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Student to face court over death threats

August 1, 2006 - 12:40PM

A Japanese PhD student who has applied for asylum in Australia will face a Queensland court on Wednesday on charges of making death threats against court employees.

Megumi Ogawa, 39, who has been studying in Australia since 1999, is accused of threatening to kill Federal Court employees Tim Conrad and Jane Mussett.

She allegedly made the threats during more than 150 phone calls to Federal Court staff.

Ogawa was remanded in custody during a brief appearance in Sydney's Central Local Court.

The appearance followed her arrest on an extradition warrant at a Sydney immigration department office on Monday.

Magistrate Allan Moore was told Ogawa, dressed in the same jeans, black top and red jacket she was wearing when arrested, was already on conditional bail at the time of the alleged offence.

Outside court, a Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions spokeswoman said Ogawa had been charged previously with sending threatening emails to Federal Court employees.

Crown Prosecutor Lara Gallagher told the court the telephone calls "breached at least the spirit" of previous bail conditions.

Ogawa, whose husband is a law professor in Japan, was to be escorted by Queensland police to Brisbane on a 2pm (AEST) flight on Tuesday, the court was told.

Ogawa was released on a bridging visa from Sydney's Villawood Immigration Detention Centre on Friday. She had been detained there since May, having lost her student visa after an enrolment dispute with the University of Melbourne.

Her scheduled deportation last week was delayed after she lodged an application for asylum - a visa usually reserved for those fleeing persecution.

The Federal Court delayed until Wednesday a decision on whether to block her deportation.


Ogawa, whose address is listed on court papers as the University of Queensland, is accused of using a carriage (telephone) service on May 9 to threaten Mr Conrad and Ms Mussett.

Court documents show she is accused also of using a carriage service to menace or harass between April 14 and May 18 this year.

She will be charged with those offences formally upon her return to Queensland.

Mr Moore remanded Ogawa in custody.

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