

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Circle Internet Group, Inc. v. Hathim Haneef
Case No. D2026-1062

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Circle Internet Group, Inc., United States of America (the “United States”), represented by Fish & Richardson P.C., United States.

The Respondent is Hathim Haneef, India.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <circle-wallet.com> is registered with BigRock Solutions Pvt Ltd. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on March 12, 2026. On March 12, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 13, 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 (Unknown / Domain Admin, Privacy Protect, LLC (PrivacyProtect.org)) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on the same day, 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 the same day.

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 March 19, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 8, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on April 10, 2026.

The Center appointed Aaron Newell as the sole panelist in this matter on April 17, 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 digital asset and financial technology business that develops and manages stablecoins. It was founded in 2013, is headquartered in New York City and since 2025 has been listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Part of the Complainant's business involves offering wallet developer services to facilitate secure holding and transacting in stablecoin assets. It asserts that it "bridges" or transacts in hundreds of billions of USD annually.

Since it was founded the Complainant has traded by reference to the trademark CIRCLE as its house brand. It owns the domain name <circle.com> and uses it for its primary website where it promotes its business activities.

The Complainant asserts that it owns 139 trademark applications or registrations for trademarks that are or contain the word CIRCLE. Among these are:

- i) United States Trademark Registration No. 4704781 for the mark CIRCLE WALLET (registered on March 17, 2015) in international class 36;
- ii) European Union Trademark Registration No. 012294823 for the mark CIRCLE WALLET (registered on April 1, 2014) in international class 36; and
- iii) United Kingdom Trademark Registration No. 912294823 for the mark CIRCLE WALLET (registered on April 1, 2014) in international class 36.

The disputed domain name was registered on November 1, 2025.

There is evidence in the case file that the disputed domain name has been used to load a website that alleges that it provides digital asset management services that are "powered by Circle". The website also features colour schemes and a logo similar to those on the Complainant's own website.

At the time of writing this decision the disputed domain name redirected to the Complainant's own <circle.com> domain name.

The Respondent did not file a response to the Complaint or otherwise engage with the proceedings.

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:

- i) the disputed domain name is identical and/or confusingly similar to its registered trademarks because it contains the registered trademarks CIRCLE and CIRCLE WALLET in their entireties;

- ii) the Respondent does not have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name because the Respondent has never been known or referred to as “Circle” or “Circle Wallet”, the Respondent is not authorized or licensed to use the Complainant's trademarks and the disputed domain name has been used to misrepresent a connection or affiliation with the Complainant when there is none;
- iii) the disputed domain name was registered and used in bad faith because the disputed domain name has been used by the Respondent to target the Complainant and its CIRCLE and CIRCLE WALLET trademarks, and to create a false impression that the Respondent is or is affiliated with the Complainant, in turn giving rise to a likelihood of confusion.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant carries the burden of proving:

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

The Respondent's default does not automatically result in a decision in favor of the Complainant.

Paragraph 5(f) of the Rules does however provide that if the Respondent does not submit a response, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Panel shall decide the dispute based upon the Complaint.

Further, according to paragraph 14(b) of the Rules, the Panel may draw such inferences from the Respondent's failure to submit a response as it considers appropriate.

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.

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 3.1](#), section 1.7.

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 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.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate or illegal activity (here claimed without dispute or rebuttal to be the intentional imitation or impersonation of the Complainant and/or the Respondent’s misrepresentation as to a commercial affiliation with the Complainant when there is none) can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

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.

As noted above, the Complainant has asserted and provided compelling evidence that the Respondent has used the disputed domain name, which is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s prior registered trademark, to imitate and/or impersonate the Complainant and/or mislead consumers by creating the impression that the Respondent’s website at the disputed domain name was the Complainant’s website, or was connected with the Complainant, when it was not.

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 3.1](#), section 3.2.1.

The use of a domain name for per se illegitimate activity such as the intentional impersonation of the complainant and/or conduct that is intended to mislead or deceive consumers is manifestly considered evidence of bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.1.4.

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 <circle-wallet.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Aaron Newell/

Aaron Newell

Sole Panelist

Date: May 1, 2026