

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

VFS GLOBAL SERVICES PLC v. The Confidential
Case No. D2025-1845

1. The Parties

The Complainant is VFS GLOBAL SERVICES PLC, United Kingdom, represented by Aditya & Associates, India.

The Respondent is The Confidential, India.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <vfsworldwide.com> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on May 8, 2025. On May 8, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On May 9, 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 Respondents (Domain Admin) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on May 14, 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 amended Complaint on May 18, 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 the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on May 21, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was June 10, 2025. The Respondent sent an informal email communication to the Center on May 22, 2025. On the same day, May 22, 2025, the Center provided a complete answer to the Respondent.

No formal Response was submitted by the Respondent before, by, or after June 10, 2025. On June 16, 2025, the Center, in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Rules, proceeded to the Panel appointment process.

The Center appointed María Alejandra López García as the sole panelist in this matter on June 20, 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

VFS GLOBAL SERVICES PLC, the Complainant, was incorporated on September 28, 2010, under the laws of the United Kingdom; originally incorporated as Fastrac Visa Facilitation Services Pvt. Ltd. on July 10, 2001, under the laws of India.

The Complainant is involved in providing administrative and non-judgmental tasks related to visa application for its client Embassies and Foreign Missions, and performs other related services.

All the group companies are collectively referred to as "VFS GLOBAL" including VF Worldwide Holdings Ltd. and VFS Global Services PLC.

The Complainant and its group companies serve the interests of the diplomatic missions of 69 sovereign governments in 158 countries across 5 continents worldwide. The Complainant has processed over 311 million applications since its inception in 2001, and over 160.51 million biometric enrolments since 2007, and operates out of 3,616 Visa Application Centers located in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

The Complainant provides its services through its own designed platform, operated under privacy protection control rules, through its official website "<http://www.vfsglobal.com/>", which provides all country-specific visa information, visa requirements, application procedure, fee structure, scheduling of interviews, and is officially authorized by each embassy.

The Complainant and its group companies are the owners and the registered proprietors of the trademarks VFS / VFS GLOBAL, including, among many others, the following.

- Indian trademark for VFS GLOBAL (word mark), Registration No. 1555893, in International Class ("IC") 9; registered on May 7, 2007, and in force until May 7, 2027;
- European Union trademark for VFS GLOBAL (and design), Registration No. 006923569, in ICs 9, 35, and 38; registered on June 29, 2009, and in force until May 7, 2028;
- United Kingdom trademark for VFS.GLOBAL EST.2001 (and design), Registration No. UK00003045463, in ICs 9, 16, 35, 38, 39, and 42; registered on July 11, 2014, and in force until March 6, 2034;
- Canadian trademark for VFS. VFS.GLOBAL EST. 2001 (and design), Registration No. TMA1086528, in ICs 9, 16, 35, 38, 39, and 42; registered on October 29, 2020, and in force until October 29, 2030.

The Complainant also owns the domain name <vfsglobal.com> registered on February 23, 2005, from which it operates and offers its non-judgmental visa application services.

The Respondent is reportedly located in India.

The disputed domain name was registered on January 18, 2025, and it currently resolves to a parking page. The Complainant provided evidence that shows that the disputed domain name was used in connection with fraudulent emails impersonating the Complainant.

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.

In relation to the first UDRP element, in summary, the Complainant contends that the essential and significant part of the disputed domain name is "VFS" which is identical and/or confusingly similar to the trademarks VFS / VFS GLOBAL in which the Complainant has exclusive rights based on prior adoption, continuous and extensive use, and registrations.

In relation to the second UDRP element, in summary, the Complainant contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name, given that the Complainant's trademark VFS is the predominant and essential relevant component of the disputed domain name, where the Respondent does not own any trademark right to claim, whether based on a license, authorization, or the Complainant's consent to use the trademark VFS; that the Respondent has no justification for adopting VFS as a primary name which itself is misleading.

In relation to the third UDRP element, in summary, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith, given that the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's business activities and trademarks at the time of its registration; that the Respondent is using the disputed domain name to impersonate the Complainant's services by providing fake biometric appointment details, via an email address ending in "@vfsworldwide.com", with it, totally misleading Internet user, which constitutes clear evidence of bad faith.

B. Respondent

On May 22, 2025, the Respondent sent the following email:

"I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to request clarification regarding the recent emails you sent concerning copyright fragment issues. I am currently unsure about the purpose and context of these messages and would appreciate it if you could kindly provide more detailed information.

Could you please explain what these issues are about, why they are being brought to my attention, and if any action is required from my side?

Looking forward to your response."

On the same day, May 22, 2025, essentially the Center replied:

"Dear Respondent,

[...]

Please kindly note that a Complaint regarding the disputed domain name <vfsworldwide.com> has been filed against you under the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP). Thus, the current administrative proceeding has been commenced against you pursuant to the UDRP. You may refer to the Center's previous Notification of Complaint and Commencement of Administrative Proceeding emails of May 21, 2025, as attached and the documents contained therein for more information.

The Center will forward your communication to the Panel, (when appointed). Please note that pursuant to paragraph 10(d) of the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the ‘Rules’), ‘[t]he Panel shall determine the admissibility, relevance, materiality and weight of the evidence.’”

Based on paragraph 10 of the Rules, the Panel admits for analysis the Respondent’s communication.

On May 21, 2025, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint. On May 22, 2025, the Center replied, attaching such Notification (again) as well. The Panel notes that the Respondent’s due date to submit a Response expired without the submission of a formal Response; therefore, given the absence of any further explanation, the Panel infers that the Respondent chose not to reply to the Complainant’s contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant must satisfy each of the three following elements:

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

The Panel shall analyze the evidence submitted by the Complainant and decide this dispute under the “balance of probabilities” or “preponderance of the evidence” standard. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition (“[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)”), section 4.2.

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. Concerning trademark registrations with design elements, such elements are largely disregarded for purposes of assessing identity or confusing similarity under the first element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 1.7 and 1.10.

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 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 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms, here, “worldwide”, may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such a 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.

As for the applicable generic Top-Level Domain (“gTLD”) “.com”, it is well established that such element may typically be disregarded when assessing whether a domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark, as it is a technical requirement of registration. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.11.1.

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

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Having reviewed the record of this case, to this Panel it is clear that the Complainant did not provide any license or any kind of authorization permitting the use of any of its trademarks VFS / VFS GLOBAL, to the Respondent, including as a domain name.

Given the circumstances of this case, the Panel finds that the Complainant has established a *prima facie* case indicating that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted any of the Complainant's contentions, despite being given a fair opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the manner in which the Respondent is using the disputed domain name effectively precludes any possible finding of rights or legitimate interests.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, claimed as impersonation, or other types of fraud) can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

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

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.

Concerning the bad faith registration requirement, in this case, given the worldwide presence of the Complainant's trademark, including on the Internet, the disputed domain name's composition, nature, and use, to this Panel it is obvious that the Respondent at the time of the registration of the disputed domain name knew about the Complainant's business activity and the value of its trademarks VFS / VFS GLOBAL. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

Concerning the bad faith use requirement, panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, claimed as impersonation, or other types of fraud) constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

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 <vfsworldwide.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/María Alejandra López García/

María Alejandra López García

Sole Panelist

Date: July 4, 2025