

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

WhatsApp, LLC v. MOHAMAD-BAKER ZIAB

Case No. DME2026-0006

1. The Parties

The Complainant is WhatsApp, LLC, United States of America ("United States"), represented by Perkins Coie LLP, United States.

The Respondent is MOHAMAD-BAKER ZIAB, Lebanon.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <whattap.me> is registered with GoDaddy Online Services Cayman Islands Ltd. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 5, 2026. On June 8, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 10, 2026, 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 (Registration Private / Domains By Proxy, LLC / DomainsByProxy.com) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 10, 2026, 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 June 12, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the 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 June 15, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 5, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on 06 July 2026.

The Center appointed Angelica Lodigiani as the sole panelist in this matter on July 10, 2026. 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 is a United States company operating a messaging and voice-over-IP service and mobile application named “WhatsApp”. The Complainant is a global leader in messaging services for mobile devices with over two billion people in more than 180 countries using its WhatsApp application to send text and voice messages, make voice and video calls and share images, documents, user locations and other content with one another. The WhatsApp application is available in 60 languages. In recent years it has consistently ranked among the top apps in the market. In 2024, the WhatsApp application was considered the most downloaded app globally by *App Figures*. In 2025, it was ranked the fourth most popular app globally by “BusinessOfApps”.

The Complainant has a strong presence in the most relevant social media platforms, including Facebook, with over thirty-four million likes, X (formerly Twitter), with over five million followers, and YouTube with more than three million subscribers.

The Complainant is the owner of numerous registrations for the trademark WHATSAPP worldwide, including the following:

- WHATSAPP (word), United States registration No. 3939463, registered on April 5, 2011, claiming a date of first use in commerce of February 24, 2009, for services in class 42;
- WHATSAPP (word), European Union registration No. 009986514, registered on October 25, 2011, for goods and services in classes 9, 38 and 42;
- WHATSAPP (word), International registration No. 1396913, registered on December 21, 2017, designating various jurisdictions and covering goods and services in classes 9, 35, 38, 42, and 45.

The Complainant is also the owner of various domain names consisting of the WHATSAPP trademark, including <whatsapp.com>, registered on September 4, 2008, and used as the Complainant’s official website to promote its WhatsApp application and related services.

The disputed domain name was registered on May 21, 2025, purportedly by an individual located in Lebanon. The disputed domain name resolves to a website offering unauthorized bulk messaging services and making prominent use of the Complainant’s WHATSAPP trademark and logo.

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 confusingly similar to its WHATSAPP mark. The disputed domain name appears to be a typical example of typosquatting. It consists of the Complainant’s mark, where the letter “s” has been replaced by the letter “t” and the word “app” lacks the second letter “p”. Such common misspellings and typographical variations have consistently been found to satisfy the confusing similarity prong of paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy.

The Complainant further contends that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. There is no evidence to suggest that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name or has any rights in the disputed domain name independent of the Complainant's well-established trademark rights. To the best of the Complainant's knowledge, the Respondent has neither acquired nor applied for trademark registration for the disputed domain name. Furthermore, given its uncontested rights in the WHATSAPP trademark, the Complainant is unaware of any basis upon which the Respondent could reasonably claim rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The Respondent is neither a licensee of, nor otherwise affiliated with the Complainant. The Complainant has never authorized the Respondent to use its WHATSAPP trademark, or any variation thereof, in any manner whatsoever.

The Respondent is not making a legitimate or fair use of the disputed domain name. By registering the disputed domain name, which is an obvious misspelling of the Complainant's mark, the Respondent is clearly intending to target the Complainant's services and users. The disputed domain name resolves to a commercial website offering bulk messaging services. Such services have not been authorized, endorsed, or approved by the Complainant and trade off the goodwill of the Complainant's WHATSAPP mark. Moreover, the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name is likely to damage the Complainant's reputation and goodwill.

The Complainant's Terms of Use, which are applicable to users and developers expressly prohibit the unauthorized use of the Complainant's trademarks, including in trademarks, domain names, usernames, and account names. Accordingly, the Respondent cannot claim any rights or legitimate interest in a domain name that incorporates a misspelling of the Complainant's WHATSAPP mark.

Under the circumstances, the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name cannot constitute a bona fide offering service. According to the Complainant, the type of services offered by the Respondent through the disputed domain name are commonly associated with illegal activities, such as the spread of malware and viruses, the scraping of private information and content from the Complainant's platforms, phishing for user login credentials to hack accounts of Complainant's customers, etc.

Lastly, the Complainant contends that disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Respondent was aware of the Complainant's rights when it registered the disputed domain name. The WHATSAPP mark is inherently distinctive and well-known and has been continuously and extensively used by the Complainant since 2009. The WHATSAPP mark is exclusively associated with the Complainant. A Google search for the term "WhatsApp" returns exclusively results related to the Complainant. Moreover, the disputed domain name and the Respondent's website content are so obviously connected with the Complainant, its WHATSAPP trademark and its messaging services, that the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name suggests opportunistic bad faith.

It is therefore inconceivable that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant's WHATSAPP mark when it registered the disputed domain name.

With respect to use in bad faith, the Complainant notes that Internet users are likely to believe that the Respondent's website, along with the purported "Whatsapp Messaging" bulk messaging service promoted therein, is affiliated with, sponsored by or endorsed by the Complainant.

The website associated with the disputed domain name contains language that is likely to mislead users, including statements such as "Explore our platform with ease! Sign up, connect your whatsapp account, and start communicating with your customers".

Accordingly, the Complainant submits that by using the dispute domain name the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract Internet users to its website for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's WHATSAPP mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website and the services marketed therein.

Moreover, the Respondent's unauthorized bulk messaging services promoted through the disputed domain name may be used for illegal activities as indicated above. Such use poses a risk to the Complainant's users and further demonstrates that the Respondent is not engaged in a bona fide offering of goods or services.

The Complainant further notes that in May 2025, it sent a notice to the Respondent, through the email address listed in the Whois records for the disputed domain name, demanding that the Respondent cease all unauthorized uses of its WHATSAPP mark and transfer the disputed domain name to the Complainant. At the same time, the Complainant sent takedown notices to the Respondent's webhost provider. The Respondent failed to reply to the Complainant's communications.

Finally, the Complainant submits that the Respondent's use of a proxy service suggests an attempt to prevent and frustrate the UDRP proceeding. Accordingly, this conduct constitutes additional evidence of bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

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 of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1. In particular, the Complainant has shown that it owns registered trademark rights for WHATSAPP since 2011.

The Panel finds the mark is recognizable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

The disputed domain name consists of the term "whattap", which differs from the Complainant's WHATSAPP mark by the replacement of the letter "s" with a letter "t", and the omission of the second letter "p" at the end of the mark. A domain name which consists of a variation of a trademark (typically a common, obvious, or intentional misspelling, referred to as typosquatting) is considered by panels to be confusingly similar to the relevant mark for purposes of the first element. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.9.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that 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 that 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 3.1](#), 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.

The Panel notes that the Respondent has no relationship with the Complainant; it is not a licensee of the Complainant, nor one of its affiliates. The Complainant has not authorized the Respondent to register a domain name confusingly similar to its trademark, nor to make use of such trademark in any manner whatsoever.

The Respondent does not appear to have been commonly known by the disputed domain name. There is no evidence in the record that shows that the Respondent is the owner of a trademark corresponding to the disputed domain name.

The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's mark as it differs only by minor typographical alterations that may easily go unnoticed by Internet users. Moreover, the disputed domain name resolves to a website prominently displaying the Complainant's mark and offering bulk messaging services. The Respondent's website promises to "Revolutionise Your Whatsapp Messaging Today" by enhancing their business communications through various features allegedly designed to improve the WhatsApp user experience. The services offered through the Respondent's platform are offered on a subscription basis, subject to account registration and payment of applicable fees. The website contains multiple references to the Complainant and its WHATSAPP mark and compares the Respondent's services with those offered by the Complainant, thereby creating the misleading impression that the website is affiliated with, endorsed by, or otherwise connected to the Complainant.

The use of a domain name, confusingly similar to the Complainant's mark, to attract Internet users to a misleading website, purportedly offering services that compete with those offered by the Complainant under its WHATSAPP mark in exchange of the payment of a subscription fee, cannot confer any rights or legitimate interest on the Respondent.

Accordingly, 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.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent was most likely aware of the Complainant and its WHATSAPP trademark at the time of the registration of the disputed domain name. The WHATSAPP trademark enjoys widespread international recognition also due to the extraordinary success of the WhatsApp application. Moreover, the disputed domain name resolves to a website that prominently displays the Complainant's mark and contains several references to the Complainant and its WhatsApp application. The website offers services that compete with those provided by the Complainant. In these circumstances, the registration of a domain name that is confusingly similar to a well-known third party's trademark, being aware of such mark and without rights or legitimate interests, amounts to registration in bad faith.

As regards use in bad faith, the Panel finds that through the disputed domain name the Respondent is intentionally attempting to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's well-known WHATSAPP trademark.

The Panel further notes that the Respondent invites Internet users to create an account and provide personal information to access the services offered through the website, which are available upon payment of a subscription fee. Such conduct reinforces the commercial nature of the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name. Furthermore, the Respondent's website prominently features references to the Complainant's mark thereby increasing the risk of confusion amongst Internet users, misleading the users looking for the Complainant into its own website.

Lastly, the Panel notes that the Respondent failed to reply to the Complainant's cease and desist letter sent shortly after the registration of the disputed domain name, and that the disputed domain name was registered through a privacy or proxy registration service. In the circumstances of this case, these factors support and corroborate a finding of bad faith.

For all the aforementioned reasons, 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 <whattap.me> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Angelica Lodigiani/

Angelica Lodigiani

Sole Panelist

Date: July 24, 2026