

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Saudi Arabian Oil Co. v. saudi aramco
Case No. D2025-1733

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Saudi Arabian Oil Co., Saudi Arabia, represented by Fish & Richardson P.C., United States of America.

The Respondent is saudi aramco, Republic of Korea.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <aramco-kr.com> is registered with Gabia, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 30, 2025. On April 30, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On May 2, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Domain Admin) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on May 6, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amendment to the Complaint on May 6, 2025, and amended Complaint on May 8, 2025.

On May 6, 2025, the Center informed the parties in Korean and English, that the language of the registration agreement for the disputed domain name is Korean. On May 8, 2025, the Complainant requested English to be the language of the proceeding.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the Complaint and amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on May 15, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was June 4, 2025. The Respondent sent an email communication to the Center on May 9, 2025, agreeing to transfer the disputed domain name to the Complainant to resolve the dispute amicably. On May 13, 2025, the Complainant sent an email communication to the Center, stating that it does not wish to pursue settlement and intends to proceed to a full decision on the merit. On June 11, 2025, the Center notified the Parties that it would proceed with Panel appointment.

The Center appointed Ik-Hyun Seo as the sole panelist in this matter on June 23, 2025. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant, founded in 1933, is the national oil company of Saudi Arabia. The Complainant has used the mark ARAMCO which is an acronym for its former name "Arabian American Oil Company" in connection with its business since 1944, and has a number of trademark registrations to the mark, including the following: United Arab Emirates Trademark Registration Number 37628 registered on August 1, 2002, Saudi Arabia Trademark Registration Number 143306351 registered on October 2, 2013, and European Union Trademark Registration Number 012676045 registered on August 15, 2014.

The Respondent appears to have an address in the Republic of Korea.

The disputed domain name was registered on December 4, 2024, and redirects to the official website for the Complainant's Korean subsidiary.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the mark in which it has registrations and that the addition of the generic term "kr" and a hyphen is irrelevant to the determination of similarity.

The Complainant also contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and confirms that it has not authorized or licensed rights to the Respondent in any respect. The Complainant further contends that there is no evidence of the Respondent's use of, or demonstrable preparations to use the disputed domain name in providing any bona fide offering of goods or services, nor any evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name, or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name by the Respondent.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. With respect to registration, the Complainant contends that the ARAMCO trademark is a distinctive term, which has been in use for nearly eight decades and is globally recognized in the energy and chemical industry, and given its worldwide reputation and success, there is no reasonable explanation for the Respondent to have registered the disputed domain name other than to target the Complainant's trademark. The Complainant also contends that the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name to redirect Internet traffic to the Complainant's legitimate website is further evidence of the Respondent's knowledge of the ARAMCO mark. With respect to use, the Complainant contends that the redirect to the Complainant's official website itself constitutes bad faith, as there is no legitimate reason for such redirect.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions and only submitted the following response in English: "I understand the Complaint regarding the domain <aramco-kr.com>. To resolve the matter amicably, I agree to voluntarily transfer the domain to the Complainant. Please advise on the next steps."

6. Discussion and Findings

Language of the Proceeding

The language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is English. Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the registration agreement.

The Complaint was filed in English. The Complainant requested that the language of the proceeding be English for several reasons, including the fact that the disputed domain name is composed of Latin characters, the Respondent demonstrated familiarity with English through its registration and use of the disputed domain name, and requiring the Complainant to translate the Complaint to Korean would result in unnecessary delay and cost.

The Respondent did not comment on the Complainant's request for the language of the proceeding to be English but sent an email in English to the Center.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties' ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.5.1). Based on the Respondent's email communication to the Center in English, it is quite obvious that the Respondent would be able to understand a decision rendered in English.

Having considered all the matters above, the Panel determines under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules that the language of the proceeding shall be English.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms – here, "kr" – may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of “proving a negative”, requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant’s prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Moreover, “UDRP panels have found that domain names identical to a complainant’s trademark carry a high risk of implied affiliation. Even where a domain name consists of a trademark plus an additional term (at the second- or top-level), UDRP panels have largely held that such composition cannot constitute fair use if it effectively impersonates or suggests sponsorship or endorsement by the trademark owner”. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.1. Here, the geographical term “kr” is added after the ARAMCO mark which may mislead Internet users into believing that the website at the disputed domain name is related to and/or operated by the Complainant’s subsidiary in the Republic of Korea, contrary to the fact.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

First, given the distinctiveness and fame of the Complainant’s mark, it is unlikely that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name by chance, and much more likely that it registered the disputed domain name, targeting the Complainant.

Further, in the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent has redirected the disputed domain name to the official website for the Complainant’s Korean office, which is evidence to support a finding that the Respondent has registered the disputed domain name to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant’s mark. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.1.4.

In addition, the redirect to the Complainant’s own website creates confusion among Internet users and misleads them to believe that the disputed domain name is affiliated with the Complainant and is Korean subsidiary. Moreover, as the Respondent retains control over the redirection, it creates a real or implied ongoing threat to the Complainant.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <aramco-kr.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Ik-Hyun Seo/

Ik-Hyun Seo

Sole Panelist

Date: July 7, 2025