

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

The Ritz Hotel (London) Ltd v. Deepak Chauhan
Case No. DCO2025-0084

1. The Parties

Complainant is The Ritz Hotel (London) Ltd, United Kingdom, represented by Stobbs IP Limited, United Kingdom.

Respondent is Deepak Chauhan, India.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <ritz-partners.co> (the “Domain Name”) is registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on September 29, 2025. On October 1, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On October 2, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Unknown) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email to Complainant on October 3, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. Complainant filed an amended Complaint on October 7, 2025.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the 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 Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on October 8, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 28, 2025. Respondent sent an email to the Center on October 8, 2025. On October 30, 2025, the Center informed the Parties that it would proceed with panel appointment.

The Center appointed Robert A. Badgley as the sole panelist in this matter on November 4, 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

According to Complainant:

Complainant incorporated on November 17, 1899 and active in the provision of hotel and restaurant services since 1906, operates a global hotel and restaurant business, with its main operations in the United Kingdom. The Complainant's name RITZ originates from the hotelier César Ritz.

Evident through public company accounts, Complainant held a total equity value of GBP 40.7 million. Detailed information of Complainant's brands and products is made publicly available on Complainant's official website "www.theritzlondon.com/about-the-ritz/history".

Success of Complainant's business has been reflected through multiple awards. In the period of 2014 – 2023, Complainant and its [sic] staff achieved four AA Rosettes, one Michelin Star, multiple recommendations within industry magazines crediting its [sic] services, and recognition of Master Innholder status for its General Manager.

In 2002, Complainant was awarded a Royal Warrant for Banqueting and Catering Services by King Charles III, formerly HRH The Prince of Wales. Complainant is the first and only hotel to have been honored with the award.

On March 25, 2020, the Complainant and its [sic] RITZ brand were acquired by Mr. Abdulhadi Al-Hajri. The acquisition was subject to significant press coverage.

Annexed to the Complaint is ample documentation to support the foregoing allegations.

Complainant asserts that it enjoys a significant social media presence, with more than 150,000 Facebook followers, 363,000 Instagram followers, 50,000 X followers, and 48,000 LinkedIn followers.

Complainant holds numerous trademark registrations for the mark RITZ (or marks containing RITZ) in various jurisdictions, many of which pertain to hotel and related services. In addition, Complainant holds various registered trademarks related to gaming, including: United Kingdom Reg. No. UK00001509163 for RITZ, registered on June 7, 1996 in connection with "gaming services"; and United Kingdom Reg. No. UK00901704030 for RITZ CASINO, registered on April 15, 2005 in connection with "provision of gaming services accessed via local and world-wide computer networks, PDA devices and electronic databases; interactive television programmes about gaming and providing access to gaming services; television programmes featuring gaming; organising events related to gaming."

The Domain Name was registered on October 9, 2024. The Domain Name resolves to a fairly rudimentary website featuring a banner "RITZSLOTS" and stating:

"30% Revshare on a fast-growing Online Crypto Casino. Payments in Crypto. Modern, Fast, and Fun, ritzslots is available for all Web browsers. All Jurisdictions, no KYC."

The site then invites visitors to click a hyperlink to "Become an Affiliate".

According to Complainant:

Complainant submits that the website at the Domain Name is in use for the operation of an illicit gambling website facilitated by crypto-currency transactions. The Complainant notes the prominent marketing message as stated on the website: "Modern, Fast, and Fun, ritzslots is available for all Web browsers. All

Jurisdictions, no KYC.” The Complainant submits that the advertised operating model of the website at the Domain Name is explicitly unlawful and an attempt to circumvent local gambling regulations.

Respondent has not disputed any of the foregoing allegations or challenged any of the evidence submitted with the Complaint.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the Domain Name.

B. Respondent

Respondent did not reply to Complainant’s contentions but sent an email on October 8, 2025 addressing to the Registrar that he would renew the Domain Name.

6. Discussion and Findings

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy lists the three elements which Complainant must satisfy with respect to the Domain Name:

- (i) the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which Complainant has rights; and
- (ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name; and
- (iii) the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The Panel concludes that Complainant has rights in the trademark RITZ through registration and use demonstrated in the record.

The Panel also concludes that the Domain Name is confusingly similar to the RITZ mark. The Domain Name entirely incorporates the RITZ mark, and adds a hyphen and the word “partners.” In the Panel’s view, the mark RITZ remains recognizable within the Domain Name.

Complainant has established Policy paragraph 4(a)(i).

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Pursuant to paragraph 4(c) of the Policy, Respondent may establish its rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name, among other circumstances, by showing any of the following elements:

- (i) before any notice to Respondent of the dispute, Respondent’s use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the Domain Name or a name corresponding to the Domain Name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services; or
- (ii) Respondent (as an individual, business, or other organization) have been commonly known by the Domain Name, even if Respondent has acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or
- (iii) Respondent is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the Domain Name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.

The Panel concludes that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name. Respondent has not come forward in this proceeding to articulate any bona fide basis for registering the Domain Name, or to dispute the plausible allegations and evidence presented by Complainant.

On this undisputed record, the Panel finds it probable that Respondent was aware of Complainant's well-known RITZ mark and that mark's association with gaming activities and registered the Domain Name with a view toward attracting Internet traffic by means of creating the false impression that the RITZ mark and Respondent's website are somehow affiliated. Such conduct does not give rise to a legitimate interest vis-à-vis the Domain Name.

Complainant has established Policy paragraph 4(a)(ii).

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy provides that the following circumstances, "in particular but without limitation," are evidence of the registration and use of the Domain Name in "bad faith":

- (i) circumstances indicating that Respondent has registered or has acquired the Domain Name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the Domain Name registration to Complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that Complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of its documented out of pocket costs directly related to the Domain Name; or
- (ii) that Respondent has registered the Domain Name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that Respondent has engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or
- (iii) that Respondent has registered the Domain Name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or
- (iv) that by using the Domain Name, Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to Respondent's website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of Respondent's website or location or of a product or service on Respondent's website or location.

The Panel concludes, on this undisputed record, that Respondent has registered and used the Domain Name in bad faith. The Panel incorporates here its discussion above in the "Rights or Legitimate Interests" section. Because Respondent's site purports to offer gaming services and invites visitors to "become an affiliate," it would appear that Respondent's website is commercial in nature. As discussed above, the Panel finds that Respondent has more likely than not targeted Complainant's mark and also finds that such targeting was motivated by commercial gain. Accordingly, the Panel finds that Respondent has registered and used the Domain Name in bad faith within the meaning of the above-quoted Policy paragraph 4(b)(iv).

Complainant has established Policy paragraph 4(a)(iii).

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 Domain Name <ritz-partners.co> be transferred to Complainant.

/Robert A. Badgley/
Robert A. Badgley
Sole Panelist
Date: November 18, 2025