak Report was founded by investigative journalist Clare Rewcastle Brown, sister-in-law to former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

